THE

Poetical Works

of

Lord Byron.

Vol. VI.

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME VI.

Manfred: A Dramatic Poem. . . . . 1
Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice: An Historical Tragedy . . . . . . . . . . 83

(iii)
MANFRED,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

VOL. VI.          1          (1)
[The following extracts from Byron's letters to Mr. Murray will sufficiently explain the history of the composition of Manfred:—

Venice, Feb. 15, 1817.—"I forgot to mention to you, that a kind of Poem in dialogue (in blank verse) or Drama, from which 'the Incantation' is an extract, begun last summer in Switzerland, is finished: it is in three acts, but of a very wild, metaphysical, and inexplicable kind. Almost all the persons—but two or three—are Spirits of the earth and air, or the waters; the scene is in the Alps; the hero a kind of magician, who is tormented by a species of remorse, the cause of which is left half unexplained. He wanders about invoking these Spirits, which appear to him, and are of no use; he at last goes to the very abode of the Evil Principle, in propriâ persona, to evocate a ghost, which appears, and gives him an ambiguous and disagreeable answer; and, in the third act, he is found by his attendants dying in a tower where he had studied his art. You may perceive, by this outline, that I have no great opinion of this piece of fantasy; but I have at least rendered it quite impossible for the stage, for which my intercourse with Drury Lane has given me the greatest contempt. I have not even copied it off, and feel too lazy at present to attempt the whole; but when I have, I will send it you, and you may either throw it into the fire or not."

March 8.—"I sent you the other day, in two covers, the first act of 'Manfred,' a drama as mad as Nat. Lee's Bedlam tragedy, which was in twenty-five acts and some odd scenes: mine is but in three acts."

March 9.—"In remitting the third act of the sort of dramatic poem of which you will by this time have received the two first, I have little to observe, except that you must not publish it (if it ever is published) without giving me previous notice. I have really and truly no notion whether it is good or bad; and as this was not the case with the principal of my former publications, I am, therefore, inclined to rank it very humbly. You will submit it to Mr. Gifford, and to whomsoever you please besides. The thing you will see at a glimpse, could never be attempted or thought of for the stage; I much doubt if for publication even. It is too much in my old style; but I composed it actually with a horror of the stage, and with a view to render the thought of
it impracticable, knowing the zeal of my friends that I should try that for which I have an invincible repugnance, viz. a representation. I certainly am a devil of a mannerist, and must leave off; but what could I do? Without exertion of some kind, I should have sunk under my imagination and reality."

March 25.—"With regard to the 'Witch Drama,' I repeat, that I have not an idea if it is good or bad. If bad, it must, on no account, be risked in publication; if good, it is at your service. I value it at three hundred guineas, or less, if you like it. Perhaps, if published, the best way will be to add it to your winter volume, and not publish separately. The price will show you I don't pique myself upon it; so speak out. You may put it into the fire, if you like, and Gifford don't like."

April 9.—"As for 'Manfred,' the two first acts are the best; the third so so; but I was blown with the first and second heats. You may call it 'a Poem,' for it is no Drama, and I do not choose to have it called by so d—d a name,—'a Poem in dialogue,' or—Pantomime, if you will; any thing but a green-room synonyme; and this is your motto—

' There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. '"

The following passages are extracts from the ablest contemporary critiques upon Manfred.

"In Manfred, we recognize at once the gloom and potency of that soul which burned and blasted and fed upon itself, in Harold, and Conrad, and Lara—and which comes again in this piece, more in sorrow than in anger—more proud, perhaps, and more awful than ever—but with the fiercer traits of its misanthropy subdued, as it were, and quenched in the gloom of a deeper despondency. Manfred does not, like Conrad and Lara, wreak the anguish of his burning heart in the dangers and daring of desperate and predatory war—not seek to drown bitter thoughts in the tumult of perpetual contention; nor yet, like Harold, does he sweep over the peopled scenes of the earth with high disdain and aversion, and make his survey of the business, and pleasures, and studies of man an occasion for taunts and sarcasms, and the food of an unmeasurable spleen. He is fixed by the genius of the poet in the majestic solitudes of the central Alps—where, from his youth up, he has lived in proud but calm seclusion from the ways of men, conversing only with the magnif-
forms and aspects of nature by which he is surrounded, and with the Spirits of the Elements over whom he has acquired dominion, by the secret and unhallowed studies of sorcery and magic. He is averse, indeed, from mankind, and scorns the low and frivolous nature to which he belongs; but he cherishes no animosity or hostility to that feeble race. Their concerns excite no interest—their pursuits no sympathy—their joys no envy. It is irksome and vexatious for him to be crossed by them in his melancholy musings,—but he treats them with gentleness and pity; and, except when stung to impatience by too importunate an intrusion, is kind and considerate to the comforts of all around him.—This piece is properly entitled a dramatic poem—for it is merely poetical, and is not at all a drama or play in the modern acceptation of the term. It has no action, no plot, and no characters; Manfred merely muses and suffers from the beginning to the end. His distresses are the same at the opening of the scene and at its closing, and the temper in which they are borne is the same. A hunter and a priest, and some domestics, are indeed introduced, but they have no connection with the passions or sufferings on which the interest depends; and Manfred is substantially alone throughout the whole piece. He holds no communion but with the memory of the Being he had loved; and the immortal Spirits whom he evokes to reproach with his misery, and their inability to relieve it. These unearthly beings approach nearer to the character of persons of the drama—but still they are but choral accompaniments to the performance; and Manfred is, in reality, the only actor and sufferer on the scene. To delineate his character indeed—to render conceivable his feelings—is plainly the whole scope and design of the poem; and the conception and execution are, in this respect, equally admirable. It is a grand and terrific vision of a being invested with superhuman attributes, in order that he may be capable of more than human sufferings, and be sustained under them by more than human force and pride. To object to the improbability of the fiction, is to mistake the end and aim of the author. Probabilities, we apprehend, did not enter at all into his consideration; his object was, to produce effect—to exalt and dilate the character through whom he was to interest or appall us—and to raise our conception of it, by all the helps that could be derived from the majesty of nature, or the dread of supersti-
tion. It is enough, therefore, if the situation in which he has placed him is conceivable, and if the supposition of its reality enhances our emotions and kindles our imagination;—for it is Manfred only that we are required to fear, to pity, or admire. If we can once conceive of him as a real existence, and enter into the depth and the height of his pride and his sorrows, we may deal as we please with the means that have been used to furnish us with this impression, or to enable us to attain to this conception. We may regard them but as types, or metaphors, or allegories; but he is the thing to be expressed, and the feeling and the intellect of which all these are but shadows."—Jeffrey.

"In this very extraordinary poem, Lord Byron has pursued the same course as in the third canto of Childe Harold, and put out his strength upon the same objects. The action is laid among the mountains of the Alps— the characters are all, more or less, formed and swayed by the operations of the magnificent scenery around them, and every page of the poem teems with imagery and passion, though, at the same time, the mind of the poet is often overborne, as it were, by the strength and novelty of its own conceptions; and thus the composition, as a whole, is liable to many and fatal objections. But there is a still more novel exhibition of Lord Byron's powers in this remarkable drama. He has here burst into the world of spirits; and, in the wild delight with which the elements of nature seem to have inspired him, he has endeavored to embody and call up before him their ministering agents, and to employ these wild personifications, as he formerly employed the feelings and passions of man. We are not prepared to say, that, in this daring attempt, he has completely succeeded. We are inclined to think, that the plan he has conceived, and the principal character which he has wished to delineate, would require a fuller development than is here given to them; and, accordingly, a sense of imperfection, incompleteness, and confusion accompanies the mind throughout the perusal of the poem, owing either to some failure on the part of the poet, or to the inherent mystery of the subject. But though, on that account, it is difficult to comprehend distinctly the drift of the composition, it unquestionably exhibits many noble delineations of mountain scenery,—many impressive and terrible pictures of passion,—and many wild and awful visions of imaginary horror."—Professor Wilson.]
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Manfred.
Chamois Hunter.
Abbot of St. Maurice.
Manuel.
Herman.

Witch of the Alps.
Arimanes.
Nemesis.
The Destinies.
Spirits, etc.

The Scene of the Drama is amongst the Higher Alps—partly in the Castle of Manfred, and partly in the Mountains.
MANFRED.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Manfred alone.—Scene, a Gothic Gallery.—Time, Midnight.

Man. The lamp must be replenished, but even
It will not burn so long as I must watch: [then
My slumbers— if I slumber — are not sleep,
But a continuance of enduring thought,
Which then I can resist not: in my heart
There is a vigil, and these eyes but close
To look within; and yet I live, and bear
The aspect and the form of breathing men.
But grief should be the instructor of the wise;
Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.
Philosophy and science, and the springs
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,
I have essayed, and in my mind there is
A power to make these subject to itself—
But they avail not: I have done men good,
And I have met with good even among men—
But this availed not: I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
But this availed not:—Good, or evil, life,
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,
And feel the curse to have no natural fear,
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,
Or lurking love of something on the earth.—
Now to my task.—

Mysterious Agency!
Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe!*
Whom I have sought in darkness and in light—
Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell
In subtler essence—ye, to whom the tops
Of mountains inaccessible are haunts;†
And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things—
I call upon ye by the written charm
Which gives me power upon you——Rise! appear!

[A pause.

They come not yet.—Now by the voice of him
Who is the first among you—by this sign,
Which makes you tremble—by the claims of him
Who is undying,—Rise! appear!——Appear!

[A pause.

* [Original MS. “Eternal Agency!
Ye spirits of the immortal Universe!”]
† [MS. — “Of inaccessible mountains are the haunts.”]
If it be so. — Spirits of earth and air,
Ye shall not thus elude me: by a power,
Deeper than all yet urged, a tyrant-spell,
Which had its birthplace in a star condemned,
The burning wreck of a demolished world,
A wandering hell in the eternal space;
By the strong curse which is upon my soul,
The thought which is within me and around me,
I do compel ye to my will.—Appear!

[A star is seen at the darker end of the gallery: it is stationary; and a voice is heard singing.

**First Spirit.**

Mortal! to thy bidding bowed,
From my mansion in the cloud,
Which the breath of twilight builds,
And the summer's sunset gilds
With the azure and vermilion,
Which is mixed for my pavilion;*
Though thy quest may be forbidden,
On a star-beam I have ridden;
To thine adjuration bowed,
Mortal — be thy wish avowed!

**Voice of the Second Spirit.**

Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
They crowned him long ago

* [MS. — "Which is fit for my pavilion."]
On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
    With a diadem of snow.
Around his waist are forests braced,
    The Avalanche in his hand;
But ere it fall, that thundering ball
    Must pause for my command.
The Glacier's cold and restless mass
    Moves onward day by day;
But I am he who bids it pass,
    Or with its ice delay.*
I am the spirit of the place,
    Could make the mountain bow
And quiver to his caverned base—
    And what with me wouldst Thou?

* [MS. — "Or makes its ice delay."]
FOURTH SPIRIT.

Where the slumbering earthquake
Lies pillowed on fire,
And the lakes of bitumen
Rise boilingly higher;
Where the roots of the Andes
Strike deep in the earth,
As their summits to heaven
Shoot soaringly forth;
I have quitted my birthplace,
Thy bidding to bide—
Thy spell hath subdued me,
Thy will be my guide!

FIFTH SPIRIT.

I am the Rider of the wind,
The Stirrer of the storm;
The hurricane I left behind
Is yet with lightning warm;
To speed to thee, o'er shore and sea
I swept upon the blast:
The fleet I met sailed well, and yet
'Twill sink ere night be past.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

My dwelling is the shadow of the night,
Why doth thy magic torture me with light?
Seventh Spirit.
The star which rules thy destiny
Was ruled, ere earth began, by me:
It was a world as fresh and fair
As e'er revolved round sun in air;
Its course was free and regular,
Space bosomed not a lovelier star.
The hour arrived—and it became
A wandering mass of shapeless flame,
A pathless comet, and a curse,
The menace of the universe;
Still rolling on with innate force,
Without a sphere, without a course,
A bright deformity on high,
The monster of the upper sky!
And thou! beneath its influence born—
Thou worm! whom I obey and scorn—
Forced by a power (which is not thine,
And lent thee but to make thee mine)
For this brief moment to descend,
Where these weak spirits round thee bend
And parley with a thing like thee—
What wouldst thou, Child of Clay! with me?

The Seven Spirits.
Earth, ocean, air, night, mountains, winds, thy star,
Are at thy beck and bidding, Child of Clay!
Before thee at thy quest their spirits are—
What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals—say?
SCENE I.

MANFRED.

Man. Forgetfulness —
First Spirit. Of what — of whom — and why?
Man. Of that which is within me; read it there —
Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.
Spirit. We can but give thee that which we possess:
Ask of us subjects, sovereignty, the power
O'er earth, the whole, or portion, or a sign
Which shall control the elements, whereof
We are the dominators, each and all,
These shall be thine.
Man. Oblivion, self-oblivion —
Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
Ye offer so profusely what I ask?
Spirit. It is not in our essence, in our skill;
But — thou mayst die.
Man. Will death bestow it on me?
Spirit. We are immortal, and do not forget;
We are eternal; and to us the past
Is, as the future, present. Art thou answered?
Man. Ye mock me — but the power which
brought ye here
Hath made you mine. Slaves, scoff not at my will!
The mind, the spirit, the Promethean spark,
The lightning of my being, is as bright,
Pervading, and far darting as your own,
And shall not yield to yours, though cooped in clay.
Answer, or I will teach you what I am.
Spirit. We answer as we answered; our reply
Is even in thine own words.
Man. Why say ye so?

Spirit. If, as thou say'st, thine essence be as ours,

We have replied in telling thee, the thing
Mortals call death hath nought to do with us.

Man. I then have called ye from your realms in vain;

Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spirit. Say;

What we possess we offer; it is thine:
Bethink ere thou dismiss us, ask again —
Kingdom, and sway, and strength, and length of days —

Man. Accursed! what have I to do with days?
They are too long already. — Hence — begone!

Spirit. Yet pause: being here, our will would do thee service;

Bethink thee, is there then no other gift
Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?

Man. No, none: yet stay — one moment, ere we part —

I would behold ye face to face. I hear
Your voices, sweet and melancholy sounds,
As music on the waters; and I see
The steady aspect of a clear large star;
But nothing more. Approach me as ye are,
Or one, or all, in your accustomed forms.

Spirit. We have no forms, beyond the elements
Of which we are the mind and principle:
But choose a form — in that we will appear.
SCENE I. MANFRED.

Man. I have no choice; there is no form on earth Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him, Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect As unto him may seem most fitting — Come!

Seventh Spirit. (Appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure.) Behold!

Man. Oh God! if it be thus, and thou Art not a madness and a mockery, I yet might be most happy. I will clasp thee, And we again will be — [The figure vanishes. My heart is crushed! [MANFRED falls senseless.

(A Voice is heard in the Incantation which follows.)*

When the moon is on the wave, And the glow-worm in the grass, And the meteor on the grave, And the wisp on the morass;

* [These verses were written in Switzerland, in 1816, and transmitted to England for publication with the third canto of Childe Harold. "As they were written," says Moore, "immediately after the last fruitless attempt at reconciliation with lady Byron, it is needless to say who was in the poet's thoughts while he penned some of the opening stanzas."]

† ["And the wisp on the morass." Hearing, in February, 1818, of a menaced version of Manfred by some Italian, Byron wrote to his friend Mr. Hoppner — "If you have any means of communicating with the man, would you permit me to convey to him the offer of any price he may obtain, or think to obtain, for his project, provided he will throw his translation into the fire, and promise not to undertake any other of that, or any other of my things? I will send him his money immediately, on this condition." A negotiation was accordingly set on foot, and the
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answered owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turned around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,

translator, on receiving two hundred francs, delivered up his manuscript, and engaged never to translate any other of the poet's works. Of his qualifications for the task some notion may be formed from the fact, that he had turned the word "wisp," in this line, into "a bundle of straw."
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptized thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall Night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatched the snake,
For there it coiled as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;
In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathomed gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which passed for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel *
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed—now wither!

SCENE II.

The Mountain of the Jungfrau.—Time, Morning.—

Manfred alone upon the Cliffs.

Man. The spirits I have raised abandon me—
The spells which I have studied baffle me—
The remedy I recked of tortured me;
I lean no more on super-human aid,
It hath no power upon the past, and for
The future, till the past be gulfed in darkness,
It is not of my search.—My mother Earth!
And thou fresh breaking Day, and you, ye Mountains,
Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love ye.

* [MS. — "I do adjure thee to this spell."
And thou, the bright eye of the universe,
That openest over all, and unto all
Art a delight — thou shin'st not on my heart.
And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge
I stand, and on the torrent's brink beneath
Behold the tall pines dwindled as to shrubs
In dizziness of distance; when a leap,
A stir, a motion, even a breath, would bring
My breast upon its rocky bosom's bed
To rest for ever — wherefore do I pause?
I feel the impulse — yet I do not plunge;
I see the peril — yet do not recede;
And my brain reels — and yet my foot is firm:
There is a power upon me which withholds,
And makes it my fatality to live;
If it be life to wear within myself
This barrenness of spirit, and to be
My own soul's sepulchre, for I have ceased
To justify my deeds unto myself—
The last infirmity of evil. Ay,
Thou winged and cloud-cleaving minister,

[An eagle passes.

Whose happy flight is highest into heaven,
Well may'st thou swoop so near me — I should be
Thy prey, and gorge thine eaglets; thou art gone
Where the eye cannot follow thee; but thine
Yet pierces downward, onward, or above,
With a pervading vision.— Beautiful!
How beautiful is all this visible world!
How glorious in its action and itself!
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns, we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mixed essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride,
Contending with low wants and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are — what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other. Hark!

[The Shepherd's pipe in the distance is heard.
The natural music of the mountain reed —
For here the patriarchal days are not
A pastoral fable — pipes in the liberal air,
Mixed with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;*

* [The germs of this, and of several other passages in Manfred, may be found in the Journal of his Swiss tour, which Byron transmitted to his sister: e. g. “Sept. 19. — Arrived at a lake in the very bosom of the mountains; left our quadrupeds, and ascended further; came to some snow in patches, upon which my forehead's perspiration fell like rain, making the same dents as in a sieve; the chill of the wind and the snow turned me giddy, but I scrambled on and upwards. Hobhouse went to the highest pinnacle. The whole of the mountains superb. A shepherd on a steep and very high cliff playing upon his pipe; very different from Arcadia. The music of the cows' bells (for their wealth, like the patriarchs', is cattle) in the pastures, which reach to a height far above any mountains in Britain, and the shepherds shouting to us from crag to crag, and playing on their reeds where the steeps appeared almost inaccessible, with the surrounding scenery, realized all that I have ever heard or imagined of a pastoral existence — much more so than Greece or Asia Minor; for there we are a little too much of the sabre and musket order, and if there is a crook in one hand, you are sure to see a gun in the other: but this was pure and unmixed —
SCENE II.  MANFRED.  23

My soul would drink those echoes. — Oh, that I were
The viewless spirit of a lovely sound,
A living voice, a breathing harmony,
A bodiless enjoyment — born and dying
With the blest tone which made me!

Enter from below a Chamois Hunter.

Chamois Hunter.  Even so
This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travails. — What is here?
Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reached
A height which none even of our mountaineers,
Save our best hunters, may attain: his garb
Is goodly, his mien manly, and his air
Proud as a free-born peasant's, at this distance —
I will approach him nearer.

Man. (not perceiving the other).  To be thus —
Gray-haired with anguish,* like these blasted pines,
solitary, savage, and patriarchal.  As we went, they played the
'Ranz des Vaches' and other airs, by way of farewell. I have
lately repeopled my mind with nature.]

* [See the opening lines to the "Prisoner of Chillon." Speaking of Marie Antoinette, "I was struck," says Madame Campan,
"with the astonishing change misfortune had wrought upon her features: her whole head of hair had turned almost white, during
her transit from Varennes to Paris." The same thing occurred to the unfortunate Queen Mary. "With calm but undaunted
fortitude," says her historian, "she laid her neck upon the block; and while one executioner held her hands, the other, at
the second stroke, cut off her head, which, falling out of its attire, discovered her hair, already grown quite gray with cares
and sorrows." The hair of Mary's grandson, Charles I., turned quite gray, in like manner, during his stay at Carisbrooke.]
Wrecks of a single winter, barkless, branchless,*
A blighted trunk upon a cursed root,
Which but supplies a feeling to decay —
And to be thus, eternally but thus,
Having been otherwise! Now furrowed o'er
With wrinkles, ploughed by moments, not by years
And hours — all tortured into ages — hours
Which I outlive! — Ye toppling crags of ice!
Ye avalanches, whom a breath draws down
In mountainous o'erwhelming, come and crush me!
I hear ye momentarily above, beneath,
Crash with a frequent conflict; † but ye pass,
And only fall on things that still would live;
On the young flourishing forest, or the hut
And hamlet of the harmless villager.

C. Hun. The mists begin to rise from up the valley;
I'll warn him to descend, or he may chance
To lose at once his way and life together.

* ["Passed whole woods of withered pines, all withered,—trunks stripped and barkless, branches lifeless, done by a single winter: their appearance reminded me of me and my family." — Swiss Journal.]

† ["Ascended the Wengern mountain; left the horses, took off my coat, and went to the summit. On one side, our view comprised the Jungfrau, with all her glaciers; then the Dent d'Argent, shining like truth; then the Little Giant, and the Great Giant; and last, not least, the Wetterhorn. The height of the Jungfrau is thirteen thousand feet above the sea, and eleven thousand above the valley. Heard the avalanches falling every five minutes nearly." — Swiss Journal.]
SCENE II.  MANFRED.

Man. The mists boil up around the glaciers; clouds Rise curling fast beneath me, white and sulphury, Like foam from the roused ocean of deep Hell,* Whose every wave breaks on a living shore, Heaped with the damned like pebbles,—I am giddy.†

C. Hun. I must approach him cautiously; if near, A sudden step will startle him, and he Seems tottering already.

Man. Mountains have fallen, Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock Rocking their Alpine brethren; filling up The ripe green valleys with destruction's splinters; Damming the rivers with a sudden dash, Which crushed the waters into mist, and made Their fountains find another channel—thus, Thus, in its old age, did Mount Rosenberg— Why stood I not beneath it?

C. Hun. Friend! have a care, Your next step may be fatal!—for the love Of him who made you, stand not on that brink!

* [MS. — "Like foam from the roused ocean of old Hell."]
† ["The clouds rose from the opposite valley, curling up perpendicular precipices, like the foam of the ocean of hell during a spring tide—it was white and sulphury, and immeasurably deep in appearance. The side we ascended was not of so precipitous a nature; but, on arriving at the summit, we looked down upon the other side upon a boiling sea of cloud, dashing against the crags on which we stood—these crags on one side quite perpendicular. In passing the masses of snow, I made a snowball and pelted Hobhouse with it." — Swiss Journal.]
Man. (not hearing him). Such would have been
for me a fitting tomb;
My bones had then been quiet in their depth;
They had not then been strewn upon the rocks
For the wind's pastime — as thus — thus they shall be —
In this one plunge. — Farewell, ye opening heavens!
Look not upon me thus reproachfully —
Ye were not meant for me — Earth! take these atoms!

[As Manfred is in act to spring from the cliff, the Chamois Hunter seizes and retains him with a sudden grasp.]

C. Hun. Hold, madman! — though aweary of thy life,
Stain not our pure vales with thy guilty blood —
Away with me — I will not quit my hold.

Man. I am most sick at heart — nay, grasp me not —
I am all feebleness — the mountains whirl
Spinning around me — I grow blind — What art thou?

C. Hun. I'll answer that anon. — Away with me —
The clouds grow thicker — there — now lean on me —
Place your foot here — here, take this staff, and cling
A moment to that shrub — now give me your hand,
And hold fast by my girdle — softly — well —
The Chalet will be gained within an hour —
ACT II. SCENE I.  MANFRED.

Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath washed since winter.—Come, 'tis bravely
done—
You should have been a hunter.—Follow me.

[As they descend the rocks with difficulty,
the scene closes.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Cottage amongst the Bernese Alps.

MANFRED and the CHAMOIS HUNTER.

C. Hun. No, no—yet pause—thou must not yet
go forth:
Thy mind and body are alike unfit
To trust each other, for some hours, at least;
When thou art better, I will be thy guide—
But whither?

Man. It imports not: I do know
My route full well, and need no further guidance.

C. Hun. Thy garb and gait bespeak thee of high
lineage—
One of the many chiefs, whose castled crags
Look o'er the lower valleys—which of these
May call thee lord? I only know their portals;
My way of life leads me but rarely down
To bask by the huge hearths of those old halls,
Carousing with the vassals; but the paths,
Which step from out our mountains to their doors,
I know from childhood — which of these is thine?

Man. No matter.

C. Hun. Well, sir, pardon me the question,
And be of better cheer. Come, taste my wine;
'Tis of an ancient vintage; many a day
'T has thawed my veins among our glaciers, now
Let it do thus for thine — Come, pledge me fairly.

Man. Away, away! there's blood upon the brim!
Will it then never — never sink in the earth?


Man. I say 't is blood — my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
And loved each other as we should not love,
And this was shed: but still it rises up,
Coloring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not — and I shall never be.

C. Hun. Man of strange words, and some half-maddening sin,
Which makes thee people vacancy, whate'er
Thy dread and sufferance be, there's comfort yet —
The aid of holy men, and heavenly patience ——

Man. Patience and patience! Hence — that word was made
For brutes of burden, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine,—
I am not of thine order.

C. Hun. Thanks to heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatsoever thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless

Man. Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.
C. Hun. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Man. I tell thee, man! I have lived many years,
Many long years, but they are nothing now
To those which I must number: ages—ages—
Space and eternity—and consciousness,
With the fierce thirst of death—and still unslaked!

C. Hun. Why, on thy brow the seal of middle age
Hath scarce been set; I am thine elder far.

Man. Think'st thou existence doth depend on time?
It doth; but actions are our epochs: mine
Have made my days and nights imperishable,
Endless, and all alike, as sands on the shore,
Innumerable atoms; and one desert,
Barren and cold, on which the wild waves break,
But nothing rests, save carcasses and wrecks,
Rocks, and the salt-surf weeds of bitterness.

C. Hun. Alas! he's mad—but yet I must not leave him.

Man. I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distempered dream.

C. Hun. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?
**Man.** Myself, and thee—a peasant of the Alps—
Thy humble virtues, hospitable home,
And spirit patient, pious, proud, and free;
Thy self-respect, grafted on innocent thoughts;
Thy days of health, and nights of sleep; thy toils,
By danger dignified, yet guiltless; hopes
Of cheerful old age and a quiet grave,
With cross and garland over its green turf,
And thy grandchildren's love for epitaph;
This do I see—and then I look within—
It matters not—my soul was scorched already!

**C. Hun.** And would'st thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

**Man.** No, friend! I would not wrong thee, nor exchange
My lot with living being: I can bear—
However wretchedly, 'tis still to bear—
In life what others could not brook to dream,
But perish in their slumber.

**C. Hun.** And with this—
This cautious feeling for another's pain,
Canst thou be black with evil?—say not so.
Can one of gentle thoughts have wreaked revenge
Upon his enemies?

**Man.** Oh! no, no, no!
My injuries came down on those who loved me—
On those whom I best loved: I never quelled
An enemy, save in my just defence—
But my embrace was fatal.

**C. Hun.** Heaven give thee rest!
And penitence restore thee to thyself;
My prayers shall be for thee.

Man. I need them not,
But can endure thy pity. I depart —
'Tis time — farewell! — Here's gold, and thanks for thee —
No words — it is thy due. — Follow me not —
I know my path — the mountain peril's past:
And once again, I charge thee, follow not!

[Exit MANFRED.

SCENE II.

A lower Valley in the Alps. — A Cataract.*

Enter MANFRED.:
It is not noon — the sunbow's rays† still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven,
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
O'er the crag's headlong perpendicular,

* [This scene is one of the most poetical and most sweetly written in the poem. There is a still and delicious witchery in the tranquillity and seclusion of the place, and the celestial beauty of the being who reveals herself in the midst of these visible enchantments. — JEFFREY.]
† This iris is formed by the rays of the sun over the lower part of the Alpine torrents: it is exactly like a rainbow come down to pay a visit, and so close that you may walk into it: this effect lasts till noon. — ["Before ascending the mountain, went to the torrent; the sun upon it, forming a rainbow of the lower part of all colors, but principally purple and gold; the bow moving as you move: I never saw any thing like this; it is only in the sunshine." — Swiss Journal.]
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail,
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death,
As told in the Apocalypse.*  No eyes
But mine now drink this sight of loveliness;
I should be sole in this sweet solitude,
And with the Spirit of the place divide
The homage of these waters.—I will call her.

[Manfred takes some of the water into the palm
   of his hand, and flings it into the air, muttering
   the adjuration.  After a pause the Witch of
   the Alps rises beneath the arch of the sun-
   bow of the torrent.

Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
The charms of earth's least mortal daughters grow
To an unearthly stature, in an essence
Of purer elements; while the hues of youth,—
Carnationed like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rocked by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves

* ["Arrived at the foot of the Jungfrau; glaciers; torrents:
one of these torrents nine hundred feet in height of visible de-
scent; heard an avalanche fall, like thunder; glaciers enormous;
storm came on—thunder, lightning, hail; all in perfection,
and beautiful.  The torrent is in shape curving over the rock,
like the tail of a white horse streaming in the wind, such as it
might be conceived would be that of the 'pale horse' on which
Death is mounted in the Apocalypse.  It is neither mist nor
water, but a something between both; its immense height gives
it a wave or curve, a spreading here or condensation there,
wonderful and indescribable." — Swiss Journal.]
Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
The blush of earth embracing with her heaven,—
Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.*
Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glassed serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,

* [In all Lord Byron's heroes we recognize, though with infinite modifications, the same great characteristics — a high and audacious conception of the power of the mind, — an intense sensibility of passion, — an almost boundless capacity of tumultuous emotion, — a haunting admiration of the grandeur of disordered power, — and, above all, a soul-felt, blood-felt delight in beauty. Parisina is full of it to overflowing; it breathes from every page of the "Prisoner of Chillon;" but it is in "Manfred" that it riots and revels among the streams, and waterfalls, and groves, and mountains, and heavens. There is in the character of Manfred more of the self-might of Byron than in all his previous productions. He has therein brought, with wonderful power, metaphysical conceptions into forms, — and we know of no poem in which the aspect of external nature is throughout lighted up with an expression at once so beautiful, solemn, and majestic. It is the poem, next to "Childe Harold," which we should give to a foreigner to read, that he might know something of Byron. Shakspeare has given to those abstractions of human life and being, which are truth in the intellect, forms as full, clear, glowing, as the idealized forms of visible nature. The very words of Ariel picture to us his beautiful being. In "Manfred," we see glorious but immature manifestations of similar power. The poet there creates, with delight, thoughts and feelings and fancies into visible forms, that he may cling and cleave to them, and clasp them in his passion. The beautiful Witch of the Alps seems exhaled from the luminous spray of the cataract, — as if the poet's eyes, unsated with the beauty of inanimate nature, gave spectral apparitions of loveliness to feed the pure passion of the poet's soul. — Professor Wilson.]

VOL. VI.
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them — if that he
Avail him of his spells — to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.

Witch. Son of Earth!
I know thee, and the powers which give thee power;
I know thee for a man of many thoughts,
And deeds of good and ill, extreme in both,
Fatal and fated in thy sufferings.
I have expected this — what would'st thou with me?

Man. To look upon thy beauty — nothing further.*
The face of the earth hath maddened me, and I
Take refuge in her mysteries, and pierce
To the abodes of those who govern her —
But they can nothing aid me. I have sought
From them what they could not bestow, and now
I search no further.

Witch. What could be the quest
Which is not in the power of the most powerful,
The rulers of the invisible?

Man. A boon;
But why should I repeat it? 't were in vain.

Witch. I know not that; let thy lips utter it.

Man. Well, though it torture me, 't is but the same;

* [There is something exquisitely beautiful in all this passage;
and both the apparition and the dialogue are so managed, that
the sense of their improbability is swallowed up in that of their
beauty; and without actually believing that such spirits exist
or communicate themselves, we feel for the moment as if we
stood in their presence. — JEFFREY.]
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walked not with the souls of men,
Nor looked upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine,
The aim of their existence was not mine;
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger; though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh,
Nor midst the creatures of clay that girded me
Was there but one who —— but of her anon.
I said with men, and with the thoughts of men,
I held but slight communion; but instead,
My joy was in the Wilderness, to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; or to plunge
Into the torrent, and to roll along
On the swift whirl of the new breaking wave
Of river-stream, or ocean, in their flow.
In these my early strength exulted; or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look, listening, on the scattered leaves,
While Autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes, and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one,—
Hating to be so, — crossed me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again. And then I dived,
In my lone wanderings, to the caves of death,
Searching its cause in its effect; and drew
From withered bones, and skulls, and heaped up
dust,
Conclusions most forbidden. Then I passed
The nights of years in sciences untaught,
Save in the old time; and with time and toil,
And terrible ordeal, and such penance
As in itself hath power upon the air,
And spirits that do compass air and earth,
Space, and the peopled infinite, I made
Mine eyes familiar with Eternity,
Such as, before me, did the Magi, and
He who from out their fountain dwellings raised
Eros and Anteros,* at Gadara,

* The philosopher Jamblicus. The story of the raising of Eros
and Anteros may be found in his life by Eunapius. It is well told.
— ["It is reported of him," says Eunapius, "that while he and
his scholars were bathing in the hot baths of Gadara in Syria, a
dispute arising concerning the baths, he, smiling, ordered his
disciples to ask the inhabitants by what names the two lesser
springs, that were nearer and handsomer than the rest, were
called. To which the inhabitants replied, that ‘the one was
called Eros, and the other Anteros, but for what reason they
knew not.’ Upon which Jamblicus, sitting by one of the springs,
put his hand in the water, and muttering some few words to
himself, called up a fair-complexioned boy, with gold-colored
locks dangling from his back and breast, so that he looked like
one that was washing: and then, going to the other spring, and
doing as he had done before, called up another Cupid, with
darker and more dishevelled hair: upon which both the Cupids
clung about Jamblicus; but he presently sent them back to their
proper places. After this, his friends submitted their belief to
him in every thing."]
As I do thee; — and with my knowledge grew
The thirst of knowledge, and the power and joy
Of this most bright intelligence, until ——

Witch. Proceed.

Man. Oh! I but thus prolonged my words,
Boasting these idle attributes, because
As I approach the core of my heart's grief —
But to my task. I have not named to thee
Father, or mother, mistress, friend, or being,
With whom I wore the chain of human ties;
If I had such, they seemed not such to me —
Yet there was one ——

Witch. Spare not thyself — proceed.

Man. She was like me in lineaments — her eyes,
Her hair, her features, all, to the very tone
Even of her voice, they said were like to mine;
But softened all, and tempered into beauty;
She had the same lone thoughts and wanderings,
The quest of hidden knowledge, and a mind
To comprehend the universe: nor these
Alone, but with them gentler powers than mine,
Pity, and smiles, and tears — which I had not;
And tenderness — but that I had for her;
Humility — and that I never had.
Her faults were mine — her virtues were her own —
I loved her, and destroyed her!

Witch. With thy hand?

Man. Not with my hand, but heart — which broke
her heart —
It gazed on mine, and withered. I have shed
Blood, but not hers — and yet her blood was shed —
I saw — and could not stanch it.

Witch. And for this —
A being of the race thou dost despise,
The order which thine own would rise above,
Mingling with us and ours, thou dost forego
The gifts of our great knowledge, and shrink'st back
To recreant mortality —— Away!

Man. Daughter of Air! I tell thee, since that hour—
But words are breath — look on me in my sleep,
Or watch my watchings — Come and sit by me!
My solitude is solitude no more,
But peopled with the Furies; — I have gnashed
My teeth in darkness til returning morn,
Then cursed myself till sunset; — I have prayed
For madness as a blessing — 't is denied me.
I have affronted death — but in the war
Of elements the waters shrunk from me,
And fatal things passed harmless — the cold hand
Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
Back by a single hair, which would not break.
In fantasy, imagination, all
The affluence of my soul — which one day was
A Croesus in creation — I plunged deep,
But, like an ebbing wave, it dashed me back
Into the gulf of my unfathomed thought.
I plunged amidst mankind — Forgetfulness
I sought in all, save where 't is to be found,
And that I have to learn — my sciences,
My long pursued and super-human art,
Is mortal here — I dwell in my despair —
And live — and live for ever.

Witch. It may be
That I can aid thee.

Man. To do this thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Do so — in any shape — in any hour —
With any torture — so it be the last.

Witch. That is not in my province; but if thou
Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do
My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes.

Man. I will not swear — Obey! and whom? the
spirits
Whose presence I command, and be the slave
Of those who served me — Never!

Witch. Is this all?
Hast thou no gentler answer? — Yet bethink thee,
And pause ere thou rejectest.

Man. I have said it.

Witch. Enough! — I may retire then — say!

Man. Retire!

[The Witch disappears.

Man. (alone). We are the fools of time and
terror: Days
Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke —
This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness —
In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number
How few — how less than few — wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's. I have one resource
Still in my science — I can call the dead,
And ask them what it is we dread to be:
The sternest answer can but be the Grave,
And that is nothing — if they answer not —
The buried Prophet answered to the Hag
Of Endor; and the Spartan Monarch drew
From the Byzantine maid's unsleeping spirit
An answer and his destiny — he slew
That which he loved, unknowing what he slew,
And died unpardoned — though he called in aid
The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused
The Arcadian Evocators to compel
The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
Or fix her term of vengeance — she replied
In words of dubious import, but fulfilled.*

* The story of Pausanias, king of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platae, and afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedaemonians), and Cleonice, is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon; and in the Laconies of Pausanias the sophist, in his description of Greece. — [The following is the passage from Plutarch: — "It is related, that when Pausanias was at Byzantium, he cast his eyes upon a young virgin named Ciconice, of a noble family there, and insisted on having her for a mistress. The parents intimidated by his power, were under
If I had never lived, that which I love
Had still been living; had I never loved,
That which I love would still be beautiful —
Happy and giving happiness. What is she?
What is she now? — a sufferer for my sins —
A thing I dare not think upon — or nothing.
Within few hours I shall not call in vain —
Yet in this hour I dread the thing I dare:
Until this hour I never shrank to gaze
On spirit, good or evil — now I tremble,

the hard necessity of giving up their daughter. The young woman begged that the light might be taken out of his apartments, that she might go to his bed in secrecy and silence. When she entered he was asleep, and she unfortunately stumbled upon the candlestick, and threw it down. The noise waked him suddenly, and he, in his confusion, thinking it was an enemy coming to assassinate him, unsheathed a dagger that lay by him, and plunged it into the virgin's heart. After this he could never rest. Her image appeared to him every night, and with a menacing tone repeated this heroic verse,—

'Go to the fate which pride and lust prepare!'

The allies, highly incensed at this infamous action, joined Cimon to besiege him in Byzantium. But he found means to escape thence; and, as he was still haunted by the spectre, he is said to have applied to a temple at Heraclea, where the names of the dead were consulted. There he invoked the spirit of Cleonice, and entreated her pardon. She appeared, and told him 'he would soon be delivered from all his troubles, after his return to Sparta:' in which, it seems, his death was enigmatically foretold. These particulars we have from many historians." — Langhorn's Plutarch, vol. iii. p. 279. "Thus we find," adds the translator, "that it was a custom in the Pagan as well as in the Hebrew theology, to conjure up the spirits of the dead; and that the witch of Endor was not the only witch in the world."
And feel a strange cold thaw upon my heart.
But I can act even what I most abhor,
And champion human fears.—The night approaches.

[Exit.

SCENE III.

The Summit of the Jungfrau Mountain.

Enter First Destiny.

The moon is rising broad, and round, and bright;
And here on snows, where never human foot
Of common mortal trod, we nightly tread,
And leave no traces; o'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam,
Frozen in a moment* — a dead whirlpool's image:
And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
The fretwork of some earthquake — where the clouds
Pause to repose themselves in passing by —
Is sacred to our revels, or our vigils;
Here do I wait my sisters, on our way
To the Hall of Arimanies, for to-night
Is our great festival — 'tis strange they come not.

* ["Came to a morass; Hobhouse dismounted to get over
    well; I tried to pass my horse over; the horse sunk up to the
    chin, and of course he and I were in the mud together; bemired,
    but not hurt; laughed and rode on. Arrived at the Grindel-
    wald; mounted again, and rode to the higher glacier — like a
    frozen hurricane." — Swiss Journal.]
A Voice without, singing.

The Captive Usurper,
Hurled down from the throne,
Lay buried in torpor,
Forgotten and lone;
I broke through his slumbers,
I shivered his chain,
I leagued him with numbers—
He’s Tyrant again!
With the blood of a million he’ll answer my care,
With a nation’s destruction—his flight and despair.

Second Voice, without.
The ship sailed on, the ship sailed fast,
But I left not a sail, and I left not a mast;
There is not a plank of the hull or the deck,
And there is not a wretch to lament o’er his wreck;
Save one, whom I held, as he swam, by the hair,
And he was a subject well worthy my care;
A traitor on land, and a pirate at sea—
But I saved him to wreak further havoc for me!

First Destiny, answering.
The city lies sleeping:
The morn, to deplore it,
May dawn on it weeping:
Sullenly, slowly,
The black plague flew o’er it—
Thousands lie lowly;
Tens of thousands shall perish—
The living shall fly from
The sick they should cherish;
But nothing can vanquish
The touch that they die from.
Sorrow and anguish,
And evil and dread,
Envelop a nation —
The blest are the dead,
Who see not the sight
Of their own desolation —
This work of a night —
This wreck of a realm — this deed of my doing —
For ages I've done, and shall still be renewing!

Enter the Second and Third Destinies.

The Three.

Our hands contain the hearts of men,
Our footsteps are their graves;
We only give to take again
The spirits of our slaves!

First Des. Welcome! — Where's Nemesis?
Second Des. At some great work;
But what I know not, for my hands were full.
Third Des. Behold she cometh.

Enter Nemesis.

First Des. Say, where hast thou been?
My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.
Nem. I was detained repairing shattered thrones,
Marrying fools, restoring dynasties,
Avenging men upon their enemies,
And making them repent their own revenge;
Goading the wise to madness; from the dull
Shaping out oracles to rule the world
Afresh, for they were waxing out of date,
And mortals dared to ponder for themselves,
To weigh kings in the balance, and to speak
Of freedom, the forbidden fruit.—Away!
We have outstayed the hour—mount we our clouds!

[Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

The Hall of Arimanes—Arimanes on his Throne,
a Globe of Fire, surrounded by the Spirits.

Hymn of the Spirits.

Hail to our Master!—Prince of Earth and Air!
Who walks the clouds and waters—in his hand
The sceptre of the elements, which tear
Themselves to chaos at his high command!
He breatheth—and a tempest shakes the sea;
He speaketh—and the clouds reply in thunder;
He gazeth—from his glance the sunbeams flee;
He moveth—earthquakes rend the world asunder.
Beneath his footsteps the volcanoes rise;
His shadow is the Pestilence; his path
The comets herald through the crackling skies;*
And planets turn to ashes at his wrath.

* [MS.—"The comets herald through the {crackling} skies."]
To him War offers daily sacrifice;  
To him Death pays his tribute; Life is his,  
With all its infinite of agonies —  
And his the spirit of whatever is!

*Enter the Destinies and Nemesis.*

*First Des.* Glory to Arimanes! on the earth  
His power increaseth — both my sisters did  
His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty!  
*Second Des.* Glory to Arimanes! we who bow  
The necks of men, bow down before his throne!  
*Third Des.* Glory to Arimanes! we await  
His nod!  
*Nem.* Sovereign of Sovereigns! we are thine,  
And all that liveth, more or less, is ours,  
And most things wholly so; still to increase  
Our power, increasing thine, demands our care,  
And we are vigilant — Thy late commands  
Have been fulfilled to the utmost.

*Enter Manfred.*  
*A Spirit.* What is here?  
A mortal! — Thou most rash and fatal wretch,  
Bow down and worship!  
*Second Spirit.* I do know the man —  
A Magian of great power, and fearful skill!  
*Third Spirit.* Bow down and worship, slave! —  
What, know'st thou not  
Thine and our Sovereign? — Tremble, and obey!
All the Spirits. Prostrate thyself, and thy condemned clay,
Child of the Earth! or dread the worst.

Man. I know it;

And yet ye see I kneel not.

Fourth Spirit. 'Twill be taught thee.

Man. 'Tis taught already;—many a night on the earth,
On the bare ground, have I bowed down my face,
And strewed my head with ashes; I have known
The fulness of humiliation, for
I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt
To my own desolation.

Fifth Spirit. Dost thou dare
Refuse to Arimanès on his throne
What the whole earth accords, beholding not
The terror of his Glory?—Crouch! I say.

Man. Bid him bow down to that which is above him,
The overruling Infinite — the Maker
Who made him not for worship — let him kneel,
And we will kneel together.

The Spirits. Crush the worm!

Tear him in pieces!—

First Des. Hence! Avaunt!—he's mine.
Prince of the Powers invisible! This man
Is of no common order, as his port
And presence here denote; his sufferings
Have been of an immortal nature, like
Our own; his knowledge, and his powers and will,
As far as is compatible with clay,
Which clogs the ethereal essence, have been such
As clay hath seldom borne; his aspirations
Have been beyond the dwellers of the earth,
And they have only taught him what we know —
That knowledge is not happiness, and science
But an exchange of ignorance for that
Which is another kind of ignorance.
This is not all — the passions, attributes
Of earth and heaven, from which no power, nor being,
Nor breath from the worm upwards is exempt,
Have pierced his heart; and in their consequence
Made him a thing, which I, who pity not,
Yet pardon those who pity. He is mine,
And thine, it may be — be it so, or not,
No other Spirit in this region hath
A soul like his — or power upon his soul.

*Nem.* What doth he here then?

*First Des.* Let him answer that.

*Man.* Ye know what I have known; and without power
I could not be amongst ye: but there are
Powers deeper still beyond — I come in quest
Of such, to answer unto what I seek.

*Nem.* What would'st thou?

*Man.* Thou canst not reply to me.

Call up the dead — my question is for them.

*Nem.* Great Arimanès, doth thy will avouch
The wishes of this mortal?
SCENE IV.

MANFRED.

Ari. Yea.
Nem. Whom' would'st thou
Uncharnel?

Man. One without a tomb — call up
Astarte.

NEMESIS.
Shadow! or Spirit!
Whatever thou art,
Which still doth inherit
The whole or a part
Of the form of thy birth,
Of the mould of thy clay,
Which returned to the earth,
Re-appear to the day!
Bear what thou borest,
The heart and the form,
And the aspect thou worrest
Redeem from the worm.
Appear! — Appear! — Appear!
Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[The Phantom of Astarte rises and stands
in the midst.

Man. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her
check;
But now I see it is no living hue
But a strange hectic — like the unnatural red
Which Autumn plants upon the perished leaf.
It is the same! Oh, God! that I should dread
To look upon the same — Astarte! — No,

vol. vi. 4
I cannot speak to her — but bid her speak —
Forgive me or condemn me.

**Nemesis.**

By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthralled thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken,
Or those who have called thee!

*Man.*

She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answered.

*Nem.* My power extends no further. Prince of air!
It rests with thee alone — command her voice.

*Ari.* Spirit — obey this sceptre!

*Nem.* Silent still!
She is not of our order, but belongs
To the other powers. Mortal! thy quest is vain,
And we are baffled also.

*Man.*

Hear me, hear me —
Astarte! my beloved! speak to me:
I have so much endured — so much endure —
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more
Than I am changed for thee. Thou lovedst me
Too much, as I loved thee: we were not made
To torture thus each other, though it were
The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.
Say that thou loath'st me not — that I do bear
This punishment for both — that thou wilt be
One of the blessed — and that I shall die;
SCENE IV.  MANFRED.

For hitherto all hateful things conspire
To bind me in existence — in a life
Which makes me shrink from immortality —
A future like the past. I cannot rest.
I know not what I ask, nor what I seek:
I feel but what thou art — and what I am;
And I would hear yet once before I perish
The voice which was my music — Speak to me!
For I have called on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hushed boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly echoed name,
Which answered me — many things answered me —
Spirits and men — but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatched the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wandered o'er the earth,
And never found thy likeness — Speak to me!
Look on the fiends around — they feel for me:
I fear them not, and feel for thee alone —
Speak to me! though it be in wrath; — but say —
I reck not what — but let me hear thee once —
This once — once more!

_Phantom of Astarte._ Manfred!

_Man._

_Say on, say on —_

I live but in the sound — it is thy voice!

_Phantom._ Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.

_Farewell!_

_Man._ Yet one word more — am I forgiven?
Phan. Farewell!

Man. Say, shall we meet again?

Phan. Farewell!

Man. One word for mercy! Say, thou lovest me.

Phan. Manfred!

[The Spirit of Astarte disappears.*

Nem. She's gone, and will not be recalled; Her words will be fulfilled. Return to the earth.

A Spirit. He is convulsed—This is to be a mortal
And seek the things beyond mortality.

Another Spirit. Yet, see, he mastereth himself, and makes
His torture tributary to his will.

* [Over this fine drama, a moral feeling hangs like a sombre thunder cloud. No other guilt but that so darkly shadowed out could have furnished so dreadful an illustration of the hideous aberrations of human nature, however noble and majestic, when left a prey to its desires, its passions, and its imagination. The beauty, at one time so innocently adored, is at last soiled, profaned, and violated. Affection, love, guilt, horror, remorse, and death, come in terrible succession, yet all darkly linked together. We think of Astarte as young, beautiful, innocent—guilty—lost—murdered—buried—judged—pardoned; but still, in her permitted visit to earth, speaking in a voice of sorrow, and with a countenance yet pale with mortal trouble. We had but a glimpse of her in her beauty and innocence; but, at last, she rises up before us in all the mortal silence of a ghost, with fixed, glazed, and passionless eyes, revealing death, judgment, and eternity. The moral breathes and burns in every word,—in sadness, misery, insanity, desolation, and death. The work is 'instinct with spirit,'—and in the agony and distraction, and all its dimly imagined causes, we behold, though broken up, confused, and shattered, the elements of a purer existence.—PROFESSOR WILSON.]
ACT III. SCENE I. MANFRED.

Had he been one of us, he would have made
An awful spirit.

_Nem._ Hast thou further question
Of our great sovereign, or his worshippers?

_Mon._ None.

_Nem._ Then for a time farewell.

_Mon._ We meet then! Where? On the earth?—
Even as thou wilt: and for the grace accorded
I now depart a debtor. Fare ye well!

[Exit Manfred.

(Scene closes.)

ACT III.*

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Castle of Manfred.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

_Man._ What is the hour?

_Her._ It wants but one till sunset,
And promises a lovely twilight.

* [The third Act, as originally written, being shown to Mr. Gifford, he expressed his unfavorable opinion of it very distinctly; and Mr. Murray transmitted this to Byron. The result is told in the following extracts from his letters:—

"Venice, April 14, 1817.—The third Act is certainly d—d bad, and, like the Archbishop of Grenada's homily (which savored of the palsy), has the dregs of my fever, during which it was written. It must on no account be published in its present state. I will try and reform it, or rewrite it altogether; but the impulse
Man. Say,
Are all things so disposed of in the tower
As I directed?

Her. All, my lord, are ready:
Here is the key and casket.

Man. It is well:
Thou may'st retire. [Exit Herman.

Man. (alone). There is a calm upon me —
Inexplicable stillness! which till now
Did not belong to what I knew of life.
If that I did not know philosophy
To be of all our vanities the motliest,
The merest word that ever fooled the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem

is gone, and I have no chance of making any thing out of it.
The speech of Manfred to the Sun is the only part of this Act I
thought good myself; the rest is certainly as bad as bad can be,
and I wonder what the devil possessed me. I am very glad,
indeed, that you sent me Mr. Gifford's opinion without deduction.
Do you suppose me such a booby as not to be very much obliged
to him? or that I was not, and am not, convinced and convicted
in my conscience of this same overt act of nonsense? I shall try
at it again; in the mean time, lay it upon the shelf—the whole
Drama I mean. — Recollect not to publish, upon pain of I know
not what, until I have tried again at the third act. I am not
sure that I shall try, and still less that I shall succeed if I do."

"Rome, May 5. — I have rewritten the greater part, and re-
turned what is not altered in the proof you sent me. The Abbot
is become a good man, and the Spirits are brought in at the death.
You will find, I think, some good poetry in this new Act, here
and there; and if so, print it, without sending me further proofs,
under Mr. Gifford's correction, if he will have the goodness to
overlook it."]
The golden secret, the sought "Kalon," found,  
And seated in my soul. It will not last,  
But it is well to have known it, though but once:  
It hath enlarged my thoughts with a new sense,  
And I within my tablets would note down  
That there is such a feeling. Who is there?

_Reënter HERMAN._

_Her._ My lord, the abbot of St. Maurice craves  
To greet your presence.

_Enter the ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE._

_Abbot._ Peace be with Count Manfred!  
_Ma{n._ Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;  
Thy presence honors them, and blesseth those  
Who dwell within them.  
_Abbot._ Would it were so, Count!—  
But I would fain confer with thee alone.  
_Ma{n._ Herman, retire.— What would my rever-  
end guest?  
_Abbot._ Thus, without prelude:— Age and zeal,  
my office,  
And good intent, must plead my privilege;  
Our near, though not acquainted neighborhood,  
May also be my herald. Rumors strange,  
And of unholy nature, are abroad,  
And busy with thy name; a noble name  
For centuries: may he who bears it now  
Transmit it unimpaired!

_Ma{n._ Proceed,— I listen.
Abbot. 'Tis said thou holdest converse with the things
Which are forbidden to the search of man;
That with the dwellers of the dark abodes,
The many evil and unheavenly spirits
Which walk the valley of the shade of death,
Thou communest. I know that with mankind,
Thy fellows in creation, thou dost rarely
Exchange thy thoughts, and that thy solitude
Is as an anchorite's, were it but holy.

Man. And what are they who do avouch these things?

Abbot. My pious brethren—the scared peasantry—
Even thy own vassals—who do look on thee
With most unquiet eyes. Thy life's in peril.

Man. Take it.

Abbot. I come to save, and not destroy—I
Would not pry into thy secret soul;
But if these things be sooth, there still is time
For penitence and pity: reconcile thee [heaven.
With the true church, and through the church to

Man. I hear thee. This is my reply: whate'er
I may have been, or am, doth rest between
Heaven and myself. — I shall not choose a mortal
To be my mediator. Have I sinned
Against your ordinances? prove and punish!*

* [Thus far the text stands as originally written: this was the sequel of the scene as given in the first MS. —

"Abbot. Then, hear and tremble! For the headstrong wretch
Who in the mail of innate hardihood
Abbot. My son! I did not speak of punishment, 
But penitence and pardon; — with thyself 
The choice of such remains — and for the last,

Would shield himself, and battle for his sins,
There is the stake on earth, and beyond earth eternal ——

Man. Charity, most reverend father,
Becomes thy lips so much more than this menace,
That I would call thee back to it: but say,
What wouldst thou with me?

Abbot. It may be there are
Things that would shake thee — but I keep them back,
And give thee till to-morrow to repent,
Then if thou dost not all devote thyself
To penance, and with gift of all thy lands
To the monastery ——

Man. I understand thee, — well!

Abbot. Expect no mercy; I have warned thee.

Man. (opening the casket). Stop —
There is a gift for thee within this casket.

[Manfred opens the casket, strikes a light, and burns some incense.

Ho! Ashtaroth!

The Demon Ashtaroth appears, singing as follows: —

The raven sits
On the raven-stone,
And his black wing flits
O'er the milk-white bone;
To and fro, as the night-winds blow,
The carcass of the assassin swings;
And there alone, on the raven-stone,†
The raven flaps his dusky wings.

The fetters creak — and his ebon beak
Croaks to the close of the hollow sound;
And this is the tune, by the light of the moon,
To which the witches dance their round —

† "Raven-stone (Kabenstein), a translation of the German word for the gibbet, which in Germany and Switzerland is permanent, and made of stone."
Our institutions and our strong belief
Have given me power to smooth the path from sin
To higher hope and better thoughts; the first
I leave to heaven,—"Vengeance is mine alone!"

Merrily, merrily, cheerily, cheerily,
Merrily, speeds the ball:
The dead in their shrouds, and the demons in clouds,
Flock to the witches' carnival.

Abbot. I fear thee not—hence—hence—
Avault thee, evil one!—help, ho! without there!
Man. Convey this man to the Shreckhorn—to its peak—
To its extremest peak—watch with him there
From now till sunrise; let him gaze, and know
He ne'er again will be so near to heaven.
But harm him not; and, when the morrow breaks,
Set him down safe in his cell—away with him!
Ash. Had I not better bring his brethren too,
Convent and all, to bear him company?
Man. No, this will serve for the present. Take him up.
Ash. Come, friar! now an exorcism or two,
And we shall fly the lighter.

Ashtaroth disappears with the Abbot, singing as follows:—

A prodigal son, and a maid undone,
And a widow rewedded within the year;
And a worldly monk, and a pregnant nun,
Are things which every day appear.

Manfred alone.

Man. Why would this fool break in on me, and force
My art to pranks fantastical?—no matter,
It was not of my seeking. My heart sickens,
And weighs a fixed foreboding on my soul:
But it is calm—calm as a sullen sea
After the hurricane; the winds are still,
But the cold waves swell high and heavily,
And there is danger in them. Such a rest
Is no repose. My life hath been a combat,
And every thought a wound, till I am scarred
In the immortal part of me.—What now?"
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Man. Old man! there is no power in holy men,
Nor charm in prayer—nor purifying form
Of penitence—nor outward look—nor fast—
Nor agony—nor, greater than all these,
The innate tortures of that deep despair,
Which is remorse without the fear of hell,
But all in all sufficient to itself
Would make a hell of heaven—can exorcise
From out the unbounded spirit the quick sense
Of its own sins, wrongs, sufferance, and revenge
Upon itself; there is no future pang
Can deal that justice on the self-condemned
He deals on his own soul.

Abbot. All this is well;
For this will pass away, and be succeeded
By an auspicious hope, which shall look up
With calm assurance to that blessed place,
Which all who seek may win, whatever be
Their earthly errors, so they be atoned:
And the commencement of atonement is
The sense of its necessity.—Say on—
And all our church can teach thee shall be taught;
And all we can absolve thee shall be pardoned.

Man. When Rome's sixth emperor* was near
his last,

* [Otho, being defeated in a general engagement near Brixel-
lum, stabbed himself. Plutarch says, that, though he lived full
as badly as Nero, his last moments were those of a philosopher.
The victim of a self-inflicted wound,
To shun the torments of a public death *
From senates once his slaves, a certain soldier,
With show of loyal pity, would have stanched
The gushing throat with his officious robe;
The dying Roman thrust him back, and said —
Some empire still in his expiring glance,
"It is too late — is this fidelity?"

Abbot. And what of this?

Man. I answer with the Roman —
"It is too late!"

Abbot. It never can be so,
To reconcile thyself with thy own soul,
And thy own soul with heaven. Hast thou no hope?
'Tis strange — even those who do despair above,
Yet shape themselves some fantasy on earth,
To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

Man. Ay — father! I have had those earthly visions
And noble aspirations in my youth,
To make my own the mind of other men,
The enlightener of nations; and to rise
I knew not whither — it might be to fall;
But fall, even as the mountain-cataract,

He comforted his soldiers who lamented his fortune, and expressed his concern for their safety, when they solicited to pay him the last friendly offices.)

* MS. —

"To shun {not loss of life, but} the torments of a public death.
Choose between them."
I.

Which having leaped from its more dazzling height,
Even in the foaming strength of its abyss,
Which casts up misty columns that become Clouds raining from the reascended skies,)
Lies low but mighty still. — But this is past,
My thoughts mistook themselves.

*Abbot.* And wherefore so?

*Man.* I could not tame my nature down; for he Must serve who fain would sway — and soothe —
and sue —
And watch all time — and pry into all place —
And be a living lie — who would become A mighty thing amongst the mean, and such The mass are; I disdained to mingle with A herd, though to be leader — and of wolves. The lion is alone, and so am I.

*Abbot.* And why not live and act with other men?

*Man.* Because my nature was averse from life;
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,
But find a desolation: — like the wind,
The red-hot breath of the most lone Simoom, Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast, And revels o'er their wild and arid waves, And seeketh not, so that it is not sought, But being met is deadly; such hath been The course of my existence; but there came Things in my path which are no more.

*Abbot.* Alas!

I 'gin to fear that thou art past all aid
From me and from my calling; yet so young,
I still would——

Man. Look on me! there is an order
Of mortals on the earth, who do become
Old in their youth, and die ere middle age,
Without the violence of warlike death;
Some perishing of pleasure — some of study —
Some worn with toil — some of mere weariness —
Some of disease — and some insanity — *
And some of withered, or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are numbered in the lists of Fate,
Taking all shapes, and bearing many names.
Look upon me! for even of all these things
Have I partaken; and of all these things,
One were enough; then wonder not that I
Am what I am, but that I ever was,
Or having been, that I am still on earth.

Abbot. Yet, hear me still——

* [This speech has been quoted in more than one of the sketches of the poet's own life. Much earlier, when only twenty-three years of age, he had thus prophesied: — "It seems as if I were to experience in my youth the greatest misery of old age. My friends fall around me, and I shall be left a lonely tree before I am withered. Other men can always take refuge in their families — I have no resource but my own reflections, and they present no prospect, here or hereafter, except the selfish satisfaction of surviving my betters. I am, indeed, very wretched. My days are listless, and my nights restless. I have very seldom any society; and when I have, I run out of it. I don't know that I sha'n't end with insanity." — Byron's Letters, 1811.]
SCENE I.

Man. Old man! I do respect
Thine order, and revere thine years; I deem
Thy purpose pious, but it is in vain:
Think me not churlish; I would spare thyself,
Far more than me, in shunning at this time
All further colloquy — and so — farewell.*

[Exit Manfred.

Abbot. This should have been a noble creature:†
Hath all the energy which would have made [he

* ["Of the immortality of the soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt — if we attend for a moment to the action of mind. It is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it — but reflection has taught me better. How far our future state will be individual; or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our present existence, is another question; but that the mind is eternal seems as probable as that the body is not so." — Byron's Diary, 1821. — "I have no wish to reject Christianity without investigation; on the contrary, I am very desirous of believing; for I have no happiness in my present unsettled notions on religion." — Byron's Conversations with Kennedy, 1823.]

† [There are three only, even among the great poets of modern times, who have chosen to depict, in their full shape and vigor, those agonies to which great and meditative intellects are, in the present progress of human history, exposed by the eternal recurrence of a deep and discontented scepticism. But there is only one who has dared to represent himself as the victim of those nameless and undefinable sufferings. Goethe chose for his doubts and his darkness the terrible disguise of the mysterious Faustus. Schiller, with still greater boldness, planted the same anguish in the restless, haughty, and heroic bosom of Wallenstein. But Byron has sought no external symbol in which to embody the inquietudes of his soul. He takes the world, and all that it inherit, for his arena and his spectators; and he displays himself before their gaze, wrestling unceasingly and ineffectually with the demon that torments him. At times, there is something mournful and depressing in his scepticism; but oftener it is of a
A goodly frame of glorious elements,
Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
It is an awful chaos — light and darkness —
And mind and dust — and passions and pure thoughts
Mixed, and contending without end or order,
All dormant or destructive: he will perish,
And yet he must not; I will try once more,
For such are worth redemption; and my duty
Is to dare all things for a righteous end.
I'll follow him — but cautiously, though surely.

[Exit Abbot.]

SCENE II.

Another Chamber.

MANFRED and HERMAN.

Her. My lord, you bade me wait on you at sunset:
He sinks behind the mountain.

high and solemn character, approaching to the very verge of a
confiding faith. Whatever the poet may believe, we, his read-
ers, always feel ourselves too much ennobled and elevated, even
by his melancholy, not to be confirmed in our own belief by the
very doubts so majestically conceived and uttered. His scepti-
cism, if it ever approaches to a creed, carries with it its refutation
in its grandeur. There is neither philosophy nor religion in
those bitter and savage taunts which have been cruelly thrown
out, from many quarters, against those moods of mind which are
involuntary, and will not pass away; the shadows and spectres
which still haunt his imagination may once have disturbed our
own; — through his gloom there are frequent flashes of illumina-
tion; — and the sublime sadness which to him is breathed from
the mysteries of mortal existence, is always joined with a long-
ing after immortality, and expressed in language that is itself
divine. — Professor Wilson.]
Man. Doth he so?
I will look on him.

[Manfred advances to the Window of the Hall.

Glorious Orb! the idol
Of early nature, and the vigorous race
Of undiseased mankind, the giant sons *
Of the embrace of angels, with a sex
More beautiful than they, which did draw down
The erring spirits who can ne'er return.—
Most glorious orb! that wert a worship, ere
The mystery of thy making was revealed!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladdened, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they poured
Themselves in orisons! Thou material God!
And representative of the Unknown—
Who chose thee for his shadow! Thou chief star!
Centre of many stars! which mak'st our earth
Endurable, and temperest the hues
And hearts of all who walk within thy rays!
Sire of the seasons! Monarch of the climes,
And those who dwell in them! for near or far,
Our inborn spirits have a tint of thee
Even as our outward aspects;—thou dost rise,
And shine, and set in glory. Fare thee well!

* "And it came to pass, that the Sons of God saw the daugh-
ters of men, that they were fair," etc.—"There were giants in
the earth in those days; and also after that, when the Sons of
God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children
to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men
of renown."—Genesis, ch. vi. verses 2 and 4.
I ne'er shall see thee more. As my first glance
Of love and wonder was for thee, then take
My latest look: thou wilt not beam on one
To whom the gifts of life and warmth have been
Of a more fatal nature.* He is gone:
I follow. [Exit Manfred.

SCENE III.
The Mountains — The Castle of Manfred at some
distance — A Terrace before a Tower. — Time,
Twilight.

Herman, Manuel, and other Dependants of
Manfred.

Her. 'Tis strange enough; night after night, for
years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness. I have been within it, —
So have we all been oft-times; but from it,
Or its contents, it were impossible
To draw conclusions absolute, of aught
His studies tend to. To be sure, there is
One chamber where none enter: I would give
The fee of what I have to come these three years,
To pore upon its mysteries.

Manuel. 'T were dangerous;
Content thyself with what thou know'st already.

* ['Pray, was Manfred's speech to the Sun still retained in
Act third? I hope so: it was one of the best in the thing, and
better than the Coliseum.' — Byron's Letters, 1817.]
SCENE III. MANFRED.

_Her._ Ah! Manuel! thou art elderly and wise,
And couldst say much; thou hast dwelt within the castle —
How many years is 't?

_Manuel._ Ere Count Manfred's birth,
I served his father, whom he nought resembles.

_Her._ There be more sons in like predicament.
But wherein do they differ?

_Manuel._ I speak not
Of features or of form, but mind and habits;
Count Sigismund was proud, — but gay and free, —
A warrior and a reveller; he dwelt not
With books and solitude, nor made the night
A gloomy vigil, but a festal time,
Merrier than day; he did not walk the rocks
And forests like a wolf, nor turn aside
From men and their delights.

_Her._ Beshrew the hour,
But those were jocund times! I would that such
Would visit the old walls again; they look
As if they had forgotten them.

_Manuel._ These walls
Must change their chieftain first. Oh! I have seen
Some strange things in them, Herman.*

_Her._ Come, be friendly;
Relate me some to while away our watch:
I've heard thee darkly speak of an event
Which happened hereabouts, by this same tower.

* [MS. — "Some strange things in these few years."]
Manuel. That was a night indeed! I do remember 'Twas twilight, as it may be now, and such Another evening; — yon red cloud, which rests On Eigher's pinnacle, so rested then, — So like that it might be the same; the wind Was faint and gusty, and the mountain snows Began to glitter with the climbing moon; Count Manfred was, as now, within his tower, — How occupied, we knew not, but with him The sole companion of his wanderings And watchings — her, whom of all earthly things That lived, the only thing he seemed to love, — As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do, The lady Astarte, his —— 

Hush! who comes here?

* |The remainder of the third Act, in its original shape, ran thus:—

   Her. Look — look — the tower —
The tower's on fire. Oh, heavens and earth! what sound,
What dreadful sound is that? [A crash like thunder.
Manuel. Help, help, there! — to the rescue of the Count, —
The Count's in danger, — what ho! there! approach!
[The Servants, Vassals, and Peasantry approach, stupefied with terror.
If there be any of you who have heart
And love of human kind, and will to aid
Those in distress — pause not — but follow me —
The portal's open, follow. [Manuel goes in.

Her. Come — who follows?
What, none of ye? — ye recreants! shiver then
Without. I will not see old Manuel risk
His few remaining years unaided. [Herman goes in

Vassal. Hark! —
No — all is silent — not a breath — the flame
Enter the Abbot.

Abbot. Where is your master?

Her. Yonder in the tower.

Abbot. I must speak with him.

Manuel. 'Tis impossible; He is most private, and must not be thus Intruded on.

Which shot forth such a blaze is also gone: What may this mean? Let's enter!

Peasant. Faith, not I, —

Not that, if one, or two, or more, will join, I then will stay behind; but, for my part, I do not see precisely to what end.

Vassal. Cease your vain prating — come.

Manuel (speaking within). 'Tis all in vain —

He's dead.

Her. (within). Not so — even now methought he moved; But it is dark — so bear him gently out — Softly — how cold he is! take care of his temples In winding down the staircase.

Reenter Manuel and Herman, bearing Manfred in their Arms.

Manuel. Hie to the castle, some of ye, and bring What aid you can. Saddle the barb, and speed For the leech to the city — quick! some water there!

Her. His cheek is black — but there is a faint beat Still lingering about the heart. Some water.

[They sprinkle Manfred with water: after a pause, he gives some signs of life.

Manuel. He seems to strive to speak — come — cheerly, Count! He moves his lips — canst hear him? I am old, And cannot catch faint sounds.

[Herman inclining his head and listening.

Her. I hear a word

Or two — but indistinctly — what is next? What's to be done? let's bear him to the castle.

[Manfred motions with his hand not to remove him.

Manuel. He disapproves — and 't were of no avail —

He changes rapidly.

Her. 'T will soon be over.]
Abbot. Upon myself I take
The forfeit of my fault, if fault there be —
But I must see him.
Her. Thou hast seen him once
This eve already.
Abbot. Herman! I command thee,
Knock, and apprise the Count of my approach.
Her. We dare not.
Abbot. Then it seems I must be herald
Of my own purpose.
Manuel. Reverend father, stop —
I pray you pause.
Abbot. Why so?
Manuel. But step this way,
And I will tell you further. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. *

Interior of the Tower.

Manfred alone.

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains. — Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man; and in her starry shade

* [The opening of this scene is, perhaps, the finest passage in
the drama; and its solemn, calm, and majestic character throws
an air of grandeur over the catastrophe, which was in danger
of appearing extravagant, and somewhat too much in the style
of the "Devil and Dr. Faustus." — Wilson.]
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learned the language of another world.
I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering, — upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum’s wall,*
Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome;
The trees which grew along the broken arches
Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
The watchdog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsars’ palace came
The owl’s long cry, and, interruptedly,
Of distant sentinels the fitful song
Begun and died upon the gentle wind.
Some cypresses beyond the time-worn breach
Appeared to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
Within a bowshot — Where the Cæsars dwelt,
And dwell the tuneless birds of night,
A grove which springs through levelled battlements,
And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
Ivy usurps the laurel’s place of growth; —
But the gladiators’ bloody Circus stands,

* ["Drove at midnight to see the Coliseum by moonlight: but what can I say of the Coliseum? It must be seen; to de-
scribe it I should have thought impossible, if I had not read ‘Man-
fred.’ To see it aright, as the Poet of the North tells us of the
fair Melrose, one ‘must see it by the pale moonlight.’ The still-
ness of night, the whispering echoes, the moonlight shadows, and
the awful grandeur of the impending ruins, form a scene of ro-
mantic sublimity, such as Byron alone could describe as it de-
serves. His description is the very thing itself.” — Matthews's
Diary of an Invalid.]
A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
While Caesar's chambers, and the Augustan halls,
Grovel on earth in indistinct decay.—
And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light,
Which softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation, and filled up,
As 't were anew, the gaps of centuries;
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, till the place
Became religion, and the heart ran o' er
With silent worship of the great of old! —
The dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns.—
'T was such a night!
'T is strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order.

Enter the Abbot.

Abbot.                      My good lord!
I crave a second grace for this approach;
But yet let not my humble zeal offend
By its abruptness — all it hath of ill
Recoils on me; its good in the effect
May light upon your head — could I say heart —
Could I touch that, with words or prayers, I should
Recall a noble spirit which hath wandered;
But is not yet all lost.
Man. Thou know'st me not; My days are numbered, and my deeds recorded: Retire, or 'twill be dangerous—Away!

Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace me?

Man. Not I;

I simply tell thee peril is at hand, And would preserve thee.

Abbot. What dost thou mean?

Man. Look there!

What dost thou see?

Abbot. Nothing.

Man. Look there, I say,

And steadfastly;—now tell me what thou seest?

Abbot. That which should shake me,—but I fear it not—

I see a dusk and awful figure rise, Like an infernal god, from out the earth; His face wrapt in a mantle, and his form Robed as with angry clouds: he stands between Thyself and me—but I do fear him not.

Man. Thou hast no cause—he shall not harm thee—but

His sight may shock thine old limbs into palsy. I say to thee—Retire!

Abbot. And I reply—

Never—till I have battled with this fiend:—

What doth he here?

Man. Why—ay—what doth he here?—

I did not send for him,—he is unbidden.
Abbot. Alas! lost mortal! what with guests like these
Hast thou to do? I tremble for thy sake:
Why doth he gaze on thee, and thou on him?
Ah! he unveils his aspect: on his brow
The thunder-scars are graven; from his eye
Glares forth the immortality of hell—
Avaunt!—
Man. Pronounce — what is thy mission?
Spirit. Come!
Abbot. What art thou, unknown being? an-
swer! — speak!
Spirit. The genius of this mortal. — Come! 'tis
time.
Man. I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here?
Spirit. Thou 'lt know anon — Come! come!
Man. I have commanded
Things of an essence greater far than thine,
And striven with thy masters. Get thee hence!
Spirit. Mortal! thine hour is come — Away!
I say.
Man. I knew, and know my hour is come, but not
To render up my soul to such as thee:
Away! I'll die as I have lived — alone.
Spirit. Then I must summon up my brethren.—
Rise! [Other Spirits rise up.
Abbot. Avaunt! ye evil ones! — Avaunt! I say,—
Ye have no power where piety hath power,
And I do charge ye in the name——
SCENE IV.  MANFRED.  75

_Spirit._  Old man!
We know ourselves, our mission, and thine order;
Waste not thy holy words on idle uses,
It were in vain: this man is forfeited.
Once more I summon him—Away! away!

_Mann._ I do defy ye,—though I feel my soul
Is ebbing from me, yet I do defy ye;
Nor will I hence, while I have earthly breath
To breathe my scorn upon ye—earthly strength
To wrestle, though with spirits; what ye take
Shall be ta'en limb by limb.

_Spirit._ Reluctant mortal!
Is this the Magian who would so pervade
The world invisible, and make himself
Almost our equal?—Can it be that thou
Art thus in love with life? the very life
Which made thee wretched!

_Mann._ Thou false fiend, thou liest!
My life is in its last hour,—_that_ I know,
Nor would redeem a moment of that hour;
I do not combat against death, but thee
And thy surrounding angels; my past power
Was purchased by no compact with thy crew,
But by superior science—penance—daring—
And length of watching—strength of mind—and
skill
In knowledge of our fathers—when the earth
Saw men and spirits walking side by side,
And gave ye no supremacy: I stand
Upon my strength — I do defy — deny —
Spurn back, and scorn ye! —

_Spirit._  
But thy many crimes
Have made thee —

_Men._  
What are they to such as thee?
Must crimes be punished but by other crimes,
And greater criminals? — Back to thy hell!
Thou hast no power upon me, _that_ I feel;
Thou never shalt possess me, _that_ I know:
What I have done is done; I bear within
A torture which could nothing gain from thine:
The mind which is immortal makes itself
Requital for its good or evil thoughts —
Is its own origin of ill and end —
And its own place and time — its innate sense,
When stripped of this mortality, derives
No color from the fleeting things without;
But is absorbed in sufferance or in joy,
Born from the knowledge of its own desert.
_Thou_ didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me;
I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey —
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. — Back, ye baffled fiends!
The hand of death is on me — but not yours!

_[The Demons disappear._

_Abbot._ Alas! how pale thou art — thy lips are white —
And thy breast heaves — and in thy gasping throat
The accents rattle — Give thy prayers to Heaven —
Pray — albeit but in thought, — but die not thus.

Man. 'Tis over — my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well —
Give me thy hand.

Abbot. Cold — cold — even to the heart —
But yet one prayer — Alas! how fares it with thee?

Man. Old man! 'tis not so difficult to die.*

[Manfred expires.

Abbot. He's gone — his soul hath ta'en its earth-
less flight —
Whither? I dread to think — but he is gone.†

* [In the first edition, this line was accidentally left out. On
discovering the omission, Byron wrote to Mr. Murray — "You
have destroyed the whole effect and moral of the poem, by omit-
ting the last line of Manfred's speaking;"]

† [In June, 1820, Byron thus writes to his publisher: — "In-
closed is something which will interest you; to wit, the opinion
of the greatest man in Germany — perhaps in Europe — upon
one of the great men of your advertisements (all 'famous hands,'
as Jacob Tonson used to say of his ragamuffins) — in short, a
critic of Goethe's upon Manfred. There is the original, an Eng-
lisht translation, and an Italian one: keep them all in your ar-
chives; for the opinions of such a man as Goethe, whether
favorable or not, are always interesting — and this is more so,
as favorable. His Faust I never read, for I don't know German;
but Matthew Monk Lewis, in 1816, at Coligny, translated most
of it to me vivá voce, and I was naturally much struck with it:
but it was the Steinbach and the Jungfrau, and something else,
much more than Faustus, that made me write Manfred. The
first scene, however, and that of Faustus are very similar."

The following is the extract from Goethe's Kunst und Alther-
thum (i. e. Art and Antiquity) which the above letter inclosed: —
"Byron's tragedy, 'Manfred,' was to me a wonderful phenomenon, and one that closely touched me. This singularly intellectual poet has taken my Faustus to himself, and extracted from it the strongest nourishment for his hypochondriac humor. He has made use of the impelling principles in his own way, for his own purposes, so that no one of them remains the same; and it is particularly on this account that I cannot enough admire his genius. The whole is in this way so completely formed anew, that it would be an interesting task for the critic to point out, not only the alterations he has made, but their degree of resemblance with, or dissimilarity to, the original: in the course of which I cannot deny, that the gloomy heat of an unbounded and exuberant despair becomes at last oppressive to us. Yet is the dissatisfaction we feel always connected with esteem and admiration.

"We find thus, in this tragedy, the quintessence of the most astonishing talent born to be its own tormentor. The character of Lord Byron's life and poetry hardly permits a just and equitable appreciation. He has often enough confessed what it is that torments him. He has repeatedly portrayed it; and scarcely any one feels compassion for this intolerable suffering, over which he is ever laboriously ruminating. There are, properly speaking, two females whose phantoms for ever haunt him, and which, in this piece also, perform principal parts— one under the name of Astarte, the other without form or actual presence, and merely a voice. Of the horrid occurrence which took place with the former, the following is related:— When a bold and enterprising young man, he won the affections of a Florentine lady.* Her husband discovered the amour, and

* ['"The grave confidence with which the venerable critic traces the fancies of his brother poet to real persons and events, making no difficulty even of a double murder at Florence to furnish grounds for his theory, affords an amusing instance of the disposition so prevalent throughout Europe, to picture Byron as a man of marvels and mysteries, as well in his life as his poetry. To these exaggerated, or wholly false notions of him, the numerous fictions palmed upon the world of his romantic tours and wonderful adventures, in places he never saw, and with persons that never existed, have, no doubt, considerably contributed; and the consequence is, so utterly out of truth and nature are the represen-
murdered his wife; but the murderer was the same night found dead in the street, and there was no one on whom any suspicion could be attached. Lord Byron removed from Florence, and these spirits haunted him all his life after.

"This romantic incident is rendered highly probable by innumerable allusions to it in his poems. As, for instance, when turning his sad contemplations inwards, he applies to himself the fatal history of the king of Sparta. It is as follows:—Pausanias, a Lacedaemonian general, acquires glory by the important victory at Plataea but afterwards forfeits the confidence of his countrymen through his arrogance, obstinacy, and secret intrigues with the enemies of his country. This man draws upon himself the heavy guilt of innocent blood, which attends him to his end. For, while commanding the fleet of the allied Greeks in the Black Sea, he is inflamed with a violent passion for a Byzantine maiden. After long resistance, he at length obtains her from her parents, and she is to be delivered up to him at night. She modestly desires the servant to put out the lamp, and, while groping her way in the dark, she overturns it. Pausanias is awakened from his sleep—apprehensive of an attack from murderers, he seizes his sword, and destroys his mistress. The horrid sight never leaves him. Her shade pursues him unceasingly, and he implores for aid in vain from the gods and the exorcising priests.

"That poet must have a lacerated heart who selects such a scene from antiquity, appropriates it to himself, and burdens his tragic image with it. The following soliloquy, which is overladen with gloom and a weariness of life, is, by this remark, rendered intelligible. We recommend it as an exercise to all friends of declamation. Hamlet's soliloquy appears improved upon here."—Goethe here subjoins Manfred's soliloquy, beginning "We are the fools of time and terror," in which the allusions of his life and character long current upon the Continent, that it may be questioned whether the real 'flesh and blood' hero of these pages—the social, practical-minded, and, with all his faults and eccentricities, English Lord Byron,—may not, to the over-exalted imaginations of most of his foreign admirers, appear but an ordinary, unromantic, and prosaic personage."—Moore's Life of Byron.]
sion to Pausanias occurs. The reader will not be sorry to pass from this German criticism to that of the Edinburgh Review on Manfred. — "This is, undoubtedly, a work of great genius and originality. Its worst fault, perhaps, is that it fatigues and over-awes us by the uniformity of its terror and solemnity. Another, is the painful and offensive nature of the circumstance on which its distress is ultimately founded. The lyrical songs of the Spirits are too long, and not all excellent. There is something of pedantry in them now and then; and even Manfred deals in classical allusions a little too much. If we were to consider it as a proper drama, or even as a finished poem, we should be obliged to add, that it is far too indistinct and unsatisfactory. But this we take to be according to the design and conception of the author. He contemplated but a dim and magnificent sketch of a subject which did not admit of more accurate drawing or more brilliant coloring. Its obscurity is a part of its grandeur; — and the darkness that rests upon it, and the smoky distance in which it is lost, are all devices to increase its majesty, to stimulate our curiosity, and to impress us with deeper awe. — It is suggested, in an ingenious paper in a late number of the Edinburgh Magazine, that the general conception of this piece, and much of what is excellent in the manner of its execution, have been borrowed from 'The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus,' of Marlow; * and a variety of passages are quoted, which the author considers as similar, and, in many respects superior to others in the poem before us. We cannot agree in the general terms of the conclusion; but there is no doubt a certain resemblance, both in some of the topics that are suggested, and in the cast of the diction in which they are expressed. Thus, to induce Faustus to persist in his unlawful studies, he is told that the Spirits of the Elements will serve him,—

* [On reading this, Byron wrote from Venice: — "Jeffrey is very kind about Manfred, and defends its originality, which I did not know that anybody had attacked. As to the germs of it, they may be found in the Journal which I sent to Mrs. Leigh, shortly before I left Switzerland. I have the whole scene of Manfred before me, as if it was but yesterday, and could point it out, spot by spot, torrent and all." ]
'Sometimes like women, or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their ayrie browes,
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.'

And again, when the amorous sorcerer commands Helen of Troy
to revive again to be his paramour, he addresses her, on her first
appearance, in these rapturous lines —

'Was this the face that launcht a thousand ships,
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen! make me immortal with a kiss,
Her lips suck forth my soule! — see where it flies.
Come, Helen, come give me my soul againe,
Here will I dwell, for heaven is on that lip,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
Oh! thou art fairer than the evening ayre,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand starres;
More lovely than the monarch of the skyes,
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms!'

The catastrophe, too, is bewailed in verses of great elegance and
classical beauty —

'Cut is the branch that might have growne full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough
That sometime grew within this learned man.
Faustus is gone! — regard his hellish fall,
Whose finful torture may exhort the wise,
Only to wonder at unlawful things!'

But these, and many other smooth and fanciful verses in this
curious old drama, prove nothing; we think, against the original-
ity of Manfred; for there is nothing to be found there of the
pride, the abstraction, and the heart-rooted misery in which that
originality consists. Faustus is a vulgar sorcerer, tempted to
sell his soul to the devil for the ordinary price of sensual pleas-
ure, and earthly power and glory; and who shrinks and shud-
ders in agony when the forfeit comes to be exacted. The style,
too, of Marlow, though elegant and scholarlike, is weak and
childish compared with the depth and force of much of Lord
Byron; and the disgusting buffoonery and low farce of which
his piece is principally made up, place it more in contrast, than
in any terms of comparison, with that of his noble successor.
In the tone and pitch of the composition, as well as in the char-
acter of the diction in the more solemn parts, Manfred reminds
us much more of the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus,* than of any more modern performance. The tremendous solitude of the principal person — the supernatural beings with whom alone he holds communion — the guilt — the firmness — the misery — are all points of resemblance, to which the grandeur of the poetic imagery only gives a more striking effect. The chief differences are, that the subject of the Greek poet was sanctified and exalted by the established belief of his country, and that his terrors are nowhere tempered with the sweetness which breathes from so many passages of his English rival."—Jeffrey.]

*["Of the 'Prometheus' of Æschylus I was passionately fond as a boy (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow); indeed, that and the 'Medea' were the only ones, except the 'Seven before Thebes,' which ever much pleased me. The Prometheus, if not exactly in my plan, has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or any thing that I have written; but I deny Marlow and his progeny, and beg that you will do the same."—Byron's Letters, 1817.]
MARINO FALIERO,
DOGE OF VENICE;

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.*

"Dux inquieta turbidus Adriae."—Horace.

* [On the original MS. sent from Ravenna, Byron wrote: — "Begun April 4th, 1820— completed July 16th, 1820— finished copying August 16th-17th, 1820; the which copying makes ten times the toll of com- posing, considering the weather — thermometer 90 in the shade.— and my domestic duties."]

(83)
[Byron finished the composition of this tragedy on the 17th July, 1820. He at the time intended to keep it by him for six years before sending it to the press; but resolutions of this kind are, in modern days, very seldom adhered to. It was published in the end of the same year; and, to the poet's great disgust, and in spite of his urgent and repeated remonstrances, was produced on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre early in 1821.

Marino Faliero was, greatly to his satisfaction, commended warmly for the truth of its adhesion to Venetian history and manners, as well as the antique severity of its structure and language, by that eminent master of Italian and classical literature, Ugo Foscolo. Mr. Gifford also delighted him by pronouncing it "English—genuine English." It was, however, little favored by the contemporary critics. There was, indeed, only one who spoke of it as quite worthy of Byron's reputation. "Nothing," said he, "has for a long time afforded us so much pleasure, as the rich promise of dramatic excellence unfolded in this production of Lord Byron. Without question, no such tragedy as Marino Faliero has appeared in English, since the day when Otway also was inspired to his masterpiece by the interests of a Venetian story and a Venetian conspiracy. The story of which Lord Byron has possessed himself is, we think, by far the finer of the two,—and we say possessed, because we believe he has adhered almost to the letter of the transactions as they really took place."—The language of the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviewers, Mr. Jeffrey and Bishop Heber, was in a far different strain. The former says—

"Marino Faliero has undoubtedly considerable beauties, both dramatic and poetical; and might have made the fortune of any young aspirant for fame: but the name of Byron raises expectations which are not so easily satisfied; and, judging of it by the lofty standard which he himself has established, we are compelled to say, that we cannot but regard it as a failure, both as a poem and a play. The story, in so far as it is original in our drama, is extremely improbable, though, like most other very improbable stories, derived from authentic sources: but, in the main, it is original; being, indeed, merely another 'Venice Preserved,' and continually recalling, though certainly without
eclipsing, the memory of the first. Except that Jaffier is driven to join the conspirators by the natural impulse of love and misery, and the Doge by a resentment so outrageous as to exclude all sympathy,—and that the disclosure, which is produced by love in the old play, is here ascribed to mere friendship,—the general action and catastrophe of the two pieces are almost identical; while, with regard to the writing and management, it must be owned that, if Lord Byron has most sense and vigor, Otway has by far the most passion and pathos; and that though his conspirators are better orators and reasoners than the gang of Pierre and Reynault, the tenderness of Belvidere is as much more touching, as it is more natural, than the stoical and self-satisfied decorum of Angiolina."

The following is an extract from Bishop Heber's review in the Quarterly:

"Marino Faliero has, we believe, been pretty generally pronounced a failure by the public voice, and we see no reason to call for a revision of their sentence. It contains, beyond all doubt, many passages of commanding eloquence, and some of genuine poetry; and the scenes, more particularly, in which Lord Byron has neglected the absurd creed of his pseudo-Hellenic writers, are conceived and elaborated with great tragic effect and dexterity. But the subject is decidedly ill-chosen. In the main tissue of the plot, and in all the busiest and most interesting parts of it, it is, in fact, no more than another 'Venice Preserved,' in which the author has had to contend (nor has he contended successfully) with our recollections of a former and deservedly popular play on the same subject. And the only respect in which it differs is, that the Jaffier of Lord Byron's plot is drawn in to join the conspirators, not by the natural and intelligible motives of poverty, aggravated by the sufferings of a beloved wife, and a deep and well-grounded resentment of oppression, but by his outrageous anger for a private wrong of no very atrocious nature. The Doge of Venice, to chastise the vulgar libel of a foolish boy, attempts to overturn that republic of which he is the first and most trusted servant; to massacre all his ancient friends and fellow-soldiers, the magistracy and nobility of the land. With such a resentment as this, thus simply stated and taken singly, who ever sympathized, or who but Lord Byron would have ex-
pected in such a cause to be able to awaken sympathy? It is little to the purpose to say that this is all historically true. A thing may be true without being probable; and such a case of idiosyncrasy as is implied in a resentment so sudden and extravagant, is no more a fitting subject for the poet, than an animal with two heads would be for an artist of a different description."

The following extract from a letter of January, 1821, will show the author's own estimate of the piece thus criticized. After repeating his hope, that no manager would be so audacious as to trample on his feelings by producing it on the stage, he thus proceeds:—

"It is too regular — the time, twenty-four hours — the change of place not frequent — nothing melo-dramatic — no surprises — no starts, nor trap-doors, nor opportunities 'for tossing their heads and kicking their heels' — and no love, the grand ingredient of a modern play. I am persuaded that a great tragedy is not to be produced by following the old dramatists — who are full of gross faults, pardoned only for the beauty of their language, — but by writing naturally and regularly, and producing regular tragedies, like the Greeks; but not in imitation, — merely the outline of their conduct, adapted to our own times and circumstances, and of course no chorus. You will laugh, and say, 'Why don't you do so?' I have, you see, tried a sketch in Marino Faliero; but many people think my talent 'essentially undramatic,' and I am not at all clear that they are not right. If Marino Faliero don't fail — in the perusal — I shall, perhaps, try again (but not for the stage); and as I think that love is not the principal passion for tragedy (and yet most of ours turn upon it), you will not find me a popular writer. Unless it is love furious, criminal, and hopeless, it ought not to make a tragic subject. When it is melting and maudlin, it does, but it ought not to do; it is then for the gallery and second price boxes. If you want to have a notion of what I am trying, take up a translation of any of the Greek tragedians. If I said the original, it would be an impudent presumption of mine; but the translations are so inferior to the originals, that I think I may risk it. Then judge of the 'simplicity of plot,' and do not judge me by your old mad dramatists; which is like drinking usquebaugh, and then proving a fountain. Yet, after all, I suppose you do not mean that spirits
is a nobler element than a clear spring bubbling up in the sun? and this I take to be the difference between the Greeks and those turbid mountebanks—always excepting Ben Johnson, who was a scholar and a classic. Or, take up a translation of Alfieri, and try the interest, etc. of these my new attempts in the old line, by him in English; and then tell me fairly your opinion. But do n't measure me by your own old or new tailor’s yard. Nothing so easy as intricate confusion of plot and rant. Mrs. Centlivre, in comedy, has ten times the bustle of Congreve; but are they to be compared? and yet she drove Congreve from the theatre."

Again, February 16, he thus writes:—

"You say the Doge will not be popular: did I ever write for popularity? I defy you to show a work of mine (except a tale or two) of a popular style or complexion. It appears to me that there is room for a different style of the drama; neither a servile following of the old drama, which is a grossly erroneous one, nor yet too French, like those who succeeded the older writers. It appears to me that good English, and a severer approach to the rules, might combine something not dishonorable to our literature. I have also attempted to make a play without love; and there are neither rings, nor mistakes, nor starts, nor outrageous canting villains, nor melodrama in it. All this will prevent its popularity, but does not persuade me that it is therefore faulty. Whatever fault it has will arise from deficiency in the conduct, rather than in the conception, which is simple and severe.

"Reproach is useless always, and irritating—but my feelings were very much hurt, to be dragged like a gladiator to the fate of a gladiator by that 'retarius,' Mr. Elliston. As to his defence and offers of compensation, what is all this to the purpose? It is like Louis XIV. who insisted upon buying at any price Algernon Sydney's horse, and, on his refusal, on taking it by force, Sydney shot his horse. I could not shoot my tragedy, but I would have flung it into the fire rather than have had it represented."

The poet originally designed to inscribe this tragedy to his friend, Mr. Douglas Kinnaird; but the dedication he drew up remained in MS. till after the poet's death. It is in these words:—
'To the Honorable Douglas Kinnaird.

"My dear Douglas,—I dedicate to you the following tragedy, rather on account of your good opinion of it, than from any notion of my own that it may be worthy of your acceptance. But if its merits were ten times greater than they possibly can be, this offering would still be a very inadequate acknowledgment of the active and steady friendship with which, for a series of years, you have honored

"Your obliged and affectionate friend,

"BYRON."

At another moment, the poet resolved to dedicate the tragedy to Goethe, whose praises of "Manfred" had highly delighted him; but this dedication shared the fate of that to Mr. Kinnaird:—it did not reach the hands of Goethe till 1831, when it was presented to him at Weimar, by Mr. Murray, jun.; nor was it printed at all, until Moore included it in his Memoirs of Byron. In doing so, he omitted some passages, which, the MS. having since been lost, cannot be restored. "It is written," he says, "in the poet's most whimsical and mocking mood; and the unmeasured severity poured out in it upon the two favorite objects of his wrath and ridicule, compels me to deprive the reader of some of its most amusing passages."

Wordsworth and Southey were the persons ridiculed in these suppressed passages.

'To Baron Goethe,* etc. etc. etc.

"Sir,—In the Appendix to an English work lately translated into German and published at Leipsic, a judgment of yours upon English poetry is quoted as follows: 'That in English poetry, great genius, universal power, a feeling of profundity, with sufficient tenderness and force, are to be found; but that altogether these do not constitute poets,' etc. etc.

'I regret to see a great man falling into a great mistake. This opinion of yours only proves, that the 'Dictionary of ten thousand living English Authors' has not been translated into German.

* [Goethe was ennobled, having the Von prefixed to his name, but never received the title of Baron.]
You will have read, in your friend Schlegel's version, the dialogue in Macbeth—

'There are ten thousand!

Macbeth. Geese, villain?

Answer. Authors, sir.'

Now, of these 'ten thousand authors,' there are actually nineteen hundred and eighty-seven poets, all alive at this moment, whatever their works may be, as their booksellers well know: and amongst these there are several who possess a far greater reputation than mine, although considerably less than yours. It is owing to this neglect on the part of your German translators that you are not aware of the works of...

* * * * *

"There is also another, named...

* * * * *

"I mention these poets by way of sample to enlighten you. They form but two bricks of our Babel (Windsor bricks, by the way), but may serve for a specimen of the building.

"It is, moreover, asserted that 'the predominant character of the whole body of the present English poetry is a disgust and contempt for life.' But I rather suspect that, by one single work of prose, you yourself have excited a greater contempt for life, than all the English volumes of poesy that ever were written. Madame de Staël says, that 'Werther has occasioned more suicides than the most beautiful woman;' and I really believe that he has put more individuals out of this world than Napoleon himself,—except in the way of his profession. Perhaps, Illustrious Sir, the acrimonious judgment passed by a celebrated northern journal upon you in particular, and the Germans in general, has rather indisposed you towards English poetry as well as criticism. But you must not regard our critics, who are at bottom good-natured fellows, considering their two professions,—taking up the law in court, and laying it down out of it. No one can more lament their hasty and unfair judgment, in your particular, than I do; and I so expressed myself to your friend Schlegel, in 1816, at Coppet.

"In behalf of my 'ten thousand' living brethren, and of myself, I have thus far taken notice of an opinion expressed with
regard to 'English poetry' in general, and which merited notice, because it was yours.

"My principal object in addressing you was to testify my sincere respect and admiration of a man, who, for half a century, has led the literature of a great nation, and will go down to posterity as the first literary character of his age.

"You have been fortunate, Sir, not only in the writings which have illustrated your name, but in the name itself, as being sufficiently musical for the articulation of posterity. In this you have the advantage of some of your countrymen, whose names would perhaps be immortal also — if anybody could pronounce them.

"It may, perhaps, be supposed, by this apparent tone of levity that I am wanting in intentional respect towards you; but this will be a mistake: I am always flippant in prose. Considering you, as I really and warmly do, in common with all your own, and with most other nations, to be by far the first literary character which has existed in Europe since the death of Voltaire, I felt, and feel, desirous to inscribe to you the following work, — not as being either a tragedy or a poem, (for I cannot pronounce upon its pretensions to be either one or the other, or both, or neither,) but as a mark of esteem and admiration from a foreigner to the man who has been hailed in Germany 'THE GREAT GOETHE.'

"I have the honor to be, with the truest respect,

Ravenna, Sbre 14°. 1820.

BYRON.

"P. S. I perceive that in Germany, as well as in Italy, there is a great struggle about what they call 'Classical' and 'Romantic,' — terms which were not subjects of classification in England, at least when I left it four or five years ago. Some of the English scribblers, it is true, abused Pope and Swift, but the reason was, that they themselves did not know how to write either prose or verse; but nobody thought them worth making a sect of. Perhaps there may be something of the kind sprung up lately, but I have not heard much about it, and it would be such bad taste that I shall be very sorry to believe it."

Goethe was much gratified with this token of Byron's admiration.
PREFACE.

The conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the most singular government, city, and people of modern history. It occurred in the year 1355. Every thing about Venice is, or was, extraordinary — her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance. The story of this Doge is to be found in all her Chronicles, and particularly detailed in the "Lives of the Doges," by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix. It is simply and clearly related, and is perhaps more dramatic in itself than any scenes which can be founded upon the subject.

Marino Faliero appears to have been a man of talents and of courage. I find him commander-in-chief of the land forces at the siege of Zara, where he beat the King of Hungary and his army of eighty thousand men, killing eight thousand men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check; an exploit to which I know none similar in history,
except that of Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d'Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome,—at which last he received the news of his election to the dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprised of his predecessor's death and his own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podestà and captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this, honest Sanuto "saddles him with a judgment," as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of Count, by Lorenzo Count-bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable Abate Morelli, in his "Monumenti Veneziani di varia Letteratura," printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Darù, Sismondi, and Laugier, nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers.
Sismondi attributes the conspiracy to his *jealousy*; but I find this nowhere asserted by the national historians. Vettor Sandi, indeed, says, that "Altri scrissero che ….. dalla gelosa suspizion di esso Doge siasi fatto (Michel Steno) staccar con violenza," etc. etc.; but this appears to have been by no means the general opinion, nor is it alluded to by Sanuto or by Navagero; and Sandi himself adds, a moment after, that "per altre Veneziane memorie traspiri, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura, ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe independente." The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their "tre Capi." The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the "Dogaressa" herself, against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion), that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her, and for his own honor, warranted by his past services and present dignity.

I know not that the historical facts are alluded to in English, unless by Dr. Moore in his View of Italy. His account is false and flippant, full of stale
jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause. How so acute and severe an observer of mankind as the author of Zeluco could wonder at this is inconceivable. He knew that a basin of water spilt on Mrs. Masham's gown deprived the Duke of Marlborough of his command, and led to the inglorious peace of Utrecht— that Louis XIV. was plunged into the most desolating wars, because his minister was nettled at his finding fault with a window, and wished to give him another occupation— that Helen lost Troy— that Lucrecia expelled the Tarquins from Rome— and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain— that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome— that a single verse of Frederick II. of Prussia on the Abbé de Bernis, and a jest on Madame de Pompadour, led to the battle of Rosbach*— that the elopement of Dearbhorgil with

* [The Abbé's biographer denies the correctness of this statement. — "Quelques écrivains," he says, "qui trouvaient sans doute piquant d'attribuer de grands effets à de petites causes, ont prétendus que l'Abbe avait insisté dans le conseil pour faire déclarer la guerre à la Prusse, par ressentiment contre Frédéric, et pour venger sa vanité poétique, humilié par le vers du monarque bel-esprit et poète—

'Évitez de Bernis la stérile abondance.'

Je ne m'amuserai point à réfuter cette opinion ridicule; elle tombe par le fait, si l'abbé, comme dit Duclos, se déclara au contraire, dans le conseil, constamment pour l'alliance avec la Prusse, contre le sentiment même de Louis XV. et de Madame de Pompadour." — Bib. Univ.]
Mac Murchad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland—that a personal pique between Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons—and, not to multiply instances, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance—and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both king and commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection, it is indeed extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent, in a fierce age, an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to favor it—

"The young man's wrath is like straw on fire,
But like red-hot steel is the old man's ire."

"Young men soon give and soon forget affronts,
Old age is slow at both."

Laugier's reflections are more philosophical:—
"Tale fù il fine ignominioso di un' uomo, che la sua nascità, la sua età, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi talenti per lungo tempo esercitati ne' maggiori impieghi, la sua capacità sperimentata ne' governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de' cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragi per vol. vi.
collocarlo alla testa della republica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un’ingiuria leggera insinuò nel suo cuore tal veleno, che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati; serio esempio, che prova non esservi età, in cui la prudenza umana sia sicura, e che nell’uomo restano sempre passioni capaci a disonorarlo, quando non invigili sopra se stesso.”

Where did Dr. Moore find that Marino Faliero begged his life? I have searched the chroniclers, and find nothing of the kind; it is true that he avowed all. He was conducted to the place of torture, but there is no mention made of any application for mercy on his part; and the very circumstance of their having taken him to the rack seems to argue any thing but his having shown a want of firmness, which would doubtless have been also mentioned by those minute historians, who by no means favor him: such, indeed, would be contrary to his character as a soldier, to the age in which he lived, and at which he died, as it is to the truth of history. I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate; and they who have died upon a scaffold have generally had faults enough of their own, without attributing to them that which the very incurring of the perils which

conducted them to their violent death renders, of all others, the most improbable. The black veil which is painted over the place of Marino Faliero amongst the Doges, and the Giants’ Staircase where he was crowned, and discrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination; as did his fiery character and strange story. I went, in 1819, in search of his tomb more than once to the church San Giovanni e San Paolo; and, as I was standing before the monument of another family, a priest came up to me and said, “I can show you finer monuments than that.” I told him that I was in search of that of the Faliero family, and particularly of the Doge Marino’s. “Oh,” said he, “I will show it you;” and conducting me to the outside, pointed out a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription. He said that it had been in a convent adjoining, but was removed after the French came, and placed in its present situation; that he had seen the tomb opened at its removal; there were still some bones remaining, but no positive vestige of the decapitation. The equestrian statue, of which I have made mention in the third act, as before that church, is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date. There were two other Doges of this family prior to Marino; Ordelaflo, who fell in battle at Zara in 1117 (where his descendant afterwards conquered the Huns), and Vital Faliero, who reigned in 1082. The family, originally from Fano, was of the
most illustrious in blood and wealth in the city of once the most wealthy and still the most ancient families in Europe. The length I have gone into on this subject will show the interest I have taken in it. Whether I have succeeded or not in the tragedy, I have at least transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.

It is now four years that I have meditated this work; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero.* But, perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was, besides, well advised by the late Matthew Lewis on that point, in talking with him of my intention at Venice in 1817. "If you make him jealous," said

* [In February, 1817, Byron wrote to Mr. Murray—"Look into Dr. Moore's 'View of Italy' for me: in one of the volumes you will find an account of the Doge Valiero (it ought to be Falieri) and his conspiracy, or the motives of it. Get it transcribed for me, and send it in a letter to me soon. I want it, and cannot find so good an account of that business here: though the veiled patriot, and the place where he was crowned, and afterwards decapitated, still exist and are shown. I have searched all their histories; but the policy of the old aristocracy made their writers silent on his motives, which were a private grievance against one of the patricians. I mean to write a tragedy on the subject, which appears to me very dramatic; an old man, jealous, and conspiring against the state, of which he was actually reigning chief. The last circumstance makes it the most remarkable, and only fact of the kind, in all history of all nations."
he, "recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakspeare, and an exhausted subject; — stick to the old fiery Doge's natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn; and make your plot as regular as you can." Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same counsel. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time.* And I cannot conceive any man of irritable feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience. The sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labor to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that, even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made

* [MS. "It is like being at the whole process of a woman's toilet— it disenchants."]
the attempt, and never will.* But surely there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie,

* While I was in the sub-committee of Drury Lane Theatre, I can vouch for my colleagues, and I hope for myself, that we did our best to bring back the legitimate drama. I tried what I could to get "De Montfort" revived, but in vain, and equally in vain in favor of Sotheby's "Ivan," which was thought an acting play; and I endeavored also to wake Mr. Coleridge to write a tragedy. Those who are not in the secret will hardly believe that the "School for Scandal" is the play which has brought least money, averaging the number of times it has been acted since its production; so Manager Dibdin assured me. Of what has occurred since Maturin's "Bertram" I am not aware; so that I may be traducing, through ignorance, some excellent new writers: if so, I beg their pardon. I have been absent from England nearly five years, and, till last year, I never read an English newspaper since my departure, and am now only aware of theatrical matters through the medium of the Parisian Gazette of Galignani, and only for the last twelve months. Let me then deprecate all offence to tragic or comic writers, to whom I wish well, and of whom I know nothing. The long complaints of the actual state of the drama arise, however, from no fault of the performers. I can conceive nothing better than Kemble, Cooke, and Kean in their very different manners, or than Elliston in gentleman's comedy, and in some parts of tragedy. Miss O'Neill I never saw, having made and kept a determination to see nothing which should divide or disturb my recollection of Siddons. Siddons and Kemble were the ideal of tragic action; I never saw any thing at all resembling them even in person: for this reason, we shall never see again Coriolanus or Macbeth. When Kean is blamed for want of dignity, we should remember that it is a grace, and not an art, and not to be attained by study. In all, not super-natural parts, he is perfect; even his very defects belong, or seem to belong, to the parts themselves, and appear truer to nature. But of Kemble we may say, with reference to his acting, what the Cardinal de Retz said of the Marquis of Montrose, "that he was the only man he ever saw who reminded him of the heroes of Plutarch."
and Millman, and John Wilson exist. The "City of the Plague" and the "Fall of Jerusalem" are full of the best "matériel" for tragedy that has been seen since Horace Walpole, except passages of Ethwald and De Montfort. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the Castle of Otranto, he is the "Ultimus Romanorum," the author of the Mysterious Mother, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.

In speaking of the drama of Marino Faliero, I forgot to mention, that the desire of preserving, though still too remote, a nearer approach to unity than the irregularity, which is the reproach of the English theatrical compositions, permits, has induced me to represent the conspiracy as already formed, and the Doge acceding to it; whereas, in fact, it was of his own preparation and that of Israel Bertuccio. The other characters (except that of the Duchess), incidents, and almost the time, which was wonderfully short for such a design in real life, are strictly historical, except that all the consultations took place in the palace. Had I followed this, the unity would have been better preserved; but I
wished to produce the Doge in the full assembly of the conspirators, instead of monotonously placing him always in dialogue with the same individuals.* For the real facts, I refer to the Appendix.

* ["We cannot conceive a greater instance of the efficacy of system to blind the most acute perception, than the fact that Lord Byron, in works exclusively intended for the closet, has piqued himself on the observance of rules which are evidently, off the stage, a matter of perfect indifference. The only object of adhering to the unities is to preserve the illusion of the scene. To the reader they are obviously useless." — Heber.]
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice.
Bertuccio Faliero, Nephew of the Doge.
Lioni, a Patrician and Senator.
Benintende, Chief of the Council of Ten.
Michel Steno, One of the three Capì of the Forty.
Israel Bertuccio, Chief of the Arsenal,
Philip Calendaro, Conspirators.
Dagolino,
Bertram,
Signor of the Night, "Signore di Notte," one of the Officers belonging to the Republic.
First Citizen.
Second Citizen.
Third Citizen.
Vincenzo,
Pietro, Officers belonging to the Ducal Palace.
Battista,
Secretary of the Council of Ten.
Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, The Council of Ten, The Giunta, etc. etc.

WOMEN.

Angiolina, Wife to the Doge.
Marianna, her Friend.
Female Attendants, etc.

Scene Venice — in the year 1855.
MARINO FALIERO.

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ACT I.

SCENE I.

An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.

PIETRO speaks, in entering, to BATTISTA.

Pie. Is not the messenger returned?

Bat. Not yet;

I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno's accusation.

Pie. Too long—at least so thinks the Doge.

Bat. How bears he

These moments of suspense?

Pie. With struggling patience
Placed at the ducal table, covered o'er
With all the apparel of the state; petitions,
Despatches, judgments, acts, reprieves, reports,
He sits as rapt in duty; but whene'er
He hears the jarring of a distant door,
Or aught that intimates a coming step,
Or murmur of a voice, his quick eye wanders,
And he will start up from his chair, then pause,
And seat himself again, and fix his gaze
Upon some edict; but I have observed
For the last hour he has not turned a leaf.

*Bat.* 'Tis said he is much moved,—and doubtless 't was
Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.

*Pie.* Ay, if a poor man: Steno's a patrician,
Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.

*Bat.* Then you think
He will not be judged hardly?

*Pie.* 'T were enough
He be judged justly; but 't is not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.

*Bat.* And here it comes.—What news, Vincenzo?

*Enter Vincenzo.*

*Vin.* 'Tis Decided; but as yet his doom's unknown:
I saw the president in act to seal
The parchment which will bear the Forty's judgment
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him. [Exeunt.

**SCENE II.**

_The Ducal Chamber._

**Marino Faliero, Doge; and his Nephew,**
**Bertuccio Faliero.**

*Ber. F.* It cannot be but they will do you justice.
Doge. Ay, such as the Avogadori * did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty
To try him by his peers, his own tribunal. [act

Ber. F. His peers will scarce protect him; such an
Would bring contempt on all authority.

Doge. Know you not Venice? Know you not the
Forty?
But we shall see anon.

Ber. F. (addressing Vincenzo, then entering).

How now — what tidings?

Vin. I am charged to tell his highness that the
court
Has passed its resolution, and that, soon
As the due forms of judgment are gone through,
The sentence will be sent up to the Doge;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute
The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptation of their duty.

Doge. Yes —
They are wond’rous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is passed, you say?

Vin. It is, your highness:
The president was sealing it, when I
Was called in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due
Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.

* [The Avogadori, three in number, were the conductors of
criminal prosecutions on the part of the state; and no act of the
councils was valid, unless sanctioned by the presence of one of them.]
BER. F. Are you aware, from aught you have perceived, Of their decision?

VIN. No, my lord; you know the secret custom of the courts in Venice.

BER. F. True; but there still is something given to guess, [at;]
Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch a whisper, or a murmur, or an air
More or less solemn spread o'er the tribunal.
The Forty are but men — most worthy men,
And wise, and just, and cautious — this I grant —
And secret as the grave to which they doom the guilty; but with all this, in their aspects —
At least in some, the juniors of the number —
A searching eye, an eye like yours, Vincenzo, Would read the sentence ere it was pronounced.

VIN. My lord, I came away upon the moment,
And had no leisure to take note of that
Which passed among the judges, even in seeming;
My station near the accused too, Michel Steno, Made me —

DOGE. (abruptly). And how looked he? deliver that.

VIN. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resigned To the decree, whate'er it were: — but lo!
It comes, for the perusal of his highness.

Enter the Secretary of the Forty.

SEC. The high tribunal of the Forty sends Health and respect to the Doge Faliero,
Chief magistrate of Venice, and requests
His highness to peruse and to approve
The sentence passed on Michel Steno, born
Patrician, and arraigned upon the charge
Contained, together with its penalty,
Within the rescript which I now present.

Doge. Retire, and wait without.

[Exeunt Secretary and Vincenzo.

Take thou this paper:

The misty letters vanish from my eyes;
I cannot fix them.

Ber. F. Patience, my dear uncle:
Why do you tremble thus? — nay, doubt not, all
Will be as could be wished.

Doge. Say on.

Ber. F. (reading). "Decreed
In council, without one dissenting voice,
That Michel Steno, by his own confession,
Guilty on the last night of Carnival
Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words ——"*

Doge. Would'st thou repeat them?
Would'st thou repeat them — thou, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonor of our house,
Dishonored in its chief — that chief the prince
Of Venice, first of cities? — To the sentence.

Ber. F. Forgive me, my good lord; I will obey —
(Reads.) "That Michel Steno be detained a month
In close arrest."

* ["Marino Faliero, dalla bella moglie — altrì la gode, ed egli
la mantiene." — Sanuto.]
Doge. Proceed.

Ber. F. My lord, 'tis finished.

Doge. How, say you?—finished! Do I dream?—'tis false—Give me the paper—(Snatches the paper and reads)—"'Tis decreed in council
That Michel Steno"—Nephew, thine arm!

Ber. F. Nay, Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncalled for—Let me seek some assistance.

Doge: Stop, sir—Stir not—'Tis past.

Ber. F. I cannot but agree with you
The sentence is too slight for the offence—It is not honorable in the Forty
To affix so slight a penalty to that
Which was a foul affront to you, and even
To them, as being your subjects; but 'tis not
Yet without remedy: you can appeal
To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,
And do you right upon the bold delinquent.
Think you not thus, good uncle? why do you stand
So fixed? You heed me not:—I pray you, hear me!

Doge (dashing down the ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew) Oh! that the Saracen were in Saint Mark's!
Thus would I do him homage.
SCENE II. DOGE OF VENICE.

Ber. F. For the sake
Of Heaven and all its saints, my lord —
Doge. Away!
Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!
Oh, that the Huns whom I o'erthrew at Zara
Were ranged around the palace!
Ber. F. 'T is not well
In Venice' Duke to say so.
Doge. Venice' Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him,
That he may do me right.
Ber. F. If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty,
Remember that of man, and curb this passion.
The Duke of Venice —
Doge (interrupting him). There is no such thing —
It is a word — nay, worse — a worthless by-word:
The most despised, wronged, outraged, helpless wretch.
Who begs his bread, if 't is refused by one,
May win it from another kinder heart;
But he, who is denied his right by those
Whose place it is to do no wrong, is poorer
Than the rejected beggar — he's a slave —
And that am I, and thou, and all our house,
Even from this hour; the meanest artisan
Will point the finger, and the haughty noble
May spit upon us: — where is our redress?
Ber. F. The law, my prince? —
Doge (interrupting him). You see what it has done —
I asked no remedy but from the law —
I sought no vengeance but redress by law —
I called no judges but those named by law —
As sovereign, I appealed unto my subjects,
The very subjects who had made me sovereign,
And gave me thus a double right to be so.
The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,
Honors and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
The travel, toil, the perils, the fatigues,
The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
Were weighed i' the balance, 'gainst the foulest stain,
The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime
Of a rank, rash patrician — and found wanting!
And this is to be borne!

Ber. F. I say not that: —
In case your fresh appeal should be rejected,
We will find other means to make all even.

Doge. Appeal again! art thou my brother's son?
A scion of the house of Faliero?
The nephew of a Doge? and of that blood
Which hath already given three dukes to Venice?
But thou say'st well — we must be humble now.

Ber. F. My princely uncle! you are too much moved: —
I grant it was a gross offence, and grossly
Left without fitting punishment: but still
This fury doth exceed the provocation,
Or any provocation: if we are wronged,
We will ask justice; if it be denied,
We 'll take it; but may do all this in calmness —
Deep Vengeance is the daughter of deep Silence.
I have yet scarce a third part of your years,
I love our house, I honor you, its chief,
The guardian of my youth, and its instructor —
But though I understand your grief, and enter
In part of your disdain, it doth appall me
To see your anger, like our Adrian waves,
O'ersweep all bounds, and foam itself to air.

_Doge._ I tell thee — _must_ I tell thee — what thy father
Would have required no words to comprehend?
Hast thou no feeling save the external sense
Of torture from the touch? hast thou no soul —
No pride — no passion — no deep sense of honor?

_Ber. F._ 'Tis the first time that honor has been doubted,
And were the last, from any other sceptic.

_Doge._ You know the full offence of this born villain,
This creeping, coward, rank, acquitted felon,
Who threw his sting into a poisonous libel,
And on the honor of — Oh God! — my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honor,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth
Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,
And villanous jests, and blasphemies obscene;
While sneering nobles, in more polished guise,
Whispered the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them — a courteous wittol,
Patient — ay, proud, it may be, of dishonor.
Ber. F. But still it was a lie — you knew it false, And so did all men.

Doge. Nephew, the high Roman
Said, "Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected," And put her from him.

Ber. F. True — but in those days —

Doge. What is it that a Roman would not suffer, That a Venetian prince must bear? Old Dandolo Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars, And wore the ducal cap I trample on, Because 'tis now degraded.

Ber. F. 'Tis even so.

Doge. It is — it is; — I did not visit on The innocent creature thus most vilely slandered Because she took an old man for her lord, For that he had been long her father's friend And patron of her house, as if there were No love in woman's heart but lust of youth And beardless faces; — I did not for this Visit the villain's infamy on her, But craved my country's justice on his head, The justice due unto the humblest being Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to him, Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to him, Who hath a name whose honor 's all to him, When these are tainted by the accursing breath Of calumny and scorn.

Ber. F. And what redress Did you expect as his fit punishment?

Doge. Death! Was I not the sovereign of the state —
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me?
Was I not injured as a husband? scorned
As man? reviled, degraded, as a prince?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason? — and he lives!
Had he instead of on the Doge's throne
Stamped the same brand upon a peasant's stool,
His blood had gilt the threshold; for the carle
Had stabbed him on the instant.

_Ber. F._ Do not doubt it, He shall not live till sunset — leave to me The means, and calm yourself.

_Doge._ Hold, nephew: this
Would have sufficed but yesterday; at present
I have no further wrath against this man. [doubled

_Ber. F._ What mean you? is not the offence re-
By this most rank — I will not say — acquittal;
For it is worse, being full acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunished?

_Doge._ It is redoubled, but not now by him:
The Forty hath decreed a month's arrest —
We must obey the Forty.

_Ber. F._ Obey them!
Who have forgot their duty to the sovereign?

_Doge._ Why yes; — boy, you perceive it then at last:
Whether as fellow-citizen who sues
For justice, or as sovereign who commands it,
They have defrauded me of both my rights
(For here the sovereign is a citizen);
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair
Of Steno's head — he shall not wear it long.

Ber. F. Not twelve hours longer, had you left to me
The mode and means: if you had calmly heard me,
I never meant this miscreant should escape,
But wished you to suppress such gusts of passion,
That we more surely might devise together
His taking off.

Doge. No, nephew, he must live;
At least, just now — a life so vile as his
Were nothing at this hour; in th' olden time
Some sacrifices asked a single victim,
Great expiations had a hecatomb.

Ber. F. Your wishes are my law: and yet I fain
Would prove to you how near unto my heart
The honor of our house must ever be. [proof:

Doge. Fear not; you shall have time and place of
But be not thou too rash, as I have been.
I am ashamed of my own anger now;
I pray you, pardon me.

Ber. F. Why that's my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the chief
Of commonwealths, and sovereign of himself!
I wondered to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,
Although the cause ——

Doge. Ay, think upon the cause —
Forget it not: — When you lie down to rest,
Let it be black among your dreams; and when
The morn returns, so let it stand between
The sun and you, as an ill-omened cloud
Upon a summer-day of festival:
So will it stand to me; — but speak not, stir not, —
Leave all to me; — we shall have much to do,
And you shall have a part. — But now retire,
'Tis fit I were alone.

Ber. F. (taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the table). Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurned,
Till you can change it haply for a crown.
And now I take my leave, imploring you
In all things to rely upon my duty
As doth become your near and faithful kinsman,
And not less loyal citizen and subject.

[Exit Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge (solus). Adieu, my worthy nephew.—
Hollow bauble! [Taking up the ducal cap.
Beset with all the thorns that line a crown,
Without investing the insulted brow
With the all-swaying majesty of kings;
Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,
Let me resume thee as I would a vizor. [Puts it on.
How my brain aches beneath thee! and my temples
Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
Could I not turn thee to a diadem?
Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
Which in this hundred-handed senate rules,
Making the people nothing, and the prince
A pageant? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult — achieved for them,  
Who thus repay me! — Can I not requite them?  
Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day  
Of my full youth, while yet my body served  
My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,  
I would have dashed amongst them, asking few  
In aid to overthrow these swoln patricians;  
But now I must look round for other hands  
To serve this hoary head; — but it shall plan  
In such a sort as will not leave the task  
Herculean, though as yet 'tis but a chaos  
Of darkly brooding thoughts: my fancy is  
In her first work, more nearly to the light  
Holding the sleeping images of things  
For the selection of the pausing judgment. —  
The troops are few in ——

Enter Vincenzo.

Vin. There is one without  
Craves audience of your highness.  
Doge. I'm unwell —  
I can see no one, not even a patrician —  
Let him refer his business to the council.  
Vin. My lord, I will deliver your reply;  
It cannot much import — he's a plebeian,  
The master of a galley, I believe.  
Doge. How! did you say the patron of a galley?  
That is — I mean — a servant of the state:  
Admit him, he may be on public service.  

[Exit Vincenzo.
Doge (solus). This patron may be sounded; I will try him.
I know the people to be discontented:
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse day,
When Genoa conquered: they have further cause,
Since they are nothing in the state, and in
The city worse than nothing—mere machines,
To serve the nobles' most patrician pleasure.
The troops have long arrears of pay, oft promised,
And murmur deeply—any hope of change
Will draw them forward: they shall pay themselves
With plunder:—but the priests—I doubt the priesthood
Will not be with us; they have hated me
Since that rash hour, when, maddened with the drone,
I smote the tardy bishop at Treviso,*
Quickening his holy march; yet, ne'ertheless
They may be won, at least their chief at Rome,
By some well-timed concessions; but, above
All things, I must be speedy: at my hour
Of twilight little light of life remains.
Could I free Venice, and avenge my wrongs,
I had lived too long, and willingly would sleep
Next moment with my sires; and, wanting this,
Better that sixty of my four-score years
Had been already where—how soon, I care not—

* An historical fact. See Marin Sanuto's Lives of the Doges.—
["Sanuto says that Heaven took away his senses for this buffet, and induced him to conspire:—'Peró fu permesso che il Faliero perdette l'intelletto,'" etc. — Byron's Letters.]
The whole must be extinguished; — better that
They ne'er had been, than drag me on to be
The thing these arch-oppressors fain would make me.
Let me consider — of efficient troops
There are three thousand posted at —

*Enter Vincenzo and Israel Bertuccio.*

*Vin.* May it please
Your highness, the same patron whom I spake of
Is here to crave your patience.

*Doge.* Leave the chamber,

Vincenzo. — [Exit Vincenzo.

Sir, you may advance — what would you?

*I. Ber.* Redress.

*Doge.* Of whom?

*I. Ber.* Of God and of the Doge

*Doge.* Alas! my friend, you seek it of the twain
Of least respect and interest in Venice.
You must address the council.

*I. Ber.* 'Twere in vain;
For he who injured me is one of them.

*Doge.* There's blood upon thy face — how came
it there?

*I. Ber.* 'Tis mine, and not the first I've shed for
Venice,
But the first shed by a Venetian hand:
A noble smote me.

*Doge.* Doth he live?

*I. Ber.* Not long —
But for the hope I had and have, that you,
SCENE II. DOGE OF VENICE.

My prince, yourself a soldier, will redress
Him, whom the laws of discipline and Venice
Permit not to protect himself; — if not —
I say no more.

Doge. But something you would do —
Is it not so?

I. Ber. I am a man, my lord.

Doge. Why so is he who smote you.

I. Ber. He is called so;
Nay, more, a noble one — at least, in Venice:
But since he hath forgotten that I am one,
And treats me like a brute, the brute may turn —
'Tis said the worm will.

Doge. Say — his name and lineage?

I. Ber. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause? or the pretext?

I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal,* employed
At present in repairing certain galleys
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.
This morning comes the noble Barbaro
Full of reproof, because our artisans
Had left some frivolous order of his house,
To execute the state's decree; I dared
To justify the men — he raised his hand; —

* [This officer was chief of the artisans of the arsenal, and commanded the Bucentaur, for the safety of which, even if an accidental storm should arise, he was responsible with his life. He mounted guard at the ducal palace during an interregnum, and bore the red standard before the new Doge on his inauguration.— Amelot de la Houssaye, 79.]
Behold my blood! the first time it e'er flowed
Dishonorably.

_Doge._ Have you long time served?
_I. Ber._ So long as to remember Zara's siege,
And fight beneath the chief who beat the Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Faliero.—

_Doge._ How! are we comrades?—the state's
ducal robes
Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognized you not. Who placed you?

_I. Ber._ The late Doge; keeping still my old com-
mand
As patron of a galley: my new office
Was given as the reward of certain scars
(So was your predecessor pleased to say):
I little thought his bounty would conduct me
To his successor as a helpless plaintiff;
At least, in such a cause.

_Doge._ Are you much hurt?
_I. Ber._ Irreparably in my self-esteem.

_Doge._ Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at
heart,
What would you do to be revenged on this man?
_I. Ber._ That which I dare not name, and yet will
do.

_Doge._ Then wherefore came you here?
_I. Ber._ I come for justice,
Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, filled the ducal throne,
This blood had been washed out in other blood.

_Doge._ You come to me for justice — unto _me_!

The Doge of Venice, and _I_ cannot give it;
I cannot even obtain it — 't was denied
To me most solemnly an hour ago!

_I. Ber._ How says your highness?

_Doge._ Steno is condemned
To a month's confinement.

_I. Ber._ What! the same who dared
To stain the ducal throne with those foul words,
That have cried shame to every ear in Venice?

_Doge._ Ay, doubtless they have echoed o'er the
arsenal,
Keeping due time with every hammer's clink
As a good jest to jolly artisans;
Or making chorus to the creaking ear,
In the vile tune of every galley-slave,
Who, as he sung the merry stave, exulted
He was not a shamed dotard like the Doge.

_I. Ber._ Is't possible? a month's imprisonment!
No more for Steno?

_Doge._ You have heard the offence,
And now you know his punishment; and then
You ask redress of _me_! Go to the Forty,
Who passed the sentence upon Michel Steno;
They'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.

_I. Ber._ Ah! dared I speak my feelings!

_Doge._ Give them breath.
Mine have no further outrage to endure.
I. Ber. Then, in a word, it rests but on your word
To punish and avenge — I will not say
My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,
However vile, to such a thing as I am? —
But the base insult done your state and person.

Doge. You overrate my power, which is a pageant.
This cap is not the monarch’s crown; these robes
Might move compassion, like a beggar’s rags;
Nay, more, a beggar’s are his own, and these
But lent to the poor puppet, who must play
Its part with all its empire in this ermine.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be king?

Doge. Yes — of a happy people.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be sovereign lord of Venice?

Doge. Ay,
If that the people shared that sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves
To this o’ergrown aristocratic Hydra,
The poisonous heads of whose envenomed body
Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.

I. Ber. Yet, thou wast born, and still hast lived,
patrician.

Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toiled a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the senate;
Their good and my own honor were my guerdon.
I have fought and bled; commanded, ay, and con-
quered;
Have made and marred peace oft in embassies,
As it might chance to be our country's vantage;
Have traversed land and sea in constant duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for Venice,
My fathers' and my birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this?
Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripped her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
She'd tell thee 't was for all her little ones.

I. Ber. And yet they made thee duke.

Doge. They made me so;
I sought it not, the flattering fetters met me
Returning from my Roman embassy,
And never having hitherto refused
Toil, charge, or duty for the state, I did not,
At these late years, decline what was the highest
Of all in seeming, but of all most base
In what we have to do and to endure:
Bear witness for me thou, my injured subject,
When I can neither right myself nor thee.

I. Ber. You shall do both, if you possess the will;
And many thousands more not less oppressed,
Who wait but for a signal — will you give it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.

I. Ber. Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life; if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.
Doge. Say on.

I. Ber. Not thou, Nor I alone, are injured and abused, Contemned and trampled on; but the whole people Groan with the strong conception of their wrongs: The foreign soldiers in the senate’s pay Are discontented for their long arrears; The native mariners, and civic troops, Feel with their friends; for who is he amongst them Whose brethren, parents, children, wives, or sisters, Have not partook oppression, or pollution, From the patricians? And the hopeless war Against the Genoese, which is still maintained With the plebeian blood, and treasure wrung From their hard earnings, has inflamed them further: Even now — but, I forget that speaking thus, Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death!

Doge. And suffering what thou hast done — fear'st thou death?

Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten By those for whom thou hast bled.

I. Ber. No, I will speak

At every hazard; and if Venice’ Doge Should turn delator, be the shame on him, And sorrow too; for he will lose far more Than I.

Doge. From me fear nothing; out with it!

I. Ber. Know then, that there are met and sworn in secret
A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true;
Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long
Grieved over that of Venice, and have right
To do so; having served her in all climes,
And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same from those within her walls.
They are not numerous, nor yet too few
For their great purpose; they have arms, and means,
And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.

Doge. For what then do they pause?

I. Ber. An hour to strike.

Doge (aside). Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!*

I. Ber. I now have placed
My life, my honor, all my earthly hopes
Within thy power, but in the firm belief
That injuries like ours, sprung from one cause,
Will generate one vengeance: should it be so,
Be our chief now — our sovereign hereafter.

Doge. How many are ye?

I. Ber. I'll not answer that
Till I am answered.

Doge. How, sir! do you menace?

I. Ber. No; I affirm. I have betrayed myself;
But there's no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace, nor in those
Not less appalling cells, the "leaden roofs,"

* The bells of San Marco were never rung but by order of the Doge. One of the pretexts for ringing this alarm was to have been an announcement of the appearance of a Genoese fleet off the Lagune.
To force a single name from me of others.
The Pozzi * and the Piombi were in vain;
They might wring blood from me, but treachery
never.

And I would pass the fearful "Bridge of Sighs;"
Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows
Between the murderers and the murdered, washing
The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on't, and avenge me.

_Doge_. If such your power and purpose, why
come here
To sue for justice, being in the course
To do yourself due right?

_I. Ber._ Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be
Suspected of combining to destroy it.
Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and muttered threats had made me
A marked man to the Forty's inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily

* [The state dungeons, called Pozzi, or wells, were sunk in
the thick walls of the palace; and the prisoner, when taken out
to die, was conducted across the gallery to the other side, and
being then led back into the other compartment, or cell, upon
the bridge, was there strangled. The low portal through which
the criminal was taken into this cell is now walled up; but the
passage is open, and is still known by the name of the Bridge of
Sighs. — Hobhouse.]
It shapes its phrase, is little to be feared,  
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,  
I had another reason.  

_Doge._ What was that?  

_I. Ber._ Some rumors that the Doge was greatly moved  
By the reference of the Avogadori  
Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty  
Had reached me. I had served you, honored you,  
And felt that you were dangerously insulted,  
Being of an order of such spirits, as  
Requite tenfold both good and evil: 't was  
My wish to prove and urge you to redress.  
Now you know all; and that I speak the truth,  
My peril be the proof.  

_Doge._ You have deeply ventured;  
But all must do so who would greatly win:  
Thus far I'll answer you — your secret's safe.  

_I. Ber._ And is this all?  

_Doge._ Unless with all intrusted,  
What would you have me answer?  

_I. Ber._ I would have you  
Trust him who leaves his life in trust with you.  

_Doge._ But I must know your plan, your names, and numbers;  
The last may then be doubled, and the former  
Matured and strengthened.  

_I. Ber._ We're enough already;  
You are the sole ally we covet now.
Doge. But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.

I. Ber. That shall be done upon your formal pledge
To keep the faith that we will pledge to you.

Doge. When? where?

I. Ber. This night I'll bring to your apartment
Two of the principals; a greater number
Were hazardous.

Doge. Stay, I must think of this.

What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?

I. Ber. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

I. Ber. Not were he your son.

Doge. Wretch! darest thou name my son? He died in arms
At Sapienza for this faithless state.
Oh! that he were alive, and I in ashes!
Or that he were alive ere I be ashes!
I should not need the dubious aid of strangers.

I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers whom thou doubtest,
But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with them.

Doge. The die is cast. Where is the place of meeting?

I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and masked
Where'er your highness pleases to direct me,
To wait your coming, and conduct you where
You shall receive our homage, and pronounce
Upon our project.

_Doge._ At what hour arises

The moon?

_I. Ber._ Late, but the atmosphere is thick and
dusky,
'Tis a sirocco.

_Doge._ At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires;* the
same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola,† with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

_I. Ber._ I will not fail.

_Doge._ And now retire ——

* [The Doges were all buried in St. Mark's before Faliero. It is singular that when his predecessor, Andrea Dandolo, died, the Ten made a law that all the future Doges should be buried with their families in their own churches—one would think, by a kind of presentiment. So that all that is said of his _ancestral Doges_, as buried at St. John's and Paul's, is altered from the fact, they being in St. Mark's. Make a note of this, and put _Editor_ as the subscription to it. As I make such pretensions to accuracy, I should not like to be twitted even with such trifles on that score. Of the play they may say what they please, but not so of my costume and _dram. pers._—they having been real existences.—_Byron's Letters_, Oct. 1820.]

† A gondola is not like a common boat, but is as easily rowed with one oar as with two (though of course, not so swiftly), and often is so from motives of privacy; and, since the decay of Venice, of economy.
I. Ber. In the full hope your highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave.

[Exit Israel Bertuccio.

Doge (solus). At midnight, by the church Saints John and Paul,
Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair —
To what? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin states!
And will not my great sires leap from the vault,
Where lie two doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them? Would they could!
For I should rest in honor with the honored.
Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a name
Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles; but I will redeem it
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that's base in Venice,
And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of time,
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,
But try the Cæsar or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert — success.
ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.

ANGIOLINA (wife of the Doge) and Marianna.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer?

Mar. That he was

That moment summoned to a conference;
But 'tis by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the senators embarking;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.

Ang. Would he were returned!

He has been much disquieted of late;
And Time, which has not tamed his fiery spirit
Nor yet enfeebled even his mortal frame,
Which seems to be more nourished by a soul
So quick and restless that it would consume
Less hardy clay — Time has but little power
On his resentments or his griefs. Unlike
To other spirits of his order, who,
In the first burst of passion, pour away
Their wrath or sorrow, all things wear in him
An aspect of eternity: his thoughts,
His feelings, passions, good or evil, all
Have nothing of old age; and his bold brow
Bears but the scars of mind, the thoughts of years,
Not their decrepitude: and he of late
Has been more agitated than his wont.
Would he were come! for I alone have power
Upon his troubled spirit.

*Mar.*

It is true,
His highness has of late been greatly moved
By the affront of Steno, and with cause:
But the offender doubtless even now
Is doomed to expiate his rash insult with
Such chastisement as will enforce respect
To female virtue, and to noble blood.

*Ang.* 'Twas a gross insult; but I heed it not
For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep impression
Which it has made upon Faliero's soul,
The proud, the fiery, the austere—au stole
To all save me: I tremble when I think
To what it may conduct.

*Mar.* Assuredly
The Doge can not suspect you?

*Ang.* Suspect me!
Why Steno dared not: when he scrawled his lie,
Grovelling by stealth in the moon's glimmering light,
His own still conscience smote him for the act,
And every shadow on the walls frowned shame
Upon his coward calumny.

*Mar.* 'Twere fit
He should be punished grievously.

*Ang.*

He is so.

*Mar.* What! is the sentence passed? is he con-

demned?
Ang. I know not that, but he has been detected.
Mar. And deem you this enough for such foul scorn?
Ang. I would not be a judge in my own cause, Nor do I know what sense of punishment May reach the soul of ribalds such as Steno; But if his insults sink no deeper in The minds of the inquisitors than they Have ruffled mine, he will, for all acquaintance, Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.
Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slandered virtue.
Ang. Why, what is virtue if it needs a victim? Or if it must depend upon men's words? The dying Roman said, "'t was but a name:"
It were indeed no more, if human breath Could make or mar it.
Mar. Yet full many a dame, Stainless and faithful, would feel all the wrong Of such a slander; and less rigid ladies, Such as abound in Venice, would be loud And all-inexorable in their cry For justice.
Ang. This but proves it is the name And not the quality they prize: the first Have found it a hard task to hold their honor, If they require it to be blazoned forth; And those who have not kept it, seek its seeming As they would look out for an ornament Of which they feel the want, but not because They think it so; they live in others' thoughts, And would seem honest as they must seem fair.
Mar. You have strange thoughts for a patrician dame.

Ang. And yet they were my father's; with his name,
The sole inheritance he left.

Mar. You want none;

Wife to a prince, the chief of the Republic.

Ang. I should have sought none though
a peasant's bride,
But feel not less the love and gratitude
Due to my father, who bestowed my hand
Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend,
The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge.

Mar. And with that hand did he bestow your heart?

Ang. He did so, or it had not been bestowed.

Mar. Yet this strange disproportion in your years,
And, let me add, disparity of tempers,
Might make the world doubt whether such an union
Could make you wisely, permanently happy.

Ang. The world will think with worldlings; but
my heart
Has still been in my duties, which are many,
But never difficult.

Mar. And do you love him?

Ang. I love all noble qualities which merit
Love, and I loved my father, who first taught me
To single out what we should love in others,
And to subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
SCENE I.  DOGE OF VENICE.

To baser passions. He bestowed my hand
Upon Faliero: he had known him noble,
Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities
Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all
Such have I found him as my father said.
His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms
Of men who have commanded; too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely fostered by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honor, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrained, and this I fear in him.
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet tempered by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavished all its chief employs upon him,
From his first fight to his last embassy,
From which on his return the dukedom met him.

Mar. But previous to this marriage, had your
heart
Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
Such as in years had been more meet to match
Beauty like yours? or since have you ne'er seen
One, who, if your fair hand were still to give,
Might now pretend to Loredano's daughter?

Ang. I answered your first question when I said
I married.

Mar. And the second?

Ang. Needs no answer.
Mar. I pray you pardon, if I have offended.

Ang. I feel no wrath, but some surprise: I knew not
That wedded bosoms could permit themselves
To ponder upon what they now might choose,
Or aught save their past choice.

Mar. 'Tis their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they would
Now choose more wisely, could they cancel it.

Ang. It may be so. I knew not of such thoughts.

Mar. Here comes the Doge—shall I retire?

Ang. It may
Be better you should quit me; he seems rapt
In thought.—How pensively he takes his way!

[Exit Marianna.

Enter the Doge and Pietro.

Doge (musing.) There is a certain Philip Calendaro
Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
Of eighty men, and has great influence
Besides on all the spirits of his comrades:
This man, I hear, is bold and popular,
Sudden and daring, and yet secret; 't would
Be well that he were won: I needs must hope
That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
But fain would be ——

Pie. My lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and inquire your pleasure
To fix an hour when he may speak with you.

_Doge._ At sunset.—Stay a moment—let me see—

Say in the second hour of night. [Exit Pietro.

_Ang._ My lord!

_Doge._ My dearest child, forgive me—why delay
So long approaching me?—I saw you not.

_Ang._ You were absorbed in thought, and he who now
Has parted from you might have words of weight
To bear you from the senate.

_Doge._ From the senate?*

* [This scene is, perhaps, the finest in the whole play. The character of the calm, pure-spirited Angiolina is developed in it most admirably;—the great difference between her temper and that of her fiery husband is vividly portrayed;—but not less vividly touched is that strong bond of their union which exists in the common nobleness of their deeper natures. There is no spark of jealousy in the old man's thoughts,—he does not expect the fervors of youthful passion in his wife, nor does he find them: but he finds what is far better,—the fearless confidence of one, who, being to the heart's core innocent, can scarcely be a believer in the existence of such a thing as guilt. He finds every charm which gratitude, respect, anxious and deep-seated affection can give to the confidential language of a lovely, and a modest, and a pious woman. She has been extremely troubled by her observance of the countenance and gesture of the Doge, ever since the discovery of Steno's guilt; and she does all she can to soothe him from his proud irritation. Strong in her consciousness of purity, she has brought herself to regard without anger the insult offered to herself; and the yet uncorrected instinct of a noble heart makes her try to persuade her lord, as she is herself persuaded, that Steno, whatever be the sentence of his
Ang. I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.
Doge. The senate's duty! you mistake;
'Tis we who owe all service to the senate.
Ang. I thought the Duke had held command in
Venice.
Doge. He shall. — But let that pass. — We will be
jocund.
How fares it with you? have you been abroad?
The day is overcast, but the calm wave
Favors the gondolier's light skimming oar;
Or have you held a levee of your friends?
Or has your music made you solitary?
Say — is there aught that you would will within
The little sway now left the Duke? or aught
Of fitting splendor, or of honest pleasure,
Social or lonely, that would glad your heart,
To compensate for many a dull hour, wasted
On an old man oft moved with many cares?
Speak, and 'tis done.

Ang. You're ever kind to me.
I have nothing to desire, or to request,
Except to see you oftener and calmer.
Doge. Calmer?
Ang. Ay, calmer, my good lord. — Ah, why
Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,
And let such strong emotions stamp your brow,

judges, must be punished — more even than they would wish
him to be — by the secret suggestions of his own guilty con-
science. — Lockhart.]
As not betraying their full import, yet
Disclose too much?
  Doge.  Disclose too much! — of what?
What is there to disclose?
  Ang.  A heart so ill
At ease.
  Doge. 'Tis nothing, child. — But in the state
You know what daily cares oppress all those
Who govern this precarious commonwealth;
Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within — 'tis this which makes me
More pensive and less tranquil than my wont.
  Ang. Yet this existed long before, and never
Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me; there is something at your heart
More than the mere discharge of public duties,
Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have rendered light, nay, a necessity,
To keep your mind from stagnating. 'Tis not
In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you;
You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
And climbed up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainted by the way, and stand
Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne'er feel dizzy.
Were Genoa's galleys riding in the port,
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark's,
You are not to be wrought on, but would fall,
As you have risen, with an unaltered brow —
Your feelings now are of a different kind;
Something has stung your pride, not patriotism.
Doge. Pride! Angiolina? Alas! none is left me.

Ang. Yes—the same sin that overthrew the angels,
And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature:
The vile are only vain; the great are proud.

Doge. I had the pride of honor, of your honor,
Deep at my heart—But let us change the theme.

Ang. Ah no!—As I have ever shared your kindness
In all things else, let me not be shut out
From your distress: were it of public import,
You know I never sought, would never seek
To win a word from you; but feeling now
Your grief is private, it belongs to me
To lighten or divide it. Since the day
When foolish Steno's ribaldry detected
Unfixed your quiet, you are greatly changed,
And I would soothe you back to what you were.

Doge. To what I was!—Have you heard Steno's sentence?

Ang. No.

Doge. A month's arrest.

Ang. Is it not enough?

Doge. Enough!—yes, for a drunken galley slave,
Who, stung by stripes, may murmur at his master;
But not for a deliberate, false, cool villain,
Who stains a lady's and a prince's honor
Even on the throne of his authority.
Ang. There seems to me enough in the conviction
Of a patrician guilty of a falsehood:
All other punishment were light unto
His loss of honor.

Doge. Such men have no honor;
They have but their vile lives—and these are spared.

Ang. You would not have him die for this offence?

Doge. Not now:—being still alive, I'd have him live
Long as he can; he has ceased to merit death;
The guilty saved hath damned his hundred judges,
And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.

Ang. Oh! had this false and flippant libeller
Shed his young blood for his absurd lampoon,
Ne'er from that moment could this breast have known
A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber more.

Doge. Does not the law of Heaven say blood for blood?
And he who taints kills more than he who sheds it.
Is it the pain of blows, or shame of blows,
That make such deadly to the sense of man?
Do not the laws of man say blood for honor?
And, less than honor, for a little gold?
Say not the laws of nations blood for treason?
Is't nothing to have filled these veins with poison
For their once healthful current? is it nothing
To have stained your name and mine—the noblest names?
Is't nothing to have brought into contempt
A prince before his people? to have failed
In the respect accorded by mankind
To youth in woman, and old age in man?
To virtue in your sex, and dignity
In ours?—But let them look to it who have saved him.*

Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies.
Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is Satan saved
From wrath eternal? †

Ang. Do not speak thus wildly—Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.
Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive them!
Ang. And will you?
Doge. Yes, when they are in heaven!
Ang. And not till then?
Doge. What matters my forgiveness? an old man's,
Worn out, scorned, spurned, abused; what matters then
My pardon more than my resentment, both
Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long.—

* [This scene between the Doge and Angiolina, though intolerably long, has more force and beauty than any thing that goes before it. She endeavors to soothe the furious mood of her aged partner; while he insists that nothing but the libeller's death could make fitting expiation for his offence. This speech of the Doge is an elaborate, and, after all, ineffectual attempt, by rhetorical exaggerations, to give some color to the insane and unmeasured resentment on which the piece hinges. — Jeffrey.]

† MS. — "Doth Heaven forgive her own? is there not Hell?"
But let us change the argument. — My child! My injured wife, the child of Loredano, The brave, the chivalrous, how little deemed Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend, That he was linking thee to shame! — Alas! Shame without sin, for thou art faultless. Hadst thou But had a different husband, any husband In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this brand, This blasphemy had never fallen upon thee. So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure, To suffer this, and yet be unavenged! Ang. I am too well avenged, for you still love me, And trust, and honor me; and all men know That you are just, and I am true: what more Could I require, or you command? Doge. 'Tis well, And may be better; but whate'er betide, Be thou at least kind to my memory. Ang. Why speak you thus? Doge. It is no matter why; But I would still, whatever others think, Have your respect both now and in my grave. Ang. Why should you doubt it? has it ever failed? Doge. Come hither, child; I would a word with you. Your father was my friend; unequal fortune Made him my debtor for some courtesies Which bind the good more firmly: when, oppressed
With his last malady, he willed our union,
It was not to repay me, long repaid
Before by his great loyalty in friendship;
His object was to place your orphan beauty
In honorable safety from the perils,
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail
A lonely and undowered maid. I did not
Think with him, but would not oppose the thought
Which soothed his death-bed.

_Ang._ I have not forgotten
The nobleness with which you bade me speak
If my young heart held any preference
Which would have made me happier; nor your offer
To make my dowry equal to the rank
Of aught in Venice, and forego all claim
My father's last injunction gave you.

_Doge._ Thus,
'T was not a foolish dotard's vile caprice,
Nor the false edge of aged appetite,
Which made me covetous of girlish beauty,
And a young bride: for in my fieriest youth
I swayed such passions; nor was this my age
Infected with that leprosy of lust
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,
Making them ransack to the very last
The dregs of pleasure for their vanished joys;
Or buy in selfish marriage some young victim,
Too helpless to refuse a state that's honest,
Too feeling not to know herself a wretch.
Our wedlock was not of this sort; you had
Freedom from me to choose, and urged in answer
Your father's choice.

Ang. I did so; I would do so
In face of earth and heaven; for I have never
Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,
In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.

Doge. I knew my heart would never treat you
harshly;
I knew my days could not disturb you long;
And then the daughter of my earliest friend,
His worthy daughter, free to choose again,
Wealthier and wiser, in the ripest bloom
Of womanhood, more skilful to select
By passing these probationary years
Inheriting a prince's name and riches,
Secured, by the short penance of enduring
An old man for some summers, against all
That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might
Have urged against her right; my best friend's child
Would choose more fitly in respect of years,
And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My lord, I looked but to my father's wishes,
Hallowed by his last words, and to my heart
For doing all its duties, and replying
With faith to him with whom I was allied.
Ambitious hopes ne'er crossed my dreams; and
should
The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.

Doge. I do believe you; and I know you true:
For love, romantic love, which in my youth
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been
No lure for me, in my most passionate days,
And could not be so now, did such exist.
But such respect, and mildly paid regard
As a true feeling for your welfare, and
A free compliance with all honest wishes;
A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness
Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings
As youth is apt in, so as not to check
Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew
You had been won, but thought the change your choice;
A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct,—
A trust in you — a patriarchal love,
And not a doting homage — friendship, faith —
Such estimation in your eyes as these
Might claim, I hoped for.

Ang. And have ever had.

Doge. I think so. For the difference in our years
You knew it, choosing me, and chose: I trusted
Not to my qualities, nor would have faith
In such, nor outward ornaments of nature,
Were I still in my five and twentieth spring;
I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins; I trusted to the soul
God gave you — to the truths your father taught you—
To your belief in heaven — to your mild virtues —
To your own faith and honor, for my own.
**SCENE I.  DOGE OF VENICE.**  

_Any._ You have done well.—I thank you for that trust,
Which I have never for one moment ceased
To honor you the more for.

_Doge._ Where is honor,
Innate and precept-strengthened, 'tis the rock
Of faith connubial: where it is not—where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although 't were wed to him it covets most:
An incarnation of the poet's god
In all his marble-chiselled beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides, in
His majesty of superhuman manhood,
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not;
It is consistency which forms and proves it:
Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
The once fallen woman must for ever fall;
For vice must have variety, while virtue
Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect.

_Ang._ And seeing, feeling thus this truth in others,
(I pray you pardon me;) but wherefore yield you
To the most fierce of fatal passions, and
Disquiet your great thoughts with restless hate
Of such a thing as Steno?

_Doge._ You mistake me.
It is not Steno who could move me thus;
Had it been so, he should —— but let that pass.

Ang. What is't you feel so deeply, then, even now?
Doge. The violated majesty of Venice,
At once insulted in her lord and laws.

Ang. Alas! why will you thus consider it?
Doge. I have thought on't till —— but let me
lead you back
To what I urged; all these things being noted,
I wedded you; the world then did me justice
Upon the motive, and my conduct proved
They did me right, while yours was all to praise:
You had all freedom — all respect — all trust
From me and mine; and, born of those who made
Princes at home, and swept kings from their thrones
On foreign shores, in all things you appeared
Worthy to be our first of native dames.

Ang. To what does this conduct?
Doge. To thus much — that
A miscreant's angry breath may blast it all —
A villain, whom for his unbridled bearing,
Even in the midst of our great festival,
I caused to be conducted forth, and taught
How to demean himself in ducal chambers;
A wretch like this may leave upon the wall
The blighting venom of his sweltering heart,
And this shall spread itself in general poison;
And woman's innocence, man's honor, pass
Into a by-word; and the doubly felon
(Who first insulted virgin modesty
By a gross affront to your attendant damsels
Amidst the noblest of our dames in public)
Requite himself for his most just expulsion
By blackening publicly his sovereign's consort,
And be absolved by his upright compeers.

Ang. But he has been condemned into captivity.

Doge. For such as him a dungeon were acquittal;
And his brief term of mock-arrest will pass
Within a palace. But I've done with him;
The rest must be with you.

Ang. With me, my lord?

Doge. Yes, Angiolina. Do not marvel; I
Have let this prey upon me till I feel
My life cannot be long; and fain would have you
Regard the injunctions you will find within
This scroll (Giving her a paper)—— Fear not; they
are for your advantage:
Read them hereafter at the fitting hour.

Ang. My lord, in life, and after life, you shall
Be honored still by me: but may your days
Be many yet — and happier than the present!
This passion will give way, and you will be
Serene, and what you should be — what you were.

Doge. I will be what I should be, or be nothing;
But never more — oh! never, never more,
O'er the few days or hours which yet await
The blighted old age of Faliero, shall
Sweet Quiet shed her sunset! Never more
Those summer shadows rising from the past
Of a not ill-spent nor inglorious life,
Mellowing the last hours as the night approaches,
Shall soothe me to my moment of long rest.
I had but little more to ask, or hope,
Save the regards due to the blood and sweat,
And the soul's labor through which I had toiled
To make my country honored. As her servant—
Her servant, though her chief—I would have gone
Down to my fathers with a name serene
And pure as theirs; but this has been denied me.—
Would I had died at Zara!

Ang. There you saved
The state; then live to save her still. A day,
Another day like that would be the best
Reproof to them, and sole revenge for you.

Doge. But one such day occurs within an age;
My life is little less than one, and 'tis
Enough for Fortune to have granted once,
That which scarce one more favored citizen
May win in many states and years. But why
Thus speak I? Venice has forgot that day—
Then why should I remember it?—Farewell,
Sweet Angiolina! I must to my cabinet;
There's much for me to do—and the hour hastens.

Ang. Remember what you were.

Doge. It were in vain!
Joy's recollection is no longer joy,
While Sorrow's memory is a sorrow still.

Ang. At least, whate'er may urge, let me implore
That you will take some little pause of rest:
Your sleep for many nights has been so turbid,
That it had been relief to have awaked you,
Had I not hoped that Nature would o’erpower
At length the thoughts which shook your slumbers thus.
An hour of rest will give you to your toils
With fitter thoughts and freshened strength.

Doge. I cannot—
I must not, if I could; for never was
Such reason to be watchful: yet a few—
Yet a few days and dream-perturbed nights,
And I shall slumber well—but where?—no matter.
Adieu, my Angiolina.

Ang. Let me be
An instant—yet an instant your companion!
I cannot bear to leave you thus.

Doge. Come then,
My gentle child—forgive me; thou wert made
For better fortunes than to share in mine,
Now darkling in their close toward the deep vale
Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.
When I am gone—it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that stirring
Within—above—around, that in this city
Will make the cemeteries populous
As e’er they were by pestilence or war,—
When I am nothing, let that which I was
Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips,
A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing [ber;—
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remem-
Let us begone, my child—the time is pressing.

[Exeunt.]
SCENE II.

_A retired Spot near the Arsenal._

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CALENDARO.

Cal. How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint?

I. Ber. Why, well.

Cal. Is't possible! will he be punished?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. With what? a mulct or an arrest?

I. Ber. With death!—

Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,

Such as I counselled you, with your own hand.

I. Ber. Yes; and for one sole draught of hate, forego

The great redress we meditate for Venice,

And change a life of hope for one of exile;

Leaving one scorpion crushed, and thousands sting-

My friends, my family, my countrymen!

No, Calendaro; these same drops of blood,

Shed shamefully, shall have the whole of his

For their requital —— But not only his;

We will not strike for private wrongs alone:

Such are for selfish passions and rash men,

But are unworthy a tyrannicide.

Cal. You have more patience than I care to boast.

Had I been present when you bore this insult,
I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath.

I. Ber. Thank Heaven, you were not—all had
else been marred:
As 'tis, our cause looks prosperous still.

Cal. You saw
The Doge—what answer gave he?

I. Ber. That there was
No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Cal. I told you so before, and that 't was idle
To think of justice from such hands.

I. Ber. At least,
It lulled suspicion, showing confidence.
Had I been silent, not a sbirro but
Had kept me in his eye, as meditating
A silent, solitary, deep revenge.

Cal. But wherefore not address you to the
Council?
The Doge is a mere puppet, who can scarce
Obtain right for himself. Why speak to him?

I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal. Why not now?

I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight. Get your
musters,
And bid our friends prepare their companies:—
Set all in readiness to strike the blow,
Perhaps in a few hours; we have long waited
For a fit time—that hour is on the dial,
It may be, of to-morrow's sun: delay
Beyond may breed us double danger. See
That all be punctual at our place of meeting,
And armed, excepting those of the Sixteen,
Who will remain among the troops to wait
The signal.

Cal. These brave words have breathed new life
Into my veins; I am sick of these protracted
And hesitating councils: day on day
Crawled on, and added but another link
To our long fetters, and some fresher wrong
Inflicted on our brethren or ourselves,
Helping to swell our tyrants' bloated strength.
Let us but deal upon them, and I care not
For the result, which must be death or freedom!
I'm weary to the heart of finding neither.

I. Ber. We will be free in life or death! the
ground
Is chainless. Have you all the musters ready?
And are the sixteen companies completed
To Sixty?

Cal. All save two, in which there are
Twenty-five wanting to make up the number.

I. Ber. No matter; we can do without. Whose
are they?

Cal. Bertram's and old Soranzo's, both of whom
Appear less forward in the cause than we are.

I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you deem all
those
Who are not restless cold: but there exists
Oft in concentrated spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.
Cal. I do not doubt the elder; but in Bertram
There is a hesitating softness, fatal
To enterprise like ours: I've seen that man
Weep like an infant o'er the misery
Of others, heedless of his own, though greater;
And in a recent quarrel I beheld him
Turn sick at sight of blood, although a villain's.

I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes,
And feel for what their duty bids them do.
I have known Bertram long; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of honor.

Cal. It may be so:
I apprehend less treachery than weakness;
Yet as he has no mistress, and no wife
To work upon his milkiness of spirit,
He may go through the ordeal; it is well
He is an orphan, friendless save in us:
A woman or a child had made him less
Than either in resolve.

I. Ber. Such ties are not
For those who are called to the high destinies
Which purify corrupted commonwealths;
We must forget all feelings save the one —
We must resign all passions save our purpose —
We must behold no object save our country —
And only look on death as beautiful,
So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,
And draw down freedom on her evermore.

Cal. But if we fail ——

I. Ber. They never fail who die
In a great cause: the block may soak their gore;  
Their heads may sodden in the sun; their limbs  
Be strung to city gates and castle walls—  
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years  
Elapse, and others share as dark a doom,  
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts  
Which overpower all others, and conduct  
The world at last to freedom: What were we,  
If Brutus had not lived? He died in giving  
Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson—  
A name which is a virtue, and a soul  
Which multiplies itself throughout all time  
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state  
Turns servile: he and his high friend were styled  
"The last of Romans!" Let us be the first  
Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires.  

_Cal._ Our fathers did not fly from Attila  
Into these isles, where palaces have sprung  
On banks redeemed from the rude ocean's ooze,  
To own a thousand despot's in his place.  
Better bow down before the Hun, and call  
A Tartar lord, than these swoln silkworms masters!  
The first at least was man, and used his sword  
As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things  
Command our swords, and rule us with a word  
As with a spell.  

_I. Ber._ It shall be broken soon.  
You say that all things are in readiness:  
To-day I have not been the usual round,  
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care: these orders
In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have
Lent a fair color to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtained in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet.—Are all supplied with arms?

Cal. All who were deemed trustworthy: there are some
Whom it were well to keep in ignorance
Till it be time to strike, and then supply them;
When in the heat and hurry of the hour
They have no opportunity to pause,
But needs must on with those who will surround them.

I. Ber. You have said well. Have you remarked all such?

Cal. I've noted most; and caused the other chiefs
To use like caution in their companies.
As far as I have seen, we are enough
To make the enterprise secure, if 'tis
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 'tis begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

I. Ber. Let the Sixteen meet at the wonted hour,
Except Soranzo, Nicoletto Blondo,
And Marco Giuda, who will keep their watch
Within the arsenal, and hold all ready
Expectant of the signal we will fix on.

Cal. We will not fail.
I. Ber. Let all the rest be there;  
I have a stranger to present to them.  
Cal. A stranger! doth he know the secret?  
I. Ber. Yes.  
Cal. And have you dared to peril your friends’ lives  
On a rash confidence in one we know not?  
I. Ber. I have risked no man’s life except my own—  
Of that be certain: he is one who may  
Make our assurance doubly sure, according  
His aid; and if reluctant, he no less  
Is in our power: he comes alone with me,  
And cannot ’scape us; but he will not swerve.  
Cal. I cannot judge of this until I know him:  
Is he one of our order?  
I. Ber. Ay, in spirit,  
Although a child of greatness; he is one  
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one—  
One who has done great deeds, and seen great changes;  
No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;  
Valiant in war, and sage in council; noble  
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:  
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,  
That if once stirred and baffled, as he has been  
Upon the tenderest points, there is no Fury  
In Grecian story like to that which wrings  
His vitals with her burning hands, till he  
Grows capable of all things for revenge;
And add too, that his mind is liberal,
He sees and feels the people are oppressed,
And shares their sufferings. Take him all in all,
We have need of such, and such have need of us.

Cal. And what part would you have him take
with us?

I. Ber. It may be, that of chief.

Cal. What! and resign
Your own command as leader?

I. Ber. Even so.
My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had marked me
out
To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear: if I have found such
As you yourselves shall own more worthy, think
you
That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,
Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,
Rather than yield to one above me in
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,
Know your friend better; but you all shall judge.—
Away! and let us meet at the fixed hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.

Cal. Worthy Bertuccio, I have known you ever
Trusty and brave, with head and heart to plan
What I have still been prompt to execute.
For my own part, I seek no other chief;
What the rest will decide I know not, but
I am with you, as I have ever been,
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us meet.  

[Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Scene, the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it. — A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.

Enter the Doge alone, disguised.

Doge (solus). I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee
A lazar-house of tyranny: the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not;
And therefore was I punished, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague-spots in the healing wave. Tall fane!
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead,
Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,
Moulder'd into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes,
When what is now a handful shook the earth—
Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house!
Vault where two Doges rest—my sires! who died
The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labors, wounds, and state
I have inherited,—let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,
And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me!
I call them up, and them and thee to witness
What it hath been which put me to this task—
Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,
Their mighty name dis-honored all in me,
Not by me, but by the ungrateful nobles
We fought to make our equals, not our lords:—
And chiefly thou, Ordelaf the brave,
Who perished in the field, where I since conquered,
Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice' foes, there offered up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?
Spirits! smile down upon me; for my cause
Is yours, in all life now can be of yours,—
Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,
And in the future fortunes of our race!
Let me but prosper, and I make this city
Free and immortal, and our house's name
Worthier of what you were, now and hereafter!*

Enter Israel Bertuccio.

I. Ber. Who goes there?
Doge. A friend to Venice.
I. Ber. 'Tis he.
Welcome, my lord,—you are before the time.
Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly.
I. Ber. Have with you.—I am proud and pleased to see
Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all dispelled?
Doge. Not so—but I have set my little left
Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
When I first listened to your treason,—Start not!
That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
Though I be wrought on to commit them. When
I heard you tempt your sovereign, and forbore
To have you dragged to prison, I became
Your guitiest accomplice: now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.

* [The Doge, true to his appointment, is waiting for his conductor before the church of San Paolo e Giovanni. There is great loftiness, both of feeling and diction, in this passage.—Jeffrey.]
I. Ber. Strange words, my lord, and most unmerited;
I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. We—We!—no matter—you have earned the right
To talk of us. — But to the point. — If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, rendered free
And flourishing, when we are in our graves,
Conducts her generations to our tombs,
And makes her children with their little hands
Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel;—thou
No less than he who was thy sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.

I. Ber. 'Tis not the moment to consider thus,
Else I could answer. — Let us to the meeting,
Or we may be observed in lingering here.

Doge. We are observed, and have been.

I. Ber. We observed! Let me discover—and this steel——

Doge. Put up;
Here are no human witnesses: look there—
What see you?

I. Ber. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.
That warrior was the sire
Of my sire's fathers, and that statue was
Decreed to him by the twice rescued city:—
Think you that he looks down on us or no?

I. Ber. My lord, these are mere fantasies; there are
No eyes in marble.

But there are in Death.
I tell thee, man, there is a spirit in
Such things that acts and sees, unseen, though felt;
And, if there be a spell to stir the dead,
'Tis in such deeds as we are now upon.
Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as mine
Can rest, when he, their last descendant chief,
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves
With stung plebeians?*

I. Ber. It had been as well
To have pondered this before, — ere you embarked
In our great enterprise. — Do you repent?

Doge. No — but I feel, and shall do to the last.
I cannot quench a glorious life at once,

* [There is a great deal of natural struggle in the breast of the
high-born and haughty Doge, between the resentment with which
he burns on the one hand, and the reluctance with which he
considers the meanness of the associates with whom he has
leagued himself, on the other. The conspiring Doge is not, we
think, meant to be ambitious for himself, but he is sternly,
proudly, a Venetian noble; and it is impossible for him to tear
from his bosom the scorn for every thing plebeian which has been
implanted there by birth, education, and a long life of princely
command. There are other thoughts, too, and of a gentler kind,
which cross from time to time his perturbed spirit. He remem-
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,*
And take men’s lives by stealth, without some pause:
Yet doubt me not; it is this very feeling,
And knowing what has wrung me to be thus,
Which is your best security. There’s not
A roused mechanic in your busy plot
So wronged as I, so fallen, so loudly called
To his redress: the very means I am forced
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,
That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.

I. Ber. Let us away — hark — the hour strikes.

Doge. On — on —
It is our knell or that of Venice — On.

I. Ber. Say rather, ’tis her freedom’s rising peal
Of triumph —— This way — we are near the place.

[Exeunt.

bers — he cannot entirely forget — the days and nights of old companionship, by which he had long been bound to those whose sentence he has consented to seal. He has himself been declaiming against the folly of mercy, and arguing valiantly the necessity of total extirpation, — and that, too, in the teeth even of some of the plebeian conspirators themselves: yet the poet, with profound insight into the human heart, makes him shudder when his own impetuosity has brought himself, and all who hear him, to the brink. He cannot look upon the bloody resolution, no not even after he himself has been the chief instrument of its formation. — Lockhart.]

* [MS. — “Nor dwindle to a cut-throat without shuddering.”]
SCENE II.

The House where the Conspirators meet.

Dagolino, Doro, Bertram, Fedele Trevisano, Calendaro, Antonio delle Bende, etc. etc.

Cal. (entering.) Are all here?

Dag. All with you; except the three

On duty, and our leader Israel,

Who is expected momentarily.

Cal. Where's Bertram?

Ber. Here!

Cal. Have you not been able to complete

The number wanting in your company?

Ber. I had marked out some: but I have not dared

To trust them with the secret, till assured

That they were worthy faith.

Cal. There is no need

Of trusting to their faith: who, save ourselves

And our more chosen comrades, is aware

Fully of our intent? they think themselves

Engaged in secret to the Signory,*

To punish some more dissolute young nobles

Who have defied the law in their excesses;

But once drawn up, and their new swords well-

fleshed

In the rank hearts of the more odious senators,

They will not hesitate to follow up

Their blow upon the others, when they see

* An historical fact. See Appendix, Note (A).
The example of their chiefs, and I for one
Will set them such, that they for very shame
And safety will not pause till all have perished.

Ber. How say you? all!
Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?
Ber. I spare?

I have no power to spare. I only questioned,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked men
There might be some, whose age and qualities
Might mark them out for pity.

Cal. Yes, such pity
As when the viper hath been cut to pieces,
The separate fragments quivering in the sun,
In the last energy of venomous life,
Deserve and have. Why, I should think as soon
Of pitying some particular fang which made
One in the jaw of the swoln serpent, as
Of saving one of these: they form but links
Of one long chain; one mass, one breath, one body,
They eat, and drink, and live, and breed together,
Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert,—
So let them die as one!

Dag. Should one survive,
He would be dangerous as the whole; it is not
Their number, be it tens or thousands, but
The spirit of this aristocracy
Which must be rooted out; and if there were
A single shoot of the old tree in life,
'Twould fasten in the soil, and spring again
To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm!
Gal. Look to it well,
Bertram; I have an eye upon thee.

Who Distrusts me?

Cal. Not I; for if I did so,
Thou wouldst not now be there to talk of trust:
It is thy softness, not thy want of faith,
Which makes thee to be doubted.

Ber. You should know
Who hear me, who and what I am; a man
Roused like yourselves to overthrow oppression;
A kind man, I am apt to think, as some
Of you have found me; and if brave or no,
You, Calendaro, can pronounce, who have seen me
Put to the proof; or, if you should have doubts,
I'll clear them on your person!

Cal. You are welcome,
When once our enterprise is o'er, which must not
Be interrupted by a private brawl.

Ber. I am no brawler; but can bear myself
As far among the foe as any he
Who hears me; else why have I been selected
To be of your chief comrades? but no less
I own my natural weakness; I have not
Yet learned to think of indiscriminate murder
Without some sense of shuddering; and the sight
Of blood which spouts through hoary scalps is not
To me a thing of triumph, nor the death
Of man surprised a glory. Well—too well
I know that we must do such things on those
Whose acts have raised up such avengers; but
If there were some of these who could be saved
From out this sweeping fate, for our own sakes
And for our honor, to take off some stain
Of massacre, which else pollutes it wholly,
I had been glad; and see no cause in this
For sneer, nor for suspicion!

_Dag._ Calm thee, Bertram;
For we suspect thee not, and take good heart.
It is the cause, and not our will, which asks
Such actions from our hands: we'll wash away
All stains in Freedom's fountain!

_Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and the DOGE, disguised._

_Dag._ Welcome, Israel.

_Consp._ Most welcome.—Brave Bertuccio, thou
art late—

Who is this stranger?

_Cal._ It is time to name him.

Our comrades are even now prepared to greet him
In brotherhood, as I have made it known
That thou wouldst add a brother to our cause,
Approved by thee, and thus approved by all,
Such is our trust in all thine actions. Now
Let him unfold himself.

_I. Ber._ Stranger, step forth!

[The Doge discovers himself.

_Consp._ To arms!—we are betrayed—it is the
Doge!

Down with them both! our traitorous captain, and
The tyrant he hath sold us to.

_Cal._ (drawing his sword). Hold! hold!
Who moves a step against them dies. Hold! hear Bertuccio—What! are you appalled to see A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man Amongst you?—Israel, speak! what means this mystery?

I. Ber. Let them advance and strike at their own bosoms, Ungrateful suicides! for on our lives Depend their own, their fortunes, and their hopes.

Doge. Strike!—If I dreaded death, a death more fearful Than any your rash weapons can inflict, I should not now be here:—Oh, noble Courage! The eldest born of Fear, which makes you brave Against this solitary hoary head! See the bold chiefs, who would reform a state. And shake down senates, mad with wrath and dread At sight of one patrician!—Butcher me, You can; I care not.—Israel, are these men The mighty hearts you spoke of? look upon them!

Cal. Faith! he hath shamed us, and deservedly. Was this your trust in your true chief Bertuccio, To turn your swords against him and his guest? Sheathe them, and hear him.

I. Ber. I disdain to speak. They might and must have known a heart like mine Incapable of treachery; and the power They gave me to adopt all fitting means To further their design was ne'er abused. They might be certain that whoc'er was brought
By me into this council had been led
To take his choice — as brother or as victim.

_Doge._ And which am I to be? your actions leave
Some cause to doubt the freedom of the choice.

_I. Ber._ My lord, we would have perished here
Had these rash men proceeded; but, behold,
They are ashamed of that mad moment's impulse,
And droop their heads; believe me, they are such
As I described them — Speak to them.

_Cal._ Ay, speak; We are all listening in wonder.

_I. Ber._ (addressing the Conspirators). You are safe,
Nay, more, almost triumphant — listen then,
And know my words for truth.

_Doge._ You see me here,
As one of you hath said, an old, unarmed,
Defenceless man; and yesterday you saw me
Presiding in the hall of ducal state,
Apparent sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters — the patricians.
Why I was there you know, or think you know;
Why I am _here_, he who hath been most wronged,
He who among you hath been most insulted,
Outraged and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him _here_?
You know my recent story, all men know it,
And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgment to heap scorn on scorn.
But spare me the recital — it is here,
Here at my heart the outrage — but my words,
Already spent in unavailing plaints,
Would only show my feebleness the more,
And I come here to strengthen even the strong,
And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman's weapons; but I need not urge you.
Our private wrongs have sprung from public vices
In this — I cannot call it commonwealth
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state*
Without its virtues — temperance and valor.
The Lords of Lacedaemon were true soldiers,
But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved;
Although dressed out to head a pageant, as
The Greeks of yore made drunk their slaves to form
A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this monster of a state,
This mockery of a government, this spectre,
Which must be exorcised with blood, — and then
We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights,
Proportioned like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,

* [MS. — "But all the worst sins of the Spartan state."]
And making firm the whole with grace and beauty, 
So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry.
In operating this great change, I claim
To be one of you — if you trust in me;
If not, strike home, — my life is compromised,
And I would rather fall by freemen’s hands
Than live another day to act the tyrant
As delegate of tyrants: such I am not,
And never have been — read it in our annals;
I can appeal to my past government
In many lands and cities; they can tell you
If I were an oppressor, or a man
Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.
Haply had I been what the senate sought,
A thing of robes and trinkets, dizened out
To sit in state as for a sovereign’s picture;
A popular scourge, a ready sentence-signer,
A stickler for the Senate and “the Forty,”
A sceptic of all measures which had not
The sanction of “the Ten,” a council-fawner,
A tool, a fool, a puppet,— they had ne’er
Fostered the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reached me through my pity for the people;
That many know, and they who know not yet
Will one day learn: meantime I do devote,
Whate’er the issue, my last days of life—
My present power such as it is, not that
Of Doge, but of a man who has been great
Before he was degraded to a Doge,
And still has individual means and mind;
I stake my fame (and I had fame) — my breath —
(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh)
My heart — my hope — my soul — upon this cast!
Such as I am, I offer me to you
And to your chiefs, accept me or reject me,
A Prince who fain would be a citizen
Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so.

Cal. Long live Faliero! — Venice shall be free!
Consp. Long live Faliero!

I. Ber. Comrades! did I well?

Is not this man a host in such a cause?

Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you?

Cal. Ay, and the first amongst us, as thou hast been
Of Venice — be our general and chief.

Doge. Chief! — general! — I was general at Zara,
And chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, prince in Venice:
I cannot stoop —— that is, I am not fit
To lead a band of —— patriots: when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
'Tis not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows — but now to the point:
Israel has stated to me your whole plan —
'Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.

Cal. E'en when thou wilt. Is it not so, my friends?
I have disposed all for a sudden blow;
When shall it be then?
SCENE II.  DOGE OF VENICE.

Doge.  At sunrise.
Ber.  So soon?
Doge.  So soon?—so late—each hour accumulates
Peril on peril, and the more so now
Since I have mingled with you;—know you not
The Council, and “the Ten?” the spies, the eyes
Of the patricians dubious of their slaves,
And now more dubious of the prince they have
made one?
I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly,
Full to the Hydra’s heart—its heads will follow.
Cal.  With all my soul and sword, I yield assent.
Our companies are ready, sixty each,
And all now under arms by Israel’s order;
Each at their different place of rendezvous,
And vigilant, expectant of some blow;
Let each repair for action to his post!
And now, my lord, the signal?
Doge.  When you hear
The great bell of Saint Mark’s, which may not be
Struck without special order of the Doge
(The last poor privilege they leave their prince),
March on Saint Mark’s!
I. Ber.  And there?—
Doge.  By different routes
Let your march be directed, every sixty
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of war
And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn
Discerned before the port; form round the palace,
Within whose court will be drawn out in arms
My nephew and the clients of our house,
Many and martial; while the bell tolls on,
Shout ye, "Saint Mark!—the foe is on our waters!"

Cal. I see it now— but on, my noble lord.

Doge. All the patricians flocking to the Council,
(Which they dare not refuse, at the dread signal
Pealing from out their patron saint's proud tower,)
Will then be gathered in unto the harvest,
And we will reap them with the sword for sickle.
If some few should be tardy or absent them,
'Twill be but to be taken faint and single,
When the majority are put to rest.

Cal. Would that the hour were come! we will
not scotch,
But kill.

Ber. Once more, sir, with your pardon, I
Would now repeat the question which I asked
Before Bertuccio added to our cause
This great ally who renders it more sure,
And therefore safer, and as such admits
Some dawn of mercy to a portion of
Our victims—must all perish in this slaughter?

Cal. All who encounter me and mine, be sure,
The mercy they have shown, I show.

Consp. All! all!

Is this a time to talk of pity? when
Have they e'er shown, or felt, or feigned it?

I. Ber. Bertram,
This false compassion is a folly, and
SCENE II. DOGE OF VENICE.

Injustice to thy comrades and thy cause!
Dost thou not see, that if we single out
Some for escape, they live but to avenge
The fallen? and how distinguish now the innocent
From out the guilty? all their acts are one —
A single emanation from one body,
Together knit for our oppression! 'Tis
Much that we let their children live; I doubt
If all of these even should be set apart:
The hunter may reserve some single cub
From out the tiger's litter, but who e'er
Would seek to save the spotted sire or dam,
Unless to perish by their fangs? however,
I will abide by Doge Faliero's counsel:
Let him decide if any should be saved.

*Doge.* Ask me not — tempt me not with such a question —
Decide yourselves.

*I. Ber.* You know their private virtues
Far better than we can, to whom alone
Their public vices, and most foul oppression,
Have made them deadly; if there be amongst them
One who deserves to be repealed, pronounce.

*Doge.* Dolfino's father was my friend, and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared*
My Genoese embassy: I saved the life
Of Veniero — shall I save it twice?

* [MS. — "Fought by my side, and { Marc Cornaro } shared.
{ John Grimani }]
My { Genoese embassy; } I saved the life," etc.]
Would that I could save them and Venice also!
All these men, or their fathers, were my friends
Till they became my subjects; then fell from me
As faithless leaves drop from the o'erblown flower,
And left me a lone blighted thorny stalk,
Which, in its solitude, can shelter nothing;
So, as they let me wither, let them perish!

Cal. They cannot coexist with Venice' freedom!

Doge. Ye, though you know and feel our mutual mass
Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant*
What fatal poison to the springs of life,
To human ties, and all that's good and dear,
Lurks in the present institutes of Venice:
All these men were my friends; I loved them, they
Requited honorably my regards;
We served and fought; we smiled and wept in concert;
We revelled or we sorrowed side by side;
We made alliances of blood and marriage;
We grew in years and honors fairly,—till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them choose me for their prince, and then farewell!
Farewell all social memory! all thoughts
In common! and sweet bonds which link old friendships,
When the survivors of long years and actions,
Which now belong to history, soothe the days

* [MS. — "Bear witness with me! ye who hear and know,
And feel our mutual mass of many wrongs."]
SCENE II.  DOGE OF VENICE.

Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
Of half a century on his brother's brow,
And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
Flit round them whispering of the days gone by,
And seeming not all dead, as long as two
Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble——
Oime! Oime! — and must I do this deed?*

I. Ber. My lord, you are much moved: it is not
now
That such things must be dwelt upon.

Doge. Your patience
A moment — I recede not: mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour that made me Doge, the Doge they
made me —

* [The Doge is at last ushered into the presence of the conspirators, who are at first disposed to sacrifice both him and his introducer; but are pacified and converted by a speech of three pages, which is not very good: and then they put it to him to say, whether any of the devoted senate shall be spared in the impending massacre. He says —

"Ask me not — tempt me not with such a question —
Decide yourselves." —

But, on being further pressed, he, in these passages, gives way to feelings most natural to his own condition, but by no means calculated to recommend him to his new associates: and afterwards, when he is left alone with the chief conspirator, the contrast of their situation is still more finely and forcibly elicited.— JEFFREY.]
Farewell the past! I died to all that had been,
Or rather they to me: no friends, no kindness,
No privacy of life—all were cut off:
They came not near me, such approach gave umbrage;
They could not love me, such was not the law;
They thwarted me, 't was the state's policy;
They baffled me, 't was a patrician's duty;
They wronged me, for such was to right the state;
They could not right me, that would give suspicion;
So that I was a slave to my own subjects;
So that I was a foe to my own friends;
Begirt with spies for guards—with robes for power—
With pomp for freedom—gaolers for a council—
Inquisitors for friends—and hell for life!
I had one only fount of quiet left,
And that they poisoned! My pure household gods*
Were shivered on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
Sate grinning Ribaldry and sneering Scorn.

I. Ber. You have been deeply wronged, and now
shall be
Nobly avenged before another night.

Doge. I had borne all—it hurt me, but I bore it—
Till this last running over of the cup
Of bitterness—until this last loud insult,
Not only unredressed, but sanctioned; then,

* ["I could have forgiven the dagger or the bowl, any thing,
but the deliberate desolation piled upon me, when I stood alone
upon my hearth, with my household gods shivered around me.
Do you suppose I have forgotten or forgiven it? It has, compar-
atively, swallowed up in me every other feeling, and I am only
a spectator upon earth till a tenfold opportunity offers. It may
come yet."—*Byron's Letters*, 1819.]
And thus, I cast all further feelings from me —
The feelings which they crushed for me, long, long
Before, even in their oath of false allegiance!
Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured
Their friend and made a sovereign, as boys make
Playthings, to do their pleasure — and be broken!
I from that hour have seen but senators
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge,
Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear;
They dreading he should snatch the tyranny
From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants.
To me, then, these men have no private life,
Nor claim to ties they have cut off from others;
As senators for arbitrary acts
Amenable, I look on them — as such
Let them be dealt upon.*

Cal. And now to action!

Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be
The last night of mere words: I'd fain be doing!
Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me
wakeful!

I. Ber. Disperse then to your posts: be firm and
vigilant;

* [The struggle of feelings with which the Doge undertakes
the conspiracy is admirably contrasted with the ferocious eagerness of his low-born associates; and only loses its effect because
we cannot but be sensible that the man who felt thus, could not
have gone on with his guilty project, unless stimulated by some
greater and more accumulated injuries than are, in the course
of the tragedy, brought before the perception of the reader. —
Heber.]
Think on the wrongs we bear, the rights we claim.
This day and night shall be the last of peril!
Watch for the signal, and then march. I go
To join my band; let each be prompt to marshal
His separate charge: the Doge will now return
To the palace to prepare all for the blow.
We part to meet in freedom and in glory!
   Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage
to you
Shall be the head of Steno on this sword!
   Doge. No; let him be reserved unto the last,
Nor turn aside to strike at such a prey,*
Till nobler game is quarried: his offence
Was a mere ebullition of the vice,
The general corruption generated
By the foul aristocracy: he could not —
He dared not in more honorable days
Have risked it. I have merged all private wrath
Against him in the thought of our great purpose.
A slave insults me — I require his punishment
From his proud master's hands; if he refuse it,
The offence grows his, and let him answer it.
   Cal. Yet, as the immediate cause of the alliance
Which consecrates our undertaking more,
I owe him such deep gratitude, that fain
I would repay him as he merits; may I?
   Doge. You would but lop the hand, and I the head;
You would but smite the scholar, I the master;

* [MS. — "Nor turn aside to strike at such a wretch."]
You would but punish Steno, I the senate.
I cannot pause on individual hate,
In the absorbing, sweeping, whole revenge,
Which, like the sheeted fire from heaven, must blast
Without distinction, as it fell of yore,
Where the Dead Sea hath quenched two cities' ashes.

_I. Ber._ Away, then, to your posts! I but remain
A moment to accompany the Doge
To our late place of tryst, to see no spies
Have been upon the scout, and thence I hasten
To where my allotted band is under arms.

_Cal._ Farewell, then,—until dawn!

_I. Ber._ Success go with you!

_Consp._ We will not fail—Away! My lord, farewell!*

* [The great defect of Marino Faliero is, that the nature and character of the conspiracy excite no interest. It matters little that Lord Byron has been faithful to history, if the event is destitute of a poetic character. Like Alfieri, to whom, in many points, his genius approximates, he is fettered by an intractable story, which is wholly remote from the instincts and feelings of mankind. How elevated soever may be his diction, how vivid soever his coloring, a moral truth is wanting. That charm, so difficult to define, so easy to apprehend, which, diffused over the scene, excites in generous bosoms an exalted enthusiasm for the great interests of humanity. This is the poesy of history. It is the charm of the William Tell of Schiller; it is felt in the awful plot of Brutus, and, to a certain degree, in the conspiracy of Pierre and Jaffier; for the end and purpose of these conspiracies were, to redeem their country from insult and oppression. But in Marino Faliero's attempt against the state, we contemplate nothing but the project of a sanguinary ruffian,
[The Conspirators salute the Doge and Israel Bertuccio, and retire, headed by Philip Calendaro. The Doge and Israel Bertuccio remain.]

I. Ber. We have them in the toil—it cannot fail!
Now thou'rt indeed a sovereign, and wilt make
A name immortal greater than the greatest:
Free citizens have struck at kings ere now;
Caesars have fallen, and even patrician hands
Have crushed dictators, as the popular steel
Has reached patricians: but, until this hour,
What prince has plotted for his people's freedom?
Or risked a life to liberate his subjects?
For ever, and for ever, they conspire
Against the people, to abuse their hands
To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
Against the fellow nations, so that yoke
On yoke, and slavery and death may whet,
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan!
Now, my lord, to our enterprise;—'tis great,
And greater the reward; why stand you rapt?
A moment back, and you were all impatience!

Doge. And is it then decided! must they die?

seeking to grasp unlimited authority, and making, after the established precedents of all usurpers, the wrongs and sufferings of the commonalty his pretence; while, in another aspect of his character, we see him goaded, by an imagined injury, into an enterprise which would have inundated Venice with her best blood. Is this a sublime spectacle, calculated to purge the mind, according to the aphorism of Aristotle, by means of terror or pity?—Ecl. Rev.]
I. Ber. Who?

Doge. My own friends by blood and courtesy, And many deeds and days — the senators?

I. Ber. You passed their sentence, and it is a just one.

Doge. Ay, so it seems, and so it is to you;
You are a patriot, plebeian Gracchus —
The rebel's oracle, the people's tribune —
I blame you not — you act in your vocation;
They smote you, and oppressed you, and despised you;
So they have me: but you ne'er spake with them;
You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt;
You never had their wine-cup at your lips;
You grew not up with them, nor laughed, nor wept,
Nor held a revel in their company;
Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claimed their smile
In social interchange for yours, nor trusted
Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have:
These hairs of mine are gray, and so are theirs,
The elders of the council: I remember
When all our locks were like the raven's wing,
As we went forth to take our prey around
The isles wrung from the false Mahometan;
And can I see them dabbled o'er with blood?
Each stab to them will seem my suicide.*

* [The unmixed selfishness of the motives with which the Doge accedes to the plot perpetually escapes him. Not that he is wholly untouched by the compunctious visitings of nature.]
I. Ber. Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy a child; if you are not in second childhood, call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor thus shame yourself and me. By heavens! I'd rather forego even now, or fail in our intent, than see the man I venerate subside from high resolves into such shallow weakness! you have seen blood in battle, shed it, both your own and that of others; can you shrink then from a few drops from veins of hoary vampires, who but give back what they have drained from millions?

Doge. Bear with me! step by step, and blow on blow, I will divide with you; think not I waver: ah! no; it is the certainty of all

But the fearful unity of such a character is broken by assigning to it the throbings and the pangs of human feelings, and by making him recoil with affright from slaughter and desolation. in the roar and whirlwind of the mighty passions which precede the acting of a dreadful plot, it is wholly unreasonable and out of keeping to put into his mouth the sentimental effusions of affectionate pity for his friends, whom he thinks of rather too late to give these touches of remorse and mercy any other character than that of hypocritical whining. The sentiments are certainly good, but lamentably out of time and place, and remind us of Scarron's remark upon the moralizing Phlegyas in the infernal regions,—

"Cette sentence est vrai et belle, 
Mais dans enfer de quoi sert-elle?"

Yet though wholly repugnant to dramatic congruity, the passage has great poetic power.—Ecl. Rev.]
Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.
But let these last and lingering thoughts have way
To which you only and the Night are conscious,
And both regardless; when the hour arrives,
'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
Which shall unpeople many palaces,
And hew the highest genealogic trees
Down to the earth, strewed with their bleeding fruit,
And crush their blossoms into barrenness:
This will I—must I—have I sworn to do,
Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;
But still I quiver to behold what I
Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.

I. Ber. Re-man your breast; I feel no such remorse,
I understand it not: why should you change?
You acted, and you act, on your free will.

Doge. Ay, there it is—you feel not, nor do I,
Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
A thousand lives, and, killing, do no murder;
You feel not—you go to this butcher-work
As if these high-born men were steers for shambles!
When all is over, you'll be free and merry,
And calmly wash those hands incarnadine;
But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows
In this surpassing massacre, shall be,
Shall see and feel—oh God! oh God! 'tis true,
And thou dost well to answer that it was
"My own free will and act," and yet you err,
For I will do this! Doubt not—fear not; I
Will be your most unmerciful accomplice!
And yet I act no more on my free will,
Nor my own feelings — both compel me back;
But there is hell within me and around,
And like the demon who believes and trembles,
Must I abhor and do. Away! away!
Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
To gather the retainers of our house.
Doubt not, Saint Mark's great bell shall wake all
Venice,
Except her slaughtered senate: ere the sun
Be broad upon the Adriatic there
Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
The roar of waters in the cry of blood!
I am resolved — come on.

I. Ber. With all my soul!
Keep a firm rein upon these bursts of passion;
Remember what these men have dealt to thee,
And that this sacrifice will be succeeded
By ages of prosperity and freedom
To this unshackled city: a true tyrant
Would have depopulated empires, nor
Have felt the strange compunction which hath
wrung you
To punish a few traitors to the people.
Trust me, such were a pity more misplaced
Than the late mercy of the state to Steno.

Doge. Man, thou hast struck upon the chord
which jars
All nature from my heart. Hence to our task!

[Exeunt.]
ACT IV.

SCENE I.*

Palazzo of the patrician Lioni. Lioni laying aside the mask and cloak which the Venetian Nobles wore in public, attended by a Domestic.

Lioni. I will to rest, right weary of this revel. The gayest we have held for many moons, And yet, * know not why, it cheered me not; There came a heaviness across my heart, Which, in the lightest movement of the dance, Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united Even with the lady of my love, oppressed me, And through my spirit chilled my blood, until A damp like death rose o'er my brow; I strove To laugh the thought away, but 'twould not be; Through all the music ringing in my ears A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,

* [The fourth act opens with the most poetical and brilliantly written scene in the play—though it is a soliloquy, and altogether alien from the business of the piece. Lioni, a young nobleman, returns home from a splendid assembly, rather out of spirits; and, opening his palace window for air, contrasts the tranquillity of the night scene which lies before him, with the feverish turbulence and glittering enchantments of that which he has just quitted. Nothing can be finer than this picture, in both its compartments. There is a truth and a luxuriance in the description of the rout, which mark at once the hand of a master, and raise it to a very high rank as a piece of poetical painting;—while the moonlight view from the window is equally grand and beautiful.—Jeffrey.]
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark:
So that I left the festival before
It reached its zenith, and will woo my pillow
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light
The lamp within my chamber.

Ant. Yes, my lord:
Command you no refreshment?

Lioni. Nought, save sleep,
Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it,

[Exit Antonio.

Though my breast feels too anxious; I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits: 'tis
A goodly night; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon has brightened. What a still-

[ Goes to an open lattice.

And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls,
Spread over the reluctant gloom which haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which showed all things, but nothing as they were.
There age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of youth
At the sad labor of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Pranked forth in all the pride of ornament,  
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood  
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,  
Believed itself forgotten, and was fooled.  
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such  
Vain adjuncts, lavished its true bloom, and health,  
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press  
Of flushed and crowded wassailers, and wasted  
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was pleasure,  
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams  
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not  
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.  
The music, and the banquet, and the wine —  
The garlands, the rose odors, and the flowers —  
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments —  
The white arms and the raven hair — the braids  
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,  
An India in itself, yet dazzling not  
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,  
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze and heaven;  
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,  
Suggesting the more secret symmetry  
Of the fair forms which terminate so well —  
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,  
Its false and true enchantments — art and nature,  
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank  
The sight of beauty as the parched pilgrim's  
On Arab sands the false mirage, which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone. — Around me are the stars and waters—
Worlds mirrored in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Reared up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse;
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city—
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm!
I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate: and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,—
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this——

[A knocking is heard from without.

Hark! what is that? or who at such a moment?

Enter Antonio.

Ant. My lord, a man without, on urgent business,
Implores to be admitted.

Lioni. Is he a stranger?

Ant. His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
I craved his name, but this he seemed reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni. 'Tis a strange hour, and a suspicious
bearing!
And yet there is slight peril: 'tis not in
Their houses noble men are struck at; still,  
Although I know not that I have a foe  
In Venice, 't will be wise to use some caution.  
Admit him, and retire; but call up quickly  
Some of thy fellows, who may wait without.—  
Who can this man be?—  
[Exit Antonio, and returns with Bertram muffled.  
Ber. My good lord Lioni,  
I have no time to lose, nor thou—dismiss  
This menial hence; I would be private with you.  
Lioni. It seems the voice of Bertram—Go,  
Antonio. [Exit Antonio.  
Now, stranger, what would you at such an hour?  
Ber. (discovering himself). A boon, my noble patron; you have granted  
Many to your poor client, Bertram; add  
This one, and make him happy.  
Lioni. Thou hast known me  
From boyhood, ever ready to assist thee  
In all fair objects of advancement, which  
Beseem one of thy station; I would promise  
Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,  
Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode  
Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit  
Hath some mysterious import— but say on—  
What has occurred, some rash and sudden broil?—  
A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab?—  
Mere things of every day; so that thou hast not  
Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;  
But then thou must withdraw, for angry friends
And relatives, in the first burst of vengeance,
Are things in Venice deadlier than the laws.

Ber. My lord, I thank you; but —

Lioni. But what? You have not
Raised a rash hand against one of our order?
If so, withdraw and fly, and own it not;
I would not slay — but then I must not save thee!
He who has shed patrician blood —

Ber. I come
To save patrician blood, and not to shed it!
And thereunto I must be speedy, for
Each minute lost may lose a life; since Time
Has changed his slow scythe for the two-edged
sword,
And is about to take, instead of sand,
The dust from sepulchres to fill his hour-glass! —
Go not thou forth to-morrow!

Lioni. Wherefore not? —
What means this menace?

Ber. Do not seek its meaning,
But do as I implore thee; — stir not forth,
Whate'er be stirring; though the roar of crowds —
The cry of women, and the shrieks of babes —
The groans of men — the clash of arms — the sound
Of rolling drum, shrill trump, and hollow bell,
Peal in one wide alarum! — Go not forth
Until the tocsin's silent, nor even then
Till I return!

Lioni. Again, what does this mean?

Ber. Again, I tell thee, ask not; but by all
Thou holdest dear on earth or heaven — by all
The souls of thy great fathers, and thy hope
To emulate them, and to leave behind
Descendants worthy both of them and thee —
By all thou hast of blessed in hope or memory —
By all thou hast to fear here or hereafter —
By all the good deeds thou hast done to me,
Good I would now repay with greater good,
Remain within — trust to thy household gods,
And to my word for safety, if thou dost
As I now counsel — but if not, thou art lost!

Lioni. I am indeed already lost in wonder;
Surely thou ravest! what have I to dread?
Who are my foes? or if there be such, why
Art thou leagued with them? — thou! or if so leagued,
Why comest thou to tell me at this hour,
And not before?

Ber. I cannot answer this.
Wilt thou go forth despite of this true warning?

Lioni. I was not born to shrink from idle threats,
The cause of which I know not: at the hour
Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
Be found among the absent.

Ber. Say not so!
Once more, art thou determined to go forth?

Lioni. I am. Nor is there aught which shall im-
pede me!

Ber. Then Heaven have mercy on thy soul! —
Farewell!
[Going.]
Lioni. Stay—there is more in this than my own safety
Which makes me call thee back; we must not part thus:
Bertram, I have known thee long.

Ber. From childhood, signor,
You have been my protector: in the days
Of reckless infancy, when rank forgets,
Or, rather, is not yet taught to remember
Its cold prerogative, we played together;
Our sports, our smiles, our tears, were mingled oft;
My father was your father's client, I
His son's scarce less than foster-brother; years
Saw us together—happy, heart-full hours!
Oh God! the difference 'twixt those hours and this!

Lioni. Bertram, 'tis thou who hast forgotten them.

Ber. Nor now, nor ever; whatsoever betide,
I would have saved you: when to manhood's growth
We sprung, and you, devoted to the state,
As suits your station, the more humble Bertram
Was left unto the labors of the humble,
Still you forsook me not; and if my fortunes
Have not been tower ing, 't was no fault of him
Who oftentimes rescued and supported me
When struggling with the tides of circumstance
Which bear away the weaker: noble blood
Ne'er mantled in a nobler heart than thine
Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Bertram.
Would that thy fellow senators were like thee!
Lioni. Why, what hast thou to say against the senate?

Ber. Nothing.

Lioni. I know that there are angry spirits And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason, Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out Muffled to whisper curses to the night; Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians, And desperate libertines who brawl in taverns; Thou herdest not with such: 'tis true, of late I have lost sight of thee, but thou wert wont To lead a temperate life, and break thy bread With honest mates, and bear a cheerful aspect. What hath come to thee? in thy hollow eye And hueless cheek, and thine unquiet motions, Sorrow and shame and conscience seem at war To waste thee.

Ber. Rather shame and sorrow light On the accursed tyranny which rides* The very air in Venice, and makes men Madden as in the last hours of the plague Which sweeps the soul deliriously from life!

Lioni. Some villains have been tampering with thee, Bertram; This is not thy old language, nor own thoughts; Some wretch has made thee drunk with disaffection: But thou must not be lost so; thou wert good And kind, and art not fit for such base acts

* [MS. — "On the accursed tyranny which taints."]
As vice and villany would put thee to:
Confess—confide in me—thou know'st my nature—
What is it thou and thine are bound to do,
Which should prevent thy friend, the only son
Of him who was a friend unto thy father,
So that our good-will is a heritage
We should bequeath to our posterity
Such as ourselves received it, or augmented;
I say, what is it thou must do, that I
Should deem thee dangerous, and keep the house
Like a sick girl?

Ber. Nay, question me no further:
I must be gone.

Lioni. And I be murdered!—say,
Was it not thus thou said'st, my gentle Bertram?

Ber. Who talks of murder? what said I of
murder?—
'Tis false! I did not utter such a word.

Lioni. Thou didst not; but from out thy wolfish
eye,
So changed from what I knew it, there glares forth
The gladiator. If my life's thine object,
Take it—I am unarmed,—and then away!
I would not hold my breath on such a tenure
As the capricious mercy of such things
As thou and those who have set thee to thy task-work.

Ber. Sooner than spill thy blood, I peril mine;
Sooner than harm a hair of thine, I place
In jeopardy a thousand heads, and some
As noble, nay, even nobler than thine own.
Lioni. Ay, is it even so? Excuse me, Bertram; I am not worthy to be singled out From such exalted hecatombs—who are they That are in danger, and that make the danger?

Ber. Venice, and all that she inherits, are Divided like a house against itself, And so will perish ere to-morrow's twilight!

Lioni. More mysteries, and awful ones! But now, Or thou, or I, or both, it may be, are Upon the verge of ruin; speak once out, And thou art safe and glorious; for 'tis more Glorious to save than slay, and slay i' the dark too— Fie, Bertram! that was not a craft for thee! How would it look to see upon a spear The head of him whose heart was open to thee, Borne by thy hand before the shuddering people? And such may be my doom; for here I swear, Whate'er the peril or the penalty Of thy denunciation, I go forth, Unless thou dost detail the cause, and show The consequence of all which led thee here!

Ber. Is there no way to save thee? minutes fly, And thou art lost!—thou! my sole benefactor, The only being who was constant to me Through every change. Yet, make me not a traitor! Let me save thee—but spare my honor!

Lioni. Where Can lie the honor in a league of murder? And who are traitors save unto the state?

Ber. A league is still a compact, and more binding
In honest hearts when words must stand for law;
And in my mind, there is no traitor like
He whose domestic treason plants the poniard
Within the breast which trusted to his truth.

*Lioni.* And who will strike the steel to mine?

*Ber.* Not I;
I could have wound my soul up to all things
Save this. *Thou* must not die! and think how dear
Thy life is, when I risk so many lives,
Nay, more, the life of lives, the liberty
Of future generations, *not* to be
The assassin thou miscall'st me; — once, once more
I do adjure thee, pass not o'er thy threshold!

*Lioni.* It is in vain — this moment I go forth.

*Ber.* Then perish Venice rather than my friend!
I will disclose — ensnare — betray — destroy —
Oh, what a villain I become for thee!

*Lioni.* Say, rather thy friend's savior and the state's! —
Speak — pause not — all rewards, all pledges for
Thy safety and thy welfare; wealth such as
The state accords her worthiest servants; nay,
Nobility itself I guarantee thee,
So that thou art sincere and penitent.

*Ber.* I have thought again: it must not be — I love thee —
Thou knowest it — that I stand here is the proof,
Not least though last; but having done my duty
By thee, I now must do it by my country!
Farewell — we meet no more in life! — farewell!
Lioni. What, ho! — Antonio — Pedro — to the door!
See that none pass — arrest this man! —

Enter Antonio and other armed Domestics, who seize Bertram.

Lioni (continues). Take care
He hath no harm; bring me my sword and cloak,
And man the gondola with four oars — quick —

[Exit Antonio.

We will unto Giovanni Gradenigo's,
And send for Marc Cornaro: — fear not, Bertram;
This needful violence is for thy safety,
No less than for the general weal.

Ber. Where wouldst thou
Bear me a prisoner?

Lioni. Firstly to "the Ten;"
Next to the Doge.

Ber. To the Doge?

Lioni. Assuredly:

Is he not chief of the state?

Ber. Perhaps at sunrise —

Lioni. What mean you? — but we'll know anon.

Ber. Art sure?

Lioni. Sure as all gentle means can make; and if
They fail, you know "the Ten" and their tribunal,
And that St. Mark's has dungeons, and the dungeons
A rack.

Ber. Apply it then before the dawn
Now hastening into heaven. — One more such word,
And you shall perish piecemeal, by the death
You think to doom to me.

Reénter Antonio.

Ant. The bark is ready,
My lord, and all prepared.

Lioni. Look to the prisoner.

Bertram, I'll reason with thee as we go
To the Magnifico's, sage Gradenigo. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Ducal Palace. — The Doge's Apartment.

The Doge and his nephew Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge. Are all the people of our house in muster?

Ber. F. They are arrayed, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo.*
I come for your last orders.

Doge. It had been
As well had there been time to have got together,
From my own fief, Val di Marino, more
Of our retainers — but it is too late.

Ber. F. Methinks, my lord, 'tis better as it is:
A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion; and, though fierce and trusty,
The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long maintained

* The Doge's family palace.
The secret discipline we need for such
A service, till our foes are dealt upon.

Doge. True; but when once the signal has been
given,
These are the men for such an enterprise;
These city slaves have all their private bias,
Their prejudice against or for this noble,
Which may induce them to o'erdo or spare
Where mercy may be madness; the fierce peasants,
Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord without
Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,
A Gradenigo or a Foscari;
They are not used to start at those vain names,
Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;
A chief in armor is their Suzerain,
And not a thing in robes.

Ber. F. We are enough;
And for the dispositions of our clients
Against the senate I will answer.

Doge. Well,
The die is thrown; but for a warlike service,
Done in the field, commend me to my peasants:
They made the sun shine through the host of
Huns
When sallow burghers slunk back to their tents,
And cowered to hear their own victorious trumpet.
If there be small resistance, you will find
These citizens all lions, like their standard;
SCENE II.  DOGE OF VENICE.

But if there's much to do, you'll wish with me,
A band of iron rustics at our backs.

Ber. F. Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolve
To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge. Such blows
Must be struck suddenly or never. When
I had o'ermastered the weak false remorse
Which yearned about my heart, too fondly yielding
A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro,
I know not well the courage or the faith:
To-day might find 'mongst them a traitor to us,
As yesterday a thousand to the senate;
But once in, with their hilts hot in their hands,
They must on for their own sakes; one stroke
struck,
And the mere instinct of the first-born Cain,
Which ever lurks somewhere in human hearts,
Though circumstance may keep it in abeyance,
Will urge the rest on like to wolves; the sight
Of blood to crowds begets the thirst of more,
As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel;
And you will find a harder task to quell
Than urge them when they have commenced, but till
That moment, a mere voice, a straw, a shadow,
Are capable of turning them aside.—
How goes the night?

VOL. VI.  14
Ber. F. Almost upon the dawn.

Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the bell.

Are the men posted?

Ber. F. By this time they are;
But they have orders not to strike, until
They have command from you through me in person.

Doge. 'Tis well.—Will the morn never put to rest
These stars which twinkle yet o'er all the heavens?
I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to
Resolve to cleanse this commonwealth with fire,
Now leaves my mind more steady. I have wept,
And trembled at the thought of this dread duty;
But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,
As doth the pilot of an admiral galley:
Yet (wouldst thou think it, kinsman?) it hath been
A greater struggle to me, than when nations
Beheld their fate merged in the approaching fight,
Where I was leader of a phalanx, where
Thousands were sure to perish — Yes, to spill
The rank polluted current from the veins
Of a few bloated despots needed more
To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal, than to face
The toils and dangers of a life of war.

Ber. F. It gladdens me to see your former wisdom
Subdue the furies which so wrung you ere
You were decided.

Doge. It was ever thus
With me; the hour of agitation came
In the first glimmerings of a purpose, when
Passion had too much room to sway; but in
The hour of action I have stood as calm
As were the dead who lay around me: this
They knew who made me what I am, and trusted
To the subduing power which I preserved
Over my mood, when its first burst was spent.
But they were not aware that there are things
Which make revenge a virtue by reflection,
And not an impulse of mere anger; though
The laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured souls
Oft do a public right with private wrong,
And justify their deeds unto themselves.—
Methinks the day breaks — is it not so? look,
Thine eyes are clear with youth; — the air puts on
A morning freshness, and, at least to me,
The sea looks grayer through the lattice.

Ber. F. True,
The morn is dappling in the sky.*

Doge. Away then!
See that they strike without delay, and with
The first toll from St. Mark’s, march on the palace
With all our house’s strength; here I will meet you —
The Sixteen and their companies will move
In separate columns at the self-same moment —
Be sure you post yourself at the great gate:
I would not trust “the Ten” except to us —

* [MS. — “The night is clearing from the sky.”]
The rest, the rabble of patricians, may [with us.
Glut the more careless swords of those leagued
Remember that the cry is still "Saint Mark!
The Genoese are come — ho! to the rescue!
Saint Mark and Liberty!"— Now — now to action!

_Ber. F._ Farewell then, noble uncle! we will meet
In freedom and true sovereignty, or never!

_Doge._ Come hither, my Bertuccio — one embrace —
Speed, for the day grows broader — Send me soon
A messenger to tell me how all goes
When you rejoin our troops, and then sound — sound
The storm-bell from Saint Mark's!

[Exit Bertuccio Faliero.

_Doge (solus)._ He is gone,*
And on each footstep moves a life. — 'Tis done.
Now the destroying angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey,
And for a moment, poised in middle air,
Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak. — Thou day!
That slowly walk'st the waters! march — march on —

* [At last the moment arrives when the bell is to be sounded, and the whole of the conspiring bands are watching in impatience for the signal. The nephew of the Doge, and the heir of his house (for he is childless), leaves Faliero in his palace, and goes to strike with his own hand the fatal summons. The Doge is left alone; and English poetry, we think, contains few passages superior to that which follows. — _Lockhart._]
I would not smite i' the dark, but rather see
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea-waves!
I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply too,
With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flowed too, but victorious;
Now thou must wear an unmixed crimson; no
Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this?
I, who was named Preserver of the City?
I, at whose name the million's caps were flung
Into the air, and cries from tens of thousands
Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me blessings,
And fame, and length of days — to see this day?
But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their crown;
I will resign a crown, and make the state
Renew its freedom — but oh! by what means?
The noble end must justify them — What
Are a few drops of human blood? 't is false,
The blood of tyrants is not human; they,
Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until 't is time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous. — Oh world!
Oh men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime?
And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword superfluous?
And I, upon the verge of th' unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me? —
I must not ponder this. 

[A Pause.

Hark! was there not
A murmur as of distant voices, and
The tramp of feet in martial unison?
What phantoms even of sound our wishes raise!
It cannot be — the signal hath not rung —
Why pauses it? My nephew's messenger
Should be upon his way to me, and he
Himself perhaps even now draws grating back
Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower portal,
Where swings the sullen huge oracular bell,*
Which never knells but for a princely death,
Or for a state in peril, pealing forth
Tremendous bodements; let it do its office,
And be this peal its awfallest and last
Sound till the strong tower rock! — What! silent
still?
I would go forth, but that my post is here,
To be the centre of re-union to
The oft discordant elements which form
Leagues of this nature, and to keep compact
The wavering of the weak, in case of conflict;
For if they should do battle, 'twill be here,
Within the palace, that the strife will thicken:

* [MS. — "Where swings the sullen { iron oracle.
{ huge oracular bell."]}
Then here must be my station, as becomes
The master-mover. — Hark! he comes — he comes,
My nephew, brave Bertuccio's messenger.—
What tidings? Is he marching? hath he sped? —
They here! — all's lost — yet will I make an effort.*

Enter a Signor of the Night,† with Guards,
&c. &c.

_Sig._ Doge, I arrest thee of high treason!
_Doge._ Me!
Thy prince, of treason? — Who are they that dare
Cloak their own treason under such an order?
_Sig._ (showing his order). Behold my order from
the assembled Ten. [no
_Doge._ And where are they, and why assembled?
Such council can be lawful, till the prince
Preside there, and that duty's mine: on thine
I charge thee, give me way, or marshal me
To the council chamber.
_Sig._ Duke! it may not be:
Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,
But sitting in the convent of Saint Saviour's.

* [A relenting conspirator, whom the contemplative Lioni had
formerly befriended, calls to warn him of his danger; and is
gradually led to betray his associates. The plot is crushed in
the moment of its development, and the Doge arrested in his
palace. The scene immediately preceding this catastrophe is
noble and thrilling. — Jeffery.]
† ["I Signori di Notte" held an important charge in the old
republic.]
Doge. You dare to disobey me, then?
Sig. I serve
The state, and needs must serve it faithfully;
My warrant is the will of those who rule it.
Doge. And till that warrant has my signature
It is illegal, and, as now applied,
Rebellious—Hast thou weighed well thy life's worth,
That thus you dare assume a lawless function?
Sig. 'Tis not my office to reply, but act—
I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide.
Doge (aside). I must gain time—So that the storm-bell sound
All may be well yet. — Kinsman, speed—speed—speed!
Our fate is trembling in the balance, and
Woe to the vanquished! be they prince and people,
Or slaves and senate—
[The great bell of Saint Mark's tolls.
Lo! it sounds— it tolls!
Doge (aloud). Hark, Signor of the Night! and you, ye hirelings,
Who wield your mercenary staves in fear,
It is your knell—Swell on, thou lusty peal!
Now, knaves, what ransom for your lives?
Sig. Confusion!
Stand to your arms, and guard the door—all's lost
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath missed his path or purpose,
SCENE II. DOGE OF VENICE.

Or met some unforeseen and hideous obstacle.
Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with me.

[Exit part of the Guard.

Doge. Wretch! if thou wouldst have thy vile life,
implore it;
It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.
Ay, send thy miserable ruffians forth;
They never shall return.

Sig. So let it be!
They die then in their duty, as will I.

Doge. Fool! the high eagle flies at nobler game
Than thou and thy base myrmidons,—live on,
So thou provok'st not peril by resistance,
And learn (if souls so much obscured can bear
To gaze upon the sunbeams) to be free.

Sig. And learn thou to be captive—It hath ceased,
[The bell ceases to toll.
The traitorous signal, which was to have set
The bloodhound mob on their patrician prey—
The knell hath rung, but it is not the senate's!

Doge (after a pause). All's silent, and all's lost!

Sig. Now, Doge, denounce me
As rebel slave of a revoluted council!
Have I not done my duty?

Doge. Peace, thou thing!
Thou hast done a worthy deed, and earned the price
Of blood, and they who use thee will reward thee.
But thou wert sent to watch, and not to prate,
As thou said'st even now—then do thine office,
But let it be in silence, as behooves thee,
Since, though thy prisoner, I am thy prince.

_Sig._ I did not mean to fail in the respect
Due to your rank: in this I shall obey you.

_Doge_ (aside). There now is nothing left me save
to die;
And yet how near success! I would have fallen,
And proudly, in the hour of triumph, but
To miss it thus! —

_Enter other Signors of the Night, with Bertuc-
cio Faliero prisoner._

_2d Sig._ We took him in the act
Of issuing from the tower, where, at his order,
As delegated from the Doge, the signal
Had thus begun to sound.

_1st Sig._ Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured?

_2d Sig._ They are — besides, it matters not; the
chiefs
Are all in chains, and some even now on trial —
Their followers are dispersed, and many taken.

_Ber. F._ Uncle!

_Doge._ It is in vain to war with Fortune;
The glory hath departed from our house.

_Ber. F._ Who would have deemed it? — Ah! one
moment sooner!

_Doge._ That moment would have changed the face
of ages;

_This_ gives us to eternity — We'll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in all,
Equal to every fortune. Droop not, 'tis
But a brief passage — I would go alone,
Yet if they send us, as 'tis like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.

Ber. F. I shall not shame you, uncle.

1st Sig. Lords, our orders
Are to keep guard on both in separate chambers,
Until the council call ye to your trial.

Doge. Our trial! will they keep their mockery
up
Even to the last? but let them deal upon us,
As we had dealt on them, but with less pomp.
'T is but a game of mutual homicides,
Who have cast lots for the first death, and they
Have won with false dice. — Who hath been our
Judas?

1st Sig. I am not warranted to answer that.

Ber. F. I'll answer for thee — 'tis a certain Ber-
tram,
Even now deposing to the secret giunta.

Doge. Bertram, the Bergamask! With what vile
tools
We operate to slay or save! This creature,
Black with a double treason, now will earn
Rewards and honors, and be stamped in story
With the geese in the Capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,
While Manlius, who hurled down the Gauls, was cast*
From the Tarpeian.

1st Sig. He aspired to treason,
And sought to rule the state.

Doge. He saved the state,
And sought but to reform what he revived —
But this is idle —— Come, sirs, do your work.

1st Sig. Noble Bertuccio, we must now remove you
Into an inner chamber.

Ber. F. Farewell, uncle!
If we shall meet again in life I know not,
But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.

Doge. Yes, and our spirits, which shall yet go forth,
And do what our frail clay, thus clogged, hath failed in!
They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurled them from their guilty thrones,
And such examples will find heirs, though distant.

* [MS.— "While Manlius, who hurled back the Gauls," etc.]
ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Hall of the Council of Ten assembled with the additional Senators, who, on the Trials of the Conspirators for the Treason of Marino Faliero, composed what was called the Giunta,—Guards, Officers, etc. etc.—Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro as prisoners.—Bertram, Lioni, and Witnesses, etc.*

The Chief of the Ten, Benintende.†

Ben. There now rests, after such conviction of Their manifold and manifest offences,
But to pronounce on these obdurate men
The sentence of the law:—a grievous task
To those who hear, and those who speak. Alas!
That it should fall to me! and that my days
Of office should be stigmatized through all
The years of coming time, as bearing record
To this most foul and complicated treason

* [The fifth Act, which begins with the arraignment of the original conspirators, is much in the style of that of Pierre and his associates in the old play. After them, the Doge is brought in; his part is very forcibly written throughout.—Jeffrey.]

† ["In the notes to Marino Faliero, it may be as well to say, that Benintende was not really of the Ten, but merely Grand Chancellor— a separate office, though an important one. It was an arbitrary alteration of mine."—Byron's Letters.]
Against a just and free state, known to all
The earth as being the Christian bulwark 'gainst
The Saracen and the schismatic Greek,
The savage Hun, and not less barbarous Frank;
A city which has opened India's wealth
To Europe; the last Roman refuge from
O'erwhelming Attila; the ocean's queen;
Proud Genoa's prouder rival! 'Tis to sap
The throne of such a city, these lost men
Have risk'd and forfeited their worthless lives —
So let them die the death.

I. Ber. We are prepared;
Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.

Ben. If ye have that to say which would obtain
Abatement of your punishment, the Giunta
Will hear you; if you have aught to confess,
Now is your time, perhaps it may avail ye.

Ber. F. We stand to hear, and not to speak.

Ben. Your crimes
Are fully proved by your accomplices,
And all which circumstance can add to aid them;
Yet we would hear from your own lips complete
Avowal of your treason: on the verge
Of that dread gulf which none repass, the truth
Alone can profit you on earth or heaven —
Say, then, what was your motive?

I. Ber. Justice!

Ben. What

Your object?

I. Ber. Freedom!
Scene I. 

Doge of Venice.

Ben. You are brief, sir.

I. Ber. So my life grows: I

Was bred a soldier, not a senator.

Ben. Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity

To brave your judges to postpone the sentence?

I. Ber. Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,

I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.

Ben. Is this your sole reply to the tribunal?

I. Ber. Go, ask your racks what they have wrung from us,

Or place us there again; we have still some blood left,

And some slight sense of pain in these wrenched limbs:

But this ye dare not do; for if we die there—

And you have left us little life to spend

Upon your engines, gorged with pangs already—

Ye lose the public spectacle, with which

You would appall your slaves to further slavery!

Groans are not words, nor agony assent,

Nor affirmation truth, if nature's sense

Should overcome the soul into a lie,

For a short respite—must we bear or die?

Ben. Say, who were your accomplices?

I. Ber. The Senate!

Ben. What do you mean?

I. Ber. Ask of the suffering people,

Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.

Ben. You know the Doge?
I. Ber. I served with him at Zara In the field, when you were pleading here your way To present office; we exposed our lives, While you but hazarded the lives of others, Alike by accusation or defence; And, for the rest, all Venice knows her Doge, Through his great actions, and the Senate's insults. Ben. You have held conference with him? I. Ber. I am weary — Even wearier of your questions than your tortures: I pray you pass to judgment. Ben. It is coming. — And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what Have you to say why you should not be doomed? Cal. I never was a man of many words, And now have few left worth the utterance. Ben. A further application of yon engine May change your tone. Cal. Most true, it will do so; A former application did so; but It will not change my words, or, if it did — Ben. What then? Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack Stand good in law? Ben. Assuredly. Cal. Whoe'er The culprit be whom I accuse of treason? Ben. Without doubt, he will be brought up to trial. Cal. And on this testimony would he perish?
Scene I.  Doge of Venice.

Ben. So your confession be detailed and full, He will stand here in peril of his life.
Cal. Then look well to thy proud self, President! For by the eternity which yawns before me, I swear that thou, and only thou, shalt be The traitor I denounce upon that rack, If I be stretched there for the second time. One of the Giunta. Lord President, 'twere best proceed to judgment; There is no more to be drawn from these men. Ben. Unhappy men! prepare for instant death. The nature of your crime — our law — and peril The state now stands in, leave not an hour's respite — Guards! lead them forth, and upon the balcony Of the red columns, where, on festal Thursday,* The Doge stands to behold the chase of bulls, Let them be justified: and leave exposed Their wavering relics, in the place of judgment, To the full view of the assembled people! — And Heaven have mercy on their souls! The Giunta. Amen! I. Ber. Signors, farewell! we shall not all again Meet in one place. Ben. And lest they should essay To stir up the distracted multitude — Guards! let their mouths be gagged† even in the act Of execution. — Lead them hence!

* "Giovedì grasso," — "fat or greasy Thursday," — which I cannot literally translate in the text, was the day.
† Historical fact.
Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
Nor leave a last word with our confessor?

Ben. A priest is waiting in the antechamber;
But, for your friends, such interviews would be
Painful to them, and useless all to you.

Cal. I knew that we were gagged in life; at least
All those who had not heart to risk their lives
Upon their open thoughts; but still I deemed
That in the last few moments, the same idle
Freedom of speech accorded to the dying,
Would not now be denied to us; but since——

I. Ber. Even let them have their way, brave Calendaro!
What matter a few syllables? let's die
Without the slightest show of favor from them;
So shall our blood more readily arise
To heaven against them, and more testify
To their atrocities, than could a volume
Spoken or written of our dying words!
They tremble at our voices — nay, they dread
Our very silence — let them live in fear! —
Leave them unto their thoughts, and let us now
Address our own above! — Lead on; we are ready.

Cal. Israel, hadst thou but hearkened unto me
It had not now been thus; and yon pale villain,
The coward Bertram, would——

I. Ber. Peace, Calendaro!
What brooks it now to ponder upon this?

Bert. Alas! I fain you died in peace with me:
I did not seek this task; 'twas forced upon me:
Say, you forgive me, though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness—frown not thus!
_I. Ber._ I die and pardon thee!
_Cal._ (spitting at him).* I die and scorn thee!

[Exeunt _Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro, Guards, &c._

_Ben._ Now that these criminals have been disposed of,
'Tis time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero!
The proofs and process are complete; the time
And crime require a quick procedure: shall
He now be called in to receive the award?

_The Giunta._ Ay, ay.

_Ben._ Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the council.

_One of the Giunta._ And the rest,
When shall they be brought up?

_Ben._ When all the chiefs

* ["I know what Foscolo means, about Calendaro's spitting at Bertram; that's national—the objection, I mean. The Italians and French, with those 'flags of abomination' their pocket handkerchiefs, spit there, and here, and everywhere else—in your face almost, and therefore object to it on the stage as too familiar. But we who spit nowhere—but in a man's face when we grow savage—are not likely to feel this. Remember Massinger, and Kean's Sir Giles Overreach—

'Lord! thus I spit at thee and at thy counsel!'"

_Byron's Letters._]
Have been disposed of. Some have fled to Chiozza; But there are thousands in pursuit of them, And such precaution ta'en on terra firma, As well as in the islands, that we hope None will escape to utter in strange lands His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the senate.

Enter the Doge as Prisoner, with Guards, etc. etc.

Ben. Doge — for such still you are, and by the law Must be considered, till the hour shall come When you must doff the ducal bonnet from That head, which could not wear a crown more noble Than empires can confer, in quiet honor, But it must plot to overthrow your peers, Who made you what you are, and quench in blood A city's glory — we have laid already Before you in your chamber at full length, By the Avogadori, all the proofs Which have appeared against you; and more ample Ne'er reared their sanguinary shadows to Confront a traitor. What have you to say In your defence?

Doge. What shall I say to ye, Since my defence must be your condemnation? You are at once offenders and accusers, Judges and executioners! — Proceed Upon your power.

Ben. Your chief accomplices Having confessed, there is no hope for you.

Doge. And who be they?
Ben. In number many; but
The first now stands before you in the court,
Bertram, of Bergamo,—would you question him?
Doge (looking at him contemptuously). No.
Ben. And two others, Israel Bertuccio,
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted
Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!
Doge. And where are they?
Ben. Gone to their place, and now
Answering to Heaven for what they did on earth.
Doge. Ah! the plebeian Brutus, is he gone?
And the quick Cassius of the arsenal?—
How did they meet their doom?
Ben. Think of your own:
It is approaching. You decline to plead, then?
Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor
Can recognize your legal power to try me.
Show me the law!
Ben. On great emergencies,
The law must be remodelled or amended:
Our fathers had not fixed the punishment
Of such a crime, as on the old Roman tables
The sentence against parricide was left
In pure forgetfulness; they could not render
That penal, which had neither name nor thought
In their great bosoms: who would have foreseen
That nature could be filed to such a crime
As sons 'gainst sires, and princes 'gainst their realms?
Your sin hath made us make a law which will
Become a precedent 'gainst such haught traitors,
As would with treason mount to tyranny;
Not even contented with a sceptre, till
They can convert it to a two-edged sword!
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?
What's nobler than the signory of Venice?

_Doge._ The signory of Venice! You betrayed me—
_You_— _you_, who sit there, traitors as ye are!
From my equality with you in birth,
And my superiority in action,
You drew me from my honorable toils
In distant lands — on flood — in field — in cities—
_You_ singled me out like a victim to
Stand crowned, but bound and helpless, at the altar
Where you alone could minister. I knew not —
I sought not — wished not — dreamed not the election,
Which reached me first at Rome, and I obeyed;
But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you
To mock and mar your sovereign's best intents,
You had, even in the interregnum of
My journey to the capital, curtailed
And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the duke: all this I bore, and would
Have borne, until my very hearth was stained
By the pollution of your ribaldry,
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you —
Fit judge in such tribunal! —

_Ben._ (interrupting him).  
Michel Steno
Is here in virtue of his office, as
One of the Forty; "the Ten" having craved
A Giunta of patricians from the senate
To aid our judgment in a trial arduous
And novel as the present: he was set
Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the law,
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim
No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates!

_Doge._ His punishment! I rather see him there,
Where he now sits, to glut him with my death,
Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show of justice
Decreed as sentence! Base as was his crime,
'Twas purity compared with your protection.

_Ben._ And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years
And honors on his head, could thus allow
His fury, like an angry boy's, to master
All feeling, wisdom, faith, and fear, on such
A provocation as a young man's petulance?

_Doge._ A spark creates the flame — 'tis the last drop
Which makes the cup run o'er, and mine was full
Already: you oppressed the prince and people;
I would have freed both, and have failed in both:
The price of such success would have been glory,
Vengeance, and victory, and such a name
As would have made Venetian history
Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourished ages after,
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus:—
Failing, I know the penalty of failure
Is present infamy and death—the future
Will judge, when Venice is no more, or free;
Till then, the truth is in abeyance. Pause not;
I would have shown no mercy, and I seek none;
My life was staked upon a mighty hazard,
And being lost, take what I would have taken!
I would have stood alone amidst your tombs:
Now you may flock round mine, and trample on it,
As you have done upon my heart while living.

_Ben._ You do confess then, and admit the justice
Of our tribunal?

_Doge._ I confess to have failed;
Fortune is female: from my youth her favors
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope
Her former smiles again at this late hour.

_Ben._ You do not then in aught arraign our equity?

_Doge._ Noble Venetians! stir me not with ques-
tions.
I am resigned to the worst; but in me still
Have something of the blood of brighter days,
And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me
Further interrogation, which boots nothing,
Except to turn a trial to debate.
I shall but answer that which will offend you,
And please your enemies—a host already;
'Tis true, these sullen walls should yield no echo:
But walls have ears—nay, more, they have tongues; and if
There were no other way for truth to o'erleap them,*
You who condemn me, you who fear and slay me,
Yet could not bear in silence to your graves
What you would hear from me of good or evil;
The secret were too mighty for your souls:
Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court
A danger which would double that you escape.
Such my defence would be, had I full scope
To make it famous; for true words are things,
And dying men's are things which long outlive,
And oftentimes avenge them; bury mine,
If ye would fain survive me; take this counsel,
And though too oft ye made me live in wrath,
Let me die calmly; you may grant me this;—
I deny nothing—defend nothing—nothing
I ask of you, but silence for myself;
And sentence from the court!

_Ben._ This full admission
Spares us the harsh necessity of ordering
The torture to elicit the whole truth.†

_Doge._ The torture! you have put me there already,
Daily since I was Doge; but if you will

* [MS. — "There were no other way for truth to pierce them."]
† [MS. — "The torture for the exposure of the truth."]
Add the corporeal rack, you may: these limbs
Will yield with age to crushing iron; but
There's that within my heart shall strain your engines.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Noble Venetians! Duchess Faliero *
Requests admission to the Giunta's presence.

Ben. Say, conscript fathers;† shall she be ad-
mitted?

One of the Giunta. She may have revelations of
importance
Unto the state, to justify compliance
With her request.

Ben. Is this the general will?

All. It is.

Doge. Oh, admirable laws of Venice!
Which would admit the wife, in the full hope
That she might testify against the husband.
What glory to the chaste Venetian dames!
But such blasphemers 'gainst all honor, as
Sit here, do well to act in their vocation.
Now, villain Steno! if this woman fail,
I'll pardon thee thy lie, and thy escape,
And my own violent death, and thy vile life.

* [MS. — "Noble Venetians! { Dogo Faliero's consort.
} with respect the Duchess."
]

† The Venetian senate took the same title as the Roman, of
"conscript fathers."
The Duchess enters.*

Ben. Lady! this just tribunal has resolved,
Though the request be strange, to grant it, and
Whatever be its purport, to accord
A patient hearing with the due respect
Which fits your ancestry, your rank, and virtues:
But you turn pale—ho! there, look to the lady!
Place a chair instantly.

Ang. A moment's faintness—
'Tis past; I pray you pardon me, — I sit not
In presence of my prince and of my husband,
While he is on his feet.

Ben. Your pleasure, lady?

* [The drama, which has the merit, uncommon in modern performances, of embodying no episodical deformity whatever, now hurries in full career to its close. Every thing is despatched with the stern decision of a tyrannical aristocracy. There is no hope of mercy on any side,—there is no petition,—nay, there is no wish for mercy. Even the plebeian conspirators have too much Venetian blood in them to be either scared by the approach, or shaken in the moment, of death: and, as for the Doge, he bears himself as becomes a warrior of sixty years, and a deeply insulted prince. At the moment, however, which immediately precedes the pronouncing of the sentence, admission is asked and obtained by one from whom less of the Spartan firmness might have been expected. This is Angiolina. She indeed hazards one fervent prayer to the unbending senate; but she sees in a moment that it is in vain, and she recovers herself on the instant; and turning to her lord, who stands calm and collected at the foot of the council table, speaks words worthy of him and of her. Nothing can be more unexpected, or more beautiful, than the behavior of the young patrician who interrupts their conversation. —Lockhart.]
Ang. Strange rumors, but most true, if all I hear
And see be sooth, have reached me, and I come
To know the worst, even at the worst; forgive
The abruptness of my entrance and my bearing.
Is it —— I cannot speak — I cannot shape
The question — but you answer it ere spoken,
With eyes averted, and with gloomy brows —
Oh God! this is the silence of the grave!

Ben. (after a pause). Spare us, and spare thyself
the repetition
Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to heaven and man!

Ang. Yet speak; I cannot —
I cannot — no — even now believe these things.
Is he condemned?

Ben. Alas!

Ang. And was he guilty?

Ben. Lady! the natural distraction of
Thy thoughts at such a moment makes the question
Merit forgiveness; else a doubt like this
Against a just and paramount tribunal
Were deep offence. But question even the Doge,
And if he can deny the proofs, believe him
Guiltless as thy own bosom.

Ang. Is it so?
My lord — my sovereign — my poor father's friend —
The mighty in the field, the sage in council;
Unsay the words of this man! — Thou art silent!
Ben. He hath already owned to his own guilt,*
Nor, as thou seest, doth he deny it now.
Ang. Ay, but he must not die! Spare his few years,
Which grief and shame will soon cut down to days!
One day of baffled crime must not efface
Near sixteen lustres crowded with brave acts.
Ben. His doom must be fulfilled without remission
Of time or penalty — 'tis a decree.
Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.
Ben. Not in this case with justice.
Ang. Alas! signor,
He who is only just is cruel; who
Upon the earth would live were all judged justly?
Ben. His punishment is safety to the state.
Ang. He was a subject, and hath served the state;
He was your general, and hath saved the state;
He is your sovereign, and hath ruled the state.
One of the Council. He is a traitor, and betrayed
the state.
Ang. And, but for him, there now had been no
state
To save or to destroy; and you who sit
There to pronounce the death of your deliverer,
Had now been groaning at a Moslem oar,
Or digging in the Hunnish mines in fetters!
One of the Council. No, lady, there are others who
would die
Rather than breathe in slavery!

* [MS. — "He hath already granted his own guilt."]
Ang. If there are so
Within these walls, thou art not of the number:
The truly brave are generous to the fallen!—
Is there no hope?
Ben. Lady, it cannot be.
Ang. (turning to the Doge). Then die, Faliero!
since it must be so;
But with the spirit of my father's friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half-cancelled by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them—have prayed to them—
Have begged as famished mendicants for bread—
Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answered as they answer—
Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes
Had not announced the heartless wrath within.
Then, as a prince, address thee to thy doom!
Doge. I have lived too long not to know how to
die!
Thy suing to these men were but the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge: I would not take
A life eternal, granted at the hands
Of wretches, from whose monstrous villanies
I sought to free the groaning nations!

Michel Steno. Doge,
A word with thee, and with this noble lady,
Whom I have grievously offended. Would
Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part,
Could cancel the inexorable past!
But since that cannot be, as Christians let us
Say farewell, and in peace: with full contrition
I crave, not pardon, but compassion from you,
And give, however weak, my prayers for both.

Ang. Sage Benintende, now chief judge of Venice,
I speak to thee in answer to yon signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words
Ne'er weighed in mind with Loredano's daughter
Further than to create a moment's pity
For such as he is: would that others had
Despised him as I pity! I prefer
My honor to a thousand lives, could such
Be multiplied in mine, but would not have
A single life of others lost for that
Which nothing human can impugn — the sense
Of virtue, looking not to what is called
A good name for reward, but to itself.
To me the scorners words were as the wind
Unto the rock: but as there are — alas!
Spirits more sensitive, on which such things
Light as the whirlwind on the waters; souls
To whom dishonor's shadow is a substance
More terrible than death, here and hereafter;
Men whose vice is to start at vice's scoffing,
And who, though proof against all blandishments
Of pleasure, and all pangs of pain, are feeble
When the proud name on which they pinnacled
Their hopes is breathed on, jealous as the eagle
Of her high aiery; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson
To wretches how they tamper in their spleen
With beings of a higher order. Insects
Have made the lion mad ere now; a shaft
I' the heel o'erthrew the bravest of the brave;
A wife's dishonor was the bane of Troy;
A wife's dishonor unkinged Rome for ever;
An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,
And thence to Rome, which perished for a time;
An obscene gesture cost Caligula
His life, while Earth yet bore his cruelties;
A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish province;
And Steno's lie, couched in two worthless lines,
Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
A senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
Discrowned a prince, cut off his crownless head,
And forged new fetters for a groaning people!
Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this,
If it so please him—'twere a pride fit for him!
But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate'er he now is, was a hero,
By the intrusion of his very prayers;
Nothing of good can come from such a source,
Nor would we aught with him, nor now, nor ever:
We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,
And not for reptiles—we have none for Steno,
And no resentment: things like him must sting,
And higher beings suffer; 't is the charter
SCENE I.    DOGE OF VENICE.

Of life. The man who dies by the adder's fang
May have the crawler crushed, but feels no anger:
'Twas the worm's nature; and some men are worms
In soul, more than the living things of tombs.*

Doge (to Ben.). Signor! complete that which
you deem your duty.

Ben. Before we can proceed upon that duty,
We would request the princess to withdraw;
'Twill move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must endure it,
For 'tis a part of mine — I will not quit,
Except by force, my husband's side. — Proceed!
Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear;
Though my heart burst, it shall be silent. — Speak!
I have that within which shall o'ermaster all.

Ben. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
Count of Val di Marino, Senator,

* [The Duchess is formal and cold, without even that degree of love for her old husband which a child might have for her parent, or a pupil for her instructor. Even in this her longest and best speech, at the most touching moment of the catastrophe, she can moralize, in a strain of pedantry less natural to a woman than to any other person similarly circumstanced, on lions stung by gnats, Achilles, Helen, Lucretia, the siege of Clusium, Caligula, Caaba, and Persepolis! The lines are fine in themselves, indeed; and if they had been spoken by Benintende as a funeral oration over the Duke's body, or still more, perhaps, if they had been spoken by the Duke's counsel on his trial, they would have been perfectly in place and character. But that is not the highest order of female intellect which is disposed to be long-winded in distress; nor does any one, either male or female, who is really and deeply affected, find time for wise saws and instances ancient and modern. — Heber.]
And some time General of the Fleet and Army,
Noble Venetian, many times and oft
Intrusted by the state with high employments,
Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.
Convict by many witnesses and proofs,
And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of treachery and treason, yet unheard of
Until this trial — the decree is death.
Thy goods are confiscate unto the state,
Thy name is razed from out her records, save
Upon a public day of thanksgiving
For this our most miraculous deliverance,
When thou art noted in our calendars
With earthquakes, pestilence, and foreign foes,
And the great enemy of man, as subject
Of grateful masses for Heaven's grace in snatching
Our lives and country from thy wickedness.
The place wherein as Doge thou shouldst be painted,
With thine illustrious predecessors, is
To be left vacant, with a death-black veil
Flung over these dim words engraved beneath, —
"This place is of Marino Faliero,
Decapitated for his crimes."

Doge. "His crimes!"
But let it be so: — it will be in vain.
The veil which blackens o'er this blighted name,
And hides, or seems to hide, these lineaments,
Shall draw more gazers than the thousand portraits
Which glitter round it in their pictured trappings —
Your delegated slaves — the people's tyrants!
"Decapitated for his crimes!" — *What* crimes? 

Were it not better to record the facts,
So that the contemplator might approve,
Or at the least learn *whence* the crimes arose?
When the beholder knows a Doge conspired,
Let him be told the cause — it is your history.

*Ben.* Time must reply to that; our sons will judge

Their fathers' judgment, which I now pronounce.

As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and cap,

Thou shalt be led hence to the Giants' Staircase,

Where thou and all our princes are invested;

And there, the ducal crown being first resumed

Upon the spot where it was first assumed,

Thy head shall be struck off; and Heaven have mercy

Upon thy soul!

*Doge.* Is this the Giunta's sentence?

*Ben.* It is.

*Doge.* I can endure it. — And the time?

*Ben.* Must be immediate. — Make thy peace with God:

Within an hour thou must be in His presence.

*Doge.* I am already; and my blood will rise

To Heaven before the souls of those who shed it. —

Are all my lands confiscated?

*Ben.* They are;

And goods, and jewels, and all kind of treasure,

Except two thousand ducats — these dispose of.

*Doge.* That's harsh. — I would have fain reserved

the lands

Near to Treviso, which I hold by investment
From Laurence the Count-bishop of Ceneda,
In fief perpetual to myself and heirs,
To portion them (leaving my city spoil,
My palace and my treasures, to your forfeit)
Between my consort and my kinsmen.

Ben. These
Lie under the state's ban; their chief, thy nephew,
In peril of his own life; but the council
Postpones his trial for the present. If
Thou wilt a state unto thy widowed princess,
Fear not, for we will do her justice.

Ang. Signors,
I share not in your spoil! From henceforth, know
I am devoted unto God alone,
And take my refuge in the cloister.

Doge. Come!
The hour may be a hard one, but 't will end.
Have I aught else to undergo save death?

Ben. You have nought to do, except confess and
die.
The priest is robed, the scimitar is bare,
And both await without. — But, above all,
Think not to speak unto the people; they
Are now by thousands swarming at the gates,
But these are closed: the Ten, the Avogadori,
The Giunta, and the chief men of the Forty,
 Alone will be holders of thy doom,
And they are ready to attend the Doge.

Doge. The Doge!

Ben. Yes, Doge, thou hast lived and thou shalt
die
A sovereign; till the moment which precedes
The separation of that head and trunk,
That ducal crown and head shall be united.
Thou hast forgot thy dignity in deigning
To plot with petty traitors; not so we,
Who in the very punishment acknowledge
The prince. Thy vile accomplices have died
The dog's death, and the wolf's; but thou shalt fall
As falls the lion by the hunters, girt
By those who feel a proud compassion for thee,
And mourn even the inevitable death
Provoked by thy wild wrath, and regal fierceness.
Now we remit thee to thy preparation:
Let it be brief, and we ourselves will be
Thy guides unto the place where first we were
United to thee as thy subjects, and
Thy senate; and must now be parted from thee
As such for ever, on the self-same spot. —
Guards! form the Doge's escort to his chamber.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

The Doge's Apartment.

The Doge as Prisoner, and the Duchess attending him.

Doge. Now, that the priest is gone, 't were use-
less all
To linger out the miserable minutes;
But one pang more, the pang of parting from thee, 
And I will leave the few last grains of sand, 
Which yet remain of the accorded hour, 
Still falling — I have done with Time.

Ang. Alas!
And I have been the cause, the unconscious cause;
And for this funeral marriage, this black union,
Which thou, compliant with my father's wish,
Didst promise at his death, thou hast sealed thine own.

Doge. Not so: there was that in my spirit ever
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse;
The marvel is, it came not until now —
And yet it was foretold me.

Ang. How foretold you?

Doge. Long years ago — so long, they are a doubt
In memory, and yet they live in annals:
When I was in my youth, and served the senate
And signory as podesta and captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day
Of festival, the sluggish bishop who
Conveyed the Host aroused my rash young anger
By strange delay, and arrogant reply
To my reproof; I raised my hand and smote him
Until he reeled beneath his holy burden;
And as he rose from earth again, he raised
His tremulous hands in pious wrath towards Heaven.
Thence pointing to the Host, which had fallen from him,
He turned to me, and said, "The hour will come
When he thou hast o'erthrown shall overthrow thee:  
The glory shall depart from out thy house,  
The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,  
And in thy best maturity of mind  
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;  
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease  
In other men, or mellow into virtues;  
And majesty, which decks all other heads,  
Shall crown to leave thee headless; honors shall  
But prove to thee the heralds of destruction,  
And hoary hairs of shame, and both of death,  
But not such death as fits an aged man.”
Thus saying, he passed on. — That hour is come.

Ang. And with this warning couldst thou not have striven  
To avert the fatal moment, and atone,  
By penitence for that which thou hadst done?

Doge. I own the words went to my heart, so much  
That I remembered them amid the maze  
Of life, as if they formed a spectral voice,  
Which shook me in a supernatural dream;  
And I repented; but ’twas not for me  
To pull in resolution: what must be  
I could not change, and would not fear. — Nay more,  
Thou canst not have forgot, what all remember,  
That on my day of landing here as Doge,  
On my return from Rome, a mist of such  
Unwonted density went on before

* [MS. — “A madness of the heart shall rise within.”]
The bucentaur, like the columnar cloud
Which ushered Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembarked us
Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where 'tis
The custom of the state to put to death
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is,—
So that all Venice shuddered at the omen.

Ang. Ah! little boots it now to recollect
Such things.

Doge. And yet I find a comfort in
The thought that these things are the work of Fate;
For I would rather yield to gods than men,
Or cling to any creed of destiny,
Rather than deem these mortals, most of whom
I know to be as worthless as the dust,
And weak as worthless, more than instruments
Of an o'erruling power; they in themselves
Were all incapable—they could not be
Victors of him who oft had conquered for them!

Ang. Employ the minutes left in aspirations
Of a more healing nature, and in peace
Even with these wretches take thy flight to Heaven.

Doge. I am at peace: the peace of certainty
That a sure hour will come, when their sons' sons,
And this proud city, and these azure waters,
And all which makes them eminent and bright,
Shall be a desolation and a curse,
A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel!
Ang. Speak not thus now; the surge of passion still
Sweeps o'er thee to the last; thou dost deceive
Thyself, and canst not injure them — be calmer.

Doge. I stand within eternity, and see
Into eternity, and I behold —
Ay, palpable as I see thy sweet face
For the last time — the days which I denounce
Unto all time against these wave-girt walls,
And they who are indwellers.

Guard (coming forward). Doge of Venice,
The Ten are in attendance on your highness.

Doge. Then farewell, Angiolina! — one embrace —
Forgive the old man who hath been to thee
A fond but fatal husband — love my memory —
I would not ask so much for me still living,
But thou canst judge of me more kindly now,
Seeing my evil feelings are at rest.
Besides, of all the fruit of these long years,
Glory, and wealth, and power, and fame, and name,
Which generally leave some flowers to bloom
Even o'er the grave, I have nothing left, not even
A little love, or friendship, or esteem,
No, not enough to extract an epitaph
From ostentatious kinsmen; in one hour
I have uprooted all my former life,
And outlived every thing, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will oft
With unimpaired but not a clamorous grief*
Still keep — Thou turn’st so pale! — Alas, she faints,
She has no breath, no pulse! — Guards! lend your aid —
I cannot leave her thus, and yet 'tis better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal. — Call her women —
One look! — how cold her hand! — as cold as mine
Shall be ere she recovers. — Gently tend her,
And take my last thanks — I am ready now.

[The Attendants of Angiolina enter and surround their mistress, who has fainted. —
Exeunt the Doge, Guards, etc. etc.]

SCENE III.

The Court of the Ducal Palace: the outer gates are shut against the people. — The Doge enters in his ducal robes, in procession with the Council of Ten and other Patricians, attended by the Guards, till they arrive at the top of the "Giants' Staircase" (where the Doges took the oaths); the Executioner is stationed there with his sword. — On arriving, a Chief of the Ten takes off the ducal cap from the Doge's head.

Doge. So now the Doge is nothing, and at last I am again Marino Faliero:

* [MS. — "With unimpaired but not outrageous grief.”]
'Tis well to be so, though but for a moment. Here was I crowned, and here, bear witness, Heaven! With how much more contentment I resign That shining mockery, the ducal bauble, Than I received the fatal ornament. _One of the Ten._ Thou tremblest, Faliero! _Doge._ 'Tis with age, then.* _Ben._ Faliero! hast thou aught further to commend, Compatible with justice, to the senate? _Doge._ I would commend my nephew to their mercy, My consort to their justice; for methinks My death, and such a death, might settle all Between the state and me. _Ben._ They shall be cared for; Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime. _Doge._ Unheard of! ay, there's not a history But shows a thousand crowned conspirators Against the people; but to set them free One sovereign only died, and one is dying. * This was the actual reply of Bailli, maire of Paris, to a Frenchman who made him the same reproach on his way to execution, in the earliest part of their revolution. I find in reading over (since the completion of this tragedy), for the first time these six years, "Venice Preserved," a similar reply on a different occasion by Renault, and other coincidences arising from the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental, from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the closet as Otway's chef-d'œuvre.
Ben. And who were they who fell in such a cause?

Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge of Venice—
    Agis and Faliero!

Ben. Hast thou more
To utter or to do?

Doge. May I speak?

Ben. Thou may’st;
But recollect the people are without,
Beyond the compass of the human voice.

Doge. I speak to Time and to Eternity,*
Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
Ye elements! in which to be resolved
I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit
Upon you! Ye blue waves! which bore my banner,
Ye winds! which fluttered o’er as if you loved it,
And filled my swelling sails as they were wafted
To many a triumph! Thou, my native earth,
Which I have bled for, and thou foreign earth,
Which drank this willing blood from many a wound!
Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
Reck up to Heaven! Ye skies, which will receive it!
Thou sun! which shinest on these things, and Thou!
Who kindlest and who quenchest suns!† — Attest!

* [The last speech of the Doge is a grand prophetic rant; something strained and elaborate — but eloquent and terrible. — Jeffrey.]
† [In MS. —

—— "and Thou!
Who makest and destroyest suns!"]
I am not innocent — but are these guiltless?
I perish, but not unavenged; far ages
Float up from the abyss of time to be,
And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
Of this proud city, and I leave my curse
On her and hers for ever! — Yes, the hours
Are silently engendering of the day,
When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield
Unto a bastard Attila, without
Shedding so much blood in her last defence
As these old veins, oft drained in shielding her,
Shall pour in sacrifice. — She shall be bought
And sold, and be an appanage to those
Who shall despise her! * — She shall stoop to be

* Should the dramatic picture seem harsh, let the reader look to the historical, of the period prophesied, or rather of the few years preceding that period. Voltaire calculated their "nostre bene merite meretrici" at 12,000 of regulars, without including volunteers and local militia, on what authority I know not; but it is, perhaps, the only part of the population not decreased. Venice once contained two hundred thousand inhabitants: there are now about ninety thousand; and these!! few individuals can conceive, and none could describe, the actual state into which the more than infernal tyranny of Austria has plunged this unhappy city. From the present decay and degeneracy of Venice under the Barbarians, there are some honorable individual exceptions. There is Pasqualigo, the last, and, alas! posthumous son of the marriage of the Doges with the Adriatic, who fought his frigate with far greater gallantry than any of his French coadjutors in the memorable action off Lissa. I came home in the squadron with the prizes in 1811, and recollect to have heard Sir William Hoste, and the other officers engaged in that glori-
A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles,* panders for a people!
Then when the Hebrew's in thy palaces;†
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his!
When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
Make their nobility a plea for pity!
Then, when the few who still retain a wreck

ous conflict, speak in the highest terms of Pasqualigo's behavior.
There is the Abbate Morelli. There is Alvise Querini, who, after a
long and honorable diplomatic career, finds some consolation for
the wrongs of his country, in the pursuits of literature with his
nephew, Vittor Benzoni, the son of the celebrated beauty, the
heroine of "La Biondina in Gondoletta." There are the patri-
cian poet Morosini, and the poet Lamberti, the author of the
"Biondina," etc. and many other estimable productions; and,
not least in an Englishman's estimation, Madame Michelli, the
translator of Shakspeare. There are the young Dandolo and
the improvvisatore Carrer, and Giuseppe Albrizzi, the accom-
plished son of an accomplished mother. There is Agletti, and,
were there nothing else, there is the immortality of Canova.
Cicognara, Mustoxithi, Buchti, etc. etc. I do not reckon,
because the one is a Greek, and the others were born at least a
hundred miles off, which, throughout Italy, constitutes, if not a
foreigner, at least a stranger (forestiere).

* [MS. — "Beggars for nobles, { lazars lepers } for a people!"]
† The chief palaces on the Brenta now belong to the Jews;
who in the earlier times of the republic were only allowed to
inhabit Mestri, and not to enter the city of Venice. The whole
commerce is in the hands of the Jews and Greeks, and the Huns
form the garrison.
Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-gerent,
Even in the palace where they swayed as sovereigns,
Even in the palace where they slew their sovereign,
Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
From an adulteress boastful of her guilt
With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation;—when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turned o'er to the vanquished by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorned even by the vicious for such vices
As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
Defy all codes to image or to name them;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom,
All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entailed on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
A wider proverb for worse prostitution;—
When all the ills of conquered states shall cling thee,
Vice without splendor, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smoothe it o'er,
But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitue,
Prurient yet passionless, cold studied lewdness,
Depraving nature's frailty to an art;—
When these and more are heavy on thee, when
Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
Youth without honor, age without respect,
Meanness and weakness, and a sense of woe
'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar'st not murmur,*
Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
Amidst thy many murders, think of mine!
Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes! †

* If the Doge’s prophecy seem remarkable, look to the follow-
ing, made by Alamanni two hundred and seventy years ago:—
"There is one very singular prophecy concerning Venice: ‘If
thou dost not change,’ it says to that proud republic, ‘thy lib-
erty, which is already on the wing, will not reckon a century
more than the thousandth year.’ If we carry back the epocha
of Venetian freedom to the establishment of the government
under which the republic flourished, we shall find that the date
of the election of the first doge is 697; and if we add one cen-
tury to a thousand, that is, eleven hundred years, we shall find
the sense of the prediction to be literally this: ‘Thy liberty will
not last till 1797.’ Recollect that Venice ceased to be free in
the year 1796, the fifth year of the French republic; and you
will perceive, that there never was prediction more pointed, or
more exactly followed by the event. You will, therefore, note
as very remarkable the three lines of Alamanni addressed to
Venice; which, however, no one has pointed out:—

'Se non cangi pensier, un secol solo
Non conterà sopra 'l millesimo anno
Tua libertà, che va fuggendo a volo.'

Many prophecies have passed for such, and many men have
been called prophets for much less." — Ginguene, Hist. Lit. de
l'Italie, t. ix. p. 144.

† Of the first fifty Doges, five abdicated — five were banished
with their eyes put out — five were massacred — and nine de-
posed; so that nineteen out of fifty lost the throne by violence,
besides two who fell in battle: this occurred long previous to the
reign of Marino Faliero. One of his more immediate predeces-
SCENE III. DOGE OF VENICE.

Gehenna of the waters! thou sea Sodom! *
Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods!
Thee and thy serpent seed!†

* [Here the Doge turns and addresses the Executioner.]

Slave, do thine office!

Strike as I struck the foe! Strike as I would

sors, Andrea Dandolo, died of vexation. Marino Faliero himself perished as related. Amongst his successors, Foscarì, after seeing his son repeatedly tortured and banished, was deposed, and died of breaking a blood-vessel, on hearing the bell of Saint Mark’s toll for the election of his successor. Morosini was impeached for the loss of Candia; but this was previous to his dukedom, during which he conquered the Morea, and was styled the Peloponnesian. Faliero might truly say,

“Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!”

† [The sentence is pronounced, a brief hour is permitted for the last devotions, and then,— still robed in his ducal gown, and wearing the diadem,— preceded with all the pomp of his station, from which he is to be degraded in the moment only before the blow be struck,—Marino Faliero is led solemnly to the Giant’s Staircase, at the summit of which he had been crowned. On that spot he is to expiate his offence against the majesty of the Venetian state. His wife struggles to accompany him to the dreadful spot, but she faints, and he leaves her on the marble pavement, forbidding them to raise her, until all had been accomplished with himself. Lord Byron breaks out with all his power in the curse with which he makes this old man take leave of the scene of his triumphs and his sorrows. The present abject condition of her that “once did hold the gorgeous East in fee”—the barbarian sway under which she is bowed down to the dust—the profligacy of manners, which ought rather, perhaps, to have been represented as the cause than the consequence of the loss of Venetian liberty;—all these topics are handled—and handled as no writer but Byron could have dared to handle them.—Lockhart.]

VOL. VI. 17
Have struck those tyrants! Strike deep as my curse! Strike — and but once!

[The Doge throws himself upon his knees, and as the Executioner raises his sword the scene closes.

SCENE IV.

The Piazza and Piazzetta of Saint Mark's. — The People in crowds gathered round the grated gates of the Ducal Palace, which are shut.

First Citizen. I have gained the gate, and can discern the Ten,
Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge.

Second Cit. I cannot reach thee with mine utmost effort.

How is it? let us hear at least, since sight
Is thus prohibited unto the people.
Except the occupiers of those bars.

First Cit. One has approached the Doge, and now they strip
The ducal bonnet from his head — and now
He raises his keen eyes to heaven; I see
Them glitter, and his lips move — Hush! Hush! —
'Twas but a murmur — Curse upon the distance!
His words are inarticulate, but the voice
Swells up like muttered thunder; would we could
But gather a sole sentence!

Second Cit. Hush! we perhaps may catch the sound.
SCENE IV. DOGE OF VENICE.

First Cit. 'Tis vain,
I cannot hear him. — How his hoary hair
Streams on the wind like foam upon the wave!
Now — now — he kneels — and now they form a circle
Round him, and all is hidden — but I see
The lifted sword in air —— Ah! hark! it falls!

[The People murmur.

Third Cit. Then they have murdered him who would have freed us.

Fourth Cit. He was a kind man to the commons ever.

Fifth Cit. Wisely they did to keep their portals barred.

Would we had known the work they were preparing
Ere we were summoned here—we would have brought
Weapons, and forced them!

Sixth Cit. Are you sure he's dead?

First Cit. I saw the sword fall — Lo! what have we here?

Enter on the Balcony of the Palace which fronts Saint Mark's Place a Chief of the Ten,* with a bloody sword. He waves it thrice before the People, and exclaims,

"Justice hath dealt upon the mighty Traitor!"

[The gates are opened; the populace rush in towards the "Giants' Staircase," where the execu-

* "Un Capo de' Dieci" are the words of Sanuto's Chronicle.
tion has taken place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,
The gory head * rolls down the Giants’ Steps!

[The curtain falls.†

* [MS. ]{“The gory head is rolling down the steps!”} {“The head is rolling down the gory steps!”}

† [As a play, Marino Faliero is deficient in the attractive passions, in probability, and in depth and variety of interest; and revolts throughout, by the extravagant disproportion which the injury bears to the unmeasured resentment with which it is pursued. As a poem, though it occasionally displays great force and elevation, it obviously wants both grace and facility. The diction is often heavy and cumbrous, and the versification without sweetness or elasticity. It is generally very verbose, and sometimes exceedingly dull. Altogether, it gives us the impression of a thing worked out against the grain, and not poured forth from the fulness of the heart or the fancy; — the ambitious and elaborate work of a powerful mind engaged with an unsuitable task — not the spontaneous effusion of an exuberant imagination, sporting in the fulness of its strength. Every thing is heightened and enforced with visible effort and design; and the noble author is often contented to be emphatic by dint of exaggeration, and eloquent by the common topics of declamation. Lord Byron is, undoubtedly, a poet of the very first order, and has talents to reach the very highest honors of the drama. But he must not again disdain love, and ambition, and jealousy; he must not substitute what is merely bizarre and extraordinary, for what is naturally and universally interesting, nor expect, by any exaggerations, to so rouse and rule our sympathies by the senseless anger of an old man, and the prudish proprieties of an untempted woman, as by the agency of the great and simple passions with which, in some of their degrees, all men are familiar, and by which alone the Dramatic Muse has hitherto wrought her miracles. — Jeffrey.

On the whole, the Doge of Venice is the effect of a powerful and cultivated mind. It has all the requisites of tragedy, sublimity, terror, and pathos — all but that without which the rest
are unavailing, interest! With many detached passages which neither derogate from Lord Byron's former fame, nor would have derogated from the reputation of our best ancient tragedians, it is, as a whole, neither sustained nor impressive. The poet, except in the soliloquy of Lioni, scarcely ever seems to have written with his own thorough good liking. He may be suspected throughout to have had in his eye some other model than nature; and we rise from his work with the same feeling as if we had been reading a translation. For this want of interest the subject itself is, doubtless, in some measure to blame; though, if the same subject had been differently treated, we are inclined to believe a very different effect would have been produced. But for the constraint and stiffness of the poetry, we have nothing to blame but the apparent resolution of its author to set (at whatever risk) an example of classical correctness to his uncivilized countrymen, and rather to forego success than to succeed after the manner of Shakspeare. — Heber.]
APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

I am obliged for the following excellent translation of the old Chronicle to Mr. F. Cohen,* to whom the reader will find himself indebted for a version that I could not myself—though after many years’ intercourse with Italian—have given by any means so purely and so faithfully.†

STORY OF MARINO FALIERO, DOGE XLIX.

MCCCLIV.

On the eleventh day of September, in the year of our Lord 1354, Marino Faliero was elected and chosen to be the Duke of the Commonwealth of Venice. He was Count of Valdemarino,

* [Mr. Francis Cohen, now Sir Francis Palgrave, K. H., the learned author of the "Rise and Progress of the English Constitution," "History of the Anglo-Saxons," etc. etc.]

† [In a letter to Mr. Murray, dated Ravenna, July 30, 1821, Byron says:—"Enclosed is the best account of the Doge Faliero, which was only sent to me, from an old MS., the other day. Get it translated, and append it as a note to the next edition. You will, perhaps, be pleased to see, that my conceptions of his character were correct; though I regret not having met with the extract before. You will perceive that he himself said exactly what he is made to say about the Bishop of Treviso. You will see also that he spoke little, and those only words of rage and disdain after his arrest; which is the case in the play, except when he breaks out at the close of Act fifth. But his speech to the conspirators is better in the MS. than in the play. I wish I had met with it in time."]

(263)
in the Marches of Treviso, and a Knight, and a wealthy man to boot. As soon as the election was completed, it was resolved in the Great Council, that a deputation of twelve should be despatched to Marino Faliero the Duke, who was then on his way from Rome; for when he was chosen, he was ambassador at the court of the Holy Father, at Rome,— the Holy Father himself held his court at Avignon. When Messer Marino Faliero the Duke was about to land in this city, on the 5th day of October, 1354, a thick haze came on, and darkened the air; and he was enforced to land on the place of Saint Mark, between the two columns, on the spot where evil doers are put to death; and all thought that this was the worst of tokens.—Nor must I forget to write that which I have read in a chronicle. When Messer Marino Faliero was Podesta and Captain of Treviso, the Bishop delayed coming in with the holy sacrament, on a day when a procession was to take place. Now, the said Marino Faliero was so very proud and wrathful, that he buffeted the Bishop, and almost struck him to the ground: and, therefore, Heaven allowed Marino Faliero to go out of his right senses, in order that he might bring himself to an evil death.

When this Duke had held the dukedom during nine months and six days, he, being wicked and ambitious, sought to make himself Lord of Venice, in the manner which I have read in an ancient chronicle. When the Thursday arrived upon which they were wont to hunt the bull, the bull hunt took place as usual; and, according to the usage of those times, after the bull hunt had ended, they all proceeded unto the palace of the Duke, and assembled together in one of his halls; and they disported themselves with the women. And until the first bell tolled they danced, and then a banquet was served up. My Lord the Duke paid the expenses thereof, provided he had a Duchess, and after the banquet they all returned to their homes.

Now to this feast there came a certain Ser Michele Steno, a gentleman of poor estate and very young, but crafty and daring, and who loved one of the damsels of the Duchess. Ser Michele stood amongst the women upon the solajo; and he behaved indiscreetly, so that my Lord the Duke ordered that he should be kicked off the solajo; and the esquires of the Duke flung him down from the solajo accordingly. Ser Michele thought that
such an affront was beyond all bearing; and when the feast was over, and all other persons had left the palace, he, continuing heated with anger, went to the hall of audience, and wrote certain unseemly words relating to the Duke and the Duchess upon the chair in which the Duke was used to sit; for in those days the Duke did not cover his chair with cloth of sendal, but he sat in a chair of wood. Ser Michele wrote thereon—"Marin Fa-
lier, the husband of the fair wife; others kiss her, but he keeps her." In the morning the words were seen, and the matter was consid-
ered to be very scandalous; and the Senate commanded the Avogadori of the Commonwealth to proceed therein with the greatest diligence. A largess of great amount was immediately proffered by the Avogadori, in order to discover who had written these words. And at length it was known that Michele Steno had written them. It was resolved in the Council of Forty that he should be arrested; and he then confessed that in the fit of vexation and spite, occasioned by his being thrust off the solajo in the presence of his mistress, he had written the words. Therefore the Council debated thereon. And the Council took his youth into consideration, and that he was a lover; and there-
fore they adjudged that he should be kept in close confinement during two months, and that afterwards he should be banished from Venice and the state during one year. In consequence of this merciful sentence the Duke became exceedingly wroth, it appearing to him, that the Council had not acted in such a manner as was required by the respect due to his ducal dignity; and he said they ought to have condemned Ser Michele to be hanged by the neck, or at least to be banished for life.

Now it was fated that my Lord Duke Marino was to have his head cut off. And as it is necessary when any effect is to be brought about, that the cause of such effect must happen, it therefore came to pass, that on the very day after sentence had been pronounced on Ser Michele Steno, being the first day of Lent, a gentleman of the house of Barbaro, a choleric gentleman, went to the arsenal, and required certain things of the masters of the galleys. This he did in the presence of the Admiral of the arsenal, and he, hearing the request, answered,—No, it cannot be done. High words arose between the gentleman and the Admiral, and the gentleman strack him with his fist just above
APPENDIX TO THE

the eye; and as he happened to have a ring on his finger, the ring cut the Admiral and drew blood. The Admiral, all bruised and bloody, ran straight to the Duke to complain, and with the intent of praying him to inflict some heavy punishment upon the gentleman of Cà Barbaro. — "What wouldst thou have me do for thee?" answered the Duke: "think upon the shameful gibe which hath been written concerning me; and think on the manner in which they have punished that ribald Michele Steno, who wrote it; and see how the Council of Forty respect our person." — Upon this the Admiral answered, — "My Lord Duke, if you would wish to make yourself a prince, and to cut all those cuckoldly gentlemen to pieces, I have the heart, if you do but help me, to make you prince of all this state; and then you may punish them all." — Hearing this, the Duke said, — "How can such a matter be brought about?" — and so they discoursed thereon.

The Duke called for his nephew, Ser Bertuccio Faliero, who lived with him in the palace, and they communed about this plot. And without leaving the place, they sent for Philip Calendaro, a seaman of great repute, and for Bertuccio Israello, who was exceedingly wily and cunning. Then taking counsel amongst themselves, they agreed to call in some others; and so, for several nights successively, they met with the Duke at home in his palace. And the following men were called in singly; to wit; — Niccolo Fagiuolo, Giovanni da Corfu, Stefano Fagiono, Niccolo dalle Bende, Niccolo Bioado, and Stefano Trivisano. — It was concerted that sixteen or seventeen leaders should be stationed in various parts of the city, each being at the head of forty men, armed and prepared; but the followers were not to know their destination. On the appointed day they were to make affrays amongst themselves here and there, in order that the Duke might have a pretence for tolling the bells of San Marco; these bells are never rung but by the order of the Duke. And at the sound of the bells, these sixteen or seventeen, with their followers, were to come to San Marco, through the streets which open upon the Piazza. And when the noble and leading citizens should come into the Piazza, to know the cause of the riot, then the conspirators were to cut them in pieces; and this work being finished, my Lord Marino Faliero the Duke was to be proclaimed
the Lord of Venice. Things having been thus settled, they agreed to fulfil their intent on Wednesday, the 15th day of April, in the year 1355. So covertly did they plot, that no one ever dreamt of their machinations.

But the Lord, who hath always helped this most glorious city, and who, loving its righteousness and holiness, hath never forsaken it, inspired one Beltramo Bergamasco to be the cause of bringing the plot to light, in the following manner. This Beltramo, who belonged to Ser Niccolo Liono of Santo Stefano, had heard a word or two of what was to take place; and so, in the before-mentioned month of April, he went to the house of the aforesaid Ser Niccolo Liono, and told him all the particulars of the plot. Ser Niccolo, when he heard all these things, was struck dead, as it were, with affright. He heard all the particulars; and Beltramo prayed him to keep it all secret; and if he told Ser Niccolo, it was in order that Ser Niccolo might stop at home on the 15th of April, and thus save his life. Beltramo was going, but Ser Niccolo ordered his servants to lay hands upon him, and lock him up. Ser Niccolo then went to the house of Messer Giovanni Gradenigo Nasoni, who afterwards became Duke, and who also lived at Santo Stefano, and told him all. The matter seemed to him to be of the very greatest importance, as indeed it was; and they two went to the house of Ser Marco Cornaro, who lived at San Felice; and, having spoken with him, they all three then determined to go back to the house of Ser Niccolo Lioni, to examine the said Beltramo; and having questioned him, and heard all that he had to say, they left him in confinement. And then they all three went into the sacristy of San Salvatoren, and sent their men to summon the Councillors, the Avogadori, the Capi de' Dieci, and those of the Great Council.

When all were assembled, the whole story was told to them. They were struck dead, as it were, with affright. They determined to send for Beltramo. He was brought in before them. They examined him, and ascertained that the matter was true; and, although they were exceedingly troubled, yet they determined upon their measures. And they sent for the Capi de' Quarante, the Signori di Notte, the Capi de' Sestieri, and the Cinque della Pace; and they were ordered to associate to their men other good men and true, who were to proceed to the
houses of the ringleaders of the conspiracy, and secure them. And they secured the foreman of the arsenal, in order that the conspirators might not do mischief. Towards nightfall they assembled in the palace. When they were assembled in the palace, they caused the gates of the quadrangle of the palace to be shut. And they sent to the keeper of the Bell-tower, and forbade the tolling of the bells. All this was carried into effect. The before-mentioned conspirators were secured, and they were brought to the palace; and, as the Council of Ten saw that the Duke was in the plot, they resolved that twenty of the leading men of the state should be associated to them for the purpose of consultation and deliberation, but that they should not be allowed to ballot.

The counsellors were the following: — Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, of the Sestiero of San Marco; Ser Almoro Veniero da Santa Marina, of the Sestiero of Castello; Ser Tomas Viadro, of the Sestiero of Canaregio; Ser Giovanni Sanudo, of the Sestiero of Santa Croce; Ser Pietro Trivisano, of the Sestiero of San Paolo; Ser Pantalione Barbo il Grando, of the Sestiero of Ossoduro. The Avogadori of the Commonwealth were Zufredo Morosini, and Ser Orio Pasqualigo; and these did not ballot. Those of the Council of Ten were Ser Giovanni Marcello, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, and Ser Micheleto Dolfino, the heads of the aforesaid Council of Ten. Ser Luca da Legge, and Ser Pietro da Mosto, inquisitors of the aforesaid Council. And Ser Marco Polani, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Lando Lombardo, and Ser Niccoletto Trivisano, of Sant' Angelo.

Late in the night, just before the dawning, they chose a junta of twenty noblemen of Venice from amongst the wisest, and the worthiest, and the oldest. They were to give counsel, but not to ballot. And they would not admit any one of Ca Faliero. And Niccolo Faliero, and another Niccolo Faliero, of San Tomaso, were expelled from the Council, because they belonged to the family of the Doge. And this resolution of creating the junta of twenty was much praised throughout the state. The following were the members of the junta of twenty: — Ser Marco Gistiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Erizzo, Procuratore, Ser Leonardo Giustiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Contarini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Nicolo Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser
Marco Diedo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser Andrea Cornaro, Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri du Mosto, Ser Gazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosini, Ser Stefano Belegno, Ser Nicolo Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini.

These twenty were accordingly called in to the Council of Ten; and they sent for My Lord Marino Faliero the Duke: and My Lord Marino was then consorting in the palace with people of great estate, gentlemen, and other good men, none of whom knew yet how the fact stood.

At the same time Bertucci Israello, who, as one of the ring-leaders, was to head the conspirators in Santa Croce, was arrested and bound, and brought before the Council. Zanello del Brin, Nicoletto di Rosa, Nicoletto Alberto, and the Guardiaga, were also taken, together with several seamen, and people of various ranks. These were examined, and the truth of the plot was ascertained.

On the 16th of April judgment was given in the Council of Ten, that Filippo Calendaro and Bertuccio Israello should be hanged upon the red pillars of the balcony of the palace, from which the Duke is wont to look at the bull hunt: and they were hanged with gags in their mouths.

The next day the following were condemned:—Niccolo Zuccuolo, Nicoletto Blondo, Nicoletto Doro, Marco Giuda, Jacomello Dagolino, Nicoletto Fidele, the son of Filippo Calendaro, Marco Torello, called Israello, Stefano Trivisano, the money changer of Santa Margherita, and Antonio dalle Bende. These were all taken at Chioggia, for they were endeavoring to escape. Afterwards, by virtue of the sentence which was passed upon them in the Council of Ten, they were hanged on successive days; some singly and some in couples, upon the columns of the palace, beginning from the red columns, and so going onwards towards the canal. And other prisoners were discharged, because, although they had been involved in the conspiracy, yet they had not assisted in it: for they were given to understand by some of the heads of the plot, that they were to come armed and prepared for the service of the state, and in order to secure certain criminals; and they knew nothing else. Nicoletto Alberto, the Guardiaga, and Bartolommeo Ciricolo and his son, and several others, who were not guilty, were discharged.
On Friday, the 16th day of April, judgment was also given, in the aforesaid Council of Ten, that my Lord Marino Faliero, the Duke, should have his head cut off; and that the execution should be done on the landing-place of the stone staircase, where the Dukes take their oath when they first enter the palace. On the following day, the 17th of April, the doors of the palace being shut, the Duke had his head cut off, about the hour of noon. And the cap of estate was taken from the Duke’s head before he came down stairs. When the execution was over, it is said that one of the Council of Ten went to the columns of the palace over against the place of St. Mark, and that he showed the bloody sword unto the people, crying out with a loud voice—“The terrible doom hath fallen upon the traitor!”—and the doors were opened, and the people all rushed in, to see the corpse of the Duke, who had been beheaded.

It must be known that Ser Giovanni Sanudo, the councillor, was not present when the aforesaid sentence was pronounced; because he was unwell and remained at home. So that only fourteen balloted; that is to say, five councillors, and nine of the Council of Ten. And it was adjudged, that all the lands and chattels of the Duke, as well as of the other traitors, should be forfeited to the state. And as a grace to the Duke, it was resolved in the Council of Ten, that he should be allowed to dispose of two thousand ducats out of his own property. And it was resolved, that all the councillors and all the Avogadori of the Commonwealth, those of the Council of Ten, and the members of the junta, who had assisted in passing sentence on the Duke and the other traitors, should have the privilege of carrying arms both by day and by night in Venice, and from Grado to Cavazere. And they were also to be allowed two footmen carrying arms, the aforesaid footmen living and boarding with them in their own houses. And he who did not keep two footmen might transfer the privilege to his sons or his brothers; but only to two. Permission of carrying arms was also granted to the four Notaries of the Chancery; that is to say, of the Supreme Court, who took the depositions; and they were, Amedio, Nicoletto di Lorino, Steffanello, and Pietro de Compostelli, the secretaries of the Signori di Notte.

After the traitors had been hanged, and the Duke had had his head cut off, the state remained in great tranquillity and peace.
And, as I have read in a Chronicle, the corpse of the Duke was removed in a barge, with eight torches, to his tomb in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo, where it was buried. The tomb is now in that aisle in the middle of the little church of Santa Maria della Pace, which was built by Bishop Gabriel of Bergamo. It is a coffin of stone, with these words engraved thereon: "Heic jacet Dominus Marinus Faletro Dux." — And they did not paint his portrait in the hall of the Great Council: — but in the place where it ought to have been, you see these words: — "Hic est locus Marini Faletro, decapitati pro criminibus." — And it is thought that his house was granted to the church of Sant' Apostolo; it was that great one near the bridge. Yet this could not be the case, or else the family bought it back from the church; for it still belongs to Ca Faliero. I must not refrain from noting, that some wished to write the following words in the place where his portrait ought to have been, as aforesaid: — "Marinus Faletro Dux, temeritas me cepit. Pxnas lui, decopitatus pro criminibus." — Others, also, indited a couplet, worthy of being inscribed upon his tomb.

"Dux Venetum jacte hic, patriam qui prodere tentans,
Sceptra, decus, censum perdidit, atque caput."

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**NOTE B.**

**PETRARCh ON THE CONSPIRACY OF MARINO FALIERO.**

"Al giovane Doge Andrea Dandolo succedette un vecchio, il quale tardi si pose al timone della repubblica, ma sempre prima di quel che facea d' uopo a lui, ed alla patria: egli è Marino Faliero, personaggio a me noto per antica dimestichesza. Falsa era l' opinione intorno a lui, giacchè egli si mostrò fornito più di coraggio, che di senno. Non pago della prima dignità, entrò con sinistro piede nel pubblico Palazzo: impareciocchè questo

* [*Had a copy taken of an extract from Petrarch's Letters, with reference to the conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero, containing the poet's opinion of the matter.*] — Byron's Diary, Feb. 11, 1821.]*
APPENDIX TO THE

Doge dei Veneti, magistrato sacro in tutti i secoli, che dagli antichi fu sempre venerato qual nume in quella città, l'altro' jeri fu decollato nel vestibolo dell' istesso Palazzo. Discorrei fin dal principio le cause di un tale evvento, se colvarlo ed ambiguo non ne fosse il grido. Nessuno però lo scuosa, tutti affermano, che egli abbia voluto cangiare qualche cosa nell' ordine della repubblica a lui tramandato dai maggiori. Che desiderava egli di più? Io son d' avviso, che egli abbia ottenuto ciò che non sì concedette a nessun altro: mentre adempiva gli uffici di legato presso il Pontefice, e sulle rive del Rodano trattava la pace, che io prima di lui aveva indarno tentato di concludere, gli fu conferito l' onore del Ducato, che ne chiedeva, ne s' aspettava. Tornato in patria, pensò a quello cui nessuno non pose mente giammai, e soffri quello che a nuno accadde mai di soffrire: giacché in quel luogo celeberrimo, e chiarissimo, e bellissimo infra tutti quelli che io vidi, ove i suoi antenati avevano ricevuti grandissimi onori in mezzo alle pompe trionfali, ivi egli fu trascinato in modo servile, e spogliato delle insegne ducale, perdette la testa, e macchiò col proprio sangue le soglie del tempio, l'atrio del Palazzo, e le scale marmoree rendute spesse volte illustri, o dalle solenni festività, o dalle estili spoglie. Ho notato il luogo, ora noto il tempo: è l' anno del Natale di Cristo 1355, fu il giorno 18 d' Aprile. Si alto è il grido sparso, che se alcuno esaminerà la disciplina, e le costumanze di quella città, e quanto mutamento di cose venga minacciato dalla morte di un sol uomo (quantunque molti altri, come narrano, essendo complici, o subirono l' istesso supplicio, o lo aspettano) si accorrerà, che nulla di più grande avvenne ai nostri tempi nella Italia. Tu forse qui attendi il mio giudizio: assolve il popolo, se credere alla fama, benché abbia potuto e castigare più mitemente, e con maggior dolcezza vendicare il suo dolore: ma non così facilmente si modera un' ira giusta insieme e grande, in un numeroso popolo principalmente, nel quale il precipitoso ed instabile volgo aguzza gli stimoli dell' irracondia con rapidi e sconsigliati clamori. Compatisco, e nell' istesso tempo mi adiro con quell' infelice uomo, il quale adorno di un' insolito onore, non so che cosa si volesse negli estremi anni della sua vita: la calamità di lui diviene sempre più grave, perché dalla sentenza contra di esso promulgata aperirà, che egli fù non solo miserò, ma insano e
demente, e che con vane arti si usurpò per tanti anni una falsa fama di sapienza. Ammonisco i Dogi, i quali gli succederanno, che questo è un' esempio posto inanzi ai loro occhi, quale specchio, nel quale vegnano d' essere non Signori, ma Ducì, anzi nemmeno Ducì, ma onorati servi della Repubblica. Tu sta sano; e giacché fluttuano le pubbliche cose, sforsiamoci di governar modestissimamente i privati nostri affari.” —_LEVATI, Viaggi di Petrarca_, vol. iv. p. 323.

The above Italian translation from the Latin epistles of Petrarch proves—

1stly, That Marino Faliero was a personal friend of Petrarch's;

"antica dimestichezza," old intimacy, is the phrase of the poet.

2dly, That Petrarch thought that he had more courage than conduct, "più di coraggio che di senno."

3dly, That there was some jealousy on the part of Petrarch; for he says that Marino Faliero was treating of the peace which he himself had "vainly attempted to conclude."

4thly, That the honor of the Dukedom was conferred upon him, which he neither sought nor expected, "che nè chiedeva nè aspettava," and which had never been granted to any other in like circumstances, "ciò che non si concedette a nessun altro," a proof of the high esteem in which he must have been held.

5thly, That he had a reputation for _wisdom_, only forfeited by the last enterprise of his life, "si usurpò per tanti anni una falsa fama di sapienza." — "He had usurped for so many years a false fame of wisdom," rather a difficult task, I should think. People are generally found out before eighty years of age, at least in a republic.

From these and the other historical notes which I have collected, it may be inferred, that Marino Faliero possessed many of the qualities, but not the success of a hero; and that his passions were too violent. The paltry and ignorant account of Dr. Moore falls to the ground. Petrarch says, "that there had been no greater event in his times" (our times literally), "nostri tempi," in Italy. He also differs from the historian in saying that Faliero was "on the banks of the Rhone," instead of at Rome, when elected; the other accounts say, that the deputation of the Venetian senate met him at Ravenna. How this may have been, it
is not for me to decide, and is of no great importance. Had the man succeeded, he would have changed the face of Venice, and perhaps of Italy. As it is, what are they both?

Note C.

VENETIAN SOCIETY AND MANNERS.

"Vice without splendor, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smoothe it o'er;
But, in its stead, coarse lusts of habituate," etc. — (See p. 173.)

"To these attacks so frequently pointed by the government against the clergy,— to the continual struggles between the different constituted bodies,— to these enterprises carried on by the mass of the nobles against the depositaries of power,— to all those projects of innovation, which always ended by a stroke of state policy; we must add a cause not less fitted to spread contempt for ancient doctrines; this was the excess of corruption.

"That freedom of manners, which had been long boasted of as the principal charm of Venetian society, had degenerated into scandalous licentiousness: the tie of marriage was less sacred in that Catholic country, than among those nations where the laws and religion admit of its being dissolved. Because they could not break the contract, they feigned that it had not existed; and the ground of nullity, immodestly alleged by the married pair, was admitted with equal facility by priests and magistrates, alike corrupt. These divorces, veiled under another name, became so frequent, that the most important act of civil society was discovered to be amenable to a tribunal of exceptions; and to restrain the open scandal of such proceedings became the office of the police. In 1782, the Council of Ten decreed, that every woman who should sue for a dissolution of her marriage should be compelled to await the decision of the judges in some convent, to be named by the court.*

* Correspondence of M. Schlick, French chargé d'affaires. Despatch of 24th August, 1782.
wards the same council summoned all causes of that nature before itself. This infringement on ecclesiastical jurisdiction having occasioned some remonstrance from Rome, the council retained only the right of rejecting the petition of the married persons, and consented to refer such causes to the holy office as it should not previously have rejected.†

"There was a moment in which, doubtless, the destruction of private fortunes, the ruin of youth, the domestic discord occasioned by these abuses, determined the government to depart from its established maxims concerning the freedom of manners allowed the subject. All the courtesans were banished from Venice; but their absence was not enough to reclaim and bring back good morals to a whole people brought up in the most scandalous licentiousness. Depravity reached the very bosoms of private families, and even into the cloister; and they found themselves obliged to recall, and even to indemnify ‡ women who sometimes gained possession of important secrets, and who might be usefully employed in the ruin of men whose fortunes might have rendered them dangerous. Since that time licentiousness has gone on increasing; and we have seen mothers, not only selling the innocence of their daughters, but selling it by a contract, authenticated by the signature of a public officer, and the performance of which was secured by the protection of the laws.§

"The parlors of the convents of noble ladies, and the houses of the courtesans, though the police carefully kept up a number of spies about them, were the only assemblies for society in Venice; and in these two places, so different from each other, there was equal freedom. Music, collations, gallantry, were not more forbidden in the parlors than at the casinos. There were

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* Correspondence of M. Schlick, French chargé d'affaires. Despatch, 81st August.
† Ibid. Despatch of 31 September, 1785.
‡ The decree for their recall designates them as nostre benemerite meretrici: a fund and some houses, called Case rampane, were assigned to them; hence the opprobrious appellation of Carampane.
§ Mayer, Description of Venice, vol. ii. and M. Archenholz, Picture of Italy, vol. i. ch. 2.
a number of casinos for the purpose of public assemblies, where gaming was the principal pursuit of the company. It was a strange sight to see persons of either sex masked, or grave in their magisterial robes, round a table, invoking chance, and giving way at one instant to the agonies of despair, at the next to the illusions of hope, and that without uttering a single word.

"The rich had private casinos, but they lived incognito in them; and the wives whom they abandoned found compensation in the liberty they enjoyed. The corruption of morals had deprived them of their empire. We have just reviewed the whole history of Venice, and we have not once seen them exercise the slightest influence." — Daku: Hist. de la Répub. de Venise, vol. v. p. 95.