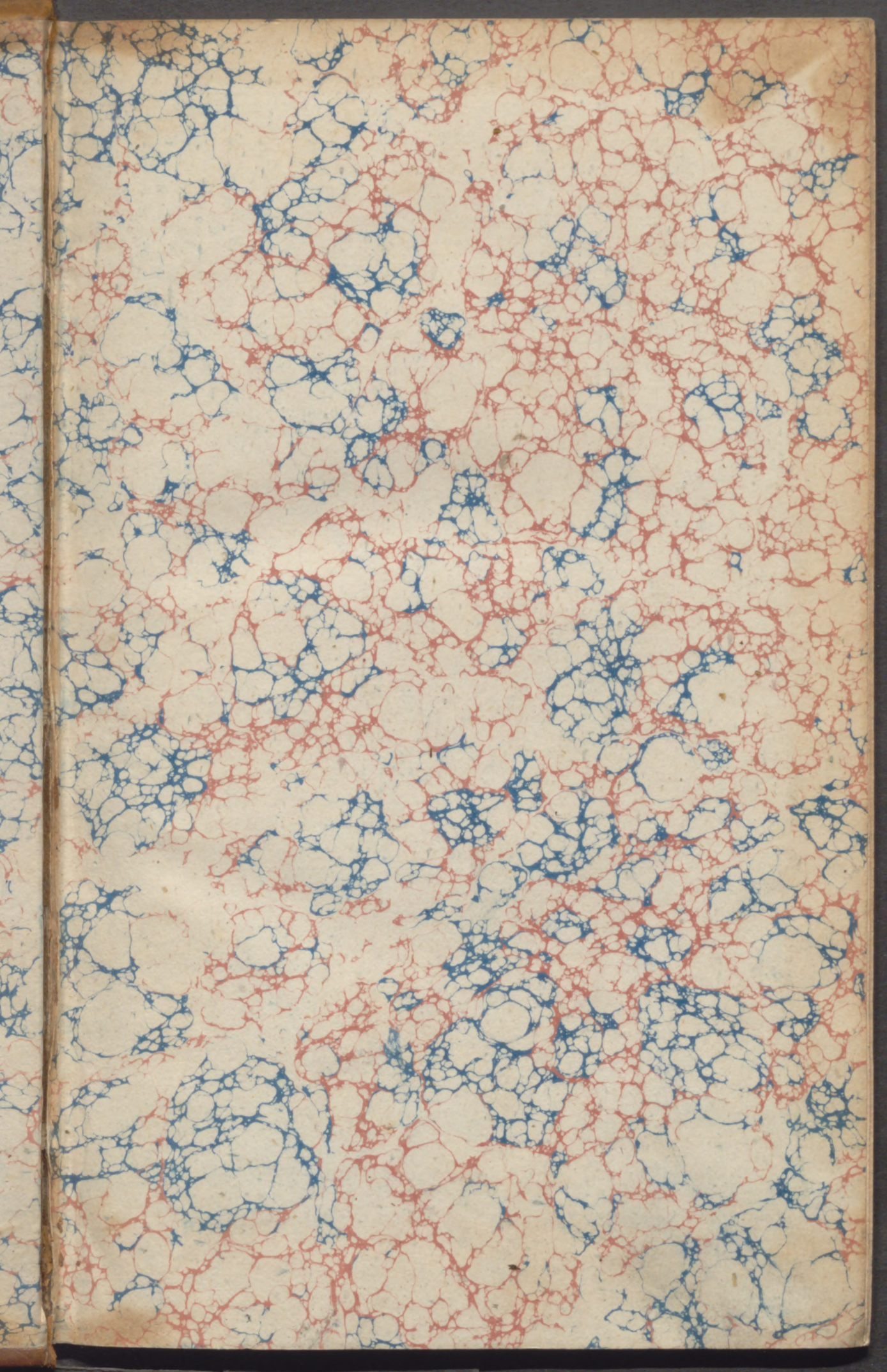
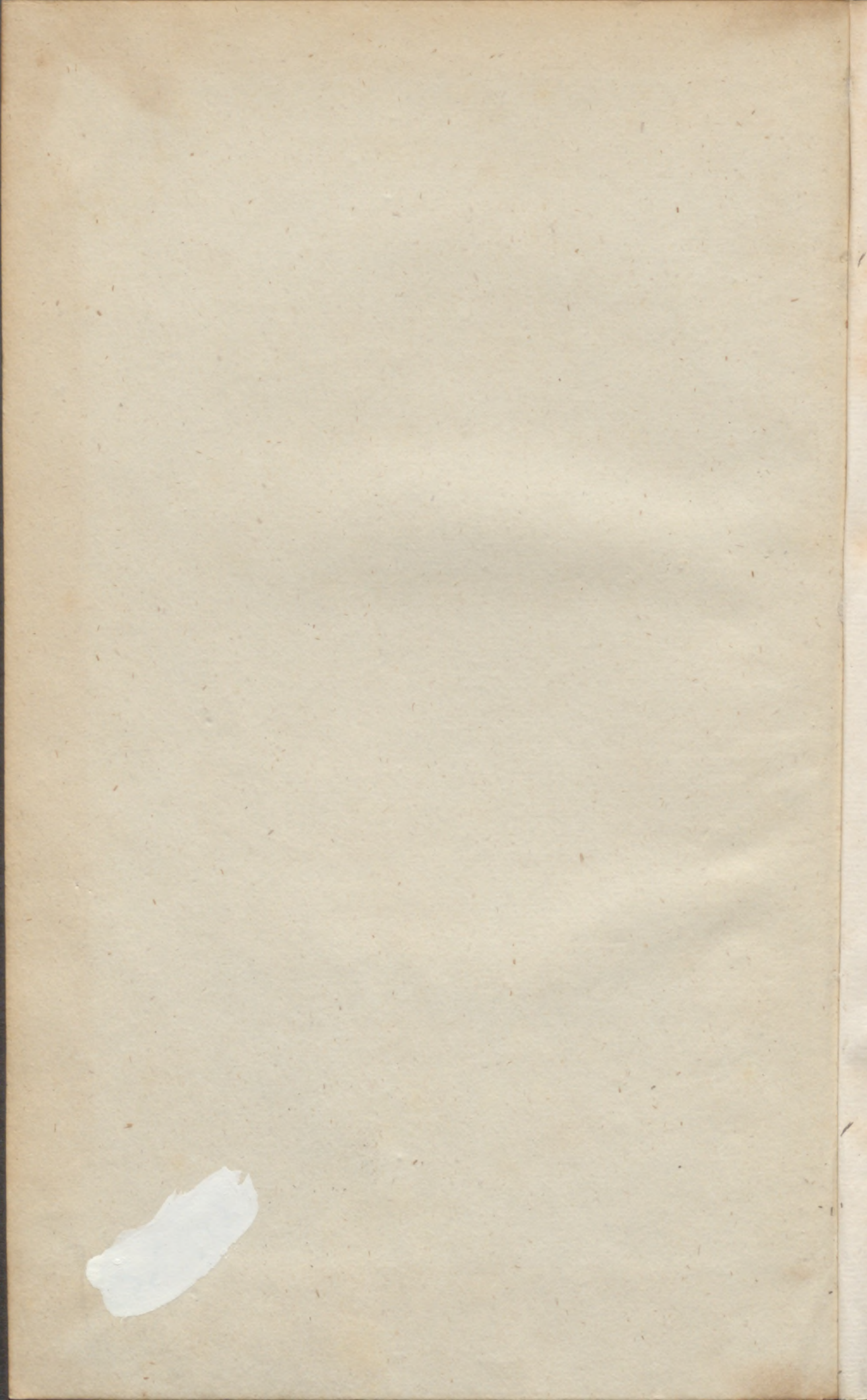


BYRONS
WORKS.

5

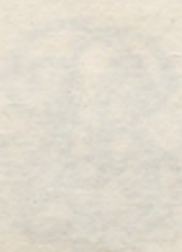






THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
LORD BYRON.

VOL. III.



PARIS.

DEBENY'S EUROPEAN LIBRARY,

10, RUE DE LA HARPE, PARIS.

PRINTED BY A. LEFÈVRE, 10, RUE DE LA HARPE, PARIS.

COMPLETE WORKS

LORD BYRON

THE
any other
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
LORD BYRON,

NEW EDITION,
ENTIRELY REVISED AND CORRECTED FROM THE
LAST LONDON EDITION.

VOL. III.



PARIS,
BAUDRY'S EUROPEAN LIBRARY,
RUE DU COQ, NEAR THE LOUVRE,
SOLD ALSO BY AMYOT, RUE DE LA PAIX; TRUCHY, BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS;
THEOPHILE BARROIS, JUN., RUE RICHELIEU; LIBRAIRIE DES ETRANGERS,
RUE NEUVE SAINT-AUGUSTIN; AND FRENCH AND ENGLISH LIBRARY,
RUE VIVIENNE.

1835.

82

COMPLETE WORKS

LORD BYRON

NEW EDITION

REVISED AND CORRECTED FROM THE

LAST LONDON EDITION

VOL. III



U. D. J. p. 1945/1325

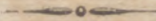
PARIS

BAHREYIA LIBRARY


Small, faint text at the bottom of the page, likely a library notice or publisher's information.

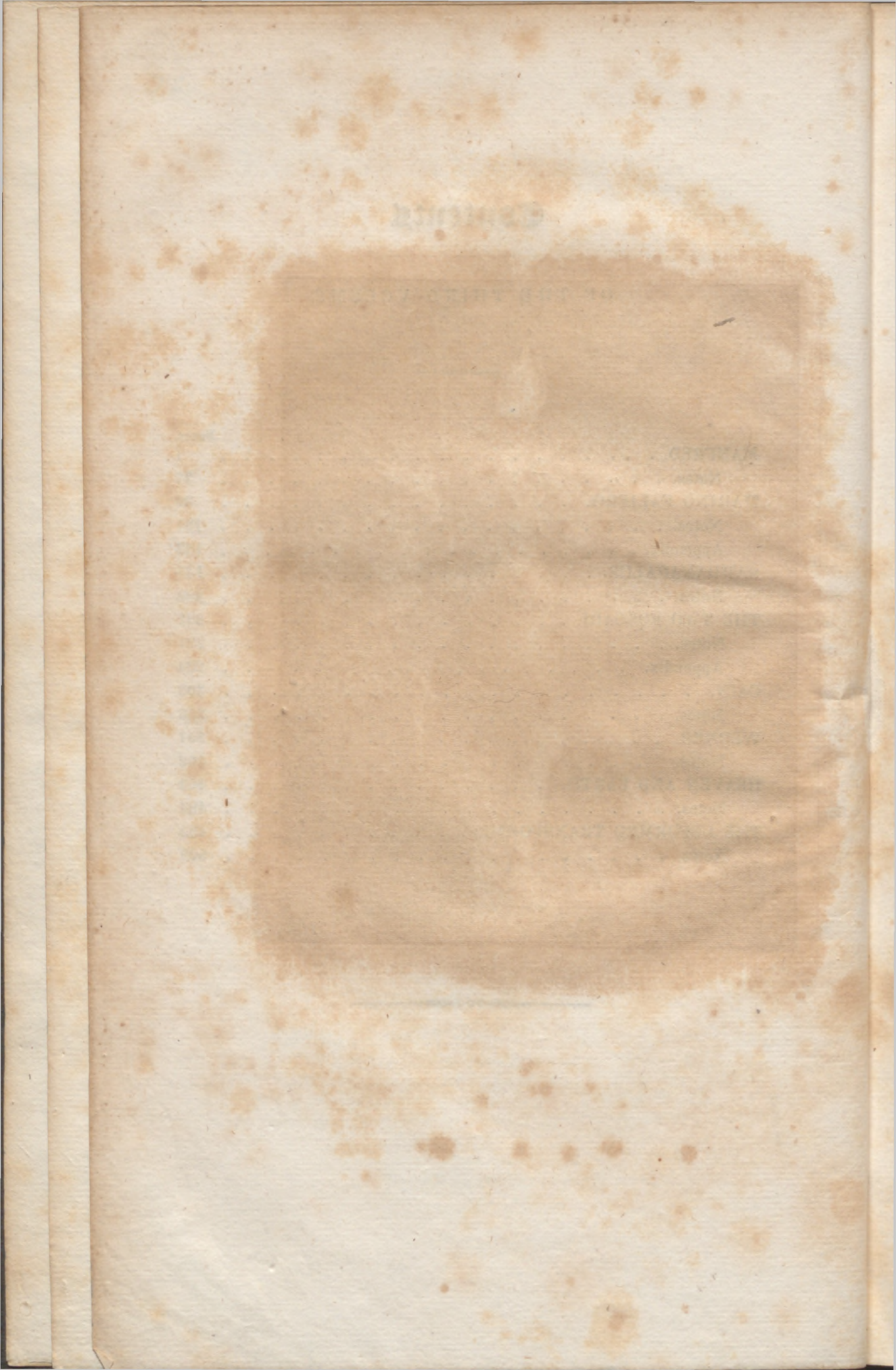
Contents.

OF THE THIRD VOLUME.



	Pages.
MANFRED.	1
Notes.	37
MARINO FALIERO.	39
Notes.	131
Appendix.	133
SARDANAPALUS.	145
Notes.	228
THE TWO FOSCARI.	231
Notes.	291
Appendix.	294
CAIN.	303
Notes.	356
WERNER.	357
Notes.	452
HEAVEN AND EARTH.	453
Notes.	484
THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.	485
Notes.	529







Drawn by Rich^d Westall R.A.

Engraved by Chas Heath.

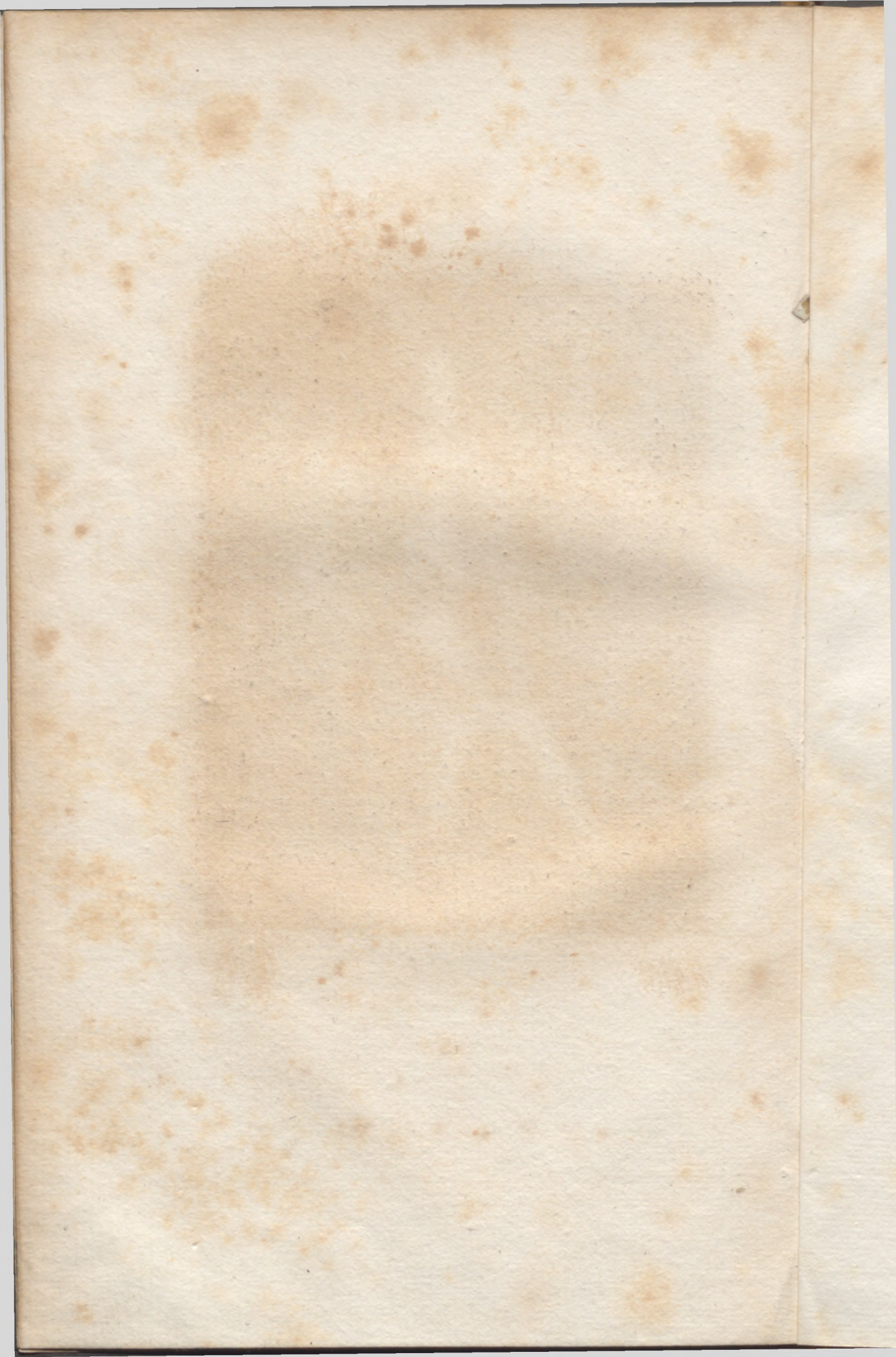
MANFRED.

BACK, YE BAFFLED FIENDS!

THE HAND OF DEATH IS ON ME . . . BUT NOT YOURS!

Act 3.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, DEC. 1819.



MANFRED;

A DRAMATIC POEM.

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

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANFRED.
CHAMOIS HUNTER.
ABBOT OF ST. MAURICE.
MANUEL.
HERMAN.

WITCH OF THE ALPS.
ARIMANES.
NEMESIS.
THE DESTINIES.
SPIRITS, &c.

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.—A GOTHIC GALLERY.—TIME, MIDNIGHT.

MANFRED (*alone*).

THE lamp must be replenish'd, but even then
It will not burn so long as I must watch :
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 essay'd, 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 avail'd not : I have had my foes,
And none have baffled, many fallen before me—
But this avail'd 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.]

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 birth-place in a star condemn'd,
 The burning wreck of a demolish'd 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.]

1st Spirit. Mortal! to thy bidding bow'd,
 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 mix'd for my pavilion;
 Though thy quest may be forbidden,
 On a star-beam I have ridden,
 To thine adjuration bow'd,
 Mortal—be thy wish avow'd!

2d Spir. Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains,
 They crown'd him long ago
 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 cavern'd base—
 And what with me wouldst *thou*?

3d Spir. In the blue depth of the waters,
 Where the wave hath no strife,
 Where the wind is a stranger,
 And the sea-snake hath life,
 Where the mermaid is decking
 Her green hair with shells;
 Like the storm on the surface
 Came the sound of thy spells;
 O'er my calm hall of coral
 The deep echo roll'd—
 To the Spirit of Ocean
 Thy wishes unfold!

4th Spir. Where the slumbering earthquake
 Lies pillow'd 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 birth-place
 Thy bidding to bide—
 Thy spell hath subdued me,
 Thy will be my guide!

5th Spir. 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 sail'd well, and yet
 'T will sink ere night be past.

6th Spir. My dwelling is the shadow of the night:
 Why does thy magic torture me with light?

7th Spir. 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 bosom'd 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?

Manf. Forgetfulness—

1st Spir. Of what—of whom—and why?

Manf. Of that which is within me: read it there—
 Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.

Spir. 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.

Manf. Oblivion, self-oblivion—
 Can ye not wring from out the hidden realms
 Ye offer so profusely what I ask?

Spir. It is not in our essence, in our skill;
 But—thou may'st die.

Manf. Will death bestow it on me?

Spir. We are immortal, and do not forget:
 We are eternal, and to us the past
 Is, as the future, present. Art thou answer'd?

Manf. 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 coop'd in clay!
 Answer, or I will teach you what I am.

Spir. We answer as we answer'd; our reply
 Is even in thine own words.

Manf. Why say ye so?

Spir. 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.

Manf. I then have call'd ye from your realms in vain ;
Ye cannot, or ye will not, aid me.

Spir. 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—

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

Spir. 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 ?

Manf. 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 accustom'd forms.

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

Manf. 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 !

Manf. 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 crush'd !

(*MANFRED falls senseless.*)

(*A voice is heard in the incantation which follows.*)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm on the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass ;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd 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 gather'd 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 turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot ;
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptised 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 has strength to kill,
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring ;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd 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 unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy ;

By the perfection of thine art,
Which pass'd 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 does 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 pass'd—now wither !

SCENE II.—THE MOUNTAIN OF THE JUNGFRAU.—TIME,
MORNING.

MANFRED *alone upon the cliffs.*

The spirits I have raised abandon me—
The spells which I have studied baffle me—
The remedy I reck'd 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 gulf'd 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.
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 mayst 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 mix'd 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 note,

[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,
 Mix'd with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd;
 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.

Hunt. Even so,
 This way the chamois leapt: her nimble feet
 Have baffled me; my gains to-day will scarce
 Repay my break-neck travail.—What is here?
 Who seems not of my trade, and yet hath reach'd
 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.

Manf. (not perceiving the other). To be thus—
 Gray-hair'd with anguish, like these blasted pines,
 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 furrow'd o'er
 With wrinkles, plough'd 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.

Hunt. 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.

Manf. 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,
 Heap'd with the damn'd like pebbles.—I am giddy.

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

Manf. 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 crush'd 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 ?

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

Manf. (*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.*]

Hunt. 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.

Manf. I am most sick at heart—nay, grasp me not—
 I am all febleness—the mountains whirl

Spinning around me—I grow blind.—What art thou?

Hunt. 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 gain'd within an hour.
Come on, we'll quickly find a surer footing,
And something like a pathway, which the torrent
Hath wash'd since winter.—Come, 't is 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.

Hunt. 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?

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

Hunt. 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?

Manf. No matter.

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

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

Hunt. What dost thou mean? thy senses wander from thee.

Manf. I say 't is blood—my blood! the pure warm stream
Which ran in the veins of my father, 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,
Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
Where thou art not—and I shall never be.

Hunt. 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—

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

Hunt. Thanks to Heaven!
I would not be of thine for the free fame
Of William Tell; but whatso'er thine ill,
It must be borne, and these wild starts are useless.

Manf. Do I not bear it?—Look on me—I live.

Hunt. This is convulsion, and no healthful life.

Manf. 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!

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

Manf. 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.

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

Manf. I would I were—for then the things I see
Would be but a distemper'd dream.

Hunt. What is it
That thou dost see, or think thou look'st upon?

Manf. 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 scorch'd already!

Hunt. And wouldst thou then exchange thy lot for mine?

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

Hunt. 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 wreak'd revenge
Upon his enemies?

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

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

Manf. I need them not,
But can endure thy pity. I depart—
'T is 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,
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 in the air, muttering the adjuration. After a pause, the WITCH OF THE ALPS rises beneath the arch of the sunbeam of the torrent.

Manf. 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,—
Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek,
Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
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 glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
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 wouldst thou with me?

Manf. To look upon thy beauty—nothing further.
The face of the earth hath madden'd 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?

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

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

Manf. Well, though it torture me, 't is but the same;
My pang shall find a voice. From my youth upwards
My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd 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 insects' 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, list'ning, on the scatter'd 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,—cross'd 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 wither'd bones, and skulls, and heap'd up dust,
 Conclusions most forbidden. Then I pass'd
 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,
 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.

Manf. Oh ! I but thus prolong'd 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 seem'd not such to me—
 Yet there was one—

Witch. Spare not thyself—proceed !

Manf. 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 soften'd all, and temper'd 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 destroy'd her !

Witch. With thy hand ?

Manf. Not with my hand, but heart—which broke her heart—
 It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed
 Blood, but not hers—and yet her blood was shed—
 I saw—and could not staunch 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 !

Manf. 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 gnash'd
 My teeth in darkness till returning morn,
 Then cursed myself till sunset ;—I have pray'd
 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 pass'd harmless—the cold hand
 Of an all-pitiless demon held me back,
 Back by a single hair, which would not break.
 In phantasy, imagination, all
 The affluence of my soul—which one day was
 A Cæsus in creation—I plunged deep,
 But, like an ebbing wave, it dash'd me back
 Into the gulf of my unfathom'd 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.

Manf. 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.

Manf. 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.

Manf. I have said it.

Witch. Enough!—I may retire then—say!

Manf.

Retire!

[*The WITCH disappears.*]

Manf. (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 answer'd 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 unpardon'd—though he call'd in aid
 The Phyxian Jove, and in Phigalia roused

The Arcadian evocators to compel
 The indignant shadow to depose her wrath,
 Or fix a term of vengeance—she replied
 In words of dubious import, but fulfill'd.³
 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 shrunk to gaze
 On spirit, good or evil—now I tremble,
 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—the dead whirlpool's image:
 And this most steep fantastic pinnacle,
 The fret-work 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 Arimanes, for to-night
 Is our great festival—'t is strange they come not.

A voice without, singing.

The captive usurper,
 Hurl'd down from the throne,
 Lay buried in torpor,
 Forgotten and lone;
 I broke through his slumbers,
 I shiver'd his chain,
 I leagu'd 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 sail'd on, the ship sail'd 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!

1st Dest. Welcome!—Where 's Nemesis?

2d Dest.

At some great work;

But what I know not, for my hands were full.

3d Dest. Behold she cometh.

Enter NEMESIS.

1st Dest.

Say, where hast thou been?

My sisters and thyself are slow to-night.

Nem. I was detain'd repairing shatter'd 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 outstaid 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.
 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.

1st Dest. Glory to Arimanes ! on the earth
 His power increaseth—both my sisters did
 His bidding, nor did I neglect my duty !

2d Dest. Glory to Arimanes ! we who bow
 The necks of men, bow down before his throne !

3d Dest. 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 fulfill'd to the utmost.

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?

1st Dest.

Let him answer that.

Manf. 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 wouldst thou?

Manf.

Thou canst not reply to me.

Call up the dead—my question is for them.

Nem. Great Arimanes, doth thy will avouch
 The wishes of this mortal?

Arim.

Yea.

Nem.

Whom wouldst thou

Uncharnel?

Manf.

One without a tomb—call up

Astarte.

Nem.

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 return'd to the earth,—

Re-appear to the day!

Bear what thou borest,

The heart and the form,

And the aspect thou worst

Redeem from the worm.

Appear!—appear!—appear!

Who sent thee there requires thee here!

[*The phantom of ASTARTE rises and stands in the midst.*]

Manf. Can this be death? there's bloom upon her cheek!
 But now I see it is no living hue,
 But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red
 Which Autumn plants upon the perish'd leaf.
 It is the same! Oh God! that I should dread
 To look upon the same—Astarte!—No,
 I cannot speak to her—but bid her speak—
 Forgive me or condemn me.

Nem. By the power which hath broken
The grave which enthrall'd thee,
Speak to him who hath spoken,
Or those who have call'd thee!

Manf. She is silent,
And in that silence I am more than answer'd.

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

Arim. 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.

Manf. 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;
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 call'd on thee in the still night,
Startled the slumbering birds from the hush'd boughs,
And woke the mountain wolves, and made the caves
Acquainted with thy vainly-echoed name,
Which answer'd me—many things answer'd me—
Spirits and men—but thou wert silent all.
Yet speak to me! I have outwatch'd the stars,
And gazed o'er heaven in vain in search of thee.
Speak to me! I have wander'd 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 reckon not what—but let me hear thee once—
This once—once more!

Phantom of Astarte. Manfred!
Manf. Say on, say on—
 I live but in the sound—it is thy voice!
Phantom. Manfred! to-morrow ends thine earthly ills.
 Farewell!
Manf. Yet one word more—am I forgiven?
Phantom. Farewell!
Manf. Say, shall we meet again?
Phantom. Farewell!
Manf. One word, for mercy! say, thou lovest me.
Phantom. Manfred!

[*The Spirit of ASTARTE disappears.*

Nem. She's gone, and will not be recall'd;
 Her words will be fulfill'd. 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.
 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?

Manf. None.

Nem. Then for a time farewell.

Manf. 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.

Manf. What is the hour?

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

Manf. 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.

Manf. It is well :

Thou mayst retire.

[*Exit* HERMAN.]

Manf. (*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 fool'd the ear
From out the schoolman's jargon, I should deem
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?

Re-enter 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!

Manf. Thanks, holy father! welcome to these walls;
Thy presence honours them, and blesseth those
Who dwell within them.

Abbot. Would it were so, Count!
But I would fain confer with thee alone.

Manf. Herman, retire. What would my reverend guest?

Abbot. Thus, without prelude:—Age and zeal, my office,
And good intent, must plead my privilege;
Our near, though not acquainted neighbourhood,
May also be my herald. Rumours 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 unimpair'd!

Manf. Proceed!—I listen.

Abbot. 'T is 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.

Manf. 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.

Manf. 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
With the true church, and through the church to Heaven.

Manf. 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 sinn'd
Against your ordinances? prove and punish! 4

Abbot. My son! I did not speak of punishment,
But penitence and pardon;—with thyself
The choice of such remains—and for the last,
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!”
So saith the Lord, and with all humbleness
His servant echoes back the awful word.

Manf. Old man! there is no power in holy men,
No 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-condemn'd
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 pardon'd.

Manf. When Rome's sixth emperor was near his last,
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 staunch'd
 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 ?

Manf. 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 ?
 'T is strange—even those who do despair above,
 Yet shape themselves some phantasy on earth,
 To which frail twig they cling, like drowning men.

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

Abbot. And wherefore so ?

Manf. 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 disdain'd 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 ?

Manf. 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——

Manf.

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 wither'd, or of broken hearts;
For this last is a malady which slays
More than are number'd 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——

Manf.

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: he
Hath all the energy which would have made
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
Mix'd 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.

Manf. 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 sons⁴
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 reveal'd!
Thou earliest minister of the Almighty,
Which gladden'd, on their mountain tops, the hearts
Of the Chaldean shepherds, till they pour'd
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!
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. 'T is 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.

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

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

Man. 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 ?

Man. 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.

Man. 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 happen'd hereabouts, by this same tower.

Man. That was a night indeed ; I do remember
'T was 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 seem'd to love,
As he, indeed, by blood was bound to do,
The lady Astarte, his—⁶

Hush ! who comes here ?

Enter the ABBOT.

Abbot. Where is your master?

Her. Yonder, in the tower.

Abbot. I must speak with him.

Man. 'T is impossible;

He is most private, and must not be thus
Intruded on.

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.

Man. Reverend father, stop—
I pray you pause.

Abbot. Why so?

Man. 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
Of dim and solitary loveliness,
I learn'd 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 watch-dog bay'd beyond the Tiber; and
More near from out the Cæsar's 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
 Appear'd to skirt the horizon, yet they stood
 Within a bow-shot—where the Cæsars dwelt,
 And dwell the tuneless birds of night, amidst
 A grove which springs through levell'd battlements,
 And twines its roots with the imperial hearths,
 Ivy usurps the laurel's place of growth;—
 But the gladiator's bloody circus stands,
 A noble wreck in ruinous perfection!
 While Cæsar'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 soften'd down the hoar austerity
 Of rugged desolation, and fill'd 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 wander'd,
 But is not yet all lost.

Manf. Thou know'st me not;
 My days are number'd, and my deeds recorded;
 Retire, or 't will be dangerous.—Away!

Abbot. Thou dost not mean to menace me?

Manf. Not I;
 I simply tell thee peril is at hand,
 And would preserve thee.

Abbot. What dost thou mean?

Manf. Look there!

What dost thou see?

Abbot. Nothing.

Manf. 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.

Manf. 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 ?

Manf. 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 !——

Manf. Pronounce—what is thy mission ?

Spirit. Come !

Abbot. What art thou, unknown being ? answer !—speak !

Spirit. The genius of this mortal.—Come ! 't is time.

Manf. I am prepared for all things, but deny
The power which summons me. Who sent thee here ?

Spirit. Thou 'lt know anon—Come ! come !

Manf. 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.

Manf. 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——

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 !

Manf. 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 !

Manf. 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——

Manf. What are they to such as thee ?
Must crimes be punish'd 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 stripp'd of this mortality, derives
No colour from the fleeting things without,
But is absorb'd 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.

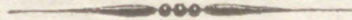
Manf. 'T is over—my dull eyes can fix thee not;
But all things swim around me, and the earth
Heaves as it were beneath me. Fare thee well—
Give me thy hand.

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

Manf. Old man! 't is not so difficult to die.

[*MANFRED expires.*

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



NOTES.

Note 1. Page 14.

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.

Note 2. Page 16.

The philosopher Iamblicus. The story of the raising of Eros and Anteros may be found in his life by Eunapius. It is well told.

Note 3. Page 19.

The story of Pausanias, king of Sparta (who commanded the Greeks at the battle of Platea, and afterwards perished for an attempt to betray the Lacedæmonians), and Cleonice, is told in Plutarch's life of Cimon; and in the Laconics of Pausanias the sophist, in his description of Greece.

Note 4. Page 27.

Lord Byron was induced by the advice of Gifford to write again the greater part of this act. We subjoin 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
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.
Ho! Ashtaroth!

[MANFRED strikes a light, and burns some incense.

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—

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—
Avaunt 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!

Asht. Had I not better bring his brethren too,
Convent and all, to bear him company?

* "Raven-stone (Rabenstein) a translation of the German word for the gibbet, which in Germany and Switzerland is permanent, and made of stone."

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 re-wedded within the year;
And a worldly monk, and a pregnant nun,
Are things which every day appear.

Man. (alone). 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 fix'd 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 scarr'd
In the immortal part of me. What now?"

Note 5. Page 30.

"And it came to pass, that the *Sons of God* saw the daughters of men, that they were fair," &c.—"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.

Note 6. Page 33.

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, stupified 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
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). 'T is 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.

Re-enter 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.

Her. inclining his head and listening. 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 'twere of no avail—
He changes rapidly.

Her. 'Twill soon be over.

MARINO FALIERO,

DOGE OF VENICE ;

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.*

"Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ."

HORACE.

* On the original MS. sent from Ravenna, Lord Byron has written :—" Begun April 4th, 1820—completed July 16th, 1820—finished copying August 16th-17th, 1820; the which copying makes ten times the toil of composing, considering the weather—thermometer 90 in the shade—and my domestic duties."—E.

Lord Byron originally designed to inscribe this tragedy to his friend, the late Mr. Douglas Kinnaird; but the dedication, then drawn up, has remained till now in MS. It is in these words:—

“TO THE HONOURABLE 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 honoured

“Your obliged

“and affectionate friend,

“BYRON.”

At another moment, the poet resolved to dedicate this 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 Mr. Moore included it in his *Memoirs of Lord Byron*. It is to be regretted that Mr. Moore, in doing so, omitted some passages, which, the MS. having since been lost, we cannot now restore. “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 favourite objects of his wrath and ridicule, compels me to deprive the reader of some of its most amusing passages.” The world are in possession of so much of Lord Byron’s sarcastic criticisms on his contemporaries, and the utter recklessness with which he threw them off is so generally appreciated, that one is at a loss to understand what purpose could be served by suppressing the fragments thus characterised. See *MOORE’S Notices*, v. ii, p. 202.—E.

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 podesta 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 Abbate Morelli, in his “*Monumenti Veneziani di varia letteratura*,” printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Daru, 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," &c., &c.; 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 traspari, che non il *solo* desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura, ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui aneleva a farsi principe indipendente." 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 "Dogaresa" 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 honour, 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 Lucretia 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 Frederic 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 Mac Murchad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland—that a personal pique between Marie 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 favour 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 fu il fine ignominioso di un uomo, che la sua nascita, 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 collocarlo alla testa della repubblica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un' ingiuria leggiera insinuò nel suo cuore tal veneno che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine degli 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.*"
 LAUGIER, *Italian translation*, vol. iv., pp. 30, 31.

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 favour 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 Giant's 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 of 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 ; Ordelafo, 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 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 labour 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 the attempt, and never will.* But surely there

* 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 favour of Sotheby's "Ivan," which was thought an acting play; and I endeavoured 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 English 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

is dramatic power somewhere,—where Joanna Baillie, and Milman, 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 extracts given in the Appendix in Italian, with a translation.

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 supernatural* 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.”

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 Capi of the Forty.*
ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, *Chief of the Arsenal.*
PHILIP CALENDARO, }
DAGOLINO, } *Conspirators.*
BERTRAM, }
Signor of the Night, } "*Signore di Notte,*" *one of the officers be-*
} *longing 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, &c.

WOMEN.

ANGIOLINA, *Wife to the Doge.*
MARIANNA, *her Friend.*
Female Attendants, &c.

Scene, VENICE—in the year 1355.

MARINO FALIERO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—AN ANTICHAMBER IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

PIETRO *speaks, in entering, to BATTISTA.*

Piet. Is not the messenger return'd ?

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.

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

Bat. How bears he
These moments of suspense ?

Piet. With struggling patience.
Placed at the ducal table, cover'd o'er
With all the apparel of the state ; petitions,
Dispatches, 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 turn'd a leaf.

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

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

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

Piet. '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.

Vinc.

'T is

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.

Bert. Fal. 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.

Bert. Fal. His peers will scarce protect him ; such an act
Would bring contempt on all authority.

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

Enter VINCENZO.

Bert. Fal. (*addressing Vincenzo*). How now—what tidings ?

Vinc. I am charged to tell his highness that the court
Has pass'd 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 acceptance of their duty.

Doge. Yes—
They are wondrous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is pass'd, you say ?

Vinc. It is, your highness :
The president was sealing it, when I
Was call'd 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.

Bert. Fal. Are you aware, from aught you have perceived,
Of their decision ?

Vinc. No, my lord ; you know
The secret customs of the courts in Venice.

Bert. Fal. True ; but there still is something given to guess
Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch at ;
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 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.

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

Doge (abruptly). And how looked *he* ? deliver that.

Vinc. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resign'd
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 pass'd on Michel Steno, born
Patrician, and arraign'd upon the charge
Contain'd, 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.

Bert. Fal. Patience, my dear uncle :
Why do you tremble thus ?—nay, doubt not, all
Will be as could be wish'd.

Doge. Say on.

Bert. Fal. (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. Wouldst thou repeat them ?
Wouldst *thou* repeat them—*thou*, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonour'd in its chief—that chief the prince
Of Venice, first of cities ?—To the sentence.

Bert. Fal. Forgive me, my good lord ; I will obey—
(*Reads*) “ That Michel Steno be detain'd a month
In close arrest.”

Doge. Proceed.

Bert. Fal. My lord, 't is finish'd.

Doge. How, say you?—finish'd ! Do I dream?—'T is false—
Give me the paper—(*Snatches the paper, and reads*),
“ 'T is decreed in council
That Michel Steno”—Nephew, thine arm !

Bert. Fal. Nay,
Cheer up, be calm ; this transport is uncall'd for—
Let me seek some assistance.

Doge. Stop, sir—stir not—
'T is past.

Bert. Fal. I cannot but agree with you
The sentence is too slight for the offence ;
It is not honourable 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 't is 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 fix'd ? 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.

Bert. Fal. 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 !

Bert. Fal. '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.

Bert. Fal. 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, wrong'd, 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 ?

Bert. Fal. The law, my prince—

Doge (*interrupting him*).

You see what it has done :

I ask'd no remedy but from the law—
 I sought no vengeance but redress by law—
 I call'd no judges but those named by law—
 As sovereign, I appeal'd 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,
 Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
 The travel, toil, the perils, the fatigues,
 The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
 Were weigh'd 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 ?

Bert. Fal.

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.

Bert. Fal. 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 wrong'd,
 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 honour 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 appal 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 honour?

Bert. Fal. 'T is the first time that honour 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 honour of—Oh, God!—my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour;
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 polish'd guise,
Whisper'd the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them—a courteous wittol,
Patient—ay, proud, it may be, of dishonour.

Bert. Fal. But still it was a lie—you knew it false,
And so did all men.

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

Bert. Fal. 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 't is now degraded.

Bert. Fal. 'T is even so.

Doge. It is—it is:—I did not visit on
The innocent creature, thus most vilely slander'd,
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 honour's all to him,
When these are tainted by the accursing breath
Of calumny and scorn.

Bert. Fal. 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? scorn'd
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,
Stamp'd the same brand upon a peasant's stool,
His blood had gilt the threshold, for the carle
Has stabb'd him on the instant.

Bert. Fal. 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.

Bert. Fal. What mean you? is not the offence redoubled
By this most rank—I will not say—acquittal,
For it is worse, being full acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunish'd?

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

Bert. Fal. 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.

Bert. Fal. 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 wish'd you to repress 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 ask'd a single victim,
Great expiations had a hecatomb.

Bert. Fal. Your wishes are my law; and yet I fain
Would prove to you how near unto my heart

The honour of our house must ever be.

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

Bert. Fal. Why, that's my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the chief
Of commonwealths, and sovereign of himself!
I wonder'd 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-omen'd 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,
'T is fit I were alone.

Bert. Fal. (*Taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the table.*)

Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurn'd,
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.
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 achiev'd
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

[*Puts it on.*]

My soul, as serves the generous steed his lord !
 I would have dash'd 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 't is 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.

Vinc. 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.

Vinc. 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 conquer'd : 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, madden'd with the drone,
 I smote the tardy bishop at Treviso,²
 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 fourscore years
 Had been already where—how soon, I care not—
 The whole must be extinguish'd ;—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.

Vinc. 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 ?

Isr. Bert. Redress.

Doge. Of whom ?

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. 'T were in vain ;
 For he who injured me is one of them.

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

Isr. Bert. 'T is 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 ?

Isr. Bert. Not long—
 But for the hope I had and have, that you,
 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 ?

Isr. Bert. I am a man, my lord.

Doge. Why, so is he who smote you.

Isr. Bert. He is call'd 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—
 'T is said the worm will.

Doge. Say—his name and lineage ?

Isr. Bert. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause, or the pretext ?

Isr. Bert. I am the chief of the arsenal, employ'd
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:—
Behold my blood! the first time it e'er flow'd
Dishonourably.

Doge. Have you long time served?

Isr. Bert. 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 recognised you not. Who placed you?

Isr. Bert. The late Doge; keeping still my old command
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?

Isr. Bert. Irreparably in my self-esteem.

Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at heart,
What would you do to be revenged on this man?

Isr. Bert. That which I dare not name, and yet will do.

Doge. Then wherefore came you here?

Isr. Bert. I come for justice,
Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, fill'd the ducal throne,
This blood had been wash'd 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.

Isr. Bert. How says your highness?

Doge. Steno is condemn'd
To a month's confinement.

Isr. Bert. 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 echo'd 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 oar,
 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.

Isr. Bert. Is it 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 pass'd the sentence upon Michel Steno;
 They'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.

Isr. Bert. Ah! dared I speak my feelings!

Doge. Give them breath:
 Mine have no further outrage to endure.

Isr. Bert. 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 over-rate 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.

Isr. Bert. Wouldst thou be king?

Doge. Yes—of a happy people.

Isr. Bert. 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 envenom'd body
 Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.

Isr. Bert. 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 toil'd a soldier and a servant
 Of Venice and her people, not the senate;
 Their good and my own honour were my guerdon.
 I have fought and bled; commanded, ay, and conquer'd;
 Have made and marr'd 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 birth-place, 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 ripp'd her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
 She 'd tell thee 't was for *all* her little ones.

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. You shall do both, if you possess the will,
 And many thousands more not less oppress'd,
 Who wait but for a signal—will you give it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.

Isr. Bert.

Which shall soon be read,

At peril of my life, if you disdain not
 To lend a patient ear.

Doge.

Say on.

Isr. Bert.

Not thou,

Nor I alone, are injured and abused,
 Condemn'd 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 maintain'd
 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.

Isr. Bert.

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!

Isr. Bert. 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?

Isr. Bert. An hour to strike.

Doge (aside). Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!¹⁵

Isr. Bert. I now have placed

My life, my honour, 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?

Isr. Bert. I'll not answer that
Till I am answer'd.

Doge. How, sir! do you menace?

Isr. Bert. No; I affirm. I have betray'd myself;
But there's no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace, nor in those
Not less appalling cells, "the leaden roofs,"
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,"¹⁴
Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows
Between the murderers and the murder'd, 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?

Isr. Bert. 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 mutter'd threats had made me
 A mark'd man to the Forty's inquisition ;
 But loud complaint, however angrily
 It shapes its phrase, is little to be fear'd,
 And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
 I had another reason.

Doge. What was that ?

Isr. Bert. Some rumours that the Doge was greatly moved
 By the reference of the Avogadori
 Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty
 Had reach'd me. I had served you, honour'd 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.

Isr. Bert. And is this all ?

Doge. Unless with all entrusted,
 What would you have me answer ?

Isr. Bert. 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 strengthen'd.

Isr. Bert. We are enough already ;
 You are the sole ally we covet now.

Doge. But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.

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

Doge. When ? where ?

Isr. Bert. 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 ?

Isr. Bert. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. 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?

Isr. Bert. At midnight I will be alone and mask'd
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?

Isr. Bert. Late; but the atmosphere is thick and dusky;
'T is a sirocco.

Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires:⁵ the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola,⁶ with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

Isr. Bert. I will not fail.

Doge. And now retire——

Isr. Bert. 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 honour with the honour'd.
Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who've 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. II—AN APARTMENT IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

ANGIOLINA and MARIANNA.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer ?*Mar.*

That he was

That moment summon'd to a conference ;
 But 't is 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 return'd !

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 nourish'd 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 doom'd to expiate his rash insult with
 Such chastisement as will enforce respect
 To female virtue, and to noble blood.

Ang. 'T was 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—austere
 To all save me · I tremble when I think

To what it may conduct.

Mar. Assuredly
The Doge cannot suspect you?

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

Mar. 'T were fit
He should be punish'd grievously.

Ang. He is so.

Mar. What ! is the sentence past ? is he condemn'd ?

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 acquittance,
Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.

Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slander'd 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 honour,
If they require it to be blazon'd 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 bestow'd 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 bestow'd.

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
To baser passions. He bestow'd 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 foster'd by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honour, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrain'd, and this I fear in him.
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet temper'd by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavish'd 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 answer'd 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 chuse,
Or aught, save their past choice.

Mar. 'T is their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they would
Now chuse 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 wrapt
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——

Piet. My lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and enquire 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 absorb'd 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?

Ang. I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.

Doge. The senate's duty! you mistake;
'T is 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
 Favours 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 splendour, 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,
 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. 'T is 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—'t is 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 render'd light, nay, a necessity,
 To keep your mind from stagnating. 'T is not
 In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you;
 You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
 And climb'd 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 unalter'd 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 honour, of *your* honour,
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,
Unfix'd 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 honour,
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 honour.

Doge. Such men have no honour !
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 damn'd 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 makes such deadly to the sense of man ?

Do not the laws of man say blood for honour?
 And, less than honour, for a little gold?
 Say not the laws of nations blood for treason?
 Is 't nothing to have fill'd 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, scorn'd, spurn'd, abused; what matters then
 My pardon more than my resentment, both
 Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long—
 But let us change the argument.—My child!
 My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
 The brave, the chivalrous, how little deem'd
 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 honour me; and all men know
 That you are just, and I am true: what more
 Could I require, or you command?

Doge. 'T is 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, opprest
With his last malady, he will'd 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 honourable safety from the perils
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail
A lonely and undower'd 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 sway'd 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 vanish'd 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 chuse, 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 chuse 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 chuse more fitly in respect of years,
 And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My lord, I look'd but to my father's wishes,
 Hallow'd by his last words, and to my heart
 For doing all its duties, and replying
 With faith to him with whom I was affianced.
 Ambitious hopes ne'er cross'd 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, chusing 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 honour, for my own.

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

Doge. Where is honour.
 Innate and precept-strengthen'd, 't is 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
 'T were 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-chisell'd 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 appear'd
 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 honour, 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 condemn'd 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 honour'd 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 labour through which I had toil'd
 To make my country honour'd. 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 't is
Enough for Fortune to have granted *once*,
That which scarce one more favour'd 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 freshen'd 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
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remember.—
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?

Isr. Bert. Why, well.

Cal. Is 't possible? will he be punish'd?

Isr. Bert. Yes.

Cal. With what? a mulct or an arrest?

Isr. Bert. With death!—

Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,
Such as I counsell'd you, with your own hand.

Isr. Bert. 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 crush'd, and thousands stinging
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.

Isr. Bert. Thank Heaven, you were not—all had else been marr'd:
As 't is, our cause looks prosperous still.

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

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. At least,
It lull'd 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*?

Isr. Bert. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal. Why not now?

Isr. Bert. Be patient but till midnight. Get your musters,

And bid your 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 arm'd, 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 'm sick of these protracted
 And hesitating councils : day on day
 Crawl'd 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.

Isr. Bert. We will be free in life or death ! the grave
 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.

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. Your fiery nature makes you deem all those
 Who are not restless, cold : but there exists
 Oft in concentr'd 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.

Isr. Bert. 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 honour.

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.

Isr. Bert. Such ties are not
 For those who are call'd 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 ?——

Isr. Bert. 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 o'erpower 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 despots in his place.
 Better bow down before the Hun, and call
 A Tartar lord, than these swoln silk-worms 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.

Isr. Bert. 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 colour to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtain'd in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet.—Are all supplied with arms ?

Cal. All who were deem'd 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.

Isr. Bert. You have said well.—Have you remark'd 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 't is
Commenced to-morrow ; but till 't is begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. Let all the rest be there ;
I have a stranger to present to them.

Cal. A stranger ! doth he know the secret ?

Isr. Bert. Yes.

Cal. And have you dared to peril your friends' lives
On a rash confidence in one we know not ?

Isr. Bert. I have risk'd 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 ?

Isr. Bert. 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, through 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 stirr'd 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 oppress'd,
 And shares their sufferings. Take him all in all,
 We 've need of such, and such have need of us.

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

Isr. Bert. It may be that of chief.

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

Isr. Bert. 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 mark'd 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 fix'd 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.—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 punish'd, 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 labours, 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 dishonour'd all *in* me,
 Not *by* me, but by the ungrateful nobles
 We fought to make our equals, not our lords:—
 And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
 Who perish'd in the field where I since conquer'd,
 Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs

Of thine and Venice' foes, there offer'd 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.

Isr. Bert. Who goes there?
Doge. A friend to Venice.
Isr. Bert. 'Tis he.

Welcome, my lord,—you are before the time.

Doge. I 'm ready to proceed to your assembly.

Isr. Bert. Have with you.—I am proud and pleased to see
 Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
 Since our last meeting, then, are all dispell'd?

Doge. Not so—but I have set my little left
 Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
 When I first listen'd 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 dragg'd to prison, I became
 Your guiltiest accomplice: now you may,
 If it so please you, do as much by me.

Isr. Bert. Strange words, my lord, and most unmerited;
 I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. *We! We!*—no matter—you have earn'd the right
 To talk of *us*.—But to the point.—If this
 Attempt succeeds, and Venice, render'd 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 their 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.

Isr. Bert. 'T is 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.

Isr. Bert.

We observed?

Let me discover—and this steel—

Doge.

Put up;

Here are no human witnesses; look there—

What see you?

Isr. Bert. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.

Doge.

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?

Isr. Bert. My lord, these are mere phantasies; there are
No eyes in marble.

Doge.

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,

'T is 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?

Isr. Bert.

It had been as well

To have ponder'd this before,—ere you embark'd

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,

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 wrong'd as I, so fallen, so loudly call'd

To his redress: the very means I'm 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.

Isr. Bert. Let us away!—hark!—the hour strikes.

Doge.

On—on—

It is our knell, or that of Venice.—On.

Isr. Bert. Say, rather, 't is her freedom's rising peal
Of triumph.—This way—we are near the place.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—THE HOUSE WHERE THE CONSPIRATORS MEET.

DAGOLINO, DORO, BERTRAM, FEDELE TREVISANO, CALENDARO, ANTONIO
DELLE BENDE, &c., &c.

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 mark'd 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 flesh'd
In the rank hearts of the more odious senators,
They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
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 perish'd.

Ber. How say you? *all!*

Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?

Ber. *I spare!*

I have no power to spare. I only question'd
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,
'T would fasten in the soil and spring again
To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm !

Cal. Look to it well,
Bertram : I have an eye upon thee.

Ber. 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 've 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 men 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 those who could be saved
From out this sweeping fate, for our own sakes
And for our honour, 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 !

Conspir. 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.

Isr. Bert. Stranger, step forth !

[The DOGE discovers himself.]

Conspir. To arms !—we are betray'd—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 appall'd to see
A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you ?—Israel, speak ! what means this mystery ?

Isr. Bert. 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.

Isr. Bert. 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 whoe'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.

Isr. Bert. My lord, we would have perish'd here together,
 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.

Isr. Bert. (*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, unarm'd,
 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 wrong'd,
 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 has neither prince nor people,
 But all the sins of the old Spartan state
 Without its virtues, temperance and valour.
 The lords of Lacedemon were true soldiers,

But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved,
Although drest 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,
Proportion'd like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
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, dizen'd 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
Foster'd the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reach'd 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!

Conspir. Long live Faliero!

Isr. Bert.

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,
'T is 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—
'T is 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?

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've 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!

Isr. Bert.

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
 Discern'd 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 gather'd in unto the harvest,
 And we will reap them with the sword for sickle.
 If some few should be tardy or absent then,
 'T will 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, sirs, with your pardon, I
 Would now repeat the question which I ask'd
 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 feign'd it?

Isr. Bert.

Bertram,

This false compassion is a folly, and
 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! 'T is
 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.

Isr. Bert. 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 repeal'd, pronounce.

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

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 co-exist 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 honourably my regards;
We served and fought; we smiled and wept in concert;
We revell'd or we sorrow'd side by side;
We made alliances of blood and marriage;
We grew in years and honours fairly, till
Their own desire, not my ambition, made
Them chuse 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
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, whisp'ring 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?

Isr. Bert. 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—
 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 wrong'd 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 poison'd ! My pure household gods
 Were shiver'd on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
 Sate grinning ribaldry and sneering scorn.

Isr. Bert. You have been deeply wrong'd, 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 unredress'd, but sanctioned ; then
 And thus, I cast all further feelings from me—
 The feelings which they crush'd 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 !

Isr. Bert. Disperse then to your posts ; be firm and vigilant ;
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 honourable days
Have risk'd 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 ;
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 quench'd two cities' ashes.

Isr. Bert. Away, then, to your posts ! I but remain
A moment to accompany the Doge
To our late place of trust, 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.

Isr. Bert. Success go with you !

Consp. We will not fail—away ! My lord, farewell.

[*The Conspirators salute the DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and retire, headed by PHILIP CALENDARO. The DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO remain.*]

Isr. Bert. 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 ;
 Cæsars have fallen, and even patrician hands
 Have crush'd dictators, as the popular steel
 Has reach'd patricians ; but until this hour,
 What prince has plotted for his people's freedom ?
 Or risk'd 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 ; 't is 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 ?

Isr. Bert. Who ?

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

Isr. Bert. 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 oppress'd 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 laugh'd, nor wept,
 Nor held a revel in their company ;
 Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claim'd 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 grey, 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.

Isr. Bert. 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 Heaven ! 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 drain'd 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
 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,
 'T is mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
 Which shall unpeople many palaces,
 And hew the highest genealogic trees
 Down to the earth, strew'd 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.

Isr. Bert. 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! 't is 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 slaughter'd 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.

Isr. Bert. 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, I know not why, it cheer'd 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, oppress'd me,
And through my spirit chill'd my blood, until
A damp like death rose o'er my brow : I strove
To laugh the thought away, but 't would not be ;
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
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 reach'd 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: 't is
A goodly night; the cloudly wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon has brighten'd. What a stillness!

[*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 show'd 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 labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Prankt 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 fool'd.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flush'd 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 odours, and the flowers—
The sparkling eyes and flashing ornaments—
The white arms and the raven hair—the braids
And bracelets; swan-like 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 sylph-like,
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 parch'd 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 mirror'd 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,
 Soften'd 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
 Rear'd 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 guitar
 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 chequering 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 seem'd reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni. 'T is a strange hour, and a suspicious bearing:
And yet there is slight peril: 't is 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 occur'd, 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 blest 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 impede 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 play'd 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, 't is thou who hast forgotten them.

Ber. Nor now, nor ever; whatsoe'er 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 labours of the humble,
Still you forsook me not: and if my fortunes
Have not been towering, 't was no fault of him
Who oft-times 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: 't is 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
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 saidst, my gentle Bertram?

Ber. Who talks of murder? what said I of murder?—
'T is 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 unarm'd,—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 't is 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 honour!

Lioni. Where
 Can lie the honour 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 saviour 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 know'st 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 Mark 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 Saint Mark's has dungeons, and the dungeons
A rack.

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

Re-enter 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 ?

Bert. Fal. They are array'd, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo.⁸
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.

Bert. Fal. Methinks, my lord, 't is 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 maintain'd
 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 the civic senate :
 A chief in armour is their suzerain,
 And not a thing in robes.

Bert. Fal. 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 cower'd to hear their own victorious trumpet.
 If there be small resistance, you will find
 These citizens all lions, like their standard ;
 But if there's much to do, you 'll wish with me
 A band of iron rustics at our backs.

Bert. Fal. Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolved
 To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge. Such blows
 Must be struck suddenly or never. When
 I had o'ermaster'd the weak false remorse
 Which yearn'd 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 knew 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 ?

Bert. Fal. Almost upon the dawn.

Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the bell.
 Are the men posted ?

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

Doge. 'T is 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.

Bert. Fal. 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 greyer through the lattice.

Bert. Fal. 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 by the great gate ;
 I would not trust the " Ten " except to us.
 The rest, the rabble of patricians, may
 Glut the more careless swords of those leagued with us.
 Remember that the cry is still " Saint Mark !
 The Genoese are come—ho ! to the rescue !
 Saint Mark and liberty !"—Now—now to action !

Bert. Fal. 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.—'T is 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—
 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 flow'd too, but victorious :
 Now thou must wear an unmix'd 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 the unknown realm,
 Yet send so many heralds on before me ?—
 I must not ponder this.

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 awfulest 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, 't will be here,
 Within the palace, that the strife will thicken ;
 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, 9 with Guards, &c.

Signor. 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 ?

Signor (showing his order). Behold my order from the assembled
 Ten.

Doge. And *where* are they, and *why* assembled ? no
 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.

Signor. Duke, it may not be ;
 Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,
 But sitting in the convent of Saint Saviour's.

Doge. You dare to disobey me then ?

Signor.

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 weigh'd well thy life's worth,
 That thus you dare assume a lawless function ?

Signor. 'T is 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 vanquish'd ! be they prince and people,
 Or slaves and senate—

[*The great bell of St. 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?

Signor. Confusion!
Stand to your arms, and guard the door—all 's lost
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.
The officer hath miss'd his path or purpose,
Or met some unforeseen and hideous obstacle.
Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower; the rest remain with me.

[*Exit a 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.

Signor. 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.

Signor. 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!

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

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

Signor. 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 BERTUCCIO FALIERO prisoner.

2d Signor. 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 Signor. Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured?

2d Signor. 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.

Bert. Fal. Uncle!

Doge. It is in vain to war with fortune;
The glory hath departed from our house.

Bert. Fal. Who would have deem'd 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, 't is
But a brief passage—I would go alone;
Yet if they send us, as 't is like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.

Bert. Fal. I shall not shame you, uncle.

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

Bert. Fal. I'll answer for thee—'t is a certain Bertram,
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 honours, and be stamp'd in story
With the geese in the Capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,
While Manlius, who hurl'd down the Gauls, was cast
From the Tarpeian.

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

Bert. Fal. 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 clogg'd, hath fail'd in !
They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurl'd them from guilty thrones,
And such examples will find heirs, though distant.

ACT V.

SCENE 1.—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, &c., &c.,—ISRAEL BERTUCCIO AND PHILIP
CALENDARO, AS PRISONERS. — BERTRAM, LIONI, AND
WITNESSES, &c.

*The Chief of the Ten, BENINTEDE.*¹⁰

Benin. 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 stigmatised through all
The years of coming time, as bearing record
To this most foul and complicated treason
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 open'd 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.

Isr. Bert. We are prepared ;
Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.

Benin. 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.

Isr. Bert. We stand to hear, and not to speak.

Benin.

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?

Isr. Bert.

Justice!

Benin.

What

Your object?

Isr. Bert. Freedom!

Benin.

You are brief, sir.

Isr. Bert.

So my life grows: I

Was bred a soldier, not a senator.

Benin. Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity
To brave your judges to postpone the sentence?

Isr. Bert. Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,
I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.

Benin. Is this your sole reply to the tribunal?

Isr. Bert. 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 wrench'd 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 appal 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?

Benin. Say, who were your accomplices?

Isr. Bert.

The senate!

Benin. What do you mean?

Isr. Bert.

Ask of the suffering people,

Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.

Benin. You know the Doge?

Isr. Bert.

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!

Benin. You have held conference with him?

Isr. Bert.

I am weary—

Even wearier of your questions than your tortures!

I pray you pass to judgment.

Benin. It is coming—

And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what

Have you to say why you should not be doom'd?

Cal. I never was a man of many words,
And now have few left worth the utterance.

Benin. 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—

Benin. What then?

Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack
Stand good in law?

Benin. Assuredly.

Cal. Whoe'er

The culprit be whom I accuse of treason?

Benin. Without doubt he will be brought up to trial.

Cal. And on this testimony would he perish?

Benin. So your confession be detail'd 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 stretch'd there for the second time.

One of the Giunta. Lord President, 't were best proceed to judgment;
There is no more to be drawn from these men.

Benin. 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,¹¹
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!

Isr. Bert. Signors, farewell! we shall not all again
Meet in one place.

Benin. And, lest they should essay
To stir up the distracted multitude—

Guards! let their mouths be gagg'd,¹² even in the act
Of execution.—Lead them hence!

Cal. What! must we
Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
Nor leave a last word with our confessor?

Benin. 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 gagg'd in life; at least,
All those who had not heart to risk their lives
Upon their open thoughts; but still I deem'd
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——

Isr. Bert. Even let them have their way, brave Calendaro!
What matter a few syllables? let 's die
Without the slightest show of favour 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 hearken'd unto me,
It had not now been thus; and yon pale villain,
The coward Bertram, would——

Isr. Bert. Peace, Calendaro!
What brooks it now to ponder upon this?

Ber. Alas! I fain you died in peace with me;
I did not seek this task; 't was forced upon me.
Say you forgive me, though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness—frown not thus!

Isr. Bert. I die and pardon thee!

Cal. (*spitting at him*). I die and scorn thee!

[*Exeunt ISRAEL, BERTUCCIO, and PHILIP CALENDARO, Guards, &c.*]

Benin. Now that these criminals have been disposed of,
'T is time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor on 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 call'd in to receive the award?

The Giunta. Ay, ay.

Benin. Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the council.

One of the Giunta. And the rest

When shall they be brought up?

Benin. When all the chiefs
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 treason 'gainst the senate.

Enter the DOGE as prisoner, with Guards, &c., &c.

Benin. Doge—for such still you are, and by the law
Must be consider'd, 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 honour,
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 appear'd against you; and more ample
Ne'er rear'd 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.

Benin. Your chief accomplices
Having confess'd, there is no hope for you.

Doge. And who be they?

Benin. 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.

Benin. And two others, Israel Bertuccio,
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted
Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!

Doge. And where are they?

Benin. 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?

Benin. Think of your own;—
It is approaching. You decline to plead, then?

Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor

Can recognise your legal power to try me :
Show me the law !

Benin. On great emergencies,
The law must be remodell'd or amended :
Our fathers had not fix'd 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 betray'd 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 honourable toils
In distant lands—on flood—in field—in cities—
You singled me out like a victim to
Stand crown'd, but bound and helpless, at the altar
Where you alone could minister. I knew not—
I sought not—wish'd not—dream'd not the election,
Which reach'd me first at Rome, and I obey'd ;
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, curtail'd
And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the duke : all this I bore, and would
Have borne, until my very heart was stain'd
By the pollution of your ribaldry,
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you—
Fit judge in such tribunal !—

Benin. (*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,
'T was purity compared with your protection.

Benin. And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years
And honours 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 ; 't is the last drop
Which makes the cup run o'er, and mine was full
Already : you oppress'd the prince and people ;
I would have freed both, and have fail'd 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 flourish'd 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.

Benin. You do confess, then, and admit the justice
Of our tribunal ?

Doge. I confess to have fail'd :
Fortune is female ; from my youth her favours
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope
Her former smiles again at this late hour.

Benin. You do not then in aught arraign our equity ?

Doge. Noble Venetians ! stir me not with questions.
I am resign'd 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.
 'T is 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 !

Benin. 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
 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.

Benin. Say, conscript fathers, shall she be admitted ?

One of the Giunta. She may have revelations of importance
 Unto the state to justify compliance
 With her request.

Benin. 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 honour 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.

The DUCHESS enters.

Benin. 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—
'T is past; I pray you pardon me, I sit not
In presence of my prince, and of my husband,
While he is on his feet.

Benin. Your pleasure, lady?

Ang. Strange rumours, but most true, if all I hear
And see be sooth, have reach'd 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!

Benin. (*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?

Benin. Alas!

Ang. And was he guilty?

Benin. 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;
Unsaying the words of this man!—Thou art silent!

Benin. He hath already own'd 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.

Benin. His doom must be fulfill'd without remission

Of time or penalty—'t is a decree.

Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.

Benin. 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?

Benin. 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 betray'd 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!

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?

Benin.

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-cancell'd by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them—have pray'd to them—
Have begg'd as famish'd mendicants for bread—
Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answer'd 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!

Mic. 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 weigh'd 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 honour 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 scorner's 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 dishonour'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 airy ; 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 dishonour was the bane of Troy ;
 A wife's dishonour unking'd Rome for ever ;
 An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,
 And thence to Rome, which perish'd 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, couch'd in two worthless lines,
 Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
 A senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
 Discrown'd 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—'t were 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
 Of life. The man who dies by the adder's fang
 May have the crawler crush'd, but feels no anger:
 'T was the worm's nature; and some men are worms
 In soul, more than the living things of tombs.

Doge (to BENIN.) Signor, complete that which you deem your duty.

Benin. Before we can proceed upon that duty,
 We would request the princess to withdraw;
 'T will move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must endure it:
 For 't is 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'er-master all.

Benin. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
 Count of Val di Marino, Senator,
 And some time General of the Fleet and Army,
 Noble Venetian, many times and oft
 Entrusted 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 !”⁴ *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.

Benin. 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 ?

Benin. It is.

Doge. I can endure it.—And the time ?

Benin. 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 ?

Benin. 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.

Benin. 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 will’st a state unto thy widow’d 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 ?

Benin. 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 beholders of thy doom,
And they are ready to attend the Doge.

Doge. The Doge !

Benin. 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 useless 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 seal'd 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
Convey'd 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 reel'd beneath his holy burthen ;
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 turn'd 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 ; honours 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 pass'd 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 remember'd them amid the maze
Of life, as if they form'd a spectral voice,
Which shook me in a supernatural dream ;
And I repented ; but 't was 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
 The bucentaur, like the columnal cloud
 Which usher'd Israel out of Egypt, till
 The pilot was misled, and disembark'd us
 Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where 't is
 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 shudder'd 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'er-ruling power ; they in themselves
 Were all incapable—they could not be
 Victors of him who oft had conquer'd for them !

Ang. Employ the minutes left in inspirations
 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 unimpair'd but not a clamorous grief
 Still keep—Thou turn'st so pale—Alas! she faints,
 She hath no breath ; no pulse! Guards! lend your aid—
 I cannot leave her thus, and yet 't is 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, &c., &c.]*

SCENE III.—THE COURT OF THE DUCAL PALACE: THE OUTER
 GATES ARE SHUT AGAINST THE PEOPLE.—THE DOGE EN-
 TERS 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 :
 'T is well to be so, though but for a moment.
 Here was I crown'd, 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.

'T is with age, then. ¹⁵

Benin. 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.

Benin. They shall be cared for;
Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime.

Doge. Unheard-of! ay, there 's not a history
But shows a thousand crown'd conspirators
Against the people; but to set them free,
One sovereign only died, and one is dying.

Benin. And who are they who fell in such a cause?

Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge of Venice—
Agis and Faliero!

Benin. Hast thou more
To utter or to do?

Doge. May I speak?

Benin. Thou mayst;
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 flutter'd o'er as if you loved it,
And fill'd 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
Reek 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!
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 drain'd 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

A province for an empire, petty town
 In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
 Beggars for nobles, panders for a people !¹⁶
 Then, when the Hebrew 's in thy palaces,¹⁷
 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
 Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
 Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-gerent,
 Even in the palace where they sway'd 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 turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the victors,
 Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
 And scorn'd 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
 Entail'd on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
 A wider proverb for worse prostitution ;—
 When all the ills of conquer'd states shall cling thee,
 Vice without splendour, sin without relief
 Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er,
 But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,
 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 honour, age without respect,
 Meanness and weakness, and a sense of woe
 'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar'st not murmur,¹⁸
 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 !¹⁹
 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
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.

1st Citizen. I have gain'd the gate, and can discern the Ten,
Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge.

2d Citizen. 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.

1st Citizen. One has approach'd 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!—No,
'T was but a murmur—Curse upon the distance!
His words are inarticulate, but the voice
Swells up like mutter'd thunder; would we could
But gather a sole sentence!

2d Citizen. Hush! we perhaps may catch the sound.

1st Citizen. 'T is 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.*]

3d Citizen. Then they have murder'd him who would have freed us.

4th Citizen. He was a kind man to the commons ever.

5th Citizen. Wisely they did to keep their portals barr'd.
Would we had known the work they were preparing
Ere we were summon'd here; we would have brought
Weapons, and forced them!

6th Citizen. Are you sure he 's dead?

1st Citizen. 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 “Giant's Staircase,” where the execution has taken place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,*

The gory head rolls down the “Giants' Steps!”—[*The curtain falls.*]

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 48.

The three Avogadori were the conductors of criminal prosecutions for the state.—E.

Note 2. Page 55.

An historical fact. See Marin Sanuto's *Lives of the Doges*.

Note 3. Page 60.

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 Lagoon.

Note 4. Page 60.

See vol. i, p. 189, note I to the fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*.

Note 5. Page 62.

"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."—*B. Letter*, 1820.

Note 6. Page 62.

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.

Note 7. Page 83.

An historical fact. See SANUTO, *Appendix*.

Note 8. Page 103.

The Doge's family palace.

Note 9. Page 108.

"I Signori di Notte" held an important charge in the old republic.

Note 10. Page 111.

"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."—*B. Letter*.

Note 11. Page 113.

"Giovedì grasso,"—"fat or greasy Thursday," which I cannot literally translate in the text, was the day.

Note 12. Page 114.

Historical fact. See SANUTO, *Appendix*.

Note 13. Page 118.

The Venetian senate took the same title as the Roman, of "Conscript fathers."

Note 14. Page 123.

This and the preceding six lines were not in the original MS. They were sent by Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, with a desire that they should be inserted in the speech of the Doge, as a remark on that part of the sentence pronounced against Faliero which related to his portrait; but perhaps from some difficulty in printing, they were omitted in the tragedy, and are now first published in the present edition.

Note 15. Page 127.

This was the actual reply of Bailly, 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*.

Note 16. Page 129.

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 benemerite Meretrici," at twelve thousand 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 honourable 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 glorious conflict, speak in the highest terms of Pasqualigo's behaviour. There is the Abbate Morelli. There is Alvise Querini, who, after a long and honourable 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 patrician poet Morosini, and the poet Lamberti, the author of the "Biondina," &c. 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 accomplished son of an accomplished mother. There is Aglietti, and, were there nothing else, there is the immortality of Canova. Cicognara, Mustoxithi, Bueati, &c. &c. 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*).

Note 17. Page 129.

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.

Note 18. Page 129.

If the Doge's prophecy seem remarkable, look to the following, made by Alamanni two hundred and seventy years ago:—"Il y a une prédiction fort singulière sur Venise: 'Si tu ne changes pas,' dit-elle à cette république altière, 'ta liberté, qui déjà s'enfuit, ne comptera pas un siècle après la millième année.' En faisant remonter l'époque de la liberté Vénitienne jusqu'à l'établissement du gouvernement sous lequel la république a fleuri, on trouvera que l'élection du premier Doge date de 697, et si l'on y ajoute un siècle après mille, c'est-à-dire onze cents ans, on trouvera encore que le sens de la prédiction est littéralement celui-ci: 'Ta liberté ne comptera pas jusqu'à l'an 1797.' Rappelez-vous maintenant que Venise a cessé d'être libre en l'an cinq de la République française, ou en 1796; vous verrez qu'il n'y eut jamais de prédiction plus précise et plus ponctuellement suivie de l'effet. Vous noterez donc comme très-remarquables ces trois vers de l'Alamanni, adressés à Venise, que personne pourtant n'a remarqués:

"Se non cangi pensiero, l'un secol solo
Non conterà sopra 'l millesimo anno
Tua libertà, che va fuggendo a volo."

Bien des prophéties ont passé pour telles, et bien des gens ont été appelés prophètes à meilleur marché." GINGUENE, *Hist. Litt. d'Italie*, v. ix. p. 144.

Note 19. Page 129.

Of the first fifty Doges, *five* abdicated—*five* were banished with their eyes put out—*five* were *massacred*—and *nine* deposed; 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 predecessors, Andrea Dandolo,

died of vexation. Marino Faliero himself perished as related. Amongst his successors, *Foscari*, 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!

Note 20. Page 130.

“Un Capo de' Dieci” are the words of Sanuto's Chronicles.

APPENDIX.

I.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE XLIX.

MCCCLIV.

“Fu Eletto da quarantuno Elettori, il quale era Cavaliere e conte di Valdemarino in Trivigiana, ed era ricco, e si trovava ambasciadore a Roma. E a' di 9 di Settembre, doppo sepolto il suo predecessore, fu chiamato il gran Consiglio, e fu preso di fare il Doge giusta il solito. E furono fatti i cinque Correttori, Ser Bernardo Giustiniani Procuratore, Ser Paolo Loredano, Ser Filippo Aurio, Ser Pietro Trivisano, e Ser Tommaso Viadro. I quali a di 10 misero queste correzioni alla promozione del Doge: che i Consiglieri non odano gli Oratori e Nunzi de' Signori, senza i Capi de' quaranta; nè possano rispondere ad alcuno, se non saranno quattro Consiglieri e due Capi de' Quaranta. E che osservino la forma del suo Capitolare. E che Messer lo Doge si metta nella miglior parte, quando i giudici tra loro non fossero d'accordo. E ch' egli non possa far vendere i suoi imprestiti, salvo con legittima causa, e col voler di cinque Consiglieri, di due Capi de' Quaranta, e delle due parti del Consiglio de' Pregati. *Item*, che in luogo di tre mila pelli di Conigli, che debbon dare i Zaratini per regalia al Doge, non trovandosi tante pelli, gli diano Ducati ottanta l'anno. E poi a di 11 detto, misero *etiam* altre correzioni; che se il Doge, che sarà eletto fosse fuori di Venezia, i savj possano provvedere del suo ritorno. E quando fosse il Doge ammalato, sia Vicedoge uno de' Consiglieri, da essere eletto tra loro. E che il detto sia nominato Viceluogotenente di Messer lo Doge, quando i giudici faranno i suoi atti. E nota, perchè fu fatto Doge uno ch'era assente, che fu Vicedoge Ser Marino Badoero il più vecchio de' Consiglieri. *Item*, che il governo del Ducato sia commesso a' Consiglieri, e a' Capi de' Quaranta, quando vaccherà il Ducato, finchè sarà eletto l' altro Doge. E così a' di 11 di Settembre fu creato il prefato Marino Faliero Doge. E fu preso, che il governo del Ducato sia commesso a' Consiglieri e a' Capi de' Quaranta. I quali stiano in Palazzo di continuo, fino che verrà il Doge. Sicchè di continuo stiano in Palazzo due Consiglieri e un Capo de' Quaranta. E subito furono spedite lettere al detto Doge, il quale era a Roma Oratore al Legato di Papa Innocenzo VI, ch' era in Avignone. Fu preso nel gran Consiglio d'eleggere dodici ambasciadori incontro a Marino Faliero Doge, il quale veniva da Roma. E giunto a Chioggia, il Podestà mandò Taddeo Giustiniani suo figliuolo incontro, con quindici Ganzaruoli. E poi venuto a S. Clemente nel Bucintoro, venne un gran caligo, *adeo* che il Bucintoro non si poté levare. Laonde il Doge co' gentiluomini nelle piatte vennero di lungo in questa Terra a' 5 d'Ottobre del 1354. E dovendo smontare alla riva della Paglia per lo caligo andarono ad ismontare alla riva della Piazza, in mezzo alle due colonne dove si fa la Giustizia, che fu un malissimo augurio. E a' 6, la mattina venne alla Chiesa di San Marco alla laudazione di quello. Era in questo tempo Cancellier Grande Messer Benintende. I quarantuno Elettori furono, Ser Giovanni Contarini, Ser Andrea Giustiniani, Ser Michele Morosini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Pietro Lando, Ser Marino Gradenigo, Ser Marco Dolfino, Ser Nicolò Faliero, Ser Giovanni Quirini, Ser Lorenzo Soranzo, Ser Marco Bembo, Ser Stefano Belegno, Ser Francesco Loredano, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Giovanni Mocenigo.

Ser Andrea Barbaro, Ser Lorenzo Barbarigo, Ser Bettino da Molino, Ser Andrea Arizzo Procuratore, Ser Marco Celsi, Ser Paolo Donato, Ser Bertucci Grimani, Ser Pietro Steno, Ser Luca Duodo, Ser' Andrea Pisani, Ser Francesco Caravello, Ser Jacopo Trivisano, Sere Schiavo Marcello, Ser Maffeo Aimo, Ser Marco Capello, Ser Pancrazio Giorgio, Ser Giovanni Foscarini, Ser Tommaso Viadro, Sere Schiava Polani, Ser Marco Polo, Ser Marino Sagredo, Sere Stefano Mariani, Ser Francesco Suriano, Ser Orio Pasqualigo, Ser Andrea Gritti, Ser Buono da Mosto.

“*Trattato di Messer Marino Faliero Doge, tratto da una Cronica antica.* Essendo venuto il Giovedì della Caccia, fu fatta giusta il solito la Caccia. E a' que' tempi dopo fatta la Caccia s'andava in Palazzo del Doge in una di quelle sale, e con donne facevasi una festicciuola, dove si ballava fino alla prima campana, e veniva una colazione; la quale spesa faceva messer lo Doge, quando v'era la Dogaressa. E poscia tutti andavano a casa sua. Sopra la qual festa, pare, che Ser Michele Steno molto giovane e povero gentiluomo, ma ardito e astuto, il quale era innamorato in certa donzella della Dogaressa, essendo sul Solajo appresso le donne, facesse cert' atto non conveniente, adeo che il Doge comandò ch' e' fosse buttato giù dal Solajo. E così quegli scudieri del Doge lo spinsero giù di quel Solajo. Laonde a Ser Michele parve, che fossegli stata fatta troppo grande ignominia. E non considerando altramente il fine, ma sopra quella passione fornita la festa, e andati tutti via, quella notte egli andò, e sulla cadrega, dove sedeva il Doge nella Sala dell' Udienza (perchè allora i Dogi non tenevano panno di seta sopra la cadrega, ma sedevano in una cadrega di legno) scrisse alcune parole disoneste del Doge e della Dogaressa, cioè: *Marin Faliero dalla bella moglie: Altri la gode, ed egli la mantiene.* E la mattina furono vedute tali parole scritte. E parve una brutta cosa. E per la Signoria fu commessa la cosa agli Avvogadori del Comune con grande efficacia. I quali Avvogadori subito diedero taglia grande per venire in chiaro della verità di chi avea scritto tal lettera. E tandem si seppe, che Michele Steno aveale scritte. E fu per li Quaranta preso di ritenerlo: e ritenuto confessò, che in quella passione d'essere stato spinto giù dal Solajo, presente la sua amante, egli aveale scritte. Onde poi fu placitato nel detto Consiglio, e parve al Consiglio sì per rispetto all' età, come per la caldezza d'amore, di condannarlo a compiere due mesi in prigione serrato, e poi ch' e' fosse bandito di Venezia e dal distretto per un' anno. Per la qual condanna-gione tanto piccola il Doge ne prese grande sdegno, parendogli che non fosse stata fatta quella estimazione della cosa, che ricercava la sua dignità del Ducato. E diceva, ch' eglino doveano averlo fatto appiccare per la gola, o *saltem* bandirlo in perpetuo da Venezia. E perchè (quando dee succedere un' effetto è necessario che vi concorra la cagione a fare tal' effetto) era destinato, che a Messer Marino Doge fosse tagliata la testa, perciò occorse, che entrata la Quaresima il giorno dopo che fu condannato il detto Ser Michele Steno, un gentiluomo, da Cà Barbaro, di natura collerico, andasse all' Arsenal, domandasse certe cose ai Padroni, ed era alla presenza de' Signori l' Ammiraglio dell' Arsenal. Il quale intesa la domanda, disse, che non si poteva fare. Quel gentiluomo venne a parole coll' Ammiraglio, e diedegli un pugno su un' occhio. E perchè avea un' anello in dito, coll' anello gli ruppe la pelle, e fece sangue. E l' Ammiraglio così battuto e insanguinato andò al Doge a lamentarsi, acciocchè il Doge facesse fare gran punizione contra il detto da Cà Barbaro. Il Doge disse: *Che vuoi che ti faccia? Guarda le ignominiose parole scritte di me, e il modo ch'è stato punito quel ribaldo di Michele Steno, che le scrisse. E quale stima hanno i Quaranta fatto della persona nostra?* Laonde l' Ammiraglio gli disse: *Messer lo Doge, se voi volete farvi Signore, e fare tagliare tutti questi becchi gentiluomini a pezzi, mi basta l'animo, dandomi voi ajuto, di farvi Signore di questa Terra. E allora voi potrete castigare tutti costoro.* Inteso questo, il Doge disse: *Come si può fare una simile cosa?* E così entrarono in ragionamento.

“Il Doge mandò a chiamare Ser Bertuccio Faliero suo nipote, il quale stava con lui in Palazzo, e entrarono in questa macchinazione. Nè si partirono di lì, che mandarono per Filippo Calendaro, uomo marittimo e di gran seguito, e per Bertuccio Israello, ingegnere e uomo astutissimo. E consigliatisi insieme diede ordine di chiamare alcuni altri. E così per alcuni giorni la notte si riducevano insieme in Palazzo in casa del Doge. E chiamarono a parte a parte altri, *videlicet* Niccolò Fagiuolo, Giovanni da Corfù, Stefano Fagiano, Niccolò dalle Bende, Niccolò Biondo, e Stefano

Trivisano. E ordinò di fare sedici o diciassette Capi in diversi luoghi della Terra, i quali avessero cadaun di loro quarant' uomini provvigionati, preparati, non dicendo a' detti suoi quaranta quello che volessero fare. Ma che il giorno stabilito si mostrasse di far quistione tra loro in diversi luoghi, acciocchè il Doge facesse sonare a San Marco le campane, le quali non si possono suonare, s'egli nol comanda. E al suono delle campane questi sedici o diciassette co' suoi uomini venissero a San Marco, alle strade che buttano in Piazza. E così i nobili e primarj cittadini, che venissero in Piazza per sapere del romore ciò ch'era, li tagliassero a pezzi. E seguito questo, che fosse chiamato per Signore Messer Marino Faliero Doge. E fermate le cose tra loro, stabilito fu, che questo dovess'essere a' 15 Aprile del 1355 in giorno di Mercoledì. La quale macchinazione trattata fu tra loro tanto segretamente, che mai nè pure se ne sospettò, non che se ne sapesse cos' alcuna. Ma il Signor' Iddio, che ha sempre ajutato questa gloriosissima città, e che per le santimonie e giustizie sue mai non l'ha abbandonata, ispirò a un Beltramo Bergamasco, il quale fu messo Capo di quarant' uomini per uno de' detti congiurati (il quale intese qualche parola, sicchè comprese l'effetto que doveva succedere, e il qual era di casa di Ser Niccolò Lioni di Santo Stefano) di andare a di*** d'Aprile a casa del detto Ser Niccolò Lioni. E gli disse ogni cosa dell' ordin dato. Il quale intese le cose, rimase come morto; e, intese molte particolarità, il detto Beltramo il pregò che lo tenesse segreto; e glielo disse acciocchè il detto Ser Niccolò non si partisse di casa a di 15, acciocchè egli non fosse morto. Ed egli volendo partirsi, il fece ritenere a' suoi di casa, e serrarlo in una camera. Ed esso andò a casa di M. Giovanni Gradenigo Nasone, il quale fu poi Doge, che stava anch' egli a Santo Stefano; e dissegli la cosa. La quale parendogli, com'era, d'una grandissima importanza, tutti e due andarono a casa di Ser Marco Cornaro, che stava a San Felice. E dettogli il tutto, tutti e tre deliberarono di venire a casa del detto Ser Niccolò Lioni, ed esaminare il detto Beltramo. E quello esaminato, intese le cose, il fecero stare serrato. E andarono tutti e tre a San Salvatore in sacristia, e mandarono i loro famigli a chiamare i Consiglieri, gli Avvogadori, i Capi de' Dieci, e que' del Consiglio. E ridotti insieme dissero loro le cose. I quali rimasero morti. E deliberarono di mandare pel detto Beltramo, e fattolo venire cautamente, ed esaminatolo, e verificate le cose, ancorchè ne sentissero gran passione, pure pensarono la provvisione. E mandarono pe' Capi de' Quaranta, pe' Signori di notte, pe' Capi de' Sestieri, e pe' Cinque della Pace. E ordinato, ch' eglino co' loro uomini trovassero degli altri buoni uomini, e mandassero a casa de' capi de' congiurati, *ut supra* mettersero loro le mani addosso. E tolsero i detti le Maestriere dell' Arsenal, acciocchè i provvisionati de' congiurati non potessero offenderli. E si rudessero in Palazzo verso la sera. Dove ridotti fecero serrare le porte della corte del Palazzo. E mandarono a ordinar al campanaro, che non sonasse le campane. E così fu eseguito; e messe le mani addosso a tutti i nominati di sopra, furono que' condotti al Palazzo. E vedendo il Consiglio de' Dieci, che il Doge era nella cospirazione, presero di eleggere venti de' primarj della Terra, di giunta al detto Consiglio a consigliare, non però che potessero mettere pallotta.

“ I Consiglieri furono questi: Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, del Sestiero di San Marco; Ser Almorò Veniero da Santa Marina, del Sestiero di Castello; Ser Tommaso Viadro, del Sestiero di Canergio; Ser Giovanni Sanudo, del Sestiero di Santa Croce; Ser Pietro Trevisano, del Sestiero di San Paolo; Ser Pantalione Barbo il Grande, del Sestiero d'Ossoduro. Gli Avvogadori del Comune furono: Ser Zufredo Morosini, e Ser Orio Pasqualigo, e questi non ballottarono. Que' del Consiglio de' Dieci furono: Ser Giovanni Marcello, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, e Ser Micheletto Dolfino. Capi del detto Consiglio de' Dieci: Ser Luca da Legge, e Ser Pietro da Mosto. Inquisitori del detto Consiglio: Ser Marco Polani, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Lando Lombardo, Ser Nicoletto Trevisano da Sant' Angiolo. Questi elessero tra loro una Giunta, nella notte ridotti quasi sul romper del giorno, di venti nobili di Venezia de' migliori, de' più savj, e de' più antichi, per consultare, non però che mettersero pallottola. E non vi vollero alcuno da Cà Faliero. E cacciarono fuori del Consiglio Niccolò Faliero, e un' altro Niccolò Faliero da San Tommaso, per essere della casata del Doge. E questa provvigione di chiamare i venti della Giunta fu molto commendata per tutta la Terra. Questi furono i venti della Giunta: Ser Marco Giustiniani, Procuratore; Ser Andrea Erizzo, Procuratore; Ser Leonardo Giustiniani,

Procuratore; Ser Andrea Contarini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Niccolò Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser Marco Diedo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser' Andrea Cornaro, Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri da Mosto, Ser Gazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosino, Sere Stefano Belegno, Ser Niccolò Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini. E chiamati questi venti nel Consiglio de' Dieci, fu mandato per Messer Marino Faliero Doge, il quale andava pel Palazzo con gran gente, gentiluomini, e altra buona gente, che non sapeano ancora come il fatto stava. In questo tempo fu condotto, preso, e legato, Bertuccio Israello, uno de' Capi del trattato per que' di Santa Croce, e ancora fu preso Zanello del Brin, Nicoletto di Rosa, e Nicoletto Alberto, il Guardiaga, e altri uomini da mare, e d' altre condizioni. I quali furono esaminati, e trovata la verità del tradimento. A di 16 d'Aprile fu sentenziato pel detto Consiglio de' Dieci, che Filippo Calandaro, e Bertucci Israello fossero appiccati alle colonne rosse del balconate del Palazzo, nelle quali sta a vedere il Doge la festa della Caccia. E così furono appiccati con spranghe in bocca. E nel giorno seguente questi furono condannati, Niccolò Zuccuolo, Nicoletto Blondo, Nicoletto Doro, Marco Geuda, Jacomello Dagolino, Nicoletto Fedele figliuolo di Filippo Calandaro, Marco Torello, detto Israello, Stefano Trivisano, combiatore di Santa Margherita, Antonio dalle Bende. Furono tutti presi a Chioggia, che fuggivano, e dipoi in diversi giorni a due a due, ed a uno a uno, per sentenza fatta nel detto Consiglio de' Dieci, furono appiccati per la gola alle colonne, continuando dalle rosse del Palazzo, seguendo fin verso in Canale. E altri presi furono lasciati, perchè sentirono il fatto, ma non vi furono, tal che fu dato loro ad intendere per questi capi, che venissero coll' arme, per prendere alcuni malfattori in servizio della Signoria, nè altro sapeano. Fu ancora liberato Nicoletto Alberto, il Guardiaga, e Bartolommeo Ciriuela, e suo figliuolo, e molti altri, che non erano in colpa.

E a di 16 d'Aprile, giorno di Venerdì, fu sentenziato nel detto Consiglio de' Dieci, di tagliare la testa a Messer Marino Faliero Doge sul pato della scala di pietra, dove i Dogi giurano il primo sacramento, quando montano prima in Palazzo. E così serrato il Palazzo, la mattina seguente a ora di terza, fu tagliata la testa al detto Doge a di 17 d'Aprile. E prima la berretta fu tolta di testa al detto Doge, avanti che venisse giù dalla scala. E compiuta la giustizia, pare che un Capo de' Dieci andasse alle Colonne del Palazzo sopra la Piazza, e mostrasse la spada insanguinata a tutti, dicendo: *E stata fatta la gran giustizia del Traditore*. E aperta la porta, tutti entrarono dentro con gran furia a vedere il Doge, ch' era stato giustiziato. E' da sapere, che a fare la detta giustizia non fu Ser Giovanni Sanudo il Consigliere, perchè era andato a casa per difetto della persona, sicchè furono quattordici soli, che ballottarono, cioè cinque Consiglieri, e nove del Consiglio de' Dieci. E fu preso, che tutti i beni del Doge fossero confiscati nel Comune, e così degli altri traditori. E fu concesso al detto Doge pel detto Consiglio de' Dieci, ch' egli potesse ordinare del suo per ducati due mila. Ancora fu preso, che tutti i Consiglieri, e Avogadori del Comune, que' del Consiglio de' Dieci, e della Giunta, ch' erano stati a fare la detta sentenza del Doge, e d' altri, avessero licenza di portar' arme di dì e di notte in Venezia e da Grado fino a Gavarzere, che è sotto il Dogato, con due fanti in vita loro, stando i fanti con essi in casa al suo pane e al suo vino. E chi non avessi fanti, potesse dar tal licenza a' suoi figliuoli ovvero fratelli, due però e non più. Eziandio fu data licenza dell' arme a quattro Notaj della Cancelleria, cioè della Corte Maggiore, che furono a prendere le deposizioni e inquisizioni, in perpetuo a loro soli, i quali, furono Amadio, Nicoletto di Loreno, Steffanello, e Pietro de' Compostelli, Scrivani de' Signori di notte. Ed essendo stati impiccati i traditori, e tagliata la testa al Doge, rimase la Terra in gran riposo e quiete. E come in una cronica ho trovato, fu portato il corpo del Doge in una barca con otto doppiieri a reppelire nella sua arca a San Giovanni e Paolo, la quale al presente è in quell' andito per mezzo la Chiesuola di Santa Maria della Pace, fatta fare pel Vescovo Gabriello di Bergamo, e un cassone di pietra con queste lettere: *Hic jacet Dominus Marinus Faletro Dux*. E nel gran Consiglio non gli è stato fatto alcun breve, ma il luogo vacuo con lettere, che dicono così: *Hic est locus Marino Faletro, decapitati pro criminibus*. E pare, che la sua casa fosse data alla Chiesa di Sant' Apostolo, la qual' era quella grande sul ponte. *Tamen* vedo il contrario che è pure di Cà Faliero, o che i Falieri la ricuperassero con danari dalla Chiesa. Nè voglio

restar di scrivere alcuno, che volevano, che fosse messo nel suo breve, cioè: *Marinus Faletro Dux. Temeritas me cepit. Pœnas lui, decapitatus pro crimibus.* Altri vi fecero un distico assai degno al suo merito, il quale è questo, da essere posto su la sua sepoltura :

"Dux Venetum jacet hic, patriam qui prodere tentans,
Sceptra, decus, censum perdidit, atque caput."

* * * * *

"Non voglio restar di scrivere quello che ho letto in una cronica, cioè, che Marino Faliero trovandosi Podestà e Capitano a Treviso, e dovendosi fare una processione, il Vescovo stette troppo a far venire il Corpo di Cristo. Il detto Faliero era di tanta superbia e arroganza, che diede un buffetto al prefato Vescovo, per modo ch' egli quasi cadde in terra. Però fu permesso, che il Faliero perdette l'intelletto, e fece la mala morte, come ho scritto di sopra."

* * * * *

Cronica di Sanuto—Muratori S. S. Rerum Italicarum—vol. xxii. 628—639.

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, 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 dispatched 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 fifth 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 Falier, the husband of the fair wife; others kiss her, but he keeps her.*" In the morning the words were seen, and the matter was considered to be very scandalous; and the Senate commanded the Avvogadori of the Commonwealth to proceed therein with the greatest diligence. A largesse of great amount was immediately proffered by the Avvogadori 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 a 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 therefore 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 that 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 struck him with his fist just above 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 cuckoldy 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 Fagiano, Niccolo dalle Bende, Niccolo Blondo, 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

fifteenth 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 Lioni, 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 Lioni, 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 fifteenth 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 Salvatore, and sent their men to summon the Councillors, the Avvogadori, 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' Quaranta, 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 foremen 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 councillors were the following: Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, of the Sestiero of San Marco; Ser Almoro Veniero da Santa Marina, of the Sestiero of Castello; Ser Tommaso Viadro, of the Sestiero of Caneregio; Ser Giovanni Sanudo, of the Sestiero of Santa Croce; Ser Pietro Trivisano, of the Sestiero of San Paolo; Ser Pantalione Barbo il Grande, of the Sestiero of Ossoduro. The Avvogadori 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 Micheletto 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 Niccolotto 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 Cà Faliero. And Niccolo Faliero, and another Niccolo Faliero, of San Tommaso, 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 Giustiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Erizzo, Procuratore, Ser Lionardo Giustiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Contarini, Sere Simone Dandolo, Ser Niccolo Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser Marco Diedo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser Andrea Cor-

naro, Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri da Mosto, Ser Gazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosini, Sere Stefano Belegno, Ser Niccolo Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscari.

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 Bertuccio Israello, who, as one of the ringleaders, 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 sixteenth 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 Guida, 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 Chiozza, for they were endeavouring 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 Ciriuela, and his son, and several others, who were not guilty, were discharged.

On Friday, the sixteenth 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 seventeenth 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 ballotted; 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 Avvogadori 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: "*Hic 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 Cà 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. Pœnas lui, decapitatus pro criminibus.*"—Others, also, indited a couplet, worthy of being inscribed upon his tomb.

"Dux Venetum jacet hic, patriam qui prodere tentans,
Sceptra, decus, census perdidit, atque caput."

[I am obliged for this 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.]

II.

"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 dimestichezza. 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: imperciocchè questo Doge dei Veneti, magistrato sacro in tutti i secoli, che dagli antichi fu sempre venerato qual nume in quella città, l' altr' jeri fu decollato nel vestibolo dell' istesso Palazzo. Discorrerei fin dal principio le cause di un tale evento, se così vario, ed ambiguo non ne fosse il grido. Nessuno però lo scusa, tutti affermano, che egli abbia voluto cangiar qualche cosa nell' ordine della repubblica a lui tramandato dai maggiori. Chè desiderava egli di più? Io son d'avviso, che egli abbia ottenuto ciò, che non si concedette a nessun altro: mentre adempiva gli ufficj di legato presso il Pontefice, e sulle rive del Rodano trattava la pace, che io prima di lui avevo indarno tentato di conchiudere, gli fù conferito l' onore del Ducato, che nè chiedeva, nè s' aspettava. Tornato in patria, pensò a quello, cui nessuno non pose mente giammai, e soffrì quello che a ninno accade mai di soffrire: giacchè 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 ducali, 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 ostili spoglie. Ho notato il luogo, ora noto il tempo: è l' anno del Natale di Cristo 1355, fù il giorno 18 d'Aprile. Sì 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 accorgerà, che nulla di più grande avvenne ai nostri tempi nell' Italia. Tu forse qui attendi il mio giudizio; assolvo il popolo, se credere alla fama, benchè abbia potuto e castigare più mitamente, 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' iracundia con rapidi, e scongiati 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, perchè dalla sentenza contra di esso promulgata apparirà, che egli fu non solo misero, 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 innanzi ai loro occhi, quale specchio nel quale veggano di essere non Signori, ma Duci, anzi nemmeno Duci, ma onorati servi della Repubblica. Tu sta sano; e giacchè fluttuano le publiche cose, sforziamoci 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 honour 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;" 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?

III.

VENETIAN SOCIETY AND MANNERS.

"A CES attaques si fréquentes que le gouvernement dirigeait contre le clergé, à ces luttes établies entre les différents corps constitués, à ces entreprises de la masse de la noblesse contre les dépositaires du pouvoir, à toutes ces propositions d'innovation qui se terminaient toujours par des coups d'état; il faut ajouter une autre cause, non moins propre à propager le mépris des anciennes doctrines, c'était l'excès de la corruption.

"Cette liberté de mœurs qu'on avait long-temps vantée comme le charme principal de la société de Venise était devenue un désordre scandaleux; le lien du mariage était moins sacré dans ce pays catholique que dans ceux où les lois civiles et religieuses permettent de le dissoudre. Faute de pouvoir rompre le contrat, on supposait qu'il n'avait jamais existé; et les moyens de nullité, allégués avec impudeur par les époux, étaient admis avec la même facilité par des magistrats et par des prêtres également corrompus. Ces divorces colorés d'un autre nom devinrent si fréquents, que l'acte le plus important de la société civile se trouva de la compétence

d'un tribunal d'exception, et que ce fut à la police de réprimer le scandale. Le conseil des dix ordonna, en 1782, que toute femme qui intenterait une demande en dissolution de mariage serait obligée d'en attendre le jugement dans un couvent que le tribunal désignerait.* Bientôt après il évoqua devant lui toutes les causes de cette nature.† Cet empiètement sur la juridiction ecclésiastique ayant occasionné des réclamations de la part de la cour de Rome, le conseil se réserva le droit de débouter les époux de leur demande, et consentit à la renvoyer devant l'officialité, toutes les fois qu'il ne l'aurait pas rejetée.‡

“ Il y eut un moment où sans doute le renversement des fortunes, la perte des jeunes gens, les discordes domestiques, déterminèrent le gouvernement à s'écarter des maximes qu'il s'était faites sur la liberté de mœurs qu'il permettait à ses sujets : on chassa de Venise toutes les courtisanes. Mais leur absence ne suffisait pas pour ramener aux bonnes mœurs toute une population élevée dans la plus honteuse licence. Le désordre pénétra dans l'intérieur des familles, dans les cloîtres ; et l'on se crut obligé de rappeler, d'indemniser § même des femmes qui surprenaient quelquefois d'importants secrets, et qu'on pouvait employer utilement à ruiner des hommes que leur fortune aurait pu rendre dangereux. Depuis, la licence est toujours allée croissant ; et l'on a vu non seulement des mères trafiquer de la virginité de leurs filles, mais la vendre par un contrat dont l'authenticité était garantie par la signature d'un officier public, et l'exécution mise sous la protection des lois.**

“ Les parloirs des couvents où étaient renfermées les filles nobles, les maisons des courtisanes, quoique la police y entretint soigneusement un grand nombre de surveillants, étaient les seuls points de réunion de la société de Venise, et dans ces deux endroits si divers on était également libre. La musique, les collations, la galanterie, n'étaient pas plus interdites dans les parloirs que dans les casinos. Il y avait un grand nombre de casinos destinés aux réunions publiques, où le jeu était la principale occupation de la société. C'était un singulier spectacle de voir autour d'une table des personnes des deux sexes en masque, et de graves personnages en robes de magistrature, implorant le hasard, passant des angoisses du désespoir aux illusions de l'espérance, et cela sans proférer une parole.

“ Les riches avaient des casinos particuliers ; mais ils y vivaient avec mystère ; leurs femmes délaissées trouvaient un dédommagement dans la liberté dont elles jouissaient. La corruption des mœurs les avait privées de tout leur empire ; on vient de parcourir toute l'histoire de Venise, et on ne les a pas vues une seule fois exercer la moindre influence.”—DARU, *Histoire de la République de Venise*. vol. v. p. 95.

“ To these attacks, so frequently pointed by the government against the clergy,—to the continual struggles between the different constituted bodies,—to those 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 mar-

* Correspondance de M. Schlick, chargé d'affaires de France ; dépêche du 24 août 1782.

† Ibid. Dépêche du 31 août.

‡ Ibid. Dépêche du 3 septembre 1785.

§ Le décret de rappel les désignait sous le nom de *nostre benemerite meretrici*. On leur assigna un fonds et des maisons appelées *Case rampane*, d'où vient la dénomination injurieuse de *Carampane*.

** Mayer, *Description de Venise*, tom. ii, et M. Archenholtz, *Tableau de l'Italie*, tom. I, chap. 2.

riage 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 judge in some convent, to be named by the court.* Soon afterwards 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 parlours 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 parlours than at the casinos. There were 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 personages 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."

* Correspondence of Mr. Schlick, French chargé d'affaires. Despatch of 24th August, 1782.

† Ibid. Despatch, 31st August.

‡ Ibid. Despatch, 3d September, 1785.

§ The decree for their recall designates them as *nostræ benemeritæ 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. Archenholtz, *Picture of Italy*, vol. i. chap. 2.

SARDANAPALUS;

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS GÆTHE,
A STRANGER
PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE
OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,
THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED
THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.
THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM
IS ENTITLED
SARDANAPALUS.

SAHJANAPATHI

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

SAHJANAPATHI

PREFACE.

IN publishing the following Tragedies,* I have only to repeat that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage.

On the attempt made by the managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed.

With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the compositions in question, the reader is referred to the Notes.

The author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach the "unities;" conceiving that, with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilized parts of it. But "Nous avons changé tout cela," and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect,—and not in the art.

* "Sardanapalus" originally appeared in the same volume with "The Two Foscari" and "Cain."—E.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SARDANAPALUS, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, &c.*

ARBACES, *the Mede who aspired to the throne.*

BELESES, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*

SALEMENES, *the King's Brother-in-law.*

ALTADA, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*

PANIA.

ZAMES.

SFERO.

BALEA.

WOMEN.

ZARINA, *the Queen.*

MYRRHA, *an Ionian female Slave, and the favourite of SARDANAPALUS.*

Women composing the Harem of SARDANAPALUS.

Guards, Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, &c., &c.

Scene—a Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

SARDANAPALUS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A HALL IN THE PALACE.

SALEMENES (*solus*).

HE hath wrong'd his queen, but still he is her lord ;
He hath wrong'd my sister, still he is my brother ;
He hath wrong'd his people, still he is their sovereign,
And I must be his friend as well as subject :
He must not perish thus. I will not see
The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale :
He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
There is a careless courage, which corruption
Has not all quench'd, and latent energies,
Repress'd by circumstance, but not destroy'd—
Steep'd, but not drown'd, in deep voluptuousness.
If born a peasant, he had been a man
To have reach'd an empire ; to an empire born,
He will bequeath none ; nothing but a name,
Which his sons will not prize in heritage :—
Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem
His sloth and shame, by only being that
Which he should be, as easily as the thing
He should not be, and is. Were it less toil
To sway his nations than consume his life ?
To head an army than to rule a harem ?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul,
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield not
Health like the chase, nor glory like the war :—
He must be roused. Alas ! there is no sound

[*Sound of soft music heard from within.*]

To rouse him, short of thunder. Hark! the lute,
 The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
 Of lulling instruments, the softening voices
 Of women, and of beings less than women,
 Must chime in to the echo of his revel;
 While the great king of all we know of earth
 Lolls crown'd with roses, and his diadem
 Lies negligently by, to be caught up
 By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
 Lo, where they come! already I perceive
 The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
 And see the bright gems of the glittering girls,
 At once his chorus and his council, flash
 Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
 As femininely garb'd, and scarce less female,
 The grandson of Semiramis, the man-queen.—
 He comes! Shall I await him? Yes, and front him,
 And tell him what all good men tell each other,
 Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves,
 Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.

SCENE II.—ENTER SARDANAPALUS, EFFEMINATELY DRESSED
 HIS HEAD CROWNED WITH FLOWERS, AND HIS ROBE NE-
 GLIGENTLY FLOWING, ATTENDED BY A TRAIN OF WOMEN
 AND YOUNG SLAVES.

SARDANAPALUS (*speaking to some of his Attendants*).

Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
 Be garlanded, and lit, and furnish'd forth
 For an especial banquet; at the hour
 Of midnight we will sup there; see nought wanting,
 And bid the galley be prepared. There is
 A cooling breeze which crisks the broad clear river;
 We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who deign
 To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
 We 'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
 When we shall gather like the stars above us,
 And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs.
 Till then, let each be mistress of her time;
 And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha,³ chuse,
 Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr.

My lord—

Sard. My lord! my life, why answerest thou so coldly?
 It is the curse of kings to be so answer'd.
 Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine—say, wouldst thou
 Accompany our guests, or charm away
 The moments from me?

Myr.

The king's choice is mine.

Sard. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest joy
Is to contribute to thine every wish.
I do not dare to breathe my own desire,
Lest it should clash with thine; for thou art still
Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.

Myr. I would remain: I have no happiness
Save in beholding thine; yet——

Sard. Yet! what YET?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.

Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council; it were better I retire.

Sal. (*coming forward*). The Ionian slave says well; let her retire.

Sard. Who answers? How now, brother?

Sal. The queen's brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.

Sard. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all dispose their
hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence.

[*The court retiring.*]

(*To Myrrha, who is going*).

Myrrha! I thought thou wouldst remain.

Myr. Great king
Thou didst not say so.

Sard. But thou lookedst it;
I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.

Myr. Sire! your brother——

Sal. His consort's brother, minion of Ionia!
How darest thou name me and not blush?

Sard. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her crimson
Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness,
Which will not see it. What! in tears, my Myrrha?

Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.

Sard. Cursed be he who caused those tears to flow!

Sal. Curse not thyself—millions do that already.

Sard. Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
I am a monarch.

Sal. Would thou couldst!

Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou too, prince, permit my absence.

Sard. Since it must be so, and this churl has check'd
Thy gentle spirit, go; but recollect

That we must forthwith meet : I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence.

[Exit MYRRHA.]

Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever.

Sard. Brother,
I can at least command myself, who listen
To language such as this ; yet urge me not
Beyond my easy nature.

Sal. 'T is beyond
That easy, far too easy, idle nature,
Which I would urge thee. Oh that I could rouse thee,
Though 't were against myself!

Sard. By the god Baal!
The man would make me tyrant.

Sal. So thou art.
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains? The despotism of vice—
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury—
The negligence—the apathy—the evils
Of sensual sloth—produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power,
And those who should sustain it; so that whether
A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
Distract within, both will alike prove fatal:
The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer;
The last they rather would assist than vanquish.

Sard. Why, what makes thee the mouth-piece of the people?

Sal. Forgiveness of the queen my sister's wrongs;
A natural love unto my infant nephews;
Faith to the king, a faith he may need shortly,
In more than words; respect for Nimrod's line;
Also, another thing thou knowest not.

Sard. What 's that?

Sal. To thee an unknown word.

Sard. Yet speak it;
I love to learn.

Sal. Virtue.

Sard. Not know the word!
Never was word yet rung so in my ears—
Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet:
I've heard thy sister talk of nothing else.

Sal. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of vice.

Sard. From whom?

Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
Unto the echoes of the nation's voice.

Sard. Come, I'm indulgent, as thou knowest; patient,
As thou hast often proved—speak out, what moves thee?

Sal. Thy peril.

Sard. Say on.

Sal. Thus, then: all the nations,
For they are many, whom thy father left
In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee.

Sard. 'Gainst me! What would the slaves?

Sal. A king.

Sard. And what
Am I then?

Sal. In their eyes a nothing; but
In mine a man who might be something still.

Sard. The railing drunkards! why, what would they have?
Have they not peace and plenty?

Sal. Of the first,
More than is glorious; of the last, far less
Than the king reckes of.

Sard. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps, who provide no better?

Sal. And somewhat in the monarch who ne'er looks
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 't is but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal!
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A god, or at the least shimest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril!
For what? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.

Sard. I understand thee—thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read! the restless slaves
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.

Sal. Wherefore not?
Semiramis—a woman only—led
These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.

Sard. 'T is most true. And how return'd?

Sal. Why, like a man—a hero; baffled, but
Not vanquish'd. With but twenty guards, she made

Good her retreat to Bactria.

Sard. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?

Sal. Our annals say not.

Sard. Then I will say for them—
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Have fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men—the fiercest of the three—
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.

Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate.
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she fail'd in India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the realm
Which she once sway'd—and thou *mightst* sway.

Sard. I *sway* them—
She but subdued them.

Sal. It may be, ere long,
That they will need her sword more than your sceptre.

Sard. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such—they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,
Who conquer'd this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquish'd.

Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou perceivest
That he is deem'd a god for what he did.

Sard. And in his godship I will honour him—
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!

Sal. What means the king?

Sard. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sard. (*addressing the Cupbearer*). Bring me the golden goblet
thick with gems,
Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence,
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. Is this moment
A fitting one for the resumption of
Thy yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sard. (*taking the cup from him*). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus

Conquer'd the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deem'd a deity.

Sard. Not so :—of all his conquests a few columns,
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here, here in this goblet is his title
To immortality—the immortal grape
From which he first express'd the soul, and gave
To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave ;
And, like my ancestor Semiramis,
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
Here 's that which deified him—let it now
Humanize thee : my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek god !

Sal. For all thy realms
I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.

Sard. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans ; and no god,
Because he turn'd a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires
The young ; makes Weariness forget his toil,
And Fear her danger ; opens a new world
When this, the present, palls. Well, then, I pledge thee,
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind. [Drinks.

Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?

Sard. And if I did, 't were better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not
My present purpose : since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest. (*To the Cupbearer*). Boy, retire.
[Exit Cupbearer.

Sal. I would but have recall'd thee from thy dream :
Better by me awaken'd than rebellion.

Sard. Who should rebel ? or why ? what cause ? pretext ?
I am the lawful king, descended from
A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me ?

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.

Sard. But
Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the queen : is 't not so ?

Sal. Think ! Thou hast wrong'd her !

Sard. Patience, prince, and hear me.
 She has all power and splendour of her station,
 Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
 The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
 I married her, as monarchs wed—for state,
 And loved her as most husbands love their wives ;
 If she or thou supposedst I could link me
 Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
 Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.

Sal. I pray thee, change the theme ; my blood disdains
 Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
 Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord !
 Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
 With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
 The queen is silent.

Sard. And why not her brother ?

Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
 Which he who long neglects not long will govern.

Sard. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves ! they murmur
 Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
 To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
 Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges ;
 Nor decimated them with savage laws,
 Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
 Or Babylonian walls.

Sal. Yet these are trophies
 More worthy of a people and their prince
 Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
 And lavish'd treasures, and contemned virtues.

Sard. Or for my trophies I have founded cities :
 There 's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
 In one day—what could that blood-loving beldame,
 My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
 Do more, except destroy them ?

Sal. 'T is most true ;
 I own thy merit in those founded cities,
 Built for a whim, recorded with a verse
 Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.

Sard. Shames me ! By Baal, the cities, though well built,
 Are not more goodly than the verse ! Say what
 Thou wilt 'gainst me, my mode of life or rule,
 But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.
 Why, those few lines contain the history
 Of all things human ; hear, " Sardanapalus
 The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
 In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
 Eat, drink, and love ; the rest 's not worth a fillip." ⁵

Sal. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,

For a king to put up before his subjects!

Sard. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up edicts—

“Obey the king—contribute to his treasure—
Recruit his phalanx—spill your blood at bidding—
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.”

Or thus—“Sardanapalus on this spot

Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.

These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.”

I leave such things to conquerors; enough

For me, if I can make my subjects feel

The weight of human misery less, and glide

Ungroaning to the tomb; I take no licence

Which I deny to them. We all are men.

Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods—

Sard.

In dust

And death, where they are neither gods nor men.

Talk not of such to me! the worms are gods;

At least they banqueted upon your gods,

And died for lack of further nutriment.

Those gods were merely men; look to their issue:

I feel a thousand mortal things about me,

But nothing godlike, unless it may be

The thing which you condemn, a disposition

To love and to be merciful, to pardon

The follies of my species, and (that's human)

To be indulgent to my own.

Sal.

Alas!

The doom of Nineveh is seal'd.—Woe—woe

To the unrivall'd city!

Sard.

What dost dread?

Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes: in a few hours

The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee

And thine and mine; and in another day

What is shall be the past of Belus' race.

Sard. What must we dread?

Sal.

Ambitious treachery,

Which has environ'd thee with snares; but yet

There is resource: empower me with thy signet

To quell the machinations, and I lay

The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.

Sard. The heads—how many?

Sal.

Must I stay to number

When even thine own 's in peril? Let me go;

Give me thy signet—trust me with the rest.

Sard. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.

When we take those from others, we nor know

What we have taken, nor the thing we give.

Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek for thine?

Sard. That 's a hard question.—But I answer, Yes.
Cannot the thing be done without? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest?—Let them be arrested.

Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me; the next moment
Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all.—
Trust me.

Sard. Thou knowest I have done so ever;
Take thou the signet. [Gives the signet.]

Sal. I have one more request.—

Sard. Name it.

Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.

Sard. Forbear the banquet! Nor for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom! Let them come,
And do their worst: I shall not blench for them;
Nor rise the sooner; nor forbear the goblet;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less;
Nor lose one joyous hour.—I fear them not.

Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not, if needful?

Sard. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper; and a bow
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth;
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on 't, 't is long since I 've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother?

Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling?—
If need be, wilt thou wear them?

Sard. Will I not?—
Oh! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I 'll use the sword
Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.

Sal. They say, thy sceptre 's turn'd to that already.

Sard. That 's false! but let them say so: the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen: thou seest,
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.

Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.

Sard. No;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat,
And never changed their chains but for their armour:
Now they have peace and pastime, and the licence
To revel and to rail; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided

A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour?

Sal. You have said they 're men;
As such their hearts are something.

Sard. So my dogs' are;
And better, as more faithful:—but, proceed;
Thou hast my signet:—since they are tumultuous,
Let them be temper'd; yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life;
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal! done all I could to soothe them:
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sard. They lie.—Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch; else for me,
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to be so.

Sard. What mean'st thou?—'t is thy secret; thou desirest
Few questions, and I 'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps, and since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only; if they rouse me, better
They 'd conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
"The mighty hunter." I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who *were*,
But *would* no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie: that which
They yet may find me—shall defy their wish
To speak it worse; and let them thank themselves.

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel?

Sard. Feel! who feels not
Ingratitude?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy

Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
 And thou mayst yet be glorious in thy reign,
 As powerful in thy realm. Farewell!

[*Exit SALEMENES.*]

Sard. (*solus*).

Farewell!

He's gone; and on his finger bears my signet,
 Which is to him a sceptre. He is stern
 As I am heedless; and the slaves deserve
 To feel a master. What may be the danger,
 I know not:—he hath found it, let him quell it.
 Must I consume my life—this little life—
 In guarding against all may make it less?
 It is not worth so much! It were to die
 Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
 Tracing revolt, suspecting all about me,
 Because they're near; and all who are remote,
 Because they're far. But if it should be so—
 If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
 Why, what is earth, or empire of the earth?
 I've loved, and lived, and multiplied my image;
 To die is no less natural than those
 Acts of this clay! 'T is true I have not shed
 Blood, as I might have done, in oceans, till
 My name became the synonyme of death—
 A terror and a trophy. But for this
 I feel no penitence; my life is love:
 If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
 Till now no drop from an Assyrian vein
 Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
 Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavish'd
 On objects which could cost her sons a tear:
 If then they hate me, 't is because I hate not;
 If they rebel, it is because I oppress not.
 Oh, men! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
 And mowed down like grass, else all we reap
 Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
 Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
 Making a desert of fertility.—
 I'll think no more.—Within there, ho!

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sard.

Slave, tell

The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.

Att. King, she is here.

MYRRHA enters.

Sard. (*apart to Attendant*). Away!

(*Addressing MYRRHA.*)

Beautiful being!

Thou dost almost anticipate my heart ;
 It throbb'd for thee, and here thou comest ; let me
 Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet oracle,
 Communicates between us, though unseen,
 In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sard. I know there doth ; but not its name ;
 What is it ?

Myr. In my native land a god,
 And in my heart a feeling like a god's,
 Exalted : yet I own 't is only mortal ;
 For what I feel is humble, and yet happy—
 That is, it would be happy ; but——

[MYRRHA pauses.

Sard. There comes
 For'ever something between us and what
 We deem our happiness : let me remove
 The barrier which that hesitating accent
 Proclaims to thine, and mine is seal'd.

Myr. My lord !—

Sard. My lord—my king—sire—sovereign ! thus it is—
 For ever thus, address'd with awe. I ne'er
 Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
 Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
 Have gorged themselves up to equality,
 Or I have quaff'd me down to their abasement.
 Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
 Lord—king—sire—monarch—nay, time was I prized them,
 That is, I suffer'd them—from slaves and nobles ;
 But when they falter from the lips I love,
 The lips which have been press'd to mine, a chill
 Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
 Of this my station, which represses feeling
 In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me
 Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
 And share a cottage on the Caucasus
 With thee, and wear no crowns but those of flowers.

Myr. Would that we could !

Sard. And dost *thou* feel this ?—Why ?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst never know.

Sard. And that is——

Myr. The true value of a heart ;
 At least a woman's.

Sard. I have proved a thousand—
 A thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts ?

Sard. I think so.

Myr. Not one! the time may come thou mayst.

Sard.

It will.

Hear, Myrrha; Salemenes has declared—
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I—
But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.

Myr. He did well.

Sard. And say'st thou so?

Thou whom he spurn'd so harshly, and now dared
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?

Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou speak'st of peril—
Peril to thee—

Sard. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes—and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man—it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't—
But of the midnight festival.

Myr. 'Tis time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurn'd his sage cautions?

Sard. What!—and dost thou fear?

Myr. Fear!—I'm a Greek, and how should I fear death?
A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?

Sard. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?

Myr. I love.

Sard. And do not I? I love thee far—far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced:—yet I blench not.

Myr. That means thou lovest nor thyself nor me;
For he who loves another, loves himself
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost.

Sard. Lost!—why, who is the aspiring chief who dared
Assume to win them?

Myr. Who is he should dread
To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?

Sard. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur.—King, I am your subject!

Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you!—
 Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
 Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs—
 A slave, and hating fetters—an Ionian,
 And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
 Degraded by that passion than by chains!
 Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
 Enough to overcome all former nature,
 Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sard. Save me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
 And what I seek of thee is love—not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells security?

Sard. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
 Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
 Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
 Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs
 Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
 When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
 Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sard. My eloquent Ionian! thou speak'st music,
 The very chorus of the tragic song
 I've heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
 Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not—calm thee.

Myr. I weep not.—But I pray thee, do not speak
 About my fathers or their land.

Sard. Yet oft
 Thou speakest of them.

Myr. True—true:—constant thought
 Will overflow in words unconsciously:
 But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.

Sard. Well, then, how wouldst thou save me, as thou saidst?

Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
 Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
 The rage of the worst war—the war of brethren.

Sard. Why, child, I loathe all war and warriors;
 I live in peace and pleasure: what can man
 Do more?

Myr. Alas! my lord, with common men
 There needs too oft the show of war to keep
 The substance of sweet peace; and for a king,
 'T is sometimes better to be fear'd than loved.

Sard. And I have never sought but for the last.

Myr. And now art neither.

Sard. Dost thou say so, Myrrha?

Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self-love*,
 Which means that men are kept in awe and law,
 Yet not oppress'd—at least they must not think so;

Or if they think so, deem it necessary
To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
And love, and mirth, was never king of glory.

Sard. Glory! what 's that?

Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.

Sard. They cannot answer; when the priests speak for them,
'T is for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's founders.

Sard. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I cannot.
But what wouldst have? the empire *has been* founded:
I cannot go on multiplying empires.

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sard. At least I will enjoy it.

Come, Myrrha, let us on to the Euphrates;
The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
And the pavilion, deck'd for our return,
In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
It seems unto the stars which are above us
Itself an opposite star; and we will sit
Crown'd with fresh flowers like——

Myr. Victims.

Sard. No, like sovereigns,

The shepherd kings of patriarchal times,
Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths,
And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter PANIA.

Pania. May the king live for ever!

Sard. Not an hour
Longer than he can love. How my soul hates
This language, which makes life itself a lie,
Flattering dust with eternity. Well, Pania
Be brief.

Pania. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace: when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

Sard. What! am I then coop'd?
Already captive? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pania. I must obey, and yet——

Myr. Oh, monarch, listen.—

How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
 Within these palace walls in silken dalliance,
 And never shown thee to thy people's longing;
 Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
 The satraps uncontroll'd, the gods unworshipp'd,
 And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
 Till all, save evil, slumber'd through the realm!
 And wilt thou not now tarry for a day,
 A day which may redeem thee? Wilt thou not
 Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
 For them, for thee, for thy past fathers' race,
 And for thy sons' inheritance?

Pania. 'T is true!
 From the deep urgency with which the prince
 Dispatch'd me to your sacred presence, I
 Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
 Which now has spoken.

Sard. No, it must not be.

Myr. For the sake of thy realm!

Sard. Away!

Pania. For that
 Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
 Round thee and thine!

Sard. These are mere phantasies;
 There is no peril:—'t is a sullen scheme
 Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,
 And show himself more necessary to us.

Myr. By all that's good and glorious, take this counsel.

Sard. Business to-morrow.

Myr. Ay, or death to-night.

Sard. Why, let it come, then, unexpectedly,
 Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love;
 So let me fall like the pluck'd rose!—far better
 Thus than be wither'd.

Myr. Then thou wilt not yield,
 Even for the sake of all that ever stirr'd
 A monarch into action, to forego
 A trifling revel?

Sard. No.

Myr. Then yield for mine;
 For my sake!

Sard. Thine, my Myrrha?

Myr. 'T is the first
 Boon which I e'er ask'd Assyria's king.

Sard. That's true; and, wer't my kingdom, must be granted.

Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence!
Thou hear'st me.

Pania. And obey.

[Exit PANIA.]

Sard. I marvel at thee.
What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me?

Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the prince, thy kinsman, to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.

Sard. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou?

Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee*.

Sard. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou?

Sard. I shall be king, as heretofore.

Myr. Where?

Sard. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am—may make me nothing—
But either that or nothing must I be:
I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee.

Sard. And who will do so now?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none?

Sard. Suspect!—that 's a spy's office. Oh! we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there!—Ye slaves, deck
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel:
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we 'll wear our fetters jocundly;
If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer dwelling on its beauteous border,
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho! within there!

[Exit SARDANAPALUS.]

Myr. Why do I love this man? My country's daughters
Love none but heroes. But I have no country!
The slave hath lost all, save her bonds. I love him;
And that 's the heaviest link of the long chain—
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so:
The hour is coming when he 'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabb'd him on his throne when highest
Would have been noble in my country's creed:
I was not made for either. Could I save him,
I should not love *him* better, but myself;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen

In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger :
 And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving
 That he is hated of his own barbarians,
 The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
 Could I but wake a single thought like those
 Which even the Phrygians felt, when battling long
 'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
 He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and triumph.
 He loves me, and I love him ; the slave loves
 Her master, and would free him from his vices.
 If not, I have a means of freedom still,
 And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
 May show him how alone a king can leave
 His throne. I must not lose him from my sight. [Exit.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE PORTAL OF THE SAME HALL OF THE PALACE.

BELESES (*solus*).

The sun goes down ; methinks he sets more slowly,
 Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.
 How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,
 Like the blood he predicts ! If not in vain,
 Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,
 I have outwatch'd ye, reading ray by ray
 The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble
 For what he brings the nations, 't is the furthest
 Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm !
 An earthquake should announce so great a fall—
 A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,
 To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon
 Its everlasting page the end of what
 Seem'd everlasting ; but oh ! thou true sun !
 The burning oracle of all that live,
 As fountain of all life, and symbol of
 Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit
 Thy lore unto calamity ? Why not
 Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine
 All-glorious burst from ocean ? Why not dart
 A beam of hope athwart the future's years,
 As of wrath to its days ! Hear me ! oh ! hear me !
 I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant—

I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,
 And bow'd my head beneath thy mid-day beams,
 When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch'd
 For thee, and after thee, and pray'd to thee,
 And sacrificed to thee, and read, and fear'd thee,
 And ask'd of thee, and thou hast answer'd—but
 Only to thus much: while I speak, he sinks—
 Is gone—and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
 To the delighted west, which revels in
 Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
 Death, so it be but glorious? 'T is a sunset:
 And mortals may be happy to resemble
 The gods but in decay.

Enter ARBACES, by an inner door.

Arb. Beleses, why
 So wrapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand
 Gazing to trace thy disappearing god
 Into some realm of undiscover'd day?
 Our business is with night—'t is come.

Bel. But not
 Gone.

Arb. Let it roll on—we are ready.

Bel. Yes.

Would it were over!

Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
 To whom the very stars shine victory?

Bel. I do not doubt of victory—but the victor.

Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Meantime,
 I have prepared as many glittering spears
 As will out-sparkle our allies—your planets.
 There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
 That less than woman, is even now upon
 The waters with his female mates. The order
 Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
 The first cup which he drains will be the last
 Quaff'd by the line of Nimrod.

Bel. 'T was a brave one.

Arb. And is a weak one—'t is worn out—we 'll mend it.

Bel. Art sure of that?

Arb. Its founder was a hunter—
 I am a soldier—what is there to fear?

Bel. The soldier.

Arb. And the priest, it may be; but
 If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
 Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
 Why spur me to this enterprise? your own

No less than mine?

Bel. Look to the sky!

Arb. I look.

Bel. What seest thou?

Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.

Bel. And midst them mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers,
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.

Arb. Well?

Bel. 'T is thy natal ruler—thy birth planet.

Arb. (*touching his scabbard*). My star is in this scabbard: when it
shines,

It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think
Of what is to be done to justify
Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer,
They shall have temples—ay, and priests—and thou
Shalt be the pontiff of—what gods thou wilt;
For I observe that they are ever just,
And own the bravest for the most devout.

Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave—thou hast not
Seen me turn back from battle.

Arb. No; I own thee

As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
As skilful in Chaldea's worship; now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?

Bel. Why not both?

Arb. The better;

And yet it almost shames me, we shall have
So little to effect. This woman's warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have pluck'd
A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,
That were heroic or to win or fall;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be——

Bel. Do not deem it:

He has that in him which may make you strife yet;
And, were he all you think, his guards are hardy,
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.

Arb. They 'll not resist.

Bel. Why not? they are soldiers.

Arb. True,

And therefore need a soldier to command them.

Bel. That Salemenes is.

Arb. But not their king.

Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels?

Bel. But
Not from the council—there he is ever constant.

Arb. And ever thwarted; what would you have more
To make a rebel out of? A fool reigning,
His blood dishonour'd, and himself disdain'd:
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.

Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so: this I doubt of.

Arb. What if we sound him?

Bel. Yes—if the time served.

Enter BALEA.

Balea. Satraps! the king commands your presence at
The feast to-night.

Bel. To hear is to obey.
In the pavilion?

Balea. No; here in the palace.

Arb. How! in the palace? it was not thus order'd.

Balea. It is so order'd now.

Arb. And why?

Balea. I know not.
May I retire?

Arb. Stay.

Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush! let him go his way.
(*Alternatively to Balea*) Yes, Balea, thank the monarch, kiss the hem
Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour—was 't midnight?

Balea. It was; the place, the Hall of Nimrod. Lords,
I humble me before you and depart. [*Exit BALEA.*]

Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place;
There is some mystery: wherefore should he change it?

Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful—
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault.—Why dost thou muse?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion—it was ever
His summer dotage.

Bel. And he loved his queen—
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides—
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.

Arb. Still—I like it not.

If he has changed—why so must we : the attack
Were easy in the isolated bower,
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers ;
But in the Hall of Nimrod—

Bel. Is it so ?

Methought the haughty soldier fear'd to mount
A throne too easily—does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on ?

Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake—and gaily play'd for :
But here is more upon the die—a kingdom.

Bel. I have foretold already—thou wilt win it :
Then on, and prosper.

Arb. Now, were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obey'd—I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's here ?

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps !

Bel. My prince !

Sal. Well met—I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.

Arb. Wherefore so ?

Sal. 'T is not the hour.

Arb. The hour—what hour ?

Sal. Of midnight.

Bel. Midnight, my lord ?

Sal. What, are you not invited ?

Bel. Oh ! yes—we had forgotten.

Sal. Is it usual
Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation ?

Arb. Why—we but now received it.

Sal. Then why here ?

Arb. On duty.

Sal. On what duty ?

Bel. On the state's.
We have the privilege to approach the presence,
But found the monarch absent.

Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.

Arb. May we crave its purport ?

Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards ! within there !

Enter Guards.

Sal. (continuing).
Your swords.

Satraps,

Bel. (delivering his). My lord, behold my scimitar.

Arb. (drawing his sword). Take mine.

Sal. (advancing). I will.

Arb. But in your heart the blade—
The hilt quits not this hand.

Sal. (drawing). How! dost thou brave me?
'T is well—this saves a trial and false mercy.
Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

Arb. Soldiers! Ay—
Alone you dare not.

Sal. Alone! foolish slave—
What is there in thee that a prince should shrink from
Of open force? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its venom—
The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.

Bel. (interposing). Arbaces! are you mad? Have I not rendered
My sword? Then trust, like me, our sovereign's justice.

Arb. No—I will sooner trust the stars thou prat'st of,
And this slight arm, and die a king at least
Of my own breath and body—so far that
None else shall chain them.

Sal. (to the Guards). You hear him, and me.
Take him not—kill.

[*The Guards attack ARBACES, who defends himself valiantly and dexterously till they waver.*

Sal. Is it even so? and must
I do the hangman's office? Recreants! see
How you should fell a traitor.

[*SALEMENES attacks ARBACES.*

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Train.

Sard. Hold your hands—
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken?
My sword! Oh fool, I wear no sword! here, fellow, [*To a Guard.*
Give me thy weapon.

[*SARDANAPALUS snatches a sword from one of the soldiers, and makes between the combatants—they separate.*

Sard. In my very palace!
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers?

Bel. Sir, your justice.

Sal. Or—
Your weakness.
Sard. (*raising the sword*). How?
Sal. Strike! so the blow 's repeated
Upon yon traitor—whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture—I 'm content.
Sard. What—him!
Who dares assail Arbaces?
Sal. I!
Sard. Indeed!
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant?
Sal. (*showing the signet*). Thine.
Arb. (*confused*). The king's!
Sal. Yes! and let the king confirm it.
Sard. I parted not from this for such a purpose.
Sal. You parted with it for your safety—I
Employ'd it for the best. Pronounce in person.
Here I am but your slave—a moment past
I was your representative.
Sard. Then sheathe
Your swords.

[ARBACES and SALEMENES return their swords to the scabbards.]

Sal. Mine 's sheathed; I pray you sheathe *not* yours;
'T is the sole sceptre left you now with safety.

Sard. A heavy one; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.
(*To a Guard*). Here, fellow, take thy weapon back. Well, sirs,
What doth this mean?

Bel. The prince must answer that.

Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.

Sard. Treason—Arbaces! treachery and Beleses!
That were an union I will not believe.

Bel. Where is the proof?

Sal. I 'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow traitor's sword.

Arb. (*to Sal.*) A sword which hath been drawn as oft as thine
Against his foes.

Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.

Sard. That is not possible: he dared not; no—
No—I 'll not hear of such things. These vain bickerings
Are spawn'd in courts by base intrigues and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.

Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,

And I will answer all.

Sard. Why, if I thought so—
But no, it cannot be ; the Mede Arbaces—
The trusty, rough, true soldier—the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations—No,
I 'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.

Sal. (*delivering back the signet*). Monarch, take back your signet.

Sard. No, retain it ;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire,
I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sard. So I should :
He never ask'd it.

Sal. Doubt not, he will have it
Without that hollow semblance of respect.

Bel. I know not what has prejudiced the prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest and faithless soldier ! thou
Unitest in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin
Is, at the least, a bold one, and not temper'd
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,
My liege—the son of Belus ! he blasphemes
The worship of the land which bows the knee
Before your fathers.

Sard. Oh ! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men ; feeling that I
Am mortal, and believing that the race
From whence I sprung are—what I see them—ashes.

Bel. King ! do not deem so : they are with the stars
And—

Sard. You shall join them there ere they will rise,
If you preach further.—Why, *this* is rank treason.

Sal. My lord !

Sard. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols ! Let him be released—
Give him his sword.

Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,

I pray ye, pause.

Sard. Yes, and be sermonized,
And dinn'd, and deafen'd with dead men and Baal,
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.

Bel. Monarch! respect them.

Sard. Oh! for that—I love them;
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes;
I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks: but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds or the lights of worlds, I know nor care not:
There's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore:
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it or below it—nothing.
I see their brilliancy, and feel their beauty—
When they shine on my grave, I shall know neither.

Bel. For neither, sire, say better.

Sard. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that knowledge.
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry—not loving either.

Sal. (aside). His lusts have made him mad. Then I must save him,
Spite of himself.

Sard. Please you to hear me, Satraps!
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier, and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior: let us part
In peace—I'll not say pardon—which must be
Earn'd by the guilty; this I'll not pronounce ye,
Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not—for that I am soft, not fearful—
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attained gore from the high gates
Of this our palace into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crown'd to reign o'er—let that pass.
As I have said, I will not deem ye guilty,
Nor doom ye guiltless. Albeit, better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you;

And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
 And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
 Two men, who, whatso'er they now are, were
 Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.

Arb. Sire, this clemency—

Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself; and, although
 innocent,

We thank—

Sard. Priest! keep your thanksgivings for Belus;
 His offspring needs none.

Bel. But, being innocent—

Sard. Be silent—Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal,
 Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.

Bel. So we should be, were justice always done
 By earthly power omnipotent; but innocence
 Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.

Sard. That 's a good sentence for a homily,
 Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
 To plead thy sovereign's cause before his people.

Bel. I trust there is no cause.

Sard. No cause, perhaps;
 But many causers:—if ye meet with such
 In the exercise of your inquisitive function
 On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
 In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
 Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
 That there are worse things betwixt earth and heaven
 Than him who ruleth many and slays none;
 And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
 Enough to spare even those who would not spare him,
 Were they once masters—but that 's doubtful. Satraps!
 Your swords and persons are at liberty
 To use them as ye will—but from this hour
 I have no call for either. Salemenes!
 Follow me.

[*Exeunt SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES, and the Train, &c., leaving*
ARBACES and BELESES.

Arb. Beleses!

Bel. Now, what think you?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What! thus suspected—with the sword slung o'er us
 But by a single hair, and that still wavering
 To be blown down by his imperious breath,
 Which spared us—why, I know not.

Bel. Seek not why;
 But let us profit by the interval.
 The hour is still our own—our power the same—

The night the same we destined. He hath changed
Nothing, except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.

Arb. And yet—

Bel. What, doubting still?

Arb. He spared our lives—nay more,
Saved them from Salemenes.

Bel. And how long
Will he so spare? till the first drunken minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly;
Gave royally what we had forfeited
Basely—

Bel. Say, bravely.

Arb. Somewhat of both, perhaps.
But it has touch'd me, and, whate'er betide,
I will no further on.

Bel. And lose the world!

Arb. Lose any thing, except my own esteem.

Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such
A king of distaffs!

Arb. But no less we owe them;
And I should blush far more to take the grantor's!

Bel. Thou mayst endure whate'er thou wilt; the stars
Have written otherwise.

Arb. Though they came down,
And marshall'd me the way in all their brightness,
I would not follow.

Bel. This is weakness—worse
Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead,
And waking in the dark.—Go to—go to.

Arb. Methought he look'd like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.

Bel. I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him.
What then? he is the nobler foe.

Arb. But we
The meaner—Would he had not spared us!

Bel. So—
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily?

Arb. No—but it had been better to have died,
Than live ungrateful.

Bel. Oh, the souls of some men!
Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery—and, behold, upon the sudden

Because, for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,
'Twixt thee and Saïmenes, thou art turn'd
Into—what shall I say?—Sardanapalus!
I know no name more ignominious.

Arb.

But

An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly—as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us—
Semiramis herself would not have done it.

Bel. No—the queen liked no sharers of the kingdom,
Not even a husband.

Arb.

I must serve him truly—

Bel. And humbly?

Arb.

No, sir, proudly—being honest.

I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven;
And if not quite so haughty, yet more lofty.
You may do your own deeming—you have codes,
And mysteries, and corollaries of
Right and wrong, which I lack for my direction,
And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.
And now you know me.

Bel.

Have you finish'd?

Arb.

Yes—

With you.

Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well
As quit me?

Arb.

That's a sacerdotal thought,
And not a soldier's.

Bel.

Be it what you will—
Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.

Arb.

No—

There is more peril in your subtle spirit
Than in a phalanx.

Bel.

If it must be so—

I'll on alone.

Arb.

Alone!

Bel.

Thrones hold but one.

Arb. But this is fill'd.

Bel.

With worse than vacancy—

A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces:
I have still aided, cherish'd, loved, and urged you;
Was willing even to serve you, in the hope
To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself
Seem'd to consent, and all events were friendly,
Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk
Into a shallow softness; but now, rather

Than see my country languish, I will be
Her saviour, or the victim of her tyrant,
Or one or both, for sometimes both are one ;
And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.

Arb. Your servant?

Bel. Why not? better than be slave,
The pardon'd slave of *she* Sardanapalus.

Enter PANIA.

Pania. My lords, I bear an order from the king.

Arb. It is obey'd ere spoken.

Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let 's hear it.

Pania. Forthwith, on this very night,
Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.

Bel. With our troops?

Pania. My order is unto the satraps and
Their household train.

Arb. But—

Bel. It must be obey'd ;
Say, we depart.

Pania. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.

Bel. (*aside*). Ay!

Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.

Pania. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.

[*Exit PANIA.*

Bel. Now then obey!

Arb. Doubtless.

Bel. Yes, to the gates
That grate the palace, which is now our prison :
No farther.

Arb. Thou hast harp'd the truth indeed :
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.

Bel. Graves!

Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.

Bel. It shall have work enough ;
Let me hope better than thou augurest :
At present let us hence as best we may.
Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?

Arb. Why, what other

Interpretation should it bear? it is
 The very policy of orient monarchs—
 Pardon and poison—favours and a sword—
 A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.
 How many satraps in his father's time—
 For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless—

Bel. But *will* not, *can* not be so now.

Arb. I doubt it.

How many satraps have I seen set out
 In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
 Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
 But they all sicken'd by the way, it was
 So long and heavy.

Bel. Let us but regain
 The free air of the city, and we 'll shorten
 The journey.

Arb. 'T will be shorten'd at the gates,
 It may be.

Bel. No: they hardly will risk that.
 They mean us to die privately, but not
 Within the palace or the city walls,
 Where we are known and may have partisans:
 If they had meant to slay us here, we were
 No longer with the living. Let us hence.

Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my life—

Bel. Fool! hence—what else should despotism alarm'd
 Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and march.

Arb. Towards our provinces?

Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
 There 's time, there 's heart and hope, and power, and means,
 Which their half measures leave us in full scope.—
 Away!

Arb. And I, even yet repenting, must
 Relapse to guilt!

Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
 Sole bulwark of all right. Away! I say:
 Let 's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
 And the walls have a scent of night-shade—hence!
 Let us not leave them time for further council;
 Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
 Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
 The worthy Pania, from anticipating
 The orders of some parasangs from hence:
 Nay, there 's no other choice but—hence, I say.

[*Exit with ARBACES, who follows reluctantly.*]

Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES.

Sard. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy;
We are now secure by these men's exile.

Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.

Sard. Why, what wouldst have me do?

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sard. Revoke my pardon?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your temples.

Sard. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sard. We are so.
What danger can they work upon the frontier?

Sal. They are not there yet—never should they be so,
Were I well listen'd to.

Sard. Nay, I have listen'd
Impartially to thee—why not to them?

Sal. You may know that hereafter; as it is,
I take my leave, to order forth the guard.

Sard. And you will join us at the banquet?

Sal. Sire,
Dispense with me—I am no wassailer:
Command me in all service save the bacchant's.

Sard. Nay, but 't is fit to revel now and then.

Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who revel
Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?

Sard. Yes—stay a moment, my good Salemenes,

My brother, my best subject, better prince

Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,

And I—I know not what, and care not; but

Think not I am insensible to all

Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough, yet kind,

Though oft-reproving, sufferance of my follies.

If I have spared these men against thy counsel,

That is, their lives—it is not that I doubt

The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will not

Cavil about their lives—so let them mend them.

Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,

Which their death had not left me.

Sal. Thus you run

The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors—

A moment's pang now changed for years of crime.

Still let them be made quiet.

Sard. Tempt me not;

My word is past.

Sal. But it may be recall'd:

Sard. 'T is royal.

Sal. And should therefore be decisive.

This half indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke—a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.

Sard. And who persuaded me
After I had repeal'd them, or at least
Only dismiss'd them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?

Sal. True; that I had forgotten: that is, sire,
If they e'er reach'd their satrapies—why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.

Sard. And if
They do not reach them—look to it!—in safety,
In safety, mark me—and security—
Look to thine own.

Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.

Sard. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.

Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign.

[Exit SALEMENES.]

Sard. (solus). That man is of a temper too severe:
Hard, but as lofty as the rock, and free
From all the taints of common earth—while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers;
But as our mould is, must the produce be.
If I have err'd this time, 't is on the side
Where error sits most lightly on that sense,
I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me oftentimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To court its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me,
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity—
Albeit his marble face majestic
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.
Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous—
And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,

In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show
 In forked flashes a commanding tempest.
 Will you then quit the palace ?

Sard. Tempest, say'st thou ?

Myr. Ay, my good lord.

Sard. For my own part, I should be
 Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
 And watch the warring elements ; but this
 Would little suit the silken garments and
 Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
 Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds ?

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
 As auguries of Jove.

Sard. Jove—ay, your Baal—
 Ours also has a property in thunder,
 And ever and anon some falling bolt
 Proves his divinity, and yet sometimes
 Strikes his own altars.

Myr. That were a dread omen.

Sard. Yes—for the priests. Well, we will not go forth
 Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
 Our feast within.

Myr. Now, Jove be praised ! that he
 Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The gods
 Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
 And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
 To shield thee from them.

Sard. Child, if there be peril,
 Methinks it is the same within these walls
 As on the river's brink.

Myr. Not so, these walls
 Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason has
 To penetrate through many a winding way,
 And massy portal ; but in the pavilion
 There is no bulwark.

Sard. No, nor in the palace,
 Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
 Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
 Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be :
 Even as the arrow finds the airy king,
 The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm :
 The men, or innocent or guilty, are
 Banish'd, and far upon their way.

Myr. They live, then ?

Sard. So sanguinary ? *Thou !*

Myr. I would not shrink
 From just infliction of due punishment

On those who seek your life : were 't otherwise,
I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.

Sard. This is strange ;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.

Myr. 'T is a Greek virtue.

Sard. But not a kingly one—I 'll none on 't ; or,
If ever I indulge in 't, it shall be
With kings—my equals.

Myr. These men sought to be so,

Sard. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear——

Myr. For you.

Sard. No matter—still 't is fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women.

Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my love,
Nor of my attributes ; I have shared your splendour,
And will partake your fortunes. You may live
To find one slave more true than subject myriads ;
But this the gods avert ! I am content
To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
Rather than prove it to you in your griefs,
Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

Sard. Griefs cannot come where perfect love exists,
Except to heighten it, and vanish from
That which it could not scare away. Let 's in—
The hour approaches, and we must prepare
To meet the invited guests who grace our feast.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE HALL OF THE PALACE ILLUMINATED.—SARDANAPALUS AND HIS GUESTS AT TABLE.—A STORM WITHOUT, AND THUNDER OCCASIONALLY HEARD DURING THE BANQUET.

Sard. Fill full! Why this is as it should be; here
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.

Zames. Nor elsewhere—where the king is, pleasure sparkles.

Sard. Is not this better now than Nimrod's huntings,
Or my wild grandam's chase in search of kingdoms
She could not keep when conquer'd?

Altada. Mighty though
They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reach'd
The acme of Sardanapalus, who
Has placed his joy in peace—the sole true glory.

Sard. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.

Zames. No;
All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.

Sard. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.

Zames. Traitors they
Who dare to say so!—'T is impossible.
What cause?

Sard. What cause? true,—fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.

All. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the king—the monarch, say I!
The god Sardanapalus!

[ZAMES and the Guests kneel, and exclaim—

Mightier than
His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!

[It thunders as they kneel, some start up in confusion.

Zames. Why do ye rise, my friends? In that strong peal

His father-gods consented.

Myr. Menaced, rather.
King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?

Sard. Impiety!—nay, if the sires who reign'd
Before me can be gods, I'll not disgrace
Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends,
Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there :
I seek but to be loved, not worshipp'd.

Alt. Both—
Both you must ever be by all true subjects.

Sard. Methinks the thunders still increase : it is
An awful night.

Myr. Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers.

Sard. That 's true, my Myrrha ; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I'd do it.

Myr. Thou 'rt no god, then, not to be
Able to work a will so good and general,
As thy wish would imply.

Sard. And your gods, then,
Who can, and do not ?

Myr. Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.

Sard. True, they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me :
Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air-worshippers—that is, when it is angry,
And pelting as even now ?

Myr. The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.

Sard. Yes, when the sun shines.

Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were
Unroof'd and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the king lay low ?

Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well ;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's,
And homage is their pride.

Sard. Nay, pardon, guests,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.

Alt. Pardon ! sire :
We honour her of all things next to thee.
Hark ! what was that ?

Zames. That ! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

Alt. It sounded like the clash of—hark again !

Zames. The big rain pattering on the roof.

Sard.

No more.

Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order?
Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st,
Who in thy country threw——

*Enter PANIA, with his sword and garments bloody, and disordered.
The Guests rise in confusion.*

Pania (to the Guards). Look to the portals;
And with your best speed to the wall without.
Your arms! To arms! The king's in danger. Monarch!
Excuse this haste,—'t is faith.

Sard.

Speak on.

Pania.

It is,

As Salemenes fear'd: the faithless satraps——

Sard. You are wounded—give some wine. Take breath, good Pania.

Pania. 'Tis nothing—a mere flesh wound. I am worn
More with my speed to warn my sovereign,
Than hurt in his defence.

Myr.

Well, sir, the rebels?

Pania. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reach'd
Their stations in the city, they refused
To march; and on my attempt to use the power
Which I was delegated with, they call'd
Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.

Myr. All!

Pania. Too many.

Sard.

Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears the truth.

Pania.

My own slight guard

Were faithful—and what 's left of it is still so.

Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?

Pania.

No—

The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,
Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force, and save the king.
(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to——

Myr.

'T is no time for hesitation.

Pania. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.

Sard. What, ho!
My armour there.

Myr. And wilt thou?

Sard. Will I not?
Ho, there!—But seek not for the buckler: 't is
Too heavy:—a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?

Pania. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall, the fiercest conflict rages.

Sard. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out—There is space enough
Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.

[*Exit Sfero for the armour.*]

Myr. How I do love thee!

Sard. I ne'er doubted it.

Myr. But now I know thee.

Sard. (*to his Attendant*). Bring down my spear, too—
Where 's Salemenes?

Pania. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.

Sard. Then hasten to him—Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?

Pania. 'T was
When I late left him, and I have no fear:
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx form'd.

Sard. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own—and say
I come.

Pania. There 's victory in the very word.

[*Exit PANIA.*]

Sard. Altada—Zames—forth and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armoury.
See that the women are bestow'd in safety
In the remote apartments: let a guard
Be set before them, with strict charge to quit
The post but with their lives—command it, Zames.
Altada, arm yourself, and return here;
Your post is near our person.

[*Exeunt ZAMES, ALTADA, and all, save MYRRHA.*]

Enter Sfero and others, with the King's arms, &c.

Sfero. King! your armour.

Sard. (*arming himself*). Give me the cuirass—so: my baldric; now
My sword: I had forgot the helm, where is it?
That 's well—no, 't is too heavy: you mistake, too—

It was not this I meant, but that which bears
A diadem around it.

Sfero. Sire, I deem'd
That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath—and, trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich.

Sard. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a rebel? Fellow!
Your part is to obey: return, and—no—
It is too late—I will go forth without it.

Sfero. At least wear this.

Sard. Wear Caucasus! why, 't is
A mountain on my temples.

Sfero. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle.
All men will recognize you—for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her brightness.

Sard. I go forth to be recognized, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now—my spear! I'm arm'd.

[*In going, stops short, and turns to SFERO.*]

Sfero—I had forgotten—bring the mirror.⁴

Sfero. The mirror, sire?

Sard. Yes, sir, of polish'd brass,
Brought from the spoils of India—but be speedy.

[*Exit SFERO.*]

Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?

Myr. Because my place is here.

Sard. And when I am gone—

Myr. I follow.

Sard. You! to battle?

Myr. If it were so,
'T were not the first Greek girl had trod the path.

I will await here your *return*.

Sard. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail; and, if it should be so,
And I return not—

Myr. Still, we meet again.

Sard. How?

Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last—
In Hades! if there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx; and if there be not,
In ashes.

Sard. Darest thou so much?

Myr. I dare all things,
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty: forth, and do your bravest.

Re-enter SFERO with the mirror.

Sard. (looking at himself). This cuirass fits me well, the baldric better,
And the helm not at all. Methinks, I seem
[Flings away the helmet, after trying it again.
Passing well in these toys ; and now to prove them.
Altada ! Where 's Altada ?

Sfero. Waiting, sire,
Without : he has your shield in readiness.

Sard. True : I forgot he is my shield-bearer
By right of blood, derived from age to age.
Myrrha, embrace me ; yet once more—once more—
Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory
Shall be to make me worthier of your love.

Myr. Go forth, and conquer !

[Exit SARDANAPALUS and SFERO.

Now I am alone.

All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return. Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish ! If he vanquish not, I perish ;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is a king ; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns
To yield him no more of it than a grave ;
And yet I love him more. Oh ! mighty Jove !
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympus : yes, I love him
Now, now, far more than—Hark—to the war-shout !
Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,

[She draws forth a small vial.

This cunning Colchian poison, which my father
Learn'd to compound on Euxine shores, and taught me
How to preserve, shall free me ! It had freed me
Long ere this hour, but that I loved, until
I half forgot I was a slave :—where all
Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,
So they are served in turn by something lower
In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less
Are chains. Again that shout ! and now the clash
Of arms—and now—and now—

Enter ALTADA.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho!

Myr. He is not here, what wouldst thou with him? How Goes on the conflict?

Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the king?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero, And bring him a new spear and his own helmet; He fights till now bare-headed, and by far Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face, And the foe too; and in the moon's broad light, His silk tiara and his flowing hair Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features, And the broad fillet which crowns both.

Myr. Ye gods, Who fulmine o'er my fathers' land, protect him! Were you sent by the king?

Alt. By Salemenes, Who sent me privily upon this charge, Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign. The king! the king fights as he revels! ho! What, Sfero! I will seek the armoury, He must be there.

[*Exit* ALTADA.]

Myr. 'T is no dishonour—no— 'T is no dishonour to have loved this man. I almost wish now, what I never wish'd Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's She-garb, and wielding her vile distaff, surely He, who springs up a Hercules at once, Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood, And rushes from the banquet to the battle, As though it were a bed of love, deserves That a Greek girl should be his paramour, And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb His monument. How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer. Lost, Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed To watch before the apartment of the women. [*Exit* OFFICER.]

Myr. (sola). He's gone; and told no more than that all's lost! What need have I to know more? In those words,

Those little words, a kingdom and a king,
 A line of thirteen ages, and the lives
 Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
 With life, are merged : and I, too, with the great,
 Like a small bubble breaking with the wave
 Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least
 My fate is in my keeping : no proud victor
 Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pania. Away with me,
 Myrrha, without delay ; we must not lose
 A moment—all that 's left us now.

Myr. The king ?

Pania. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond
 The river, by a secret passage.

Myr. Then
 He lives——

Pania. And charged me to secure your life,
 And beg you to live on for his sake, till
 He can rejoin you.

Myr. Will he then give way ?

Pania. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
 Despair can do ; and, step by step, disputes
 The very palace.

Myr. They are here, then :—ay,
 Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
 Never profaned by rebel echoes till
 This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line !
 Farewell to all of Nimrod ! Even the name
 Is now no more.

Pania. Away with me—away !

Myr. No ; I 'll die here !—Away, and tell your king
 I loved him to the last.

*Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES, with soldiers. PANIA quits
 MYRRHA, and ranges himself with them.*

Sard. Since it is thus,
 We 'll die where we were born—in our own halls.
 Serry your ranks—stand firm. I have dispatch'd
 A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
 All fresh and faithful ; they 'll be here anon.
 All is not over.—Pania, look to Myrrha.

[*PANIA returns towards MYRRHA.*]

Sal. We have breathing time : yet one more charge, my friends—
 One for Assyria !

Sard. Rather say, for Bactria !

My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we 'll hold together
This realm as province.

Sal. Hark! they come—they come

Enter BELESES and ARBACES with the rebels.

Arb. Set on! we have them in the toil. Charge! charge!

Bel. On! on!—Heaven fights for us, and with us—On!

[*They charge the King and SALEMENES with their troops, who defend themselves till the arrival of ZAMES with the guard before mentioned. The rebels are then driven off, and pursued by SALEMENES, &c. As the King is going to join the pursuit, BELESES crosses him.*]

Bel. Ho! tyrant—I will end this war.

Sard. Even so,

My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject:—yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.

Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sard. No, thine.—I 've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crush'd.

Bel. But not by thee.

[*They fight: BELESES is wounded and disarmed.*]

Sard. (*raising his sword to dispatch him, exclaims—*)

Now call upon thy planets; will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?

[*A party of rebels enter and rescue BELESES. They assail the King, who, in turn, is rescued by a party of his soldiers, who drive the rebels off.*]

The villain was a prophet, after all.

Upon them—ho! there—victory is ours. [*Exit in pursuit.*]

Myr. (*to Pania*). Pursue! Why stand'st thou here, and leavest the ranks

Of fellow-soldiers conquering without thee?

Pania. The king's command was not to quit thee.

Myr. Me!

Think not of me—a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard;
I need no guard: what, with a world at stake,
Keep watch upon a woman? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed! Nay, then, I will go forth,
A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,

And bid thee guard me *there*—where thou shouldst shield
Thy sovereign. [Exit MYRRHA.]

Pania. Yet stay, damsel! She is gone.
If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her
Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too; and can I do less than him,
Who never flush'd a scimitar till now?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch. [Exit PANIA.]

Enter ALTADA and SFERO by an opposite door.

All. Myrrha!
What, gone? yet she was here when the fight raged,
And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them?

Sfero. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled:
They probably are but retired to make
Their way back to the harem.

All. If the king
Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doom'd
To worse than captive rebels.

Sfero. Let us trace them;
She cannot be fled far; and, found, she makes
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recover'd kingdom.

All. Baal himself
Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than
His silken son to save it: he defies
All augury of foes or friends; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man's inscrutable.

Sfero. Not more than others.
All are the sons of circumstance: away—
Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortured for his infatuation, and
Condemn'd without a crime. [Exeunt.]

Enter SALEMENES and soldiers, &c.

Sal. The triumph is
Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have open'd regular access
To the troops station'd on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where

Is the chief victor? where 's the king?

Enter SARDANAPALUS, cum suis, &c., and MYRRHA.

Sard. Here, brother.

Sal. Unhurt, I hope.

Sard. Not quite; but let it pass.
We 've clear'd the palace——

Sal. And, I trust, the city.
Our numbers gather; and I have order'd onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,
All fresh and fiery, to be pour'd upon them
In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.

Sard. It is already; or at least they march'd
Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent; give me a seat.

Sal. There stands the throne, sire.

Sard. 'T is no place to rest on,
For mind or body: let me have a couch,

[*They place a seat.*]

A peasant's stool—I care not what. So—now
I breathe more freely.

Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.

Sard. And the most tiresome. Where 's my cupbearer?
Bring me some water.

Sal. (smiling). 'T is the first time he
Ever had such an order: even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.

Sard. Blood, doubtless.
But there 's enough of that shed; as for wine,
I have learn'd to-night the price of the pure element:
Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renew'd,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where 's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet?

One of the guards. Slain, sire!
An arrow pierced his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.

Sard. Slain! unrewarded!
And slain to serve my thirst: that 's hard, poor slave!
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold: all the gold of earth could ne'er repay
The pleasure of that draught; for I was parch'd
As I am now.

[*They bring water—he drinks.*]

I live again—from henceforth

The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, sire,
Which girds your arm?

Sard. A scratch from brave Beleses.

Myr. Oh! he is wounded!

Sard. Not too much of that;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with——

Sard. The fillet of my diadem: the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me
Save an incumbrance.

Myr. (to the Attendants). Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful: pray, retire;
I will unbind your wound, and tend it.

Sard. Do so.

For now it throbs sufficiently: but what
Know'st thou of wounds? yet wherefore do I ask?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frighten'd antelopes.

Sard. No: like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging
(And femininely meaneth furiously,
Because all passions in excess are female)
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers
In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed!

Sard. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek;
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through her long hair,
As it stream'd o'er her; her blue veins, that rose
Along her most transparent brow; her nostril,
Dilated from its symmetry; her lips
Apart; her voice, that clove through all the din,
As a lute's pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
Jarr'd but not drown'd by the loud brattling; her
Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness,
Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
From a dead soldier's grasp: all these things made
Her seem unto the troops a prophetess
Of victory, or Victory herself,
Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. (*aside*). This is too much ;
Again the love-fit 's on him, and all 's lost,
Unless we turn his thoughts.

(*Aloud*). But, pray thee, sire,
Think of your wound—you said even now 't was painful.

Sard. That 's true, too ; but I must not think of it.

Sal. I have look'd to all things needful, and will now
Receive reports of progress made in such
Orders as I had given, and then return
To hear your further pleasure.

Sard. Be it so.

Sal. (*in retiring*). Myrrha !

Myr. Prince.

Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
Which, were he not my 'sister's lord——But now
I have no time : thou lov'st the king ?

Myr. I love
Sardanapalus.

Sal. But wouldst have him king still ?

Myr. I would not have him less than what he should be.

Sal. Well, then, to have him king, and yours, and all
He should, or should not be ; to have him *live*,
Let him not sink back into luxury.
You have more power upon his spirit than
Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
Raging without : look well that he relapse not.

Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes
To urge me on to this ; I will not fail.
All that a woman's weakness can——

Sal. Is power
Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his ;
Exert it wisely. [*Exit SALEMENES.*]

Sard. Myrrha ! what, at whispers
With my stern brother ? I shall soon be jealous.

Myr. (*smiling*). You have cause, sire ; for on the earth there
breathes not

A man more worthy of a woman's love—
A soldier's trust—a subject's reverence—
A king's esteem—the whole world's admiration .

Sard. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
That throws me into shade : yet you speak truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your wound look'd to.
Pray lean on me.

Sard. Yes, love ! but not from pain.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—SARDANAPALUS DISCOVERED SLEEPING UPON A COUCH, AND OCCASIONALLY DISTURBED IN HIS SLUMBERS, WITH MYRRHA WATCHING.

Myr. (sola, gazing). I have stolen upon his rest, if rest it be,
Which thus convulses slumber : shall I wake him ?
No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of quiet !
Whose reign is o'er seal'd eyelids and soft dreams,
Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathom'd,
Look like thy brother, Death—so still—so stirless—
For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
Are happiest of all within the realm
Of thy stern, silent, and unawakening twin.
Again he moves—again the play of pain
Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm
Beneath the mountain shadow ; or the blast
Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
I must awake him—yet not yet : who knows
From what I rouse him ? It seems pain ; but if
I quicken him to heavier pain ? The fever
Of this tumultuous night ; the grief, too, of
His wound, though slight, may cause all this, and shake
Me more to see than him to suffer. No ;
Let nature use her own maternal means,—
And I await to second, not disturb her.

Sard. (awakening). Not so—although ye multiplied the stars,
And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you ! I would not so purchase
The empire of eternity.—Hence—hence—
Old hunter of the earliest brutes ! and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes,
Once bloody mortals—and now bloodier idols,
If your priests lie not ! And thou, ghastly beldame !
Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on
The carcasses of Inde—away ! away !
Where am I ? Where the spectres ? Where—No—that
Is no false phantom ; I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living. Myrrha !

Myr. Alas ! thou art pale, and on thy brow the drops
Gather like night-dew. My beloved, hush—

Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world,
And thou art loved of this. Be of good cheer;
All will go well.

Sard. Thy hand—so—'t is thy hand;
'T is flesh; grasp—clasp—yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be—thine.

Sard. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha! I have been where we shall be.

Myr. My lord!

Sard. I've been i' the grave—where worms are lords,
And kings are—But I did not deem it so;
I thought 't was nothing.

Myr. So it is; except
Unto the timid, who anticipate
That which may never be.

Sard. Oh, Myrrha! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not death disclose?

Myr. I know no evil death can show, which life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore, where mind survives, 't will be as mind,
All unincorporate: or if there flits
A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay,
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and heaven,
And fetters us to earth—at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear death.

Sard. I fear it not; but I have felt—have seen—
A legion of the dead.

Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed: what hast thou seen?
Speak it, 't will lighten thy dimm'd mind.

Sard. Methought—

Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired—in pain—exhausted; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit: seek
Rather to sleep again.

Sard. Not now—I would not
Dream; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt:—and canst thou bear to hear it?

Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you, in semblance
Or full reality.

Sard. And this look'd real,
I tell you: after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight—for then they fled.

Myr. Say on.

Sard. I saw, that is, I dream'd myself
Here—here—even where we are, guests as we were,
Myself a host that deem'd himself but guest,
Willing to equal all in social freedom ;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead
Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face—I could not recognize it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where ;
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted ; his long locks curl'd down
On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feather'd from the eagle's wing
That peep'd up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answer'd not—I fill'd it—
He took it not—but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fix'd glare of his eye ;
I frown'd upon him as a king should frown—
He frown'd not in his turn, but look'd upon me
With the same aspect, which appall'd me more,
Because it changed not ; and I turn'd for refuge
To milder guests, and sought them on the right,
Where thou wert wont to be. But——

[*He pauses.*]

Myr.

What instead ?

Sard. In thy own chair—thy own place in the banquet—
I sought thy sweet face in the circle ; but
Instead—a grey-hair'd, wither'd, bloody-eyed
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,
Female in garb, and crown'd upon the brow,
Furrow'd with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sat :—my veins curdled.

Myr.

Is this all ?

Sard.

Upon

Her right hand—her lank, bird-like right hand—stood
A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood ; and on
Her left, another, fill'd with—what I saw not,
But turn'd from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crowned wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision ?

Sard.

No ;

It was so palpable, I could have touch'd them.
I turn'd from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew

Ere I saw theirs ; but no—all turn'd upon me,
 And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared,
 Till I grew stone, as they seem'd half to be,
 Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
 And life in me : there was a horrid kind
 Of sympathy between us, as if they
 Had lost a part of death to come to me,
 And I the half of life to sit by them.
 We were in an existence all apart
 From heaven or earth——And rather let me see
 Death all than such a being !

Myr. And the end ?

Sard. At last I sate marble as they, when rose
 The hunter and the crew ; and smiling on me—
 Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
 The hunter smiled upon me—I should say,
 His lips, for his eyes moved not—and the woman's
 Thin lips relax'd to something like a smile.
 Both rose ; and the crown'd figures on each hand
 Rose also, as if aping their chief shades—
 Mere mimics even in death ; but I sate still :
 A desperate courage crept through every limb,
 And at the last I fear'd them not, but laugh'd
 Full in their phantom faces. But then—then
 The hunter laid his hand on mine : I took it,
 And grasp'd it—but it melted from my own ;
 While he too vanish'd, and left nothing but
 The memory of a hero, for he look'd so.

Myr. And was ; the ancestor of heroes, too,
 And thine no less.

Sard. Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
 The female who remain'd, she flew upon me,
 And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses,
 And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
 Methought their poisons flow'd around us, till
 Each form'd a hideous river. Still she clung ;
 The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
 Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
 Embraced me ; while I shrunk from her, as if,
 In lieu of her remote descendant, I
 Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
 Then—then—a chaos of all loathsome things
 Throng'd thick and shapeless ; I was dead, yet feeling—
 Buried, and raised again—consumed by worms,
 Purged by the flames, and wither'd in the air !
 I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
 Save that I long'd for thee, and sought for thee,
 In all these agonies, and woke and found thee.

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things—the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused to toil, yet overwrought by toil,
Such as might try the sternest.

Sard. I am better.
Now that I see *thee* once more, what was seen
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake?

Sard. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.
My father was amongst them, too; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,
And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew, who still
Keep gathering head—repuls'd, but not quite quell'd.

Sard. How wears the night?

Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.

Sard. No, not to-night, if 't is not gone: methought
I pass'd hours in that vision.

Myr. Scarcely one;
I watch'd by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.

Sard. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.

Sard. 'T is granted.

Sal. Hear it,
Ere you reply too readily; and 't is
For *your* ear only.

Myr. Prince, I take my leave.

[*Exit MYRRHA.*]

Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.

Sard. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.

Sal. Your patience—
'T is not yet vacant, and 't is of its partner

I come to speak with you.

Sard. How! of the queen?

Sal. Even so. I judged it fitting for their safety,
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta
Governs; and there at all events secure
My nephews and your sons their lives; and, with them,
Their just pretensions to the crown, in case——

Sard. I perish—as is probable: well thought—
Let them set forth with a sure escort.

Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates; but ere they
Depart, will you not see——

Sard. My sons? It may
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep;
And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles?
You know I cannot feign.

Sal. But you can feel;
At least, I trust so: in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part—for ever.

Sard. Unto what end? what purpose? I will grant
Aught—all that she can ask—but such a meeting.

Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of women,
Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy than the whole external world.
I think as you do of my sister's wish;
But 't was her wish: she is my sister—you
Her husband—will you grant it?

Sard. 'T will be useless;
But let her come.

Sal. I go. [Exit SALEMENES.]

Sard. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again—and now to meet!
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows,
Who have ceased to mingle love?

Re-enter SALEMENES and ZARINA.

Sal. My sister! courage.
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. The queen is present, sire.

Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.

Sal. Since you ask it,

[Exit SALEMENES.]

Zar. Alone with him ! How many a year has past,
 Though we are still so young, since we have met,
 Which I have worn in widowhood of heart !
 He loved me not : yet he seems little changed—
 Changed to me only—would the change were mutual !
 He speaks not—scarce regards me—not a word—
 Nor look. Yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect—
 Indifferent, not austere. My lord !

Sard. Zarina !

Zar. No, *not* Zarina—do not say Zarina.
 That tone—that word—annihilate long years,
 And things which make them longer.

Sard. 'T is too late
 To think of these past dreams. Let 's not reproach—
 That is, reproach me not—for the *last* time—

Zar. And *first*. I ne'er reproach'd you.

Sard. 'T is most true ;
 And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
 Than——But our hearts are not in our own power.

Zar. Nor hands ; but I gave both.

Sard. Your brother said,
 It was your will to see me, ere you went
 From Nineveh with——(*He hesitates.*)

Zar. Our children : it is true ;
 I wish'd to thank you that you have not divided
 My heart from all that 's left it now to love—
 Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
 And look upon me as you look'd upon me
 Once——But they have not changed.

Sard. Nor ever will.
 I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish
 Those infants, not alone from the blind love
 Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
 They are now the only tie between us.

Sard. Deem not
 I have not done you justice : rather make them
 Resemble your own line, than their own sire.
 I trust them with you—to you : fit them for
 A throne, or, if that be denied—You have heard
 Of this night's tumults ?

Zar. I had half-forgotten,
 And could have welcomed any grief, save yours,
 Which gave me to behold your face again.

Sard. The throne—I say it not in fear—but 't is
 In peril ; they perhaps may never mount it :
 But let them not for this lose sight of it.
 I will dare all things to bequeath it them ;

But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely—and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.

Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honour
Their father's memory.

Sard. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they'll learn
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,
And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys!—I could have borne it were I childless.

Zar. Oh! do not say so—do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,
And honour him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if——

Sard. 'T is lost, all earth will cry out, thank your father!
And they will swell the echo with a curse.

Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour
The name of him, who, dying like a king,
In his last hours did more for his own memory,
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.

Sard. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;
But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning—memorable.

Zar. Yet, be not rash—be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.

Sard. And who are they?
A slave, who loves from passion—I'll not say
Ambition—she has seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends, who have revell'd till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured—children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse——

Zar. Who loves.

Sard. And pardons?

Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemn'd.

Sard. My wife!

Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
I never thought to hear it more—from thee.

Sard. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects. Yes—
These slaves, whom I have nurtured, pamper'd, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till
They reign themselves—all monarchs in their mansions—
Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand

His death, who made their lives a jubilee ;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful. This is true, yet monstrous.

Zar.

'T is

Perhaps too natural ; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.

Sard.

And good ones make

Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar.

Then reap

The honey, nor inquire whence 't is derived.
Be satisfied—you are not all abandon'd.

Sard. My life insures me that. How long, bethink you
Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal ;
That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be ?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my—that is,
Your children's sake !

Sard.

My gentle, wrong'd Zarina !

I am the very slave of circumstance
And impulse—borne away with every breath !
Misplaced upon the throne—misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel
I am not what I should be—let it end.
But take this with thee : if I was not form'd
To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,
Nor dote even on thy beauty—as I 've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that look'd like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch) ; yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last—that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them—as the miner lights
Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering
That which avails him nothing ; he hath found it,
But 't is not his—but some superior's, who
Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth
Which sparkles at his feet ; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning
The sullen earth.

Zar.

Oh ! if thou hast at length

Discover'd that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more—but let us hence together,
And I—let me say *we*—shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth—we 'll find
A world out of our own—and be more blest
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye—
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.

Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out
Instants so high and blest?

Sal. Blest!

Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me that I cannot think
Of quitting.

Sal. So—this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.
I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be?

Sal. Remain, and perish——

Zar. With my husband—

Sal. And children.

Zar. Alas!

Sal. Hear me, sister, like
My sister :—all 's prepared to make your safety
Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes.
'T is not a single question of mere feeling,
Though that were much—but 't is a point of state ;
The rebels would do more to seize upon
The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush—

Zar. Ah! do not name it.

Sal. Well, then, mark me : when
They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels
Have miss'd their chief aim—the extinction of
The line of Nimrod. Though the present king
Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance.

Zar. But could not I remain, alone?

Sal. What! leave
Your children, with two parents and yet orphans—
In a strange land—so young, so distant?

Zar. No—
My heart will break.

Sal. Now you know all—decide.

Sard. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we
Must yield awhile to this necessity.
Remaining here, you may lose all ; departing,
You save the better part of what is left
To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
As yet beat in these kingdoms.

Sal. The time presses.

Sard. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps

I may be worthier of you—and, if not,
Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
Are ended. Yet, I dread thy nature will
Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
Which once were mightiest in Assyria—than—
But I grow womanish again, and must not;
I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
Been of the softer order—*hide thy tears—*
I do not bid thee not to shed them—'t were
Easier to stop Euphrates at its source
Than one tear of a true and tender heart—
But let me not behold them; they unman me
Here when I had re-mann'd myself. My brother,
Lead her away.

Zar. Oh, God! I never shall
Behold him more!

Sal. (*striving to conduct her*). Nay, sister, I *must* be obey'd.

Zar. I must remain—away! you shall not hold me.
What, shall he die alone?—*I live alone?*

Sal. He shall *not die alone*; but lonely you
Have lived for years.

Zar. That's false! I knew he lived,
And lived upon his image—let me go!

Sal. (*conducting her off the stage*). Nay, then, I must use some
fraternal force,
Which you will pardon.

Zar. Never. Help me! Oh!
Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
Torn from thee?

Sal. Nay—then all is lost again,
If that this moment is not gain'd.

Zar. My brain turns—
My eyes fail—where is he? [*She faints.*]

Sard. (*advancing*). No—set her down:
She's dead—and you have slain her.

Sal. 'T is the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion: in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back.—(*Aside*). I must
Avail myself of this sole moment to
Bear her to where her children are embark'd,
I' the royal galley on the river. [*SALEMENES bears her off.*]

Sard. (*solus*). This too—
And this too must I suffer—I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang! But that is false—
She loved me, and I loved her. Fatal passion!
Why dost thou not expire at *once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once? Zarina!

I must pay dearly for the desolation
 Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved
 But thee, I should have been an unopposed
 Monarch of honouring nations. To what gulphs
 A single deviation from the track
 Of human duties leads even those who claim
 The homage of mankind as their born due,
 And find it, till they forfeit it themselves !

Enter MYRRHA.

Sard. You here ! Who call'd you ?

Myr. No one—but I heard
 Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
 And thought—

Sard. It forms no portion of your duties
 To enter here till sought for.

Myr. Though I might,
 Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours
 (Although they *too were chiding*), which reproved me,
 Because I ever dreaded to intrude ;
 Resisting my own wish and your injunction
 To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
 Uncall'd for : I retire.

Sard. Yet stay—being here.
 I pray you pardon me ; events have sour'd me
 Till I wax peevish—heed it not : I shall
 Soon be myself again.

Myr. I wait with patience
 What I shall see with pleasure.

Sard. Scarce a moment
 Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
 Queen of Assyria, departed hence.

Myr. Ah !

Sard. Wherefore do you start ?

Myr. Did I do so ?

Sard. 'T was well you enter'd by another portal,
 Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her !

Myr. I know to feel for her.

Sard. That is too much,
 And beyond nature—'t is nor mutual,⁵
 Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
 Nor she aught but—

Myr. Despise the favourite slave ?
 Not more than I have ever scorn'd myself.

Sard. Scorn'd ! what, to be the envy of your sex,
 And lord it o'er the heart of the world's lord ?

Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand worlds—

As you are like to lose the one you sway'd—
I did debase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant—
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.

Sard. You talk it well—

Myr. And truly.

Sard. In the hour
Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling ; but as I am not
Quite fallen, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.

Myr. Part !

Sard. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part ?

Myr. Why ?

Sard. For your safety, which I will have look'd to,
With a strong escort to your native land ;
And such gifts as, if you have not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.

Myr. I pray you talk not thus.

Sard. The queen is gone :
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone—I seek no partners but in pleasure.

Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.
You shall not force me from you.

Sard. Think well of it—
It soon may be too late.

Myr. So let it be ;
For then you cannot separate me from you.

Sard. And will not ; but I thought you wish'd it.

Myr. I ?

Sard. You spoke of your abasement.

Myr. And I feel it
Deeply—more deeply than all things but love.

Sard. Then fly from it.

Myr. 'T will not recall the past—
'T will not restore my honour, nor my heart.
No—here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph ; should
Your lot be different, I 'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.

Sard. Your courage never—nor your love till now ;
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words—

Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise

This very night, and in my further bearing,
Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.

Sard. I am content ; and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors, and return
To peace—the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory—conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others.
I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recall Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love—the breath
Of friends for truth—the lips of woman for
My only guerdon—so they are, my Myrrha ;

[*He kisses her.*]

Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life !
They shall have both, but never thee !

Myr.

No, never !

Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering : kingdoms fall—hosts yield—
Friends fail—slaves fly—and all betray—and, more
Than all, the most indebted—but a heart
That loves without self-love ! 'T is here—now prove it.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you.—How ! *she* here again ?

Sard.

Return not

Now to reproof : methinks your aspect speaks
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.

Sal. The only woman whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence—
The queen's embark'd.

Sard.

And well ? say that much.

Sal.

Yes.

Her transient weakness has past o'er ; at least,
It settled into tearless silence : her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fix'd
Upon the palace towers, as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the starlight ;

But she said nothing.

Sard. Would I felt no more
Than she has said.

Sal. 'T is now too late to feel!
Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang;
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshall'd
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack: they have apparently
Been join'd by other satraps.

Sard. What! more rebels?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are join'd by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too: but, till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.

Sard. I detest
That waiting; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes
Strew'd to receive them, still I like it not—
My soul seems lukewarm; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would have
A pluck at them, or perish on hot blood!
Let me then charge!

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sard. I am no soldier, but a man: speak not
Of soldiership. I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily; 't is not
Like mine, or any other subject's breath:
The whole war turns upon it—with it; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it—
Prolong it—end it.

Sard. Then let us end both!
'T were better thus, perhaps, than prolong either;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.

[A trumpet sounds without.

Sal. Hark!

Sard. Let us

Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound?

Sard. 'T is bound—
'T is heal'd—I had forgotten it. Away!
A leech's lancet would have scratch'd me deeper:
The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour
Strike with a better aim!

Sard. Ay, if we conquer;
But if not, they will only leave to me
A task they might have spared their king. Upon them!
[Trumpet sounds again.]

Sal. I am with you.

Sard. Ho, my arms! again, my arms!
[Exeunt.]

ACT V.

SCENE.—THE SAME HALL OF THE PALACE.

MYRRHA and BALEA.

Myr. (at a window). The day at last has broken. What a night
Hath usher'd it! How beautiful in heaven!
Though varied with a transitory storm,
More beautiful in that variety!
How hideous upon earth! where peace and hope,
And love and revel, in an hour were trampled
By human passions to a human chaos,
Not yet resolved to separate elements.—
'T is warring still! And can the sun so rise,
So bright, so rolling back the clouds into
Vapours more lovely than the unclouded sky,
With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,
And billows purpler than the ocean's, making
In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
So like, we almost deem it permanent;
So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught
Beyond a vision, 't is so transiently
Scatter'd along the eternal vault: and yet
It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
And blends itself into the soul, until
Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
Of sorrow and of love; which they who mark not,

Know not the realms where those twin genii
 (Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
 So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
 For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
 The air with clamour) build the palaces
 Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
 Briefly ;—but in that brief cool calm inhale
 Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
 The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
 And dream them through in placid sufferance ;
 Though seemingly employ'd like all the rest
 Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks
 Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,
 Which our internal, restless agony
 Would vary in the sound, although the sense
 Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Balea. You muse right calmly ; and can you so watch
 The sunrise which may be our last ?

Myr. It is
 Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
 Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
 For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
 Without the reverence and the rapture due
 To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
 As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
 The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon,
 I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Balea. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
 He sway'd.

Myr. He sways it now far more, then ; never
 Had earthly monarch half the power and glory
 Which centres in a single ray of his.

Balea. Surely he is a god !

Myr. So we Greeks deem too ;
 And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
 Must rather be the abode of gods than one
 Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
 Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
 That shuts the world out. I can look no more.

Balea. Hark ! heard you not a sound ?

Myr. No, 't was mere fancy ;
 They battle it beyond the wall, and not
 As in late midnight conflict in the very
 Chambers : the palace has become a fortress
 Since that insidious hour ; and here within
 The very centre, girded by vast courts
 And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
 Which must be carried one by one before

They penetrate to where they then arrived,
We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.

Balea. But they reach'd
Thus far before.

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were
Beat back by valour; now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.

Balea. May they
Prosper!

Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more: it is an anxious hour;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas!
How vainly!

Balea. It is said the king's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appall'd
The rebels than astonish'd his true subjects.

Myr. 'T is easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves;
But he did bravely.

Balea. Slew he not Beleses?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.

Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquish'd him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril,
And by that heedless pity risk'd a crown.

Balea. Hark!

Myr. You are right; some steps approach, but slowly.

*Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES wounded, with a broken javelin
in his side: they seat him upon one of the couches which furnish the
apartment.*

Myr. Oh, Jove!

Balea. Then all is over.

Sal. That is false.
Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.

Myr. Spare him—he's none: a mere court butterfly
That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.

Sal. Let him live on, then.

Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.

Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?

Soldier. By the king's order. When the javelin struck you,
You fell and fainted; 't was his strict command
To bear you to this hall.

Sal. 'T was not ill done:

For, seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers—but—'t is vain.
I feel it ebbing!

Myr. Let me see the wound;
I am not quite skillless: in my native land,
'T is part of our instruction. War being constant,
We are nerved to look on such things.

Soldier. Best extract
The javelin.

Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.

Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must follow
The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.

Sal. And I *not* death. Where was the king when you
Convey'd me from the spot where I was stricken?

Soldier. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops
Who had seen you fall, and falter'd back.

Sal. Whom heard ye
Named next to the command?

Soldier. I did not hear.

Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 't was my last request
That Zames take my post until the junction,
So hoped for, yet delay'd, of Ofratanes,
Satrap of Susa. Leave me here: our troops
Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.

Soldier. But, prince——

Sal. Hence, I say! Here 's a courtier and
A woman, the best chamber company.
As you would not permit me to expire
Upon the field, I 'll have no idle soldiers
About my sick couch. Hence! and do my bidding!

[*Exeunt the Soldiers.*]

Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit! must the earth
So soon resign thee?

Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 't is
The end I would have chosen, had I saved
The monarch or the monarchy by this;
As 't is, I have not outlived them.

Myr. You wax paler.

Sal. Your hand; this broken weapon but prolongs
My pangs, without sustaining life enough
To make me useful: I would draw it forth,
And my life with it, could I but hear how
The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Soldiers.

Sard. My best brother!

Sal. And the battle

Is lost?

Sard. (*despondingly*). You see me here.

Sal. I 'd rather see you *thus!*

[*He draws out the weapon from the wound, and dies.*]

Sard. And *thus* I will be seen, unless the succour,
The last frail reed of our beleaguer'd hopes,
Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not
Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?

Sard. I did.

Myr. Where 's Zames?

Sard. Dead.

Myr. And Altada?

Sard. Dying.

Myr. Pania? Sfero?

Sard. Pania yet lives; but Sfero 's fled, or captive.
I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost?

Sard. Our walls,
Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out against
Their present force, or aught save treachery:
But i' the field——

Myr. I thought 't was the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally
Till ye were strengthen'd by the expected succours.

Sal. I over-ruled him.

Myr. Well, the fault 's a brave one.

Sard. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole redeeming honour,
To call back——But I will not weep for thee;
Thou shalt be mourn'd for as thou wouldst be mourn'd.
It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life
Believing that I could survive what thou
Hast died for——our long royalty of race.
If I redeem it, I will give thee blood
Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement
(The tears of all the good are thine already).
If not, we meet again soon, if the spirit
Within us lives beyond:—thou readest mine,
And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp

That yet warm hand, and fold that throbbless heart
[Embraces the body.]

To this which beats so bitterly. Now bear
 The body hence.

Soldier. Where?

Sard. To my proper chamber.
 Place it beneath my canopy, as though
 The king lay there: when this is done, we will
 Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.

[Exeunt Soldiers with the body of SALEMENES.]

Enter PANIA.

Sard. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and issued
 The orders fix'd on?

Pania. Sire, I have obey'd.

Sard. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pania. Sire?

Sard. I'm answer'd! When a king asks twice, and has
 A question as an answer to *his* question,
 It is a portent. What! they are dishearten'd?

Pania. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
 Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
 Have made them——

Sard. *Rage*—not droop—it should have been.
 We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pania. Such a loss
 Might sadden even a victory.

Sard. Alas!
 Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet,
 Though coop'd within these walls, they are strong, and we
 Have those without will break their way through hosts,
 To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was—
 A palace—not a prison, nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sard. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!

Officer. I dare not.

Sard. Dare not?

While millions dare revolt with sword in hand!
 That's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
 Which loathes to shock its sovereign; we can hear
 Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pania. Proceed, thou hearest.

Officer. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
 Is thrown down by the sudden inundation
 Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln

From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroy'd the bulwark.

Pania. That 's a black augury! it has been said
For ages, "That the city ne'er should yield
To man, until the river grew its foe."

Sard. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall?

Officer. About
Some twenty stadii.⁷

Sard. And all this is left
Pervious to the assailants?

Officer. For the present
The river's fury must impede the assault;
But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be cross'd by the accustom'd barks,
The palace is their own.

Sard. That shall be never.
Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provok'd them,
My fathers' house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.

Pania. With your sanction
I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures
For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.

Sard. About it straight,
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [*Exeunt PANIA and the Officer.*]

Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.

Sard. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardon'd, since they can't be punish'd.

Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

Sard. I am past the fear of portents: they can tell me
Nothing I have not told myself since midnight:
Despair anticipates such things.

Myr. Despair?

Sard. No, not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble
Word than this is to give it utterance.
But what are words to us? we have well nigh done
With them and all things.

Myr. Save one deed—the last

And greatest to all mortals ; crowning act
 Of all that was—or is—or is to be—
 The only thing common to all mankind,
 So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
 Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects,
 Without one point of union, save in this,
 To which we tend, for which we 're born, and thread
 The labyrinth of mystery call'd life.

Sard. Our clew being well nigh wound out, let 's be cheerful.
 They who have nothing more to fear, may well
 Indulge a smile at that which once appall'd ;
 As children at discover'd bugbears.

Re-enter PANIA.

Pania. 'T is
 As was reported ; I have order'd there
 A double guard, withdrawing from the wall,
 Where it was strongest, the required addition
 To watch the breach occasion'd by the waters.

Sard. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
 My worthy Pania ! further ties between us
 Draw near a close. I pray you take this key :

[*Gives a key.*

It opens to a secret chamber placed
 Behind the couch in my own chamber (now
 Press'd by a nobler weight than e'er it bore—
 Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
 Along its golden frame—as bearing for
 A time what late was Salemenes). Search
 The secret covert to which this will lead you ;
 'T is full of treasure ; take it for yourself
 And your companions ; there 's enough to load ye,
 Though ye be many. Let the slaves be freed, too ;
 And all the inmates of the palace, of
 Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.
 Thence launch the regal barks, once form'd for pleasure,
 And now to serve for safety, and embark.
 The river 's broad and swoln, and uncommanded
 (More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
 Fly ! and be happy !

Pania. Under your protection !
 So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sard. No, Pania ! that must not be ; get thee hence,
 And leave me to my fate.

Pania. 'T is the first time
 I ever disobey'd ; but now—

Sard. So all men
 Dare beard me now, and Insolence within

Apes Treason from without. Question no further ;
'T is my command, my last command. Wilt thou
Oppose it? *thou!*

Pania. But yet—not yet.

Sard. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.

Pania. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.

Sard. 'T is enough. Now order here
Faggots, pine-nuts, and wither'd leaves, and such
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark ;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile ;
Bring frankincense and myrrh too, for it is
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre ;
And heap them round yon throne.

Pania. My lord !

Sard. I have said it,
And *you* have sworn.

Pania. And could keep my faith
Without a vow.

[*Exit PANIA.*

Myr. What mean you ?

Sard. You shall know
Anon—what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.

PANIA, *returning with a Herald.*

Pania. My king, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.

Sard. Let him speak.

Herald. The King Arbaces—

Sard. What, crown'd already?—But proceed.

Herald. Beleses,

The anointed high-priest—

Sard. Of what god, or demon ?
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed ;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.

Herald. And Satrap Ofratanes—

Sard. Why, *he is ours.*

Herald (showing a ring). Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors : behold
His signet ring.

Sard. 'T is his. A worthy triad !
Poor Salemenes ! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less : this man

Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.

Herald. They offer thee thy life, and freedom
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watch'd, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages

Sard. (*ironically*). The generous victors!

Herald. I wait the answer.

Sard. Answer, slave? How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?

Herald. Since they were free.

Sard. Mouthpiece of mutiny!
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania!
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him!

[PANIA and the Guards seizing him.]

Pania. I never yet obey'd
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore;
Put him to rest without.

Herald. A single word:
My office, king, is sacred.

Sard. And what's mine?
That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me
To lay it down?

Herald. I but obey'd my orders,
At the same peril, if refused, as now
Incurr'd by my obedience.

Sard. So, there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood!

Herald. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly)—but it may be—yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent;
Would it then suit the last hours of a line
Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy
A peaceful herald, unarm'd, in his office;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man—but that
More holy tie which links us with the gods?

Sard. He's right.—Let him go free.—My life's last act

Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take

[Gives him a golden cup from a table near.

This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me*; or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.

Herald. I thank you doubly for my life, and this
Most gorgeous gift which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer?

Sard. Yes,—I ask
An hour's truce to consider.

Herald. But an hour's?

Sard. An hour's: if at the expiration of
That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.

Herald. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.

Sard. And, hark! a word more.

Herald. I shall not forget it,
What's'er it be.

Sard. Commend me to Beleses;
And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.

Herald. Where?

Sard. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.

Herald. I shall obey you to the letter. [Exit Herald.

Sard. Pania!—
Now, my good Pania!—quick! with what I order'd.

Pania. My lord,—the soldiers are already charged:
And, see! they enter.

[Soldiers enter, and form a pile about the throne, &c.

Sard. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quench'd
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not
Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'T were to enkindle the strong tower of our
Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect!
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a king's obsequies?

Pania. Ay, for a kingdom's.
I understand you now.

Sard. And blame me?

Pania. No—
Let me but fire the pile and share it with you.

Myr. That duty's mine.

Pania. A woman's!

Myr. 'T is the soldier's
Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not
The woman's with her lover?

Pania. 'T is most strange!

Myr. But not so rare, my *Pania*, as thou think'st it.
In the mean time, live thou.—Farewell! the pile
Is ready.

Pania. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.

Sard. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust already. Get thee hence;
Enrich thee.

Pania. And live wretched!

Sard. Think upon
Thy vow;—'t is sacred and irrevocable.

Pania. Since it is so, farewell.

Sard. Search well my chamber;
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold;
Remember, what you leave you leave the slaves
Who slew me: and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.
The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly,—
And as you sail, turn back; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates: if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.

Pania. That royal hand!
Let me then once more press it to my lips;
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you!

[*The Soldiers and PANIA throng round him, kissing his hand
and the hem of his robe.*]

Sard. My best! my last friends!
Let's not unman each other—part at once!
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,

And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
 Hence, and be happy! trust me, I am not
 Now to be pitied, or far more for what
 Is past than present;—for the future, 't is
 In the hands of the deities, if such
 There be: I shall know soon. Farewell—farewell.

[*Exeunt PANIA and the Soldiers.*]

Myr. These men were honest; it is comfort still
 That our last looks should be on loving faces.

Sard. And lovely ones, my beautiful!—but hear me!
 If at this moment, for we now are on
 The brink, thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
 This leap through flame into the future, say it:
 I shall not love thee less; nay, perhaps more,
 For yielding to thy nature; and there's time
 Yet for thee to escape hence.

Myr. Shall I light
 One of the torches which lie heap'd beneath
 The ever-burning lamp that burns without,
 Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?

Sard. Do so. Is that thy answer?

Myr. Thou shalt see.

[*Exit MYRRHA.*]

Sard. She's firm. My fathers! whom I will rejoin,
 It may be, purified by death from some
 Of the gross stains of too material being,
 I would not leave your ancient first abode
 To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
 If I have not kept your inheritance
 As ye bequeath'd it, this bright part of it,
 Your treasure, your abode, your sacred relics
 Of arms, and records, monuments, and spoils,
 In which *they* would have revell'd, I bear with me
 To you in that absorbing element,
 Which most personifies the soul, as leaving
 The least of matter unconsumed before
 Its fiery working:—and the light of this
 Most royal of funeral pyres shall be
 Not a mere pillar form'd of cloud and flame,
 A beacon in the horizon for a day,
 And then a mount of ashes, but a light
 To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
 Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
 A people's records, and a hero's acts;
 Sweep empire after empire, like this first
 Of empires, into nothing; but even then
 Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
 A problem few dare imitate, and none

Despise—but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

MYRRHA returns with a lighted torch in her hand, and a cup in
the other.

Myr. Lo!

I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.

Sard. And the cup?

Myr. 'T is my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.

Sard. And mine

To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and, although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.

[SARDANAPALUS takes the cup, and after drinking and tinkling the
reversed cup, as a drop falls, exclaims—

And this libation

Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why

Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villany?

Sard. The one

Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet:
But I dismiss them from my mind.—Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think

A Greek girl dare not do for love that which
An Indian widow braves for custom?

Sard. Then

We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long

In sounding.

Sard. Now, farewell; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last: there is one more.

Sard. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.

Sard. Say it.

Myr. It is, that no kind hand will gather

The dust of both into one urn.

Sard. The better!

Rather let them be borne abroad upon

The winds of heaven, and scatter'd into air,
 Than be polluted more by human hands
 Of slaves and traitors; in this blazing palace,
 And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
 We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
 Hath piled in her brick mountains o'er dead kings,
 Or *kine*, for none know whether those proud piles
 Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis :⁸
 So much for monuments that have forgotten
 Their very record !⁹

Myr. Then farewell, thou earth
 And loveliest spot of earth! farewell, Ionia!
 Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
 Aloof from desolation! My last prayer
 Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of thee.

Sard. And that?

Myr. Is yours.

[*The trumpet of PANIA sounds without.*

Sard. Hark!

Myr. Now!

Sard. Adieu, Assyria!

I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
 And better as my country than my kingdom.
 I satiated thee with peace and joys; and this
 Is my reward! and now I owe thee nothing,
 Not even a grave.

[*He mounts the pile.*

Now, Myrrha!

Myr. Art thou ready?

Sard. As the torch in thy grasp.

[*MYRRHA fires the pile.*

Myr. 'T is fired! I come.

[*As MYRRHA springs forward to throw herself
 into the flames, the curtain falls.*¹⁰

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 149.

In this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history. [It is worthy of notice that Lord Byron has followed the Greek historian in the manifest geographical blunder of placing Nineveh on the *Euphrates* (see the *Tragedy passim*), instead of the *Tigris*, in opposition not only to the uniform tradition of the East, but to the express assertions of Herodotus, Pliny and Ptolemy.—E.]

Note 2. Page 150.

And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha.

"The Ionian name had been still more comprehensive, having included the Achæians and the Bœotians, who, together with those to whom it was afterwards confined, would make nearly the whole of the Greek nation; and among the Orientals it was always the general name for the Greeks."—MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. i, p. 199.

[Myrrha—in the original draught, *Byblis*.—E.]

Note 3. Page 156.

—“Sardanapalus,
The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
Eat, drink, and love; the rest 's not worth a fillip.”

“For this expedition he took not only a small chosen body of the phalanx, but all his light troops. In the first day's march he reached Anchialus, a town said to have been founded by the king of Assyria, Sardanapalus. The fortifications, in their magnitude and extent, still in Arrian's time, bore the character of greatness, which the Assyrians appear singularly to have affected in works of the kind. A monument representing Sardanapalus was found there, warranted by an inscription in Assyrian characters, of course in the old Assyrian language, which the Greeks, whether well or ill, interpreted thus: “Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play: all other human joys are not worth a fillip.” Supposing this version nearly exact (for Arrian says it was not quite so), whether the purpose has not been to invite to civil order a people disposed to turbulence, rather than to recommend immoderate luxury, may perhaps reasonably be questioned. What, indeed, could be the object of a king of Assyria in founding such towns in a country so distant from his capital, and so divided from it by an immense extent of sandy deserts and lofty mountains, and, still more, how the inhabitants could be at once in circumstances to abandon themselves to the intemperate joys which their prince has been supposed to have recommended, is not obvious; but it may deserve observation that, in that line of coast, the southern of Lesser Asia, ruins of cities, evidently of an age after Alexander, yet barely named in history, at this day astonish the adventurous traveller by their magnificence and elegance. Amid the desolation which, under a singularly barbarian government, has for so many centuries been daily spreading in the finest countries of the globe, whether more from soil and climate, or from opportunities for commerce, extraordinary means must have been found for communities to flourish there, whence it may seem that the measures of Sardanapalus were directed by juster views than have been commonly ascribed to him; but that monarch having been the last of a dynasty ended by a revolution, obloquy on his memory would follow of course from the policy of his successors and their partisans.

“The inconsistency of traditions concerning Sardanapalus is striking in Diodorus's account of him.”—MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. ix, p. 311.

[Possible as it may be that the above-mentioned inscription was ill interpreted by the Greeks, nevertheless the following epitaph which, according to Diodorus Siculus

the Assyrian monarch directed to be inscribed upon his tomb, must be allowed to form a worthy counterpart to its supposed import:—

Ἐὖ λίδος θρι θυγιάς ἔφους, σὸν θυμὸν δεξέ,
 Τερπόμενος θαλίῃσι, θανόντι σοι ἔτις ἔνησις,
 Καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ σποδὸς εἶμι, Νινῆς μεγάλῃς βασιλεύσας,
 Ταῦτ' ἔχω, ὅσσ' ἔφαγον καὶ ἐφύβρισα, καὶ μετ' ἔρωτος
 Τέρπην' ἔπαθον, τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ἄλβια πάντα λίλειπται.—

“an epitaph,” says Aristotle, “fit for a hog.”—E.]

Note 4. Page 189.

“In the third Act, where Sardanapalus calls for a mirror to look at himself in his armour, recollect to quote the Latin passage from Juvenal upon Otho (a similar character, who did the same thing). Gifford will help you to it. The trait is, perhaps, too familiar, but it is historical (of Otho, at least), and natural in an effeminate character.”—*B.'s Letter to Mr. Murray.*

“Ille tenet speculum pathici gestamen Othonis,
 Actoris Aurunci spoliū, quo se ille videbat
 Armatum, cum jam tolli vexilla juberet.
 Res memoranda novis annalibus, atque recenti
 Historia, speculum civiſis farcina belli.”—*JUV. Sat. ii.*

“This grasps a mirror—pathic Otho's boast
 (Auruncan Actor's spoil), where, while his host,
 With shouts, the signal of the fight required,
 He view'd his mailed form; view'd, and admired!
 Lo, a new subject for the historic page,
 A MIRROR, midst the arms of civil rage!”—*GIFFORD.*

Note 5. Page 209.

“T is nor mutual.

For *mutual*, the original MS. has *natural*; but we are not quite sure that there has been merely a misprint in the foregoing editions.—E.

[“We are not sure whether there is not a violation of costume in the remorse of Sardanapalus on the score of his infidelity to Zarina. Little as we know of the domestic habits of Assyria, we have reason to conclude, from the habits of contemporary nations, and from the manners of the East in every age, that polygamy was neither accounted a crime in itself, nor as a measure of which the principal wife was justified in complaining. But where is the critic who would object to an inaccuracy which has given occasion to such sentiments and poetry.”—*BISHOP HEBER.*

“In many parts of this play, it strikes me that Lord Byron has more in his eye the case of a sinful christian that has but one wife, and a sly business or so which she and her kin do not approve of, than a bearded oriental, like Sardanapalus, with three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines.”—*HOC.*]

Note 6. Page 214.

Had earthly monarch half the power and glory.

Misprinted hitherto—

“Had earthly monarch half the *peace* and glory.”—E.

Note 7. Page 219.

—— About
 Some twenty stadii.

About two miles and a half.

Note 8. Page 227.

“These lines are in bad taste enough, from the jingle between *kings* and *kine*, down to the absurdity of believing that Sardanapalus at such a moment would be likely to discuss a point of antiquarian curiosity. But they involve also an anachronism, inasmuch as, whatever date be assigned to the erection of the earlier pyramids, there can be no reason for apprehending that, at the fall of Niveveh, and while the kingdom and hierarchy of Egypt subsisted in their full splendour, the destination of those immense fabrics could have been a matter of doubt.”—*BISHOP HEBER.*

[A similar anachronism occurs in Act i, Sc. ii, where Myrrha is introduced speaking to her royal lover of “the tragic song,” as the favourite pastime of Greece, two hundred years before Thespis. “Nor could Myrrha,” says Heber, “at so early a period of her country's history, have spoken of their national hatred of kings, or of that which was equally the growth of a later age, their contempt for barbarians.”—E.]

Note 9. Page 227.

"The pyramids, dotting with age," says old Fuller, in his quaint way, "have forgotten the names of their founders."—E.

Note 10. Page 227.

"The history of the last of the Assyrian kings is at once sufficiently well known to awaken that previous interest which belongs to illustrious names, and early associations; and sufficiently remote and obscure to admit of any modification of incident or character which a poet may find convenient. All that we know of Nineveh and its sovereigns is majestic, indistinct and mysterious. We read of an extensive and civilised monarchy erected in the ages immediately succeeding the deluge, and existing in full might and majesty while the shores of Greece and Italy were unoccupied, except by roving savages. We read of an empire whose influence extended from Samarcand to Troy, and from the mountains of Judah to those of Caucasus, subverted, after a continuance of thirteen hundred years, and a dynasty of thirty generations, in an almost incredibly short space of time, less by the revolt of two provinces than by the anger of Heaven and the predicted fury of natural and inanimate agents. At the same time all which we know is so brief, so general, and so disjointed, that we have few of those preconceived notions of the persons and facts represented, which, in classical dramas, if servilely followed, destroy the interest, and if rashly departed from, offend the prejudices of the reader or the auditor. An outline is given of the most majestic kind; but it is an outline only which the poet may fill at pleasure..... The developement of Sardanapalus's character is incidental only to the plot of Lord Byron's drama, and though his favourite unities have confined his picture within far narrower limits than he might otherwise have thought advisable, the character is admirably sketched; nor is there any one of the portraits of this great master which gives us a more favourable opinion of his talents, his force of conception, his delicacy and vigour of touch, or the richness and harmony of his colouring. He had, indeed, no unfavourable groundwork, even in the few hints supplied by the ancient historians, as to the conduct and history of the last and most unfortunate of the line of Belus. Though accused (whether truly or falsely), by his triumphant enemies, of the most revolting vices, and an effeminacy even beyond what might be expected from the last dregs of Asiatic despotism, we find Sardanapalus, when roused by the approach of danger, conducting his armies with a courage, a skill, and, for some time at least, with a success not inferior to those of his most warlike ancestors. We find him retaining to the last the fidelity of his most trusted servants, his nearest kindred, and no small proportion of his hardest subjects. We see him providing for the safety of his wife, his children and his capital city, with all the calmness and prudence of an experienced captain. We see him at length subdued, not by man, but by Heaven and the elements, and seeking his death with a mixture of heroism and ferocity which little accords with our notions of a weak and utterly degraded character."—HEBER.

"In the conception of his hero, Lord Byron has very wisely followed nature and fancy rather than history. *His* Sardanapalus is not an effeminate, worn-out lebauchee, with shattered nerves and exhausted senses, the slave of indolence and vicious habits; but a sanguine votary of pleasure, a princely epicure, indulging, evelling in boundless luxury while he can, but with a soul so inured to voluptuousness, so saturated with delights, that pain and danger, when they come uncalled for, give him neither concern nor dread; and he goes forth from the banquet to the battle, as to a dance or measure, attired by the Graces, and with youth, joy, and love for his guides. He dallies with Bellona as her bridegroom—for his sport and pastime; and the spear or fan, the shield or shining mirror, become his hands equally well. He enjoys life, in short, and triumphs in death; and whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, his soul smiles out superior to evil."—JEFFREY.

"I remember Lord Byron's mentioning that the story of Sardanapalus had been working in his brain for seven years before he commenced it."—TRELAWNEY.

The following is an extract from the life of Dr. Parr.—"In the course of the evening the Doctor cried out,—'Have you read Sardanapalus?'—'Yes, sir.'—'Right; and you couldn't sleep a wink after it?'—'No.'—'Right, right—now don't say a word more about it to-night.'—The memory of that fine poem seemed to act like a spell of horrible fascination upon him.

THE TWO FOSCARI;

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY.

The *father* softens, but the *governor*'s resolved.

CRITIC.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

FRANCIS FOSCARI, *Doge of Venice.*
JACOPO FOSCARI, *Son of the Doge.*
JAMES LOREDANO, *a Patrician.*
MARCO MEMMO, *a Chief of the Forty.*
BARBARIGO, *Senator.*
Other Senators, the Council of Ten, Guards, Attendants, &c., &c.

WOMAN.

MARINA, *Wife of the young FOSCARI.*

Scene—The Ducal Palace, Venice.

THE TWO FOSCARI.

ACT I.

SCENE.—A HALL IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO, meeting.

Lor. WHERE is the prisoner?

Barb. Reposing from

The question.

Lor. The hour's past—fix'd yesterday
For the resumption of his trial.—Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

Barb. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well!

Barb. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari,
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffer'd beyond nature's
Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime.

Barb. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avow'd the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Barb. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

Barb. To extermination.

Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this.—Let 's in to council.

Barb. Yet pause—the number of our colleagues is not
Complete yet ; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.

Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge ?

Barb. No—he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

Lor. True—true—
His last.

Barb. Will nothing move you ?

Lor. Feels he, think you ?

Barb. He shows it not.

Lor. I have mark'd *that*—the wretch !

Barb. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he pass'd the threshold,
The old man fainted.

Lor. It begins to work, then.

Barb. The work is half your own.

Lor. And should be *all* mine—
My father and my uncle are no more.

Barb. I have read their epitaph, which says they died
By poison.¹

Lor. When the Doge declared that he
Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sicken'd shortly :—he *is* sovereign.

Barb. A wretched one.

Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans ?

Barb. But *did* the Doge make you so ?

Lor. Yes.

Barb. What solid proofs ?

Lor. When princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult ; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second needless.

Barb. But you will move by law ?

Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

Barb. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of commerce

(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles),
 “Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
 Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
 My sire and uncle?”

Lor. It is written thus.

Barb. And will you leave it unerased?

Lor. Till balanced

Barb. And how?

[*Two Senators pass over the stage, as in their way to the Hall of the Council of Ten.*

Lor. You see the number is complete.
 Follow me.

[*Exit LOREDANO.*

Barb. (solus). Follow thee! I have follow'd long
 Thy path of desolation, as the wave
 Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
 The wreck that creaks to the wild winds, and wretch
 Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush
 The waters through them; but this son and sire
 Might move the elements to pause, and yet
 Must I on hardily like them—Oh! would
 I could as blindly and remorselessly!
 Lo, where he comes!—Be still, my heart! they are
 Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
 For those who almost broke thee?

Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI as prisoner, &c.

Guard. Let him rest,
 Signor, take time.

Jac. Fosc. I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble;
 But thou mayst stand reproved.

Guard. I'll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fosc. That's kind:—I meet some pity, but no mercy;
 This is the first.

Guard. And might be the last, did they
 Who rule behold us.

Barb. (advancing to the Guard). There is one who does:
 Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
 Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,
 Wait their last summons—I am of the “Ten,”
 And, waiting for that summons, sanction you
 Even by my presence: when the last call sounds
 We'll in together.—Look well to the prisoner!

Jac. Fosc. What voice is that?—'t is Barbarigo's! Ah!
 Our house's foe, and one of my few judges.

Barb. To balance such a foe, if such there be,
 Thy father sits among thy judges.

Jac. Fosc. True,

He judges.

Barb. Then deem not the laws too harsh,
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety——

Jac. Fosc. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Barb. (to the Guard). Let him approach. I must not speak with him
Further than thus; I have transgress'd my duty
In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber. *[Exit BARBARIGO.]*

[Guard conducting JACOPO FOSCARI to the window.]

Guard. There, sir, 't is
Open—How feel you?

Jac. Fosc. Like a boy—O Venice!

Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fosc. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimm'd
The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheer'd us on
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal!—How many a time have I
Cloven, with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughen'd; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drench'd hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kiss'd it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft,
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they wax'd fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As show'd that I had search'd the deep: exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurn'd
The foam which broke around me, and pursued
My track like a sea-bird.—I was a boy then.

Guard. Be a man now; there never was more need

Of manhood's strength.

Jac. Fosc. (looking from the lattice). My beautiful, my own,
My only Venice—*this is breath!* Thy breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
The very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howl'd about my Candiotte dungeon, and
Made my heart sick.

Guard. I see the colour comes
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you strength to bear
What more may be imposed!—I dread to think on 't.

Jac. Fosc. They will not banish me again?—No—no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.

Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.

Jac. Fosc. I confess'd
Once—twice before: both times they exiled me.

Guard. And the third time will slay you.

Jac. Fosc. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.

Guard. And can you so much love the soil which hates you?

Jac. Fosc. The soil!—Oh no, it is the seed of the soil
Which persecutes me; but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Bring in the prisoner!

Guard. Signor, you hear the order.

Jac. Fosc. Ay, I am used to such a summons; 't is
The third time they have tortured me:—then lend me
Thine arm. [To the Guard.

Officer. Take mine, sir; 't is my duty to
Be nearest to your person.

Jac. Fosc. You!—you are he
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs—
Away!—I'll walk alone.

Officer. As you please, signor:
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council, when
They—

Jac. Fosc. Bade thee stretch me on their horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not—that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that order,

But keep off from me till 't is issued. As
 I look upon thy hands, my curdling limbs
 Quiver with the anticipated wrenching,
 And the cold drops strain through my brow as if—
 But onward—I have borne it—I can bear it.—
 How looks my father?

Officer. With his wonted aspect.

Jac. Fosc. So doth the earth, and sky, the blue of ocean,
 The brightness of our city, and her domes,
 The mirth of her Piazza, even now
 Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
 Even here, into these chambers of the unknown
 Who govern, and the unknown and the unnumber'd
 Judged and destroy'd in silence—all things wear
 The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
 Nothing can sympathize with Foscari,
 Not even a Foscari.—Sir, I attend you.

[*Exeunt* JACOPO FOSCARI, *Officer*, &c.]

Enter MEMMO and another Senator.

Memmo. He 's gone—we are too late :—think you the “Ten”
 Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
 Persisting in his first avowal; but
 More I know not.

Memmo. And that is much; the secrets
 Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
 From us, the premier nobles of the state,
 As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumours
 Which (like the tales of spectres that are rife
 Near ruin'd buildings) never have been proved,
 Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little
 Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
 Unfathom'd mysteries.

Memmo. But with length of time
 We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
 Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

Sen. Or Doge!

Memmo. Why, no, not if I can avoid it.

Sen. 'T is the first station of the state, and may
 Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
 Attain'd by noble aspirants.

Memmo. To such
 I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
 Is limited: I 'd rather be an unit
 Of an united and imperial “Ten,”

Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher.—
Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA, with a female Attendant.

Mar. What, no one?—I am wrong, there still are two;
But they are senators.

Memmo. Most noble lady,
Command us.

Mar. *I command!*—Alas! my life
Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.

Memmo. I understand thee, but I must not answer.

Mar. (fiercely). True—none dare answer here save on the rack,
Or question, save those——

Memmo (interrupting her). High-born dame! bethink thee
Where thou now art.

Mar. Where I now am!—It was
My husband's father's palace.

Memmo. The Duke's palace.

Mar. And his son's prison; true, I have not forgot it;
And if there were no other nearer, bitterer
Remembrances, would thank the illustrious Memmo
For pointing out the pleasures of the place.

Memmo. Be calm.

Mar. (looking up towards heaven). I am; but oh, thou eternal God!
Canst thou continue so, with such a world?

Memmo. Thy husband yet may be absolved.

Mar. He is,
In heaven. I pray you, signor Senator,
Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
So is the Doge; he has a son at stake,
Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
Or had: they are there within, or were at least
An hour since, face to face, as judge and culprit:
Will he condemn him?

Memmo. I trust not.

Mar. But if
He does not, there are those will sentence both.

Memmo. They can.

Mar. And with them power and will are one
In wickedness:—my husband's lost!

Memmo. Not so;
Justice is judge in Venice.

Mar. If it were so,
There now would be no Venice. But let it
Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
Of nature's summons; but the "Ten's" is quicker,

And we must wait on 't. Ah! a voice of wail!

[*A faint cry within.*]

Sen. Hark!

Memmo. 'T was a cry of—

Mar. No, no; not my husband's—
Not Foscari's.

Memmo. The voice was—

Mar. Not his; no.
He shriek! No; that should be his father's part,
Not his—not his—he 'll die in silence.

[*A faint groan again within.*]

Memmo. What!
Again?

Mar. His voice! it seem'd so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but—no—no—no—it must have been
A fearful pang which wrung a groan from him.

Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs, wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain in silence?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari,
Though they sweep both the Doge and son from life;
I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs;
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have shriek'd,
But did not, for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with tears.

Memmo. All 's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all 's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Memmo. How now, friend, what seek you?

Officer. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.

[*Exit Officer*]

Memmo. Lady,
'T were better to retire.

Senator (*offering to assist her*). I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! I will tend him.

Memmo. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers,
Except to the "Ten," and their familiars.

Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have enter'd—many never; but

They shall not balk my entrance.

Memmo. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.

Mar. Who shall oppose me?

Memmo. They
Whose duty 't is to do so.

Mar. 'T is *their* duty
To trample on all human feelings, all
Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends, who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass.

Memmo. It is impossible.

Mar. That shall be tried.
Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through hosts
With levell'd spears; and think you a few jailors
Shall put me from my path? Give me, then, way;
This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
Of the Duke's son, the Duke's *innocent* son,
And they shall hear this!

Memmo. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.

Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.

[*Exit* MARINA.]

Sen. Poor lady!

Memmo. 'T is mere desperation; she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.

[*The Officer passes over the stage with another person.*]

Memmo. I hardly
Thought that the "Ten" had even this touch of pity,
Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is 't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to death
By the compassionate trance, poor nature's last
Resource against the tyranny of pain?

Memmo. I marvel they condemn him not at once.

Sen. That 's not their policy: they 'd have him live,
Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land,
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,

Consuming but not killing.

Memmo. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the letter, which he says was written,
Address'd to Milan's duke, in the full knowledge
That it would fall into the senate's hands,
And thus he should be reconvey'd to Venice.

Memmo. But as a culprit.

Sen. Yes, but to his country;
And that was all he sought—so he avouches.

Memmo. The accusation of the bribes was proved.

Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
Has been annull'd by the death-bed confession
Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
Chief of the "Ten."⁵

Memmo. Then why not clear him?

Sen. That
They ought to answer; for it is well known
That Almero Donato, as I said,
Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.

Memmo. There must be more in this strange process than
The apparent crimes of the accused disclose—
But here come two of the "Ten; let us retire.

[*Exeunt MEMMO and Senator.*

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Barb. That were too much; believe me, 't was not meet
The trial should go farther at this moment.

Lor. And so the Council must break up, and Justice
Pause in her full career, because a woman
Breaks in on our deliberations!

Barb. No,
That's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's state.

Lor. And had he not recover'd?

Barb. To relapse
Upon the least renewal.

Lor. 'T was not tried.

Barb. 'T is vain to murmur; the majority
In council were against you.

Lor. Thanks to you, sir,
And the old ducal dotard, who combined
The worthy voices which o'erruled my own.

Barb. I am a judge; but must confess that part
Of our stern duty, which prescribes the question,
And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,

Makes me wish——

Lor. What?

Barb. That *you* would *sometimes* feel,
As I do always.

Lor. Go to! you 're a child,
Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
About by every breath, shook by a sigh,
And melted by a tear—a precious judge
For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
Be partner in my policy!

Barb. He shed
No tears.

Lor. He cried out twice.

Barb. A saint had done so,
Even with the crown of glory in his eye,
At such inhuman artifice of pain
As was forced on him; but he did not cry
For pity—not a word nor groan escaped him;
And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
But wrung from pangs, and follow'd by no prayers.

Lor. He mutter'd many times between his teeth,
But inarticulately.

Barb. That I heard not;
You stood more near him.

Lor. I did so.

Barb. Methought,
To my surprise too, you were touch'd with mercy;
And were the first to call out for assistance
When he was failing.

Lor. I believed that swoon
His last.

Barb. And have I not oft heard thee name
His and his father's death your nearest wish?

Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say,
With his guilt unavow'd, he 'll be lamented.

Barb. What! wouldst thou slay his memory?

Lor. Wouldst thou have
His state descend to his children, as it must,
If he die unattainted?

Barb. War with *them* too!

Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine are nothing.

Barb. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
And the repress'd convulsion of the high
And princely brow of his old father, which
Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though rarely,
Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away

In stern serenity ; these moved you not ?

[*Exit* LOREDANO.]

He 's silent in his hate, as Foscari
 Was in his suffering ; and the poor wretch moved me
 More by his silence than a thousand outcries
 Could have effected. 'T was a dreadful sight
 When his distracted wife broke through into
 The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
 What we could scarcely look upon, long used
 To such sights. I must think no more of this,
 Lest I forget in this compassion for
 Our foes their former injuries, and lose
 The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
 For him and me ; but mine would be content
 With lesser retribution than he thirsts for ;
 And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
 To milder thoughts ; but, for the present, Foscari
 Has a short hourly respite, granted at
 The instance of the elders of the Council,
 Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
 The hall, and his own sufferings.—Lo ! they come :
 How feeble and forlorn ! I cannot bear
 To look on them again in this extremity :
 I 'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

[*Exit* BARBARIGO.]

ACT II.

SCENE.—A HALL IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

The DOGE and a SENATOR.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
 Now, or postpone it till to-morrow ?

Doge. Now ;
 I overlook'd it yesterday ; it wants
 Merely the signature. Give me the pen—

[*The Doge sits down and signs the paper.*]

There, signor.

Sen. (*looking at the paper*). You have forgot ; it is not sign'd.

Doge. Not sign'd ? Ah, I perceive my eyes begin
 To wax more weak with age. I did not see
 That I had dipp'd the pen without effect.

Sen. (*dipping the pen into the ink, and placing the paper before the Doge*). Your hand, too, shakes, my lord: allow me, thus—

Doge. 'T is done, I thank you.

Sen. Thus the act confirm'd
By you and by the "Ten," gives peace to Venice.

Doge. 'T is long since she enjoy'd it: may it be
As long ere she resume her arms!

Sen. 'T is almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.

Doge. No doubt:
I found her queen of ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy: it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem
The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema
And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

Sen. 'T is most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

Doge. Perhaps so.

Sen. Which should be made manifest.

Doge. I have not complain'd, sir.

Sen. My good lord, forgive me.

Doge. For what?

Sen. My heart bleeds for you.

Doge. For me, signor?

Sen. And for your—

Doge. Stop!

Sen. It must have way, my lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kindness,
Not to feel deeply for your son.

Doge. Was this
In your commission?

Sen. What, my lord?

Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's sign'd;
Return with it to them who sent you.

Sen. I
Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council
That you would fix an hour for their reunion.

Doge. Say, when they will—now, even at this moment,
If it so please them: I am the state's servant.

Sen. They would accord some time for your repose.

Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which shall cause
The loss of an hour's time unto the state.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and *what* I have been ever. [Exit SENATOR.
(The DOGE remains in silence.)

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!

Doge. Say on.

Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.

Doge. Bid her enter. Poor

Marina! [Exit Attendant.
(The DOGE remains in silence as before.)

Enter MARINA.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The state.

Mar. I wish'd to speak to you of *him*.

Doge. Your husband?

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter.

Mar. I had obtain'd permission from the "Ten"
To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. 'T is revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. The "Ten."—When we had reach'd "the Bridge of
Sighs,"⁴

Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurr'd; a messenger was sent back to
The "Ten;" but as the court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal re-assembled,
The dungeon-walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,

The form has been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourn'd; and, till it meets,
'T is dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,

They 'll torture him again ; and he and I
Must purchase, by renewal of the rack,
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the heavens ?—Oh God !
Dost thou see this ?

Doge. Child—child——

Mar. (*abruptly*). Call me not “ child ! ”

You soon will have no children—you deserve none—
You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans ! Though these did not weep
Their boys who died in battle, is it written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretch'd forth a hand to save them ?

Doge. You behold me :

I cannot weep—I would I could ; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the diadem of earth,
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves
A talisman to still them—I 'd give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know not Venice.
Alas ! how should you ? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me—they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father ;
The sire's destruction would not save the son ;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is—but they have not conquer'd yet.

Mar. But they have crush'd,

Doge. Nor crush'd as yet—I live.

Mar. And your son—how long will he live ?

Doge. I trust,

For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,
Hath ruin'd all by that detected letter ;
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke :
Had he but borne a little, little longer,
His Candiote exile, I had hopes—he has quench'd them—
He must return.

Mar. To exile ?

Doge. I have said it.

Mar. And can I not go with him ?

Doge. You well know

This prayer of yours was twice denied before

By the assembled "Ten;" and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors, on the part
Of your lord, render them still more austere.

Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old human fiends,
With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes, strange
To tears, save drops of dotage; with long white
And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and heads
As palsied as their hearts are hard,—they council,
Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if life
Were no more than the feelings long extinguish'd
In their accursed bosoms.

Doge. You know not——

Mar. I do—I do—and so should you, methinks—
That these are demons; could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and suckled—
Who have loved, or talk'd at least of love—have given
Their hands in sacred vows—have danced their babes
Upon their knees, perhaps have mourn'd above them
In pain, in peril, or in death—who are,
Or were at least in seeming, human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you yourself,
You, who abet them?

Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

Mar. You know it well,
And feel it nothing.

Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.

Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and your flesh shook not;
And, after that, what are a woman's words?
No more than woman's tears, that they should shake you.

Doge. Woman! this clamorous grief of thine, I tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weigh'd with that
Which——but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from me;
Pity thy son! *Thou* pity!—'t is a word
Strange to thy heart—how came it on thy lips?

Doge. I must bear these reproaches, though they wrong me.
Couldst thou but read——

Mar. 'T is not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts; where, then,
Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

Doge. (*pointing downwards*). There!

Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though

Loaded with marble, than the thoughts which press it
Now, you will know me better.

Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloke their soul's hoarded triumph, as a fit one
To mingle with my name; that name shall be
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was
When I received it.

Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.

Doge. Would it were so!
Better for him he never had been born,
Better for me.—I have seen our house dishonour'd.

Mar. That's false! A truer, nobler, trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppress'd but not disgraced, crush'd, overwhelm'd,
Alive, or dead, for prince or paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonour'd!—*he* dishonour'd!
I tell thee, Doge, 't is Venice is dishonour'd;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.
'T is ye who are all traitors, tyrant!—ye!
Did you but love your country like this victim,
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile,
You'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was,
Indeed, all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took from me
Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again?

Doge. Has he not been condemn'd?

Mar. Is none but guilt so?

Doge. Time may restore his memory—I would hope so.
He was my pride, my—but 't is useless now—
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were ominous.

Mar. I say he's innocent: and, were he not so,
Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

Doge. I shrank not from him:

But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those duties;
Twice I demanded it, but was refused;
They must then be fulfill'd.

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
The "Ten."

Doge. Who bears it?

Att. Noble Loredano.

Doge. He!—but admit him. *[Exit Attendant.]*

Mar. Must I then retire?

Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this
Concerns your husband, and if not—Well, signor,
Your pleasure! *[To LOREDANO entering.]*

Lor. I bear that of the "Ten."

Doge. They

Have chosen well their envoy.

Lor. 'T is *their* choice

Which leads me here.

Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
And no less to their courtesy.—Proceed.

Lor. We have decided.

Doge. We?

Lor. The "Ten" in council.

Doge. What! have they met again, and met without
Apprizing me?

Lor. They wish'd to spare your feelings,
No less than age.

Doge. That 's new—when spared they either?
I thank them, notwithstanding.

Lor. You know well
That they have power to act at their discretion,
With or without the presence of the Doge.

Doge. 'T is some years since I learn'd this, long before
I became Doge, or dream'd of such advancement.
You need not school me, signor: I sate in
That council when you were a young patrician.

Lor. True, in my father's time; I have heard him and
The admiral, his brother, say as much.
Your highness may remember them: they both
Died suddenly.

Doge. And if they did so, better
So die than live on lingeringly in pain.

Lor. No doubt; yet most men like to live their days out.

Doge. And did not they?

Lor. The grave knows best: they died,
As I said, suddenly.

Doge. Is that so strange,
That you repeat the word emphatically?

Lor. So far from strange, that never was there death
In my mind half so natural as theirs.
Think *you* not so?

Doge. What should I think of mortals?

Lor. That they have mortal foes.

Doge. I understand you:
Your sires were mine, and you are heir in all things.

Lor. You best know if I should be so.

Doge. I do.
Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
To poison. 'T is perhaps as true as most
Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
A fable.

Lor. Who dares say so?

Doge. I!—'T is true
Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
As their son e'er can be, and I no less
Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe:
I never work'd by plot in council, nor
Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
Of practice against life by steel or drug.
The proof is, your existence.

Lor. I fear not.

Doge. You have no cause, being what I am; but were I
That you would have me thought, you long ere now
Were past the sense of fear. Hate on; I care not.

Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
That is, by open means.

Doge. But I, good signor,
Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
In blood, in mind, in means; and that they know
Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
Striven all they dare to weigh me down: be sure,
Before or since that period, had I held you
At so much price as to require your absence,
A word of mine had set such spirits to work
As would have made you nothing. But in all things
I have observed the strictest reverence;
Nor for the laws alone, for those *you* have strain'd
(I do not speak of *you* but as a single
Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what

I could enforce for my authority,
 Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
 I have observed with veneration, like
 A priest's for the high altar, even unto
 The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
 Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,
 The health, the pride, and welfare of the state.
 And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'T is decreed,
 That, without farther repetition of
 The question, or continuance of the trial,
 Which only tends to show how stubborn guilt is
 (The "Ten," dispensing with the stricter law
 Which still prescribes the question till a full
 Confession, and the prisoner partly having
 Avow'd his crime, in not denying that
 The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
 James Foscari return to banishment,
 And sail in the same galley which convey'd him.

Mar. Thank God! At least they will not drag him more
 Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
 But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
 Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
 Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my daughter.

Mar. No, 't was too human. May I share his exile?

Lor. Of this the "Ten" said nothing.

Mar. So I thought:
 That were too human, also. But it was not
 Inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. (to the DOGE). Then, father,
 Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:

[To LOREDANO.

And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
 Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavour.

Mar. And you, signor?

Lor. Lady!
 'T is not for me to anticipate the pleasure
 Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
 To use for the decrees of——

Doge. Daughter, know you
 In what a presence you pronounce these things?

Mar. A prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!
It galls you :—well, you are his equal, as
You think ; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant :—well, then, you 're a prince,
A princely noble ; and what then am I ?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free thoughts ?

Lor. The presence of your husband's judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared mechanics,
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek slaves,
Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And mask'd nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings-off and drownings,
Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level ; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions,
Your " Bridge of Sighs," your strangling chamber, and
Your torturing instruments, have made ye seem
The beings of another and worse world !
Keep such for them : I fear ye not. I know ye
Have known and proved your worst, in the infernal
Process of my poor husband ! Treat me as
Ye treated him :—you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear *from* you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not ?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady ! words
Utter'd within these walls, I bear no further
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass
Between the Duke and me on the state's service.
Doge ! have you aught in answer ?

Doge. Something from
The Doge ; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My mission *here* is to the Doge.

Doge. Then say
The Doge will chuse his own ambassador
Or state in person what is meet ; and for
The father——

Lor. I remember *mine*.—Farewell !

I kiss the hands of the illustrious lady,
And bow me to the Duke.

[Exit LOREDANO.]

Mar. Are you content?

Doge. I am what you behold.

Mar. And that 's a mystery.

Doge. All things are so to mortals : who can read them,
Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume—man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and brain,
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it : all the sins
We find in others, nature made our own ;
All our advantages are those of fortune ;
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against fate, 't were well.
We should remember fortune can take nought,
Save what she gave—the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all passions
Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow—clay from first to last,
The prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our fame is in men's breath,⁵ our lives upon
Less than their breath ; our durance upon days,
Our days on seasons ; our whole being on
Something which is not *us!*—So, we are slaves,
The greatest as the meanest—nothing rests
Upon our will : the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm ;
And when we think we lead, we are most led,
And still towards death, a thing which comes as much
Without our act or choice, as birth ; so that
Methinks we must have sinn'd in some old world,
And *this* is hell : the best is, that it is not
Eternal.

Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.

Doge. And how then shall we judge each other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am call'd upon
To judge my son? I have administer'd
My country faithfully—victoriously—
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what

She was and is : my reign has double realms ;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.

Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such things,
So I be left with him.

Doge. You shall be so ;
Thus much they cannot well deny.

Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.

Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?

Mar. I know not, reckon not—
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman—
Any where, where we might respire unfetter'd,
And live, nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.

Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade for husband,
And turn him into traitor?

Mar. He is none ;
The country is the traitress, which thrusts forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem
None rebels except subjects? The prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more
A brigand than the robber-chief.

Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.

Mar. No ; thou
Observ'st, obey'st, such laws as make old Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.

Doge. I found the law ; I did not make it. Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment ; but, as prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the charter
Left by our fathers.

Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?

Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is—a state to rival
In deeds, and days, and sway, and, let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeath'd
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people sway'd by senates.

Mar. Rather say,
Groan'd under the stern oligarchs.

Doge. Perhaps so ;

But yet subdued the world : in such a state
 An individual, be he richest of
 Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest,
 Without a name, is alike nothing, when
 The policy, irrevocably tending
 To one great end, must be maintain'd in vigour.

Mar. This means that you are more a Doge than father.

Doge. It means I am more citizen than either.
 If we had not for many centuries
 Had thousands of such citizens, and shall,
 I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

Mar. Accursed be the city where the laws
 Would stifle nature's !

Doge. Had I as many sons
 As I have years, I would have given them all,
 Not without feeling, but I would have give them
 To the state's service, to fulfil her wishes
 On the flood, in the field, or if it must be,
 As it, alas ! has been, to ostracism,
 Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse
 She might decree.

Mar. And this is patriotism?
 To me it seems the worst barbarity.
 Let me seek out my husband : the sage " Ten,"
 With all its jealousy, will hardly war
 So far with a weak woman as deny me
 A moment's access to his dungeon.

Doge. I'll
 So far take on myself, as order that
 You may be admitted.

Mar. And what shall I say
 To Foscari from his father ?

Doge. That he obey
 The laws.

Mar. And nothing more ? Will you not see him
 Ere he depart ? It may be the last time.

Doge. The last !—My boy !—The last time I shall see
 My last of children ! Tell him I will come.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE.—THE PRISON OF JACOPO FOSCARI.

JACOPO FOSCARI (*solus*).

No light, save yon faint gleam, which shows me walls
 Which never echo'd but to sorrow's sounds,
 The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
 Of feet on which the iron clank'd, the groan
 Of death, the imprecation of despair?
 And yet for this I have return'd to Venice,
 With some faint hope, 't is true, that time, which wears
 The marble down, had worn away the hate
 Of men's hearts: but I knew them not, and here
 Must I consume my own, which never beat
 For Venice but with such a yearning as
 The dove has for her distant nest, when wheeling
 High in the air on her return to greet
 Her callow brood. What letters are these which

[*Approaching the wall.*]

Are scrawl'd along the inexorable wall?⁶
 Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the names
 Of my sad predecessors in this place,
 The dates of their despair, the brief words of
 A grief too great for many. This stone page
 Holds like an epitaph their history,
 And the poor captive's tale is graven on
 His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
 Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
 His own and his beloved's name. Alas!
 I recognize some names familiar to me,
 And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
 Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
 Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches.

[*He engraves his name.*]*Enter a FAMILIAR of the "Ten."*

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fesc.

I pray you set it down;

I am past hunger: but my lips are parch'd—
 The water!

Fam. There.

Jac. Fosc. (after drinking). I thank you : I am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you that
Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fosc. Till when?

Fam. I know not.—It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fosc. Ah! they relent, then—I had ceased to hope it :
'T was time.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My best beloved!

Jac. Fosc. (embracing her). My true wife,
And only friend! What happiness!

Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fosc. How! wouldst thou share a dungeon?

Mar. Ay,
The rack, the grave, all,—any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall
Be ignorant of each other; yet I will
Share that—all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.
How dost thou? How are those worn limbs? Alas!
Why do I ask? Thy paleness—

Jac. Fosc. 'T is the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!

Mar. 'T is
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine eyes—
No, not thine eyes—they sparkle—how they sparkle!

Jac. Fosc. And thine!—but I am blinded by the torch.

Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst thou see here?

Jac. Fosc. Nothing at first; but use and time had taught me
Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice: but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

Mar. What ?

Jac. Fosc. My name : look, 't is there—recorded next
The name of him who here preceded me,
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him ?

Jac. Fosc. These walls are silent of men's ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern walls
Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,
Or those who soon must be so. *What of him ?*
Thou askest.—What of me ? may soon be ask'd,
With the like answer—doubt and dreadful surmise—
Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. *I speak of thee !*

Jac. Fosc. And wherefore not ? All then shall speak of me :
The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men's groans
Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's !
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life ;
And neither do I fear.

Mar. Thy life is safe.

Jac. Fosc. And liberty ?

Mar. The mind should make its own.

Jac. Fosc. That has a noble sound ; but 't is a sound,
A music most impressive, but too transient :
The mind is much, but is not all. The mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me ; but 't is not all, for there are things
More woful—such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.

Mar. Alas ! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is prince.

Jac. Fosc. That thought would scarcely aid me to endure it.
My doom is common, many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace ;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford
Our only day ; for, save the jailor's torch,
And a strange fire-fly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas !
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men ;
It sinks in solitude : my soul is social.

Mar. I will be with thee.

Jac. Fosc.

Ah! if it were so!

But *that* they never granted—nor will grant,
And I shall be alone: no men—no books—
Those lying likenesses of lying men.
I ask'd for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they were
Refused me; so these walls have been my study,
More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The hall not far from hence, which bears on high
Hundreds of Doges, and their deeds and dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fosc.

I know it—look!

[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the tortures which
he had undergone.*]

Mar. No—no—no more of that; even they relent
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fosc.

What then?

Mar.

That you

Return to Candia.

Jac. Fosc.

Then my last hope's gone.

I could endure my dungeon, for 't was Venice;
I could support the torture—there was something
In my native air that buoy'd my spirits up,
Like a ship on the ocean toss'd by storms,
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course: but *there*, afar,
In that accursed isle of slaves, and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seem'd mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

Mar. And *here*?

Jac. Fosc.

At once—by better means, as briefer.

What! would they even deny me my sires' sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

Mar.

My husband!

I have sued to accompany thee hence,
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is passion, and not patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A paradise; its first inhabitants

Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fosc. Well I know *how* wretched!

Mar. And yet you see how from their banishment
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remain'd of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean-Rome; ⁷
And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

Jac. Fosc. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs, seeking
Another region, with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila
From fertile Italy to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late country,
And many thoughts; but afterwards address'd
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this—though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fosc. Ay—we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can number
The hearts which broke in silence of that parting,
Or after their departure; of that malady⁸
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fever'd eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrain'd from treading them?
That melody,⁹ which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds,
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is strength,
I say,—the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his country can love nothing.

Mar. Obey her, then; 't is she that puts thee forth.

Jac. Fosc. Ay, there it is: 't is like a mother's curse
Upon my soul—the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,
Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitched together—I 'm alone.

Mar. You shall be so no more—I will go with thee.

Jac. Fosc. My best Marina!—and our children?

Mar. They,
 I fear, by the prevention of the state's
 Abhorrent policy (which holds all ties
 As threads, which may be broken at her pleasure),
 Will not be suffer'd to proceed with us.

Jac. Fosc. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes. With many a pang.
 But—I *can* leave them, children as they are,
 To teach you to be less a child. From this
 Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
 By duties paramount; and 't is our first
 On earth to bear.

Jac. Fosc. Have I not borne?

Mar. Too much
 From tyrannous injustice, and enough
 To teach you not to shrink now from a lot
 Which, as compared with that you have undergone
 Of late, is mercy.

Jac. Fosc. Ah! you never yet
 Were far away from Venice, never saw
 Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
 While every furrow of the vessel's track
 Seem'd ploughing deep into your heart; you never
 Saw day go down upon your native spires
 So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
 And after dreaming a disturbed vision
 Of them and theirs, awoke and found them not.

Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
 Of our departure from this much-loved city
 (Since you must *love* it, as it seems), and this
 Chamber of state her gratitude allots you.
 Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
 And by my uncles: we must sail ere night.

Jac. Fosc. That 's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?

Mar. You will.

Jac. Fosc. Where?

Mar. Here, or in the ducal chamber—
 He said not which. I would that you could bear
 Your exile as he bears it.

Jac. Fosc. Blame him not.
 I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
 He could not now act otherwise. A show
 Of feeling or compassion on his part
 Would have but drawn upon his aged head
 Suspicion from the "Ten," and upon mine
 Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated!

What pangs are those they have spared you ?

Jac. Fosc. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 't was
Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the state's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves. Away—away—
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorr'd,
Unjust, and—

Jac. Fosc. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my country ?

Mar. Men and angels !
The blood of myriads reeking up to heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and subjects
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads ; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence*. *Couldst thou say*
Aught in its favour, who would praise like *thee* ?

Jac. Fosc. Let us address us then, since so it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here ?

Enter LOREDANO, attended by Familiars.

Lor. (to the Familiars). Retire,
But leave the torch. [*Exeunt the two Familiars.*]

Jac. Fosc. Most welcome, noble signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have drawn
Such presence hither.

Lor. 'T is not the first time
I have visited these places.

Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us ?

Lor. Neither are of my office, noble lady !
I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce the "Ten's" decree.

Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated ; it is known.

Lor. As how ?

Mar. I have inform'd him, not so gently,
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues ; but he knew it.
If you come for our thanks, take them, and hence !
The dungeon gloom is deep enough without you,
And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though

Their sting is honester.

Jac. Fosc. I pray you, calm you :
What can avail such words ?

Mar. To let him know
That he is known.

Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.

Lor. You do well
To nurse them wisely. Foscari—you know
Your sentence, then ?

Jac. Fosc. Return to Candia ?

Lor. True—
For life.

Jac. Fosc. Not long.

Lor. I said—for *life*.

Jac. Fosc. And I
Repeat—not long.

Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea—afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

Jac. Fosc. Both the same to me : the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is 't true my wife accompanies me ?

Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.

Mar. Who obtain'd that justice ?

Lor. One who wars not with women.

Mar. But oppresses
Men : howsoever, let him have *my* thanks
For the only boon I would have ask'd or taken
From him, or such as he is.

Lor. He receives them
As they are offer'd.

Mar. May they thrive with him
So much!—no more.

Jac. Fosc. Is this, sir, your whole mission ?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

Mar. Nobler !

Lor. How nobler ?

Mar. As more generous !
We say the "generous steed," to express the purity
Of his high blood. Thus much I've learnt, although
Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),

From these Venetians who have skimm'd the coasts
 Of Egypt, and her neighbour Araby :
 And why not say as soon " the generous man ?"
 If race be aught, it is in qualities
 More than in years ; and mine, which is as old
 As yours, is better in its product, nay—
 Look not so stern—but get you back, and pore
 Upon your genealogic trees most green
 Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
 Blush to find ancestors, who would have blush'd
 For such a son—thou cold inveterate hater !

Jac. Fosc. Again, Marina !

Mar. Again ! *still*, Marina.
 See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
 With a last look upon our misery ?
 Let him partake it.

Jac. Fosc. That were difficult.

Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it now—
 Ay, he may veil beneath a marble brow
 And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
 A few brief words of truth shame the devil's servants
 No less than master ; I have probed his soul
 A moment, as the eternal fire, ere long,
 Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from me !
 With death, and chains, and exile in his hand,
 To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit :
 They are his weapons, not his armour, for
 I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
 I care not for his frowns ! We can but die,
 And he but live, for him the very worst
 Of destinies : each day secures him more
 His tempter's.

Jac. Fosc. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so ; and *who* hath made us *mad* ?

Lor. Let her go on ; it irks not me.

Mar. That's false !

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
 Of cold looks upon manifold griefs ! You came
 To be sued to in vain—to mark our tears,
 And hoard our groans—to gaze upon the wreck
 Which you have made a prince's son—my husband !
 In short, to trample on the fallen—an office
 The hangman shrinks from, as all men from him.
 How have you sped ! We are wretched, signor, as
 Your plots could make, and vengeance could desire us,
 And how *feel* you ?

Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted :

They feel not, but no less are shiver'd. Come,
Foscari ; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit habitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly,
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fosc. My father !

Doge. (*embracing him*). Jacopo ! my son—my son !

Jac. Fosc. My father still ! How long it is since I
Have heard thee name my name—*our* name !

Doge. My boy !

Couldst thou but know—

Jac. Fosc. I rarely, sir, have murmur'd.

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. Doge, look there !

[*She points to LOREDANO.*

Doge. I see the man—what mean'st thou ?

Mar. Caution !

Lor. Being

The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch ! 't is no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice :
As such I recommend it, as I would
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous ; I have long
Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes ; *worse* he could not.

Jac. Fosc. Father, let not these

Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it—is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings ?

Doge. You behold
These white hairs ?

Jac. Fosc. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father !

I loved you ever—never more than now.
Look to my children—to your last child's children :
Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.
May I not see *them* also ?

Mar. No—not *here*.

Jac. Fosc. They might behold their parent any where.

Mar. I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,

To freeze their young blood in its natural current.
 They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not that
 Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well
 I know his fate may one day be their heritage,
 But let it only be their *heritage*,
 And not their present fee. Their senses, though
 Alive to love, are yet awake to terror ;
 And these vile damps too, and yon *thick green wave*
 Which floats above the place where we now stand—
 A cell so far below the waters' level,
 Sending its pestilence through every crevice,
 Might strike them : *this is not their atmosphere*,
 However you—and you—and, most of all,
 As worthiest—you, sir, noble Loredano !
 May breathe it without prejudice.

Jac. Fosc. I had not
 Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.
 I shall depart, then, without meeting them ?

Doge. Not so : they shall await you in my chamber.

Jac. Fosc. And must I leave them *all* ?

Lor. You must.

Jac. Fosc. Not one ?

Lor. They are the state's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.

Lor. They are, in all maternal things.

Mar. That is,
 In all things painful. If they 're sick, they will
 Be left to me to tend them ; should they die,
 To me to bury and to mourn ; but if
 They live, they 'll make you soldiers, senators,
 Slaves, exiles—what *you* will ; or if they are
 Females with portions, brides and *bribes* for nobles !
 Behold the state's care for its sons and mothers !

Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind is fair.

Jac. Fosc. How know you that here, where the genial wind
 Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom ?

Lor. 'T was so
 When I came here. The galley floats within
 A bow-shot of the "Riva di Schiavoni."

Jac. Fosc. Father ! I pray you to precede me, and
 Prepare my children to behold their father.

Doge. Be firm, my son !

Jac. Fosc. I will do my endeavour.

Mar. Farewell ! at least to this detested dungeon,
 And him to whose good offices you owe
 In part your past imprisonment.

Lor. And present
Liberation.

Doge. He speaks truth.

Jac. Fosc. No doubt : but 't is
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I owe him.
He knows this, or he had not sought to change them.
But I reproach not.

Lor. The time narrows, signor.

Jac. Fosc. Alas! I little thought so lingeringly
To leave abodes like this, but when I feel
That every step I take even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and—

Doge. Boy! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame him now.
They will relieve his heart—that too kind heart—
And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep now,
But would not gratify yon wretch so far.
Let us proceed. *Doge*, lead the way.

Lor. (*to the Familiar*). The torch there!

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

Doge. My son, you are feeble; take this hand.

Jac. Fosc. Alas!

Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

Lor. Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 't will sting you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we 're plunged,
No hand of ours would stretch itself to meet it.
Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar gave you;
It could not save, but will support you ever.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE.—A HALL IN THE DUCAL PALACE.

*Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.**Barb.* And have you confidence in such a project?*Lor.* I have.*Barb.* 'T is hard upon his years.*Lor.*

Say rather

Kind to relieve him from the cares of state.

Barb. 'T will break his heart.*Lor.*

Age has no heart to break.

He has seen his son's half broken, and, except

A start of feeling in his dungeon, never

Swerved.

Barb. In his countenance, I grant you, never;

But I have seen him sometimes in a calm

So desolate, that the most clamorous grief

Had nought to envy him within. Where is he?

Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with

His son, and the whole race of Foscari.

Barb. Bidding farewell.*Lor.*

A last—as soon he shall

Bid to his dukedom.

Barb.

When embarks the son?

Lor. Forthwith—when this long leave is taken. 'T is

Time to admonish them again.

Barb.

Forbear;

Retrench not from their moments.

Lor.

Not I, now

We have higher business for our own. This day

Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,

As the first of his son's last banishment;

And that is vengeance.

Barb.

In my mind, too deep.

Lor. 'T is moderate—not even life for life, the rule

Denounced of retribution from all time:

They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

Barb. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?*Lor.*

Doubtless.

Barb. And did not this shake your suspicion?*Lor.*

No.

Barb. But if this deposition should take place,

By our united influence in the council,
It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds.

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for aught
I care, depute the Council on their knees
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope) to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

Barb. What, if he will not?

Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.

Barb. But will the laws uphold us?

Lor. What laws?—The "Ten" are laws; and if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.

Barb. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you,
Our powers are such.

Barb. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.

Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.

Barb. Unask'd?

Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances :
If they were from his heart, he may be thankful ;
If not, 't will punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time ; let us join them,
And be *thou* fix'd in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not
Fail to move them, and remove him : since
Their thoughts, their objects, have been sounded, do not
You, with your wonted scruples, teach us pause,
And all will prosper.

Barb. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.

Lor. He is safe, I tell you ;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them : 't is his throne
Alone is aim'd at.

Barb. But discarded princes
Are seldom long of life.

Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.

Barb. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long enough ; and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence ! In to council !

[*Exeunt* LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.]

Enter MEMMO and a Senator.

Sen. A summons to the "Ten !" Why so ?

Memmo.

The "Ten"

Alone can answer : they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are summon'd—
That is enough.

Sen. For them, but not for us ;
I would know why.

Memmo. You will know why anon,
If you obey, and, if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obey'd.

Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but*—

Memmo. In Venice *but* 's a traitor.
But me no *buts*, unless you would pass o'er
The Bridge which few repass.

Sen. I am silent.

Memmo. Why
Thus hesitate ?—The "Ten" have call'd in aid
Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the senate—you are one,
And I another ; and it seems to me
Both honour'd by the choice or chance which leads us
To mingle with a body so august.

Sen. Most true. I say no more.

Memmo. As we hope, signor,
And all may honestly (that is, all those
Of noble blood may), one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the senate's
Chosen delegates a school of wisdom, to
Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

Sen. Let us view them ; they,
No doubt, are worth it.

Memmo. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are worth
Something, at least, to you or me.

Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary ; but being
Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
I shall fulfil my office.

Memmo. Let us not

Be latest in obeying the "Ten's" summons.

Sen. All are not met, but I am of your thought
So far—let 's in.

Memmo. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils—we will not be least so.

[*Exeunt*

Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI, and MARINA.

Jac. Fosc. Ah, father! though I must and will depart,
Yet—yet—I pray you to obtain for me
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annex'd they please,
But let me still return.

Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our country's will, 't is not
For us to look beyond.¹⁰

Jac. Fosc. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be less so
Now you are last; but did the state demand
The exile of the disinterred ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting round
To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty paramount to every duty.

Mar. My husband! let us on: this but prolongs
Our sorrow.

Jac. Fosc. But we are not summon'd yet;
The galley's sails are not unfurl'd:—who knows?
The wind may change.

Mar. And if it do, it will not
Change *their* hearts, or your lot; the galley's oars
Will quickly clear the harbour.

Jac. Fosc. Oh, ye elements!
Where are your storms?

Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

Jac. Fosc. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for prosperous
And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves

And waken Auster, sovereign of the tempest !
Till the sea dash me back on my own shore,
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which skirt
The land I love, and never shall see more !

Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside you ?

Jac. Fosc. No—

No—not for thee, too good, too kind ! Mayst thou
Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support ! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of heaven howl down the gulf,
And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appall'd, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them, as an offering
To appease the waves. The billow which destroys me
Will be more merciful than man, and bear me,
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave,
From fishers' hands upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er received
One lacerated like the heart which then
Will be——But wherefore breaks it not ? why live I ?

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time, to master
Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one : why,
What is this to the things thou hast borne in silence—
Imprisonment and actual torture ?

Jac. Fosc. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture ! But you are right,
It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

Doge. Would
It could avail thee ! but no less thou hast it.

Jac. Fosc. Forgive——

Doge. What ?

Jac. Fosc. My poor mother for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself
(As I forgive you) for the gift of life,
Which you bestow'd upon me as my sire.

Mar. What hast thou done ?

Jac. Fosc. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow : but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chasten'd and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter !

Mar. Fear not : *that* 's reserved

For your oppressors.

Jac. Fosc. Let me hope not.

Mar. Hope not?

Jac. Fosc. I cannot wish them *all* they have inflicted.

Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A thousand-fold!
May the worm which ne'er dieth feed upon them!

Jac. Fosc. They may repent.

Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Officer. Signor! the boat is at the shore—the wind
Is rising—we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fosc. And I to be attended. Once more, father,
Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own trembles!

Jac. Fosc. No—you mistake; 't is yours that shakes, my father.
Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fosc. No—nothing.

[To the Officer.]

Lend me your arm, good signor.

Officer. You turn pale—
Let me support you—paler—ho! some aid there!
Some water!

Mar. Ah, he is dying!

Jac. Fosc. Now, I 'm ready—
My eyes swim strangely—where 's the door?

Mar. Away!

Let me support him—my best love! Oh God!
How faintly beats this heart—this pulse!

Jac. Fosc. The light!

Is it the light?—I am faint.

[Officer presents him with water.]

Officer. He will be better,
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fosc. I doubt not. Father—wife—
Your hands!

Mar. There 's death in that damp clammy grasp.
Oh God!—My Foscari, how fare you?

Jac. Fosc. Well!

[He dies.]

Officer. He 's gone.

Doge. He 's free.

Mar. No—no, he is not dead;
There must be life yet in that heart—he could not

Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter!

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now—thou hast no son.
Oh Foscari!

Officer. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants! your base office
Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his remains
To those who know to honour them.

Officer. I must
Inform the signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the signory from *me*, the Doge,
They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject—
Now he is *mine*—my broken-hearted boy! [Exit Officer.]

Mar. And must I live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

Mar. My children! true—they live, and I must live
To bring them up to serve the state, and die
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so!

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What!
You feel it then at last—*you!*—Where is now
The stoic of the state?

Doge. (*throwing himself down by the body*). Here!

Mar. Ay, weep on!
I thought you had no tears—you hoarded them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more—never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Lor. What's here?

Mar. Ah! the devil come to insult the dead! Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 't is holy ground.
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Barb. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But pass'd here merely on our path from council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

Mar. (*pointing to the DOGE, who is still on the ground by his son's
body*). He's busy, look,
About the business you provided for him.

Are ye content ?

Barb. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.

Doge (rising). Sirs, I am ready.

Barb. No—not now.

Lor. Yet 't was important.

Doge. If 't was so, I can
Only repeat—I am ready.

Barb. It shall not be
Just now, though Venice totter'd o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you bring
Are evil, you may say them ; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on there :
If they be good, say on ; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.

Barb. I would they could !

Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.

Mar. Ah ! I thought it would be so.

Doge. What mean you ?

Mar. Lo ! there is the blood beginning
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari—
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.

[*To LOREDANO.*

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How death itself bears witness to thy deeds !

Doge. My child ! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body (*To his Attendants*). Signors, if it please you,
Within an hour I 'll hear you.

[*Exeunt DOGE, MARINA, and Attendants with the body.*

[*Manent LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.*

Barb. He must not
Be troubled now.

Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.

Barb. These are words ;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in
Upon it barbarous.

Lor. Sorrow preys upon
Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.

Barb. And therefore

You would deprive this old man of all business ?

Lor. The thing 's decreed. The Giunta and the "Ten"
Have made it law : who shall oppose that law ?

Barb. Humanity !

Lor. Because his son is dead ?

Barb. And yet unburied.

Lor. Had we known this when
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not—once past.

Barb. I 'll not consent.

Lor. You have consented to
All that 's essential—leave the rest to me.

Barb. Why press his abdication now ?

Lor. The feelings
Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit ; and what the state
Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

Barb. You have a son.

Lor. I *have*—and *had* a father.

Barb. Still so inexorable ?

Lor. Still.

Barb. But let him
Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.

Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle—I consent. Men may,
Even aged men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.
The victims are not equal : he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I
My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master
Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.
His sons, and he had four, are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.

Barb. And art thou sure
He dealt in such ?

Lor. Most sure.

Barb. And yet he seems
All openness.

Lor. And so he seem'd not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.

Barb. The attainted
And foreign traitor ?

Lor. Even so : when *he*,
 After the very night in which the " Ten"
 (Join'd with the Doge) decided his destruction,
 Met the great Duke at day-break with a jest,
 Demanding whether he should augur him
 " The good day or good night ?" his Doge-ship answer'd,
 " That he in truth had pass'd a night of vigil,
 In which (he added with a gracious smile)
 There often has been question about you." "
 'T was true ; the question was the death resolved
 Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died ;
 And the old Doge, who knew him doom'd, smiled on him
 With deadly cozenage, eight long months beforehand—
 Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
 Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmagnuola
 Is dead ; so are young Foscari and his brethren—
 I never *smiled* on them.

Barb. Was Carmagnuola
 Your friend ?

Lor. He was the safeguard of the city,
 In early life its foe, but, in his manhood,
 Its saviour first, then victim.

Barb. Ah ! that seems
 The penalty of saving cities. He
 Whom we now act against not only saved
 Our own, but added others to her sway.

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave a crown
 To him who took a city ; and they gave
 A crown to him who saved a citizen
 In battle : the rewards are equal. Now,
 If we should measure forth the cities taken
 By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
 Destroy'd by him, or *through* him, the account
 Were fearfully against him, although narrow'd
 To private havoc, such as between him
 And my dead father.

Barb. Are you then thus fix'd ?

Lor. Why, what should change me ?

Barb. That which changes me :
 But you, I know, are marble to retain
 A feud. But when all is accomplish'd, when
 The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
 His sons are dead, his family depress'd,
 And you and yours triumphant, shall you sleep ?

Lor. More soundly.

Barb. That 's an error, and you 'll find it
 Ere you sleep with your fathers.

Lor. They sleep not

In their accelerated graves, nor will
Till Foscari fill his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing towards
The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

Barb. Fancy's distemperature! There is no passion
More spectral or fantastical than hate;
Not even its opposite, love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.

Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?

Officer. By the ducal order,
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Barb. Their
Vault has been often open'd of late years.

Lor. 'T will be full soon, and may be closed for ever.

Officer. May I pass on?

Lor. You may.

Barb. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?

Officer. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the adjoining
Apartment, mutter forth the words—"My son!"
Scarce audibly. I must proceed.

[*Exit Officer.*

Barb. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.

Lor. Right!
We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The Council's resolution.

Barb. I protest
Against it at this moment.

Lor. As you please—
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours or mine.

[*Exeunt BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.*

ACT V.¹²

SCENE—THE DOGE'S APARTMENT.

THE DOGE and an ATTENDANT.

Att. My lord, the deputation is in waiting ;
But add, that if another hour would better
Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are alike. Let them approach.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

An Officer. Prince ! I have done your bidding.

Doge. What command ?

Officer. A melancholy one—to call the attendance
Of—

Doge. True—true—true ; I crave your pardon. I
Begin to fail in apprehension, and
Wax very old—old almost as my years.
Till now I fought them off, but they begin
To overtake me.

*Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory, and the
CHIEF OF THE TEN.*

Noble men, your pleasure !

Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole
With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more—no more of that.

Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke
Accept the homage of respect ?

Doge. I do
Accept it as 't is given—proceed.

Chief of the Ten. The "Ten,"
With a selected giunta from the senate
Of twenty-five of the best born patricians,
Having deliberated on the state
Of the republic, and the o'erwhelming cares
Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress
Your years, so long devoted to your country,
Have judged it fitting, with all reverence,
Now to solicit from your wisdom (which
Upon reflection must accord in this),
The resignation of the ducal ring,
Which you have worn so long and venerably ;
And, to prove that they are not ungrateful nor
Cold to your years and services, they add
An appanage of twenty hundred golden

Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid
Than should become a sovereign's retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly?

Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?

Doge. No.—Have you done?

Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty-four
Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.

Chief of the Ten. We
Will now retire.

Doge. Stay! Four and twenty hours
Will alter nothing which I have to say.

Chief of the Ten. Speak!

Doge. When I twice before reiterated
My wish to abdicate, it was refused me;
And not alone refused, but ye exacted
An oath from me that I would never more
Renew this instance. I have sworn to die
In full exertion of the functions which
My country call'd me here to exercise,
According to my honour and my conscience—
I cannot break *my* oath.

Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not
To the alternative of a decree,
Instead of your compliance.

Doge. Providence
Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me;
But ye have no right to reproach my length
Of days, since every hour has been the country's.
I am ready to lay down my life for her,
As I have laid down dearer things than life;
But for my dignity—I hold it of
The *whole* republic; when the *general* will
Is manifest, then you shall be answer'd.

Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot
Avail you aught.

Doge. I can submit to all things,
But nothing will advance; no, not a moment.
What you decree—decree—

Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we
Return to those who sent us?

Doge. You have heard me.

Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire.

[*Exeunt the Deputation, &c.*]

Enter an ATTENDANT.

All.

My lord,

The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My lord, if I intrude—
Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone!
Alone, come all the world around me, I
Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will; and for the sake of those who are,
Endeavour—Oh my husband!

Doge. Give it way!
I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived,
So form'd for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved, the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to other men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition,
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.
The country and the people whom he loved,
The prince of whom he was the elder born,
And——

Doge. Soon may be a prince no longer.

Mar. How?

Doge. They have taken my son from me, and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws!

Mar. Oh the tyrants!
In such an hour too!

Doge. 'T is the fittest time:
An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And
Will you not now resent it?—Oh for vengeance!
But he, who, had he been enough protected,
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so
Against his country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that——

Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were

Country and home. I loved *him*—how I loved him!
 I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
 The old martyrs would have shrunk from: he is gone,
 And I, who would have given my blood for him,
 Have nought to give but tears! But could I compass
 The retribution of his wrongs!—Well, well;
 I have sons who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when I saw him
 Bow'd down by such oppression; yes, I thought
 That I would rather look upon his corse
 Than his prolong'd captivity:—I am punish'd
 For that thought now. Would I were in his grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he—

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier.

Doge. And he is in his shroud?

Mar. Come, come, old man!

[*Exeunt the DOGE and MARINA.*]

Enter BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.

Barb. (to an Att.) Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence,

With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Barb. Let us return then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot.

We have the implicit order of the giunta
 To await their coming here, and join them in
 Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Barb. And will they press their answer on the Doge?

Lor. 'T was his own wish that all should be done promptly.
 He answer'd quickly, and must so be answer'd;
 His dignity is look'd to, his estate
 Cared for—what would he more?

Barb. Die in his robes.

He could not have lived long; but I have done
 My best to save his honours, and opposed
 This proposition to the last, though vainly.
 Why would the general vote compel me hither?

Lor. 'T was fit that some one of such different thoughts
 From ours should be a witness, lest false tongues
 Should whisper that a harsh majority
 Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

Barb. And not less, I must needs think, for the sake
Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in
Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating* ;
'T is thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes) to you
I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in
Your giunta's duties.

Lor. How !—*my giunta* !

Barb. *Yours* !

They speak your language, watch your nod, approve
Your plans, and do your work. Are they not *yours* ?

Lor. You talk unwarily. 'T were best they hear not
This from you.

Barb. Oh ! they 'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine ; they have gone beyond
Even their exorbitance of power : and when
This happens in the most contemn'd and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.

Lor. You talk but idly.

Barb. That remains for proof.
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence ?

Att. He shall be inform'd. [*Exit Attendant.*]

Barb. The Duke is with his son.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so,
We will remit him till the rites are over.
Let us return. 'T is time enough to-morrow.

Lor. (*aside to Barbarigo*). Now the rich man's hell-fire upon your
tongue,
Unquench'd, unquenchable ! I 'll have it torn
From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this ! Sage signors,
I pray ye be not hasty. [*Aloud to the others.*]

Barb. But be human !

Lor. See, the Duke comes !

Enter the DOGE.

Doge. I have obey'd your summonings.

Chief of the Ten. We come once more to urge our past request.

Doge. And I to answer.

Chief of the Ten. What?

Doge. My only answer.

You have heard it.

Chief of the Ten. Hear *you* then the last decree,
Definitive and absolute!

Doge. To the point—
To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts—Go on!

Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge; you are released
From your imperial oath as sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for
Your services, the state allots the appanage
Already mention'd in our former congress.
Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated
All your own private fortune.

Doge. That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.

Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke?

Lor. Your answer, Francis Foscari?

Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old age
Was prejudicial to the state, the chief
Of the republic never would have shown
Himself so far ungrateful as to place
His own high dignity before his country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being render'd, I obey.

Chief of the Ten. If you would have the three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

Doge. Not eight hours, signor,
Nor even eight minutes.—There 's the ducal ring,
[*Taking off his ring and cap.*]

And there the ducal diadem. And so
The Adriatic 's free to wed another.

Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.

Doge. I am old, sir,
And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst you
A face I know not—Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

Memmo. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo.

Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend.—But *sons* and *fathers*!

What, ho! my servants there!

Att.

My prince!

Doge.

No prince—

There are the princes of the prince!

[*Pointing to the Ten's Deputation.*

Prepare

To part from hence upon the instant.

Chief of the Ten.

Why

So rashly? 't will give scandal.

Doge.

Answer that;

[*To the Ten.*

It is your province.—Sirs, bestir yourselves:

[*To the Servants.*

There is one burthen which I beg you bear

With care, although 't is past all farther harm—

But I will look to that myself.

Barb.

He means

The body of his son.

Doge.

And call Marina,

My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

Doge.

Get thee ready, we must mourn

Elsewhere.

Mar.

And every where.

Doge.

True; but in freedom,

Without these jealous spies upon the great.

Signors, you may depart: what would you more?

We are going: do you fear that we shall bear

The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times

As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,

Have served you, so have I, and I and they

Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not

To fall upon you! else they would, as erst

The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on

The Israelite and his Philistine foes.

Such power I do believe there might exist

In such a curse as mine, provoked by such

As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good signors!

May the next duke be better than the present!

Lor. The *present* duke is Pascal Malipiero.

Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these doors.

Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about to toll
For his inauguration.

Doge.

Earth and heaven!

Ye will reverberate this peal; and I

Live to hear this!—the first Doge who e'er heard

Such sound for his successor! Happier he,

My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero—
This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor.

What!

Do you regret a traitor?

Doge.

No—I merely

Envy the dead.

Chief of the Ten. My lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the state's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you towards
The landing-place of the canal.

Doge.

No. I

Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty—the Giant's Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested duke.
My services have call'd me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Install'd, and traversed these same halls from which
I never thought to be divorced except
A corse—a corse, it might be, fighting for them—
But not push'd hence by fellow-citizens.
But, come; my son and I will go together—
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.

Chief of the Ten. What, thus in public?

Doge.

I was publicly

Elected, and so will I be deposed.

Marina! art thou willing?

Mar.

Here 's my arm!

Doge. And here my *staff*: thus propp'd will I go forth.

Chief of the Ten. It must not be—the people will perceive it.

Doge. The people!—There 's no people, you well know it,
Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.

There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan nor curse you,
Save with their hearts and eyes.

Chief of the Ten.

You speak in passion,

Else—

Doge. You have reason. I have spoken much
More than my wont; it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows that I approach
A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs.

Barb.

You shall not depart without

An escort fitting past and present rank.

We will accompany, with due respect,

The Doge unto his private palace. Say,
My brethren, will we not?

Different voices. Ay!—Ay!

Doge. You shall not
Stir—in my train, at least. I enter'd here
As sovereign—I go out as citizen
By the same portals; but as citizen,
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.
Pomp is for princes—I am *none!*—That's false,
I *am*, but only to these gates.—Ah!

Lor. Hark!

[*The great bell of Saint Mark's tolls.*]

Barb. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. Saint Mark's, which tolls for the election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognize
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I *was not young*.

Barb. Sit down, my lord!
You tremble.

Doge. 'T is the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

Barb. I pray you sit.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne till now.
Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily.

Doge (walks a few steps, then stops). I feel a thirst—will no one
bring me here
A cup of water?

Barb. I——

Mar. And I——

Lor. And I——

[*The DOGE takes a goblet from the hand of LOREDANO.*]

Doge. I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'T is said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons, as
To burst if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 't is
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as look'd my husband!

Barb. He sinks!—support him!—quick—a chair—support him!

Doge. The bell tolls on!—let 's hence—my brain's on fire!

Barb. I do beseech you, lean upon us!

Doge. No!

A sovereign should die standing. My poor boy!

Off with your arms!—*That bell!*

[*The DOGE drops down and dies.*

Mar. My God! my God!

Barb. (*to LOR.*) Behold! your work's completed!

Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!

All. 'T is all over.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his obsequies
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?

Barb. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reign'd: then let his funeral rites be princely.

Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?

All, except Loredano, answer. Yes.

Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be
with him!

Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul
(A soul by whom you have increased your empire,
And made your power as proud as was his glory),
You banish'd from his palace, and tore down
From his high place with such relentless coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled.
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.

Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt) consign'd to powers which may

Resemble that you exercise on earth.
 Leave him to me ; you would have done so for
 His dregs of life, which you have kindly shorten'd :
 It is my last of duties, and may prove
 A dreary comfort in my desolation.
 Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
 And the apparel of the grave.

Chief of the Ten. Do you
 Pretend still to this office ?

Mar. I do, signor.
 Though his possessions have been all consumed
 In the state's service, I have still my dowry,
 Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
 And those of—

[*She stops with agitation.*]

Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your children.

Mar. Ay, they are fatherless : I thank you.

Chief of the Ten. We
 Cannot comply with your request. His relics
 Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and follow'd
 Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
 As *Doge*, but simply as a senator.

Mar. I heard of murderers, who have interr'd
 Their victims ; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
 Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
 O'er those they slew.¹⁵ I 've heard of widows' tears—
 Alas ! I have shed some—always thanks to you !
 I 've heard of *heirs* in sables—you have left none
 To the deceased, so you would act the part
 Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done ! as one day,
 I trust, Heaven's will be done too !

Chief of the Ten. Know you, lady,
 To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech ?

Mar. I know the former better than yourselves ;
 The latter—like yourselves ; and can face both.
 Wish you more funerals ?

Barb. Heed not her rash words ;
 Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

Chief of the Ten. We will not note them down.

Barb. (*turning to Loredano, who is writing upon his tablets*). What
 art thou writing,
 With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets ?

Lor. (*pointing to the Doge's body*). That he has paid me !¹⁴

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe you ?

Lor. A long and just one ; nature's debt and mine.

[*Curtain falls.*]

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 234.

Their epitaph which says they died

By poison.

“*Veneno sublatus.*”—The tomb is in the church of Santa Elena.—E.

“When his father died,
They whisper’d, ‘Twas by poison!’ and the words
Struck him as utter’d from his father’s grave.
He wrote it on the tomb (’tis there in marble),
And with a brow of care, most merchant-like,
Among the debtors in his ledger-book
Enter’d at full (nor month, nor day forgot)
‘FRANCISCO FOSCARI—for my father’s death,’
Leaving a blank to be filled up hereafter.”—ROGERS.

Note 2. Page 239.

High-born dame.

“A daughter of the house of Contarini,
That house as old as Venice now among
Its ancestors, in monumental brass,
Numbering eight Doges.—ROGERS.

Note 3. Page 242.

The extraordinary sentence pronounced against him, still existing among the archives of Venice, runs thus:—“Giacopo Foscari, accused of the murder of Hermolao Donato, has been arrested and examined; and, from the testimony, evidence, and documents exhibited, *it distinctly appears* that he is guilty of the aforesaid crime; nevertheless, on account of his obstinacy, and of *enchantments and spells*, in his possession, of which there are manifest proofs, it has not been possible to extract from him the truth, which is clear from parole and written evidence; for, while he was on the cord, he uttered neither word nor groan, but only murmured something to himself indistinctly and under his breath; therefore, *as the honour of the state requires*, he is condemned to a more distant banishment in Candia.” Will it be credited, that a distinct proof of his innocence, obtained by the discovery of the real assassin, wrought no change in his unjust and cruel sentence?—See SMEDLEY’S *Venetian Sketches*, vol. ii. p. 97.

Note 4. Page 246.

Bridge of Sighs.

See vol. i, p. 189, note 1 to the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*.

Note 5. Page 254

Our fame is in men’s breath

See vol. ii, p. 517.

“What’s fame! a fancied life in others’ breath,
A thing beyond us, ev’n before our death.”—POPE.

Note 6. Page 257.

For Mr. Hobhouse’s account of the state dungeons of Venice see vol. i, page 189.

Note 7. Page 261

An Ocean Rome.

In Lady Morgan’s fearless and excellent work upon Italy, I perceive the expression of “Rome of the Ocean” applied to Venice. The same phrase occurs in the “Two Foscari.” My publisher can vouch for me, that the tragedy was written and

sent to England some time before I had seen Lady Morgan's work, which I only received on the 16th of August. I hasten, however, to notice the coincidence, and to yield the originality of the phrase to her who first placed it before the public. I am the more anxious to do this, as I am informed (for I have seen but few of the specimens, and those accidentally), that there have been lately brought against me charges of plagiarism [See vol. iv, p. 103, note 2].

Note 8. Page 261

That malady.

The calenture. [A distemper peculiar to sailors in hot climates.

“ So by a calenture misled,
The mariner with rapture sees
On the smooth ocean's azure bed
Enamell'd fields and verdant trees;
With eager haste he longs to rove
In that fantastic scene, and thinks
It must be some enchanted grove,
And in he leaps, and down he sinks.”—SWIFT.

Note 9. Page 261.

Alluding to the Swiss air and its effects. [The Ranz des Vaches played upon the bagpipe by the young cowkeepers on the mountains. See ROUSSEAU.—E.]

The *maladie du vays* is as old as the human heart. Juvenal's little cup-bearer.

Suspirat longo non visam tempore matrem,
Et casulam et notos tristic desiderat hœdos.

And the Argive, in the heat of battle,

Dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos.—ROGERS.

Note 10. Page 272.

“ Unnerved, unsettled in mind from long
And exquisite pain, he sobs aloud and cries,
Kissing the old man's cheek, ‘ Help me, my father!
Let me, I pray thee, live once more among you:
Let me go home.’—‘ My son,’ returns the Doge,
Mastering his grief, ‘ If thou art indeed my son,
Obey. Thy country wills it.’”—ROGERS.]

Note 11. Page 278.

An historical fact. See DARU, in the Appendix.

Note 12. Page 280.

DEPOSITION OF OLD FOSCARI.

“ Then was thy cup, old man, full to the brim.
But thou wert yet alive; and there was one,
The soul and spring of all that enmity,
Who would not leave thee; fastening on thy flank,
Hungering and thirsting, still unsatisfied;
One of a name illustrious as thine own!
One of the Ten! one of the Invisible Three!
’T was Loredano. When the whelps were gone,
He would dislodge the Lion from his den;
And, leading on the pack he long had led,
The miserable pack that ever howl'd
Against fallen Greatness, moved that Foscari
Be Doge no longer; urging his great age;
Calling the loneliness of grief, neglect
Of duty, sullenness against the laws.
—‘ I am most willing to retire,’ said he:
‘ But I have sworn, and cannot of myself.
Do with me as ye please.’

“ He was deposed,
He, who had reign'd so long and gloriously;
His ducal bonnet taken from his brow,
His robes stript off, his seal and signet-ring
Broken before him. But now nothing moved
The meekness of his soul. All things alike!

Among the six that came with the decree,
Foscari saw one he knew not, and enquired
His name. 'I am the son of Marco Memmo.
'Ah! he replied, 'thy father was my friend!

"And now he goes. 'It is the hour and past.
I have no business here.'—'But wilt thou not
Avoid the gazing crowd? That way is private.'
'No! as I entered, so will I retirè.'
And, leaning on his staff, he left the house,
His residence for five-and-thirty years,
By the same stairs up which he came in state;
Those where the giants stand, guarding the ascent,
Monstrous, terrific. At the foot he stopt,
And, on his staff still leaning, turn'd and said,
'By mine own merits did I come. I go,
Driven by the malice of mine enemies.'
Then to his boat withdrew, poor as he came,
Amid the sighs of them that dared not speak.—ROGERS.

* * * * *

Note 13. Page 290.

Those they slew.

The Venetians appear to have had a particular turn for breaking the hearts of their Doges. The following is another instance of the kind in the Doge Marco Barbarigo: he was succeeded by his brother Agostino Barbarigo, whose chief merit is here mentioned.—"Le doge, blessé de trouver constamment un contradicteur et un censeur si amer dans son frère, lui dit un jour en plein conseil: 'Messire Augustin, vous faites tout votre possible pour hâter ma mort: vous vous flattez de me succéder mais, si les autres vous connaissent aussi bien que je vous connais, ils n'auront garde de vous élire.' Là-dessus il se leva, ému de colère, rentra dans son appartement, et mourut quelques jours après. Ce frère, contre lequel il s'était emporté, fut précisément le successeur qu'on lui donna. C'était un mérite dont on aimait à tenir compte, surtout à un parent, de s'être mis en opposition avec le chef de la république."—DARU, *Hist. de Venise*, vol. ii. p. 533.

Note 14. Page 290.

He has paid me.

"*L'ha pagata.*" An historical fact. See *Hist. de Venise*, par P. Daru, t. ii. p. 411.—[Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow were added by Mr. Gifford. In the margin of the MS., Lord Byron has written,—"If the last line should appear obscure to those who do not recollect the historical fact mentioned in the first act of Loredano's inscription in his book, of 'Doge Foscari debtor for the deaths of my father and uncle,' you may add the following lines to the conclusion of the last act:—

Chief of the Ten. For what has he repaid thee?

Lor.

For my father's

And father's brother's death—by his son's and own!

Ask Gifford about this.—E.

"When Foscari's noble heart at length gave way,
He took the volume from the shelf again—
Calmly, and with his pen fill'd up the blank,
Inscribing, 'He has paid me.'—ROGERS.]

APPENDIX.

Extrait de l'Histoire de la République de Venise, par P. DARU, de l'Académie française. Tome II.

DEPUIS trente ans la république n'avait pas déposé les armes. Elle avait acquis les provinces de Brescia, de Bergame, de Crème, et la principauté de Ravenne.

Mais ces guerres continuelles faisaient beaucoup de malheureux et de mécontents. Le doge François Foscari, à qui on ne pouvait pardonner d'en avoir été le promoteur, manifesta une seconde fois, en 1442, et probablement avec plus de sincérité que la première, l'intention d'abdiquer sa dignité. Le conseil s'y refusa encore. On avait exigé de lui le serment de ne plus quitter le dogat. Il était déjà avancé dans la vieillesse, conservant cependant beaucoup de force de tête et de caractère, et jouissant de la gloire d'avoir vu la république étendre au loin les limites de ses domaines pendant son administration. Au milieu de ces prospérités, de grands chagrins vinrent mettre à l'épreuve la fermeté de son âme.

Son fils, Jacques Foscari, fut accusé, en 1445, d'avoir reçu des présents de quelques princes ou seigneurs étrangers, notamment, disait-on, du duc de Milan, Philippe Visconti. C'était non seulement une bassesse, mais une infraction des lois positives de la république.

Le conseil des dix traita cette affaire comme s'il se fût agi d'un délit commis par un particulier obscur. L'accusé fut amené devant ses juges, devant le doge, qui ne crut pas pouvoir s'abstenir de présider le tribunal. Là, il fut interrogé, appliqué à la question, déclaré coupable, et il entendit, de la bouche de son père, l'arrêt qui le condamnait à un bannissement perpétuel, et le reléguait à Naples de Romanie, pour y finir ses jours.

Embarqué sur une galère pour se rendre au lieu de son exil, il tomba malade à Trieste. Les sollicitations du doge obtinrent, non sans difficulté, qu'on lui assignât une autre résidence. Enfin le conseil des dix lui permit de se retirer à Trévise, en lui imposant l'obligation d'y rester sous peine de mort, et de se présenter tous les jours devant le gouverneur.

Il y était depuis cinq ans, lorsqu'un des chefs du conseil des dix fut assassiné. Les soupçons se portèrent sur lui : un de ses domestiques qu'on avait vu à Venise, fut arrêté et subit la torture. Les bourreaux ne purent lui arracher aucun aveu. Ce terrible tribunal se fit amener le maître, le soumit aux mêmes épreuves ; il résista à tous les tourments, ne cessant d'attester son innocence ; † mais on ne vit

*E datagli la corda per avere da lui la verità ; chiamato il consiglio de' dieci colla giunta, nel quale fù messer lo doge, fù sentenziato.—(Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi, F. Foscari.)

†E fù tormentato nè mai confessò cosa alcuna, pure parve al consiglio de' dieci di confinarlo in vita alla Canea. (Ibid.) Voici le texte du jugement : " Cum Jacobus Foscari per occasionem percussiois et mortis Hermolai Donati fuit retentus et examinatus, et propter significationes, testificationes et scripturas quæ habentur contra eum, clare apparet ipsum esse reum criminis prædicti, sed propter incantationes et verba quæ sibi reperta sunt, de quibus existit indicia manifesta videtur propter obstinatam mentem suam, non esse possibile extrahere ab ipso illam veritatem, quæ clara est per scripturas et testificationes, quoniam in fure aliquam nec vocem, nec gemitum, sed solum intra dentes voces ipse videtur et auditur infra se loqui, &c... Tamen non est standum in istis terminis propter honorem statûs nostri et pro multis respectibus, præsertim quod regimen nostrum occupatur in hac re et quia interdictum est amplius progredere : vadit pars quod dictus Jacobus Foscari, propter ea quæ habentur de illo mittatur in confinium in civitate Canea," &c. Notice sur le procès de Jacques Foscari,

dans cette constance que de l'obstination ; de ce qu'il taisait le fait , on conclut que ce fait existait ; on attribua sa fermeté à la magie , et on le relégua à la Canée. De cette terre lointaine , le banni , digne alors de quelque pitié , ne cessait d'écrire à son père , à ses amis , pour obtenir quelque adoucissement à sa déportation. N'obtenant rien , et sachant que la terreur qu'inspirait le conseil des dix ne lui permettait pas d'espérer de trouver dans Venise une seule voix qui s'élevât en sa faveur , il fit une lettre pour le nouveau duc de Milan , par laquelle , au nom des bons offices que Sforce avait reçus du chef de la république , il implorait son intervention en faveur d'un innocent , du fils du doge.

Cette lettre , selon quelques historiens , fut confiée à un marchand qui avait promis de la faire parvenir au duc , mais qui , trop averti de ce qu'il avait à craindre en se rendant l'intermédiaire d'une pareille correspondance , se hâta , en débarquant à Venise , de la remettre au chef du tribunal. Une autre version , qui paraît plus sûre , rapporte que la lettre fut surprise par un espion , attaché aux pas de l'exilé.*

Ce fut un nouveau délit dont on eut à punir Jacques Foscari. Réclamer la protection d'un prince étranger était un crime dans un sujet de la république. Une galère partit sur-le-champ pour l'amener dans les prisons de Venise. A son arrivée , il fut soumis à l'estrapade. † C'était une singulière destinée pour le citoyen d'une république et pour le fils d'un prince , d'être trois fois dans sa vie appliqué à la question. Cette fois la torture était d'autant plus odieuse qu'elle n'avait point d'objet , le fait qu'on avait à lui reprocher étant incontestable.

Quand on demanda à l'accusé , dans les intervalles que les bourreaux lui accordaient , pourquoi il avait écrit la lettre qu'on lui produisait , il répondit que c'était précisément parce qu'il ne doutait pas qu'elle ne tombât entre les mains du tribunal , que toute autre voie lui avait été fermée pour faire parvenir ses réclamations , qu'il s'attendait bien qu'on le ferait amener à Venise , mais qu'il avait tout risqué pour avoir la consolation de voir sa femme , son père et sa mère , encore une fois.

Sur cette naïve déclaration , on confirma sa sentence d'exil ; mais on l'aggrava , en y ajoutant qu'il serait retenu en prison pendant un an. Cette rigueur , dont on usait envers un malheureux , était sans doute odieuse ; mais cette politique , qui défendait à tous les citoyens de faire intervenir les étrangers dans les affaires intérieures de la république , était sage. Elle était chez eux une maxime de gouvernement et une maxime inflexible. L'historien Paul Morosini ‡ a conté que l'empereur Frédéric III , pendant qu'il était l'hôte des Vénitiens , demanda comme une faveur particulière l'admission d'un citoyen dans le grand conseil , et la grâce d'un ancien gouverneur de Candie , gendre du doge , et banni pour sa mauvaise administration , sans pouvoir obtenir ni l'une ni l'autre.

Cependant on ne put refuser au condamné la permission de voir sa femme , ses enfants , ses parents , qu'il allait quitter pour toujours. Cette dernière entrevue même fut accompagnée de cruauté , par la sévère circonspection , qui retenait les épanchements de la douleur paternelle et conjugale. Ce ne fut point dans l'intérieur de leur appartement , ce fut dans une des grandes salles du palais , qu'une femme , accompagnée de ses quatre fils , vint faire les derniers adieux à son mari , qu'un père octogénaire et la dogaresse accablés d'infirmités , jouirent un moment de la triste consolation de mêler leurs larmes à celles de leur exilé. Il se jeta à leurs genoux , en leur tendant des mains disloquées par la torture , pour les supplier de solliciter quelque adoucissement à la sentence qui venait d'être prononcée contre lui. Son père eut le courage de lui répondre : " Non , mon fils , respectez votre arrêt , et obéissez sans murmure à la seigneurie." § A ces mots il se sépara de l'infortuné , qui fut sur-le-champ embarqué pour Candie.

dans un volume intitulé : *Raccolta di memorie storiche e anedote , per formar la Storia dell' eccellentissimo consiglio di X , dalla sua prima istituzione sino a' giorni nostri , con le diverse variazioni e riforme nelle varie epoche successe.* (Archives de Venise.)

* La notice citée ci-dessus , qui rapporte les actes de cette procédure.

† Ebbe prima per sapere la verità trenta squassi di corda. (Marin Sanuto , *Vite de' Duchi* , F. Foscari.)

‡ *Historia di Venezia* , lib. 23.

§ Marin Sanuto , dans sa chronique , *Vite de' Duchi* , se sert ici , sans en avoir eu l'intention d'une expression assez énergique : " Il doge era vecchio , in decrepità età , e camminava con

L'antiquité vit avec autant d'horreur que d'admiration un père condamnant ses fils évidemment coupables. Elle hésita pour qualifier de vertu sublime ou de férocité cet effort qui paraît au dessus de la nature humaine; * mais ici, où la première faute n'était qu'une faiblesse, où la seconde n'était pas prouvée, où la troisième n'avait rien de criminel, comment concevoir la constance d'un père, qui voit torturer trois fois son fils unique, qui l'entend condamner sans preuves, et qui n'éclate pas en plaintes, qui ne l'aborde que pour lui montrer un visage plus austère qu'attendri, et qui, au moment de s'en séparer pour jamais, lui interdit les murmures et jusqu'à l'espérance? Comment expliquer une si cruelle circonspection, si ce n'est en avouant, à notre honte, que la tyrannie peut obtenir de l'espèce humaine les mêmes efforts que la vertu? La servitude aurait-elle son héroïsme comme la liberté?

Quelque temps après ce jugement, on découvrit le véritable auteur de l'assassinat, dont Jacques Foscari portait la peine; mais il n'était plus temps de réparer cette atroce injustice, le malheureux était mort dans sa prison.

Il me reste à raconter la suite des malheurs du père. L'histoire les attribua à l'impatience qu'avaient ses ennemis et ses rivaux de voir vaquer sa place. Elle accuse formellement Jacques Lorédan, l'un des chefs du conseil des dix, de s'être livré contre ce vieillard aux conseils d'une haine héréditaire et qui depuis longtemps divisait leurs maisons. †

François Foscari avait essayé de la faire cesser, en offrant sa fille à l'illustre amiral Pierre Lorédan, pour un de ses fils. L'alliance avait été rejetée, et l'inimitié des deux familles s'en était accrue. Dans tous les conseils, dans toutes les affaires, le doge trouvait toujours les Lorédan prêts à combattre ses propositions ou ses intérêts. Il lui échappa un jour de dire qu'il ne se croirait réellement prince que lorsque Pierre Lorédan aurait cessé de vivre. Cet amiral mourut quelque temps après d'une incommodité assez prompte qu'on ne put expliquer. Il n'en fallut pas davantage aux malveillants pour insinuer que François Foscari, ayant désiré cette mort, pouvait bien l'avoir hâtée.

Ces bruits s'accréditèrent encore lorsqu'on vit aussi périr subitement Marc Lorédan, frère de Pierre, et cela dans le moment où, en sa qualité d'avogador, il instruisait un procès contre André Donato, gendre du doge, accusé de péculat. On écrivit sur la tombe de l'amiral qu'il avait été enlevé à la patrie par le poison.

Il n'y avait aucune preuve, aucun indice contre François Foscari, aucune raison même de le soupçonner. Quand sa vie entière n'aurait pas démenti une imputation aussi odieuse, il savait que son rang ne lui promettait ni l'impunité ni même l'indulgence. La mort tragique de l'un de ses prédécesseurs l'en avertissait, et il n'avait que trop d'exemples domestiques du soin que le conseil des dix prenait d'humilier le chef de la république.

Cependant, Jacques Lorédan, fils de Pierre, croyait ou feignait de croire avoir à venger les pertes de sa famille. ‡ Dans ses livres de comptes (car il faisait le commerce, comme à cette époque presque tous les patriciens), il avait inscrit de sa propre main le doge au nombre de ses débiteurs, pour la mort, y était-il dit, de mon père et de mon oncle. § De l'autre côté du registre, il avait laissé une page en blanc,

una mazzetta. E quando gli andò parlogi molto costantemente che pareva che non fosse suo figliulo, licef fosse figliulo unico, e Jacopo disse, 'messer padre, vi prego che procuriate per me, acciocchè io torni a casa mia.' Il doge disse: 'Jacopo, va e obbedisei a quello che vuole la terra, e non cercar più oltre.'

* Cela fut un acte que l'on ne sauroit ny suffisamment louer, ny assez blâmer: car, ou c'estoit une excellence de vertu, qui rendoit ainsi son cœur impassible, ou une violence de passion qui le rendoit insensible, dont ne l'une ne l'autre n'est chose petite, ainsi surpassant l'ordinaire d'humaine nature, et tenant ou de la divinité ou de la bestialité. Mais il est plus raisonnable que le jugement des hommes s'accorde à sa gloire, que la faiblesse des jugeans fasse descrire sa vertu. Mais pour lors quand il se fut retiré, tout le monde demoura sur la place, comme transy d'horreur et de frayeur, par un long temps sans mot dire, pour avoir veu ce qui avoit été fait. (Plutarque, Valerius Publicola.)

† Je suis principalement dans ce récit une relation manuscrite de la déposition de François Foscari qui est dans le volume intitulé: *Raccolta di memorie storiche e annedote, per formar la Storia dell' eccellentissimo consiglio di X.* (Archives de Venise.)

‡ *Hasce tamen injurias quamvis imaginarias non tam ad animum revocaverat Jacobus Lauredanus defunctorum nepos quam in abecedarium vindictam opportuna.* (Palazzi, *Fasti Ducales.*)

§ *Ibid.*, et l'Histoire Vénitienne de Vianolo.

pour y faire mention du recouvrement de cette dette, et en effet, après la perte du doge, il écrivit sur son registre : il me l'a payée, *l'ha pagata*.

Jacques Lorédan fut élu membre du conseil des dix, en devint un des trois chefs, et se promit bien de profiter de cette occasion pour accomplir la vengeance qu'il méditait.

Le doge, en sortant de la terrible épreuve qu'il venait de subir, pendant le procès de son fils, s'était retiré au fond de son palais : incapable de se livrer aux affaires, consumé de chagrins, accablé de vieillesse, il ne se montrait plus en public, ni même dans les conseils. Cette retraite, si facile à expliquer dans un vieillard octogénaire si malheureux, déplut aux décevirs, qui voulurent y voir un murmure contre leurs arrêts.

Lorédan commença par se plaindre devant ses collègues du tort que les infirmités du doge, son absence des conseils, apportaient à l'expédition des affaires ; il finit par hasarder et réussit à faire agréer la proposition de le déposer. Ce n'était pas la première fois que Venise avait pour prince un homme dans la caducité : l'usage et les lois y avaient pourvu ; dans ces circonstances le doge était suppléé par le plus ancien du conseil. Ici, cela ne suffisait pas aux ennemis de Foscari. Pour donner plus de solennité à la délibération, le conseil des dix demanda une adjonction de vingt-cinq sénateurs ; mais comme on n'en énonçait pas l'objet, et que le grand conseil était loin de la soupçonner, il se trouva que Marc Foscari, frère du doge, leur fut donné pour l'un des adjoints. Au lieu de l'admettre à la délibération, ou de réclamer contre ce choix, on enferma ce sénateur dans une chambre séparée, et on lui fit jurer de ne jamais parler de cette exclusion qu'il éprouvait, en lui déclarant qu'il y allait de sa vie ; ce qui n'empêcha pas qu'on inscrivit son nom au bas du décret, comme s'il y eût pris part.*

Quand on en vint à la délibération, Lorédan la provoqua en ces termes : † " Si l'utilité publique doit imposer silence à tous les intérêts privés, je ne doute pas que nous ne prenions aujourd'hui une mesure que la patrie réclame, que nous lui devons. Les états ne peuvent se maintenir sans un ordre de choses immuable : vous n'avez qu'à voir comme le nôtre est changé, et combien il le serait davantage s'il n'y avait une autorité assez ferme pour y porter remède. J'ai honte de vous faire remarquer la confusion qui règne dans les conseils, le désordre des délibérations, l'encombrement des affaires, et la légèreté avec laquelle les plus importantes sont décidées ; la licence de notre jeunesse, le peu d'assiduité des magistrats, l'introduction de nouveautés dangereuses. Quel est l'effet de ces désordres ? de compromettre notre considération ; quelle en est la cause ? l'absence d'un chef capable de modérer les uns, de diriger les autres, de donner l'exemple à tous, et de maintenir la force des lois.

" Où est le temps où nos décrets étaient aussitôt exécutés que rendus ? où François Carrare se trouvait investi dans Padoue, avant de pouvoir être seulement informé que nous voulions lui faire la guerre ? Nous avons vu tout le contraire dans la dernière guerre contre le duc de Milan. Malheureuse la république qui est sans chef !

" Je ne vous rappelle pas tous ces inconvénients et leurs suites déplorables pour vous affliger, pour vous effrayer, mais pour vous faire souvenir que vous êtes les maîtres, les conservateurs de cet état fondé par vos pères, et de la liberté que nous devons à leurs travaux, à leurs institutions. Ici, le mal indique le remède. Nous n'avons point de chef, il nous en faut un. Notre prince est notre ouvrage, nous avons donc le droit de juger son mérite quand il s'agit de l'élire, et son incapacité quand elle se manifeste. J'ajouterai que le peuple, encore bien qu'il n'ait pas le droit de prononcer sur les actions de ses maîtres, apprendra ce changement avec transport ; c'est la Providence, je n'en doute pas, qui lui inspire elle-même ces dispositions pour vous avertir que la république réclame cette résolution, et que le sort de l'état est en vos mains."

Ce discours n'éprouva que de timides contradictions ; cependant, la délibération

* Il faut cependant remarquer que dans la notice où l'on raconte ce fait, la délibération est rapportée ; que les vingt-cinq adjoints y sont nommés, et que le nom de Marc Foscari ne s'y trouve pas.

† Cette harangue se lit dans la notice citée ci-dessus.

dura huit jours. L'assemblée ne se jugeant pas aussi sûre de l'approbation universelle que l'orateur voulait le lui faire croire, désirait que le doge donnât lui-même sa démission. Il l'avait déjà proposée deux fois, et on n'avait pas voulu l'accepter.

Aucune loi ne portait que le prince fût révocable; il était au contraire à vie, et les exemples qu'on pouvait citer de plusieurs doges déposés prouvaient que de telles révolutions avaient toujours été le résultat d'un mouvement populaire.

Mais d'ailleurs, si le doge pouvait être déposé, ce n'était pas assurément par un tribunal composé d'un petit nombre de membres, institué pour punir les crimes, et nullement investi du droit de révoquer ce que le corps souverain de l'état avait fait.

Cependant le tribunal arrêta que les dix conseillers de la seigneurie, et les chefs du conseil des dix, se transporteraient auprès du doge, pour lui signifier que l'excelentissime conseil avait jugé convenable qu'il abdiquât une dignité dont son âge ne lui permettait plus de remplir les fonctions. On lui donna 1500 ducats d'or pour son entretien, et vingt-quatre heures pour se décider.*

Foscari répondit sur-le-champ avec beaucoup de gravité, que deux fois il avait voulu se démettre de sa charge; qu'au lieu de le lui permettre, on avait exigé de lui le serment de ne plus réitérer cette demande; que la Providence avait prolongé ses jours pour l'éprouver et pour l'affliger; que cependant on n'était pas en droit de reprocher sa longue vie à un homme qui avait employé quatre-vingt-quatre ans au service de la république; qu'il était prêt encore à lui sacrifier sa vie; mais que, pour sa dignité, il la tenait de la république entière, et qu'il se réservait de répondre sur ce sujet, quand la volonté générale se serait légalement manifestée.

Le lendemain, à l'heure indiquée, les conseillers et les chefs des dix se présentèrent. Il ne voulut pas leur donner d'autre réponse. Le conseil s'assembla sur-le-champ, lui envoya demander encore une fois sa résolution, séance tenante, et, la réponse ayant été la même, on prononça que le doge était relevé de son serment et déposé de sa dignité: on lui assigna une pension de 1500 ducats d'or, en lui enjoignant de sortir du palais dans huit jours, sous peine de voir tous ses biens confisqués. †

Le lendemain ce décret fut porté au doge, et ce fut Jacques Lorédan qui eut la cruelle joie de le lui présenter. Il répondit: "Si j'avais pu prévoir que ma vieillesse fût préjudiciable à l'état, le chef de la république ne se serait pas montré assez ingrat pour préférer sa dignité à la patrie; mais cette vie lui ayant été utile pendant tant d'années, je voulais lui en consacrer jusqu'au dernier moment. Le décret est rendu, je m'y conformerai." Après avoir parlé ainsi, il se dépouilla des marques de sa dignité, remit l'anneau ducal qui fut brisé en sa présence, et dès le jour suivant il quitta ce palais, qu'il avait habité pendant trente-cinq ans, accompagné de son frère, de ses parents et de ses amis. Un secrétaire, qui se trouva sur le perron, l'invita à descendre par un escalier dérobé, afin d'éviter la foule du peuple, qui s'était rassemblé dans les cours, mais il s'y refusa, disant qu'il voulait descendre par où il était monté; et quand il fut au bas de l'escalier des géants, il se retourna, appuyé sur sa béquille, vers le palais, en proférant ces paroles: "Mes services m'y avaient appelé, la malice de mes ennemis m'en fait sortir."

La foule qui s'ouvrait sur son passage, et qui avait peut-être désiré sa mort, était émue de respect et d'attendrissement. † Rentré dans sa maison, il recommanda à sa famille d'oublier les injures de ses ennemis. Personne dans les divers corps de l'état ne se crut en droit de s'étonner qu'un prince inamovible eût été déposé sans qu'on lui reprochât rien; que l'état eût perdu son chef, à l'insu du sénat, et du corps souverain lui-même. Le peuple seul laissa échapper quelques regrets: une proclamation du conseil des dix prescrivit le silence le plus absolu sur cette affaire, sous peine de mort.

Avant de donner un successeur à François Foscari, une nouvelle loi fut rendue, qui défendait au doge d'ouvrir et de lire, autrement qu'en présence de ses con-

* Ce décret est rapporté textuellement dans la notice.

† La notice rapporte aussi ce décret.

‡ On lit dans la notice ces propres mots: "Se fosse stato in loro potere volentieri lo avrebbero restituito."

seillers, les dépêches des ambassadeurs de la république, et les lettres des princes étrangers.*

Les électeurs entrèrent au conclave, et nommèrent au dogat Paschal Malipier, le 30 octobre 1457. La cloche de Saint-Marc, qui annonçait à Venise son nouveau prince, vint frapper l'oreille de François Foscari; cette fois sa fermeté l'abandonna, il éprouva un tel saisissement qu'il mourut le lendemain. †

La république arrêta qu'on lui rendrait les mêmes honneurs funèbres que s'il fût mort dans l'exercice de sa dignité; mais lorsqu'on se présenta pour enlever ses restes, sa veuve, qui de son nom était Marine Nani, déclara qu'elle ne le souffrirait point; qu'on ne devait pas traiter en prince après sa mort celui que vivant on avait dépouillé de la couronne, et que, puisqu'il avait consumé ses biens au service de l'état, elle saurait consacrer sa dot à lui faire rendre les derniers honneurs. ‡ On ne tint aucun compte de cette résistance, et malgré les protestations de l'ancienne dogaresse, le corps fut enlevé, revêtu des ornemens ducaux, exposé au public, et les obsèques furent célébrées avec la pompe accoutumée. Le nouveau doge assista au convoi en robe de sénateur.

La pitié qu'avait inspiré le malheur de ce vieillard, ne fut pas tout-à-fait stérile. Un an après, on osa dire que le conseil des dix avait outrepassé ses pouvoirs, et il lui fut défendu par une loi du grand conseil de s'ingérer à l'avenir de juger le prince, à moins que ce ne fût pour cause de félonie. §

Un acte d'autorité tel que la déposition d'un doge inamovible de sa nature aurait pu exciter un soulèvement général, ou au moins occasionner une division dans une république autrement constituée que Venise. Mais depuis trois ans, il existait dans celle-ci une magistrature, ou plutôt une autorité devant laquelle tout devait se taire.

Extrait de l'Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du moyen âge, par J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi, tom. X.

Le doge de Venise, qui avait prévenu par ce traité une guerre non moins dange-reuse que celle qu'il avait terminée presqu'en même temps par le traité de Lodi, était alors parvenu à une extrême vieillesse. François Foscari occupait cette première dignité de l'état dès le 15 avril 1423. Quoiqu'il fût déjà âgé de plus de cin-quante-un ans à l'époque de son élection, il était cependant le plus jeune des qua-rante-un électeurs. Il avait eu beaucoup de peine à parvenir au rang qu'il convoitait, et son élection avait été conduite avec beaucoup d'adresse. Pendant plusieurs tours de scrutin ses amis les plus zélés s'étaient abstenus de lui donner leur suffrage, pour que les autres ne le considérassent pas comme un concurrent redoutable.** Le conseil des dix craignait son crédit parmi la noblesse pauvre, parce qu'il avait cherché à se la rendre favorable, tandis qu'il était procureur de Saint-Marc, en faisant em-ployer plus de trente mille ducats à doter des jeunes filles de bonne maison, ou à éta-blir de jeunes gentilshommes. On craignait encore sa nombreuse famille, car alors il était père de quatre enfans, et marié de nouveau; enfin on redoutait son ambi-tion et son goût pour la guerre. L'opinion que ses adversaires s'étaient formée de lui fut vérifiée par les événemens; pendant trente-quatre ans que Foscari fut à la tête de la république, elle ne cessa point de combattre. Si les hostilités étaient suspendues durant quelques mois, c'était pour recommencer bientôt avec plus de vigueur. Ce fut l'époque où Venise étendit son empire sur Brescia, Bergame, Ravenne et Crème, où elle fonda sa domination de Lombardie, et parut sans cesse sur le point d'asservir toute cette province. Profond, courageux, inébranlable, Foscari communiqua aux conseils son propre caractère, et ses talents lui firent obte-

* Hist. di Venezia, di Paolo Morosini, lib. 23.

† Hist. di Pietro Justiniani, lib. 8.

‡ Hist. d'Egnatio, lib. 6, cap. 7.

§ Ce décret est du 25 octobre 1458. La notice le rapporte.

** Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venezia, p. 967.

nir plus d'influence sur la république, que n'en avaient exercé la plupart de ses pré-décesseurs. Mais si son ambition avait eu pour but l'agrandissement de sa famille, elle fut cruellement trompée : trois de ses fils moururent dans les huit années qui suivirent son élection ; le quatrième, Jacob, par lequel la maison Foscari s'est perpétuée, fut victime de la jalousie du conseil des dix, et empoisonna par ses malheurs les jours de son père.*

En effet, le conseil des dix, redoublant de défiance envers le chef de l'état, lorsqu'on le voyait plus fort par ses talents et sa popularité, veillait sans cesse sur Foscari, pour le punir de son crédit et de sa gloire. Au mois de février 1445, Michel Bevilacqua, Florentin, exilé à Venise, accusa en secret Jacques Foscari auprès des inquisiteurs d'état, d'avoir reçu du duc Philippe Visconti des présens d'argent et de bijoux, par les mains des gens de sa maison. Telle était l'odieuse procédure adoptée à Venise, que, sur cette accusation secrète, le fils du doge, du représentant de la majesté de la république, fut mis à la torture. On lui arracha par l'estrapade l'aveu des charges portées contre lui ; il fut relégué pour le reste de ses jours à Napoli de Romanie, avec obligation de se présenter chaque matin au commandant de la place. † Cependant le vaisseau qui le portait ayant touché à Trieste, Jacob, grièvement malade des suites de la torture, et plus encore de l'humiliation qu'il avait éprouvée, demanda en grâce au conseil des dix de n'être pas envoyé plus loin. Il obtint cette faveur par une délibération du 28 décembre 1446 ; il fut rappelé à Trévisé, et il eut la liberté d'habiter tout le Trévisan indifféremment. ‡

Il vivait en paix à Trévisé ; et la fille de Léonard Contarini, qu'il avait épousée le 10 février 1441, était venue le joindre dans son exil, lorsque, le 5 novembre 1450, Almoré Donato, chef du conseil des dix, fut assassiné. Les deux autres inquisiteurs d'état, Triadano Gritti et Antonio Venieri, portèrent leurs soupçons sur Jacob Foscari, parce qu'un domestique à lui, nommé Olivier, avait été vu ce soir-là même à Venise, et avait des premiers donné la nouvelle de cet assassinat. Olivier fut mis à la torture, mais il nia jusqu'à la fin, avec un courage inébranlable, le crime dont on l'accusait, quoique ses juges eussent la barbarie de lui faire donner jusqu'à quatre-vingt tours d'estrapade. Cependant comme Jacob Foscari avait de puissants motifs d'inimitié contre le conseil des dix qui l'avait condamné, et qui témoignait de la haine au doge son père, on essaya de mettre à son tour Jacob à la torture, et l'on prolongea contre lui ces affreux tourmens, sans réussir à en tirer aucune confession. Malgré sa dénégation, le conseil des dix le condamna à être transporté à la Canée, et accorda une récompense à son délateur. Mais les horribles douleurs que Jacob Foscari avait éprouvées, avaient troublé sa raison ; ses persécuteurs, touchés de ce dernier malheur, permirent qu'on le ramenât à Venise le 26 mai 1451. Il embrassa son père, il puisa dans ses exhortations quelque courage et quelque calme, et il fut reconduit immédiatement à la Canée. § Sur ces entrefaites, Nicolas Erizzo, homme déjà noté pour un précédent crime, confessa, en mourant, que c'était lui qui avait tué Almoré Donato.**

Le malheureux doge, François Foscari, avait déjà cherché, à plusieurs reprises, à abdiquer une dignité si funeste à lui-même et à sa famille. Il lui semblait que, redescendu au rang de simple citoyen, comme il n'inspirerait plus de crainte ou de jalousie, on n'accablerait plus son fils par ces effroyables persécutions. Abattu par la mort de ses premiers enfants, il avait voulu, dès le 26 juin 1433, déposer une dignité durant l'exercice de laquelle sa patrie avait été tourmentée par la guerre, par la peste, et par les malheurs de tout genre. †† Il renouvela cette proposition après les jugemens rendus contre son fils ; mais le conseil des dix le retenait forcément sur le trône, comme il retenait son fils dans les fers.

En vain Jacob Foscari, obligé de se présenter chaque jour au gouverneur de la Canée, réclamait contre l'injustice de sa dernière sentence, sur laquelle la confession d'Erizzo ne laissait plus de doutes. En vain il demandait grâce au farouche conseil

* Marin Sanuto, p. 968.

† Ibid. p. 968.

‡ Ibid. p. 1123.

§ Ibid. p. 1138 — M. Aut. Sabellico, Deca III, L. VI, f. 187.

** Ibid. 1139.

†† Ibid. p. 1032.

des dix ; il ne pouvait obtenir aucune réponse. Le désir de revoir son père et sa mère, arrivés tous deux au dernier terme de la vieillesse, le désir de revoir une patrie dont la cruauté ne méritait pas un si tendre amour, se changèrent en lui en une vraie fureur. Ne pouvant retourner à Venise pour y vivre libre, il voulut du moins y aller chercher un supplice. Il écrivit au duc de Milan à la fin de mai 1456, pour implorer sa protection auprès du sénat ; et sachant qu'une telle lettre serait considérée comme un crime, il l'exposa lui-même dans un lieu où il était sûr qu'elle serait saisie par les espions qui l'entouraient. En effet, la lettre étant déferée au conseil des dix, on l'envoya chercher aussitôt, et il fut reconduit à Venise le 19 juillet 1456.*

Jacob Foscari ne nia point sa lettre ; il raconta en même temps dans quel but il l'avait écrite, et comment il l'avait fait tomber entre les mains de son délateur. Malgré ces aveux, Foscari fut remis à la torture, et on lui donna trente tours d'estrapade, pour voir s'il confirmerait ensuite ses dépositions. Quand on le détacha de la corde, on le trouva déchiré par ces horribles secousses. Les juges permirent alors à son père, à sa mère, à sa femme et à ses fils d'aller le voir dans sa prison. Le vieux Foscari, appuyé sur son bâton, ne se traîna qu'avec peine dans la chambre où son fils unique était pansé de ses blessures. Ce fils demandait encore la grâce de mourir dans sa maison. "Retourne à ton exil, mon fils, puisque ta patrie l'ordonne," lui dit le doge, "et soumets-toi à sa volonté." Mais en rentrant dans son palais, ce malheureux vieillard s'évanouit, épuisé par la violence qu'il s'était faite. Jacob devait encore passer une année en prison à la Canée, avant qu'on lui rendît la même liberté limitée à laquelle il était réduit avant cet événement ; mais à peine fut-il débarqué sur cette terre d'exil, qu'il y mourut de douleur. †

Dès-lors, et pendant quinze mois, le vieux doge, accablé d'années et de chagrins, ne recouvra plus la force de son corps ou celle de son âme ; il n'assistait plus à aucun des conseils, et il ne pouvait plus remplir aucune des fonctions de sa dignité. Il était entré dans sa quatre-vingt-sixième année, et si le conseil des dix avait été susceptible de quelque pitié, il aurait attendu en silence la fin, sans doute prochaine, d'une carrière marquée par tant de gloire et tant de malheurs. Mais le chef du conseil des dix était alors Jacques Loredano, fils de Marc, et neveu de Pierre, le grand amiral, qui toute leur vie avaient été les ennemis acharnés du vieux doge. Ils avaient transmis leur haine à leurs enfans, et cette vieille rancune n'était pas encore satisfaite. ‡ A l'instigation de Loredano, Jérôme Barbarigo, inquisiteur d'état, proposa au conseil des dix, au mois d'octobre 1457, de soumettre Foscari à une nouvelle humiliation. Dès que ce magistrat ne pouvait plus remplir ses fonctions, Barbarigo demanda qu'on nommât un autre doge. Le conseil, qui avait refusé par deux fois l'abdication de Foscari, parce que la constitution ne pouvait la permettre, hésita avant de se mettre en contradiction avec ses propres décrets. Les discussions dans le conseil et la junte se prolongèrent pendant huit jours, jusque fort avant dans la nuit. Cependant on fit entrer dans l'assemblée Marco Foscari, procureur de Saint-Marc, et frère du doge, pour qu'il fût lié par le redoutable serment du secret, et qu'il ne pût arrêter les mesures de ses ennemis. Enfin, le conseil se rendit auprès du doge, et lui demanda d'abdiquer volontairement un emploi qu'il ne pouvait plus exercer. "J'ai juré," répondit le vieillard, "de remplir jusqu'à ma mort, selon mon honneur et ma conscience, les fonctions auxquelles ma patrie m'a appelé. Je ne puis me délier moi-même de mon serment ; qu'un ordre des conseils dispose de moi, je m'y soumettrai, mais je ne le devancerai pas." Alors une nouvelle délibération du conseil délia François Foscari de son serment ducal, lui assura une pension de deux mille ducats pour le reste de sa vie, et lui ordonna d'évacuer en trois jours le palais, et de déposer les ornemens de sa dignité. Le doge ayant remarqué parmi les conseillers qui lui portèrent cet ordre, un chef de la quarantie qu'il ne connaissait pas, demanda son nom : "Je suis le fils de Marco Memmo," lui dit le conseiller. — "Ah ! ton père était mon ami," lui dit le vieux doge en soupirant. Il donna aussitôt des ordres pour qu'on transportât ses effets dans une maison à lui ; et le lendemain, 23 octobre, on le vit, se

* Marin Sanuto, p. 1162.

† Ibid. p. 1163.—Navagiero Stor. Venez. p. 1118.

‡ Vettor Sandi Storia civile Veneziana, P. II, L. VIII, p. 715, 717.

soutenant à peine, et appuyé sur son vieux frère, redescendre ces mêmes escaliers sur lesquels, trente-quatre ans auparavant, on l'avait vu installer avec tant de pompe, et traverser ces mêmes salles où la république avait reçu ses serments. Le peuple entier parut indigné de tant de dureté exercée contre un vieillard qu'il respectait et qu'il aimait; mais le conseil des dix fit publier une défense de parler de cette révolution, sous peine d'être traduit devant les inquisiteurs d'état. Le 20 octobre Pascal Malipieri, procureur de Saint-Marc, fut élu pour successeur de Foscari; celui-ci n'eut pas néanmoins l'humiliation de vivre sujet là où il avait régné. En entendant le son des cloches qui sonnaient en actions de grâce pour cette élection, il mourut subitement d'une hémorragie causée par une veine qui s'éclata dans sa poitrine.*

* Marin Sanuto, *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, p. 1164.—*Chronicum Eugubinum*, T. XXI, p. 992.
—Christoforo da Soldo *Istoria Bresciana*, T. XXI, p. 891.—*Navigero Storia Veneziana*, T. XXIII, p. 1120.—M. A. Sabellico, *Deca III*, L. VIII, f. 201.

CAIN;

A MYSTERY.

Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.
Genesis, III, 1.

TO SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

THIS "MYSTERY OF CAIN" IS INSCRIBED,
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

CAIN

A MYSTERY

PREFACE.

THE following scenes are entitled "a Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries," or "Moralities." The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;" and that only because he was "the most subtle of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I must take the words as I find them, and reply with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the Schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!"—holding up the *Scripture*. It is to be recollected that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty, I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gessner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents, I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza.—In the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis; they were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.*

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect) that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the *Old Testament*. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult "Warburton's *Divine Legation*;" whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

* Here follows, in the original draught.—"I am prepared to be accused of Manicheism, or some other hard name in *ism*, which make a formidable figure and awful sound in the eyes and ears of those who would be as much puzzled to explain the terms so bandied about, as the liberal and pious indulgers in such epithets. Against such I can defend myself, or, if necessary, I can attack in turn."—E.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects ; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness.

If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it ; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the Pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, &c. &c., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a “Tramelogedia” of Algeri, called “Abele.”—I have never read that nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his Life.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ADAM.
CAIN.
ABEL.

WOMEN.

EVE.
ADAH.
ZILLAÏ.

SPIRITS.

ANGEL OF THE LORD.
LUCIFER.

CAIN.

ACT I.

SCENE.—THE LAND WITHOUT PARADISE.—TIME, SUNRISE.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH, *offering a sacrifice.*

Adam. God, the Eternal! Infinite! All-Wise!—
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word—all hail!
Jehovah, with returning light, all hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never—
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament—all hail!

Abel. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth—ocean—air—and fire, and with the day
And night, and worlds which these illuminate
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee—all hail! all hail!

Adah. God, the Eternal! Parent of all things!
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
To be beloved, more than all, save thee—
Let me love thee and them :—All hail! all hail!

Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil :—Hail! all hail!

Adam. Son Cain, my first-born, wherefore art thou silent?

Cain. Why should I speak?

Adam. To pray.

Cain. Have ye not pray'd?

Adam. We have, most fervently.

Cain. And loudly: I

Have heard you.

Adam. So will God, I trust.

Abel. Amen!

Adam. But thou, my eldest-born, art silent still.

Cain. 'T is better I should be so.

Adam. Wherefore so?

Cain. I have nought to ask.

Adam. Nor aught to thank for?

Cain. No.

Adam. Dost thou not live?

Cain. Must I not die?

Eve. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins

To fall.

Adam. And we must gather it again.

Oh, God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?

Cain. And wherefore pluck'd ye not the tree of life?

Ye might have then defied him.

Adam. Oh! my son,

BlaspHEME not: these are serpent's words.

Cain. Why not?

The snake spoke *truth*: it *was* the tree of knowledge;

It *was* the tree of life:—knowledge is good,

And life is good; and how can both be evil?

Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke in sin,

Before thy birth: let me not see renew'd

My misery in thine. I have repented.

Let me not see my offspring fall into

The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,

Which e'en in Paradise destroy'd his parents.

Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,

Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh, my son!

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,

Each to his task of toil—not heavy, though

Needful: the earth is young, and yields us kindly

Her fruits with little labour.

Eve. Cain, my son,

Behold thy father cheerful and resign'd,

And do as he doth.

[Exit ADAM and EVE.]

Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,

Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse

The Eternal anger?

Adah. My beloved Cain,

Wilt thou frown even on me?

Cain. No, Adah! no;

I fain would be alone a little while.

Abel, I 'm sick at heart ; but it will pass :
 Precede me, brother—I will follow shortly.
 And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind ;
 Your gentleness must not be harshly met :
 I 'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
 Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
 Be on your spirit, brother ! [*Exit ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH.*]

Cain (solus). And this is
 Life!—Toil! and wherefore should I toil?—because
 My father could not keep his place in Eden.
 What had I done in this?—I was unborn,
 I sought not to be born ; nor love the state
 To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
 Yield to the serpent and the woman? or,
 Yielding, why suffer? What was there in this?
 The tree was planted, and why not for him?
 If not, why place him near it, where it grew
 The fairest in the centre? They have but
 One answer to all questions, “ 't was *his* will,
 And *he* is good.” How know I that? Because
 He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
 I judge but by the fruits—and they are bitter—
 Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
 Whom have we here?—A shape like to the angels,
 Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
 Of spiritual essence : why do I quake?
 Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
 Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
 Before the gates round which I linger oft,
 In twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of these
 Gardens which are my just inheritance,
 Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls,
 And the immortal trees which overtop
 The cherubim-defended battlements?
 If I shrink not from these, the fire-arm'd angels,
 Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
 Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
 Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
 As he hath been, and might be : sorrow seems
 Half of his immortality. And is it
 So? and can aught grieve save humanity?
 He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain. Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!
You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought;—'t is your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?
This has not been reveal'd: the tree of life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit is death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.

Cain. I live,
But live to die: and, living, see nothing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer. Thou livest, and must live for ever: think not
The earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence—it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

Cain. No less! and why
No more?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we.

Cain. And ye?

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. We are mighty.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. No; art thou?

Cain. How should I be so? Look on me!

Lucifer. Poor clay!
And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

Cain. I am:—and thou, with all thy might, what art thou?

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain. Ah!
Thou look'st almost a god; and—

Lucifer. I am none:
And having fail'd to be one, would be nought
Save what I am. He conquer'd; let him reign.

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. Thy sire's Maker, and the earth's.

Cain.

And heaven's,

And all that in them is. So I have heard
His seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say—what they must sing and say, on pain
Of being that which I am—and thou art—
Of spirits and of men.

Cain.

And what is that?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality—
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him, that
His evil is not good! If he has made,
As he saith—which I know not, nor believe—
But, if he made us—he cannot unmake:
We are immortal!—nay, he 'd have us so
That he may torture:—let him! He is great—
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude!
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant!
Could he but crush himself, 't were the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery.
Spirits and men, at least we sympathise;
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs,
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all—
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create—

Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which long have swum
In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
My father and my mother talk to me
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded cherubim,
Which shut them out, and me: I feel the weight
Of daily toil, and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things:—but I thought alone

This misery was *mine*.—My father is
 Tamed down; my mother has forgot the mind
 Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
 Of an eternal curse; my brother is
 A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
 The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
 The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;
 My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
 Than the birds' matins; and my Adah, my
 Own and beloved, she too understands not
 The mind which overwhelms me: never till
 Now met I aught to sympathise with me.
 'T is well—I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own soul
 For such companionship, I would not now
 Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
 Had been enough to charm ye, as before.

Cain. Ah! didst *thou* tempt my mother?

Lucifer. I tempt none,
 Save with the truth: was not the tree, the tree
 Of knowledge? and was not the tree of life
 Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck them not?
 Did *I* plant things prohibited within
 The reach of beings innocent, and curious
 By their own innocence? I would have made ye
 Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye
 Because "ye should not eat the fruits of life,
 And become gods as we." Were those his words?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from those who heard them
 In thunder.

Lucifer. Then who was the demon? He
 Who would not let ye live, or he who would
 Have made ye live for ever in the joy
 And power of knowledge?

Cain. Would they had snatch'd both
 The fruits, or neither!

Lucifer. One is yours already,
 The other may be still.

Cain. How so?

Lucifer. By being
 Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
 Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
 And centre of surrounding things—'t is made
 To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer. I?
 Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?

Cain. They say the serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer. Who
 Saith that? It is not written so on high :
 The proud One will not so far falsify,
 Though man's vast fears and little vanity
 Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
 His own low failing. The snake was the snake—
 No more : and yet not less than those he tempted,
 In nature being earth also—*more in wisdom,*
 Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
 The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
 Think'st thou I 'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain. But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer. He but woke one
 In those he spoke to with his forky tongue.
 I tell thee that the serpent was no more
 Than a mere serpent : ask the cherubim,
 Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
 Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes and your seed's,
 The seed of the then world may thus array
 Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
 To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
 That bows to him who made things but to bend
 Before his sullen sole eternity ;
 But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
 Fond parents listen'd to a creeping thing,
 And fell. For what should spirits tempt them? What
 Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
 Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
 Space—but I speak to thee of what thou know'st not,
 With all thy tree of knowledge.

Cain. But thou canst not
 Speak aught of knowledge which I would not know,
 And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
 To know.

Lucifer. And heart to look on?

Cain. Be it proved.

Lucifer. Darest thou to look on Death?

Cain. He has not yet
 Been seen.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Cain. My father
 Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
 Weeps when he 's named ; and Abel lifts his eyes
 To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
 And sighs a prayer ; and Adah looks on me,
 And speaks not.

Lucifer. And thou?

Cain. Thoughts unspeakable

Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape, but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

Cain. Ah!

I thought it was a being: who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. The Maker—call him
Which name thou wilt; he makes but to destroy.

Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of death: although I know not what it is,
Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd out
In the vast desolate night in search of him;
And, when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequer'd
By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watch'd for what I thought his coming; for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 't was which shook us all—but nothing came.
And then I turn'd my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?

Lucifer. Perhaps—but long outlive both thine and thee.

Cain. I'm glad of that; I would not have them die,
They are so lovely. What is death? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
I cannot compass: 't is denounced against us,
Both them who sinn'd and sinn'd not, as an ill—
What ill?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

Cain. Were I quiet earth,
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a grov'ling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to know.

Cain. But not to live, or wherefore pluck'd he not
The life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hinder'd.

Cain. Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit : but ere he pluck'd
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it—fear I know not what!

Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing : see
What is true knowledge.

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Ay, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.

Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me—thy Lord.

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer. No.

Cain. His equal?

Lucifer. No ;—I have nought in common with him!
Nor would : I would be aught above—beneath—
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart ; but I am great :—
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall—be thou amongst the first.

Cain. I never
As yet have bow'd unto my father's God,
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice :
Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bow'd
To him?

Cain. Have I not said it?—need I say it?
Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bow'd to me!

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'ertheless,
Thou art my worshipper : not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Thou 'lt know here—and hereafter.

Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer. Follow
Where I will lead thee.

Cain. But I must retire
To till the earth—for I had promised—

Lucifer. What?

Cain. To cull some first fruits.

Lucifer. Why?

Cain. To offer up

With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Saidst thou not
Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?

Cain. Yes—
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me ;
The offering is more his than mine—and Adah—

Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate?

Cain. She is my sister,
Born on the same day, of the same womb ; and
She wrung from me, with tears, this promise ; and
Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
Bear all—and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me !

Cain. I will.

Enter ADAH.

Adah. My brother, I have come for thee ;
It is our hour of rest and joy—and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast labour'd not
This morn ; but I have done thy task : the fruits
Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens :
Come away.

Cain. See'st thou not?

Adah. I see an angel !
We have seen many : will he share our hour
Of rest?—he is welcome.

Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.

Adah. Are there, then, others?
But he is welcome, as they were : they deign'd
To be our guests—will he?

Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou?

Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him.

Adah. And leave us?

Cain. Ay.

Adah. And me?

Cain. Beloved Adah !

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer. No, she must not.

Adah. Who

Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain. He is a god.

Adah. How know'st thou?

Cain. He speaks like

A god.

Adah. So did the serpent, and it lied.

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah!—was not the tree that
Of knowledge?

Adah. Ay—to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge—so he lied not:
And if he did betray you, 't was with truth;
And truth in its own essence cannot be
But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gather'd
Evil on ill: expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was, and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me—I
Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother and thy sire?

Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer. No, not yet;
It one day will be in your children.

Adah. What!
Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain?

Adah. Oh, my God!
Shall they not love, and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk
Out of this bosom? was not he, their father,
Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
With me? did we not love each other, and,
In multiplying our being, multiply
Things which will love each other as we love
Them?—And, as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
And cannot be a sin in you—whate'er
It seem in those who will replace ye in
Mortality.

Adah. What is the sin which is not
Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves
Of—

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and higher
Than them or ye would be so, did they not
Prefer an independency of torture
To the smooth agonies of adulation
In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers
To that which is omnipotent, because
It is omnipotent, and not from love,

But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence

Must be all goodness.

Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?

Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art fairer
Than was the serpent, and as false.

Lucifer. As true.

Ask Eve, your mother; bears she not the knowledge
Of good and evil?

Adah. Oh, my mother! thou
Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
Than to thyself; thou at the least hast past
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
And happy intercourse with happy spirits;
But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
Are girt about by demons, who assume
The words of God, and tempt us with our own
Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as thou
Wert work'd on by the snake, in thy most flush'd
And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.

I cannot answer this immortal thing
Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;
I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
And yet I fly not from him: in his eye
There is a fastening attraction which
Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart
Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws me near,
Nearer and nearer: Cain—Cain—save me from him!

Cain. What dreads my *Adah*? This is no ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God—nor God's: I have beheld
The cherubs and seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still—
The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah. Ay—but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery—no.

Adah. I have heard it said,
The seraphs *love most*—cherubim *know most*—
And this should be a cherub—since he loves not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches love,
What must *he be* you cannot love when known?
Since the all-knowing cherubim love least,
The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Chuse betwixt love and knowledge—since there is

No other choice : your sire hath chosen already,
His worship is but fear.

Adah. Oh, Cain ! chuse love.

Cain. For thee, my Adah, I chuse not—it was
Born with me—but I love nought else.

Adah. Our parents ?

Cain. Did they love us when they snatch'd from the tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise ?

Adah. We were not born then—and if we had been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain ?

Cain. My little Enoch ! and his lisping sister !
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget—but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations ! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sow'd the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour ! They pluck'd the tree of science
And sin—and, not content with their own sorrow,
Begot *me—thee*—and all the few that are,
And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated
By ages !—And *I* must be sire of such things !
Thy beauty and thy love—my love and joy,
The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
All we love in our children and each other,
But lead them and ourselves through many years
Of sin and pain—or few, but still of sorrow,
Intercheck'd with an instant of brief pleasure,
To Death—the unknown ! Methinks the tree of knowledge
Hath not fulfill'd its promise !—if they sinn'd,
At least they ought to have known all things that are
Of knowledge—and the mystery of death.
What do they know ?—that they are miserable.
What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that ?

Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
Wert happy—

Cain. Be thou happy then alone—
I will have nought to do with happiness,
Which humbles me and mine.

Adah. Alone I could not,
Nor *would* be happy : but with those around us,
I think I could be so, despite of death,
Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
It seems an awful shadow—if I may
Judge from what I have heard.

Lucifer. And thou couldst not,
Alone, thou say'st, be happy ?

Adah. Alone ! Oh, my God !
 Who could be happy and alone, or good ?
 To me my solitude seems sin ; unless
 When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
 His brother, and our children, and our parents.

Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone ; and is he happy ?
 Lonely, and good ?

Adah. He is not so ; he hath
 The angels and the mortals to make happy,
 And thus becomes so in diffusing joy :
 What else can joy be but the spreading joy ?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from Eden ;
 Or of his first-born son ; ask your own heart ;
 It is not tranquil.

Adah. Alas ! no ; and you—
 Are you of heaven ?

Lucifer. If I am not, inquire
 The cause of this all-spreading happiness
 (Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
 Maker of life and living things ; it is
 His secret, and he keeps it. We must bear,
 And some of us resist, and both in vain,
 His seraphs say ; but it is worth the trial,
 Since better may not be without : there is
 A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
 To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
 Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
 The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

Adah. It is a beautiful star ; I love it for
 Its beauty.

Lucifer. And why not adore ?

Adah. Our father
 Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer. But the symbols
 Of the Invisible are the loveliest
 Of what is visible ; and yon bright star
 Is leader of the host of heaven.

Adah. Our father
 Saith that he hath beheld the God himself
 Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer. Hast thou seen him ?

Adah. Yes—in his works.

Lucifer. But in his being ?

Adah. No—

Save in my father, who is God's own image ;
 Or in his angels, who are like to thee—
 And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
 In seeming : as the silent sunny noon,

All light they look upon us ; but thou seem'st
 Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
 Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd stars
 Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
 With things that look as if they would be suns ,
 So beautiful, unnumber'd, and endearing,
 Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
 They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.
 Thou seem'st unhappy ; do not make us so,
 And I will weep for thee.

Lucifer. Alas ! those tears !
 Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed—

Adah. By me ?

Lucifer. By all.

Adah. What all ?

Lucifer. The million millions —
 The myriad myriads—the all-peopled earth—
 The unpeopled earth—and the o'er-peopled hell,
 Of which thy bosom is the germ.

Adah. Oh Cain !
 This spirit curseth us.

Cain. Let him say on ;
 Him will I follow.

Adah. Whither ?

Lucifer. To a place
 Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour ;
 But in that hour see things of many days.

Adah. How can that be ?

Lucifer. Did not your Maker make
 Out of old worlds this new one in few days ?
 And cannot I, who aided in this work,
 Show in an hour what he hath made in many,
 Or hath destroy'd in few ?

Cain. Lead on.

Adah. Will he
 In sooth return within an hour ?

Lucifer. He shall.
 With us acts are exempt from time, and we
 Can crowd eternity into an hour,
 Or stretch an hour into eternity :
 We breathe not by a mortal measurement—
 But that 's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.

Adah. Will he return ?

Lucifer. Ay, woman ! he alone
 Of mortals from that place (the first and last
 Who shall return, save ONE)—shall come back to thee,
 To make that silent and expectant world
 As populous as this : at present there

Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I dwell? Where are Thy God or Gods—there am I; all things are Divided with me; life and death—and time—Eternity—and heaven and earth—and that Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with Those who once peopled or shall people both— These are my realms! So that I do divide *His*, and possess a kingdom which is not *His*. If I were not that which I have said, Could I stand here? His angels are within Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair serpent Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain! thou hast heard.
If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate
That thirst; nor ask thee to partake of fruits
Which shall deprive thee of a single good
The conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

Cain. Spirit, I have said it. [Exeunt LUCIFER and CAIN.]

Adah (*follows, exclaiming*). Cain! my brother! Cain!

ACT II

SCENE I.—THE ABYSS OF SPACE.

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not; yet I fear
To sink.

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety?

Lucifer. Believe—and sink not! doubt—and perish! thus
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me demon to his angels; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
Evil or good what is proclaim'd to them
In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be

Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
 With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
 An hour, when, toss'd upon some water-drops,
 A man shall say to a man, "Believe in me,
 And walk the waters;" and the man shall walk
 The billows and be safe. *I* will not say
 Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
 To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf
 Of space an equal flight, and I will show
 What thou darest not deny, the history
 Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh, god, or demon, or whate'er thou art,
 Is yon our earth?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognize
 The dust which form'd your father?

Cain. Can it be?
 Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
 With an inferior circlet near it still,
 Which looks like that which lit our earthly night?
 Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
 And they who guard them?

Lucifer. Point me out the site
 Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
 Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
 And as it waxes little, and then less,
 Gathers a halo round it, like the light
 Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
 Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
 Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
 Appear to join the innumerable stars
 Which are around us; and, as we move on,
 Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
 Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited
 By greater things, and they themselves far more
 In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
 Though multiplied to animated atoms,
 All living, and all doom'd to death, and wretched,
 What wouldst thou think?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
 Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were
 Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and,
 Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
 And science still beyond them, were chain'd down
 To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
 All foul and fulsome, and the very best

Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
 A most enervating and filthy cheat,
 To lure thee on to the renewal of
 Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoom'd to be
 As frail, and few so happy——

Cain.

Spirit! I

Know nought of death, save as a dreadful thing
 Of which I have heard my parents speak, as if
 A hideous heritage I owe to them
 No less than life; a heritage not happy,
 If I may judge till now. But, spirit, if
 It be as thou hast said (and I within
 Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
 Here let me die: for to give birth to those
 Who can but suffer many years, and die,
 Methinks, is merely propagating death,
 And multiplying murder.

Lucifer.

Thou canst not

All die—there is what must survive.

Cain.

The Other

Spake not of this unto my father, when
 He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
 Written upon his forehead. But at least
 Let what is mortal of me perish, that
 I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic; wouldst thou be as I am?

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy power,
 And see thou show'st me things beyond *my* power,
 Beyond all power of my born faculties,
 Although inferior still to my desires
 And my conceptions.

Lucifer.

What are they, which dwell

So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
 With worms in clay?

Cain.

And what art thou, who dwellest

So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
 Nature and immortality, and yet
 Seem'st sorrowful?

Lucifer.

I seem that which I am;

And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
 Wouldst be immortal?

Cain.

Thou hast said, I must be

Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
 This until lately—but, since it must be,
 Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
 To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

Cain.

How?

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal?

Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now, behold!
Is it not glorious?

Cain. Oh, thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether! and
Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still-increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an aerial universe of endless
Expansion, at which my soul aches to think,
Intoxicated with eternity?
Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die
(If that they die), or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour
Unworthy what I see, though my dust is:
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine earth!

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there!

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. What, yonder?

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?

Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling,—what dost think of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both beautiful
The little shining fire-fly in its flight,
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?

Cain. How know I what
I dare behold? as yet, thou hast shown nought
I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me.
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal?

Cain. Why, what are things?

Lucifer. *Both* partly: but what doth
Sit next thy heart?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall—the mysteries of death.

Lucifer. What if I show to thee things which have died,
As I have shown thee much which cannot die?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty wings.

Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue! The stars fade from us!
The earth! where is my earth? let me look on it,
For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'T is now beyond thee,
Less in the universe than thou in it;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou
Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust;
'T is part of thy eternity, and mine.

Cain. Where dost thou lead me?

Lucifer. To what was before thee!
The phantasm of the world; of which thy world
Is but the wreck.

Cain. What! is it not then new?

Lucifer. No more than life is: and that was ere thou
Or I were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either: many things will have
No end; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for much meaner than we can
Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.
But changes make not death, except to clay;
But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold.

Cain. Clay, spirit! What thou wilt, I can survey,

Lucifer. Away, then!

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approach'd,
And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.

Cain. And Edens in them?

Lucifer. It may be.

Cain. And men?

Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.

Cain. Ay! and serpents too?

Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them? must no reptile
Breathe, save the erect ones?

Cain. How the lights recede!
Where fly we?

Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.

Cain. But it grows dark, and dark—the stars are gone!

Lucifer. And yet thou seest.

Cain. 'T is a fearful light!
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.

The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight; yet I see
Huge dusky masses, but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seem'd full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and show'd them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took
Like them the features of fair earth:—instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.

Lucifer. But distinct.
Thou seekest to behold death, and dead things?

Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold at once what I
Must one day see perforce.

Lucifer. Behold!

Cain. 'T is darkness.

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever; but we will
Unfold its gates!

Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart—what 's this?

Lucifer. Enter!

Cain. Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should death be peopled?
Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide

And wider, and make widening circles round us.

Lucifer. Advance!

Cain. And thou!

Lucifer. Fear not—without me thou

Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On! on!

[*They disappear through the clouds.*]

SCENE II.—HADES.

Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim worlds!
For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
So thickly in the upper air, that I
Had deem'd them rather the bright populace
Of some all unimaginable heaven
Than things to be inhabited themselves;
But that on drawing near them I beheld
Their swelling into palpable immensity
Of matter, which seem'd made for life to dwell on,
Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy and so full of twilight that
It speaks of a day past.

Lucifer. It is the realm
Of death.—Wouldst have it present?

Cain. Till I know
That which it really is, I cannot answer.
But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 't is a thing—
Oh God! I dare not think on 't! Cursed be
He who invented life that leads to death!
Or the dull mass of life, that being life
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it—
Even for the innocent!

Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?

Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?

Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee—
But for thy sons and brother?

Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeath'd to me? I leave them my inheritance.
Oh ye interminable gloomy realms
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all

Mighty and melancholy—what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.

Cain. Then what is death?

Lucifer. What? Hath not He who made ye
Said 't is another life?

Cain. Till now He hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.

Lucifer. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.

Cain. Happy the day!

Lucifer. Yes, happy! when unfolded
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogg'd
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only!

Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I see
Floating around me?—they wear not the form
Of the intelligences I have seen
Round our regretted and unenter'd Eden,
Nor wear the form of man as I have view'd it
In Adam's, and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's;
And yet they have an aspect, which, though not
Of men nor angels, looks like something which,
If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not
The wing of seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.

Lucifer. Yet they lived.

Cain. Where?

Lucifer. Where
Thou livest.

Cain. When?

Lucifer. On what thou callest earth
They did inhabit.

Cain. Adam is the first.

Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee—but too mean to be
The last of these.

Cain. And what are they?

Lucifer. That which

Thou shalt be.

Cain. But what *were* they?

Lucifer. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire
Adam, could e'er have been in Eden, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son;—and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me! and did *they* perish?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade from thine.

Cain. But was *mine* theirs?

Lucifer. It was.

Cain. But not as now;

It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall?

Lucifer. Ask Him who fells.

Cain. But how?

Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
Subsiding has struck out a world: such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity.—
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'T is awful.

Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms! they were once
Material as thou art.

Cain. And must I be
Like them?

Lucifer. Let Him who made thee answer that.
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
Inferior as thy petty feelings, and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is life, and what ye *shall* have—death: the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engender'd out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crush'd into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness—
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barr'd as poison. But behold

What these superior beings are or were ;
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
The earth, thy task—I 'll waft thee there in safety.

Cain. No : I 'll stay here.

Lucifer. How long?

Cain. For ever ! Since
I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain ; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me—let me dwell in shadows.

Lucifer. It cannot be : thou now beholdest as
A vision that which is reality.
To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou
Must pass through what the things thou see'st have pass'd --
The gates of death.

Cain. By what gate have we enter'd
Even now ?

Lucifer. By mine ! But, plighted to return,
My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions
Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on ;
But do not think to dwell here till thine hour
Is come.

Cain. And these, too, can they ne'er repass
To earth again ?

Lucifer. Their earth is gone for ever—
So changed by its convulsion, they would not
Be conscious to a single present spot
Of its new scarcely-harden'd surface—'t was—
Oh, what a beautiful world it *was* !

Cain. And is.
It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war ; but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful untoiling,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of death and life.

Lucifer. What thy world is thou see'st,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence
(At least so seeming) to the things we have pass'd,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror ; taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them,
And tusks projecting like the trees stripp'd of

Their bark and branches—what were they ?

Lucifer. That which
The mammoth is in thy world ;—but these lie
By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But
None on it ?

Lucifer. No : for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless—
'T would be destroy'd so early.

Cain. But why war ?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden—war with all things,
And death to all things, and disease to most things,
And pangs, and bitterness ; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals—
Did they too eat of it, that they must die ?

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for you,
As you for him—You would not have their doom
Superior to your own ? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas ! the hopeless wretches !
They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons ;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple ;
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowledge* !
It was a lying tree—for we *know* nothing.
At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price*
Of death—but *knowledge* still : but what *knows* man ?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the *highest* knowledge ;
And being of all things the sole thing certain,
At least leads to the *surest* science : therefore
The tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms !
I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly—but 't is something
To know there are such realms.

Cain. We knew already
That there was death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou know'st that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own—
And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

Lucifer. Be content ; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem
The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue—
What is it ?

Lucifer. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it—'t is the phantasm of an ocean.

Cain. 'T is like another world ; a liquid sun—
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface ?

Lucifer. Are its habitants,
The past leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty
Head ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately look'd on—
Is he not of the kind which bask'd beneath
The tree in Eden ?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him ?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so call'd),
But never that precisely which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not ?

Cain. No ; 't was my mother
Who tempted him—she tempted by the serpent.

Lucifer. Good man ! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons' wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that 's new or strange,
Be sure thou see'st first who hath tempted *them*.

Cain. Thy precept comes too late : there is no more
For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to,
And man tempt woman :—let thy sons look to it !
My counsel is a kind one : for 't is even
Given chiefly at my own expense ; 't is true,
'T will not be follow'd, so there 's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou!—
Thy world and thou are still too young! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy: is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin—and thou art evil,
Of sorrow—and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence, compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do.—
Now let us back to earth!

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge?

Cain. Yes: as being
The road to happiness.

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it.
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No:
I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good.

Lucifer. And who and what doth not? *Who* covets evil
For its own bitter sake?—*None*—nothing! 't is
The leaven of all life and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we behold,
Distant and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come; they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar.

Cain. And what of that?
Distance can but diminish glory—they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beautiful,
And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this—
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion.—What is that,

Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote ?

Cain. My sister Adah.—All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world—
The hues of twilight—the sun's gorgeous coming—
His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds—
The forest shade—the green bough—the bird's voice—
The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls ;—
All these are nothing to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face : I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'T is frail as fair mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation,
And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring ; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her brother.

Lucifer.

Mortal !

My brotherhood 's with those who have no children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me.
But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched ?

Cain.

Why do I exist ?

Why art *thou* wretched ? why are all things so ?
Even He who made us must be, as the maker
Of things unhappy ! To produce destruction
Can surely never be the task of joy,
And yet my sire says He 's omnipotent :
Then why is evil—He being good ? I ask'd
This question of my father ; and he said,
Because this evil only was the path
To good. Strange good, that must arise from out
Its deadly opposite. I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile : the poor suckling
Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
And piteous bleating of its restless dam ;
My father pluck'd some herbs, and laid them to
The wound ; and by degrees the helpless wretch
Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain
The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.

Behold, my son! said Adam, how from evil
Springs good!

Lucifer. What didst thou answer?

Cain. Nothing; for

He is my father: but I thought, that 't were
A better portion for the animal
Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life
With agonies unutterable, though
Dispell'd by antidotes.

Lucifer. But as thou saidst,
Of all beloved things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers
Unto thy children——

Cain. Most assuredly:
What should I be without her?

Lucifer. What am I?

Cain. Dost thou love nothing?

Lucifer. What does thy God love?

Cain. All things, my father says; but I confess
I see it not in their allotment here.

Lucifer. And therefore thou canst not see if I love
Or no, except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like snows.

Cain. Snows! what are they?

Lucifer. Be happier in not knowing
What thy remeter offspring must encounter;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter!

Cain. But dost thou not love something like thyself?

Lucifer. And dost thou love *thyself*?

Cain. Yes, but love more
What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it.

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 't is beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

Cain. Cease to be beautiful! how can that be?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But the time has past, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair:
Not fair like Adah and the seraphim—
But very fair.

Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it; but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less.

And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.

Cain. And I thee who lovest nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother—
Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well—so does thy God.

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'T is well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly!

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.

Cain. Let him keep
Her favour, since the serpent was the first
To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
To me? should I not love that which all love?

Lucifer. And the Jehovah—the indulgent Lord,
And beauteous planter of barr'd Paradise—
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain. I
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.

Cain. Rarely.

Lucifer. But
Sufficiently to see they love your brother ;
His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they ! wherefore speak to me of this ?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.

Cain. And if
I have thought, why recall a thought that——(*he pauses, as agi-
tated*)—Spirit !

Here are we in *thy* world ; speak not of *mine*.
Thou hast shown me wonders ; thou hast shown me those
Mighty Pre-Adamites who walk'd the earth
Of which ours is the wreck ; thou hast pointed out
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life ; thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us—death ; thou hast shown me much—
But not all : show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial paradise—or *thine*.
Where is it ?

Lucifer. Here, and o'er all space.

Cain. But ye
Have some allotted dwelling—as all things ;
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants ;
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element ; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have theirs, thou say'st ;
And the Jehovah and thyself have thine—
Ye do not dwell together ?

Lucifer. No, we reign
Together, but our dwellings are asunder.

Cain. Would there were only one of ye ! perchance
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarr'd in storms.
How came ye, being spirits, wise and infinite,
To separate ? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence, and your nature, and your glory ?

Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother ?

Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain ; but, were it not so,
Is spirit like to flesh ? can it fall out ?
Infinity with immortality ?
Jarring and turning space to misery—
For what ?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal ?

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And what I've seen,
Yon blue immensity, is boundless ?

Lucifer. Ay.

Cain. And cannot ye both *reign* then ?—is there not
Enough ?—why should ye differ ?

Lucifer. We both reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which ?

Cain. Thou ! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not ?

Lucifer. And why not he who made ? I made ye not ;
Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine.

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee
Both ; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore.

Cain. And why not now?

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to gather
The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought; and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring
To the great double mysteries! the *two Principles!*
And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition, for to see
Either of these, would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There
The son of her who snatch'd the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;
That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,
Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I show'd,
Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem
Nothing.

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness;
Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'T will spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit!
Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No! By heaven, which He
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him—No!
I have a victor—true; but no superior.
Homage He has from all—but none from me:
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great

Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
 Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quench'd!
 And what can quench our immortality,
 Or mutual and irrevocable hate?
 He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd
Evil; but what will be the *good* He gives?
 Were I the victor, *his* works would be deem'd
 The only evil ones. And you, ye new
 And scarce-born mortals, what have been his gifts
 To you already in your little world?

Cain. But few; and some of those but bitter.

Lucifer.

Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
 Of his celestial boons to ye and yours.
 Evil and good are things in their own essence,
 And not made good or evil by the giver;
 But if he gives you good—so call him; if
 Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,
 Till ye know better its true fount; and judge
 Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits
 Of your existence, such as it must be.
 One good gift has the fatal apple given—
 Your *reason*:—let it not be overstay'd
 By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
 'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:
 Think and endure,—and form an inner world
 In your own bosom—where the outward fails;
 So shall you nearer be the spiritual
 Nature, and war triumphant with your own.

[*They disappear.*]

ACT III.

SCENE.—THE EARTH NEAR EDEN, AS IN ACT I.

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah Hush! tread softly, Cain.

Cain.

I will; but wherefore?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
 Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain.

Cypress! 't is

A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourn'd
O'er what it shadows ; wherefore didst thou chuse it
For our child's canopy ?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seem'd
Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Ay, the last—
And longest ; but no matter—lead me to him.

[*They go up to the child.*]

How lovely he appears ! his little cheeks,
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose-leaves strewn beneath them.

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted ! No, you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now : he will awake soon—
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over,
But it were pity to disturb him till
'T is closed.

Cain. You have said well ; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps !—Sleep on
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young : sleep on, and smile !
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent ! *thou* hast not pluck'd the fruit—
Thou know'st not thou art naked ! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine ? But now sleep on !
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them :
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream—
Of what ? Of Paradise !—Ay ! dream of it,
My disinherited boy ! 'T is but a dream ;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy !

Adah. Dear Cain ! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past ;
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise ?
Can we not make another ?

Cain. Where ?

Adah. Here, or
Where'er thou wilt : where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden.
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
And Zillah—our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth ?

Cain. Yes, death, too, is amongst the debts we owe her.

Adah. Cain ! that proud spirit, who withdrew thee hence,
Hath sadden'd thine still deeper: I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge ; but I see
Thy guide hath done thee evil : still I thank him,
And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain. So soon ?

Adah. 'T is scarcely
Two hours since ye departed : two *long* hours
To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approach'd that sun, and seen
Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
Shall light ; and worlds he never lit : methought
Years had roll'd o'er my absence.

Adah. Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds,
Pleasing or painful, little or almighty.
I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings ; skirr'd extinguish'd worlds ;
And gazing on eternity, methought
I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity ; but now I feel
My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
That I was nothing !

Adah. Wherefore said he so ?
Jehovah said not that.

Cain. No : *he* contents him
With making us the *nothing* which we are ;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of
Eden and immortality, resolves
It back to dust again—for what ?

Adah. Thou know'st—
Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that
To us ? they sinn'd, then *let them* die !

Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought
Thy own, but of the spirit who was with thee.
Would *I* could die for them, so *they* might live !

Cain. Why, so say I—provided that one victim
Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him.

Adah. How know we that some such atonement one day

May not redeem our race?

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin—
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain; thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never!

Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?

Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would be so ready
With the burnt-offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 't is well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful
Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers, and fruits;
These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and sweaten in the sun
According to the curse:—must I do more?
For what should I be gentle? for a war
With all the elements ere they will yield
The bread we eat? For what must I be grateful?
For being dust, and groveling in the dust,
Till I return to dust? If I am nothing—
For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,
And seem well pleased with pain? For what should I
Be contrite? for my father's sin, already
Expiate with what we all have undergone,
And to be more than expiated by
The ages prophesied, upon our seed.
Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there,
The germs of an eternal misery
To myriads is within him! better 't were
I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd him 'gainst
The rocks, than let him live to——

Adah. Oh, my God!

Touch not the child—my child! *thy* child! Oh Cain!

Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all the power
Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant
With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech?

Cain. I said,
'T were better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must
Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since
That saying jars you, let us only say—
'T were better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were then the joys,
The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,
And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch!

[*She goes to the child.*]

Oh Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy;
How like to me—how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike; is 't not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.

Cain. Bless thee, boy!
If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!

Adah. It shall.
Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain. Of that I doubt;
But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.

Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel! hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wandering,
In high communion with a spirit, far

Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

Cain. No.

Abel. Why then commune with him? He may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so—if so you term him?

Abel. Term him! your words are strange to-day, my brother.
My sister Adah, leave us for a while—
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[Exit ADAH, with her child.]

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

Cain. The dead,
The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpowering mysteries of space—
The innumerable worlds that were and are—
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel!

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light—
Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural hue—
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound—
What may this mean?

Cain. It means—I pray thee, leave me.

Abel. Not till we have pray'd and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone—
Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. Both well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that;
Thou art fitter for his worship than I am:
Revere him, then—but let it be alone—
At least without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If as my elder I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God call'd not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood—'t is thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee
To do so now; thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

Cain. No;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I've seen the elements still'd. My Abel, leave me!
Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so——well, then,
What shall I do?

Abel. Chuse one of these two altars.

Cain. Chuse for me: they to me are so much turf
And stone.

Abel. Chuse thou!

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'T is the highest
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?

Abel. Behold them here—
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit.

[*He gathers fruits.*

Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle a flame upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No—I am new to this; lead thou the way,
And I will follow—as I may.

Abel (kneeling). Oh God!
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so temper'd with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a paradise,
Compared with our great crimes:—Sole Lord of light!
Of good, and glory, and eternity;
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence—

Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd—
 Accept from out thy humble first of shepherd's
 First of the first-born flocks—an offering,
 In itself nothing—as what offering can be
 Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for
 The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
 The face of thy high heaven, bowing his own
 Even to the dust, of which he is, in honour
 Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore!

Cain (standing erect during this speech). Spirit! whate'er or who-
 soe'er thou art,

Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
 Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil;
 Jehovah upon earth! and God in heaven!
 And it may be with other names, because
 Thine attributes seem many, as thy works:
 If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
 Take them! If thou must be induced with altars,
 And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them!
 Two beings here erect them unto thee.
 If thou lovest blood, the shepherd's shrine, which smokes
 On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service,
 In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
 In sanguinary incense to thy skies;
 Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
 And milder seasons, which the unstain'd turf
 I spread them on now offers in the face
 Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
 Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
 Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
 A sample of thy works, than supplication
 To look on ours! If a shrine without a victim,
 And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
 Look on it! and for him who dresseth it,
 He is—such as thou mad'st him; and seeks nothing
 Which must be won by kneeling: if he 's evil,
 Strike him! thou art omnipotent, and may'st,—
 For what can he oppose? If he be good,
 Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt! since all
 Rests upon thee; and good and evil seem
 To have no power themselves, save in thy will;
 And whether that be good or ill I know not,
 Not being omnipotent, or fit to judge
 Omnipotence, but merely to endure
 Its mandate, which thus far I have endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column of the
 brightest flame, and ascends to heaven; while a whirlwind
 throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters the fruits abroad
 upon the earth.*

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray! Jehovah's wroth with thee!

Cain. Why so?

Abel. Thy fruits are scatter'd on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them return;
Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer:
Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better; see
How heaven licks up the flames, when thick with blood!

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any.—

Abel (rising). Cain! what meanest thou?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatt'rer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not:—add not impious works
to impious
Words! let that altar stand—'t is hallow'd now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. *His!*

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which
Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my altar
With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 't is thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be——

Abel. What meanest thou?

Cain. Give—

Give way! thy God loves blood!—then look to it:—
Give way, ere he hath *more!*

Abel. In *his* great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strew'd this turf along
Its native soil:—else——

Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.

Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples, which he snatches from the altar). Then take thy life unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.

Abel (falls). What hast thou done, my brother?

Cain. Brother!

Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant, and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did.—*Cain*, give me—give me thy hand; and tell
Poor Zillah—

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My hand! 't is all red, and
with—

What?

[A long pause.—Looking slowly round.

Where am I? alone! Where 's Abel? where
Cain? Can it be that I am he! My brother,
Awake!—why liest thou so on the green earth?
'T is not the hour of slumber :—why so pale?
What hast thou?—thou wert full of life this morn!
Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;
And only done to daunt me :—'t was a blow—
And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir!
Why, so—that 's well!—thou breath'st! breathe upon me!
Oh, God! Oh, God!

Abel (very faintly). What 's he who speaks of God?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him! *Cain*,
Comfort poor Zillah :—she has but one brother
Now.

[ABEL dies.

Cain. And I none!—Who makes me brotherless?
His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes!
And yet I feel it not. His heart! his heart!
Let me see, doth it beat?—methinks—No!—no!
This is a vision, else I am become
The native of another and worse world.
The earth swims round me : what is this? 't is wet;

[Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.

And yet there are no dews! 'T is blood—my blood—
My brother's and my own; and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead!—Is silence death?
No; he will wake : then let me watch by him.
Life cannot be so slight, as to be quench'd

Thus quickly!—he hath spoken to me since—
 What shall I say to him?—My brother!—No;
 He will not answer to that name; for brethren
 Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak to me.
 Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
 That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound: what can it be?
 'T is Cain; and watching by my husband. What
 Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh! heaven!
 What means this paleness, and yon stream?—No! no!
 It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
 Abel! what's this?—who hath done this? He moves not;
 He breathes not: and his hands drop down from mine
 With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!
 Why cam'st thou not in time to save him from
 This violence? Whatever hath assail'd him,
 Thou wert the stronger, and should'st have stepp'd in
 Between him and aggression! Father!—Eve!—
 Adah!—come hither! Death is in the world!

[Exit ZILLAH, calling on her parents, &c.]

Cain (solus). And who hath brought him there?—I—who abhor
 The name of death so deeply, that the thought
 Empoison'd all my life, before I knew
 His aspect—I have led him here, and given
 My brother to his cold and still embrace,
 As if he would not have asserted his
 Inexorable claim without my aid.
 I am awake at last—a dreary dream
 Had madden'd me;—but *he* shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me here.—
 What do I see?—'T is true!—My son!—my son!
 Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine!

[To EVE.]

Eve. Oh! speak not of it now: the serpent's fangs
 Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel!
 Jehovah! this is punishment beyond
 A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!

Adam. Who,
 Or what hath done this deed? Speak, Cain, since thou
 Wert present: was it some more hostile angel,
 Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild
 Brute of the forest?

Eve. Ah! a livid light
 Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! yon brand,

Massy and bloody! snatch'd from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with—

Adam. Speak, my son,
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not *thou!*

Eve. It was.
I see it now—he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine.

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah!
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him!
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate! May—

Adah. Hold!
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betroth'd.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother—
Zillah no husband—me *no son!*—for this
I curse him from my sight for evermore!
All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon—Oh death! death!
Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurr'd thee?
Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;
And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve (pointing to CAIN). *His will!* the will of yon incarnate spirit
Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him
By day and night—snakes spring up in his path—
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd
With scorpions! May his dreams be of his victim!
His waking a continual dread of death!
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he

Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip!
 May every element shun or change to him!
 May he live in the pangs which others die with!
 And death itself wax something worse than death
 To him who first acquainted him with man!
 Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is *Cain*,
 Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
 Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire!
 May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
 Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
 A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!

[*Exit EVE.*]

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no more together.
 Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am
 Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father: do not
 Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head.

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his curse.
 Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
 Who hath provided for us this dread office.
 Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
 And those lips once so warm—my heart! my heart!

[*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH weeping.*]

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I'm ready,
 So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
 And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
 Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
 Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to me,
 To me—*thine own.*

Cain. Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee.

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost thou not fear
 To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear
 Nothing, except to leave thee, much as I
 Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.
 I must not speak of this—it is between thee
 And the great God.

A voice from within exclaims, Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?

The voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the LORD.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel ?

Cain. Am I then

My brother's keeper ?

Angel. Cain ! what hast thou done ?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord !—Now thou art
Cursed from the earth, which open'd late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall not
Yield thee her strength ; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth !

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold, thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
'T will come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could ! but who are they
Shall slay me ? where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled ?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son ?

Adah. Angel of light ! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment
To him thou now see'st so besmeared with blood ?
The fratricide might well engender parricides.—
But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head. Come hither !

Cain. What
Wouldst thou with me ?

Angel. To mark upon thy brow
Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die !

Angel. It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN's brow.*

Cain. It burns
My brow, but nought to that which is within it.
Is there more ? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till ; but he
Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten ;
Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for Eden.
That which I am, I am ; I did not seek
For life, nor did I make myself ; but could I
With my own death redeem him from the dust—
And why not so ? let him return to day,
And I lie ghastly ! so shall be restored
By God the life to him he loved ; and taken
From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder ? what is done is done.
Go forth ! fulfil thy days ! and be thy deeds
Unlike the last ! [The ANGEL disappears.

Adah. He 's gone, let us go forth ;
I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.

Cain. Ah ! little knows he what he weeps for !
And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears !
But the four rivers² would not cleanse my soul.
Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me ?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would—

Cain. (*interrupting her*). No,
No more of threats : we 've had too many of them :
Go to our children ; I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead ;
Let us depart together.

Cain. Oh ! thou dead
And everlasting witness ! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven ! what thou *now* art,
I know not ! but if *thou* see'st what *I* am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell !
I must not, dare not, touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprang from the same womb with thee, drain'd
The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me—compose thy limbs into their grave—
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave ? Oh, earth ! Oh, earth !
For all the fruits thou hast render'd to me, I
Give thee back this.—Now for the wilderness.

[ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot ! Of all who mourn for thee,

I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them;
But yet, of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.
Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way;
'T is the most desolate, and suits my steps.

Adah. Lead! thou shalt be my guide, and may our God
Be thine! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And he who lieth there was childless. I
Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
And might have temper'd this stern blood of mine,
Uniting with our children Abel's offspring!
O Abel!

Adah. Peace be with him!

Cain.

But with me!—

[*Exeunt.*

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 338.

In Lord Byron's Diary for January 28, 1821, we find the following entry :—

"Thought for a speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.

"Were Death an evil, would I let thee live ?

Fool ! live as I live—as thy father lives,

And thy sons' sons shall live for evermore ! "—E.

Note 2. Page 354.

The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.



PREFACE

The following drama is one of the most important works of the author, published in the year 1794. It is a tragedy in five acts, and is written in the German language. It is a very rare and valuable work, and is one of the most interesting productions of the German drama. It is a tragedy in the true sense of the word, and is one of the most powerful and moving dramas ever written. It is a tragedy in the true sense of the word, and is one of the most powerful and moving dramas ever written.

WERNER,
OR THE INHERITANCE;
A TRAGEDY.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY IS DEDICATED.

The author of this drama is a native of the city of Weimar, and is one of the most distinguished writers of the German language. He is a man of great talents, and is one of the most powerful and moving writers of the German language. He is a man of great talents, and is one of the most powerful and moving writers of the German language. He is a man of great talents, and is one of the most powerful and moving writers of the German language. He is a man of great talents, and is one of the most powerful and moving writers of the German language. He is a man of great talents, and is one of the most powerful and moving writers of the German language.

Printed by G. J. Neumann, Neudamm, near Berlin, 1794.

WELLES

WELLES

ON THE INTERIOR

A TRAGEDY

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE TRAGEDY OF

THE TRAGEDY OF

PREFACE.

THE following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Kruitzner*," published many years ago in "*Lee's Canterbury Tales*;" written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection.* I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or at any rate its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution; for the story might, perhaps, have been more developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names; but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use; for every one must judge according to their own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815 (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Iivina*," which I had sense enough to burn), and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.†

Pisa, February, 1822.

* This is not correct. "*The Young Lady's Tale*," and "*Pembroke*" were contributed by Sophia Lee. The "*German's Tale*," and all the others in the *Canterbury Collection*, were written by Harriet, the younger of the sisters.—E.

† Werner is, however, the only one of Lord Byron's dramas that proved successful in representation. It is still in possession of the stage.—E.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

WERNER.

ULRIC.

STRALENHEIM.

IDENSTEIN.

GABOR.

FRITZ.

HENRICK.

ERIC.

ARNHEIM.

MEISTER.

RODOLPH.

LUDWIG.

WOMEN.

JOSEPHINE.

IDA STRALENHEIM.

Scene—partly on the frontier of Silesia, and partly in Siegendorf Castle,
near Prague.

Time—the close of the thirty years' war.

WERNER.

ACT I.

SCENE.—THE HALL OF A DECAYED PALACE NEAR A SMALL TOWN ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF SILESIA—THE NIGHT TEMPESTUOUS.

WERNER and JOSEPHINE his wife.

Jos. My love, be calmer !

Wer. I am calm.

Jos. To me—

Yes, but not to thyself : thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,
And stepping with the bee from flower to flower ;
But *here !*

Wer. 'T is chill ; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves : my blood is frozen.

Jos. Ah, no !

Wer. (*smiling*). Why ! wouldst thou have it so ?

Jos. I would
Have it a healthful current.

Wer. Let it flow
Until 't is spilt or check'd—how soon, I care not.

Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart ?

Wer. All—all.

Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must break mine ?

Wer. (*approaching her slowly*). But for *thee* I had been—no
matter what,

But much of good and evil ; what I am,
Thow knowest ; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not : but still I love thee, nor

Shall aught divide us.

[WERNER walks on abruptly, and then approaches JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night,
Perhaps, affects me : I 'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas !
Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love !
In watching me.

Jos. To see thee well is much—
To see thee happy—

Wer. Where hast thou seen such ?
Let me be wretched with the rest !

Jos. But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,
Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.

Wer. And that 's not the worst : who cares
For chambers ? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest—ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

Jos. And art thou not now shelter'd from them all

Wer. Yes. And from these alone.

Jos. And that is something.

Wer. True—to a peasant.

Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life ?

Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is not : we
Have borne all this, I 'll not say patiently,
Except in thee—but we have borne it.

Jos. Well !

Wer. Something beyond our outward sufferings (though
These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, now,
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,
And leaves us,—no ! this is beyond me !—but
For this I had been happy—*thou* been happy—
The splendour of my rank sustain'd—my name—
My father's name—been still upheld ; and, more
Than those—

Jos. (abruptly). My son—our son—our Ulric,
 Been clasp'd again in these long-empty arms,
 And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
 Twelve years! he was but eight then: beautiful
 He was, and beautiful he must be now.
 My Ulric! my adored!

Wer. I have been full oft
 The chase of fortune; now she hath o'ertaken
 My spirit where it cannot turn at bay,—
 Sick, poor, and lonely.

Jos. Lonely! my dear husband?

Wer. Or worse—involving all I love, in this
 Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
 And all been over in a nameless grave.

Jos. And I had not outlived thee; but pray take
 Comfort! We have struggled long; and they who strive
 With fortune win or weary her at last,
 So that they find the goal, or cease to feel
 Further. Take comfort,—we shall find our boy.

Wer. We were in sight of him, of every thing
 Which could bring compensation for past sorrow—
 And to be baffled thus?

Jos. We are not baffled.

Wer. Are we not pennyless?

Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.

Wer. But I was born to wealth, and rank, and power;
 Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas! abused them,
 And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
 In my o'er-fervent youth; but for the abuse
 Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death
 Left the path open, yet not without snares.
 This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
 Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
 The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
 Become the master of my rights, and lord
 Of that which lifts him up to princes in
 Dominion and domain.

Jos. Who knows? our son
 May have return'd back to his grandsire, and
 Even now uphold thy rights for thee?

Wer. 'T is hopeless.
 Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
 Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
 Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his course.
 I parted with him to his grandsire, on
 The promise that his anger would stop short
 Of the third generation; but Heaven seems
 To claim her stern prerogative, and visit

Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

Jos. I must hope better still,—at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

Wer. We should have done, but for this fatal sickness,
More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace :
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend ;—
How do I know he hath not track'd us here?

Jos. He does not know thy person ; and his spies,
Who so long watch'd thee, have been left at Hamburg ;
Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind :
None hold us here for aught save what we seem .

Wer. Save what we seem ! save what we *are*—sick beggars,
Even to our very hopes.—Ha ! ha !

Jos. Alas !
That bitter laugh !

Wer. Who would read in this form
The high soul of the son of a long line ?
Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands ?
Who, in this sunken sickly eye, the pride
Of rank and ancestry ? in this worn cheek,
And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of halls
Which daily feast a thousand vassals ?

Jos. You
Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly things,
My Werner ! when you deign'd to chuse for bride
The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

Wer. An exile's daughter with an outcast son
Were a fit marriage ; but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decay'd ;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

Jos. Your father did not think so, though 't was noble ;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deem'd it what it is.

Wer. And what is that in thine eyes ?

Jos. All which it
Has done in our behalf,—nothing.

Wer. How,—nothing ?

Jos. Or worse ; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning : but for this,
We had not felt our poverty, but as
Millions of myriads feel it—cheerfully ;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou might'st have earn'd thy bread as thousands earn it ;
Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,

Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

Wer. (*ironically*). And been an Hanseatic burgher? Excellent!

Jos. Whate'er thou might'st have been, to me thou art,
What no state, high or low, can ever change,
My heart's first choice;—which chose thee, knowing neither
Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy sorrows:
While they last, let me comfort or divide them;
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!

Wer. My better angel! such I have ever found thee;
This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself,—to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when in my two-and-twentieth spring,
My father barr'd me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved exclusion; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.

[*A knocking is heard.*]

Jos. Hark!

Wer. A knocking!

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour? we have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

[*WERNER puts his hand into his bosom as if to search for some
weapon.*]

Jos. Oh! do not look so. I
Will to the door, it cannot be of import
In this lone spot of wintry desolation—
The very desert saves man from mankind.

[*She goes to the door.*]

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy—what's your name, my friend?

Wer. Are you
Not afraid to demand it?

Iden. Not afraid?

Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

Wer. Better, sir?

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony, what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month
Here in the prince's palace—(to be sure
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years—but 't is still a palace)—
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer. My name is Werner.

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy name,
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board;
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos. Oh, yes, we are, but distantly.

[*Aside to WERNER.*]

Cannot you humour the dull gossip till
We learn his purpose?

Iden. Well, I 'm glad of that;
I thought so all along; such natural yearnings
Play'd round my heart—blood is not water, cousin;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance: relatives should be
Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drunk enough already,
And if you had not, I 've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours; but this you know, or should know:
You see I am poor and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone; but to your business!
What brings you here?

Iden. Why, what should bring me here?

Wer. I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

Jos. (aside). Patience, dear Werner!

Iden. You don't know what has happen'd, then?

Jos. How should we?

Iden. The river has o'erflow'd.

Jos. Alas! we have known
That to our sorrow, for these five days, since
It keeps us here.

Iden. But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream, and three postilions' wishes,
Is drown'd below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

Jos. Poor creatures! are you sure?

Iden. Yes, of the monkey,
And the valet, and the cattle; but as yet
We know not if his excellency's dead
Or no; your noblemen are hard to drown,
As it is fit that men in office should be;
But, what is certain is, that he has swallow'd
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatch'd him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

Jos. And where will you receive him? here, I hope.
If we can be of service—say the word.

Iden. Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment,
As fits a noble guest: 't is damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in 't, if he be
Still liable to cold—and if not, why
He'll be worse lodged to-morrow: ne'ertheless,
I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst—that is,
In case he should survive.

Jos. Poor gentleman!
I hope he will, with all my heart.

Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name?

My Josephine, [*Aside to his wife.*
Retire, I'll sift this fool. [*Exit JOSEPHINE.*

Iden. His name? oh Lord!
Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'T is time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer, or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

Wer. True, true, I did so; you say well and wisely.

Enter GABOR.

Gabor. If I intrude, I crave——

Iden. Oh, no intrusion!
This is the palace; this a stranger like

Yourself ; I pray you make yourself at home :
But where 's his excellency, and how fares he ?

Gabor. Wetly and wearily, but out of peril ;
He paused to change his garments in a cottage
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came on hither),
And has almost recover'd from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

Iden. What ho, there ! bustle !
Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad !

[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*]

A nobleman sleeps here to-night—see that
All is in order in the damask chamber—
Keep up the stove—I will myself to the cellar—
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel ; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since his highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless.

Gabor. Faith !
I cannot tell ; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table, after
His soaking in your river : but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean
To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer with
A traveller's appetite.

Iden. But are you sure
His excellency—but his name, what is it ?

Gabor. I do not know.

Iden. And yet you saved his life.

Gabor. I help'd my friend to do so.

Iden. Well, that 's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.

Gabor. Not so ; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

Iden. Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be ?

Gabor. By my family,
Hungarian.

Iden. Which is call'd ?

Gabor. It matters little.

Iden. (*aside*). I think that all the world are grown anonymous,
Since no one cares to tell me what he 's call'd !
Pray, has his excellency a large suite ?

Gabor. Sufficient.

Iden. How many ?

Gabor. I did not count them.
We came up by mere accident, and just
In time to drag him through his carriage window.

Iden. Well, what would I give to save a great man!
No doubt you 'll have a swinging sum as recompense.

Gabor. Perhaps.

Iden. Now, how much do you reckon on?

Gabor. I have not yet put up myself to sale:
In the mean time, my best reward would be
A glass of your Hockcheimer, a *green* glass,
Wreath'd with rich grapes and bacchanal devices,
O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage;
For which I promise you, in case you e'er
Run hazard of being drown'd (although I own
It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you),
I 'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
A wave the less may roll above your head.

Iden. (*aside*). I don't much like this fellow—close and dry
He seems, two things which suit me not; however,
Wine he shall have: if that unlocks him not,
I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN.*]

Gabor (*to WER.*) This master of the ceremonies is
The intendant of the palace, I presume?
'T is a fine building, but decay'd.

Wer. The apartment
Design'd for him you rescued will be found
In fitter order for a sickly guest.

Gabor. I wonder then you occupied it not,
For you seem delicate in health.

Wer. (*quickly*). Sir!

Gabor. Pray
Excuse me: have I said aught to offend you?

Wer. Nothing: but we are strangers to each other.

Gabor. And that 's the reason I would have us less so!
I thought our bustling guest without had said
You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
Of me and my companions.

Wer. Very true.

Gabor. Then, as we never met before, and never,
It may be, may again encounter, why,
I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here
(At least to me), by asking you to share
The fare of my companions and myself.

Wer. Pray, pardon me; my health——

Gabor. Even as you please.

I've been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

Gabor. In what service?
The imperial?

Wer. (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*). I commanded—no—
I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian.

Gabor. Well, that's over now, and peace
Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may; and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

Wer. What is that?

Gabor. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the chatelains must keep
Their castle walls—beyond them 't is but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

Wer. And I—nothing.

Gabor. That's harder still. You say you were a soldier?

Wer. I was.

Gabor. You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies,
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep
The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
You are poor and sickly—I am not rich, but healthy;
I want for nothing which I cannot want;
You seem devoid of this—wilt share it?

[GABOR pulls out his purse.

Wer. Who

Told you I was a beggar?

Gabor. You yourself,
In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

Wer. (*looking at him with suspicion*). You know me not?

Gabor. I know no
man, not even

Myself : how should I then know one I ne'er
Beheld till half an hour since ?

Wer. Sir, I thank you.

Your offer 's noble, were it to a friend,
And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,
Though scarcely prudent ; but no less I thank you.
I am a beggar in all save his trade,
And when I beg of any one, it shall be
Of him who was the first to offer what
Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me.

[*Exit WERNER.*

Gabor (solus). A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn,
As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,
Which tear life out of us before our time :
I scarce know which most quickly ; but he seems
To have seen better days, as who has not
Who has seen yesterday ?—But here approaches
Our sage intendant, with the wine ; however,
For the cup's sake, I 'll bear the cup-bearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. 'T is here ! the supernaculum ! twenty years
Of age, if 't is a day.

Gabor. Which epoch makes
Young women and old wine, and 't is great pity
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other,
Fill full—Here 's to our hostess—your fair wife.

[*Takes the glass.*

Iden. Fair !—Well, I trust your taste in wine is equal
To that you show for beauty ! but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

Gabor. Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Beseem'd this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), return'd my salutation—
Is not the same your spouse ?

Iden. I would she were !
But you 're mistaken—that 's the stranger's wife.

Gabor. And by her aspect she might be a prince's :
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

Iden. And that
Is more than I can say for Madam Idenstein,
At least in beauty ; as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared—but never mind !

Gabor. I don't. But who
May be this stranger? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

Iden. There I differ.
He 's poor as Job, and not so patient; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learn'd
To-night), I know not.

Gabor. But how came he here?

Iden. In a most miserable old calash
About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

Gabor. Tender and true!—but why?

Iden. Why, what is life
Without a living? He has not a stiver.

Gabor. In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

Iden. That 's true; but pity, as you know, *does* make
One's heart commit these follies; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour;
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for fire-wood.

Gabor. Poor souls!

Iden. Ay,
Exceeding poor.

Gabor. And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going?

Iden. Oh! Heaven knows where, unless to heaven itself.
Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey
For Werner.

Gabor. Werner! I have heard the name,
But it may be a feign'd one.

Iden. Like enough!
But hark! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency 's come.
I must be at my post: will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door?

Gabor. I dragg'd him
From out that carriage when he would have given

His barony or county to repel
 The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
 He has valets now enough : they stood aloof then,
 Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
 All roaring "Help!" but offering none; and as
 For *duty* (as you call it) I did mine *then*,
 Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him here!

*I*den. I cringe!—but I shall lose the opportunity—
 Plague take it! he 'll be *here*, and I *not there*!

[Exit IDENSTEIN, *hastily*.

Re-enter WERNER.

Wer. (to himself). I heard a noise of wheels and voices. How
 All sounds now jar me! [Perceiving GABOR.

Still here! Is he not
 A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer,
 So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
 The aspect of a secret enemy;
 For friends are slow at such.

Gabor. Sir, you seem rapt,
 And yet the time is not akin to thought.
 These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
 Or count (or whatsoe'er this half-drown'd noble
 May be), for whom this desolate village, and
 Its lone inhabitants, show more respect
 Than did the elements, is come.

*I*den. (without). This way—
 This way, your excellency :—have a care,
 The staircase is a little gloomy, and
 Somewhat decay'd; but if we had expected
 So high a guest—pray take my arm, my lord!

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and *Attendants*, partly his own, and
 partly retainers of the domain of which IDENSTEIN is Intendant.

Stral. I 'll rest me here a moment.

*I*den. (to the servants). Oh! a chair!
 Instantly, knaves! [STRALENHEIM sits down.

Wer. (aside). 'T is he!

Stral. I 'm better now.
 Who are these strangers?

*I*den. Please you, my good lord,
 One says he is no stranger.

Wer. (aloud and *hastily*). Who says that?

[They look at him with surprise.

*I*den. Why, no one spoke of you, or to you!—but
 Here 's one his excellency may be pleased
 To recognise.

[Pointing to GABOR.

Gabor. I seek not to disturb

His noble memory.

Stral. I apprehend
This is one of the strangers to whose aid
I owe my rescue. Is not that the other?

[*Pointing to WERNER.*]

My state, when I was succour'd, must excuse
My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

Iden. He!—no, my lord! he rather wants for rescue
Than can afford it. 'T is a poor sick man,
Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed
From whence he never dream'd to rise.

Stral. Methought
That there were two.

Gabor. There were, in company;
But, in the service render'd to your lordship,
I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.
The chief part of whatever aid was render'd
Was *his*: it was his fortune to be first.
My will was not inferior, but his strength
And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

Stral. Where is he?

An Att. My lord, he tarried in the cottage, where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

Stral. Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then—

Gabor. I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.

Stral. (*fixing his eyes upon WERNER, then aside*). It cannot be!
and yet he must be look'd to.

'T is twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburgh those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siegendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till—

[*He pauses and looks at WERNER; then resumes.*]

This man must
Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,

Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary ;
An error would spoil all.

Iden. Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on ?

Stral. 'T is past fatigue which gives my weigh'd-down spirit
An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

Iden. The prince's chamber is prepared, with all
The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour. (*Aside*). Somewhat tatter'd
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light ;
And that's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment :
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

Stral. (*rising*). Good night, good people ! (*turning to GABOR*)—Sir,
I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the mean time, I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.

Gabor. I attend you.

[*After a few steps, STRALENHEIM pauses, and calls WERNER.*

Stral. Friend !

Wer. Sir ?

Iden. Sir ! Lord !—oh, Lord ! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency ! Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding :
He hath not been accustom'd to admission
To such a presence.

Stral. (*to IDENSTEIN*). Peace, intendant !

Iden. Oh !

I am dumb.

Stral. (*to WERNER*). Have you been long here ?

Wer. Long ?

Stral. I sought

An answer, not an echo.

Wer. You may seek
Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.

Stral. Indeed ! ne'ertheless,
You might reply with courtesy, to what
Is ask'd in kindness.

Wer. When I know it such,
I will requite—that is, *reply*—in unison.

Stral. The intendant said you had been detain'd by sickness—
If I could aid you—journeying the same way ?

Wer. (*quickly*). I am not journeying the same way.

Stral. How know ye
That, ere you know my route?

Wer. Because there is
But one way that the rich and poor must tread
Together. You diverged from that dread path
Some hours ago, and I some days; henceforth
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.

Stral. Your language is above
Your station.

Wer. (bitterly). Is it?

Stral. Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

Wer. 'T is well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me?

Stral. (startled). I?

Wer. Yes—you! You know me not, and question me,
And wonder that I answer not—not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have;
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

Wer. Many have such:—Have you none?

Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

Stral. Sir,
I will not balk your humour, though untoward:
I only meant you service—but, good night!
Intendant, show the way! (*to GABOR*). Sir, you will with me?

[*Exeunt STRALENHEIM and Attendants; IDENSTEIN and GABOR.*]

Wer. (solus). 'T is he! I'm taken in the toils. Before
I quitted Hamburgh, Giulio, his late steward,
Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order
From Brandenburgh's elector, for the arrest
Of Kruitzner (such the name I then bore), when
I came upon the frontier; the free city
Alone preserved my freedom—till I left
Its walls—fool that I was to quit them! But
I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,
Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.
What's to be done? He knows me not by person;
Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,

Have recognised *him*, after twenty years,
 We met so rarely and so coldly in
 Our youth. But those about him! Now I can
 Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who,
 No doubt, is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's
 To sound and to secure me. Without means!
 Sick, poor—begirt too with the flooding rivers,
 Impassable even to the wealthy, with
 All the appliances which purchase modes
 Of overpowering peril with men's lives,—
 How can I hope? An hour ago methought
 My state beyond despair; and now, 't is such,
 The past seems paradise. Another day,
 And I 'm detected,—on the very eve
 Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,
 When a few drops of gold might save me still
 In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN and FRITZ in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you, 't is impossible.

Fritz. It must
 Be tried, however; and if one express
 Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
 Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
 To spare no trouble; you will be repaid
 Tenfold.

Iden. The baron is retired to rest?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
 Beside the fire, and slumbers; and has order'd
 He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
 When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before
 An hour is past I'll do my best to serve him.

Fritz. Remember!

[*Exit FRITZ.*

Iden. The devil take these great men! they
 Think all things made for them. Now here must I
 Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
 From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
 Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
 Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
 Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling:
 But no, "it *must*," and there's an end. How now?
 Are you there, Mynheer Werner?

Wer. You have left
 Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes—he's dozing,
 And seems to like that none should sleep besides.
 Here is a packet for the commandant
 Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses;
 But I must not lose time: good night! [Exit IDENSTEIN.]

Wer. "To Frankfort!"
 So, so, it thickens! Ay, "the commandant."
 This tallies well with all the prior steps
 Of this cool calculating fiend, who walks
 Between me and my father's house. No doubt
 He writes for a detachment to convey me
 Into some secret fortress.—Sooner than
 This——

[WERNER looks around, and snatches up a knife
 lying on a table in a recess.]

Now I am master of myself at least.
 Hark!—foosteps! How do I know that Stralenheim
 Will wait for even the show of that authority
 Which is to overshadow usurpation?
 That he suspects me 's certain. I'm alone;
 He with a numerous train. I weak; he strong
 In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
 I nameless, or involving in my name
 Destruction, till I reach my own domain;
 He full-blown with his titles, which impose
 Still further on these obscure petty burghers
 Than they could do elsewhere. Hark! nearer still!
 I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
 With the——No! all is silent—'t was my fancy!—
 Still as the breathless interval between
 The flash and thunder:—I must hush my soul
 Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
 To see if still be unexplored the passage
 I wot of: it will serve me as a den
 Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[WERNER draws a pannel and exit, closing it
 after him.]

Enter GABOR and JOSEPHINE.

Gabor. Where is your husband?

Jos. Here, I thought: I left him
 Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
 Have many outlets, and he may be gone
 To accompany the intendant.

Gabor. Baron Stralenheim
 Put many questions to the intendant on
 The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,

I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. Alas !
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron and the unknown Werner ?

Gabor. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved ?

Gabor. I help'd to save him as in peril ; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them, and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak :—
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

Gabor. Is he so suspicious ?

Jos. He was not once ; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

Gabor. I 'm sorry for it
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night. I trust to meet with him at day-break.

[Exit GABOR.]

Re-enter IDENSTEIN and some peasants. JOSEPHINE retires up the hall.

1st Peasant. But if I 'm drown'd ?

Iden. Why, you 'll be well paid for 't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

2d Peasant. But our wives and families ?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

3d Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.

Iden. That 's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I 'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard—if you succeed ;
And you shall have besides in sparkling coin
Two thalers.

3d Peasant. No more ?

Iden. Out upon your avarice !
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition ?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily

Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler?
When had you half the sum?

3d Peasant. Never—but ne'er
The less I must have three.

I den. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave?

3d Peasant. No—the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

I den. Sirrah! in the prince's
Absence, I'm sovereign; and the baron is
My intimate connexion:—"Cousin Idenstein!
(Quoth he) you'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains! troop—march—march, I say:
And if a single dog's ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder—look to it!
For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who cannot effect
Impossibilities—Away, ye earth-worms!

[*Exit, driving them out.*]

Josephine (coming forward). I fain would shun these scenes, too oft
repeated,

Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still—the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being!
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewel'd purple.
But, here! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal though his rags,
To wring his soul—as the bleak elements

His form. And 't is to be amongst these sovereigns
 My husband pants! and such his pride of birth—
 That twenty years of usage, such as no
 Father, born in a humble state, could nerve
 His soul to persecute a son withal,
 Hath changed no atom of his early nature;
 But I, born nobly also, from my father's
 Kindness was taught a different lesson. Father!
 May thy long-tried and now rewarded spirit
 Look down on us and our so long desired
 Ulric! I love my son, as thou didst me!
 What 's that? Thou, Werner! can it be? and thus!

Enter WERNER hastily, with the knife in his hand, by the secret pannel, which he closes hurriedly after him.

Wer. (not at first recognising her). Discover'd! then I'll stab—
 —(*recognising her*). Ah! Josephine,
 Why art thou not at rest?

Jos. What rest? My God!
 What doth this mean?

Wer. (showing a rouleau). Here 's gold—gold, Josephine,
 Will rescue us from this detested dungeon.

Jos. And how obtain'd?—that knife!

Wer. 'T is bloodless—yet.
 Away—we must to our chamber.

Jos. But whence comest thou?

Wer. Ask not! but let us think where we shall go—
 This—this will make us way (*showing the gold*).—I'll fit them now.

Jos. I dare not think thee guilty of dishonour.

Wer. Dishonour!

Jos. I have said it.

Wer. Let us hence:
 'T is the last night, I trust, that we need pass here.

Jos. And not the worst, I hope.

Wer. Hope! I make sure.
 But let us to our chamber.

Jos. Yet one question—
 What hast thou done?

Wer. (fiercely). Left one thing undone, which
 Had made all well: let me not think of it.
 Away!

Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A HALL IN THE SAME PALACE.

Enter IDENSTEIN and others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent;
The baron is determin'd not to lose
This sum without a search.

Iden. And so am I.

Fritz. But whom do you suspect?

Iden. Suspect! all people
Without—within—above—below—Heaven help me!

Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Iden. None whatever.

Fritz. Are you sure of that?

Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since my birth,
And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

Iden. Doubtless.

Fritz. The man call'd *Werner*'s poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser,
But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he:
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz. There's another—
The stranger—

Iden. The Hungarian?

Fritz. He who help'd
To fish the baron from the Oder.

Iden. Not

Unlikely. But, hold—might it not have been
One of the suite?

Fritz. How! *We, sir?*

Iden. No—not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair—
The velvet chair—in his embroider'd night gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only
Has disappeared:—the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick; the honour of the corps,
Which forms the baron's household, 's unimpeach'd,
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters;
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages: then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swoop'd all;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

Iden. There is some sense in that——

Fritz. No, sir; be sure
'T was none of our corps; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is—Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

Iden. You don't mean me?

Fritz. No, sir; I honour more
Your talents——

Iden. And my principles, I hope.

Fritz. Of course. But to the point: What 's to be done?

Iden. Nothing—but there 's a good deal to be said.
We 'll offer a reward; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there 's none nearer than
Frankfort); post notices in manuscript
(For we 've no printer); and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).
We 'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Search empty pockets; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.

Prisoners we 'll have at least, if not the culprit ;
 And for the baron's gold—if 't is not found,
 At least he shall have the full satisfaction
 Of melting twice its substance in the raising
 The ghost of this rouleau. Here 's alchemy
 For your lord's losses ?

Fritz. He hath found a better.

Iden. Where ?

Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
 The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
 Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
 Is on his way to take possession.

Iden. Was there
 No heir ?

Fritz. Oh, yes ; but he has disappear'd
 Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
 A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
 For the last twenty years ; for whom his sire
 Refused to kill the fatted calf ; and, therefore,
 If living, he must chew the husks still. But
 The baron would find means to silence him,
 Were he to re-appear : he 's politic,
 And has much influence with a certain court.

Iden. He 's fortunate.

Fritz. 'T is true, there is a grandson,
 Whom the late Count reclaim'd from his son's hands,
 And educated as his heir ; but then
 His birth is doubtful.

Iden. How so ?

Fritz. His sire made
 A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
 With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter :
 Noble, they say, too ; but no match for such
 A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
 Could brook the alliance ; and could ne'er be brought
 To see the parents, though he took the son.

Iden. If he 's a lad of mettle, he may yet
 Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
 Puzzle your baron to unravel.

Fritz. Why,
 For mettle, he has quite enough : they say,
 He forms a happy mixture of his sire
 And grandsire's qualities,—impetuous as
 The former, and deep as the latter ; but
 The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
 Some months ago.

Iden. The devil he did !

Fritz. Why, yes ;

It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assign'd?

Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
And none, perhaps, the true one. Some averr'd-
It was to seek his parents; some, because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
But peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since return'd, were that the motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature,
He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

Iden. That cannot be.
A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes!

Fritz. Heaven best knows!
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Banner, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM and ULRIC.

Stral. Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,

And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf.

Ulric. I pray you press the theme no further

Stral.

But

Can I not serve you? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes; fair in favour;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so,
And, doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,
Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger
In an as perilous, but opposite element.
You are made for the service: I have served;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends
Who shall be yours. 'T is true, this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily;
But 't will not last, men's spirits are too stirring;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
War will reclaim his own; and, in the mean time,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Brandenburg, wherein
I stand well with the elector; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

Ulric. You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due
To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 't is with the same feeling which
Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury!
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

Ulric. You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not—
You are nobly born?

Ulric. I've heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your name?

Ulric. Ulric.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulric. When I'm worthy of it,
I'll answer you.

Stral. (*aside*). Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.

[*Aloud to FRITZ and IDENSTEIN.*

So, sirs! how have ye sped in your researches?

Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.

Stral.

Then

I am to deem the plunderer is caught?

Iden. Humph!—not exactly

Stral.

Or at least suspected.

Iden. Oh! for that matter, very much suspected.

Stral. Who may he be?

Iden.

Why, don't *you* know, my lord?

Stral. How should I? I was fast asleep.

Iden.

And so

Was I, and that 's the cause I know no more
Than does your excellency.

Stral.

Dolt!

Iden.

Why, if

Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
The rogue; how should I, not being robb'd, identify
The thief among so many? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better:
'T is only at the bar and in the dungeon
That wise men know your felon by his features;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

Stral. (*to FRITZ*). Prithee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow?

Fritz.

Faith!

My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

Iden.

True;

If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

Utric. What is all this?

Stral.

You join'd us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.

Utric. Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
The outer chambers of the palace, but
I know no further.

Stral. It is a strange business :
The Intendant can inform you of the facts.

Iden. Most willingly. You see——

Stral. (*impatiently*). Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

Iden. That
Can only be approved by proofs. You see——

Stral. (*again interrupting him, and addressing ULRIC*). In short, I
was asleep upon a chair,

My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only) : some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
An hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there 's an end ; perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint) would add
To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it ?

Utric. Most willingly, and without loss of time—
Come hither, Mynheer !

[*To IDEN.*]

Iden. But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and——

Utric. Standing motionless,
None ; so let 's march, we 'll talk as we go on.

Iden. But——

Utric. Show the spot, and then I 'll answer you.

Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

Fritz. Hence !

Utric. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle !

[*Exit with IDENSTEIN and FRITZ.*]

Stral. (*solus*). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling ;
Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him ;
I 've need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle :
And though I 'm not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one ;
But he hath play'd the truant in some hour

Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
 Champion his claims: that 's well. The father, whom
 For years I 've track'd, as does the blood-hound, never
 In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
 To fault, but *here I have* him, and that 's better.
 It must be *he!* All circumstance proclaims it;
 And careless voices, knowing not the cause
 Of my inquiries, still confirm it—Yes!
 The man, his bearing, and the mystery
 Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
 The Intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
 Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;
 Besides the antipathy with which we met,
 As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
 By secret instinct that both must be foes
 Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
 All—all—confirm it to my mind: however,
 We 'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
 The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
 Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
 Their quick abatement), and I 'll have him safe
 Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
 His real estate and name; and there 's no harm done,
 Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
 (Save for the actual loss) is lucky also:
 He 's poor, and that 's suspicious—he 's unknown,
 And that 's defenceless,—true, we have no proofs
 Of guilt, but what hath he of innocence?
 Were he a man indifferent to my prospects
 In other bearings, I should rather lay
 The inculcation on the Hungarian, who
 Hath something which I like not; and alone
 Of all around, except the Intendant, and
 The prince's household and my own, had ingress
 Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fare you?

Gabor. As those who fare well every where, when they
 Have supp'd and slumber'd, no great matter how—
 And you, my lord?

Stral. Better in rest than purse:
 Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

Gabor. I heard
 Of your late loss; but 't is a trifle to
 One of your order.

Stral. You would hardly think so,
 Were the loss yours.

Gabor. I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turn'd back—I have outstript them,
In my return.

Stral. You!—Why?

Gabor. I went at day-break,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

Stral. Would the dogs were in it!
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
I order'd this at all risks.

Gabor. Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
They might have ventured.

Stral. I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves!—but they shall smart for this.

[Exit STRALENHEIM.]

Gabor (solus). There goes my noble, feudal, self-will'd baron!
Epitome of what brave chivalry,
The preux chivaliers of the good old times,
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air,
As would have filled a bladder, while he lay
Gurgling and foaming half-way through the window
Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance;
And now he storms at half a dozen wretches
Because they love their lives too! Yet he's right:
'T is strange they should, when such as he may put them
To hazard at his pleasure. Oh! thou world!
Thou art indeed a melancholy jest!

[Exit GABOR.]

SCENE II.—THE APARTMENT OF WERNER IN THE PALACE.

Enter JOSEPHINE and ULRIC.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again!
My Ulric!—my beloved!—can it be—
After twelve years?

Ulric. My dearest mother!

Jos. Yes!
My dream is realized—how beautiful—

How more than all I sigh'd for! Heaven receive
A mother's thanks!—a mother's tears of joy!
This is indeed thy work!—At such an hour too,
He comes not only as a son but saviour.

Ulric. If such a joy await me, it must double
What I now feel, and lighten, from my heart,
A part of the long debt of duty, not
Of love (for that was ne'er withheld)—forgive me!
This long delay was not my fault.

Jos. I know it.
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 't is so dazzled from
My memory, by this oblivious transport!—
My son!

Enter WERNER.

Wer. What have we here, more strangers?

Jos. No!

Look upon him! What do you see?

Wer. A stripling,

For the first time——

Ulric (kneeling). For twelve long years, my father!

Wer. Oh, God!

Jos. He faints!

Wer. No—I am better now—

Ulric! [*Embraces him.*]

Ulric. My father, Siegendorf!

Wer. (starting). Hush! boy—

The walls may hear that name!

Ulric. What then?

Wer. Why, then—

But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come!
Come to my arms again! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine!
Sure 't is no father's fondness dazzles me;
But had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son!

Ulric. And yet you knew me not!

Wer. Alas! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

Ulric. My memory served me far more fondly: I
Have not forgotten aught; and oftimes in
The proud and princely halls of—(I'll not name them,
As you say that 't is perilous), but i' the pomp

Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
They shall not part us more.

Wer. I know not that.
Are you aware my father is no more?

Ulric. Oh Heaven! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'T was scarce three months since.

Wer. Why did you leave him?

Jos. (embracing ULRIC). Can you ask that question?
Is he not *here*?

Wer. True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!

Ulric. All shall be better'd. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights,
Or rather yours; for I wave all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

Wer. Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

Ulric. I saved
His life but yesterday: he 's here.

Wer. You saved
The serpent who will sting us all!

Ulric. You speak
Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us?

Wer. Every thing. One who claims our fathers' lands,
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

Ulric. I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,
If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession; but his titles
Were never named before me—and what then?
His right must yield to ours.

Wer. Ay, if at Prague:
But here he is all powerful; and has spread
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

Ulric. Doth he personally know you?

Wer. No; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betray'd last night; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty

To his uncertainty.

Utric. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase); but Stralenheim
Is not what you prejudge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present;
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me;
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither;
Is sick; a stranger; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him;
I have pledged myself to do so; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that: but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure—you, my parents!

Wer. (agitatedly). Who
Taught you to mouth that name of "villain?"

Utric. What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown being
With an infernal stigma?

Utric. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought, and ill-found boy! that
It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Utric. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father!

Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not—and yet!—(*Her voice falters*).

Utric (starts, looks earnestly at WERNER, and then says slowly).
And you avow it?

Wer. *Utric!* before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. *Young,*
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait—(not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly)—Wait!—
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted—till
Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin;
Famine and poverty your guests at table;
Despair your bed-fellow—then rise—but not
From sleep, and judge! Should that day e'er arrive—
Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
Himself around all that is dear and noble
Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with

Chance your conductor ; midnight for your mantle ;
 The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
 Even to your deadliest foe ; and he as 't were
 Inviting death, by looking like it, while
 His death alone can save you :—Thank your God !
 If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
 You turn aside—I did so.²

Ulric.

But——

Wer. (abruptly).

Hear me ;

I will not brook a human voice—scarce dare
 Listen to my own (if that be human still)—
 Hear me ! you do not know this man—I do.
 He 's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
 Deem yourself safe, as young and brave ; but learn
 None are secure from desperation, few
 From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
 Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within
 A prince's chamber, lay below my knife !
 An instant—a mere motion—the least impulse—
 Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
 He was within my power—my knife was raised—
 Withdrawn—and I 'm in his : are you not so ?⁵
 Who tells you that he knows you *not* ? Who says
 He hath not lured you here to end you, or
 To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon ?

[*He pauses.*]

Ulric. Proceed—proceed !

Wer.

Me he hath ever known,

And hunted through each change of time—name—fortune—
 And why not *you* ? Are you more versed in men ?
 He wound snares round me ; flung along my path
 Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurn'd
 Even from my presence ; but, in spurning now,
 Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
 More patient ? *Ulric* !—*Ulric* !—there are crimes
 Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
 Which nature cannot master or forbear.⁴

Ulric (looks first at him, and then at JOSEPHINE). My mother !

Wer.

Ay ! I thought so : you have now

Only one parent. I have lost alike
 Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulric.

But stay !

[*WERNER rushes out of the chamber.*]

Jos. (to ULRIC). Follow him not until this storm of passion
 Abates. Think'st thou that were it well for him
 I had not follow'd ?

Ulric.

I obey you, mother,

Although reluctantly. My first act shall not

Be one of disobedience.

Jos. Oh! he is good!
 Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
 To me who have borne so much with him, and for him,
 That this is but the surface of his soul,
 And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulric. These then are but my father's principles?
 My mother thinks not with him?

Jos. Nor doth he
 Think as he speaks. Alas! long years of grief
 Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulric. Explain to me
 More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
 That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
 I may prepare to face him, or, at least,
 To extricate you from your present perils.
 I pledge myself to accomplish this—but would
 I had arrived a few hours sooner!

Jos. Ay!
 Hadst thou but done so!

Enter GABOR and IDENSTEIN with Attendants.

Gabor (to ULRIC). I have sought you, comrade.
 So this is my reward!

Ulric. What do you mean?

Gabor. 'Sdeath! have I lived to these years, and for this?
 But for your age and folly, I would— [To IDENSTEIN.

Iden. Help!
 Hands off! touch an Intendant!

Gabor. Do not think
 I'll honour you so much as save your throat
 From the Ravenstone,⁵ by choking you myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite; but there are
 Those who have greater need of it than me.

Ulric. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or—

Gabor. At once, then,
 The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
 This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
 His kind suspicions—me! whom he ne'er saw
 Till yester evening.

Iden. Wouldst have me suspect
 My own acquaintances? You have to learn
 That I keep better company.

Gabor. You shall
 Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men—

The worms ! you hound of malice ! [GABOR seizes on him.

Ulric (interfering). Nay, no violence ;

He 's old, unarm'd—be temperate, Gabor !

Gabor (letting go IDENSTEIN). True :

I am a fool to lose myself because

Fools deem me knave : it is their homage.

Ulric (to IDENSTEIN). How

Fare you ?

Iden. Help !

Ulric. I have help'd you.

Iden. Kill him ! then

I 'll say so.

Gabor. I 'm calm—live on !

Iden. That 's more

Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment

In Germany. The baron shall decide !

Gabor. Does *he* abet you in your accusation ?

Iden. Does he not ?

Gabor. Then next time let him go sink,
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.

But here he comes !

Enter STRALENHEIM.

Gabor (goes up to him). My noble lord, I 'm here !

Stral. Well, sir !

Gabor. Have you aught with me ?

Stral. What should I

Have with you ?

Gabor. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory ;
But that 's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by you
Intendant, of the pillage of your person,
Or chamber—is the charge your own, or his ?

Stral. I accuse no man.

Gabor. Then you acquit me, baron ?

Stral. I know not whom to accuse or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

Gabor. But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted—
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy—teach them their duty !
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught ; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.

I am your equal.

Stral. You!

Gabor. Ay, sir; and for
Aught that you know, superior; but proceed—
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs; I know enough
Of what I've done for you, and what you owe me,
To have at least waited your payment rather
Than paid myself, had I been eager of
Your gold. I also know that were I even
The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd
So recently would not permit you to
Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
But this is nothing; I demand of you
Justice upon your unjust servants, and
From your own lips a disavowal of
All sanction of their insolence: thus much
You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
And never thought to have ask'd so much.

Stral. This tone
May be of innocence.

Gabor. 'S death! who dare doubt it,
Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stral. You
Are hot, sir.

Gabor. Must I turn an icicle
Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
Your company.

Gabor. We found *you* in the Oder:
Would we had left you there!

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.

Gabor. I've earn'd them; but might have earn'd more from others,
Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stral. Ulric! you know this man?

Gabor. No more than you do,
If he avouches not my honour.

Ulric. I
Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
Own brief connexion led me, honour.

Stral. Then
I'm satisfied.

Gabor (ironically). Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration
More than in mine?

Stral. I merely said that I

Was satisfied—not that you were absolved.

Gabor. Again! Am I accused or no?

Stral.

Go to!

You wax too insolent: if circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is 't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

Gabor. My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage;
A vile equivocation: you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you—
Your looks, a voice—your frowns, a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me—because
You have it; but beware, you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

Stral.

Threat'st thou?

Gabor.

Not so much

As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning.

Stral. As you have said, 't is true I owe you something,
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

Gabor. Not with your gold.

Stral.

With bootless insolence.

[*To his Attendants and IDENSTEIN.*

You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. *Ulric*, good morrow!

[*Exit STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants.*

Gabor (*following*). I'll after him and—

Ulric (*stopping him*).

Not a step.

Gabor.

Who shall

Oppose me?

Ulric. Your own reason, with a moment's
Thought.

Gabor. Must I bear this?

Ulric.

Pshaw! we all must bear

The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves—the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silk-worm cast his skin—
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words?

Gabor. Must I bear to be deem'd a thief? If 't were
A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it—
There's something daring in it; but to steal
The monies of a slumbering man!—

Ulric.

It seems, then,

You are *not* guilty.

Gabor.

Do I hear aright?

You, too!

Ulric. I merely ask'd a simple question.

Gabor. If the judge ask'd me, I would answer "No"—
To you I answer *thus.* [He draws.

Ulric (drawing). With all my heart!

Jos. Without there! Ho! help! help!—Oh, God! here 's
murder! [Exit JOSEPHINE, shrieking.

[GABOR and ULRIC fight. GABOR is disarmed just as STRA-
LENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTEIN, &c. re-enter.

Jos. Oh! glorious Heaven! he 's safe!

Stral. (to JOSEPHINE). Who 's safe?

Jos. My—

*Ulric (interrupting her with a stern look, and turning afterwards
to STRALENHEIM).* Both!

Here 's no great harm done.

Stral. What hath caused all this?

Ulric. You, baron, I believe; but as the effect
is harmless, let it not disturb you.—Gabor!
There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
Let it not be against your friends.

[ULRIC pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically, in
a low voice to GABOR.

Gabor. I thank you
Less for my life than for your counsel.

Stral. These
Brawls must end here.

Gabor (taking his sword). They shall. You have wrong'd me,
Ulric,

More with your unkind thoughts than sword; I would
The last were in my bosom rather than
The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
Absurd insinuations—ignorance
And dull suspicion are a part of his
Entail will last him longer than his lands.—
But I may fit *him* yet:—you have vanquish'd me;
I was the fool of passion to conceive
That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
Already proved by greater perils than
Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
However—but in friendship.

[Exit GABOR.

Stral. I will brook
No more! This outrage following up his insults,
Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
I owed him heretofore for the so vaunted
Aid which he added to your abler succour.
Ulric, you are not hurt?

Ulric. Not even by a scratch.

Stral (to IDENSTEIN). Intendant ! take your measures to secure
Yon fellow : I revoke my former lenity.
He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort
The instant that the waters have abated.

Iden. Secure him ! he hath got his sword again—
And seems to know the use on 't ; 't is his trade,
Belike :—I 'm a civilian.

Stral. Fool ! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such ? Hence ! after him !

Ulric. Baron, I do beseech you !

Stral. I must be
Obey'd. No words !

Iden. Well, if it must be so—
March, vassals ! I 'm your leader—and will bring
The rear up : a wise general never should
Expose his precious life—on which all rests.
I like that article of war. [Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.

Stral. Come hither,
Ulric :—what does that woman here ? Oh ! now
I recognise her, 't is the stranger's wife
Whom they name "Werner."

Ulric. 'T is his name.

Stral. Indeed !
Is not your husband visible, fair dame ?

Jos. Who seeks him ?

Stral. No one—for the present : but
I fain would parley, *Ulric*, with yourself
Alone.

Ulric. I will retire with you.

Jos. Not so.
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here. [Aside to *ULRIC* as she goes out.
Oh ! *Ulric*, have a care—

Remember what depends on a rash word !

Ulric (to *JOSEPHINE*). Fear not !— [Exit *JOSEPHINE*.

Stral. *Ulric*, I think that I may trust you ?
You saved my life—and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.

Ulric. Say on.

Stral. Mysterious
And long-engender'd circumstances (not
To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious—perhaps fatal to me.

Ulric. Who ? Gabor, the Hungarian ?

Stral. No—this Werner—
With the false name and habit.

Ulric. How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor—and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

Stral. He is—'t is no matter—
But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here—and much
That is not here—confirm my apprehension),
He must be made secure, ere twelve hours further.

Ulric. And what have I to do with this?

Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend—
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburg)
For a fit escort; but this cursed flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.

Ulric. It is abating.

Stral. That is well.

Ulric. But how
Am I concern'd?

Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued.—Keep your eye on *him!*
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him.—
Watch him!—as you would watch the wild boar when
He makes against you in the hunter's gap:
Like him he must be spear'd.

Ulric. Why so?

Stral. He stands
Between me and a brave inheritance.
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulric. I hope so.

Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skimm'd it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms afar and near
Made deserts.

Ulric. You describe it faithfully!

Stral. Ay—could you see it, you would say so—but,
As I have said, you shall.

Ulric. I accept the omen.

Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as *both* may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

Utric. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch—
This way-worn stranger—stands between you and
This paradise?—(*Aside.*) As Adam did between
The devil and his.

Stral. He doth.

Utric. Hath he no right?

Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts—but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

Utric. He has a wife, then?

Stral. You'd be sorry to
Call such your mother. You have seen the woman
He calls his wife.

Utric. Is she not so?

Stral. No more
Than he's your father:—an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with the same Werner.

Utric. They are childless, then?

Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man—the grandsire (as old age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave:
But the imp stands not in my path—he has fled,
No one knows whither; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand.—Why do you smile?

Utric. At your vain fears:
A poor man almost in his grasp—a child
Of doubtful birth—can startle a grandee!

Stral. All's to be feared, where all is to be gain'd.

Utric. True; and aught done to save or to obtain it.

Stral. You have harp'd the very string next to my heart.
I may depend upon you?

Utric. 'T were too late
To doubt it.

Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful); he is a wretch, as likely
To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine; and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act;
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one.

Once—though too rash.

Ulric. And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till
They knock the brains out first—which makes them heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose nothing,
Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest—
No more.

Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you 'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

Ulric. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulric. Such is my intention. [Exeunt.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A HALL IN THE SAME PALACE, FROM WHENCE
THE SECRET PASSAGE LEADS.

Enter WERNER and GABOR.

Gabor. Sir, I have told my tale; if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well—
If not, I 'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How
Can I, so wretched, give to misery
A shelter?—wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert—

Gabor. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks
You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer. Ah!

Gabor. I care not
If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself; but will you shelter me?
I am oppress'd like you—and poor like you—
Disgraced—

Wer. (abruptly). Who told you that I was disgraced?

Gabor. No one ; nor did I say *you* were so : with
Your poverty my likeness ended ; but
I said *I* was so—and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

Wer. Again?
As *I* ?

Gabor. Or any other honest man.
What the devil would you have ? You don't believe me
Guilty of this base theft ?

Wer. No, no—I cannot.

Gabor. Why, that's my heart of honour ! yon young gallant,
Your miserly intendant, and dense noble—
All—all suspected me ; and why ? because
I am the worst-clothed and least-named amongst them,
Although, were Momus' lattice in our breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs ; but thus it is—you poor and helpless—
Both still more than myself.

Wer. How know you that ?

Gabor. You're right ; I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless ; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have droyed
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World the Spaniard boasts about,
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth,
Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it) as may leave no night-mare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean ?

Gabor. Just what I say ; I thought my speech was plain :
You are no thief—nor I—and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damn'd world, sir.

Gabor. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),
Therefore I'll stick by this—as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave ;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The dove did, trusting that they have abated.

Wer. Abated ? Is there hope of that ?

Gabor. There was
At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe.

Gabor. Are you
In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gabor. That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty?

Gabor. No—you don't look a leech for that disorder ;
I meant my peril only : you 've a roof,
And I have none ; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly ; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold ?

Gabor. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on 't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate ?

Gabor. What ?

Wer. Are you aware
To whom you speak ?

Gabor. No ; and I am not used
Greatly to care. But hark ! they come ! [A noise without.

Wer. Who come ?

Gabor. The intendant and his man-hounds after me :
I 'd face them—but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go ?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless :
Think if it were your own case !

Wer. (aside). Oh, just God !
Thy hell is not hereafter ! Am I dust still ?

Gabor. I see you 're moved ; and it shows well in you :
I may live to requite it.

Wer. Are you not
A spy of Stralenheim's ?

Gabor. Not I ! and if
I were, what is there to espy in you ?
Although I recollect his frequent question
About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion ; but you best know what—and why :
I am his deadliest foe.

Wer. You ?

Gabor. After such
A treatment for the service which in part
I render'd him—I am his enemy ;
If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gabor. But now ?

Wer. (showing the pannel). There is a secret spring ;
Remember, I discover'd it by chance

And used it but for safety.

Gabor. Open it,
And I will use it for the same.

Wer. I found it,
As I have said: it leads through winding walls
(So thick as to bear paths within their ribs,
Yet lose no jot of strength or stateliness)
And hollow cells, and obscure niches, to
I know not whither; you must not advance:
Give me your word.

Gabor. It is unnecessary:
How should I make my way in darkness, through
A Gothic labyrinth of unknown windings?

Wer. Yes, but who knows to what place it may lead?
I know not—(mark you!)—but who knows it might not
Lead even into the chambers of your foe?
So strangely were contrived these galleries
By our Teutonic fathers in old days,
When man built less against the elements
Than his next neighbour. You must not advance
Beyond the two first windings; if you do
(Albeit I never pass'd them), I'll not answer
For what you may be led to.

Gabor. But I will.
A thousand thanks!

Wer. You'll find the spring more obvious
On the other side; and, when you would return,
It yields to the least touch.

Gabor. I'll in—farewell!

[GABOR goes in by the secret pannel.]

Wer. (solus). What have I done? Alas! what *had* I done
Before to make this fearful? Let it be
Still some atonement that I save the man,
Whose sacrifice had saved perhaps my own—
They come! to seek elsewhere what is before them!

Enter IDENSTEIN, and others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanish'd then
Through the dim Gothic glass, by pious aid
Of pictured saints, upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sunrise
On long pearl-colour'd beards, and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows,
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest on some panes

Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.
He 's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain!

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search

Of him who robb'd the baron.

Wer. Are you sure

You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you

Stand there; but where 's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him

Up to this hall: are you accomplices,

Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,

To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be:

I have a question or two for yourself

Hereafter; but we must continue now

Our search for t' other.

Wer. You had best begin

Your inquisition now; I may not be

So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,

In good sooth, if you really are the man

That Stralenheim 's in quest of?

Wer. Insolent!

Said you not that he was not here?

Iden. Yes, one,

But there 's another whom he tracks more keenly,

And soon, it may be, with authority

Both paramount to his and mine. But, come!

Bustle, my boys! we are at fault.

[*Exeunt IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Wer. In what

A maze hath my dim destiny involved me!

And one base sin hath done me less ill than

The leaving undone one far greater. Down,

Thou busy devil! rising in my heart!

Thou art too late! I 'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

Ulric. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is 't not dangerous ?

Ulric. No ; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us : more—
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it :
'T is but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulric. I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them as an unarm'd carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling
In the same thicket where he hew'd for bread ?
Nets are for thrushes, eagles are not caught so ;
We 'll overfly, or rend them.

Wer. Show me how ?

Ulric. Can you not guess ?

Wer. I cannot.

Ulric. That is strange.
Came the thought ne'er into your mind *last night* ?

Wer. I understand you not.

Ulric. Then we shall never
More understand each other. But to change
The topic—

Wer. You mean, to *pursue* it, as
'T is our safety.

Ulric. Right ; I stand corrected :
I see the subject now more clearly, and
Our general situation in its bearings.
The waters are abating ; a few hours
Will bring his summon'd myrmidons from Frankfort,
When you will be a prisoner, perhaps worse,
And I an outcast, bastardized by practice
Of this same baron, to make way for him.

Wer. And now your remedy ? I thought to escape
By means of this accursed gold, but now
I dare not use it, show it, scarce look on it.
Methinks it wears upon its face my guilt
For motto, not the mintage of the state ;
And, for the sovereign's head, my own begirt
With hissing snakes, who curl around my temples,
And cry to all beholders—lo ! a villain !

Ulric. You must not use it, at least now ; but take

This ring.

[He gives WERNER a jewel.

Wer. A gem! It was my father's.

Ulric. And

As such is now your own. With this you must
Bribe the Intendant for his old calash
And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
Together with my mother.

Wer. And leave you,
So lately found, in peril too?

Ulric. Fear nothing!
The only fear were if we fled together,
For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
The waters only lie in flood between
This burgh and Frankfort; so far 's in our favour.
The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
Is not impassable; and when you gain
A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
The frontier, and you 're safe.

Wer. My noble boy!

Ulric. Hush! hush! no transports: we 'll indulge in them.
In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold:
Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold*—
No jewel: therefore, it could *not* be his;
And then the man who was possess'd of this
Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer. I will follow
In all things your direction.

Ulric. I would have
Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
To take an interest in you, and still more
By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
All had been known at once.

Wer. My guardian angel!
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence?

Ulric. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To lull all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

Wer. To part no more!

Ulric. I know not that ; but at
The least we 'll meet again once more.

Wer. My boy !
My friend—my only child, and sole preserver !
Oh, do not hate me !

Ulric. Hate my father !

Wer. Ay,
My father hated me : why not my son ?

Ulric. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wer. Scorpions
Are in thy words ! Thou know me ? In this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself ;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulric. I 'll wait !
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wer. I see it, and I feel it ; yet I feel
Further—that you despise me.

Ulric. Wherefore should I ?

Wer. Must I repeat my humiliation ?

Ulric. No !
I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not *now* ; your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house
At secret war with that of Stralenheim ;
All we have now to think of is to baffle
HIM. I have shown *one* way.

Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

Ulric. You *shall* be safe : let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands ?

Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

Ulric. *Blood!* 't is
A word of many meanings : in the veins
And out of them it is a different thing—
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren : when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulric. That may be—
And should, perhaps,—and yet—but get ye ready ;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the Intendant ; sound him with the gem ;
'T will sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime, and mud,
And ooze, too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased under-stratum ; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time !
Farewell ! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father !—

Wer. Let me embrace thee !

Ulric. We may be
Observed : subdue your nature to the hour !
Keep off from me as from your foe !

Wer. Accursed
Be he who is the stifling cause, which smothers
The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts,
At such an hour too !

Ulric. Yes, curse—it will ease you !
Here is the Intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
How fare you in your purpose ? Have you caught
The rogue ?

Iden. No, faith !

Ulric. Well, there are plenty more :
You may have better luck another chase.
Where is the baron ?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber :
And now I think on 't, asking after you
With nobly-born impatience.

Ulric. Your great men
Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound
Of the stung steed replies unto the spur :
'T is well they 've horses, too ; for if they had not
I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he ?

Ulric. An old Bohemian—an imperial gypsy.

Iden. A gypsy or Bohemian, 't is the same,
For they pass by both names. And was he one ?

Ulric. I 've heard so ; but I must take leave. Intendant,
Your servant !—(to WERNER, *slightly*). Werner, if that be your name,

Yours.

[*Exit* ULRIC.]

Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man!
And prettily behaved! He knows his station,
You see, sir: how he gave to each his due
Precedence!

Wer. I perceive it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That 's well—
That 's very well. You also know your place, too,
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

Wer. (*showing the ring*). Would this assist your knowledge?

Iden. How!—What!—Eh!
A jewel!

Wer. 'T is your own, on one condition.

Iden. Mine!—Name it!

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it: 't is
A family ring.

Iden. A family! *yours!* a gem!
I 'm breathless!

Wer. You must also furnish me,
An hour ere daybreak, with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real? let me look on it:
Diamond, by all that 's glorious!

Wer. Come, 'll trust you;
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it; this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood!

Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

Iden. So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim 's in quest of?

Wer. I am not;
But being taken for him might conduct
To much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter—'t is
To spare both, that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 't is not my business;
Besides I never should obtain the half
From this proud niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward:
But *this!* Another look!

Wer. Gaze on it freely ;
At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler !
Thou more than stone of the philosopher !
Thou touchstone of philosophy herself !
Thou bright eye of the mine ! thou load-star of
The soul ! the true magnetic pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles !
Thou flaming spirit of the earth ! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre !
Shalt thou be mine ? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist !—
A wise magician, who has bound the devil,
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else ?

Wer. Call me Werner still ;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee ! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd, in a low garb.—
But come, I 'll serve thee ; thou shalt be as free
As air, despite the waters : let us hence,
I 'll show thee I am honest—(oh, thou jewel !)
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds
Should overtake thee.—Let me gaze again !
I have a foster-brother in the mart
Of Hamburg, skill'd in precious stones : how many
Carats may it weigh ?—Come, Werner, I will wing thee.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—STRALENHEIM'S CHAMBER.

STRALENHEIM and FRITZ.

Fritz. All 's ready, my good lord !

Stral. I am not sleepy,
And yet I must to bed ; I fain would say
To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
And man, an everlasting mist ;—I will
Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well!

Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear?

Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
Because an undescrivable—but 't is
All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
Changed, to-day, of this chamber? for last night's
Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
According to your order, and beneath
The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric."

Stral. You *think!* you supercilious slave! what right
Have you to *tax your* memory, which should be
Quick, proud, and happy to retain the *name*
Of him who saved your master, as a litany
Whose daily repetition marks your duty?
Get hence! *you think*, indeed! you, who stood still
Howling and dripping on the bank, whilst I
Lay dying, and the stranger dash'd aside
The roaring torrent, and restored me to
Thank him—and despise you. *You think!* and scarce
Can recollect his name! I will not waste
More words on you. Call me betimes.

Fritz. Good night!
I trust to-morrow will restore your lordship
To renovated strength and temper.

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—THE SECRET PASSAGE.

GABOR (*solus*).

Four—

Five—six hours have I counted, like the guard
Of outposts, on the never-merry clock;
That hollow tongue of time, which, even when
It sounds for joy, takes something from enjoyment
With every clang. 'T is a perpetual knell,
Though for a marriage feast it rings: each stroke
Peals for a hope the less; the funeral note
Of love deep-buried without resurrection
In the grave of possession; while the knoll
Of long-lived parents finds a jovial echo
To triple time in the son's ear.

I'm cold—

I'm dark—I've blown my fingers—number'd o'er
And o'er my steps—and knock'd my head against

Some fifty buttresses—and roused the rats
 And bats in general insurrection, till
 Their cursed pattering feet and whirring wings
 Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
 A light! It is at distance (if I can
 Measure in darkness distance): but it blinks
 As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
 The inhibited direction; I must on,
 Nevertheless, from curiosity.
 A distant lamp-light is an incident
 In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
 To nothing that may tempt me! Else Heaven aid me
 To obtain or to escape it! Shining still!
 Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
 Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
 Contain no longer. Softly! mighty well!
 That corner's turn'd—so—ah! no, right! it draws
 Nearer. Here is a darksome angle—so,
 That's weather'd.—Let me pause.—Suppose it leads
 Into some greater danger than that which
 I have escaped?—no matter, 't is a new one;
 And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
 Wear more magnetic aspects:—I will on,
 And be it where it may—I have my dagger,
 Which may protect me at a pinch.—Burn still,
 Thou little light! Thou art my *ignis fatuus*!
 My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp!—So! so!
 He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[The scene closes.

SCENE IV.—A GARDEN.

Enter WERNER.

Wer. I could not sleep—and now the hour's at hand;
 All's ready. Idenstein has kept his word;
 And, station'd in the outskirts of the town,
 Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
 Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
 To pale in heaven; and for the last time I
 Look on these horrible walls. Oh! never, never
 Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
 But not dishonour'd: and I leave them with
 A stain,—if not upon my name, yet in
 My heart! A never-dying canker-worm,
 Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
 And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf,
 Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
 Some means of restitution, which would ease

My soul in part; but how without discovery!—
 It must be done, however: and I'll pause
 Upon the method the first hour of safety.
 The madness of my misery led to this
 Base infamy; repentance must retrieve it:
 I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
 My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine;
 Lands, freedom, life,—and yet he sleeps! as soundly
 Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
 Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
 Such as when—Hark! what noise is that? Again!
 The branches shake; and some loose stones have fallen
 From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC leaps down from the terrace.

Ulric! ever welcome!

Thrice welcome now! this filial——

Ulric. Stop! before

We approach, tell me—

Wer. Why look you so?

Ulric. Do I

Behold my father, or—

Wer. What?

Ulric. An assassin?

Wer. Insane or insolent!

Ulric. Reply, sir, as

You prize your life, or mine!

Wer. To what must I

Answer?

Ulric. Are you or are you not the assassin
 Of Stralenheim?

Wer. I never was as yet

The murderer of any man. What mean you?

Ulric. Did you not *this* night (as the night before)
 Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
 Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and—

[ULRIC pauses.

Wer. Proceed!

Ulric. Died he not by your hand?

Wer. Great God!

Ulric. You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!
 Embrace me! Yes,—your tone—your look—yes, yes,—
 Yet say so!

Wer. If I e'er, in heart or mind,
 Conceived deliberately such a thought,
 But rather strove to trample back to hell
 Such thoughts—if e'er they glared a moment through
 The irritation of my oppress'd spirit—
 May heaven be shut for ever from my hopes

As from mine eyes!

Ulric. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'T is horrible! 't is hideous, as 't is hateful!
But what have I to do with this?

Ulric. No bolt
Is forced; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarm'd; but as the Intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,
If nature——

Wer. Oh my boy! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house!

Ulric. My father, I acquit you!
But will the world do so? Will even the judge,
If——but you must away this instant.

Wer. No!
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me?

Ulric. Yet
You had *no* guests—*no* visitors—*no* life
Breathing around you, save my mother's.

Wer. Ah!
The Hungarian!

Ulric. He is gone! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.

Wer. No; I hid him in that very
Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

Ulric. There I'll find him.

[ULRIC is going.]

Wer. It is too late; he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret pannel
Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it: I but thought he had snatch'd the silent
And favourable moment to escape
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

Ulric. You re-closed
The pannel?

Wer. Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

Ulric. You are sure you closed it?

Wer. Certain.

Utric. That 's well ; but had been better, if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for—*(He pauses.)*

Wer. Thieves !
Thou wouldst say : I must bear it, and deserve it ;
But not—

Utric. No, father, do not speak of this ;
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man ?

Wer. Could I shun it ?
A man pursued by my chief foe, disgraced
For my own crime, a victim to *my* safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have, in such circumstances, thrust him forth.

Utric. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder thus : you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace out the murderer, if 't is possible.

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion, two new victims, in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and—

Utric. Who seems ! Who else
Can be so ?

Wer. Not *I*, though just now you doubted—
You, my *son!*—doubted—

Utric. And do you doubt of him—
The fugitive ?

Wer. Boy ! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I,
Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances ; and views a criminal
In innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 't is dusky.

Utric. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress ? You must not stand the hazard.
Away !—I 'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will, for his own sake and his jewel's, hold
His peace—he also is a partner in
Your flight—moreover—

Wer. Fly ! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd, as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed ?

Utric. Pshaw! leave any thing
 Except our father's sovereignty and castles,
 For which you have so long panted and in vain!
 What name? You leave *no name*, since that you bear
 Is feign'd.

Wer. Most true; but still I would not have it
 Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
 Though in this most obscure abode of men
 Besides, the search—

Utric. I will provide against
 Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
 As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
 Suspects, 't is *but suspicion*, and he is
 A fool: his folly shall have such employment,
 Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way
 To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
 Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance
 With the late general war of thirty years,
 Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,
 To which the march of armies trampled them.
 Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
 Here, save as *such*—without lands, influence,
 Save what hath perish'd with him; few prolong
 A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
 O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
 Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
 Alone, unknown,—a solitary grave,
 Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
 Is all he 'll have, or wants. If I discover
 The assassin, 't will be well—if not, believe me,
 None else, though all the full-fed train of menials
 May howl above his ashes, as they did
 Around him in his danger on the Oder,
 Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
 Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer. Look!
 The stars are almost faded, and the grey
 Begins to grizzle the black hair of night.
 You shall not answer—Pardon me, that I
 Am peremptory; 't is your son that speaks,
 Your long-lost, late-found son—Let 's call my mother!
 Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
 To me; I 'll answer for the event as far
 As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
 As my first duty, which shall be observed.
 We 'll meet in Castle Siegendorf—once more
 Our banners shall be glorious. Think of that
 Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
 Whose youth may better battle with them—Hence!
 And may your age be happy!—I will kiss

My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with you!

Wer. This counsel's safe—but is it honourable?

Utric. To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A GOTHIC HALL IN THE CASTLE OF SIEGENDORF, NEAR PRAGUE.

Enter ERIC and HENRICK, retainers of the Count.

Eric. So, better times are come at last; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail, both
A long desideratum.

Hen. Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto those who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave: but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintain'd
His feudal hospitality as high
As e'er another prince of the empire.

Eric. Why,
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel; are you sure that *this* does?

Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as he's bounteous,
And we all love him.

Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,
And the first year of sovereigns is bridal;
Anon we shall perceive his real sway
And moods of mind.

Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the present!
Then this brave son, Count Utric—there's a knight!
Pity the wars are o'er!

Hen. Why so?

Eric. Look on him!
And answer that yourself.

Hen. He's very youthful,
And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Eric. That 's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

Hen. But
Perhaps a true one.

Eric. Pity, as I said,
The wars are over : in the hall, who like
Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
Which awes but yet offends not? in the field,
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?

Hen. No one's, I grant you : do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much.

Eric. What do you mean?

Hen. You can't deny his train of followers
(But few our fellow-native vassals born
On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
As—(pauses.)

Eric. What?

Hen. The war (you love so much) leaves living;
Like other parents, she spoils her worst children.

Eric. Nonsense! they are all brave iron-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

Hen. And who loved Tilly?
Ask that at Magdebourg—or, for that matter,
Wallenstein either; they are gone to—

Eric. Rest;
But what beyond, 't is not ours to pronounce.

Hen. I wish they had left us something of their rest :
The country (nominally now at peace)
Is overrun with—God knows who : they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise ; but
Leave no less desolation, nay, even more
Than the most *open* warfare.

Eric. But Count Ulric—
What has all this to do with him?

Hen. With *him* !
He—might prevent it. As you say he 's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders ?

Eric. You 'd better ask himself.

Hen. I would as soon
Ask of the lion why he laps not milk.

Eric. And here he comes !

Hen. The devil! you 'll hold your tongue?

Eric. Why do you turn so pale?

Hen. 'T is nothing—but
Be silent!

Eric. I will, upon what you have said.

Hen. I assure you I meant nothing, a mere sport
Of words, no more; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress,
And she no doubt will soften whatsoe'er
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon
The knees of homicide; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said!

Enter ULRIC and RODOLPH.

Good morrow, count!

Ulric. Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric, is
All ready for the chase?

Eric. The dogs are order'd
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite?
What courser will you please to mount?

Ulric. The dun,
Walstein.

Eric. I fear he scarcely has recover'd
The toils of Monday: 't was a noble chase,
You spear'd *four* with your own hand.

Ulric. True, good Eric,
I had forgotten—let it be the gray, then,
Old Ziska: he has not been out this fortnight.

Eric. He shall be straight caparison'd. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall
Escort you?

Ulric. I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse.

[*Exit ERIC.*]

Rodolph!

Rod. My lord!

Ulric. The news
Is awkward from the—(*RODOLPH points to HENRICK*).
How now, Henrick, why

Loiter you here?

Hen. For your commands, my lord.

Ulric. Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before

I mount.

[Exit HENRICK.]

Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and
'T is rumour'd that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.

Rod. Best wait for further and more sure advices.

Ulric. I mean it—and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

Rod. It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the count, your father.

Ulric. Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In High Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolfe leads—keep the forests on your route :
You know it well ?

Rod. As well as on that night
When we——

Ulric. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success ;
And when you 've join'd, give Rosenberg this letter.

[Gives a letter.]

Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolfe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida ?

Ulric. Why,
I do so—but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 't were that of Venus ;—but I love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.

Rod. And constantly ?

Ulric. I think so ; for I love
Nought else.—But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed ! speed ! good Rodolph !

Rod. On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf ?

Ulric. Perhaps : my father wishes it, and sooth,
'T is no bad policy ; this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.

Rod. Adieu !

Ulric. Yet hold—we had better keep together
Until the chase begins ; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

Rod. I will. But to
Return—'t was a most kind act in the count,
Your father, to send up to Königsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

Ulric. Wondrous kind !
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

Rod. The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not ?

Ulric. How should I know ?

Rod. I've heard it whisper'd there was something strange
About his death—and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

Ulric. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

Rod. He
Has left no testament—no farewell words ?

Ulric. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

Rod. Ah ! here 's the lady Ida.

Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.

Ulric. You are early, my sweet cousin !

Ida. Not too early,

Dear Ulric, if I do not interrupt you.
Why do you call me *cousin* ?

Ulric (*smiling*). Are we not so ?

Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name ; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.

Ulric (*starting*). Blood !

Ida. Why does yours start from your cheeks ?

Ulric. Ay ! doth it ?

Ida. It doth—but no ! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

Ulric (*recovering himself*). And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin !

Ida. Cousin again !

Ulric. Nay, then, I'll call you sister.

Ida. I like that name still worse—would we had ne'er

Been aught of kindred !

Ulric (*gloomily*). Would we never had !

Ida. O Heaven ! and can you wish that ?

Ulric.

Dearest *Ida* !

Did I not echo your own wish ?

Ida. Yes, *Ulric*,

But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said ; but let me be
Sister, or cousin—what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

Ulric. You shall be

All—all—

Ida. And you to me are so already ;
But I can wait.

Ulric. Dear *Ida* !

Ida. Call me *Ida*,
Your *Ida*, for I would be yours, none else's—
Indeed I 've none else left, since my poor father—

[*She pauses.*]

Ulric. You have mine—you have me.

Ida. Dear *Ulric* ! how I wish

My father could but view our happiness,
Which wants but this !

Ulric. Indeed !

Ida. You would have loved him,
He you ; for the brave ever love each other ;
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative), but under
This grave exterior—would you had known each other !
Had such as you been near him on his journey,
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

Ulric. Who says that ?

Ida. What ?

Ulric. That he died alone.

Ida. The general rumour,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd : that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

Ulric. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida. Alas ! what is a menial to a death-bed,
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves ?—they say he died of a fever.

Ulric. Say !

It was so.

Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulric. All dreams are false.

Ida. And yet I see him, as
I see you.

Ulric. Where?

Ida. In sleep—I see him lie
Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife
Beside him.

Ulric. But do you not see his face?

Ida (looking at him). No! oh, my God! do you?

Ulric. Why do you ask?

Ida. Because you look as if you saw a murderer!

Ulric (agitatedly). *Ida*, this is mere childishness; your weakness
Infects me, to my shame; but as all feelings
Of yours are common to me, it affects me.
Prithee, sweet child, change—

Ida. Child, indeed! I have
Full fifteen summers! [*A bugle sounds.*]

Rod. Hark, my lord, the bugle!

Ida (peevishly to RODOLPH). Why need you tell him that? Can he
not hear it,
Without your echo?

Rod. Pardon me, fair baroness!

Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you earn it
By aiding me in my dissuasion of
Count *Ulric* from the chase to-day.

Rod. You will not,
Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulric. I must not now
Forego it.

Ida. But you shall!

Ulric. Shall!

Ida. Yes, or be
No true knight.—Come, dear *Ulric*! yield to me
In this, for this one day;—the day looks heavy,
And you are turn'd so pale and ill.

Ulric. You jest.

Ida. Indeed I do not:—ask of *Rodolph*.

Rod. Truly,
My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than I e'er saw you change
In years.

Ulric. 'T is nothing; but if 't were, the air
Would soon restore me. I 'm the true cameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit—I 'm a forester, and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all

The eagle loves.

Ida. Except his prey, I hope.

Ulric. Sweet *Ida*, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

Ida. And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.

Ulric. *Ida*, you scarcely
Will make a soldier's wife.

Ida. I do not wish
To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER, as COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Ulric. My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting.—You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.

Siegen. So let them—you forget
To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You're apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if
Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.

Ulric. You, count,
Will well supply the place of both—I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

Siegen. No, *Ulric*;
It were not well that you alone of all
Our young nobility—

Ida. And far the noblest
In aspect and demeanour.

Siegen. (to IDA). True, dear child,
Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel.—
But, *Ulric*, recollect too our position,
So lately re-instated in our honours.
Believe me, 't would be mark'd in any house,
But most in *ours*, that ONE should be found wanting
At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven
Which gave us back our own, in the same moment
It spread its peace o'er all, hath double claims
On us for thanksgiving; first, for our country,
And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

Ulric (aside). Devout, too! Well, sir, I obey at once.

[Then aloud to a servant.

Ludwig, dismiss the train without!

[Exit LUDWIG.

Ida. And so
You yield at once to him, what I for hours

Might supplicate in vain.

Siegen. (smiling). You are not jealous
Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel! who
Would sanction disobedience against all
Except thyself? But fear not, thou shalt rule him
Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

Ida. But I should like to govern *now*.

Siegen. You shall,
Your *harp*, which, by the way, awaits you with
The countess in her chamber. She complains
That you are a sad truant to your music:
She attends you.

Ida. Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen!
Ulric, you 'll come and hear me?

Ulric. By and by.

Ida. Be sure I 'll sound it better than your bugles;
Then pray you be as punctual to its notes:
I 'll play you King Gustavus' march.

Ulric. And why not
Old Tilly's?

Ida. Not that monster's! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,
Could aught of *his* sound on it;—but come quickly;
Your mother will be eager to receive you. [Exit *IDA*.]

Siegen. Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

Ulric. My time 's your vassal.— [Aside to *RODOLPH*].
Rodolph, hence! and do

As I directed; and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.

Rod. Count Siegendorf, command you aught? I'm bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

Siegen. (starts). Ah!—
Where? on *what* frontier?

Rod. The Silesian, on
My way—(aside to *Ulric*). Where shall I say?

*Ulric (aside to *RODOLPH*).* To Hamburgh.

(Aside to himself). That
Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

Rod. Count, to Hamburgh.

Siegen. (agitated). Hamburgh! no, I have nought to do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you!

Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegendorf!

[Exit *RODOLPH*.]

Siegen. Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions, whom I fain

Would reason with you on.

Ulric. My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

Siegen. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

Ulric. So they will do of most men. Even the monarch
Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

Siegen. If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph;
They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who still
Ravage the frontier.

Ulric. And will you believe
The world?

Siegen. In this case—yes.

Ulric. In any case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

Siegen. Son!
I understand you: you refer to—but
My destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me;
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quench'd them not—twenty thousand more, perchance,
Hereafter (or even here, in *moments* which
Might date for years, did anguish make the dial),
May not obliterate or expiate
The madness and dishonour of an instant.
Ulric, be warn'd by a father!—I was not
By mine, and you behold me!

Ulric. I behold
The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
By those he rules, and those he ranks with.

Siegen. Ah!
Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!
All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me—
But if my son's is cold!—

Ulric. Who dare say that?

Siegen. None else but I, who see it—*feel* it—keener
Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
The wound.

Ulric. You err. My nature is not given
To outward fondling; how should it be so,
After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?

Siegen. And did not *I* too pass those twelve torn years
In a like absence? but 't is vain to urge you—
Nature was never call'd back by remonstrance.
Let 's change the theme. I wish you to consider
That these young violent nobles of high name,
But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all rumour
Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
Will lead thee——

Ulric (impatiently). I 'll be led by no man.

Siegen.

Nor

Be leader of such, I would hope: at once
To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
That thou shouldst wed the lady *Ida*—more,
As thou appear'st to love her.

Ulric. I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with *Hecate*—can a son say more?

Siegen. He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness
(For glory's pillow is but restless if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient; else
Thou 'dst say at once, "I love young *Ida*, and
Will wed her," or, "I love her not, and all
The powers of earth shall never make me."—So
Would I have answer'd.

Ulric. Sir, you wed for love.

Siegen. I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.

Ulric. Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

Siegen. Still
Against your age and nature! who at twenty
E'er answer'd thus till now?

Ulric. Did you not warn me
Against your own example?

Siegen. Boyish sophist!
In a word, do you love, or love not, *Ida*?

Ulric. What matters it, if I am ready to

Obeys you in espousing her?

Siegen. As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.
She's young—all-beautiful—adores you—is
Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream
Of something which your poets cannot paint,
And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
For which philosophy might barter wisdom;
And giving so much happiness deserves
A little in return. I would not have her
Break her heart for a man who has none to break,
Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
According to the Orient tale. She is—

Ulric. The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe:
I'll wed her, ne'ertheless; though, to say truth,
Just now I am not violently transported
In favour of such unions.

Siegen. But she loves you.

Ulric. And I love her, and therefore would think *twice*.

Siegen. Alas! love never *did* so.

Ulric. Then 't is time
He should begin, and take the bandage from
His eyes, and look before he leaps: till now
He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

Siegen. But you consent?

Ulric. I did and do.

Siegen. Then fix the day.

Ulric. 'T is usual,
And, certes, courteous, to leave that to the lady.

Siegen. I will engage for her.

Ulric. So will not I
For any woman; and as what I fix,
I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
Her answer, I'll give mine.

Siegen. But 't is your office
To woo.

Ulric. Count, 't is a marriage of your making,
So be it of your wooing; but, to please you,
I will now pay my duty to my mother,
With whom, you know, the lady Ida is—
What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
And smile at pretty prattle, and look into

The eyes of feminine, as though they were
 The stars receding early to our wish
 Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle—
 What can a son or man do more?

[Exit ULRIC.

Siegen. (solus). Too much!—
 Too much of duty and too little love!
 He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
 For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
 Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
 Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
 Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd without tears
 To see my child again, and now I have found him!
 But how? obedient, but with coldness; duteous
 In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious,
 Abstracted—distant—much given to long absence,
 And where—none know—in league with the most riotous
 Of our young nobles; though, to do him justice,
 He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
 Yet there 's some tie between them which I cannot
 Unravel. They look up to him—consult him—
 Throng round him as a leader: but with me
 He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
 After—what! doth my father's curse descend
 Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near
 To shed more blood, or—oh! if it should be!
 Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
 To wither him and his—who, though they slew not,
 Unlatch'd the door of death for thee? 'T was not
 Our fault, nor is our sin: thou wert our foe,
 And yet I spared thee when my own destruction
 Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening!
 And only took—accursed gold! thou liest
 Like poison in my hands; I dare not use thee,
 Nor part from thee; thou cam'st in such a guise,
 Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
 Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
 Thou villanous gold! and thy dead master's doom,
 Though he died not by me or mine, as much
 As if he were my brother! I have ta'en
 His orphan Ida—cherish'd her as one
 Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Att. The abbot, if it please
 Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
 Upon you.

[Exit ATTENDANT.

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them!

Siegen. Welcome, welcome, holy father!
And may thy prayer be heard!—all men have need
Of such, and I——

Prior. Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

Siegen. Yes, good father;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

Prior. To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,
Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

Siegen. True, father; and to avert those pangs from one,
Who, though of our most faultless, holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smooth the soul through purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[SIEGENDORF offers the gold which he had taken from STRA-
LENHEIM.]

Prior. Count, if I
Receive it, 't is because I know too well
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endow'd it, but from you
And yours in all meet things 't is fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

Siegen. (*faltering*). For—for—the dead.

Prior. His name?

Siegen. 'T is from a soul, and not a name,
I would avert perdition.

Prior. I meant not
To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

Siegen. Secret! I have none: but, father, he who 's gone
Might have one; or, in short, he did bequeath—
No, not bequeath—but I bestow this sum

For pious purposes.

Prior. A proper deed
In the behalf of our departed friends.

Siegen. But he, who 's gone, was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the staunchest.

Prior. Better still.
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies, is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

Siegen. But I did not
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But——

Prior. Best of all ; for this is pure religion !
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell—
An evangelical compassion !—with
Your own gold too !

Siegen. Father, 't is not my gold.

Prior. Whose then? you said it was no legacy.

Siegen. No matter whose—of this be sure, that he
Who own'd it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars :
'T is yours, or theirs.

Prior. Is there no blood upon it?

Siegen. No : but there 's worse than blood—eternal shame !

Prior. Did he who own'd it die in his bed?

Siegen. Alas !

He did.

Prior. Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

Siegen. His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

Prior. You said he died in his bed, not battle?

Siegen. He
Died, I scarce know—but—he was stabb'd i' the dark,
And now you have it—perish'd on his pillow
By a cut-throat!—ay! you may look upon me!
I am *not* the man. I 'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.

Prior. Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?

Siegen. No! by the God who sees and strikes!

Prior. Nor know you
Who slew him?

Siegen. I could only guess at *one*,
And he to me a stranger, unconnected,
As unemploy'd. Except by one day's knowledge,
I never saw the man who was suspected.

Prior. Then you are free from guilt.

Siegen. (*eagerly*).

Oh! am I?—say!

Prior. You have said so, and know best.

Siegen.

Father! I have spoken

The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole* :

Yet say *I* am *not* guilty! for the blood

Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,

Though, by the power who abhorreth human blood,

I did not!—nay, once spared it, when I might

And *could*—ay, perhaps *should*—(if our self-safety

Be e'er excusable in such defences

Against the attacks of over-potent foes).

But pray for him, for me, and all my house ;

For, as I said, though I be innocent,

I know not why, a like remorse is on me,

As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,

Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.

Prior.

I will.

Be comforted! You are innocent, and should

Be calm as innocence.

Siegen.

But calmness is not

Always the attribute of innocence :

I feel it is not.

Prior. But it will be so,

When the mind gathers up its truth within it.

Remember the great festival to-morrow,

In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,

As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect ;

Nor in the general orison of thanks

For bloodshed stopt, let blood, you shed not, rise

A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be

Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget

Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—A LARGE AND MAGNIFICENT GOTHIC HALL IN THE CASTLE OF SIEGENDORF, DECORATED WITH TROPHIES, BANNERS, AND ARMS OF THAT FAMILY.

Enter ARNHEIM and MEISTER, Attendants of COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Arn. Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies
Already are at the portal. Have you sent
The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague,
As far as the man's dress and figure could
By your description track him. The devil take
These revels and processions! All the pleasure
(If such there be) must fall to the spectators;
I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arn. Go to! my lady countess comes.

Meis. I'd rather
Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
Than follow in the train of a great man
In these dull pageantries.

Arn. Be gone, and rail
Within.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF and IDA STRALENHEIM.

Jos. Well, Heaven be praised, the show is over!

Ida. How can you say so? Never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun,
Streaming through the stain'd windows, even the tombs
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder;
The white robes, and the lifted eyes; the world
At peace! and all at peace with one another!
Oh, my sweet mother!

[*Embracing* JOSEPHINE.]

Jos. My beloved child!
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida. Oh!
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats!

Jos. It does, my love; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter!

Ida. Never shall it do so!
 How should it? What should make us grieve? I hate
 To hear of sorrow: how can we be sad,
 Who love each other so entirely? You,
 The count, and Ulric, and your daughter, *Ida*.

Jos. Poor child!

Ida. Do you pity me?

Jos. No; I but envy,
 And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
 Of the universal vice, if one vice be
 More general than another.

Ida. I'll not hear
 A word against a world which still contains
 You and my Ulric. Did you ever see
 Aught like him? How he tower'd amongst them all!
 How all eyes follow'd him! The flowers fell faster—
 Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, methought,
 Than before all the rest, and where he trod
 I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
 Will wither.

Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer!
 If he should hear you.

Ida. But he never will.
 I dare not say so much to him—I fear him.

Jos. Why so? he loves you well.

Ida. But I can never
 Shape my thoughts of him into words to him.
 Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

Jos. How so?

Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
 Yet he says nothing.

Jos. It is nothing: all men,
 Especially in these dark troublous times,
 Have much to think of.

Ida. But I cannot think
 Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
 In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance,
 The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
 His eyes from yours to-day.

Ida. I did not see him,
 But Ulric. Did you not see, at the moment
 When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought
 Through my fast tears, though they were thick and warm,
 I saw him smiling on me.

Jos. I could not
 See aught save heaven, to which my eyes were raised,

Together with the people's.

Ida. I thought too
Of heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.

Jos. Come.

Let us retire ; they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.

Ida. And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone ;
Dear mother, I am with you. [*Exeunt.*

Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, *in full dress, from the solemnity, and*
LUDWIG.

Siegen. Is he not found?

Lud. Strict search is making every where ; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

Siegen. Where 's Ulric?

Lud. He rode round the other way,
With some young nobles ; but he left them soon ;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, *splendidly dressed.*

Siegen. (to LUDWIG). See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described. [*Exit* LUDWIG.

Oh ! Ulric,

How have I long'd for thee !

Ulric. Your wish is granted—
Behold me !

Siegen. I have seen the murderer.

Ulric. Whom ? Where ?

Siegen. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim,

Ulric. You dream.

Siegen. I live ! and as I live, I saw him—
Heard him ! He dared to utter even my name.

Ulric. What name ?

Siegen. Werner ! 't was mine.

Ulric. It must be so
No more : forget it.

Siegen. Never ! never ! all
My destinies were woven in that name :
It will not be engraved upon my tomb,
But it may lead me there.

Ulric. To the point—the Hungarian ?

Siegen. Listen!—The church was throng'd ; the hymn was raised ;
Te Deum peal'd from nations, rather than
 From choirs, in one great cry of " God be praised "
 For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread years,
 Each bloodier than the former ; I arose,
 With all the nobles, and as I look'd down
 Along the lines of lifted faces,—from
 Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I
 Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw
 A moment, and no more), what struck me sightless
 To all else—the Hungarian's face ! I grew
 Sick ; and when I recover'd from the mist
 Which curl'd about my senses, and again
 Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving
 Was over, and we march'd back in procession.

Ulric. Continue !

Siegen. When we reach'd the Muldau's bridge,
 The joyous crowd above, the numberless
 Barks mann'd with revellers in their best garbs,
 Which shot along the glancing tide below,
 The decorated street, the long array,
 The clashing music, and the thundering
 Of far artillery, which seem'd to bid
 A long and loud farewell to its great doings,
 The standards o'er me, and the tramlings round,
 The roar of rushing thousands, all—all could not
 Chase this man from my mind ; although my sense
 No longer held him palpable.

Ulric. You saw him
 No more, then ?

Siegen. I look'd, as a dying soldier
 Looks at a draught of water, for this man ;
 But still I saw him not ; but in his stead—

Ulric. What in his stead ?

Siegen. My eye for ever fell
 Upon your dancing crest ; the loftiest,
 As on the loftiest and the loveliest head
 It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
 Which overflow'd the glittering streets of Prague.

Ulric. What's this to the Hungarian ?

Siegen. Much ; for I
 Had almost then forgot him in my son,
 When just as the artillery ceased, and paused
 The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
 Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
 Distinct and keener far upon my ear
 Than the late cannon's volume, this word—*Werner !*

Ulric. Utter'd by—

Siegen. HIM! I turn'd—and saw—and fell.

Ulric. And wherefore? Were you seen?

Siegen. The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause;
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.

Ulric. But I'll aid you now.

Siegen. In what?

Ulric. In searching for this man, or——When he's found,
What shall we do with him?

Siegen. I know not that.

Ulric. Then wherefore seek?

Siegen. Because I cannot rest
Till he is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem interwisted; nor can be
Unravell'd, till——

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Att. A stranger, to wait on
Your excellency.

Siegen. Who?

Att. He gave no name.

Siegen. Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The ATTENDANT introduces GABOR, and afterwards exit.*
Ah!

Gabor. 'T is, then, Werner!

Siegen. (*haughtily*). The same you knew, sir, by that name; and
you!

Gabor (*looking round*). I recognise you both; father and son,
It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me: I am here.

Siegen. I have sought you, and have found you; you are charged
(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as—— [He pauses.

Gabor. Give it utterance, and then
I'll meet the consequences.

Siegen. You shall do so——
Unless——

Gabor. First, who accuses me?

Siegen. All things,
If not all men: the universal rumour—
My own presence on the spot—the place—the time—
And every speck of circumstance unite
To fix the blot on you.

Gabor. And on me only?

Pause ere you answer : is no other name,
Save mine, stain'd in this business ?

Siegen. Trifling villain !
Who play'st with thine own guilt ! Of all that breathe
Thou best dost know the innocence of him
'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody slander.
But I will talk no further with a wretch,
Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
And without quibbling, to my charge.

Gabor. 'T is false !

Siegen. Who says so ?

Gabor. I.

Siegen. And how disprove it ?

Gabor. By

The presence of the murderer.

Siegen. Name him !

Gabor. He

May have more names than one. Your lordship had so
Once on a time.

Siegen. If you mean me, I dare
Your utmost.

Gabor. You may do so, and in safety ;
I know the assassin.

Siegen. Where is he ?

Gabor (*pointing to ULRIC*). Beside you !

[*ULRIC rushes forward to attack GABOR ; SIEGENDORF interposes.*]

Siegen. Liar and fiend ! but you shall not be slain ;
These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.

[*He turns to ULRIC.*]

Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,
I could not deem it earth-born : but, be calm ;
It will refute itself. But touch him not.

[*ULRIC endeavours to compose himself.*]

Gabor. Look at *him*, count, and then *hear me*.

Siegen. (*first to GABOR, and then looking at ULRIC*). I hear thee.
My God ! you look——

Ulric. How ?

Siegen. As on that dread night
When we met in the garden.

Ulric (*composes himself*). It is nothing.

Gabor. Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither
Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the people in the church, I dream'd not
To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of senators and princes ; but you have call'd me,

And we have met.

Siegen. Go on, sir.

Gabor. Ere I do so,

Allow me to inquire who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was 't I—as poor as ever;
And poorer by suspicion on my name.
The baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought—
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates, scarce less than princely.

Siegen. These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

Gabor. I can't help that;

But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because
I know you innocent, and deem you just.
But ere I can proceed—*Dare* you protect me?—
Dare you command me?

[*SIEGENDORF first looks at the Hungarian, and then at
ULRIC, who has unbuckled his sabre and is drawing
lines with it on the floor—still in its sheath.*

Ulric (looks at his father and says). Let the man go on!

Gabor. I am unarm'd, count—bid your son lay down
His sabre.

Ulric (offers it to him contemptuously). Take it.

Gabor. No, sir; 't is enough

That we are both unarm'd—I would not chuse
To wear a steel which may be stain'd with more
Blood than came there in battle.

Ulric (casts the sabre from him in contempt). It—or some
Such other weapon, in my hands—spared yours
Once, when disarm'd and at my mercy.

Gabor. True—

I have not forgotten it: you spared me for
Your own especial purpose—to sustain
An ignominy not my own.

Ulric. Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater.

[*To SIEGENDORF.*

But is it of my father to hear further?

Siegen. (takes his son by the hand). My son! I know mine own in-
nocence—and doubt not
Of yours—but I have promised this man patience;
Let him continue.

Gabor. I will not detain you
By speaking of myself much; I began
Life early—and am what the world has made me.

At Frankfort, on the Oder, where I pass'd
 A winter in obscurity, it was
 My chance at several places of resort
 (Which I frequented sometimes, but not often)
 To hear related a strange circumstance,
 In February last. A martial force,
 Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance,
 Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
 Marauders from the hostile camp.—They proved,
 However, not to be so—but banditti,
 Whom either accident or enterprise
 Had carried from their usual haunt—the forests
 Which skirt Bohemia—even into Lusatia.
 Many amongst them were reported of
 High rank—and martial law slept for a time.
 At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
 And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
 Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate
 I know no more.

Siegen. And what is this to Ulric ?

Gabor. Amongst them there was said to be one man
 Of wonderful endowments :—birth and fortune,
 Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
 And courage as unrivall'd, were proclaim'd
 His by the public rumour ; and his sway,
 Not only over his associates, **but**
 His judges, was attributed to witchcraft,
 Such was his influence :—I have no great faith
 In any magic save that of the mine—
 I therefore deem'd him wealthy.—But my soul
 Was roused with various feelings to seek out
 This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Siegen. And did you so ?

Gabor. You 'll hear. Chance favour'd me :
 A popular affray in the public square
 Drew crowds together—it was one of those
 Occasions, where men's souls look out of them,
 And show them as they are—even in their faces :
 The moment my eye met his—I exclaim'd
 “ This is the man !” though he was then, as since,
 With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
 I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly ;
 I noted down his form—his gesture—features,
 Stature and bearing—and amidst them all,
 'Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
 I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
 And gladiator's heart.

Ulric (smiling). The tale sounds well

Gabor. And may sound better.—He appear'd to me
 One of those beings to whom Fortune bends,
 As she doth to the daring—and on whom
 The fates of others oft depend: besides,
 An indescribable sensation drew me
 Near to this man, as if my point of fortune
 Was to be fix'd by him.—There I was wrong.

Siegen. And may not be right now.

Gabor. I follow'd him—
 Solicited his notice—and obtain'd it—
 Though not his friendship:—it was his intention
 To leave the city privately—we left it
 Together—and together we arrived
 In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd,
 And Stralenheim was succour'd—Now we are on
 The verge—*dare* you hear further?

Siegen. I must do so—
 Or I have heard too much.

Gabor. I saw in you
 A man above his station—and if not
 So high, as now I find you, in my then
 Conceptions—'t was that I had rarely seen
 Men such as you appear'd in height of mind,
 In the most high of worldly rank; you were
 Poor—even to all save rags—I would have shared
 My purse, though slender, with you—you refused it.

Siegen. Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
 That thus you urge it?

Gabor. Still you owe me something,
 Though not for that—and I owed you my safety,
 At least my seeming safety—when the slaves
 Of Stralenheim pursued me on the grounds
 That I had robb'd him.

Siegen. I conceal'd you—I
 Whom, and whose house, you arraign, reviving viper!

Gabor. I accuse no man—save in my defence.
 You, count, have made yourself accuser—judge—
 Your hall's my court, your heart is my tribunal.
 Be just, and I'll be merciful.

Siegen. You merciful!
 You! base calumniator!

Gabor. I. 'T will rest
 With me at least to be so. You conceal'd me—
 In secret passages known to yourself,
 You said, and to none else. At dead of night,
 Weary with watching in the dark, and dubious
 Of tracing back my way—I saw a glimmer,
 Through distant crannies, of a twinkling light.

I follow'd it, and reach'd a door—a secret
Portal—which open'd to the chamber, where,
With cautious hand and slow, having first undone
As much as made a crevice of the fastening,
I look'd through, and beheld a purple bed,
And on it Stralenheim!—

Siegen. Asleep! And yet
You slew him—wretch!

Gabor. He was already slain,
And bleeding like a sacrifice. My own
Blood became ice.

Siegen. But he was all alone!
You saw none else? You did not see the—

[*He pauses from agitation.*

Gabor. No;
He, whom you dare not name—nor even I
Scarce dare to recollect—was not then in
The chamber.

Siegen. (*to ULRIC*). Then, my boy! thou art guiltless still—
Thou bad'st me say *I* was so once—Oh! now
Do thou as much!—

Gabor. Be patient: I can *not*
Recede now, though it shake the very walls
Which frown above us. You remember, or
If not, your son does,—that the locks were changed
Beneath *his* chief inspection—on the morn
Which led to this same night: how he had enter'd
He best knows—but within an antechamber,
The door of which was half ajar—I saw
A man who wash'd his bloody hands, and oft
With stern and anxious glance gazed back upon
The bleeding body—but it moved no more.

Siegen. Oh! God of fathers!

Gabor. I beheld his features
As I see yours—but yours they were not, though
Resembling them—behold them in Count Ulric's!
Distinct—as I beheld them—though the expression
Is not now what it then was;—but it was so
When I first charged him with the crime:—so lately.

Siegen. This is so—

Gabor (*interrupting him*). Nay—but hear me to the end!
Now you must do so.—I conceived myself
Betray'd by you and *him* (for now I saw
There was some tie between you) into this
Pretended den of refuge, to become
The victim of your guilt; and my first thought
Was vengeance: but though arm'd with a short poniard
(Having left my sword without), I was no match

For him at any time, as had been proved
That morning—either in address or force.
I turn'd; and fled—i' the dark : chance, rather than
Skill, made me gain the secret door of the hall,
And thence the chamber where you slept—if I
Had found you *waking*, Heaven alone can tell
What vengeance and suspicion might have prompted ;
But ne'er slept guilt as Werner slept that night.

Siegen. And yet I had horrid dreams ! and such brief sleep—
The stars had not gone down when I awoke—
Why didst thou spare me ? I dreamt of my father—
And now my dream is out !

Gabor. 'T is not my fault,
If I have read it. Well ! I fled and hid me.
Chance led me here after so many moons—
And show'd me Werner in Count Siegendorf !
Werner, whom I had sought in huts in vain,
Inhabited the palace of a sovereign !
You sought me, and have found me : now you know
My secret, and may weigh its worth.

Siegen. (after a pause). Indeed !

Gabor. Is it revenge or justice which inspires
Your meditation ?

Siegen. Neither—I was weighing
The value of your secret.

Gabor. You shall know it
At once—when you were poor, and I, though poor,
Rich enough to relieve such poverty
As might have envied mine, I offer'd you
My purse—you would not share it :—I'll be franker
With you ; you are wealthy, noble, trusted by
The imperial powers—you understand me ?

Siegen. Yes.

Gabor. Not quite. You think me venal, and scarce true :
'T is no less true, however, that my fortunes
Have made me both at present ; you shall aid me ;
I would have aided you—and also have
Been somewhat damaged in my name to save
Yours and your son's. Weigh well what I have said.

Siegen. Dare you await the event of a few minutes'
Deliberation ?

Gabor. (casts his eyes on ULRIC, who is leaning against a pillar).
If I should do so ?

Siegen. I pledge my life for yours. Withdraw into
This tower. [Opens a turret door.

Gabor (hesitatingly). This is the second safe asylum
You have offered me.

Siegen. And was not the first so ?

Gabor. I know not that even now—but will approve
The second. I have still a further shield.—
I did not enter Prague alone—and should I
Be put to rest with Stralenheim—there are
Some tongues without will wag in my behalf.
Be brief in your decision !

Siegen. I will be so—
My word is sacred and irrevocable
Within *these* walls, but it extends no further.

Gabor. I 'll take it for so much.

Siegen. (*points to ULRIC's sabre, still upon the ground*). Take also
that—

I saw you eye it eagerly, and him
Distrustfully.

Gabor (*takes up the sabre*). I will ; and so provide
To sell my life—not cheaply.

[*GABOR goes into the turret, which SIEGENDORF closes.*

Siegen. (*advances to ULRIC*). Now, Count Ulric !
For son I dare not call thee—What say'st thou ?

Ulric. His tale is true.

Siegen. True, monster !

Ulric. Most true, father ;

And you did well to listen to it : what
We know, we can provide against. He must
Be silenced.

Siegen. Ay, with half of my domains ;
And with the other half, could he and thou
Unsay this villany.

Ulric. It is no time
For trifling or dissembling. I have said
His story 's true ; and he too must be silenced.

Siegen. How so ?

Ulric. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
As never to have hit on this before ?
When we met in the garden, what except
Discovery in the act could make me know
His death ? or had the prince's household been
Then summon'd, would the cry for the police
Been left to such a stranger ? Or should I
Have loiter'd on the way ? Or could *you, Werner,*
The object of the baron's hate and fears,
Have fled—unless by many an hour before
Suspicion woke ? I sought and fathom'd you—
Doubting if you were false or feeble ; I
Perceived you were the latter ; and yet so
Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
At times your weakness.

Siegen. Parricide! no less
Than common stabber! What deed of my life,
Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
For your accomplice?

Ulric. Father, do not raise
The devil you cannot lay, between us. This
Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured,
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? you
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Siegen. Oh! my dead father's curse! 't is working now.

Ulric. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still!—If *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *there were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? by his disgrace, which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself—a *felon's* brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak, invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have done
With right or wrong, and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as, *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe—but not from vengeance. He
Was a rock in our way, which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our destination—but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him, and he *owed me*
His *life*; when due, I but resumed the debt.
He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf, wherein
I have plunged our enemy. *You* kindled first
The torch—*you* show'd the path: now trace me that
Of safety—or let me!

Siegen. I have done with life!

Ulric. Let us have done with that which cankers life—

Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
 Of things which cannot be undone. We have
 No more to learn or hide : I know no fear,
 And have within these very walls men who
 (Although you know them not) dare venture all things.
 You stand high with the state ; what passes here
 Will not excite her too great curiosity :
 Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
 Stir not, and speak not :—leave the rest to me :
 We must have no *third* babblers thrust between us.⁷

[Exit ULRIC.

Siegen. (solus). Am I awake? are these my father's halls?
 And *you*—my son? *My* son! *mine!* who have ever
 Abhor'd both mystery and blood, and yet
 Am plunged into the deepest hell of both!
 I must be speedy, or more will be shed—
 The Hungarian's!—Ulric—he hath partisans,
 It seems : I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool!
 Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
 (As I too) of the opposite door which leads
 Into the turret. Now then! or once more
 To be the father of fresh crimes—no less
 Than of the criminal! Ho! Gabor! Gabor!

[Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.

SCENE II.—THE INTERIOR OF THE TURRET.

GABOR and SIEGENDORF.

Gabor. Who calls?

Siegen. I—Siegendorf! Take these, and fly!
 Lose not a moment!

[Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts
 them into GABOR'S hand.

Gabor. What am I to do
 With these?

Siegen. Whate'er you will : sell them, or hoard,
 And prosper ; but delay not—or you are lost!

Gabor. You pledged your honour for my safety!

Siegen. And
 Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
 It seems, of my own castle—of my own
 Retainers—nay, even of these very walls,
 Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
 Or you will be slain by—

Gabor. Is it even so?
 Farewell, then! Recollect, however, count,
 You sought this fatal interview!

Siegen. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still :—Begone !
Gabor. By the same path I enter'd ?
Siegen. Yes ; that 's safe still :
But loiter not in Prague ;—you do not know
With whom you have to deal.
Gabor. I know too well—
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sire !
Farewell ! [Exit GABOR.]
Siegen. (*solus and listening*). He hath clear'd the staircase. Ah !
I hear
The door sound loud behind him ! He is safe !
Safe !—Oh, my father's spirit !—I am faint——
[He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the tower,
in a drooping posture.]

Enter ULRIC, with others armed, and with weapons drawn.

Ulric. Dispatch !—he 's there !
Ludwig. The count, my lord !
Ulric (*recognising Siegendorf*). You here, sir !
Siegen. Yes : if you want another victim, strike !
Ulric (*seeing him stript of his jewels*). Where is the ruffian who hath
plunder'd you ?
Vassals, dispatch in search of him ! You see
'T was as I said—the wretch hath stript my father
Of jewels which might form a prince's heirloom !
Away ! I 'll follow you forthwith.
[Exeunt all but SIEGENDORF and ULRIC.]
What 's this ?

Where is the villain ?

Siegen. There are *two*, sir ; which
Are you in quest of ?

Ulric. Let us hear no more
Of this : he must be found. You have not let him
Escape ?

Siegen. He 's gone.

Ulric. With your connivance .

Siegen. With
My fullest, freest aid.

Ulric. Then fare you well ! [ULRIC is going.]

Siegen. Stop ! I command—entreat—implore ! Oh, Ulric !
Will you then leave me ?

Ulric. What ! remain to be
Denounced—dragg'd, it may be, in chains ; and all
By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,

That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!

Siegen. I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!
Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

Ulric. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains: a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands, are mine.

Siegen. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frankfort!

Ulric. Yes—men—who are worthy of the name! Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE and IDA.

Jos. What is 't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heaven, I see you safe!

Siegen. Safe!

Ida. Yes, dear father!

Siegen. No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good lord?

Siegen. That you have given birth
To a demon!

Ida (taking Ulric's hand). Who shall dare say this of Ulric?

Siegen. Ida, beware! there's blood upon that hand.

Ida (stooping to kiss it). I'd kiss it off, though it were mine!

Siegen. It is so!

Ulric. Away! it is your father's! [*Exit ULRIC.*]

Ida. Oh, great God!
And I have loved this man!

[*Ida falls senseless.—Josephine stands speechless with horror.*]

Siegen. The wretch hath slain
Them both!—my Josephine! we are now alone!
Would we had ever been so!—All is over
For me!—Now open wide, my sire, thy grave;
Thy curse hath dug it deeper for thy son
In mine!—The race of Siegendorf is past!

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 393.

“Who has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who has taught you that it would be even safe for my son to insult me?—It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian, to give him the appellation he merits:—And what is there in common between my father and such a character?—Every thing, for that ruffian was your father.”—MISS LEE'S *Kruitzner*.

Note 2. Page 394.

“Conrad, before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye, learn to understand my actions. Young, and inexperienced in the world—reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for you to judge of the force of the passions, or the temptations of misery? Wait till, like me, you have blighted your fairest hopes—have endured humiliation and sorrow—poverty and famine—before you pretend to judge of their effects on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive—should you see the being at your mercy who stands between you and every thing that is dear or noble in life! who is ready to tear from you your name—your inheritance—your very life itself—congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent, who now lives, perhaps, to sting us all!”—MISS LEE.

Note 3. Page 394.

“You do not know this man: I do! I believe him to be mean, sordid, deceitful; you will conceive yourself safe, because you are young and brave! Learn, however, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may reach them! Stralenheim, in the palace of a prince, was in my power! My knife was held over him—I forbore—and I am now in his!”—MISS LEE.

Note 4. Page 394.

“Me he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name—and why not you? Me he has entrapped—are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of Idenstein around me;—of a reptile whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom. Will you be more patient? Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or forbear,” &c.—MISS LEE.

Note 5. Page 395.

The Ravenstone, “Rabenstein,” is the *stone gibbet* of Germany and so called from the ravens perching on it.—See *Manfred*, note 4, p. 37.

Note 6. Page 447.

“I have yet an additional security—I did not enter Prague a solitary individual; and there are tongues without that will speak for me, although I should even share the fate of Stralenheim. Let your deliberation be short.—My promise is solemn, sacred, irrevocable: It extends not, however, beyond these walls.”—MISS LEE.

Note 7. Page 449.

“We stood on a precipice down which one of three must inevitably have plunged; for I will not deny that I knew my own situation to be as critical as yours. I therefore precipitated Stralenheim! You held the torch! You pointed out the path! Show me now that of safety; or let me show it you!”—“I have done with life!”—“Let us have done with retrospection. We have nothing more either to learn or to conceal from each other. I have courage and partisans; they are even within the walls, though you do not know them. Keep your own secret. Preserve an unchanged countenance. Without your further interference, I will for ever secure you from the indiscretion of a *third person*,” &c.—MISS LEE.

HEAVEN AND EARTH;

A MYSTERY.

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI.

And it came to pass..... that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair,
and they took them wives of all which they chose.

And woman wailing for her demon lover.—COLERIDGE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ANGELS.

SAMIASA.
AZAZIEL.
RAPHAEL, *the Archangel.*

MEN.

NOAH, *and his Sons.*
IRAD.

WOMEN:

ANAH.
AHOLIBAMAH.

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth.—Chorus of Mortals.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

SCENE I.—A WOODY AND MOUNTAINOUS DISTRICT NEAR
MOUNT ARARAT.—TIME, MIDNIGHT.

Enter ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah. OUR father sleeps : it is the hour when they
Who love us are accustom'd to descend
Through the deep clouds o'er rocky Ararat :—
How my heart beats!

Ahol. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.

Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.

Ahol. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.

Anah. My sister, though
I love Azazel more than—oh, too much!
What was I going to say? my heart grows impious.

Ahol. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures?

Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved me :
This cannot be of good ; and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.

Ahol. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin !
There 's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long ;
Marry, and bring forth dust !

Anah. I should have loved
Azazel not less were he mortal : yet
I am glad he is not. I cannot outlive him,

And when I think that his immortal wings
 Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
 Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
 As he adores the Highest, death becomes
 Less terrible; but yet I pity him;
 His grief will be of ages, or at least
 Mine would be such for him, were I the seraph,
 And he the perishable.

Ahol. Rather say,
 That he will single forth some other daughter
 Of earth, and love her as he once loved Anah.

Anah. And if it should be so, and she so loved him,
 Better thus than that he should weep for me.

Ahol. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
 All seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from me.
 But to our invocation! 'T is the hour.

Anah. Seraph!
 From thy sphere!
 Whatever star contain thy glory;
 In the eternal depths of Heaven
 Albeit thou watchest with "the Seven,"¹
 Though through space infinite and hoary
 Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
 Yet hear!

Oh! think of her who holds thee dear!
 And though she nothing is to thee,
 Yet think that thou art all to her.
 Thou canst not tell,—and never be
 Such pangs decreed to aught save me,—
 The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years,
 Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
 With me thou canst not sympathize,
 Except in love, and there thou must
 Acknowledge that more loving dust
 Ne'er wept beneath the skies.

Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou see'st
 The face of Him who made thee great,
 As He hath made me of the least

Of those cast out from Eden's gate:

Yet, seraph dear!

Oh hear!

For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
 Until I know what I must die in knowing,
 That thou forget'st in thine eternity
 Her whose heart death could not keep from o'erflowing
 For thee, immortal essence as thou art!
 Great is their love who love in sin and fear;

And such I feel are waging in my heart
 A war unworthy : to an Adamite
 Forgive, my seraph ; that such thoughts appear,
 For sorrow is our element ;
 Delight

An Eden kept afar from sight,
 Though sometimes with our visions blent.
 The hour is near
 Which tells me we are not abandon'd quite.—
 Appear ! appear !

Seraph !
 My own Azazel ! be but here,
 And leave the stars to their own light.

Ahol. Samiasa !
 Wheresoe'er

Thou rulest in the upper air—
 Or warring with the spirits who may dare
 Dispute with Him
 Who made all empires' empire ; or recalling
 Some wandering star which shoots through the abyss,
 Whose tenants dying, while their world is falling,
 Share the dim destiny of clay in this ;
 Or joining with the inferior cherubim,
 Thou deignest to partake their hymn—
 Samiasa !

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.
 Many worship thee—that will I not :
 If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,
 Descend and share my lot !
 Though I be form'd of clay,
 And thou of Leams
 More bright than those of day
 On Eden's streams,
 Thine immortality cannot repay
 With love more warm than mine
 My love. There is a ray
 In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
 I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
 It may be hidden long : death and decay
 Our mother Eve bequeath'd us—but my heart
 Defies it : though this life must pass away,
 Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part ?
 Thou art immortal—so am I : I feel,
 I feel my immortality o'ersweep
 All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal
 Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
 Into my ears this truth—"Thou liv'st for ever !"
 But if it be in joy,
 I know not, nor would know ;

That secret rests with the Almighty giver,
 Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss and woe.
 But thee and me He never can destroy ;
 Change us He may, but not o'erwhelm ; we are
 Of as eternal essence, and must war
 With Him if He will war with us ; with *thee*
 I can share all things, even immortal sorrow ;
 For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,
 And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity ?
 No ! though the serpent's sting should pierce me thorough,
 And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil
 Around me still ! and I will smile
 And curse thee not ; but hold
 Thee in as warm a fold
 As——but descend : and prove
 A mortal's love

For an immortal. If the skies contain
 More joy than thou canst give and take, remain !

Anah. Sister ! sister ! I view them winging
 Their bright way through the parted night.

Ahol. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
 As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But if our father see the sight ?

Ahol. He would but deem it was the moon
 Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
 An hour too soon.

Anah. They come ! *he* comes !—Azaziel !

Ahol. Haste

To meet them ! Oh ! for wings to bear
 My spirit, while they hover there,
 To Samiasa's breast !

Anah. Lo ! they have kindled all the west,
 Like a returning sunset ;—lo !

On Ararat's late secret crest

A mild and many-colour'd bow,
 The remnant of their flashing path,
 Now shines ! and now, behold ! it hath
 Return'd to night, as rippling foam,

Which the leviathan hath lash'd
 From his unfathomable home,
 When sporting on the face of the calm deep,
 Subsides soon after he again hath dash'd
 Down, down, to where the ocean's fountains sleep.

Ahol. They have touch'd earth ! Samiasa !

Anah. My Azaziel !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Enter IRAD and JAPHET.

Irada. Despond not : wherefore wilt thou wander thus
To add thy silence to the silent night,
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars?
They cannot aid thee.

Japhet. But they soothe me—now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah!

Irada. But she loves thee not.

Japhet. Alas!

Irada. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also.

Japhet. I feel for thee too.

Irada. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn ;
It may be, time too will avenge it.

Japhet. Canst thou
Find joy in such a thought?

Irada. Nor joy, nor sorrow.
I loved her well ; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love : as 't is, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.

Japhet. What destinies?

Irada. I have some cause to think
She loves another.

Japhet. Anah!

Irada. No ; her sister.

Japhet. What other?

Irada. That I know not ; but her air,
If not her words, tells me she loves another.

Japhet. Ay, but not Anah : she but loves her God.

Irada. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee?

Japhet. True, nothing ; but
I love.

Irada. And so did I.

Japhet. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier?

Irada. Yes.

Japhet. I pity thee.

Irada. Me ! why?

Japhet. For being happy,
Deprived of that which makes my misery.

Irād. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost, for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring if weigh'd
Against the metal of the sons of Cain—
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discolour'd trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford.—Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars as wolves howl to the moon—
I must back to my rest.

Japhet. And so would I
If I could rest.

Irād. Thou wilt not to our tents, then?

Japhet. No, Irād; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth, they say, opens from the internal world,
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.

Irād. Wherefore so?
What wouldst thou there?

Japhet. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad: it is a hopeless spot
And I am hopeless.

Irād. But 't is dangerous;
Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors,
I must go with thee.

Japhet. Irād, no; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.

Irād. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them: turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.

Japhet. No; neither, Irād:
I must proceed alone.

Irād. Then peace be with thee. [Exit IRAD.]

Japhet (solus). Peace! I have sought it where it should be found,
In love—with love too, which perhaps deserved it:
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart—
A weakness of the spirit—listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep—
Have come upon me. Peace! what peace? the calm
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The earth's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaim'd

A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom
 To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah!
 When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
 The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou
 Have lain within this bosom, folded from
 The elements; this bosom, which in vain
 Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
 While thine—Oh, God! at least remit to her
 Thy wrath! for she is pure amidst the falling,
 As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
 Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah!
 How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not;
 And still would I redeem thee—see thee live
 When ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed
 By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
 Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
 Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.

[Exit JAPHET.]

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet?

Shem.

He went forth,

According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
 He said; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
 Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
 Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest;
 Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
 Which opens to the heart of Ararat.

Noah. What doth he there? It is an evil spot
 Upon an earth all evil; for things worse
 Than even wicked men resort there: he
 Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
 Although he could not wed her if she loved him,
 And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts
 Of men! that one of my blood, knowing well
 The destiny and evil of these days,
 And that the hour approacheth, should indulge
 In such forbidden yearnings! Lead the way;
 He must be sought for!

Shem.

Go not forward, father:

I will seek Japhet.

Noah.

Do not fear for me:

All evil things are powerless on the man
 Selected by Jehovah—let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters?

Noah. No; to the cavern of the Caucasus.

[Exit NOAH and SHEM.]

SCENE III.—THE MOUNTAINS.—A CAVERN, AND THE ROCKS
OF CAUCASUS.JAPHET (*solus*).

Ye wilds, that look eternal; and thou cave,
 Which seem'st unfathomable; and ye mountains,
 So varied and so terrible in beauty;
 Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
 And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
 In perpendicular places, where the foot
 Of man would tremble, could he reach them—yes,
 Ye look eternal! Yet, in a few days,
 Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurl'd
 Before the mass of waters; and yon cave,
 Which seems to lead into a lower world,
 Shall have its depths search'd by the sweeping wave,
 And dolphins gambol in the lion's den!
 And man—Oh, men! my fellow-beings! Who
 Shall weep above your universal grave,
 Save I? Who shall be left to weep? My kinsmen,
 Alas! what am I better than ye are,
 That I must live beyond ye? Where shall be
 The pleasant places where I thought of Anah,
 While I had hope? or the more savage haunts,
 Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd for her?
 And can it be?—Shall yon exulting peak,
 Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
 Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep?
 No more to have the morning sun break forth,
 And scatter back the mists in floating folds
 From its tremendous brow? no more to have
 Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
 Leaving it with a crown of many hues?
 No more to be the beacon of the world,
 For angels to alight on, as the spot
 Nearest the stars? And can those words, *no more*,
 Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
 And the predestined creeping things reserved
 By my sire to Jehovah's bidding? May
He preserve *them*, and *I not* have the power
 To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
 A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
 Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolong'd,
 To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
 Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
 Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until

The salt morass subside into a sphere
 Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
 The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,
 Of yet quick myriads of all life? How much
 Breath will be still'd at once! All-beauteous world!
 So young, so mark'd out for destruction, I
 With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
 And night by night, thy number'd days and nights.
 I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
 Whose love had made me love thee more; but as
 A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
 Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
 Such as—Oh God! and canst thou——

[He pauses.

[A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts of laughter
 —afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japhet. In the name
 Of the Most High, what art thou?

Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha! ha!

Japhet. By all that earth holds holiest, speak!

Spirit (laughs). Ha! ha!

Japhet. By the approaching deluge! by the earth
 Which will be strangled by the ocean! by
 The deep which will lay open all her fountains!
 The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,
 And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes!
 Thou, unknown, terrible, and indistinct,
 Yet awful thing of shadows, speak to me!
 Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou?

Japhet. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha! ha! ha! [*Spirit vanishes.*

Japhet. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,
 The coming desolation of an orb,
 On which the sun shall rise and warm no life!
 How the earth sleeps! and all that in it is
 Sleep too upon the very eve of death!
 Why should they wake to meet it? What is here,
 Which look like death in life, and speak like things
 Born ere this dying world? They come like clouds!

[Various Spirits pass from the cavern.

Spirit. Rejoice!

The abhorred race

Which could not keep in Eden their high place,

But listen'd to the voice

Of knowledge without power,

Are nigh the hour

Of death!

Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
 Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's sapping motion,
 Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow!
 Earth shall be ocean!

And no breath,
 Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave!
 Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot:
 Not even a rock from out the liquid grave
 Shall lift its point to save,
 Or show the place where strong despair hath died,
 After long looking o'er the ocean wide
 For the expected ebb which cometh not:
 All shall be void,
 Destroy'd!

Another element shall be the lord
 Of life, and the abhorr'd
 Children of dust be quench'd; and of each hue
 Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue;
 And of the variegated mountain
 Shall nought remain
 Unchanged, or of the level plain;
 Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain:
 All merged within the universal fountain,
 Man, earth, and fire, shall die,
 And sea and sky
 Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.

Upon the foam
 Who shall erect a home?
Japhet (coming forward). My sire!
 Earth's seed shall not expire;
 Only the evil shall be put away
 From day.

Avaunt! ye exulting demons of the waste!
 Who howl your hideous joy
 When God destroys whom you dare not destroy;
 Hence! haste!

Back to your inner caves!
 Until the waves
 Shall search you in your secret place,
 And drive your sullen race
 Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing winds
 In restless wretchedness along all space!

Spirit. Son of the saved!
 When thou and thine have braved
 The wide and warring element;
 When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
 Shall thou and thine be good or happy?—No!
 Thy new world and new race shall be of woe—
 Less goodly in their aspect, in their years

Less than the glorious giants, who
 Yet walk the world in pride,
 The sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride.
 Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears.
 And art thou not ashamed
 Thus to survive,
 And eat, and drink, and wife?
 With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
 As even to hear this wide destruction named,
 Without such grief and courage as should rather
 Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
 Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd father,
 And build thy city o'er the drown'd earth's grave?
 Who would outlive their kind,
 Except the base and blind?
 Mine
 Hateth thine,
 As of a different order in the sphere,
 But not our own.
 There is not one who hath not left a throne
 Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
 Rather than see his mates endure alone.
 Go, wretch! and give
 A life like thine to other wretches—live!
 And when the annihilating waters roar
 Above what they have done,
 Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,
 And scorn thy sire as the surviving one!
 Thyself for being his son!

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

 Rejoice!
 No more the human voice
 Shall vex our joys in middle air
 With prayer;
 No more
 Shall they adore;
 And we, who ne'er for ages have adored
 The prayer-exacting Lord,
 To whom the omission of a sacrifice
 Is vice;
 We, we shall view the deep salt sources pour'd
 Until one element shall do the work
 Of all in chaos; until they,
 The creatures proud of their poor clay,
 Shall perish, and their bleach'd bones shall lurk

In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
The deep shall follow to their latest lair ;

Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,
And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother ;

Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky :

While a brief truce

Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use ;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation
Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to time
New beings—years—diseases—sorrow—crime—
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until——

Japhet (interrupting them). The eternal will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil ; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things ;
And, gather'd under his almighty wings,
Abolish hell !

And to the expiated earth
Restore the beauty of her birth,
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well !

Spirits. And when shall take effect this wond'rous spell ?

Japhet. When the Redeemer cometh ; first in pain,
And then in glory.

Spirits. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till earth wax hoary ;

War with yourselves, and Hell, and Heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory

With the blood reeking from each battle plain ;
New times, new climes, new arts, new men ; but still
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,

Shall be amongst your race in different forms ;

But the same moral storms

Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves.²

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice !
 Mortal, farewell !
 Hark ! hark ! already we can hear the voice
 Of growing ocean's gloomy swell ;
 The winds, too, plume their piercing wings !
 The clouds have nearly fill'd their springs !
 The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,
 And heaven set wide her windows ;⁵ while mankind
 View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token—
 Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.
 We hear the sound they cannot hear,
 The mustering thunders of the threatening sphere ;
 Yet a few hours their coming is delay'd ;
 Their flashing banners, folded still on high,
 Yet undisplay'd,
 Save to the spirits' all-pervading eye.
 Howl ! howl ! oh earth !
 Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth :
 Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below
 The ocean's overflow !
 The wave shall break upon your cliffs ; and shells,
 The little shells of ocean's least things be
 Deposited where now the eagle's offspring dwells—
 How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea !
 And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,
 Unanswer'd save by the encroaching swell ;—
 While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,
 The wings which could not save :—
 Where could he rest them, while the whole space brings
 Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave ?
 Brethren, rejoice !
 And loudly lift each superhuman voice—
 All die,
 Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed—
 The seed of Seth,
 Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death,
 But of the sons of Cain
 None shall remain ;
 And all his goodly daughters
 Must lie between the desolating waters ;
 Or, floating upward with their long hair laid
 Along the wave, the cruel heavens upbraid,
 Which would not spare
 Beings even in death so fair.
 It is decreed
 All die !

And to the universal human cry
 The universal silence shall succeed !
 Fly, brethren, fly !
 But still rejoice !
 We fell !
 They fall !
 So perish all
 These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from Hell !

[*The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.*]

Japhet (solus). God hath proclaim'd the destiny of earth ;
 My father's ark of safety hath announced it ;
 The very demons shriek it from their caves ;
 The scroll ⁴ of Enoch prophesied it long
 In silent books, which, in their silence, say
 More to the mind than thunder to the ear :
 And yet men listen'd not, nor listen ; but
 Walk darkling to their doom ; which, though so nigh,
 Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief,
 Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty purpose,
 Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfils it.
 No sign yet hangs its banner in the air ;
 The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture ;
 The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
 As on the fourth day of creation, when
 God said unto him, " shine !" and he broke forth
 Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
 Unform'd forefather of mankind—but roused
 Before the human orison the earlier
 Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
 Which in the open firmament of heaven
 Have wings like angels, and like them salute
 Heaven first each day before the Adamites !
 Their matins now draw nigh—the east is kindling—
 And they will sing ! and day will break ! Both near,
 So near the awful close ! For these must drop
 Their outworn pinions on the deep : and day,
 After the bright course of a few brief morrows,—
 Ay, day will rise ; but upon what ? A chaos,
 Which was ere day ; and which, renew'd, makes time
 Nothing ! for, without life, what are the hours ?
 No more to dust than is eternity
 Unto Jehovah, who created both.
 Without him, even eternity would be
 A void : without man, time, as made for man,
 Dies with man, and is swallow'd in that deep
 Which has no fountain ; as his race will be

Devour'd by that which drowns his infant world.—
 What have we here? Shapes of both earth and air?
 No—all of heaven, they are so beautiful.
 I cannot trace their features; but their forms,
 How lovely they move along the side
 Of the gray mountain, scattering its mist!
 And after the swart savage spirits, whose
 Infernal immortality pour'd forth
 Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
 Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
 To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
 For which I have so often pray'd—They come!
 Anah! oh God! and with her—

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah.

Japhet!

Sam.

Lo!

A son of Adam!

Azaz.

What doth the earth-born here,
 While all his race are slumbering?

Japhet.

Angel! what

Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be on high?

Azaz. Know'st thou not, or forget'st thou, that a part
 Of our great function is to guard thine earth?

Japhet. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
 Which is condemn'd: nay, even the evil fly
 The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
 In vain, and long, and still to be beloved!
 Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those hours
 When no good spirit longer lights below?

Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
 Forgive me—

Japhet. May the Heaven, which soon no more
 Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.

Ahol. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
 We know thee not.

Japhet. The hour may come when thou
 May'st know me better; and thy sister know
 Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been
 Upright before his god, whate'er thy griefs,
 And thy words seem of sorrow, mix'd with wrath,
 How have Azaziel, or myself, brought on thee
 Wrong?

Japhet. Wrong! the greatest of all wrongs: but thou
 Say'st well, though she be dust, I did not, could not,
 Deserve her. Farewell, Anah! I have said

That word so often! but now say it, ne'er
To be repeated. Angel! or whate'er
Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power
To save this beautiful—*these* beautiful
Children of Cain?

Azaz. From what?

Japhet. And is it so,
That ye too know not? Angels! angels! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment; or at the least
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.

Japhet. And hath not the Most High expounded them?
Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

Ahol. So be it!
If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa!

Anah. Sister! sister! speak not
Thus.

Azaz. Fearest thou, my Anah?

Anah. Yes, for thee;
I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japhet. It is for *him*, then! for the seraph thou
Hast left me! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and immortal, cannot
Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent
Upon the earth to toil and die; and they
Are made to minister on high unto
The Highest; but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.

Anah. Ah! he speaks of death.

Sam. Of death to *us!* and those who are with us!
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japhet. I grieve not for myself, nor fear;
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found
Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,

The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth!

Ahol. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood,
Warm in our veins,—strong Cain! who was begotten
In Paradise,—would mingle with Seth's children?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage?
No, not to save all earth, were earth in peril!
Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japhet. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah!
Too much of the forefather, whom thou vauntest,
Has come down in that haughty blood which springs
From him who shed the first, and that a brother's!
But thou, my Anah! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not; 't is a word I cannot
Part with, although I must from thee. My Anah!
Thou who dost rather make me dream that Abel
Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art
The rest of the stern Cainites, save in beauty,
For all of them are fairest in their favour—

Ahol. (interrupting him). And wouldst thou have her like our father's
foe
In mind, in soul? If I partook thy thought,
And dream'd that aught of *Abel* was in *her*!—
Get thee hence, son of Noah! thou mak'st strife.

Japhet. Offspring of Cain, thy father did so!

Ahol. But
He slew not Seth; and what hast thou to do
With other deeds between his God and him?

Japhet. Thou speakest well: his God hath judged him, and
I had not named his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink
From what he had done.

Ahol. He was our fathers' father:
The eldest born of man, the strongest, bravest,
And most enduring:—Shall I blush for him,
From whom we had our being? Look upon
Our race; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days—

Japhet. They are number'd—

Ahol. Be it so! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers!

Japhet. My sire and race but glory in their God,
Anah! and thou?—

Anah. Whate'er our God decrees,

The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,
 And will endeavour patiently to obey :
 But could I dare to pray in this dread hour
 Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
 It would not be to live, alone exempt
 Of all my house. My sister ! Oh, my sister !
 What were the world, or other worlds, or all
 The brightest future without the sweet past—
 Thy love—my father's—all the life, and all
 The things which sprung up with me, like the stars,
 Making my dim existence radiant with
 Soft lights which were not mine ? Aholibamah !
 Oh ! if there should be mercy—seek it, find it :
 I abhor death, because that thou must die.

Ahol. What ! hath this dreamer, with his father's ark,
 The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
 Shaken *my* sister ? Are *we* not the loved
 Of seraphs ? and if we were not, must we
 Cling to a son of Noah for our lives ?
 Rather than thus—But the enthusiast dreams
 The worst of dreams, the fantasies engender'd
 By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
 Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth,
 And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
 Distinct from that which we and all our sires
 Have seen them wear on their eternal way ?
 Who shall do this ?

Japhet. He whose one word produced them.

Ahol. Who *heard* that word ?

Japhet. The universe, which leap'd
 To life before it. Ah ! smil'st thou still in scorn ?
 Turn to thy seraphs ; if they attest it not,
 They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God !

Ahol. I have ever hail'd our Maker, Samiasa,
 As thine, and mine : a God of love, not sorrow.

Japhet. Alas ! what else is love but sorrow ? Even
 He who made earth in love, had soon to grieve
 Above its first and best inhabitants.

Ahol. 'T is said so.

Japhet. It is even so.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Japhet ! What
 Dost thou here with these children of the wicked ?
 Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom ?

Japhet. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek

To save an earth-born being ; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then,
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain : the sons of heaven,
Who seek earth's daughters for their beauty?

Azaz. Patriarch!
Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion !
Has not God made a barrier between earth
And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind?

Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image?
Did God not love what he had made ? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love ?

Noah. I am
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God ; but as our God
Has deign'd to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*, world,
Cannot be good.

Azaz. What ! though it were to save ?

Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What He who made you glorious hath condemn'd.
Were your immortal mission safety, 't would
Be general, not for two, though beautiful,
And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemn'd.

Japhet. Oh father ! say it not.

Noah. Son ! son !
If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist ; they soon shall cease to be,
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.

Japhet. Let me die with *this*, and *them* !

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt not ; He
Who *can*, redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee,
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both ?

Noah. Ask Him who made thee greater than myself
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo ! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears !

*Enter RAPHAEL the Archangel.*⁵

Raph. Spirits!
 Whose seat is near the throne,
 What do ye here?
 Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown
 Now that the hour is near
 When earth must be alone?
 Return!
 Adore and burn
 In glorious homage with the elected "seven."
 Your place is heaven.

Sam. Raphael!
 The first and fairest of the sons of God,
 How long hath this been law,
 That earth by angels must be left untrod?
 Earth! which oft saw
 Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod!
 The world He loved, and made
 For love; and oft have we obey'd
 His frequent mission with delighted pinions,
 Adoring Him in his least works display'd;
 Watching this youngest star of His dominions;
 And as the latest birth of His great word,
 Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord,
 Why is thy brow severe?

And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near?

Raph. Had Samiasa and Azazel been
 In their true place, with the angelic choir,
 Written in fire
 They would have seen
 Jehovah's late decree,

And not inquired their Maker's breath of me.

But ignorance must ever be

 A part of sin;
 And even the spirits' knowledge shall grow less
 As they wax proud within;

For blindness is the first-born of excess.

 When all good angels left the world, ye stay'd,
 Stung with strange passions, and debased
 By mortal feelings for a mortal maid;
 But ye are pardon'd thus far, and replaced
 With your pure equals: Hence! away! away!

 Or stay,

 And lose eternity by that delay!

Azaz. And thou! if earth be thus forbidden

 In the decree

 To us until this moment hidden,

Dost thou not err as we
In being here?

Raph. I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,
In the great name and at the word of God!
Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less dear
That which I came to do: till now we trod
Together the eternal space, together
Let us still walk the stars. True, earth must die!
Her race, return'd into her womb, must wither,
And much which she inherits; but oh! why
Cannot this earth be made, or be destroy'd,
Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks? immortal still

In their immeasurable forfeiture.
Our brother Satan fell; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared endure!
But ye who still are pure!
Seraphs! less mighty than that mightiest one,
Think how he was undone!
And think if tempting man can compensate
For Heaven desired too late?

Long have I warr'd,
Long must I war

With him who deem'd it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who 'midst the cherubim

Made him as sun to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him—beautiful he was: oh Heaven!
Save *His* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven!
The wish is impious: but oh ye!

Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice:
He hath not tempted you, he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt;

But man hath listen'd to his voice,
And ye to woman's—beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss,
The snake but vanquish'd dust; but she will draw
A second host from Heaven, to break Heaven's law.

Yet, yet, oh fly!
Ye cannot die,
But they
Shall pass away,

While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky
For perishable clay,
Whose memory in your immortality

Shall long outlast the sun which gave them day.
 Think how your essence differeth from theirs
 In all but suffering! Why partake
 The agony to which they must be heirs—
 Born to be plough'd with tears, and sown with cares,
 And reap'd by Death, lord of the human soil?
 Even had their days been left to toil their path
 Through time to dust, unshorten'd by God's wrath,
 Still they are evil's prey and sorrow's spoil.

Ahol. Let them fly!

I hear the voice which says that all must die,
 Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died;

And that on high
 An ocean is prepared,
 While from below

The deep shall rise to meet heaven's overflow.

Few shall be spared,
 It seems; and, of that few, the race of Cain
 Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.

Sister! since it is so,

And the eternal Lord

In vain would be implored

For the remission of one hour of woe,

Let us resign e'en what we have adored,
 And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,

If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,

And wailing less for us than those who shall
 Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,

And when the fatal waters are allay'd,

Weep for the myriads who can weep no more.

Fly, seraphs! to your own eternal shore,

Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,

And yours to live for ever:

But which is best, a dead eternity,

Or living, is but known to the great Giver:

Obey him, as we shall obey;

I would not keep this life of mine in clay

An hour beyond His will;

Nor see ye lose a portion of His grace,

For all the mercy which Seth's race

Find still.

Fly!

And as your pinions bear ye back to heaven,
 Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
 Samiasa!

And if I look up with a tearless eye,

'T is that an angel's bride disdains to weep—

Farewell! Now rise, inexorable deep!

Anah. And must we die?
 And must I lose thee too,
 Azazel?
 Oh, my heart! my heart!
 Thy prophecies were true,
 And yet thou wert so happy too!
 The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls as new;
 But yet depart!

Ah, why?
 Yet let me not retain thee—fly!
 My pangs can be but brief; but thine would be
 Eternal, if repulsed from Heaven for me.
 Too much already hast thou deign'd
 To one of Adam's race!
 Our doom is sorrow; not to us alone,
 But to the spirits who have not disdain'd
 To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
 The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurl'd
 From his once archangelic throne
 Into some unknown world:
 And thou, Azazel! No—
 Thou shalt not suffer woe
 For me. Away! nor weep!
 Thou canst not weep; but yet
 May'st suffer more, not weeping: then forget
 Her whom the surges of the all-strangling deep
 Can bring no pang like this. Fly! fly!
 Being gone, 't will be less difficult to die.

Japhet. Oh say not so!
 Father! and thou, archangel, thou!
 Surely celestial mercy lurks below
 That pure severe serenity of brow:
 Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
 Save in our ark, or let me be no more!

Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace!
 If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
 Do God no wrong!
 Live as he wills it—die, when he ordains,
 A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.
 Cease, or be sorrowful in silence; cease
 To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint.
 Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee?
 Such would it be
 To alter his intent
 For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man!
 And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.

Japhet. Ay, father! but when they are gone,
 And we are all alone,

Floating upon the azure desert, and
 The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
 And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all
 Buried in its immeasurable breast,
 Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
 Can we in desolation's peace have rest?
 Oh, God! be thou a God, and spare
 Yet while 't is time!

Renew not Adam's fall:
 Mankind were then but twain,
 But they are numerous now as are the waves
 And the tremendous rain,
 Whose drops shall be less thick than would their graves,
 Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.

Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine 's a crime!
 Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.

Raphael. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion: ye,
 Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
 May now return with me.

Sam. It may not be:
 We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?

Azaz. He hath said it, and I say, Amen!

Raph. Again!
 Then from this hour,
 Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,
 And aliens from your God,
 Farewell!

Japhet. Alas! where shall they dwell?
 Hark! hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,
 Are howling from the mountain's bosom:
 There 's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
 Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:
 Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. Hark! hark! the sea-birds cry!
 In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
 And hover round the mountain, where before
 Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
 Yet dared to soar,
 Even when the waters wax'd too fierce to brave.
 Soon it shall be their only shore,
 And then, no more!

Japhet. The sun! the sun!
 He riseth, but his better light is gone;
 And a black circle, bound
 His glaring disk around,
 Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath shone!
 The clouds return into the hues of night,

Save where their brazen-colour'd edges streak
The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.

Noah. And lo ! yon flash of light,
The distant thunder's harbinger, appears !

It cometh ! hence, away !

Leave to the elements their evil prey !

Hence to where our all-hallow'd ark uprears
Its safe and wreckless sides.

Japhet. Oh, father, stay !

Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides !

Noah. Must we not leave all life to such ? Begone !

Japhet. Not I.

Noah. Then die

With them !

How dar'st thou look on that prophetic sky,
And seek to save what all things now condemn,

In overwhelming unison

With just Jehovah's wrath ?

Japhet. Can rage and justice join in the same path ?

Noah. Blasphemer ! dar'st thou murmur even now ?

Raph. Patriarch, be still a father ! smooth thy brow :

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink ;

He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink

With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters ;

But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,

Nor perish like heaven's children with man's daughters.

Ahol. The tempest cometh ; heaven and earth unite

For the annihilation of all life.

Unequal is the strife

Between our strength and the eternal might !

Sam. But ours is with thee : we will bear ye far

To some untroubled star,

Where thou and Anah shall partake our lot :

And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth,

Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.

Anah. Oh, my dear father's tents, my place of birth !

And mountains, land, and woods, when ye are not,

Who shall dry up my tears ?

Azaz. Thy spirit-lord.

Fear not, though we are shut from heaven,

Yet much is ours, whence we can not be driven.

Raph. Rebel ! thy words are wicked, as thy deeds

Shall henceforth be but weak : the flaming sword,

Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,

Still flashes in the angelic hands.

Azaz. It cannot slay us : threaten dust with death,

And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds !

What are thy swords in our immortal eyes ?

Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy strength;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands:
Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling—God! oh God!
What have we done? Yet spare!

Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!

The dragon crawls from out his den,

To herd in terror innocent with men;

And the birds scream their agony through air.

Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod

Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair!

Hear not man only, but all nature plead!

Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons of clay,

I cannot, must not aid you. 'T is decreed! [Exit RAPHAEL.

Japh. Some clouds sweep on, as vultures for their prey,

While others, fix'd as rocks, await the word

At which their wrathful vials shall be pour'd.

No azure more shall robe the firmament,

Nor spangled stars be glorious: death hath risen:

In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare

Hath wound itself around the dying air.

Azaz. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,

To which the elements again repair,

To turn it into what it was: beneath

The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,

As was the eagle's nestling once within

Its mother's.—Let the coming chaos chafe

With all its elements! Heed not their din!

A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe

Ethereal life, will we explore:

These darken'd clouds are not the only skies.

[AZAZIEL and SAMIASA fly off, and disappear with ANAH and
AHOLIBAMAH.

Japh. They are gone! They have disappear'd amidst the roar

Of the forsaken world; and never more,

Whether they live, or die with all earth's life,

Now near its last, can aught restore

Anah unto these eyes.

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!

What, wilt thou leave us all—all—all behind?

While safe amidst the elemental strife,
 Thou sit'st within thy guarded ark?
A Mother (offering her infant to Japhet).
 Oh let this child embark!
 I brought him forth in woe,
 But thought it joy
 To see him to my bosom clinging so.
 Why was he born?
 What hath he done—
 My unwean'd son—
 To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn!
 What is there in this milk of mine, that death
 Should stir all heaven and earth up to destroy
 My boy,
 And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?
 Save him, thou seed of Seth!
 Or cursed be—with Him who made
 Thee and thy race, for which we are betray'd!
Japh. Peace! 't is no hour for curses, but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!
 And where
 Shall prayer ascend,
 When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
 And burst,
 And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
 Until the very deserts know no thirst?
 Accursed
 Be He, who made thee and thy sire!
 We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
 But, as we know the worst,
 Why should our hymn be raised, our knees be bent
 Before the implacable Omnipotent,
 Since we must fall the same?
 If He hath made earth, let it be His shame,
 To make a world for torture:—Lo! they come,
 The loathsome waters in their rage!
 And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
 The forest's trees (coeval with the hour
 When Paradise upsprung,
 Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
 Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
 So massy, vast, yet green in their old age,
 Are overtopp'd,
 Their summer blossoms by the surges lopp'd,
 Which rise, and rise, and rise.
 Vainly we look up to the lowering skies—

They meet the seas,
 And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.
 Fly, son of Noah, fly, and take thine ease
 In thine allotted ocean-tent ;
 And view, all floating o'er the element,
 The corpses of the world of thy young days :
 Then to Jehovah raise
 Thy song of praise !

A Mortal. Blessed are the dead
 Who die in the Lord !
 And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,
 Yet, as *His* word,
 Be the decree adored !

He gave me life—He taketh but
 The breath which is *His* own :
 And though these eyes should be for ever shut,
 Nor longer this weak voice before *His* throne
 Be heard in supplicating tone,
 Still blessed be the Lord,
 For what is past,
 For that which is :
 For all are *His*,
 From first to last—

Time—space—eternity—life—death—
 The vast known and immeasurable unknown,
 He made, and can unmake ;
 And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,
 BlaspHEME and groan ?
 No ; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
 Nor quiver, though the universe may quake.

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly ?
 Not to the mountains high ;
 For now their torrents rush with double roar,
 To meet the ocean, which, advancing still,
 Already grasps each drowning hill,
 Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave.

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save !
 Our valley is no more :
 My father and my father's tent,
 My brethren and my brethren's herds,
 The pleasant trees that o'er our noon-day bent
 And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds,
 The little rivulet which freshen'd all

Our pastures green,
 No more are to be seen.
 When to the mountain cliff I climb'd this morn,
 I turn'd to bless the spot,
 And not a leaf appear'd about to fall;—
 And now they are not!—
 Why was I born?

Japh. To die ! in youth to die ;
 And happier in that doom,
 Than to behold the universal tomb
 Which I

Am thus condemn'd to weep above in vain.
 Why, when all perish, why must I remain?

[*The waters rise : men fly in every direction ; many are over-
 taken by the waves ; the Chorus of Mortals disperses in search
 of safety up the mountains ; JAPHET remains upon a rock,
 while the Ark floats towards him in the distance.*

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 456.

The seven.

The archangels, said to be seven in number, and to occupy the eighth rank in the celestial hierarchy.

Note 2. Page 466.

The glorious giants' graves.

"And there were giants in the earth in those days, and after; mighty men, which were of old, men of renown."—*Genesis*.

Note 3. Page 467.

The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,
And heaven set wide her windows.

"The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened."—*Genesis*.

Note 4. Page 468.

The scroll of Enoch.

The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians, is said by them to be anterior to the flood.

Note 5. Page 474.

In the original MS. "Michael."—"I return you," says Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, "the revise. I have softened the part to which Gifford objected, and changed the name of Michael to Raphael, who was an angel of gentler sympathies."—*B. Letters*, July 6, 1822.



THE
DEFORMED TRANSFORMED;

A DRAMA.

NOTES

DEFORWARD BY AIR MAIL

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS production is founded partly on the story of a Novel, called "The Three Brothers," published many years ago, from which M. G. Lewis's "Wood Demon" was also taken—and partly on the "Faust" of the great Goëthe. The present publication contains the first two parts only, and the opening chorus of the third. The rest may perhaps appear hereafter.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

STRANGER, *afterwards* CÆSAR.

ARNOLD.

BOURBON.

PHILIBERT.

CELLINI.

WOMEN.

BERTHA.

OLIMPIA.

Spirits, Soldiers, Citizens of Rome, Priests, Peasants, &c.

THE DEFORMED TRANSFORMED.

PART I.

SCENE I.—A FOREST.

Enter ARNOLD *and his mother* BERTHA.

Ber. OUT, hunchback!

Arn. I was born so, mother!

Ber. Out!

Thou incubus! Thou nightmare! Of seven sons
The sole abortion!

Arn. Would that I had been so,
And never seen the light!

Ber. I would so too!
But as thou *hast*—hence, hence—and do thy best.
That back of thine may bear its burthen; 't is
More high, if not so broad as that of others.

Arn. It *bears* its burthen;—but, my heart! Will it
Sustain that which you lay upon it, mother?
I love, or at the least, I loved you: nothing,
Save you, in nature, can love aught like me.
You nursed me—do not kill me.

Ber. Yes—I nursed thee
Because thou wert my first-born, and I knew not
If there would be another unlike thee,
That monstrous sport of nature. But get hence
And gather wood!

Arn. I will: but when I bring it,
Speak to me kindly. Though my brothers are
So beautiful and lusty, and as free
As the free chase they follow, do not spurn me:

Our milk has been the same.

Ber. As is the hedge-hog's,
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.¹
Call not thy brothers brethren! call me not
Mother; for if I brought thee forth, it was
As foolish hens at times hatch vipers, by
Sitting upon strange eggs. Out, urchin, out!

[Exit BERTHA.]

Arn. (solus). Oh mother!—She is gone, and I must do
Her bidding; wearily but willingly
I would fulfil it, could I only hope
A kind word in return. What shall I do?

[ARNOLD begins to cut wood: in doing this he wounds one of
his hands.]

My labour for the day is over now.
Accursed be this blood that flows so fast;
For double curses will be my meed now
At home.—What home? I have no home, no kin,
No kind—not made like other creatures, or
To share their sports or pleasures. Must I bleed too
Like them? Oh that each drop which falls to earth
Would rise a snake to sting them as they have stung me!
Or that the devil, to whom they liken me,
Would aid his likeness! If I must partake
His form, why not his power? Is it because
I have not his will too? For one kind word
From her who bore me, would still reconcile me
Even to this hateful aspect. Let me wash
The wound.

[ARNOLD goes to a spring, and stoops to wash his hand: he
starts back.]

They are right; and Nature's mirror shows me
What she hath made me. I will not look on it
Again, and scarce dare think on 't. Hideous wretch
'That I am! The very waters mock me with
My horrid shadow—like a demon placed
Deep in the fountain to scare back the cattle
From drinking therein.

[He pauses.]

And shall I live on,
A burthen to the earth, myself, and shame
Unto what brought me into life? Thou blood,
Which flowest so freely from a scratch, let me
Try if thou wilt not in a fuller stream
Pour forth my woes for ever with thyself
On earth, to which I will restore at once
This hateful compound of her atoms, and

Resolve back to her elements, and take
 The shape of any reptile save myself,
 And make a world for myriads of new worms!
 This knife! now let me proye if it will sever
 This wither'd slip of nature's nightshade—my
 Vile form—from the creation, as it hath
 The green bough from the forest.

[ARNOLD places the knife in the ground, with the point upwards.

Now 't is set,

And I can fall upon it. Yet one glance
 On the fair day, which sees no foul thing like
 Myself, and the sweet sun, which warm'd me, but
 In vain. The birds—how joyously they sing!
 So let them, for I would not be lamented:
 But let their merriest notes be Arnold's knell;
 The falling leaves my monument; the murmur
 Of the near fountain my sole elegy.
 Now, knife, stand firmly, as I fain would fall!

[As he rushes to throw himself upon the knife, his eye is suddenly caught by the fountain, which seems in motion.

The fountain moves without a wind: but shall
 The ripple of a spring change m resolve?
 No. Yet it moves again! the waters stir,
 Not as with air, but by some subterrane
 And rocking power of the internal world.
 What 's here? A mist! no more?—

[A cloud comes from the fountain. He stands gazing upon it: it is dispelled, and a tall black man comes towards him.

Arn.

What would you? Speak!

Spirit or man?

Str.

As man is both, why not

Say both in one?

Arn.

Your form is man's, and yet

You may be devil.

Str.

So many men are that

Which is so call'd or thought, that you may add me

To which you please, without much wrong to either.

But come! you wish to kill yourself;—pursue

Your purpose.

Arn.

You have interrupted me.

Str.

What is that resolution which can e'er

Be interrupted? If I be the devil

You deem, a single moment would have made you

Mine, and for ever, by your suicide;

And yet my coming saves you.

Arn.

I said not

You were the demon, but that your approach

Was like one.

Str. Unless you keep company
 With him (and you seem scarce used to such high
 Society), you can't tell how he approaches ;
 And for his aspect, look upon the fountain,
 And then on me, and judge which of us twain
 Looks likest what the boors believe to be
 Their cloven-footed terror.

Arn. Do you—dare you
 To taunt me with my born deformity?

Str. Were I to taunt a buffalo with this
 Cloven foot of thine, or the swift dromedary
 With thy sublime of humps, the animals
 Would revel in the compliment. And yet
 Both beings are more swift, more strong, more mighty
 In action and endurance than thyself,
 And all the fierce and fair of the same kind
 With thee. Thy form is natural : 't was only
 Nature's mistaken largess to bestow
 The gifts which are of others upon man.

Arn. Give me the strength then of the buffalo's foot,
 When he spurns high the dust, beholding his
 Near enemy ; or let me have the long
 And patient swiftness of the desert-ship,
 The helmless dromedary :—and I'll bear
 Thy fiendish sarcasm with a saintly patience.

Str. I will.

Arn. (with surprise). Thou canst ?

Str. Perhaps. Would you aught else ?

Arn. Thou mockest me.

Str. Not I. Why should I mock
 What all are mocking? That's poor sport, methinks.
 To talk to thee in human language (for
 Thou canst not yet speak mine), the forester
 Hunts not the wretched coney, but the boar,
 Or wolf, or lion, leaving paltry game
 To petty burghers, who leave once a-year
 Their walls, to fill their household caldrons with
 Such scullion prey. The meanest gibe at thee,—
 Now I can mock the mightiest.

Arn. Then waste not
 Thy time on me : I seek thee not.

Str. Your thoughts
 Are not far from me. Do not send me back :
 I am not so easily recall'd to do
 Good service.

Arn. What wilt thou do for me ?

Str. Change
 Shapes with you, if you will, since yours so irks you :

Or form you to your wish in any shape.

Arn. Oh! then you are indeed the demon, for
Nought else would wittingly wear mine.

Str. I 'll show thee
The brightest which the world e'er bore, and give thee
Thy choice.

Arn. On what condition?

Str. There 's a question!
An hour ago you would have given your soul
To look like other men, and now you pause
To wear the form of heroes.

Arn. No; I will not.
I must not compromise my soul.

Str. What soul,
Worth naming so, would dwell in such a carcass?

Arn. 'T is an aspiring one, whate'er the tenement
In which it is mislodged. But name your compact:
Must it be sign'd in blood?

Str. Not in your own.

Arn. Whose blood, then?

Str. We will talk of that hereafter.
But I 'll be moderate with you, for I see
Great things within you. You shall have no bond
But your own will, no contract save your deeds.
Are you content?

Arn. I take thee at thy word.

Str. Now then!

[*The Stranger approaches the fountain, and turns to ARNOLD.*
A little of your blood.

Arn. For what?

Str. To mingle with the magic of the waters,
And make the charm effective.

Arn. (*holding out his wounded arm*). Take it all.

Str. Not now. A few drops will suffice for this.

[*The Stranger takes some of ARNOLD'S blood in his hand*
and casts it into the fountain.

Shadows of beauty!

Shadows of power!

Rise to your duty—

This is the hour!

Walk lovely and pliant

From the depth of this fountain,

As the cloud-shapen giant

Bestrides the Hartz mountain,

Come as ye were,

That our eyes may behold

The model in air
 Of the form I will mould,
 Bright as the Iris
 When ether is spann'd ;—
 Such *his* desire is, [Pointing to ARNOLD.
 Such my command!
 Demons heroic—
 Demons who wore
 The form of the stoic
 Or sophist of yore—
 Or the shape of each victor,
 From Macedon's boy
 To each high Roman's picture
 Who breathed to destroy—
 Shadows of beauty!
 Shadows of power!
 Up to your duty—
 This is the hour!

[Various Phantoms arise from the waters, and pass in succession before the Stranger and ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see?

Str. The black-eyed Roman, with
 The eagle's beak between those eyes which ne'er
 Beheld a conqueror, or look'd along
 The land he made not Rome's, while Rome became
 His, and all theirs who heir'd his very name.

Arn. The phantom 's bald ; my quest is beauty. Could I
 Inherit but his fame with his defects ?

Str. His brow was girt with laurels more than hairs.
 You see his aspect—chuse it or reject.
 I can but promise you his form ; his fame
 Must be long sought and fought for.

Arn. I will fight too,
 But not as a mock Cæsar. Let him pass ;
 His aspect may be fair, but suits me not.

Str. Then you are far more difficult to please
 Than Cato's sister, or than Brutus' mother,
 Or Cleopatra at sixteen—an age
 When love is not less in the eye than heart.
 But be it so ! Shadow, pass on !

[The Phantom of Julius Cæsar disappears.

Arn. And can it
 Be, that the man who shook the earth is gone
 And left no footstep ?

Str. There you err. His substance
 Left graves enough, and woes enough, and fame

More than enough to track his memory ;
 But for his shadow, 't is no more than yours,
 Except a little longer and less crooked
 I' the sun. Behold another!

[*A second Phantom passes.*]

Arn. Who is he?

Str. He was the fairest and the bravest of
 Athenians. Look upon him well.

Arn. He is
 More lovely than the last. How beautiful!

Str. Such was the curled son of Clinias ;—wouldst thou
 Invest thee with his form?

Arn. Would that I had
 Been born with it! But since I may chuse further,
 I will *look* further.

[*The Shade of Alcibiades disappears.*]

Str. Lo! Behold again!

Arn. What! that low, swarthy, short-nosed, round-eyed satyr,
 With the wide nostrils and Silenus' aspect,
 The splay feet and low stature!⁵ I had better
 Remain that which I am.

Str. And yet he was
 The earth's perfection of all mental beauty,
 And personification of all virtue.
 But you reject him?

Arn. If his form could bring me
 That which redeem'd it—no.

Str. I have no power
 To promise that ; but you may try, and find it
 Easier in such a form, or in your own.

Arn. No. I was not born for philosophy,
 Though I have that about me which has need on 't.
 Let him fleet on.

Str. Be air, thou hemlock-drinker!

[*The Shadow of Socrates disappears : another rises.*]

Arn. What 's here, whose broad brow and whose curly beard,
 And manly aspect look like Hercules,
 Save that his jocund eye hath more of Bacchus
 Than the sad purger of the infernal world,
 Leaning dejected on his club of conquest,
 As if he knew the worthlessness of those
 For whom he had fought?

Str. It was the man who lost
 The ancient world for love.

Arn. I cannot blame him,
 Since I have risk'd my soul because I find not
 That which he exchanged the earth for.

Str. Since so far
You seem congenial, will you wear his features?

Arn. No. As you leave me choice, I am difficult,
If but to see the heroes I should ne'er
Have seen else on this side of the dim shore
Whence they float back before us.

Str. Hence, triumvir!
Thy Cleopatra's waiting.

[*The Shade of Anthony disappears: another rises.*]

Arn. Who is this?
Who truly looketh like a demi-god,
Blooming and bright, with golden hair, and stature,
If not more high than mortal, yet immortal
In all that nameless bearing of his limbs,
Which he wears as the sun his rays—a something
Which shines from him, and yet is but the flashing
Emanation of a thing more glorious still.
Was he e'er human only?

Str. Let the earth speak,
If there be atoms of him left, or even
Of the more solid gold that form'd his urn.

Arn. Who was this glory of mankind?

Str. The shame
Of Greece in peace, her thunderbolt in war—
Demetrius the Macedonian, and
Taker of cities.

Arn. Yet one shadow more.

Str. (*addressing the Shadow*). Get thee to Lamia's lap!

[*The Shade of Demetrius Poliorcetes vanishes: another rises.*]

Str. I'll fit you still,
Fear not, my hunchback. If the shadow of
That which existed please not your nice taste,
I'll animate the ideal marble, till
Your soul be reconciled to her new garment.

Arn. Content! I will fix here.

Str. I must commend
Your choice. The god-like son of the sea-goddess,
The unshorn boy of Peleus, with his locks
As beautiful and clear as the amber waves
Of rich Pactolus roll'd o'er sands of gold,
Softened by intervening crystal, and
Rippled like flowing waters by the wind,
All vow'd to Sperchius as they were—behold them!
And *him*—as he stood by Polyxena,
With sanction'd and with soften'd love, before
The altar, gazing on his Trojan bride,
With some remorse within for Hector slain
And Priam weeping, mingled with deep passion

For the sweet downcast virgin, whose young hand
Trembled in *his* who slew her brother. So
He stood i' the temple! Look upon him as
Greece look'd her last upon her best, the instant
Ere Paris' arrow flew.

Arn. I gaze upon him
As if I were his soul, whose form shall soon
Envelop mine.

Str. You have done well. The greatest
Deformity should only barter with
The extremest beauty, if the proverb's true
Of mortals, that extremes meet.

Arn. Come! be quick!
I am impatient.

Str. As a youthful beauty
Before her glass. *You both* see what is not,
But dream it is what must be.

Arn. Must I wait?

Str. No; that were pity. But a word or two:
His stature is twelve cubits: would you so far
Outstep these times, and be a Titan? Or
(To talk canonically) wax a son
Of Anak?

Arn. Why not?

Str. Glorious ambition!
I love thee most in dwarfs! A mortal of
Philistine stature would have gladly pared
His own Goliath down to a slight David;
But thou, my manikin, would'st soar a show
Rather than hero. Thou shalt be indulged,
If such be thy desire; and yet, by being
A little less removed from present men
In figure, thou canst sway them more; for all
Would rise against thee now, as if to hunt
A new-found mammoth; and their cursed engines,
Their culverins and so forth, would find way
Through our friend's armour there, with greater ease
Than the adulterer's arrow through his heel,
Which Thetis had forgotten to baptise
In Styx.

Arn. Then let it be as thou deem'st best.

Str. Thou shalt be *beauteous* as the thing thou see'st,
And strong as what it was, and—

Arn. I ask not
For valour, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is

A spur in its halt movements, to become
 All that the others cannot, in such things
 As still are free to both, to compensate
 For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
 They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
 And oft, like Timour, the lame Tartar, win them.

Str. Well spoken! And thou doubtless wilt remain
 Form'd as thou art. I may dismiss the mould
 Of shadow, which must turn to flesh, to encase
 This daring soul, which could achieve no less
 Without it.

Arn. Had no power presented me
 The possibility of change, I would
 Have done the best which spirit may, to make
 Its way, with all deformity's dull, deadly,
 Discouraging weight upon me, like a mountain,
 In feeling, on my heart, as on my shoulders—
 A hateful and unsightly mole-hill to
 The eyes of happier man. I would have look'd
 On beauty, in that sex which is the type
 Of all we know or dream of beautiful
 Beyond the world they brighten, with a sigh—
 Not of love but despair; nor sought to win,
 Though to a heart all love, what could not love me
 In turn, because of this vile crooked clog,
 Which makes me lonely. Nay, I could have borne
 It all, had not my mother spurn'd me from her.
 The she-bear licks her cubs into a sort
 Of shape;—my dam beheld my shape was hopeless.
 Had she exposed me, like the Spartan, ere
 I knew the passionate part of life, I had
 Been a clod of the valley,—happier nothing
 Than what I am. But even thus, the lowest,
 Ugliest, and meanest of mankind, what courage
 And perseverance could have done, perchance,
 Had made me something—as it has made heroes
 Of the same mould as mine. You lately saw me
 Master of my own life, and quick to quit it;
 And he who is so, is the master of
 Whatever dreads to die.

Str. Decide between
 What you have been, or will be.

Arn. I have done so.
 You have open'd brighter prospects to my eyes,
 And sweeter to my heart. As I am now,
 I might be fear'd, admired, respected, loved
 Of all save those next to me, of whom I
 Would be beloved. As thou showest me

A choice of forms, I take the one I view.

Haste ! haste !

Str. And what shall I wear ?

Arn. Surely he
Who can command all forms, will chuse the highest,
Something superior even to that which was
Pelides now before us. Perhaps *his*
Who slew him, that of Paris : or—still higher—
The poet's god, clothed in such limbs as are
Themselves a poetry.

Str. Less will content me ;
For I too love a change.

Arn. Your aspect is
Dusky, but not uncomely.

Str. If I chose,
I might be whiter ; but I have a penchant
For black—it is so honest, and besides
Can neither blush with shame nor pale with fear,
But I have worn it long enough of late,
And now I 'll take your figure.

Arn. Mine !

Str. Yes. You
Shall change with Thetis' son, and I with Bertha
Your mother's offspring. People have their tastes ;
You have yours—I mine.

Arn. Dispatch ! dispatch !

Str. Even so.

[*The Stranger takes some earth and moulds it along the turf ;
and then addresses the Phantom of Achilles.*

Beautiful shadow
Of Thetis's boy !
Who sleeps in the meadow
Whose grass grows o'er Troy :
From the red earth, like Adam,^t
Thy likeness I shape,
As the being who made him,
Whose actions I ape.
Thou clay, be all glowing,
Till the rose in his cheek
Be as fair as, when blowing,
It wears its first streak !
Ye violets, I scatter,
Now turn into eyes !
And thou, sunshiny water,
Of blood take the guise !

Let these hyacinth boughs
 Be his long, flowing hair,
 And wave o'er his brows,
 As thou wavest in air!
 Let his heart be this marble
 I tear from the rock!
 But his voice as the warble
 Of birds on yon oak!
 Let his flesh be the purest
 Of mould in which grew
 The lily-root surest,
 And drank the best dew!
 Let his limbs be the lightest
 Which clay can compound!
 And his aspect the brightest
 On earth to be found!
 Elements near me,
 Be mingled and stirr'd,
 Know me and hear me,
 And leap to my word!
 Sunbeams, awaken
 This earth's animation!
 'T is done! He hath taken
 His stand in creation!

[ARNOLD falls senseless; his soul passes into the shape of Achilles, which rises from the ground; while the phantom has disappeared, part by part, as the figure was formed from the earth.

Arn. (in his new form). I love, and I shall be beloved! O life!
 At last I feel thee! Glorious spirit!

Str. Stop!
 What shall become of your abandon'd garment,
 Your hump, and lump, and clod of ugliness,
 Which late you wore, or were?

Arn. Who cares? Let wolves
 And vultures take it, if they will.

Str. And if
 They do, and are not scared by it, you'll say
 It must be peace-time, and no better fare
 Abroad i' the fields.

Arn. Let us but leave it there,
 No matter what becomes on 't.

Str. That's ungracious,
 If not ungrateful. Whatso'er it be,
 It hath sustain'd your soul full many a day.

Arn. Ay, as the dunghill may conceal a gem
 Which is now set in gold, as jewels should be.

Str. But if I give another form, it must be
By fair exchange, not robbery. For they
Who make men without women's aid, have long
Had patents for the same, and do not love
Your interlopers. The devil may take men,
Not make them,—though he reap the benefit
Of the original workmanship :—and therefore
Some one must be found to assume the shape
You have quitted.

Arn. Who would do so ?

Str. That I know not,
And therefore I must.

Arn. You !

Str. I said it ere
You inhabited your present dome of beauty.

Arn. True. I forget all things in the new joy
Of this immortal change.

Str. In a few moments
I will be as you were, and you shall see
Yourself for ever by you, as your shadow.

Arn. I would be spared this.

Str. But it cannot be.
What ! shrink already, being what you are,
From seeing what you were ?

Arn. Do as thou wilt.

Str. (to the late form of ARNOLD, extended on the earth).

Clay ! not dead, but soulless !
Though no man would chuse thee,
An immortal no less
Deigns not to refuse thee.
Clay thou art, and unto spirit
All clay is of equal merit.

Fire ! *without* which nought can live ;
Fire ! but *in* which nought can live,
Save the fabled salamander,
Or immortal souls which wander,
Praying what doth not forgive,
Howling for a drop of water,
Burning in a quenchless lot :

Fire ! the only element
Where nor fish, beast, bird, nor worm,
Save the worm which dieth not,
Can preserve a moment's form,
But must with thyself be blent :
Fire ! man's safeguard and his slaughter :
Fire ! creation's first-born daughter,
And destruction's threaten'd son,
When heaven with the world hath done !

Fire! assist me to renew
Life in what lies in my view
Still and cold!

His resurrection rests with me and you!
One little, marshy spark of flame—
And he again shall seem the same;
But I his spirit's place shall hold!

[*An ignis-fatuus flits through the wood, and rests on the brow
of the body. The Stranger disappears: the body rises.*]

Arn. (*in his new form*). Oh! horrible!

Str. (*in ARNOLD'S late shape*). What! tremblest thou?

Arn. Not so—

I merely shudder. Where is fled the shape
Thou lately worest?

Str. To the world of shadows.

But let us thread the present. Whither wilt thou?

Arn. Must thou be my companion?

Str. Wherefore not?

Your betters keep worse company.

Arn. My betters!

Str. Oh! you wax proud, I see, of your new form:
I'm glad of that. Ungrateful too! That's well;
You improve apace:—two changes in an instant,
And you are old in the world's ways already.
But bear with me: indeed you'll find me useful
Upon your pilgrimage. But come, pronounce
Where shall we now be errant?

Arn. Where the world

Is thickest, that I may behold it in
Its workings.

Str. That's to say, where there is war
And woman in activity. Let's see!
Spain—Italy—the new Atlantic world—
Afric with all its Moors. In very truth,
There is small choice: the whole race are just now
Tugging as usual at each other's hearts.

Arn. I have heard great things of Rome.

Str. A goodly choice—

And scarce a better to be found on earth,
Since Sodom was put out. The field is wide too;
For now the Frank, and Hun, and Spanish scion
Of the old Vandals, are at play along
The sunny shores of the world's garden.

Arn. How

Shall we proceed?

Str. Like gallants, on good coursers.
What ho! my chargers! Never yet were better,

Since Phaeton was upset into the Po.
Our pages too !

Enter two Pages, with four coal-black Horses.

Arn. A noble sight !

Str. And of
A nobler breed. Match me in Barbary,
Or your Kochlani race of Araby,
With these !

Arn. The mighty stream, which volumes high
From their proud nostrils, burns the very air ;
And sparks of flame, like dancing fire-flies, wheel
Around their manes, as common insects swarm
Round common steeds towards sunset.

Str. Mount, my lord ;
They and I are your servitors.

Arn. And these,
Our dark-eyed pages—what may be their names ?

Str. You shall baptise them.

Arn. What ! in holy water ?

Str. Why not ? The deeper sinner, better saint.

Arn. They are beautiful, and cannot, sure, be demons !

Str. True ; the devil 's always ugly ; and your beauty
Is never diabolical.

Arn. I 'll call him
Who bears the golden horn, and wears such bright
And blooming aspect, *Huon* ; for he looks
Like to the lovely boy lost in the forest,
And never found till now. And for the other
And darker, and more thoughtful, who smiles not,
But looks as serious though serene as night,
He shall be *Memnon*, from the Ethiop king
Whose statue turns a harper once a-day.
And you ?

Str. I have ten thousand names, and twice
As many attributes ; but as I wear
A human shape, will take a human name.

Arn. More human than the shape (though it was mine once),
I trust.

Str. Then call me *Cæsar*.

Arn. Why, that name
Belongs to empires, and has been but borne
By the world's lords.

Str. And therefore fittest for
The devil in disguise—since so you deem me,
Unless you call me pope instead.

Arn. Well, then,

Cæsar thou shalt be. For myself, my name
Shall be plain Arnold still.

Cæsar. We 'll add a title—
“Count Arnold:” it hath no ungracious sound,
And will look well upon a billet-doux.

Arn. Or in an order for a battle-field.

Cæsar sings. To horse! to horse! my coal-black steed
Paws the ground and snuffs the air!

There 's not a foal of Arab's breed

More knows whom he must bear!

On the hill he will not tire,

Swifter as it waxes higher;

In the marsh he will not slacken,

On the plain be overtaken;

In the wave he will not sink,

Nor pause at the brook's side to drink;

In the race he will not pant,

In the combat he 'll not faint;

On the stones he will not stumble,

Time nor toil shall make him humble;

In the stall he will not stiffen,

But be winged as a griffin,

Only flying with his feet;

And will not such a voyage be sweet?

Merrily! merrily! never unsound,

Shall our bonny black horses skim over the ground!

From the Alps to the Caucasus, ride we, or fly!

For we 'll leave them behind in the glance of an eye.

[*They mount their horses, and disappear.*]

SCENE II.—A CAMP BEFORE THE WALLS OF ROME.

ARNOLD and CÆSAR.

Cæsar. You are well enter'd now.

Arn. Ay; but my path
Has been o'er carcasses: mine eyes are full
Of blood.

Cæsar. Then wipe them, and see clearly. Why!
Thou art a conqueror; the chosen knight
And free companion of the gallant Bourbon,
Late constable of France; and now to be
Lord of the city which hath been earth's lord
Under its emperors, and—changing sex,
Not sceptre, an hermaphrodite of empire—
Lady of the old world.

Arn. How old? What! are there
New worlds?

Cæsar. To you. You 'll find there are such shortly,
By its rich harvests, new disease, and gold;
From one *half* of the world named a *whole* new one,
Because you know no better than the dull
And dubious notice of your eyes and ears.

Arn. I 'll trust them.

Cæsar. Do! They will deceive you sweetly,
And that is better than the bitter truth!

Arn. Dog!

Cæsar. Man!

Arn. Devil!

Cæsar. Your obedient, humble servant.

Arn. Say *master*, rather. Thou hast lured me on,
Through scenes of blood and lust, till I am here.

Cæsar. And where would'st thou be?

Arn. Oh, at peace—in peace!

Cæsar. And where is that which is so? From the star
To the winding worm, all life is motion, and
In life *commotion* is the extremest point
Of life. The planet wheels till it becomes
A comet, and, destroying as it sweeps
The stars, goes out. The poor worm winds its way,
Living upon the death of other things,
But still, like them, must live and die, the subject
Of something which has made it live and die.
You must obey what all obey, the rule
Of fixed necessity: against her edict
Rebellion prospers not.

Arn. And when it prospers——

Cæsar. 'T is no rebellion.

Arn. Will it prosper now?

Cæsar. The Bourbon hath given orders for the assault,
And by the dawn there will be work.

Arn. Alas!

And shall the city yield? I see the giant
Abode of the true God, and his true saint,
Saint Peter, rear its dome and cross into
That sky whence Christ ascended from the cross,
Which his blood made a badge of glory and
Of joy (as once of torture unto him,
God and God's Son, man's sole and only refuge).

Cæsar. 'T is there, and shall be.

Arn. What?

Cæsar. The crucifix
Above, and many altar-shrines below.
Also some culverins upon the walls,
And harquebusses, and what not, besides

The men who are to kindle them to death
Of other men.

Arn. And those scarce mortal arches,
Pile above pile of everlasting wall,
The theatre where emperors and their subjects
(Those subjects *Romans*) stood at gaze upon
The battles of the monarchs of the wild
And wood, the lion and his tusky rebels
Of the then untamed desert, brought to joust
In the arena (as right well they might,
When they had left no human foe unconquer'd);
Made even the forest pay its tribute of
Life to their amphitheatre, as well
As Dacia men to die the eternal death
For a sole instant's pastime, and "Pass on
To a new gladiator!"—Must it fall?

Cæsar. The city or the amphitheatre?
The church, or one, or all? for you confound
Both them and me.

Arn. To-morrow sounds the assault
With the first cock-crow.

Cæsar. Which, if it end with
The evening's first nightingale, will be
Something new in the annals of great sieges:
For men must have their prey after long toil.

Arn. The sun goes down as calmly, and perhaps
More beautifully, than he did on Rome
On the day Remus leapt her wall.

Cæsar. I saw him.

Arn. You?

Cæsar. Yes, sir. You forget I am or was
Spirit, till I took up with your cast shape
And a worse name. I 'm Cæsar and a hunch-back
Now. Well! the first of Cæsars was a bald-head,
And loved his laurels better as a wig⁵
(So history says) than as a glory. Thus
The world runs on, but we 'll be merry still.
I saw your Romulus (simple as I am)
Slay his own twin, quick-born of the same womb,
Because he leapt a ditch ('t was then no wall,
Whate'er it now be); and Rome's earliest cement
Was brother's blood; and if its native blood
Be spilt till the choked Tiber be as red
As e'er 't was yellow, it will never wear
The deep hue of the ocean and the earth,
Which the great robber sons of fratricide
Have made their never-ceasing scene of slaughter
For ages.

Arn. But what have these done, their far
Remote descendants, who have lived in peace,
The peace of heaven, and in her sunshine of
Piety?

Cæsar. And what had *they* done, whom the old
Romans o'erswept?—Hark!

Arn. They are soldiers singing
A reckless roundelay, upon the eve
Of many deaths, it may be of their own.

Cæsar. And why should they not sing as well as swans?
They are black ones, to be sure.

Arn. So, you are learn'd,
I see, too.

Cæsar. In my grammar, certes. I
Was educated for a monk of all times,
And once I was well versed in the forgotten
Etruscan letters, and—were I so minded—
Could make their hieroglyphics plainer than
Your alphabet.

Arn. And wherefore do you not?

Cæsar. It answers better to resolve the alphabet
Back into hieroglyphics. Like your statesman,
And prophet, pontiff, doctor, alchemist,
Philosopher, and what not, they have built
More Babels without new dispersion, than
The stammering young ones of the flood's dull ooze,
Who fail'd and fled each other. Why? why, marry,
Because no man could understand his neighbour.
They are wiser now, and will not separate
For nonsense. Nay, it is their brotherhood,
Their Shibboleth, their Koran, Talmud, their
Cabala; their best brick-work wherewithal
They build more—

Arn. (*interrupting him*). Oh, thou everlasting sneerer!
Be silent! How the soldiers' rough strain seems
Softened by distance to a hymn-like cadence!
Listen!

Cæsar. Yes. I have heard the angels sing.

Arn. And demons howl.

Cæsar. And man too. Let us listen:
I love all music.

Song of the Soldiers within.

The Black Bands came over
The Alps and their snow;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They past the broad Po.

We have beaten all foemen,
 We have captured a king,
 We have turned back on no men,
 And so let us sing!
 Here 's the Bourbon for ever!
 Though penniless all,
 We 'll have one more endeavour
 At yonder old wall.
 With the Bourbon we 'll gather
 At day-dawn before
 The gates, and together
 Or break or climb o'er
 The wall: on the ladder,
 As mounts each firm foot,
 Our shout shall grow gladder,
 And death only be mute.
 With the Bourbon we 'll mount o'er
 The walls of old Rome,
 And who then shall count o'er
 The spoils of each dome?
 Up! up! with the lily!
 And down with the keys!
 In old Rome, the seven-hilly,
 We 'll revel at ease:
 Her streets shall be gory,
 Her Tiber all red,
 And her temples so hoary
 Shall clang with our tread.
 Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
 The Bourbon for aye!
 Of our song bear the burthen!
 And fire, fire away!
 With Spain for the vanguard,
 Our varied host comes:
 And next to the Spaniard
 Beat Germany's drums;
 And Italy's lances
 Are couch'd at their mother;
 But our leader from France is,
 Who warr'd with his brother.
 Oh, the Bourbon! the Bourbon!
 Sans country or home,
 We 'll follow the Bourbon,
 To plunder old Rome.

Cæsar. An indifferent song
 For those within the walls, methinks, to hear.

Arn. Yes, if they keep to their chorus. But here comes
 The general with his chiefs and men of trust.
 A goodly rebel!

Enter the Constable BOURBON, "cum suis," &c. &c. &c.

Phil. How now, noble prince,
You are not cheerful?

Bour. Why should I be so?

Phil. Upon the eve of conquest, such as ours,
Most men would be so.

Bour. If I were secure!

Phil. Doubt not our soldiers. Were the walls of adamant,
They'd crack them. Hunger is a sharp artillery.

Bour. That they will falter is my least of fears.
That they will be repulsed, with Bourbon for
Their chief, and all their kindled appetites
To marshal them on—were those hoary walls
Mountains, and those who guard them like the gods
Of the old fables, I would trust my Titans;—
But now—

Phil. They are but men who war with mortals.

Bour. True: but those walls have girded in great ages,
And sent forth mighty spirits. The past earth
And present phantom of imperious Rome
Is peopled with those warriors; and methinks
They flit along the eternal city's rampart,
And stretch their glorious, gory, shadowy hands,
And beckon me away!

Phil. So let them! Wilt thou
Turn back from shadowy menaces of shadows?

Bour. They do not menace me. I could have faced,
Methinks, a Sylla's menace; but they clasp,
And raise, and wring their dim and deathlike hands,
And with their thin aspen faces and fixed eyes
Fascinate mine. Look there.

Phil. I look upon
A lofty battlement.

Bour. And there!

Phil. Not even
A guard in sight; they wisely keep below,
Shelter'd by the gray parapet from some
Stray bullet of our lansquenets, who might
Practise in the cool twilight.

Bour. You are blind.

Phil. If seeing nothing more than may be seen
Be so.

Bour. A thousand years have mann'd the walls
With all their heroes,—the last Cato stands
And tears his bowels, rather than survive
The liberty of that I would enslave.

And the first Cæsar with his triumphs flits
From battlement to battlement.

Phil. Then conquer
The walls for which he conquer'd, and be greater !

Bour. True : so I will, or perish.

Phil. You can *not*.
In such an enterprise to die is rather
The dawn of an eternal day, than death.

Count ARNOLD and CÆSAR advance.

Cæsar. And the mere men—do they too sweat beneath
The noon of this same ever-scorching glory ?

Bour. Ah !
Welcome the bitter hunchback ! and his master,
The beauty of our host, and brave as beauteous,
And generous as lovely. We shall find
Work for you both ere morning.

Cæsar. You will find,
So please your highness, no less for yourself.

Bour. And if I do, there will not be a labourer
More forward, hunchback !

Cæsar. You may well say so,
For *you* have seen that back—as general,
Placed in the rear in action—but your foes
Have never seen it.

Bour. That 's a fair retort,
For I provoked it :—but the Bourbon's breast
Has been, and ever shall be, far advanced
In danger's face as yours, were you the *devil*.

Cæsar. And if I were, I might have saved myself
The toil of coming here.

Phil. Why so ?

Cæsar. One half
Of your brave bands of their own bold accord
Will go to him, the other half be sent,
More swiftly, not less surely.

Bour. Arnold, your
Slight crooked friend 's as snake-like in his words
As his deeds.

Cæsar. Your highness much mistakes me.
The first snake was a flatterer—I am none ;
And for my deeds, I only sting when stung.

Bour. You are brave, and that 's enough for me ; and quick
In speech as sharp in action—and that 's more.
I am not alone a soldier, but the soldiers'
Comrade.

Cæsar. They are but bad company, your highness :

And worse even for their friends than foes, as being
More permanent acquaintance.

Phil. How now, fellow!
Thou waxest insolent, beyond the privilege
Of a buffoon.

Cæsar. You mean I speak the truth.
I'll lie—it is as easy: then you'll praise me
For calling you a hero.

Bour. Philibert!
Let him alone: he's brave, and ever has
Been first with that swart face and mountain shoulder
In field or storm; and patient in starvation;
And for his tongue, the camp is full of licence,
And the sharp stinging of a lively rogue
Is, to my mind, far preferable to
The gross, dull, heavy, gloomy execration
Of a mere famish'd, sullen, grumbling slave,
Whom nothing can convince save a full meal,
And wine, and sleep, and a few maravedis,
With which he deems him rich.

Cæsar. It would be well
If the earth's princes ask'd no more.

Bour. Be silent!

Cæsar. Ay, but not idle. Work yourself with words!
You have few to speak.

Phil. What means the audacious prater?

Cæsar. To prate, like other prophets.

Bour. Philibert!
Why will you vex him? Have we not enough
To think on? Arnold! I will lead the attack
To-morrow.

Arn. I have heard as much, my lord.

Bour. And you will follow?

Arn. Since I must not lead.

Bour. 'T is necessary for the further daring
Of our too needy army, that their chief
Plant the first foot upon the foremost ladder's
First step.

Cæsar. Upon its topmost, let us hope:
So shall he have his full deserts.

Bour. The world's
Great capital perchance is ours to-morrow.
Through every change the seven-hill'd city hath
Retain'd her sway o'er nations, and the Cæsars
But yielded to the Alarics, the Alarics
Unto the pontiffs. Roman, Goth, or priest,
Still the world's masters! Civilized, barbarian,

Or saintly, still the walls of Romulus
 Have been the circus of an empire. Well!
 'T was *their* turn—now 't is ours; and let us hope
 That we will fight as well, and rule much better.

Cæsar. No doubt, the camp 's the school of civic rights,
 What would you make of Rome?

Bour. That which it was.

Cæsar. In Alaric's time?

Bour. No, slave! In the first Cæsar's,
 Whose name you bear like other curs.

Cæsar. And kings.

'T is a great name for bloodhounds.

Bour. There 's a demon
 In that fierce rattle-snake thy tongue. Wilt never
 Be serious?

Cæsar. On the eve of battle, no;—
 That were not soldier-like. 'T is for the general
 To be more pensive: we adventurers
 Must be more cheerful. Wherefore should we think?
 Our tutelar deity, in a leader's shape,
 Takes care of us. Keep thought aloof from hosts!
 If the knaves take to thinking, you will have
 To crack those walls alone.

Bour. You may sneer, since
 'T is lucky for you that you fight no worse for 't.

Cæsar. I thank you for the freedom; 't is the only
 Pay I have taken in your highness' service.

Bour. Well, sir, to-morrow you shall pay yourself.
 Look on those towers; they hold my treasury.
 But, Philibert, we 'll in to council. Arnold,
 We would request your presence.

Arn. Prince, my service
 Is yours, as in the field.

Bour. In both we prize it,
 And yours will be a post of trust at day-break.

Cæsar. And mine?

Bour. To follow glory with the Bourbon.
 Good night!

Arn. (to Cæsar). Prepare our armour for the assault,
 And wait within my tent.

[*Exeunt* BOURBON, ARNOLD, PHILIBERT, &c.]

Cæsar (solus). Within thy tent?
 Think'st thou that I pass from thee with my presence?
 Or that this crooked coffer, which contain'd
 Thy principle of life, is aught to me
 Except a mask? And these are men, forsooth!
 Heroes and chiefs, the flower of Adam's bastards!

This is the consequence of giving matter
 The power of thought. It is a stubborn substance,
 And thinks chaotically, as it acts,
 Ever relapsing into its first elements.
 Well! I must play with these poor puppets: 't is
 The spirit's pastime in his idler hours.
 When I grow weary of it, I have business
 Amongst the stars, which these poor creatures deem
 Were made for them to look at. 'T were a jest now
 To bring one down amongst them, and set fire
 Unto their ant-hill: how the pismires then
 Would scamper o'er the scalding soil, and, ceasing
 From tearing down each others' nests, pipe forth
 One universal orison! Ha! ha!

[Exit CÆSAR.]

PART II.

SCENE I.—BEFORE THE WALLS OF ROME.—THE ASSAULT;
 THE ARMY IN MOTION, WITH LADDERS TO SCALE THE
 WALLS; BOURBON, WITH A WHITE SCARF OVER HIS
 ARMOUR, FOREMOST.

Chorus of Spirits in the air.

1.

'T is the morn, but dim and dark.
 Whither flies the silent lark?
 Whither shrinks the clouded sun?
 Is the day indeed begun?
 Nature's eye is melancholy
 O'er the city high and holy;
 But without there is a din
 Should arouse the saints within,
 And revive the heroic ashes
 Round which yellow Tiber dashes.
 Oh ye seven hills! awaken,
 Ere your very base be shaken!

2.

Hearken to the steady stamp!
 Mars is in their every tramp!
 Not a step is out of tune,
 As the tides obey the moon!

On they march, though to self-slaughter,
 Regular as rolling water,
 Whose high waves o'ersweep the border
 Of huge moles, but keep their order,
 Breaking only rank by rank.
 Hearken to the armour's clank!
 Look down o'er each frowning warrior,
 How he glares upon the barrier!
 Look on each step of each ladder,
 As the stripes that streak an adder.

3.

Look upon the bristling wall,
 Mann'd without an interval!
 Round and round, and tier on tier,
 Cannon's black mouth, shining spear,
 Lit match, bell-mouth'd musketoon,
 Gaping to be murderous soon.
 All the warlike gear of old,
 Mix'd with what we now behold,
 In this strife 'twixt old and new,
 Gather like a locusts' crew.
 Shade of Remus! 't is a time
 Awful as thy brother's crime!
 Christians war against Christ's shrine:—
 Must its lot be like to thine?

4.

Near—and near—and nearer still,
 As the earthquake saps the hill,
 First with trembling, hollow motion,
 Like a scarce-awaken'd ocean,
 Then with stronger shock and louder,
 Till the rocks are crush'd to powder,—
 Onward sweeps the rolling host!
 Heroes of the immortal boast!
 Mighty chiefs! eternal shadows!
 First flowers of the bloody meadows
 Which encompass Rome, the mother
 Of a people without brother!
 Will you sleep when nations' quarrels
 Plough the root up of your laurels?
 Ye who wept o'er Carthage burning,
 Weep not—*strike!* for Rome is mourning!¹⁶

5.

Onward sweep the varied nations!
 Famine long hath dealt their rations.

To the wall, with hate and hunger,
 Numerous as wolves, and stronger,
 On they sweep. Oh! glorious city,
 Must thou be a theme for pity?
 Fight, like your first sire, each Roman!
 Alaric was a gentle foeman,
 Match'd with Bourbon's black banditti!
 Rouse thee, thou eternal city!
 Rouse thee! Rather give the torch
 With thy own hand to thy porch,
 Than behold such hosts pollute
 Your worst dwelling with their foot.

6.

Ah! behold yon bleeding spectre!
 Ilion's children find no Hector;
 Priam's offspring loved their brother;
 Roma's sire forgot his mother,
 When he slew his gallant twin,
 With inexpiable sin.
 See the giant shadow stride
 O'er the ramparts high and wide!
 When he first o'erleapt thy wall,
 Its foundation mourn'd thy fall.
 Now, though towering like a Babel,
 Who to stop his steps are able?
 Stalking o'er thy highest dome,
 Remus claims his vengeance, Rome!

7.

Now they reach thee in their anger:
 Fire, and smoke, and hellish clangor
 Are around thee, thou world's wonder!
 Death is in thy walls and under.
 Now the meeting steel first clashes;
 Downward then the ladder crashes,
 With its iron load all gleaming,
 Lying at its foot blaspheming!
 Up again! for every warrior
 Slain, another climbs the barrier.
 Thicker grows the strife: thy ditches
 Europe's mingling gore enriches.
 Rome! although thy wall may perish,
 Such manure thy fields will cherish,
 Making gay the harvest-home;
 But thy hearths, alas! oh, Rome!--
 Yet be Rome amidst thine anguish,
 Fight as thou wast wont to vanquish!

Yet once more, ye old Penates !
 Let not your quench'd hearths be Ate's !
 Yet again, ye shadowy heroes,
 Yield not to these stranger Neros !
 Though the son who slew his mother,
 Shed Rome's blood, he was your brother !
 'T was the Roman curb'd the Roman :—
 Brennus was a baffled foeman.
 Yet again, ye saints and martyrs,
 Rise! for yours are holier charters.
 Mighty gods of temples falling,
 Yet in ruin still appalling !
 Mightier founders of those altars,
 True and christian,—strike the assaulters !
 Tiber ! Tiber ! let thy torrent
 Show even nature's self abhorrent.
 Let each breathing heart dilated
 Turn, as doth the lion baited !
 Rome be crush'd to one wide tomb,
 But be still the Roman's Rome !

BOURBON, ARNOLD, CÆSAR, and others, arrive at the foot of the wall. ARNOLD is about to plant his ladder.

Bour. Hold, Arnold ! I am first.

Arn. Not so, my lord.

Bour. Hold, sir, I charge you ! Follow ! I am proud
 Of such a follower, but will brook no leader.

[BOURBON plants his ladder, and begins to mount.

Now, boys ! On ! on !

[A shot strikes him, and BOURBON falls.

Cæsar. And off !

Arn. Eternal powers !

The host will be appall'd—But vengeance ! vengeance !

Bour. 'T is nothing—lend me your hand.

[BOURBON takes ARNOLD by the hand and rises ; but, as he puts
 his foot on the step, falls again.

Arnold ! I am sped.

Conceal my fall—all will go well—conceal it !

Fling my cloak o'er what will be dust anon ;

Let not the soldiers see it.

Arn. You must be

Removed ; the aid of—

Bour. No, my gallant boy ;

Death is upon me. But what is *one* life ?

The Bourbon's spirit shall command them still.

Keep them yet ignorant that I am but clay,

Till they are conquerors—then do as you may.

Cæsar. Would not your highness chuse to kiss the cross?
We have no priest here, but the hilt of sword
May serve instead :—it did the same for Bayard.

Bour. Thou bitter slave! to name *him* at this time!
But I deserve it.

Arn. (to *CÆSAR*). Villain, hold your peace!

Cæsar. What, when a christian dies? Shall I not offer
A christian “vade in pace?”

Arn. Silence! Oh!
Those eyes are glazing, which o'erlook'd the world,
And saw no equal.

Bour. Arnold, should'st thou see
France—But hark! hark! the assault grows warmer—Oh!
For but an hour, a minute more of life,
To die within a wall! Hence, Arnold! hence!
You lose time—they will conquer Rome without thee.

Arn. And without *thee*!

Bour. Not so; I'll lead them still
In spirit. Cover up my dust, and breathe not
That I have ceased to breathe. Away! and be
Victorious!

Arn. But I must not leave thee thus.

Bour. You must—farewell—Up! up! the world is winning.

[*BOURBON dies.*]

Cæsar. (to *ARNOLD*.) Come, count, to business.

Arn. True. I'll weep hereafter.

[*ARNOLD covers BOURBON'S body with a mantle, and mounts
the ladder, crying,*

The Bourbon! Bourbon! On, boys! Rome is ours!

Cæsar. Good night, lord constable! thou wert a man.

[*CÆSAR follows ARNOLD; they reach the battlement; ARNOLD
and CÆSAR are struck down.*

A precious somerset! Is your countship injured?

Arn. No. [Remounts the ladder.

Cæsar. A rare blood-hound, when his own is heated!
And 't is no boy's play. Now he strikes them down!
His hand is on the battlement—he grasps it
As though it were an altar; now his foot
Is on it, and—What have we here, a Roman?

[*A man falls.*

The first bird of the covey! he has fall'n
On the outside of the nest. Why, how now, fellow?

The wounded man. A drop of water!

Cæsar. Blood 's the only liquid
Nearer than Tiber.

Wounded man. I have died for Rome.

[*Dies.*

Cæsar. And so did Bourbon, in another sense,
Oh these immortal men! and their great motives!
But I must after my young charge. He is
By this time i' the forum. Charge! charge!

[*CÆSAR mounts the ladder; the scene closes.*

SCENE II.—THE CITY.—COMBATS BETWEEN THE BESIEGERS
AND BESIEGED IN THE STREETS. INHABITANTS FIGHTING
IN CONFUSION.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæsar. I cannot find my hero; he is mix'd
With the heroic crowd that now pursue
The fugitives, or battle with the desperate.
What have we here? A cardinal or two
That do not seem in love with martyrdom.
How the old red-shanks scamper! Could they doff
Their hose as they have doff'd their hats, 't would be
A blessing, as a mark the less for plunder.
But let them fly, the crimson kennels now
Will not much stain their stockings, since the mire
Is of the self-same purple hue.

Enter a party fighting—ARNOLD at the head of the besiegers.

He comes,
Hand in hand with the mild twins—Gore and Glory.
Holla! hold, count!

Arn. Away! they must not rally.

Cæsar. I tell thee, be not rash; a golden bridge
Is for a flying enemy. I gave thee
A form of beauty, and an
Exemption from some maladies of body,
But not of mind, which is not mine to give.
But though I gave the form of Thetis' son,
I dipt thee not in Styx; and 'gainst a foe
I would not warrant thy chivalric heart
More than Pelides' heel; why then, be cautious,
And know thyself a mortal still.

Arn. And who
With aught of soul would combat if he were
Invulnerable? That were pretty sport.
Think'st thou I beat for hares when lions roar?

[*ARNOLD rushes into the combat.*

Cæsar. A precious sample of humanity!
Well, his blood 's up, and if a little 's shed,
'T will serve to curb his fever.

[*ARNOLD engages with a Roman, who retires towards a portico.*

- Arn.* Yield thee, slave !
 I promise quarter.
Roman. That 's soon said.
Arn. And done—
 My word is known.
Roman. So shall be my deeds.
 [They re-engage. CÆSAR comes forward.
Cæsar. Why, Arnold ! Hold thine own ; thou hast in hand
 A famous artizan, a cunning sculptor ;
 Also a dealer in the sword and dagger,
 Not so, my musqueteer ; 't was he who slew
 The Bourbon from the wall.
Arn. Ay, he did so ?
 Then he hath carved his monument.
Roman. I yet
 May live to carve your betters.
Cæsar. Well said, my man of marble ! Benvenuto,
 Thou hast some practice in both ways ; and he
 Who slays Cellini, will have work'd as hard
 As e'er thou didst upon Carrara's blocks.
 [ARNOLD disarms and wounds CELLINI, but slightly ; the latter
 draws a pistol and fires ; then retires and disappears through
 the portico.
Cæsar. How farest thou ? Thou hast a taste, methinks,
 Of red Bellona's banquet.
Arn. (stagers). 'T is a scratch.
 Lend me thy scarf. He shall not 'scape me thus.
Cæsar. Where is it ?
Arn. In the shoulder, not the sword-arm—
 And that 's enough. I am thirsty : would I had
 A helm of water !
Cæsar. That 's a liquid now
 In requisition, but by no means easiest
 To come at.
Arn. And my thirst increases ;—but
 I 'll find a way to quench it.
Cæsar. Or be quench'd
 Thyself ?
Arn. The chance is even ; we will throw
 The dice thereon. But I lose time in prating ;
 Prithee be quick. [CÆSAR binds on the scarf.
 And what dost thou so idly ?
 Why dost not strike ?
Cæsar. Your old philosophers
 Beheld mankind, as mere spectators of
 The Olympic games. When I behold a prize
 Worth wrestling for, I may be found a Milo.

Arn. Ay, 'gainst an oak.

Cæsar. A forest, when it suits me.

I combat with a mass, or not at all.

Meantime, pursue thy sport as I do mine :

Which is just now to gaze, since all these labourers

Will reap my harvest gratis.

Arn. Thou art still

A fiend !

Cæsar. And thou—a man.

Arn. Why, such I fain would show me.

Cæsar. True—as men are.

Arn. And what is that ?

Cæsar. Thou feelest and thou see'st.

[*Exit ARNOLD, joining in the combat which still continues between detached parties. The scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—ST. PETER'S.—THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH.—
THE POPE AT THE ALTAR.—PRIESTS, &c., CROWDING IN
CONFUSION, AND CITIZENS FLYING FOR REFUGE, PURSUED
BY SOLDIERY.

Enter CÆSAR.

A Spanish Soldier. Down with them, comrades ! seize upon those
lamps !

Cleave yon bald-pated shaveling to the chine !

His rosary 's of gold !

Lutheran Soldier. Revenge ! revenge !

Plunder hereafter, but for vengeance now—

Yonder stands Anti-Christ !

Cæsar (interposing). How, now, schismatic !
What would'st thou ?

Lutheran Soldier. In the holy name of Christ,
Destroy proud Anti-Christ. I am a christian.

Cæsar. Yea, a disciple that would make the founder
Of your belief renounce it, could he see
Such proselytes. Best stint thyself to plunder.

Lutheran Soldier. I say he is the devil.

Cæsar. Hush ! keep that secret,
Lest he should recognize you for his own.

Lutheran Soldier. Why would you save him ? I repeat he is
The devil, or the devil's vicar upon earth.

Cæsar. And that 's the reason ; would you make a quarrel
With your best friends ? You had far best be quiet ;
His hour is not yet come.

Lutheran Soldier. That shall be seen!

[*The Lutheran Soldier rushes forward; a shot strikes him from one of the Pope's guards, and he falls at the foot of the altar.*]

Cæsar (to the Lutheran). I told you so.

Lutheran Soldier. And will you not avenge me?

Cæsar. Not I! You know that "vengeance is the Lord's;"
You see he loves no interlopers.

Lutheran (dying). Oh!

Had I but slain him, I had gone on high,
Crown'd with eternal glory! Heaven, forgive
My feebleness of arm that reach'd him not,
And take thy servant to thy mercy. 'T is
A glorious triumph still; proud Babylon's
No more; the harlot of the seven hills
Hath changed her scarlet raiment for sackcloth
And ashes!

[*The Lutheran dies.*]

Cæsar. Yes, thine own amidst the rest.
Well done, old Babel!

[*The Guards defend themselves desperately, while the Pontiff escapes, by a private passage, to the Vatican and the Castle of St. Angelo.*]

Ha! right nobly battled!

Now, priest! now, soldier! the two great professions
Together by the ears and hearts! I have not
Seen a more comic pantomime since Titus
Took Jewry. But the Romans had the best then;
Now they must take their turn.

Soldiers. He hath escaped!
Follow!

Another Soldier. They have barr'd the narrow passage up,
And it is clogg'd with dead even to the door.

Cæsar. I am glad he hath escaped: he may thank me for 't
In part. I would not have his bulls abolish'd—
'T were worth one half our empire: his indulgences
Demand some in return;—no, no, he must not
Fall; and besides, his now escape may furnish
A future miracle, in future proof
Of his infallibility.

[*To the Spanish Soldiery.*]

Well, cut-throats!
What do you pause for? If you make not haste,
There will not be a link of pious gold left.
And *you* too, Catholics! Would ye return
From such a pilgrimage without a relic?
The very Lutherans have more true devotion;
See how they strip the shrines?

Soldiers. By holy Peter!

He speaks the truth ; the heretics will bear
The best away.

Cæsar. And that were shame ! Go to !
Assist in their conversion.

[*The Soldiers disperse ; many quit the church, others enter.*]

Cæsar. They are gone,
And others come ; so flows the wave on wave
Of what these creatures call eternity,
Deeming themselves the breakers of the ocean,
While they are but its bubbles, ignorant
That foam is their foundation. So, another !

Enter OLIMPIA, flying from the pursuit—She springs upon the altar.

Soldier. She 's mine.

Another Soldier (opposing the former). You lie, I track'd her
first ; and were she
The Pope's niece, I 'll not yield her. [*They fight.*]

Third Soldier (advancing towards OLIMPIA). You may settle
Your claims ; I 'll make mine good.

Olim. Infernal slave !
You touch me not alive.

Third Soldier. Alive or dead !

Olim. Respect your God ! [*She embraces a massive crucifix.*]

Third Soldier. Yes, when he shines in gold.
Girl, you but grasp your dowry.

[*As he advances, OLIMPIA, with a strong and sudden effort,
casts down the crucifix ; it strikes the Soldier, who falls.*]

Third Soldier. Oh, great God !

Olim. Ah ! now you recognise him.

Third Soldier. My brain 's crush'd !
Comrades, help, ho ! All 's darkness ! [*He dies.*]

Other Soldiers (coming up). Slay her, although she had a thou-
sand lives :
She hath kill'd our comrade.

Olim. Welcome such a death !
You have no life to give, which the worst slave
Would take. Great God ! through thy redeeming Son,
And thy Son's Mother, now receive me as
I would approach thee, worthy her, and him, and thee !

Enter ARNOLD.

Arn. What do I see ? Accursed jackals !
Forbear !

Cæsar (aside, and laughing). Ha ! ha ! here 's equity ! The dogs
Have as much right as he. But to the issue !

Soldiers. Count, she hath slain our comrade.

Arn. With what weapon?

Soldier. The cross, beneath which he is crush'd; behold him
Lie there, more like a worm than man; she cast it
Upon his head.

Arn. Even so; there is a woman
Worthy a brave man's liking. Were ye such,
Ye would have honour'd her. But get ye hence,
And thank your meanness, other God you have none,
For your existence. Had you touch'd a hair
Of those dishevell'd locks, I would have thinn'd
Your ranks more than the enemy. Away!
Ye jackals! gnaw the bones the lion leaves,
But not even these till he permits.

A Soldier (murmuring). The lion
Might conquer for himself then.

Arn. (cuts him down). Mutineer!
Rebel in hell—you shall obey on earth!

[*The Soldiers assault ARNOLD.*]

Arn. Come on! I'm glad on 't! I will show you, slaves,
How you should be commanded, and who led you
First o'er the wall you were as shy to scale,
Until I waved my banners from its height,
As you are bold within it.

[*ARNOLD mows down the foremost; the rest throw down their arms.*]

Soldiers. Mercy! mercy!

Arn. Then learn to grant it. Have I taught you *who*
Led you o'er Rome's eternal battlements?

Soldiers. We saw it, and we know it; yet forgive
A moment's error in the heat of conquest—
The conquest which you led to.

Arn. Get you hence!
Hence to your quarters! you will find them fix'd
In the Colonna palace.

Olim. (aside). In my father's
House!

Arn. (to the Soldiers): Leave your arms; ye have no further need
Of such: the city's render'd. And mark well
You keep your hands clean, or I'll find out a stream
As red as Tiber now runs, for your baptism.

Soldiers. We obey. [*They depose their arms and depart.*]

Arn. (to OLIMPIA). Lady! you are safe.

Olim. I should be so,
Had I a knife even; but it matters not—
Death hath a thousand gates; and on the marble,
Even at the altar foot, whence I look down
Upon destruction, shall my head be dash'd,

Ere thou ascend it. God forgive thee, man!

Arn. I wish to merit his forgiveness, and
Thine own, although I have not injured thee.

Olim. No! Thou hast only sack'd my native land,—
No injury!—and made my father's house
A den of thieves—No injury!—this temple—
Slippery with Roman and holy gore—
No injury! And now thou wouldst preserve me,
To be—but that shall never be!

[*She raises her eyes to heaven, folds her robe round her, and
prepares to dash herself down on the side of the altar op-
posite to that where ARNOLD stands.*]

Arn. Hold! hold!

I swear.

Olim. Spare thine already forfeit soul
A perjury for which even hell would loathe thee.
I know thee.

Arn. No, thou know'st me not; I am not
Of these men, though—

Olim. I judge thee by thy mates;
It is for God to judge thee as thou art.
I see thee purple with the blood of Rome;
Take mine, 't is all thou e'er shalt have of me!
And here, upon the marble of this temple,
Where the baptismal font baptised me God's,
I offer him a blood less holy
But not less pure (pure as it left me then,
A redeem'd infant) than the holy water
The saints have sanctified!

[*OLIMPIA waves her hand to ARNOLD with disdain, and dashes
herself on the pavement from the altar.*]

Arn. Eternal God!

I feel thee now! Help! help! She's gone.

Cæsar (*approaches*).

I am here.

Arn. Thou! but ho, save her!

Cæsar (*assisting him to raise OLIMPIA*). She hath done it well;
The leap was serious.

Arn. Oh! she is lifeless!

Cæsar.

If

She be so, I have nought to do with that:
The resurrection is beyond me.

Arn.

Slave!

Cæsar. Ay, slave or master, 't is all one; methinks
Good words, however, are as well at times.

Arn. Words!—Canst thou aid her?

Cæsar.

I will try. A sprinkling

Of that same holy water may be useful.

[*He brings some in his helmet from the font.*]

Arn. 'T is mix'd with blood.

Cæsar. There is no cleaner now
In Rome.

Arn. How pale! how beautiful! how lifeless!
Alive or dead, thou essence of all beauty,
I love but thee!

Cæsar. Even so Achilles loved
Penthesilea; with his form it seems
You have his heart, and yet it was no soft one.

Arn. She breathes! But no, 't was nothing, or the last
Faint flutter life disputes with death.

Cæsar. She breathes.

Arn. Thou say'st it? Then 't is truth.

Cæsar. You do me right—
The devil speaks truth much oftener than he 's deem'd:
He hath an ignorant audience.

Arn. (*without attending to him*). Yes! her heart beats.
Alas! that the first beat of the only heart
I ever wish'd to beat with mine, should vibrate
To an assassin's pulse.

Cæsar. A sage reflexion,
But somewhat late i' the day. Where shall we bear her?
I say she lives.

Arn. And will she live?

Cæsar. As much
As dust can.

Arn. Then she is dead!

Cæsar. Bah! bah! You are so,
And do not know it. She will come to life—
Such as you think so, such as you now are;
But we must work by human means.

Arn. We will
Convey her unto the Colonna palace,
Where I have pitch'd my banner.

Cæsar. Come then! raise her up!

Arn. Softly!

Cæsar. As softly as they bear the dead,
Perhaps because they cannot feel the jolting.

Arn. But doth she live indeed?

Cæsar. Nay, never fear!
But if you rue it after, blame not me.

Arn. Let her but live!

Cæsar. The spirit of her life
Is yet within her breast, and may revive.
Count! count! I am your servant in all things,

And this is a new office :—'t is not oft
 I am employ'd in such ; but you perceive
 How staunch a friend is what you call a fiend.
 On earth you have often only fiends for friends ;
 Now *I* desert not mine. Soft ! bear her hence,
 The beautiful half-clay, and nearly spirit !
 I am almost enamour'd of her, as
 Of old the angels of her earliest sex.

Arn. Thou !

Cæsar. I. But fear not. I'll not be your rival.

Arn. Rival !

Cæsar. I could be one, right formidable ;
 But since I slew the seven husbands of
 Tobia's future bride (and after all
 'T was suck'd out by some incense) I have laid
 Aside intrigue ; 't is rarely worth the trouble
 Of gaining, or—what is more difficult—
 Getting rid of your prize again ; for there 's
 The rub ! at least to mortals.

Arn. Prithee, peace !
 Softly ! methinks her lips move, her eyes open !

Cæsar. Like stars, no doubt ; for that 's a metaphor
 For Lucifer and Venus.

Arn. To the palace
 Colonna, as I told you !

Cæsar. Oh ! I know
 My way through Rome.

Arn. Now onward, onward ! Gently !

[*Exeunt, bearing OLIMPIA.*—*The scene closes.*]

PART III.

SCENE.—A CASTLE IN THE APENNINES, SURROUNDED BY A
 WILD BUT SMILING COUNTRY.—CHORUS OF PEASANTS
 SINGING BEFORE THE GATES.

Chorus.

1.

The wars are over,
 The spring is come ;
 The bride and her lover !
 Have sought their home :
 They are happy, we rejoice,
 Let their hearts have an echo in every voice !

2.

The spring is come ; the violet 's gone,
 The first-born child of the early sun ;
 With us she is but a winter's flower,
 The snow on the hills cannot blast her bower,
 And she lifts up her dewy eye of blue
 To the youngest sky of the self-same hue.

3.

And when the spring comes with her host
 Of flowers, that flower beloved the most
 Shrinks from the crowd that may confuse
 Her heavenly odour and virgin hues.

4.

Pluck the others, but still remember
 Their herald out of dim December—
 The morning-star of all the flowers,
 The pledge of daylight's lengthen'd hours ;
 Nor, 'midst the roses, e'er forget
 The virgin, virgin violet.

Enter CÆSAR.

Cæsar (singing). The wars are all over,
 Our swords are all idle,
 The steed bites the bridle,
 The casque 's on the wall.
 There 's rest for the rover ;
 But his armour is rusty,
 And the veteran grows crusty,
 As he yawns in the hall.
 He drinks—but what 's drinking ?
 A mere pause from thinking !
 No bugle awakes him with life and death call.

Chorus.

But the hound bayeth loudly,
 The boar 's in the wood,
 And the falcon longs proudly
 To spring from her hood.
 On the wrist of the noble,
 She sits like a crest,
 And the air is in trouble
 With birds from their nest.

Cæsar. Oh ! shadow of glory !
 Dim image of war !
 But the chase hath no story,
 Her hero no star,

Since Nimrod, the founder
 Of empire and chase,
 Who made the woods wonder
 And quake for their race.
 When the lion was young,
 In the pride of his might,
 Then 't was sport for the strong
 To embrace him in fight ;
 To go forth, with a pine
 For a spear, 'gainst the mammoth,
 Or strike through the ravine
 At the foaming behemoth ;
 While man was in stature
 As towers in our time,
 The first-born of Nature,
 And, like her, sublime !

Chorus.

But the wars are over,
 The spring is come ;
 The bride and her lover
 Have sought their home :
 They are happy, and we rejoice ;
 Let their hearts have an echo in every voice !

[Exeunt the Peasantry, singing.]

U. 82004

82.004

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 490.

—————the hedgehog's
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.

This is now generally believed to be a vulgar error; the smallness of the animal's mouth rendering it incapable of the mischief laid to its charge.—E.

Note 2. Page 493.

—————the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz mountain.

This is a well-known German superstition—a gigantic shadow produced by reflection on the Brocken. [The Brocken is the name of the loftiest of the Hartz mountains, a picturesque range which lies in the kingdom of Hanover. From the earliest periods of authentic history, the Brocken has been the seat of the marvellous.—E.]

Note 3. Page 495.

“The outside of Socrates was that of a satyr and buffoon, but his soul was all virtue, and from within him came such divine and pathetic things, as pierced the heart, and drew tears from the hearers.”—PLATO.

Note 4. Page 499.

From the red earth, like Adam.

Adam means “*red earth*,” from which the first man was formed.

Note 5. Page 506.

—————The first of Cæsars was a bald head
And loved his laurels better as a wig
(So history says) than as a glory.

Suetonius relates of Julius Cæsar, that his baldness gave him much uneasiness, having often found himself, upon that account, exposed to the ridicule of his enemies; and that, therefore, of all the honours conferred upon him by the senate and people, there was none which he either accepted or used with so much pleasure as the right of wearing constantly a laurel crown.—E.

Note 6. Page 514.

Scipio, the second Africanus, is said to have repeated a verse of Homer, and wept over the burning of Carthage. He had better have granted it a capitulation.

NOTES.

Note 1. Page 490.

—————the hedgehog's
Which sucks at midnight from the wholesome dam
Of the young bull, until the milkmaid finds
The nipple next day sore and udder dry.

This is now generally believed to be a vulgar error; the smallness of the animal's mouth rendering it incapable of the mischief laid to its charge.—E.

Note 2. Page 493.

—————the cloud-shapen giant
Bestrides the Hartz mountain.

This is a well-known German superstition—a gigantic shadow produced by reflection on the Brocken. [The Brocken is the name of the highest of the Harz mountains, a picturesque range which has been the scene of some of the earliest periods of authentic history, &c.—E.]

Note

“The outside of Socrates was that of a philosopher, and from within him came such a heart, and drew tears from the heart of his hearer.”

Note

From the

Adam means “red earth,” from

Note

—————The first
And loved his laurels
(So history says)

Suetonius relates of Julius Cæsar, having often found himself, upon the same occasions; and that, therefore, of all the people, there was none which he either despised or despised, the right of wearing constantly a laurel wreath.

Note

Scipio, the second Africanus, is said to have wept over the burning of Carthage.

END OF THE



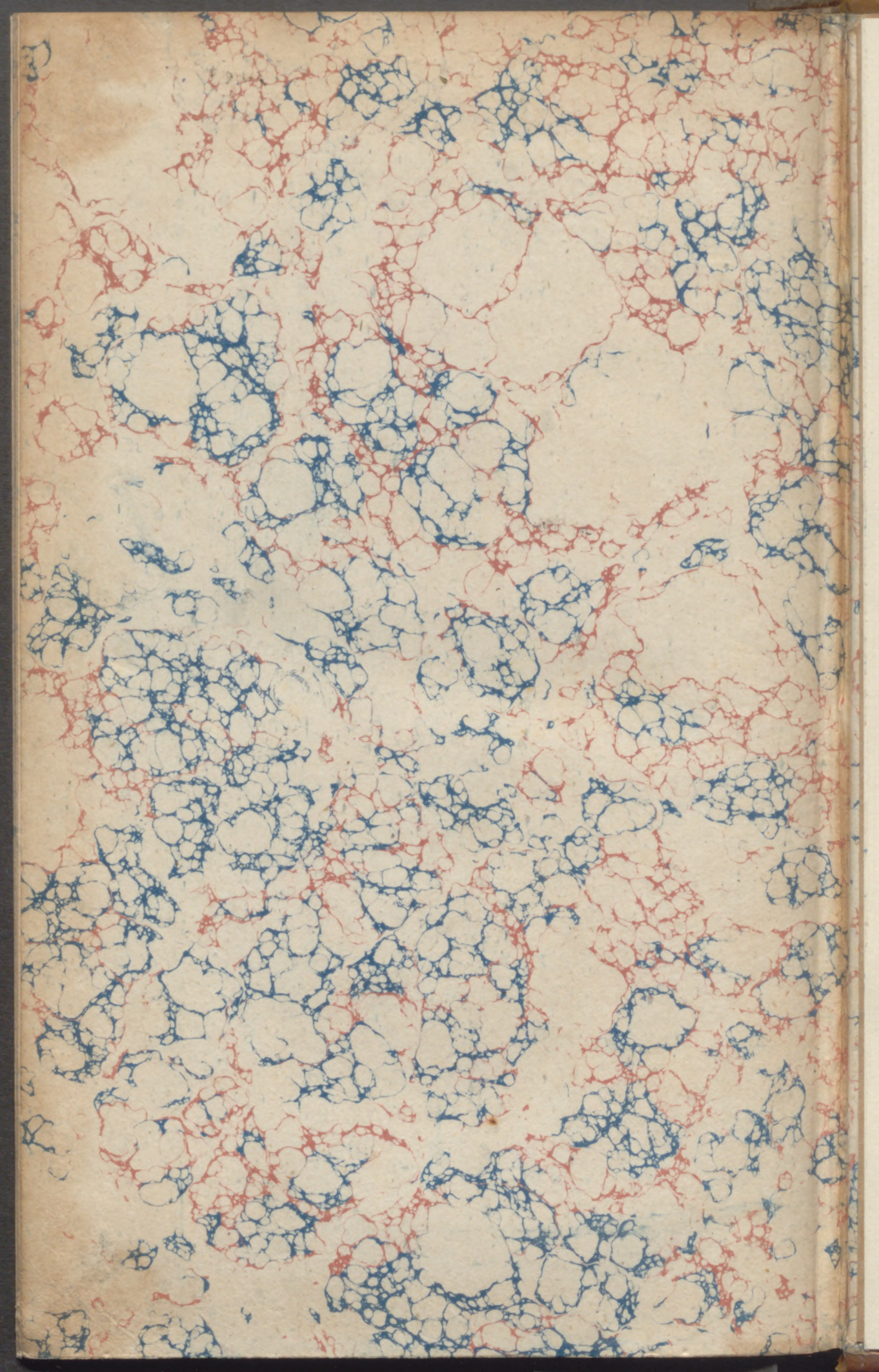
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D. C.
NOTES
This is now generally believed to be a...
month... it is...
Page 1
Page 2
Page 3
Page 4
Page 5
Page 6
Page 7
Page 8
Page 9
Page 10
Page 11
Page 12
Page 13
Page 14
Page 15
Page 16
Page 17
Page 18
Page 19
Page 20
Page 21
Page 22
Page 23
Page 24
Page 25
Page 26
Page 27
Page 28
Page 29
Page 30
Page 31
Page 32
Page 33
Page 34
Page 35
Page 36
Page 37
Page 38
Page 39
Page 40
Page 41
Page 42
Page 43
Page 44
Page 45
Page 46
Page 47
Page 48
Page 49
Page 50
Page 51
Page 52
Page 53
Page 54
Page 55
Page 56
Page 57
Page 58
Page 59
Page 60
Page 61
Page 62
Page 63
Page 64
Page 65
Page 66
Page 67
Page 68
Page 69
Page 70
Page 71
Page 72
Page 73
Page 74
Page 75
Page 76
Page 77
Page 78
Page 79
Page 80
Page 81
Page 82
Page 83
Page 84
Page 85
Page 86
Page 87
Page 88
Page 89
Page 90
Page 91
Page 92
Page 93
Page 94
Page 95
Page 96
Page 97
Page 98
Page 99
Page 100

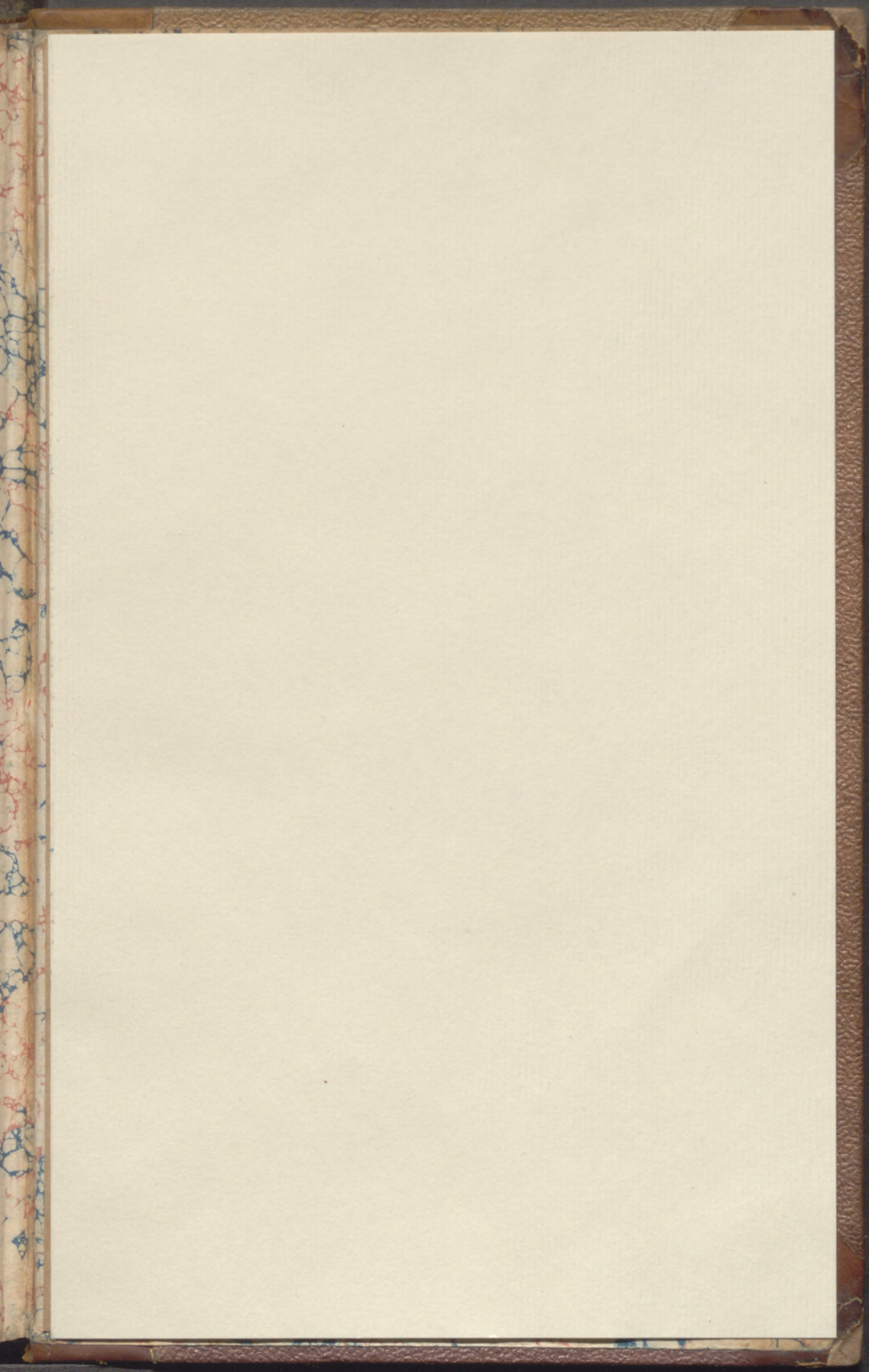
Biblioteka Główna UMK



300000800752

~~1223~~





Czytelnia
BIBLIOTEKA



VNIWERSYTECKA

W. 82004/5

W TORUNIU