

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?

Ber. F. 'Tis 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,¹
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 villainous 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.

Ber. F. 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.

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

Ber. F. 'Tis even so.
Doge. It is—it is:—I did not visit on
The innocent creature thus most vilely 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.

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

Doge. Death! Was I not the sovereign of the
state —
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me?
Was I not injured as a husband? 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
Had stabb'd him on the instant.

¹ ["Who threw his sting into a poisonous rhyme."—MS.]

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

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

Ber. F. What mean you? is not the offence re-
doubled

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.

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

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

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

Ber. F. 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.

Ber. F. 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,
'Tis fit I were alone.

Ber. F. (taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on
the table.) Ere I depart,

I pray you to resume what you have 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. [Puts it on.]
How my brain aches beneath thee! and my temples
Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
Could I not turn thee to a diadem?
Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
Which in this hundred-handed senate rules,
Making the people nothing, and the prince
A pageant? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult—achieved for them,
Who thus repay me!—Can I not requite them?
Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day
Of my full youth, while yet my body served
My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,
I would have 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 'tis but a chaos
Of darkly brooding thoughts: my fancy is
In her first work, more nearly to the light
Holding the sleeping images of things
For the selection of the pausing judgment. —
The troops are few in —

[Enter VINCENZO.]

Vin. There is one without
Craves audience of your highness.

Doge. I'm unwell —
I can see no one, not even a patrician —
Let him refer his business to the council.

Vin. My lord, I will deliver your reply;
It cannot much import—he's a plebeian,
The master of a galley, I believe.

Doge. How! did you say the patron of a galley?
That is—I mean—a servant of the state:
Admit him, he may be on public service.

[Exit VINCENZO.]

Doge (solus). This patron may be sounded; I will
try him.

I know the people to be discontented:
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse day,
When Genoa 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,¹
Quickening his holy march; yet, nevertheless,
They may be won, at least their chief at Rome,

¹ An historical fact. See Marin Sanuto's Lives of the Doges.—[“Sanuto says that Heaven took away his senses for this buffet, and induced him to conspire:—“Però fu permesso che il Faliero perdesse l'intelletto! &c.”—Byron Letters.]

² [This officer was chief of the artisans of the arsenal, and commanded the Bucentaur, for the safety of which, even if an

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.]

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

Doge. Leave the chamber,
Vincenzo. — [Exit VINCENZO.]

Sir, you may advance—what would you?
I. Ber. Redress.

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

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

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

I. Ber. 'Tis mine, and not the first I've shed for
Venice,

But the first shed by a Venetian hand:
A noble smote me.

Doge. Doth he live?
I. Ber. Not long—

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

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

I. Ber. I am a man, my lord.
Doge. Why so is he who smote you.

I. Ber. He is 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—
'Tis said the worm will.

Doge. Say—his name and lineage?
I. Ber. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause? or the pretext?
I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal², 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;—

accidental storm should arise, he was responsible with his life. He mounted guard at the ducal palace during an interregnum, and bore the red standard before the new Doge on his inauguration: for which service his perquisites were the ducal mantle, and the two silver basins from which the Doge scattered the regulated pittance which he was permitted to throw among the people.—Amelot de la Houssaye, 79.]

Behold my blood! the first time it e'er flow'd
Dishonourably.

Doge. Have you long time served?

I. Ber. So long as to remember Zara's siege,
And fight beneath the chief who beat the Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Faliero. —

Doge. How! are we comrades? — the state's ducal robes

Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed you?

I. Ber. 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?

I. Ber. Irreparably in my self-esteem.

Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at heart,

What would you do to be revenged on this man?

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

Doge. Then wherefore came you here?

I. Ber. I come for justice,

Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, 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!

I. Ber. How says your highness?

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

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

Doge. Ay, doubtless they have 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.

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

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

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

Doge. Give them breath.

Mine have no further outrage to endure.

I. Ber. Then, in a word, it rests but on your word

To punish and avenge — I will not say

My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,

However vile, to such a thing as I am? —

But the base insult done your state and person.

Doge. You overrate my power, which is a pageant.

This cap is not the monarch's crown; these robes
Might move compassion, like a beggar's rags;

Nay, more, a beggar's are his own, and these
But lent to the poor puppet, who must play
Its part with all its empire in this ermine.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be king?

Doge. Yes — of a happy people.

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

Doge. Ay,

If that the people shared that sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves
To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra,
The poisonous heads of whose envenom'd body
Have breath'd a pestilence upon us all.

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

Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and 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 con-
quered;

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 birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view

Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this?
Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripp'd her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
She'd tell thee 't was for all her little ones.

I. Ber. And yet they made thee duke.

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

I. Ber. You shall do both, if you possess the will;

And many thousands more not less oppress'd,

Who wait but for a signal — will you give it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.

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

Doge. Say on.

I. Ber. Not thou,
Nor I alone, are injured and abused,
Contemn'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.

I. Ber. No, I will speak

At every hazard; and if Venice' Doge

Should turn delator, be the shame on him,

And sorrow too; for he will lose far more

Than I.

Doge. From me fear nothing; out with it!

I. Ber. Know then, that there are met and sworn
in secret

A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true;

Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long

Grieved over that of Venice, and have right

To do so; having served her in all climes,

And having rescued her from foreign foes,
Would do the same from those within her walls.

They are not numerous, nor yet too few

For their great purpose; they have arms, and means,
And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.

Doge. For what then do they pause?

I. Ber. An hour to strike.

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

I. Ber. I now have placed

My life, my 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?

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

Doge. How, sir! do you menace?

I. Ber. 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 "lead'n roofs,"
To force a single name from me of others.
The Pozzi² and the Piombi were in vain;
They might wring blood from me, but treachery
never.

And I would pass the fearful "Bridge of Sighs,"
Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows
Between the murderers and the 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?

I. Ber. Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be
Suspected of combining to destroy it.

Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and 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? [moved]

I. Ber. Some rumours that the Doge was greatly
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.

I. Ber. And is this all?

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

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

Doge. But I must know your plan, your names,
and numbers;

The last may then be doubled, and the former
Matured and strengthen'd.

I. Ber. We're enough already:
You are the sole ally we covet now.

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

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

Doge. When? where?

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

Doge. Stay, I must think of this.
What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?

I. Ber. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

I. Ber. Not were he your son.

Doge. Wretch! darest thou name my son? He
died in arms

At Sapienza for this faithless state.
Oh! that he were alive, and I in ashes!
Or that he were alive ere I be ash'd!
I should not need the dubious aid of strangers.

I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers whom thou
doubtest,

But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with them.

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

I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and 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?

out to die, was conducted across the gallery to the other side,
and being then led back into the other compartment, or
cell, upon the bridge, was there strangled. The low portal
through which the criminal was taken into this cell is now
walled up; but the passage is open, and is still known by the
name of the Bridge of Sighs. — HOBHOUSE.]

¹ 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.

² [The state dungeons, called Pozzi, or wells, were sunk in
the thick walls of the palace; and the prisoner, when taken

I. Ber. Late, but the atmosphere is thick and dusky ;
'Tis a sirocco.

Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires ! ; the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul ;
A gondola², with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

I. Ber. I will not fail.

Doge. And now retire —

I. Ber. In the full hope your highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave.

[*Exit ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.*]

Doge (solus). At midnight, by the church Saints
John and Paul,
Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair —
To what ? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin states !
And will not my great sires leap from the vault,
Where lie two doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them ? Would they
could !

For I should rest in honour with the honour'd.
Alas ! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a name,
Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles ; but I will redeem it
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that's base in Venice,
And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of time,
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,
But try the Cæsar, or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert — success.³

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.

ANGIOLINA (*wife of the DOGE*) and MARIANNA.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer ?

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

Ang. Would he were 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

¹ [The Doges were all buried in St. Mark's before Faliero. It is singular that when his predecessor, Andrea Dandolo, died, the Ten made a law that all the future Doges should be buried with their families in their own churches — one would think, by a kind of presentiment. So that all that is said of his *ancestral Doges*, as buried at St. John's and Paul's, is altered from the fact, they being in St. Mark's. Make a note of this, and put *Editor* as the subscription to it. As I make such pretensions to accuracy, I should not like to be twitted even with such trifles on that score. Of the play they may say what they please, but not so of my costume and *dram. pers.* — they having been real existences. — *Byron Letters*, Oct. 1820.]

² A gondola is not like a common boat, but is as easily

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

Mar. Assuredly
The Doge can not suspect you ?

Ang. Suspect me !
Why Steno dared not : when he 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. 'Twere fit
He should be punish'd grievously.

Ang. He is so.

Mar. What ! is the sentence pass'd ? 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, " 'twas but a name : "

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.

³ [What Gifford says of the first act is very consolatory. English, sterling *genuine English*, is a desideratum amongst you, and I am glad that I have got so much left : though Heaven knows how I retain it : I hear none but from my valet, and he is Nottinghamshire ; and I see none but in your new publications, and theirs is *no* language at all, but jargon. Gifford says that it is good English, and Foscolo says that the characters are right Venetian —

⁴ Here are in all *two* worthy voices gain'd. " — *Byron Letters*, Sept. 1820.]

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 choose,
Or aught save their past choice.

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

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

Mar. Here comes the Doge — shall I retire ?

Ang. It may
Be better you should quit me ; he seems 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 —

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

Doge. At sunset. — Stay a moment — let me see —
Say in the second hour of night. [*Exit PIETRO.*]

Ang. My lord !

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

Ang. You were 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 ?¹

¹ [This scene is, perhaps, the finest in the whole play. The character of the calm, pure-spirited Angiolina is developed in it most admirably ; — the great difference between her temper and that of her fiery husband is vividly portrayed ; — but not less vividly touched is that strong bond of their union which exists in the common nobleness of their deeper natures. There is no spark of jealousy in the old man's thoughts, — he does not expect the fervours of youthful passion in his wife, nor does he find them ; but he finds what is far better, — the fearless confidence of one, who, being to the heart's core innocent, can scarcely be a believer in the existence of such a thing as guilt. He finds every charm which gratitude, respect, anxious and deep-seated affection can give to the

confidential language of a lovely, and a modest, and a pious woman. She has been extremely troubled by her observance of the countenance and gesture of the Doge, ever since the discovery of Steno's guilt ; and she does all she can to soothe him from his proud irritation. Strong in her consciousness of purity, she has brought herself to regard without anger the insult offered to herself ; and the yet uncorrected instinct of a noble heart makes her try to persuade her lord, as she is herself persuaded, that Steno, whatever be the sentence of his judges, *must* be punished — more even than they would wish him to be — by the secret suggestions of his own guilty conscience, — the deep blushes of his privacy. — LOCKHART.]

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 't is 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 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 faint'd 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.

¹ [This scene between the Doge and Angiolina, though in-
tolerably long, has more force and beauty than any thing that
goes before it. She endeavours to soothe the furious mood
of her aged partner; while he insists that nothing but the
libeller's death could make fitting expiation for his offence.
This speech of the Doge is an elaborate, and, after all, inef-

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 make 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 filled these veins with poison
For their once healthful current? is it nothing
To have stain'd your name and mine — the noblest
names?

Is 't nothing to have brought into contempt
A prince before his people? to have fail'd
In the respect accorded by mankind
To youth in woman, and old age in man?

To virtue in your sex, and dignity [him.¹
In ours? — But let them look to it who have saved
Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies.

Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is Satan
saved

From wrath eternal?²

Ang. Do not speak thus wildly —
Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.
Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive them!
Ang. And will you?

fectual attempt, by rhetorical exaggerations, to give some
colour to the insane and unmeasured resentment on which
the piece hinges. — JEFFREY.
² [“Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is there not Hell?”
— M.S.]

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
My pardon more than my resentment, both [then
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 fail'd?

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, oppress'd
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 fiercest 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 choose, and urged in answer
Your father's choice.

Ang. I did so; I would do so
In face of earth and heaven; for I have never

Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,
In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.

Doge. I knew my heart would never treat you
harshly;

I knew my days could not disturb you long;
And then the daughter of my earliest friend,
His worthy daughter, free to choose again,
Wealthier and wiser, in the ripest bloom
Of womanhood, more skilful to select
By passing these probationary years;
Inheriting a prince's name and riches,
Secured, by the short penance of enduring
An old man for some summers, against all
That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might
Have urged against her right; my best friend's child
Would choose more fitly in respect of years,
And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My lord, I 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, choosing me, and chose; I trusted
Not to my qualities, nor would have faith
In such, nor outward ornaments of nature,
Were I still in my five and twentieth spring;
I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins; I trusted to the soul
God gave you — to the truths your father taught you —
To your belief in heaven — to your mild virtues —
To your own faith and honour, for my own. [trust,

Ang. You have done well. — I thank you for that
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