

The demi-deity, Alcides, in
His majesty of super-human 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 fall'n 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. ¹
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 can not 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

¹ [These passages, though not perfectly dramatic, have great sweetness and dignity, and remind us, in their rich verbosity, of the moral and mellifluous parts of Massinger. — JEFFREY.]

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 task, 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 'tis
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 [ber ; —
Which would not have thee mourn it, but remem-
Let us begone, my child — the time is pressing. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A retired Spot near the Arsenal.

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CALENDARO.

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

I. Ber. Why, well.

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

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. With what ? a mulct or an arrest ?

I. Ber. With death ! —

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

I. Ber. Yes ; and for one sole draught of hate, forego
The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of exile ;
Leaving one scorpion 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.

I. Ber. Thank Heaven, you were not — all had else
been marr'd :

As 'tis, our cause looks prosperous still.

Cal. You saw

The Doge — what answer gave he ?

I. Ber. That there was

No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Cal. I told you so before, and that 't was idle

To think of justice from such hands.

I. Ber. At least,

It 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 ?

I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal. Why not now ?

I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight. Get your
musters,

And bid our friends prepare their companies : —

Set all in readiness to strike the blow,

Perhaps in a few hours ; we have long waited

For a fit time — that hour is on the dial,

It may be, of to-morrow's sun : delay

Beyond may breed us double danger. See

That all be punctual at our place of meeting,

And 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 am 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.

I. Ber. 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.

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

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

I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you deem all those
Who are not restless, cold ; but there exists
Off in concentrated spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.

Cal. I do not doubt the elder ; but in Bertram
There is a hesitating softness, fatal

To enterprise like ours : I've seen that man
Weep like an infant o'er the misery

Of others, heedless of his own, though greater ;
And in a recent quarrel I beheld him

Turn sick at sight of blood, although a villain's.

I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes,
And feel for what their duty bids them do.

I have known Bertram long ; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of 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.

I. Ber. Such ties are not
For those who are called to the high destinies

Which purify corrupted commonwealths ;
We must forget all feelings save the *one* —

We must resign all passions save our purpose —
We must behold no object save our country —

And only look on death as beautiful,
So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,

And draw down freedom on her evermore.

Cal. But if we fail —

I. Ber. They never fail who die
In a great cause : the block may soak their gore ;

Their heads may sodden in the sun ; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls —

But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
E lapse, and others share as dark a doom,

They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct

The world at last to freedom : What were we
If Brutus had not lived ? He died in giving

Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson —
A name which is a virtue, and a soul

Which multiplies itself throughout all time,
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state

Turns servile : he and his high friend were styled
"The last of Romans !" Let us be the first

Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires,
Cal. Our fathers did not fly from Attila

Into these isles, where palaces have sprung
On banks redeem'd 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 silkworms masters!
The first at least was man, and used his sword
As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a word
As with a spell.

I. Ber. It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness;
To-day I have not been the usual round,
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care: these orders
In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have
Lent a fair 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.

I. Ber. 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 'tis
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 'tis begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

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

Cal. We will not fail.

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

Cal. A stranger! doth he know the secret?

I. Ber. Yes.

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

I. Ber. I have 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?

I. Ber. Ay, in spirit,
Although a child of greatness; he is one
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one —
One who has done great deeds, and seen great
changes;

No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;
Valiant in war, and sage in council; noble
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once 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 have need of such, and such you have need of us.

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

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

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

I. Ber. Even so.
My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had 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.

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

Enter the DOGE alone, disguised.

Doge (solus). I am before the hour, the hour
whose voice,

Peeling 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 tutelary saints who guard our house!
Vault where two Doges rest — my sires! who did

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!"¹

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

I. Ber. Who goes there?

Doge. A friend to Venice.

I. Ber. 'Tis he.

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

Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly.

I. Ber. Have with you. — I am proud and pleased
to see

Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all 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.

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

Doge. We! — We! — no matter — you have 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

¹ ["We fought to make our equals, not our lords:
— MS.]

² ["By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?
{requisite?} — MS.]

³ [The Doge, true to his appointment, is waiting for his
conductor before the church of San Paolo e Giovanni. There
is great loftiness, both of feeling and diction, in this passage.
— JEFFREY.]

⁴ [There is a great deal of natural struggle in the breast of
the high-born and haughty Doge, between the resentment
with which he burns on the one hand, and the reluctance
with which he considers the meanness of the associates with
whom he has leagu'd himself on the other. The conspiring
Doge is not, we think, meant to be ambitious for himself, but
he is sternly, proudly, a Venetian noble; and it is impossible
for him to tear from his bosom the scorn for every thing

Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel; — thou
No less than he who was thy sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.

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

Doge. We are observed, and have been.

I. Ber. We observed!

Let me discover — and this steel —

Doge. Put up;

Here are no human witnesses: look there —

What see you?

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

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?

I. Ber. My lord, these are mere fantasies; 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,
'Tis in such deeds as we are now upon.
Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as mine
Can rest, when he, their last descendant chief,
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves
With stung plebeians?⁴

I. Ber. 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,⁵
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 fall'n, so loudly call'd
To his redress: the very means I am forced
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,
That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.

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

plebeian which has been implanted there by birth, education,
and a long life of princely command. There are other
thoughts, too, and of a gentler kind, which cross from time
to time his perturbed spirit. He remembers — he cannot
entirely forget — the days and nights of old companionship,
by which he had long been bound to those whose sentence he
has consented to seal. He has himself been declaiming
against the folly of mercy, and arguing valiantly the necessity
of total extirpation, — and that, too, in the teeth even of some
of the plebeian conspirators themselves: yet the Poet, with
profound insight into the human heart, makes him shudder
when his own impetuosity has brought himself, and all who
hear him, to the brink. He cannot look upon the bloody
resolution, no not even after he himself has been the chief
instrument of its formation. — LOCKHART.]

⁵ ["Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,
{a cut-throat without shuddering." —
MS.]

Doge. On—On—
It is our knell, or that of Venice—On!
I. Ber. 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,¹
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.

¹ An historical fact. See APPENDIX: Marino Faliero, Note A.

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 have seen me
Put to the proof; or, if you should have doubts,
I'll clear them on your person!

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

Ber. I am no brawler; but can bear myself
As far among the foe as any he

Who hears me; else why have I been selected
To be of your chief comrades? but no less
I own my natural weakness; I have not
Yet learn'd 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 these 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.
Consp. Most welcome.—Brave Bertuccio, thou
art late—

Who is this stranger?

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

I. Ber. Stranger, step forth!
[*The DOGE discovers himself.*]

Consp. To arms!—we are 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? [bosoms,

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

Doge. Strike!—If I dreaded death, a death more
fearful

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

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

I. Ber. I disdain to speak.
They might and must have known a heart like
mine

Incapable of treachery; and the power
They gave me to adopt all fitting means
To further their design was ne'er abused.
They might be certain that whose'er was brought
By me into this council had been led
To take his choice—as brother, or as victim.

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

I. Ber. My lord, we would have 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.

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

Doge. You see me here,
As one of you hath said, an old, 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 hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state¹

Without its virtues—temperance and valour.
The lords of Lacedæmon were true soldiers,
But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved;
Although dress'd 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!
Consp. Long live Faliero!

I. Ber. Comrades! did I well?
Is not this man a host in such a cause?
Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you?
Cal. Ay, and the first amongst us, as thou hast been
Of Venice—be our general and chief.

Doge. Chief!—general!—I was general at Zara,
And chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, prince in Venice:
I cannot stoop—that is, I am not fit
To lead a band of—patriots: when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
'T is not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows—but now to the point:

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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:

¹ ["But all the {sins of the old Spartan state.} worst sins of the Spartan state."—MS.]

Israel has stated to me your whole plan—
'Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.

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

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, [one?
And now more dubious of the prince they have made
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 St. Mark's, which may not be
Struck without special order of the Doge
(The last poor privilege they leave their prince),
March on Saint Mark's!

I. Ber. And there?—

Doge. By different routes
Let your march be directed, every sixty
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of war
And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn
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 them,
'T will be but to be taken faint and single,
When the majority are put to rest. [scotch,

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

Ber. Once more, sir, 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?

I. Ber. Bertram,
This false compassion is a folly, and

¹ ["Fought by my side, and { Marc Cornaro } shared
My { Genoese embassy; } John Grimani }
{ mission to the Pope; } I saved the life, &c.—MS.]

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

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

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

Doge. Dolfino's father was my friend, and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared¹
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 choose me for their prince, and then farewell!
Farewell all social memory! all thoughts [ships,
In common! and sweet bonds which link old friend-
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 whispering of the days gone by,
And seeming not all dead, as long as two
Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
Which once were one and many, still retain
A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble—
Oime! Oime!—and must I do this deed?

² ["Bear witness with me! ye who hear and know,
And feel our mutual mass of many wrongs."—MS.]

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

Doge. Your patience
A moment—I recede not: mark with me
The gloomy vices of this government.
From the hour they 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, 'twas the state's policy;
They baffled me, 'twas 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 foe 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.

I. Ber. 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 sanction'd; 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.²

Cal. And now to action!
Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be

¹ ["I could have forgiven the dagger or the bowl, any thing,
but the deliberate desolation piled upon me, when I stood
alone upon my hearth, with my household gods shiver'd
around me. Do you suppose I have forgotten or forgiven it?
It has, comparatively, swallowed up in me every other feeling,
and I am only a spectator upon earth till a tenfold opportunity
offers. It may come yet."—Byron Letters, 1819.]

² [The struggle of feelings with which the Doge undertakes
the conspiracy is admirably contrasted with the ferocious
eagerness of his low-born associates; and only loses its effect,
because we cannot but be sensible that the man who felt thus
could not have gone on with his guilty project, unless stimu-
lated by some greater and more accumulated injuries than
are, in the course of the tragedy, brought before the percep-
tion of the reader.—HEBER.]

³ ["Nor turn aside to strike at such a { carrion,
wretch."—MS.]

⁴ [The great defect of Marino Faliero is, that the nature
and character of the conspiracy excite no interest. It matters
little that Lord Byron has been faithful to history, if the event
is destitute of a poetic character. Like Alfieri, to whom

The last night of mere words: I'd fain be doing!
Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me wakeful!

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

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! [you
Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage to
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,³
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.

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

Cal. Farewell, then,—until dawn!

I. Ber. Success go with you!
Consp. We will not fail—Away! My lord, farewell.⁴
[The Conspirators salute the DOGE and ISRAEL
BERTUCCIO, and retire, headed by PHILIP CALEN-
DARO. The DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO
remain.]

I. Ber. We have them in the toil—it cannot fail!
Now thou 'rt indeed a sovereign, and wilt make

in many points, his genius approximates, he is fettered by an
intractable story, which is wholly remote from the instincts
and feelings of mankind. How elevated soever may be his
diction, how vivid soever his colouring, a moral truth is
wanting—that charm, so difficult to define, so easy to ap-
prehend, which, diffused over the scene, excites in generous
bosoms an exalted enthusiasm for the great interests of
humanity. This is the poetry of history. It is the charm of
the William Tell of Schiller; it is felt in the awful plot of
Brutus, and, to a certain degree, in the conspiracy of Pierre
and Jaffier; for the end and purpose of these conspiracies
were, to redeem their country from insult and oppression.
But in Marino Faliero's attempt against the state, we con-
template nothing but the project of a sanguinary ruffian seek-
ing to grasp unlimited authority, and making, after the
established precedents of all usurpers, the wrongs and suffer-
ings of the commonalty his pretence; while, in another aspect
of his character, we see him goaded, by an imagined injury,
into an enterprise which would have inundated Venice with
her best blood. Is this a sublime spectacle, calculated to
purge the mind, according to the aphorism of Aristotle, by
means of terror or pity?—*Ecl. Rev.*