MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.
by Lord Byron

edited by Peter Cochran
with thanks to Gregory Dowling, Jane Stabler, and Valeria Vallucci.

Execution of Faliero
by Delacroix.

Faliero’s “portrait”.

The following appendices will be found at the end of this document:

I. MCCCLIV. / MARINO FALIERO. / DOGE XLIX. (from Muratori’s *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*)
II. Translation of I by Francis Cohen.
IV. Translation of III by Valeria Vallucci.
VI. Translation of V.
VIII. Translation of VII.
EDITOR’S INTRODUCTION

Faliero the myth

The first thing that would have struck Byron on discovering Marino Faliero in Venice in November 1816 was that he had no tomb: indeed, nothing to commemorate him in a positive way. In the space where his portrait should be, on the wall of the Great Hall of the Palace of the Doges, there is a painted curtain drawn across (see illustration above). Two years later, Byron tells us in his preface, he sought out the actual tomb, and was shown “a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription”.1 It would have coincided eerily with the fates of so many of his own protagonists – the Giaour, Conrad, Lara, Kaled, Ezzelin, Alp, Parisina, Hugo … and even the recently-created Astarte – creatures of his own imagining, none of whom are properly buried.

No chronicle credits the historical Marino Faliero with anything approaching tragic dignity. He seems to have been a Venetian mafioso who tried, in his senescence, to go too far, and paid the penalty. But, having caught Byron’s imagination, he became for Byron a hero of whom great things might have been expected: “Had the man succeeded, he would have changed the face of Venice, and perhaps of Italy”, he writes, at the end of Appendix III, on no evidence at all. Faliero had (in so far as the scanty record shows), no agenda other than unfocussed revenge and self-aggrandisement – but had not Byron, earlier in the year, been reported as having “gone to the length of strutting about in his peer’s robes, and saying he was like Bonaparte, and the greatest man in the world, not excepting Bonaparte”?2 Faliero, with his arrogance, insane prickliness and absurd manoeuvrings (so readily detected and defeated), might indeed be the stuff of drama – a drama by Massinger, for instance. But Byron thought Massinger and his like “turbid mountebanks”,3 and would not be stopped:

. . . I am aware of what you say of Otway; and am a very great admirer of his, – all except of that maudlin bitch of chaste lewdness and blubbering curiosity, Belvidera, whom I utterly despise, abhor, and detest; but the story of Marino Falieri is different, and, I think, so much finer, that I wish Otway had taken it instead: the head conspiring against the body for refusal of redress for a real injury, – jealousy – treason, with the more fixed and inveterate passions (mixed with policy) of an old or elderly man – the devil himself could not have a finer subject, and he is your only tragic dramatist.

Voltaire was asked why no woman has ever written even a tolerable tragedy? “Ah (said the Patriarch) the composition of a tragedy requires testicles.” If this be true, Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does; I suppose she borrows them.

There is still, in the Doge’s Palace, the black veil painted over Falieri’s picture, and the staircase whereon he was first crowned Doge, and subsequently decapitated. This was the thing that most struck my imagination in Venice – more than the Rialto, which I visited for the sake of Shylock; and more, too, than Schiller’s “Armenian”, a novel which took a great hold of me when a boy. It is also called the “Ghost Seer”, and I never walked down St Mark’s by moonlight without thinking of it, and “at nine o’clock he died!” – But I hate things all fiction; and therefore the Merchant and Othello have no great associations for

1: John Julius Norwich, whose A History of Venice (Allen Lane 1982), contains, at pp.223-9, an excellent account of the conspiracy, records that Faliero was “buried in an unmarked grave” (p.228).
2: Hobhouse diary, February 12 1816.
3: See BLJ VIII, 56-7.
me: but *Pierre* has. There should always be some foundation of fact for the most airy fabric, and pure invention is but the talent of a liar . . . (BLJ V 203: letter to Murray, April 2 1817).

He wrote to Murray on January 27 1821, confessing, “I am convinced that I should have done precisely what the Doge did on those provocations.”

**Alessandro Guiccioli, and Vittorio Alfieri**

By 1820 Byron was still thinking about a play on the subject of Faliero; and had met, briefly befriended, and then, at great length, cuckolded Alessandro Guiccioli. Guiccioli, a theatre fanatic, had earlier in his life known and admired the playwright Vittorio Alfieri, and assisted him in mounting and acting in some of his plays. He had said (and not to Byron’s face), how much Byron reminded him of the dramatist:

> I have seen myself compared personally or poetically, in English, French, German (as interpreted to me), Italian, and Portuguese, within these nine years, to … [about twenty proper nouns follow] … to Alfieri, &c., &c., &c. The likeness to Alfieri was asserted very seriously by an Italian, who had known him in his younger days: it of course related merely to our apparent personal dispositions. He did not assert it to me (for we were not then good friends), but in society.5

Alfieri’s plays are not at all like those of Otway or Massinger. Their diction is pure, chaste and dignified, no comedy is allowed, and they adhere scrupulously to the Unities. Byron wished to write plays of this sort, and from a mixture of motives. Firstly, he had personal experience of Alfieri’s excellence as a dramatist:

> Last night [August 11th 1819, at Bologna] I went to the representation of Alfieri’s Mirra – the two last acts of which threw me into convulsions. – I do not mean by that word – a lady’s hysterics – but the agony of reluctant tears – and the choaking shudder which I do not often undergo for fiction. – This is but the second time for anything under reality, the first was on seeing Kean’s Sir Giles Overreach.6

Notice, however, the other dramatist who had sent Byron into a “choaking shudder”: it was Massinger.

Byron’s second reason for trying to emulate Alfieri was his paradoxical dislike of the English dramatic tradition which Massinger (with Shakespeare at his back), represented. This despite the fact that William Gifford, his “literary father”, admired and edited many of the old dramatists, and had even persuaded him to re-write the third of *Manfred* with *Dr Faustus* as a model. He thought Shakespeare himself “the worst of models – though

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4: BLJ VIII, 69.
5: BLJ IX, 11.
6: BLJ VI, 206.
the most extraordinary of writers”;\(^7\) which did not prevent him from quoting Shakespeare more often in his letters – and in *Don Juan* – than any other writer.

The third reason was the fact that, though he was himself an excellent actor (amateur, of course), and a frequent theatre-goer, sitting for a while on the Management Committee of Drury Lane, and sifting through dozens of bad play-scripts, he despised the London theatre and thought success there constituted a degradation. A brief and squalid liaison with a Drury Lane actress called Susan Boyce – while his marriage was disintegrating – would have increased his prejudice.

This had not stopped him from writing his first play, *Manfred*, as a script tailored to the requirements of Drury Lane. It was not too long, so that it could go on a bill with shorter pieces, like farces and ballets: it has a leading role designed (I believe) with Edmund Kean’s voice and personality in mind: and it calls, in the Alpine scenery in its first act and the Hall of Arimanes in its second, for the sort of spectacular scenery that Drury Lane handled well.

However, Byron never *says* that he’d like *Manfred* staged. Had anyone tried to, I have no doubt he would have protested.

A patrician disdain for mere professionalism underlies much of this nonsense (and a fear of failure in the vulgarity of the market): but his seeming rejection of the central tradition of English literature does also indicate an uncertain judgement. We have to remember that the way Shakespeare was performed in Byron’s day, with huge cuts, massive pauses for scene-changes, slow, non-conversational delivery, and much money spent on costume and scenery, would have given no great indication of his stagecraft – but we still expect something less conventional from one with Byron’s insight.

Three plays resulted from Byron’s determination to be as much like Alfieri, and as unlike Shakespeare, as possible: two are *Sardanapalus* and *The Two Foscari*, and the first is *Marino Faliero*.

There is much speculation possible as to how much of Byron is in the character of Faliero. The way Faliero surrounds himself with a gang of admiring bully-boy inferiors reminds us of a recurring “homosocial” fantasy on Byron’s part. But if we want to find an old Italian aristocrat, married to a much younger wife, arrogant, prickly, rich, manipulative, resentful, jealous, and politically aware, we have to look no further than Alessandro Guiccioli. Thomas Medwin records Byron himself as making the parallel:

> The Count Guiccioli … was sixty when he married Teresa; she sixteen. From the first they had separate compartments, and she always used to call him Sir. What could be expected from such a preposterous connexion? For some time she was an Angiolina, and he a Marino Faliero, a good old man; but young women, and your Italian ones too, are not satisfied with your good old men.\(^8\)

Guiccioli once wrote in his diary:

\(^7\): BLJ VIII, 152.
Ormai non rimane ad un gentiluomo altra alternativa che di lasciarsi tagliar la testa dalla canaglia o di mettersene a capo. Preferisco il secondo partito. (The only alternatives now left to a nobleman are either to have his head cut off by the rabble, or to put himself at their head. I prefer the second alternative.)

Faliero gets the worst of both these worlds. He puts himself at the head of the rabble, and gets his head cut off.

The only difference is that Guiccioli’s wife, unlike Faliiero’s, was unfaithful to him. The play, in its Alfierian severity, becomes in this analysis a tribute to the man who had first likened its writer to Alfieri. Byron, who wrote it, had thanked him by bedding his wife.

If Byron is to believed, Alessandro’s wife Teresa was more than usually demanding during the writing of the play:

I wish you too to recollect one thing which is nothing to the reader. – – I never wrote nor copied an entire Scene of that play – without being obliged to break off – to break a commandment; – to obey a woman’s, and to forget God’s. – Remember the drain of this upon a Man’s heart and brain – to say nothing of his immortal Soul. – Fact I assure you – the Lady always apologized for the interruption – but you know the answer a man must make when and while he can. – It happened to be the only hour I had in the four and twenty for composition or reading and I was obliged to divide even it, such are the defined duties of a Cavalier Servente, or Cavalier Schiavo.

Alessandro’s opinion of the play would be interesting to have. Near the end of its composition (on July 6 1820), Teresa was granted a separation from him; the day before it was completed (it was completed on July 16), she left him, without telling him, to go to her father at Settimello. According to Trelawny, she “said Faliero the Doge of Venice was by far the best of Lord Byron [sic] writings”: perhaps her liking for depended on recollections he knew nothing about.

Cato Street

In London on February 20 1820, an article in The New Times (the government newspaper), said that Lord Harrowby, Lord President of the Council, would be holding a dinner-party on the 21st, at his house at 39 Grosvenor Square. His cabinet colleagues, said the New Times, would all be his guests. The article was pointed out to a man called Arthur Thistlewood, who had already done twelve months for threatening a breach of the

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10: BLJ VII, 195.

11: Medwin ed. Lovell, p.21n.
peace, and who had once planned an uprising involving an attack on the Bank of England.

Of Thistlewood’s radical credentials, there can be no doubt. His plan was for Coutts’ Bank, the Mansion House, the Bank of England and the Tower, to have been assaulted after the cabinet had been killed, all paper money burnt, and the coin distributed to the poor. Unfortunately for him, the New Times article was a plant, and the man who had pointed it out to him, George Edwards, was a government spy – an agent provocateur. There was no cabinet dinner party planned at all, and Thistlewood was walking into a trap.

In Newgate on Thursday February 24 1820, Byron’s friend Hobhouse wrote in his diary:

This morning the Times says Arthur Thistlewood proclaimed a traitor and a murderer – £1,000 reward offered for him – also a denunciation of High Treason against those who harbour him. This is against law – a man must be arraigned or convicted before it is High Treason to harbour him. People coming in the morning tell the whole story: a plot to murder the ministers at a cabinet dinner. The conspirators met in a stable in Cato Street, Edgware Road. They fought desperately – Thistlewood killed one Smithers, a Bow Street officer. He was taken in bed this morning, about half-past nine, I believe. This is, as Brown my jailor says, a trump card for ministers, just before the election.

A trump card indeed it was – just as the Home Office, for whom George Edwards worked, had planned it to be. Thistlewood and his radical associates, twenty-seven in all, had rented a two-story stable in Cato Street, off the Edgware Road, about ten minutes’ walk from Harrowby’s house in Grosvenor Square. Some had just come because it was a cold night, and Thistlewood had been able to afford a bit of coal. Edwards had told his Home Office bosses everything, and they had ordered a Bow Street magistrate called Richard Birnie, with runners, and Coldstream Guards as backup, to make the arrest. On the evening of February 23 the trap had been sprung. Without waiting for the soldiers, Birnie had sent his men in. Only Thistlewood and one other had been prepared to put up a fight, and Thistlewood had run a Bow Street Runner, Richard Smithers, through with his rapier (an unlikely, aristocratic weapon for a ruffian to wield).

The Tories didn’t want the embarrassment of having to call their own agent provocateur as witness, so they offered to drop charges if any of the “official” conspirators would come forward. Two did; and Thistlewood, together with four others, were sentenced to death, and hanged and decapitated on May 1. The mob shouted for George Edwards as the victims died.

Thistlewood had tried to implicate Hobhouse in the plot, though as Hobhouse was in jail at the time of its occurrence, nothing could stick. But the Duke of Wellington – clearly as paranoid about conspiracies, and as in thrall to his own party’s lies, as the rest of the nation – was convinced that if the conspiracy had succeeded, Hobhouse would have accepted the presidency of the new-model, post-Cato Street British Republic.

Byron started work on Marino Faliero on April 4, 1820, midway between the “foiling” of the “plot” and the executions.

Attempts have been made to link the play with Byron’s involvement with the Carbonari,\textsuperscript{14} the Italian secret society with which we know he was involved; but apart from a few implications in his correspondence, evidence for this period is missing. The Carbonari were in any case middle- and upper-class; part of Faliero’s problem (in the play), is the need he’s under to associate with such “plebeians” as Israel Bertuccio. Now the historical Bertuccio is in no source identified as being of any class other than the ruling class: making him a “plebeian” is Byron’s decision, though he speaks, not the language of Jack Cade, still less that of Tom Paine, but the same sort of blank verse as everyone else. The seventh verse of the song Byron wrote to the radical Whig Hobhouse (on March 23 1820), goes

When to the mob you make a speech,
   My boy Hobbie, O,
How do you keep without their reach
   The watch within your fobby, O? –

… Hobhouse, Byron asserts (as is often the case, in the teeth of the evidence), is associating, as his Faliero will, with dangerous lower-class radicals: he’s letting his social side down – he’s a threat to property!

Byron never seems to have suspected that Cato Street had been a put-up job, even though Hobhouse was fully aware of it. On March 29 1820 (before beginning the play), Byron had written to Hobhouse, \textit{à propos} of the “conspiracy”:

… I doubt that Thistlewood will be a great help to the Ministers in all the elections – but especially in the Westminster. – What a set of desperate fools these Utican Conspirators seem to have been. – As if in London after the disarming acts, or indeed at any time a secret could have been kept among thirty or forty. – And if they had killed poor Harrowby – in whose house I have been five hundred times – at dinners and parties – his wife is one of “the Exquisites” – and t’other fellows – what end would it have answered? – “They understand these things better in France” as Yorick says – but really if these sort of awkward butchers are to get the upper hand – \textit{I} for one will declare off, I have always been (\textit{before you were} – as you well know) a well-wisher to and voter for reform in Parliament –but “such fellows as these who will never go to the Gallows with any credit” – – such infamous Scoundrels as Hunt and Cobbett – in short the whole gang (always excepting you B[urdett]. & D[ouglas].) disgust and make one doubt of the virtue of any principle or politics, which can be embraced by similar ragamuffins – I know that revolutions are not to be made with rose-water, but though some blood may & must be shed on such occasions, there is no reason it should be \textit{clotted} – in short the Radicals seem to be no better than Jack Cade, or Wat Tyler – and to be dealt with accordingly …\textsuperscript{15}

It seems that, if a real Faliero had tried a revolution in London, Byron would have been in the first rank of his enemies. But that did not stop him from creating a tragic hero who was a fantasy amalgam of himself, his best friend, and the man whose wife he was fucking.

Some reviewers made the connection with Cato Street:

\textsuperscript{14}: E.D.H. Johnson, \textit{A Political Interpretation of Byron’s Marino Faliero}, MLQ 3 1942.
\textsuperscript{15}: BLJ VII, 62-3.
... his Lordship has drawn from real life, as well as from the storehouse of recorded poetry. If Thistlewood and Ings could have delivered themselves in blank verse, they would have spoken much the same words (for they did utter the same sentiments) as the Doge, and his accomplice Israel Bertuccio. This is as it should be, and if Lord Byron consulted his own bosom, instead of the newspapers, it proves his deep knowledge of the worst parts of human nature.\(^\text{16}\)

Conspiracies ... admit of little variety in the delineation; and we do not know that there was much real difference betwixt our Thistlewood and the Venetian Israel Bertuccio, or Philip Calendaro, of Lord Byron – or even the Doge Marino Faliero himself.\(^\text{17}\)

**Ur-texts**

Byron’s reading of at least four plays (leaving Shakespeare aside), lie behind *Marino Faliero*.

On February 20th 1814 he makes a laconic entry in his journal:

> Went out, and answered some letters, yawned now and then, – and redde the Robbers. Fine, – but Fiesco is better; and Alfieri[,] and Monti’s Aristodemo best. They are more equal than the Tedeschi dramatists.\(^\text{18}\)

“... more equal” is a phrase covering a multitude of riddles. In its depiction of an Italian city-state torn between factions, all of whom claim to be the true patriots, Schiller’s *Fiesco* (his second play), led Byron on to his two Venetian tragedies: and the confused, selfish motivation of Fiesco himself gave Byron the example for the confused, selfish motivation of Marino Faliero. However, unlike Byron’s practise in *Faliero* – where I count five dramatic moments in about three hours – Schiller, true to his great model (not afraid, as Alfieri was, to lift entire scenes and characters from Shakespeare), crowds the stage with incident. The two climactic events, Fiesco’s accidental killing of his wife, and Verrina’s killing of Fiesco, are contrived to a degree, but that doesn’t detract from Schiller’s ambition, so different from Byron’s. Unlike Byron’s practise, whereby the doom of Faliero is sealed from midway through the action, and little tension exists, we’re never sure until *Fiesco* is over who will emerge victorious from the struggle. It’s almost as if Byron saw from Schiller what advantage there was in taking Shakespeare as your model – and determined not to take Shakespeare as his model.

As with *Faliero*, the climax is signalled by the tolling of a bell.

Some of but not all the characters in Thomas Otway’s *Venice Preserv’d* (1682), about the betrayal of another real historical conspiracy to overthrow the Venetian state, were very dear to Byron (see his letter, quoted above). The conspiracy starts from a personal motive, as does Faliero’s, and the Venetian politics are generalised. Byron copies its outline closely. The conspiracy is, like Faliero’s, so quickly foiled that we feel cheated, and the climax is the tolling of the bell, as in *Fiesco*. But its highly emotional, nay, sensational / sentimental style, puts it at the opposite extreme. Byron’s heroine,

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Angiolina, is very cool indeed compared with Otway’s Belvidera (“that maudlin bitch of chaste lewdness and blubbering curiosity … whom I utterly despise, abhor, and detest”, as Byron described her). The play was (but is no longer) very popular, and many reviewers took strong objection to the way Byron had, they asserted, plagiarised it. The European Magazine said,

The entire Tragedy is, indeed, little more than a remodification of “Venice Preserved.” And the action, the characters, and the catastrophe, are nearly the same. We have the Doge instead of Pierre, one Bertram instead of Jaffier, Angiolina, for Belvidera, and a Steno to wound her virtue instead of a Renault; the other parties in the drama also, individually or collectively, repeat most of the sentiments of the dramatis personæ of Otway: and the resemblance is certainly more than fortuitous.¹⁹

The Literary Gazette was contemptuous, taking issue with Byron’s statement in the preface, that he hadn’t read Otway’s play for six years:

… we must declare, that if any writer can be allowed to plunder another in the way Lord Byron has plundered Otway, and plead in defence that the robbery was committed in open day, we may as well concede at once, that barefaced depredation in literature is not a cognizable crime; or that effrontery is a complete justification of it … the whole story … would have required a considerable degree of talent and skill to render it different from Venice Preserved; but the author has been at trouble whatever in that respect … ²⁰

At V iii 22, Faliero compares himself to “Agis”. Alfieri’s play about the reforming Spartan king Agis (Agide), tried for his egalitarian plans to cancel the people’s debts, is, though its hero is more obviously sympathetic than Faliero, a clear model. Even more obvious, however (though not signalled), are Byron’s lifts from Alfieri’s La Conquiera de’ Pazzi, about an unsuccessful conspiracy against the Medicis in fifteenth-century Florence. In Byron’s play, as in Alfieri’s, the hero’s conspiratorial determination is fuelled by the resentment with which he is consumed; in each case, the wife – in Alfieri, a Medici herself, and thus suffering from a conflict of loyalties – tries to plead with her husband to mollify his anger. Scenes between a potential criminal against the state, and the wife in whom he does not confide, are of course familiar from Shakespeare’s Henry IV I and Julius Caesar. Alfieri (who refused to read Shakespeare, fearing that he might be influenced by doing so), plays considerable games with the relationships between the historical personages to achieve maximum dramatic effect. As in Faliero, the tension is heightened by the tolling of a bell.

In neither of the Alfieri plays, nor in Otway, does the head of state conspire against the state itself, which is what does happen in Fiesco.

Byron was loud in his insistence on the trustworthiness of his local colour and his historical accuracy:

History is closely followed. – (… I have consulted Sanuto – Sandi – Navagero – & an anonymous Siege of Zara – besides the histories of Laugier Daru – Sismondi &c.) … ²¹

¹⁹: The European Magazine, May 1821, RR II p.971.
²⁰: The Literary Gazette, April 28 1821, RR IV p.1417.
²¹: BLJ VII, 131-2.
In fact most of his political details are wrong, especially those relating to the different councils and groups by which Venice was ruled. The notes below will say more. None of the buildings, statues, and so on, into which he puts the action, existed in 1355, when Faliero died. He scatters anachronisms with the profusion of an 1820 Mel Gibson. The church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, where Act III scene i is set, comes nearest, but was only being built then. I do not know whether this shows ignorance on Byron’s part, or attempted sleight-of-hand. His appendices (see next section) certainly make us worry about his ability to think straight.

**The early reviews**

*Marino Faliero* was taken to the cleaners in the reviews, partly on account of the plagiarism of Otway (see above), partly because of what was perceived as the dullness of its action, partly because of what was held to be the generally poor quality of Byron’s verse. At least two reviews – those in the *Literary Gazette*, and Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review*, gave Byron the ultimate insult, and deliberately printed some passages as prose. *The Literary Gazette* said,

> It is related of George II, that not having a remarkable taste for poetical composition, he was rather annoyed at the share of public attention occupied by Pope. “Bope! Bope! (exclaimed his Majesty, in his German English, when some one was talking more about the bard than was agreeable) – Bope! I hear of nothing but dis Bope. Vy does he write Boetry? I wish he would write Bross!” This king would have admired Lord Byron’s tragedy, from which we shall transcribe the second scene, without appealing to the eye with equi-longitudinal lines, as our example of the noble writer’s Bross.22

I ii is then printed, entirely as prose. Jeffrey was more patronising still:

> This dutiful person [Bertuccio Faliero] comments thus calmly on the matter, in a speech which, though set down by Lord Byron in lines of ten syllables, we shall take the liberty to print as prose – which it undoubtedly is – and very ordinary and homely prose too.23

Jeffrey then prints, as prose, I ii 75-87.

*The European Magazine* had the unkindest cut of all:

> … upon the whole, if the Noble author professes to despise writing for the stage, the stage may perhaps, very fairly retort, that his compositions are not likely to be successful there.24

More extracts from the reviews will be found above, in the *Ur-texts* section, and below, as a note to V i 465.

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**Byron’s appendices**

Byron gives the play seven appendices, II being a translation of I, V a translation of IV, and VII a translation of VI. The one he does not translate, III, the present edition does translate, making eight appendices.

So much of the content of the appendices contradicts the detail of the play that one wonders at Byron’s fearlessness in including them, given his supposed obsession with historical verisimilitude. What he implies is evidence of the truth of his play, is in fact the reverse.

Appendix I is a passage from Muratori’s 1748 *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, which is itself an Italian translation of the fifteenth- or sixteenth-century chronicle *Vite dei Doge*, by Marin Sanudo, or Sanuto. Appendix II is translation of I by Francis Cohen, not of Muratori’s eighteenth-century Italian, but of Sanuto’s original Venetian.

The passage condenses the whole story of the tragedy. Notable alterations are the character whom Byron calls Israel Bertuccio, called by Sanudo “Admiral of the Arsenal”, and not given a working-class pedigree. “Bertucci Israello” is a separate person, and the conspirators do not meet in the shadow of SS. Paolo e Giovanni, but at the Doge’s palace. We note also that the Council, having discovered the conspiracy, “sent to the keeper of the Bell-tower, and forbade the tolling of the bells”, thus making the climax of Act IV historically impossible. At the block, Faliero neither curses Venice, nor prophecies her doom.

Appendix III is an Italian translation of a letter by Petrarch from Levati’s *Viaggi di Petrarca*. Our Appendix IV is a new translation of III by Valeria Vallucci. Byron’s reasons for not translating it are clear, for the pro-Faliero conclusions he draws from it run clean counter to Petrarch’s actual lament at Falierio’s folly. Byron’s summary (“Had the man succeeded, he would have changed the face of Venice, and perhaps of Italy”), seems, to say the least, wilful.

Appendix V is an extract from Daru’s *Histoire de la République de Venise*, which Appendix VI translates. It chronicles the decay of Venetian morality in some detail, and appears to be Byron’s “evidence” that Faliero’s “prophecy” at V iii 44-101 has come true. Byron (who knew a lot about Venetian depravity), adds a passage of his own, listing distinguished Venetians whom he claims are exceptions to the general rule. They include a mysterious “Bucati”, whom I take to be Pietro Buratti, author of the *Elefanteide*, one of the rudest poems known. At least one person raised an eyebrow at this passage, wondering what on earth Byron intended by it: he was Richard Belgrave Hoppner, the consul, Byron’s friend, and his reaction is given in a note below.

Appendix VII is an extract from the *Histoire Littéraire d’Italie*, by P.I.Ginguené, which Appendix VIII translates. It tells of a prophecy about Venice’s decline, and Byron again uses it as “evidence” for the justice of Faliero’s fictitious curse – as though the historical Faliero really had made a prophetic curse just before his death. Byron adds to all this a note which does not relate to *Marino Faliero* at all, but which refutes a recent writer who had “repeatedly declined an introduction to me while in Italy”. For the full comical story, see the final note of this edition.

The appendices to *Marino Faliero* show the characteristic illogic of Byron’s thought-processes.
Publication, and the first production

Marino Faliero was finished on July 16 1820, copied (by Byron), by August 17, and sent to Murray on August 31 with the bald instruction, “Recollect that it is not a political play”. This palpable absurdity is reinforced on September 28 when, in another letter to Murray, he contradicts himself within the same sentence:

I suspect that in Marino Faliero you and yours won’t like the politics which are perilous to you in these times – – but recollect that it is not a political play – & that I was obliged to put into the mouths of the Characters the sentiments upon which they acted. – I hate all things written like Pizarro to represent france England & so forth – all I have done is meant to be pure Venetian – even to the very prophecy of it’s present state. (BLJ VII 184)

On October 1 he tells Kinnaird, on the contrary, that “It is full of republicanism – so will find no favour in Albemarle Street”.

We have several reactions from Hobhouse – none giving the remotest inkling that he connects the play with contemporary English politics, or indeed with politics at all. On October 20 he records, “Letters from Byron … desires me to read his new tragedy Marino Faliero”. On October 23 he further records, “reading Marino Faliero – I think it will act well.” On October 26, “Walked out – read two acts of Marino Faliero aloud.” He seems to have read it to his sisters and half-sisters (a sure sign that he found it harmless), for on November 6 he writes to Byron, saying, amongst much else:

I have read your tragedy twice & with great attention I think – Foscolo is right – it is very good Venetian – so good indeed that I think the very admirable & just picture of the sort of solitary grandeur of a Doge will not be quite intelligible except to a travelled or a learned man – My opinion is most decisive, that, with Kean for Marino Faliero, and with some little alterations, the play would succeed completely on the stage – You have fallen into an inadvertence at the close – Those in the last scene see over again what happened in the last scene but one – Do you recollect it? There are two sensualities in it that you should omit, I think, namely the comparison of women’s robes to fleecy clouds “twixt us & heaven,” and the inference you draw from pretty “extremities” – These whether considered either as prettiness or as impurities are unworthy of such a poet & such a play – I presume also to object to the long account which Lioni gives to himself of a Venetian masked ball – It may be poetic but I doubt whether it is dramatic or comes within the latitude of soliloquizing – I tried your play by what I imagine a good test. I read it aloud to half a dozen girls from 15 to 25. They were highly delighted & interested by the management of your plot simple as it is. Indeed the pedants cannot quarrel with you about the unities – you have been quite strict to that of time and as to place you have been much more particular than any of our dramatists except Addison …

Others, in addition to Hobhouse, thought the play would “act well”. Well before publication, Robert Elliston, the manager of Drury Lane, planned to put the play on. Byron did everything he could to stop the production, making it sound the ultimate degradation. In his Ravenna Journal entry for January 12 1821 he writes,

25: BLJ VII, 190.
Murray writes that they want to act the Tragedy of Marino Faliero; – more fools they, it was written for the closet. I have protested against this piece of usurpation, (which, it seems, is legal for managers over any printed work, against the author’s will) and I hope they will not attempt it. Why don’t they bring out some of the numberless aspirants for theatrical celebrity, now encumbering their shelves, instead of lugging me out of the library? I have written a fierce protest against any such attempt; but I still would hope that it will not be necessary, and that they will see, at once, that it is not intended for the stage. It is too regular – the time, twenty-four hours – the change of place not frequent – nothing melodramatic – no surprises, no starts, nor trap-doors, nor opportunities “for tossing their heads and kicking their heels” – and no love – the grand ingredient of a modern play.27

To Murray he had written, the previous day:

I protest – and desire you to protest stoutly and publicly – (if it be necessary) against any attempt to bring the tragedy on any stage. – It was written solely for the reader. – It is too regular – and too simple – and of too remote an interest for the Stage. I will not be exposed to the insolence of an audience – without a remonstrance … 28

… and a week later:

… I must really and seriously protest that you will beg of Messrs Harris or Elliston – to let the Doge alone – it is not an acting play; – it will not serve their purpose – it will destroy yours (the Sale) – and it will distress me. – It is not courteous, it is hardly even gentlemanly to persist in this appropriation of a man’s writings to their Mountebanks … 29

Later he asked Murray to ask both the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Holland to intervene and prevent “this cursed attempt at representation”,30 adding, in another letter to Murray written on the same day, “I cannot conceive how Harris or Elliston can be so insane as to think of acting M[arino]. F[aliero] – they might as well act the Prometheus of Æschylus …”31

The play is published by Murray (with The Prophecy of Dante), on April 21 1821. Only four days later, Hobhouse goes to Drury Lane, where it has been performed for the first time. Elliston has bought the book, had the script cut to ribbons,32 the actors, accustomed to swift line-learning (though see the Examiner’s review, below), and minimal rehearsal, have digested what remained, and acted it. Elliston had persuaded Lord Chancellor Eldon to reverse an injunction which Murray’s lawyers had brought against its performance by chasing him personally and cornering him on his own front step – on the very day of the opening night.

The Examiner reports a grim evening. Commenting, “… for once we were glad to see empty benches”, it goes on:

27: BLJ VIII, 22-3.
29: BLJ VIII, 64.
30: BLJ VIII, 66.
31: BLJ VIII, 67.
32: See Marino Faliero Doge of Venice, the 1821 Acting Version prepared by George Lamb, ed. James Hogg (Salzburg 1989).
In representation, as we expected, the scenes followed each other wearily and without interest ... Mr. Cooper played Marino Faliero. It is certainly ... an impracticable character, but he did not give us a single feature of him. We expected to see somewhat of the “fiery quality of the Duke,” – but no, – he was utterly subdued, and preached most tediously. The other performers, with the exception of Mrs. WEST and Mr. WALLACE, reminded us of the subalterns of a provincial corps. We must not forget the Prompter, – no one was of greater importance, and he did his duty most unremittingly. But Mr. POWELL could put no faith in whispers from the side scenes, and sat in judgment on the Doge, with Michael Steno at his back openly reading the part, which he, the grave Benintende, doled out, at second hand, in due solemnity. And this too is no injustice to a poet! But it is a pain to dwell upon the subject. We hope we shall not be compelled to recur to it.33

The cutting was done for Elliston by George Lamb, Caroline’s brother-in-law, and Hobhouse’s enemy from the ranks of the mainstream Whigs. It’s obvious that his remit has been in part “remove everything that holds up the action”, but the neutering the play’s politics was also part of the intention. Gone from the Drury Lane version are not only Lioni’s soliloquy at the start of Act IV, but, amongst much else, most of the libertarian exchange between Bertuccio and Calendaro near the end of II ii, and about two-thirds of the Doge’s Curse at the end of V iii. Elliston had written proudly to the Lord Chamberlain:

I have been anxiously waiting for the publication of the Tragedy, which I now send to you, & which we have so curtailed, that I believe not a single objectionable line can be said to exist.35

It is not clear from Hobhouse’s annoying diary that he has seen the play: the signs are that, characteristically, he avoided doing so:

... Chauntrey, Kinnaird and I went to Drury Lane Theatre, where they had acted Marino Faliero in defiance of an injunction procured this morning from the Lord Chancellor by Murray, who dispensed handbills to that effect in the house. The play succeeded, some say, but [the] Times called it a cold reception. I was introduced to Elliston, who talked loud to Kinnaird, and was on perfectly easy terms with him.

Walked about the streets – lovely night.36

The play, surprisingly, did not fail, but was performed again on April 30, and on May 1, 2, 3, 4 and 14. Perhaps Cooper found more variety, and Benintende learned his part. Nevertheless, Byron was even more annoyed by the reports which reached Italy that it had failed. Perhaps having read the Examiner, he blamed Cooper.37

Further productions followed, at the Comédie-Française, on October 1 1821; at the Porte-Saint-Martin in Paris on November 7 1821; and at the Park Theatre New York, on 26 September 26 1821.

33: The Examiner, April 29 1821, p.266.
34: B. seems to have thought Lioni’s soliloquy had been retained. See Medwin ed. Lovell, p.120.
35: Letter from Elliston to John Larpent, examiner of plays, repr’d at Hogg, op.cit., frontispiece.
36: BL.Add.Mss. 56542, diary entry for April 25 1821.
37: See Medwin ed. Lovell, p.120.
No further attempts were made to mount productions of plays by Byron in his lifetime; but we have, in the diary of William Charles Macready, some regrettably brief comments on a Drury Lane production in which he starred in 1842:

APRIL 24: Gave much attention to *Marino Faliero*, which I begin to like, but I never dare venture to hope again! … The whole evening to *Marino Faliero*, which improves on me.

MAY 9: Read *Marino Faliero* in the carriage.

MAY 10: Rehearsed part of *Marino Faliero*, which promises to act well, but which I fear will be too much for me in the time; consulted Serle and Jones about it, and as to the financial consequences of not doing it. Witheld the advertisement to make an effort.

MAY 11: Woke early, and applied myself in bed to the words of Marino Faliero. Continued until twelve o’clock, and mastered all except one scene in act five.

MAY 20: Weary, weary! Rose with prayers in my heart for the success of the night’s experiment. Rehearsed with much care (what occupied a whole morning) the play of *Marino Faliero*. Rested and thought over my character. I could not sleep. Acted Marino Faliero in parts very well; the interest of the play grew upon the audience, and the curtain fell upon the death of Faliero with their strong sympathy. Was called for and very warmly received.38

Notice that the rehearsals for the play were confined to the morning of the first night.

*Continental reactions*

*Marino Faliero*, despite anything Byron might have protested about to Murray, was regarded as extremely political in Italy, and was banned. The following is a memorandum from Zanatta, Primo Censore Direttore, to the President of the Buon Governo, 24-25 August 1821:

Pervenne dalla Francia diretto al Signor Clare un esemplare dell’Opera Marino Faliero Doge of Venice an historical Tragedy in 5 actes With notes by lord Byron Paris 1821[.]

Avendo osservato, che il Censore Nardini Saviamente opinò, che a questo componimento venisse applicata la formula *Damnatur* per le cose contenute contro il Governo Austriaco, quel’Ufficio si fa premura di far conoscere a V.E. il libro stesso unendovi copia del relativo voto.

Ho l’onore di protestare all’E.V. …39

[There has come from France, addressed to Lord Clare, a copy of the work *Marino Faliero Doge of Venice*, an Historical Tragedy in Five Acts, with notes, by Lord Byron, Paris 1821. Having observed that it is the wise opinion of the Censor Nardini that the formula *Condemned* should be applied to this work, because of the things contained in it against the Austrian Government, this official thoughtfully conveys to Your Excellency the book itself, together with the judgement on it. I have the honour to be your Excellency’s …]

The next evidence is from the State Archives of Milan, August 25 1821:

38: *The Diaries of Macready*, ed. William Toynbee (Chapman and Hall 1912), Vol II pp.165-71. I am grateful to Jane Stabler for bringing these passages to my attention.

39: Keats-Shelley House Rome, Gay Papers Box 36A.

[The Censor’s Office encloses a copy of Lord Byron’s tragedy Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice. / To the Director of the Censorship. / I agree that the formula damnatur [“to be condemned”] should be applied to the tragedy of Lord Byron entitled Marino Faliero Doge of Venice, according to the decision of the Censor Nardini.]

Things had changed by mid-century, and it was translated into Italian by P. G. B. Cereseto, at Savona in 1845; and then, with Sardanapalus and The Two Foscari, (but not Cain), by Andrea Maffei, at Florence in 1862. It had also been made into an opera by Donizetti.

I am not aware of any modern productions since one at the Hovenden Theatre Club, London, on 17 May 1958. Any information gratefully received.

**Byron’s proposed Dedication to Goethe**

Goethe admired Byron. His review of Manfred appeared in the June 1820 number of Ueber Kunst und Alterthum and revealed that he had heard and believed a rumour to the effect that Byron had murdered the murderer of his Florentine mistress. Byron (who never had a mistress in Florence) announced on May 25 1820 that he had received the review and objected at once to the one word in it which he could understand – hypochondrisch. His friend Hoppner translated the entire review for him and Byron, piqued by the rumour-mongering, tried to send a jocular answer in the shape of the Dedication to Marino Faliero printed below, with which, however, John Murray was unhappy, and so Byron agreed to its not being used.

This document is interesting as an example of the kind of reception Byron wanted to have among European writers, but was debarred from having. Goethe did not read it until 1831, and we have no idea how his attitude to Wordsworth (supposing him to have had one) was modified by it. He would certainly have been disturbed by Byron’s sneer at patrons and poets, owing, as he did, so much to his own patron, Karl August Duke of Weimar. Byron would have been able to deduce something of their quasi-feudalistic relationship from the pages of de Staël’s de l’Allemagne.

Byron heard of Goethe’s liking for Don Juan and next dedicated Sardanapalus to him although it was not to be found in the first edition, because Murray forgot to include it:

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40: Keats-Shelley House Rome, Gay Papers Box 36A.
41: UkaA II ii 186-92; reprinted at LJ V 503-5.
42: BLJ VII 106.
44: BLJ VII 220.
45: CPW IV 544-6.
46: BLJ VIII 66.
47: BLJ IX 165.
48: The Ms. is reproduced opposite Robertson 68.
49: For Byron’s wrath, see BLJ IX 91, 93, 163, 167, and 179.
To the illustrious Goëthe a Stranger presumes to offer the homage of a literary vassal to his liege-Lord – the first of existing masters; – 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.’

Goethe received this in manuscript, was flattered and delighted by its feudal-retainer’s tone, had it lithographed for his friends, and never spoke ill of Byron again. Byron heard of Goethe’s delight was pleased in turn, and finally succeeded in getting a dedication to Goethe printed in a first edition – that of Werner: “To / the illustrious Goëthe, / by one of his humblest admirers, / this tragedy / is dedicated” (this may in fact have been written by John Murray). Each man, however, remained shy of writing directly to the other.

THE REJECTED DEDICATION TO MARINO FALIERO

To Baron Goethe, &c. &c. &c.

Sir,

In the appendix to an English work lately translated into German and published at Leipzig, a judgement of yours upon English poetry is quoted as follows: “… that in English poetry, great Genius, universal power, a feeling of profundity, with sufficient tenderness and force are to be found – but that altogether these do not constitute poets”, &c., &c.

I regret to see a great man falling into a great mistake. This opinion of yours only proves that the Dictionary of Ten Thousand Living English Authors has not been translated into German. You will have read in your friend Schlegel’s version the dialogue in Macbeth:

… There are ten thousand!

Macbeth. Geese – Villain?
Answer. Authors, Sir. (Macbeth, V. iii. 12-13)

Now of these “ten thousand authors” there are actually nineteen hundred and eighty seven poets, all alive at this moment, whatever their works may be, as their booksellers well know. And amongst these there are several who possess a far greater reputation than mine, although considerably less than yours. It is owing to this neglect on the part of your German translators that you are not aware of the works of William Wordsworth – who has a baronet in London who draws him frontispieces, and leads him about to dinners, and to the play; and a Lord in the country who gave him a place in the Excise, and a cover at his table. You do not know perhaps that this Gentleman is the greatest of all poets past, present and to come, besides which he has written an Opus Magnum in prose during the late election for Westmoreland. His principal publication is entitled Peter Bell, which he had withheld from the Public for “one and twenty years”, to the irreparable loss

50: CPW VI 15.
51: The dedication appears in the rare second edition of Cain, Sardananapalus and The Two Foscari: see Butler 83.
52: BLJ X 73.
53: See BLJ IX 163 and X 60 and 64.
54: CPW VI 383.
of all those who died in the interim, and will have no opportunity of reading it before the resurrection. There is also another, named Southey, who is more than a poet, being actually poet Laureate, a post which corresponds with what we call in Italy “Poeta Cesareo”, and which you call in German – I know not what – but as you have a “Cæsar”, probably you have a name for it. In England there is no Cæsar – only the Poet. I mention these poets by way of sample to enlighten you – they form but two bricks of our Babel (Windsor bricks by the way) but may serve for a specimen of the building.

It is moreover asserted that “the predominant character of the whole body of English poetry is a disgust and contempt for life” – but I rather suspect that, by one single work of prose, you yourself have excited a greater contempt for life than all the English volumes of poesy that ever were written. Madame de Staël says that “Werther has occasioned more suicides than the most beautiful woman”, and I really believe that he has put more individuals out of this world than Napoleon himself, except in the way of his profession.

Perhaps, illustrious Sir, the acrimonious judgement passed by a celebrated Northern Journal upon you in particular, and the Germans in general, has rather indisposed you towards English poetry, as well as criticism. But you must not regard our critics, who are at bottom very good-natured fellows, considering their two professions – taking up the law in court, and laying it down out of it. No-one can more lament their hasty and unfair judgement in your particular than I do, and I so expressed myself to your friend Schlegel in 1816 at Coppet.

In behalf of my “ten thousand” living brethren, and of myself, I have thus far taken notice of an opinion expressed with regard to “English poetry” in general, and which merited notice – because it was yours. My principal object in addressing you was to testify my sincere respect and admiration of “a man who for half a century has led the literature of a great nation and will go down to posterity as the first literary character of his age. You have been fortunate, Sir, not only in the writings which have illustrated your name, but in the name itself, as being sufficiently musical for the articulation of posterity. In this you have the advantage of some of your countrymen, whose names would perhaps be immortal also – if anybody could pronounce them.

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

I have the honour to be with the truest respect

y'. most obed'. & very hum'ble Ser'. Byron

Ravenna.
8bre 14th 1820.

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

**THE OFFICIAL DEDICATION (to 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 your acceptance. But if its merits were
ten times greater than they possibly can be, this offering would still be very inadequate
acknowledgement of the active and steady friendship with which, for a series of years,
you have honoured

your obliged & affectionate friend,
Byron

**THE PREFACE**

*[As Byron takes issue, in his Preface, with a 1781 account of the Faliero conspiracy by
John (“Zelucco”) Moore, and as Moore’s text is not generally available, I print it first:]*

The history of no nation presents a greater variety of singular events than that of
Venice. We have seen a conspiracy against this state, originating among the
citizens, and carried on by people of that rank only. We saw another, soon after,
which took its origin among the body of the nobles; but the year 1355 presents us
with one of a still more extraordinary nature, begun, and carried on, by the Doge
himself. If ambition, or the augmentation of his own power, had been the object, it
would not have been so surprising; but his motive to the conspiracy was as small as
the intention was dreadful.

Marino Falliero, Doge of Venice, was, at this time, eighty years of age; a time
of life when the violence of the passions is generally pretty much abated. He had,
even then, however, given a strong instance of the rashness of his disposition, by
marrying a very young woman. This lady imagined that she had been affronted by a
young Venetian at a public ball, and she complained bitterly of the insult to her
husband. The old Doge, who had all desire imaginable to please his wife,
determined, in this manner, to give her ample satisfaction.

The delinquent was brought before the Judges, and the crime was exaggerated
with all the eloquence that money could purchase; but they viewed the affair with
unprejudiced eyes, and pronounced a sentence no more than adequate to the crime.
The Doge was filled with the most extravagant rage, and, finding that the body of
the nobles took no share in his wrath, he entered into a conspiracy with the Admiral
of the Arsenal, and some others, who were discontented with the government on
other accounts, and projected a method of vindicating his wife’s honour, which
seems rather violent for the occasion. It was resolved by those desperadoes, to
massacre the whole Grand Council. Such a scene of bloodshed, on account of one woman, has not been imagined since the Trojan war.

This plot was conducted with more secrecy than could have been expected, from a man who seems to have been deprived of reason, as well as humanity. Everything was prepared; and the day, previous to that which was fixed for the execution, had arrived, without any person, but those concerned in the conspiracy, having the least knowledge of the horrid design.

It was discovered in the same manner in which that against the King and Parliament of England, was brought to light in the time of James the First.

Bertrand Bergamesse, one of the conspirators, being desirous to save Nicolas Lioni, a noble Venetian, from the general massacre, called on him, and earnestly admonished him, on no account to go out of his house the following day; for, if he did, he would certainly lose his life. Lioni pressed him to give some reason for this extraordinary advice; which the other obstinately refusing, Lioni ordered him to be seized, and confined; and, sending for some of his friends of the Senate, by means of promises and threats, they at length prevailed upon the prisoner to discover the whole of this horrid mystery.

They sent for the Avogadors, the Council of Ten, and other high officers, by whom the prisoner was examined; after which, orders were given for seizing the principal conspirators in their houses, and for summoning those of the nobility and citizens, on whose fidelity the Council could rely. These measures could not be taken so secretly as not to alarm many, who found means to make their escape. A considerable number were arrested, among whom were two chiefs of the conspiracy under the Doge. They being put to the question, confessed the whole. It appeared, that only a select body of principal men had been privy to the real design; great numbers had been desired to be prepared with arms, at a particular hour, when they would be employed in attacking certain enemies of the State, which were not named; they were desired to keep those orders a perfect secret, and were told, that upon their fidelity and secrecy their future fortunes depended. Those men did not know of each other, and had no suspicion that it was not a lawful enterprise for which they were thus engaged; they were therefore set a liberty; but all the chiefs of the plot gave the fullest evidence against the Doge. It was proved, that the whole scheme had been formed by his direction, and supported by his influence. After the principal conspirators were tried, and executed, the Council of Ten proceeded to the trial of the Doge himself. They desired that twenty senators, of the highest reputation, might assist upon this solemn occasion; and that two relations of the Fallier family, one of whom was a member of the Council of Ten, and the other an Avogador, might withdraw from the court.

The Doge, who hitherto had remained under a guard in his own apartments in the palace, was now brought before this Tribunal of his own subjects. He was dressed in the robes of his office.

It is thought he intended to have denied the charge, and attempted a defence; but when he perceived the number and nature of the proofs against him, overwhelmed by their force, he acknowledged his guilt, with many fruitless and abject entreaties for mercy.
That a man, of eighty years of age, should lose all firmness on such an occasion, is not marvellous; that he should have been incited, by a trifling offence, to such an inhuman, and such a deliberate plan of wickedness, is without example.

He was sentenced to lose his head. The sentence was executed in the place where the Doges are usually crowned.

The in the Great Chamber of the palace, where the portraits of the Doges are placed, there is a vacant space between the portraits of Fallier’s immediate predecessor and successor, with this inscription:

Locus Marini Fallieri decapitati.

The only other instance which history presents to our contemplation, of a sovereign tried according to the forms of law, and condemned to death by a Tribunal of his own subjects, is that of Charles the First, of Great Britain. But how differently are we affected by a review of the two cases!

In the one, the original errors of the misguided Prince are forgotten in the severity of his fate, and in the calm majestic firmness with which he bore it. Those who, from public spirit, had opposed the unconstitutional measures of his government, were no more; and the men now in power were actuated by far different principles. All the patrons of humanity, therefore, take part with the royal sufferer; nothing but the ungenerous spirit of party can seduce them to the side of his enemies. In his trial we behold, with a mixture of pity and indignation, the unhappy monarch delivered up to the malice of hypocrites, the rage of fanatics, and the insolence of a low-born ruffian.

In the other, every sentiment of compassion is effaced by horror, at the enormity of the crime.


BYRON’S 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 80,000 men, killing 8,000 men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check, an exploit to which I know none similar in history, except that of Caesar 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 apprized of his predecessor’s death and his
own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungo vernable 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, Darú, 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 traspiri, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe independente”. The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their “tre Capi”. The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the “Dogaressa” herself, against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion) that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her, and for his own 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—that Cava brought the Moors to Spain—that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome—that a single verse of Frederick II of Prussia on the Abbe 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 Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons—and, not to multiply instances, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance—and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both king and commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection, it is indeed
extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man, used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent in a fierce age an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to 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 eta, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi talenti per lungo tempo esercitati ne’ maggiori impieghi, la sua capacita sperimentata ne’ governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de’ cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragj per collocarlo alla testa della repubblica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un’ ingiuria leggeria insinuo nel suo cuore tal veleno che basto a corrompere le antiche sue qualita, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati; serio esempio, che prova non esservi eta, 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. page 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 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 1882. 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 Shakespeare, 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 stageworthy, 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 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 “materiel” 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.

ADDENDUM

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 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 anything 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.”
MARINO FALIERO, DOGE OF VENICE
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY, IN FIVE ACTS
by Lord Byron

Dux inquieti turbidus Adriae. Horace.55

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, Conspirator.
Dagolino, Conspirator.
Bertram, Conspirator.
Signor of the Night, “Signore di Notte,” one of the Officers
belonging to the Republic.
First Citizen.
Second Citizen.
Third Citizen.
Vincenzo, Officer belonging to the Ducal Palace.
Pietro, Officer belonging to the Ducal Palace.
Battista, Officer belonging to the Ducal Palace.
Secretary of the Council of Ten.
Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, The Council of Ten, the Giunta,
&c., &c.

WOMEN.
Angiolina, Wife to the Doge:
Marianna, her Friend.
Female Attendans, &c.

Scene Venice – in the year 1355.

55: HOR. OD. III iii 5 (“the turbulent Commander of Adria’s wave”). B. to Hobhouse, July 6 1820: I have
got a motto for my Doge Conspirator – Eccolo – Dux inquieti turbidus Adriae – an’t it a good one? (BLJ
VII, 123).
ACT I. scene I. – An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.

Pietro speaks, in entering, to Battista.

Pietro: Is not the messenger returned?
Battista: Not yet;
I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno’s accusation.

Pietro: Too long – at least so thinks the Doge:
Battista: How bears he
These moments of suspense?

Pietro: With struggling patience.

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

Battista: ’Tis said he is much moved – and doubtless ’twas
Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.

Pietro: Aye, if a poor man: Steno’s a patrician,
Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.
Battista: Then you think
He will not be judged hardly?

Pietro: ’Twere enough
He be judged justly; but ’tis not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.

Battista: And here it comes. What news, Vincenzo?

Enter Vincenzo.

Vincenzo: ’Tis
Decided; but as yet his doom’s unknown:
I saw the President in act to seal

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56: The Signory: either the heads of Venice’s ruling Council, or the whole Council. B. is incorrect in equating them with the Forty (see below, 24n.)
57: Michele Steno had written, on the Doge’s throne, “Becco Marino Falier dalla bella mogier” (Marino Faliero, beaked / horned / cuckolded by his beautiful wife). There are other versions, all meaning the same.
58: The Forty were Venice’s judicial body, not its ruling council.
The parchment which will bear the Forty’s judgement
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him.

Exeunt.

Act I scene II. – The Ducal Chamber.

Marino Faliero, Doge; and his nephew, Bertuccio Faliero. 59

Bertuccio: It cannot be but they will do you justice.
Doge: Aye, such as the Avogadori 60 did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty
To try him by his peers, his own Tribunal.
Bertuccio: 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.
Bertuccio (addressing Vincenzo, then entering): How now – what tidings?
Vincenzo: I am charged to tell his Highness that the court
Has passed its resolution, and that, soon
As the due forms of judgement are gone through,
The sentence will be sent up to the Doge;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute
The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptation of their duty.
Doge: Yes –
They are wond’rous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is passed, you say?
Vincenzo: It is, your Highness:
The President was sealing it, when I
Was called in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due
Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.
Bertuccio: Are you aware, from aught you have perceived,
Of their decision?
Vincenzo: No, my Lord; you know
The secret custom of the courts in Venice.
Bertuccio: 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 wise, and just, and cautious – this I grant –
And secret as the grave to which they doom

59: The idea that Bertuccio was Faliero’s nephew is B.’s invention.
60: The three Avogadori (Advocates) were state prosecutors. B. misunderstands their function too.
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.

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

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

Vincenzo: Calm, but not overcast, he stood resigned
To the decree, whate’er it were – but lo!
It comes, for the perusal of his Highness.

_Enter the Secretary of the Forty._

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

Doge: Retire, and wait without.

_Exeunt Secretary and Vincenzo._

Take thou this paper:
The misty letters vanish from my eyes;
I cannot fix them.

Bertuccio: Patience, my dear Uncle:
Why do you tremble thus? Nay, doubt not, all
Will be as could be wished.

Doge: Say on.

Bertuccio (reading):

“Decreed
In council, without one dissenting voice,
That Michel Steno, by his own confession,
Guilty on the last night of Carnival
Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words –”

Doge: Would’st thou repeat them?

Would’st _thou_ repeat them – _thou_, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonoured in its Chief – that Chief the Prince
Of Venice, first of cities? To the sentence.

Bertuccio: Forgive me, my good Lord; I will obey –
(reads) “That Michel Steno be detained a month
In close arrest.”

Doge: Proceed.

Bertuccio: My Lord, ’tis finished.

Give me the paper – (snatches the paper and reads) “’Tis decreed in
Council
That Michel Steno” – Nephew, thine arm!

Bertuccio: Nay,
Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncalled for –
Let me seek some assistance.

Doge: Stop, sir – Stir not –’Tis past.

Bertuccio: 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 ’tis not
Yet without remedy: you can appeal
To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,
And do you right upon the bold delinquent.
Think you not thus, good Uncle? why do you stand
So fixed? You heed me not – I pray you, hear me!

Doge (dashing down the ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew):
Oh! that the Saracen were in St. Mark’s!
Thus would I do him homage.

Bertuccio: 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!

Bertuccio: ’Tis not well
In Venice’s Duke to say so.

Doge: Venice’ Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him,

61: The real Steno was sentenced to either two months in jail and a year’s exile, or to one month’s jail, a light flogging (with a fox’s tail), and a hundred-lire fine.
62: Genoa (setting of Schiller’s Fiesco), was Venice’s rival on the other side of the peninsula.
63: Zara was an Adriatic port which had rebelled against Venice, and which Faliero had subdued in 1346.
That he may do me right.

Bertuccio: If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty,
Remember that of man, and curb this passion.
The Duke of Venice –

Doge (interrupting him): There is no such thing –
It is a word – nay, worse – a worthless by-word:
The most despised, wronged, outraged, helpless wretch,
Who begs his bread, if 'tis 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?

Bertuccio: The law, my Prince –

Doge (interrupting him): You see what it has done;
I asked no remedy but from the law
I sought no vengeance but redress by law –
I called no judges but those named by law –
As Sovereign, I appealed unto my subjects,
The very subjects who had made me Sovereign,
And gave me thus a double right to be so.
The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,
Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
The travel – toil – the perils – the fatigues –
The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
Were weighed i’the balance, ’gainst the foulest stain,
The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime
Of a rank, rash patrician – and found wanting!
And this is to be borne!

Bertuccio: 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.

Bertuccio: 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,

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64: There was no fixed law against injuring the Doge. It was left to the judges’ discretion.
Or any provocation: if we are wronged,
We will ask justice; if it be denied,
We’ll take it; but may do all this in calmness –
Deep vengeance is the daughter of deep silence.
I have yet scarce a third part of your years,
I love our house, I 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?

Bertuccio: ’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,
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 polished guise,
Whispered the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them – a courteous wittol,65
Patient – aye – proud, it may be, of dishonour.

Bertuccio: But still it was a lie – you knew it false,
And so did all men.

Doge: Nephew, the high Roman
Said, “Cæsar’s wife must not even be suspected”,
And put her from him.

Bertuccio: True – but in those days –

Doge: What is it that a Roman would not suffer,
That a Venetian Prince must bear? old Dandolo66
Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars,
And wore the ducal cap / trample on –
Because ’tis now degraded.

Bertuccio: ’Tis even so.

Doge: It is – it is – I did not visit on

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66: Enrico Dandolo (1108-1205), Doge who took Constantinople in 1204, when he was 96, and is said to have declined the throne when the crusaders offered it to him. See CHP IV, 12, 8-9.
The innocent creature thus most vilely slandered
Because she took an old man for her lord,
For that he had been long her father’s friend
And patron of her house, as if there were
No love in woman’s heart but lust of youth
And beardless faces – I did not for this
Visit the villain’s infamy on her,
But craved my country’s justice on his head,
The justice due unto the humblest being
Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to him,
Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to him –
Who hath a name whose honour’s all to him,
When these are tainted by the accursing breath
Of calumny and scorn.

Bertuccio: And what redress
Did you expect as his fit punishment?
Doge: Death! Was I not the Sovereign of the State –
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me?
Was I not injured as a husband? scorned
As man? reviled, degraded, as a Prince?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason? and he lives!
Had he instead of on the Doge’s throne
Stamped the same brand upon a peasant’s stool,
His blood had gilt the threshold; for the carle
Had stabbed him on the instant.

Bertuccio: 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.
Bertuccio: 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 unpunished?
Doge: It is redoubled, but not now by him:
The Forty hath decreed a month’s arrest –
We must obey the Forty.
Bertuccio: Obey them!
Who have forgot their duty to the Sovereign?

67: Faliero’s assertion that his hearth / home has been violated echoes B.’s own intermittent obsession about his own home – though there he had only himself to blame. Compare Don Juan I, st.36. For an extended version of the idea, see below, III ii 355-64.
68: carle – serf, peasant.
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).69
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair
Of Steno’s head – he shall not wear it long.

Bertuccio: Not twelve hours longer, had you left to me
The mode and means; if you had calmly heard me,
I never meant this miscreant should escape,
But wished you to suppress such gusts of passion,
That we more surely might devise together
His taking off.70

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

Bertuccio: 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.

Bertuccio: Why, that’s my uncle!
The leader, and the statesman, and the Chief
Of commonwealths, and Sovereign of himself!
I wondered to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,
Although the cause –

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

Bertuccio (taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the table):
Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurned,

69: Unlike in England, where the sovereign cannot be prosecuted.
70: Macbeth I, vii, 20: ... the deep damnation of his taking off.
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,\(^{71}\)
Without investing the insulted brow
With the all-swaying majesty of Kings;
Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,\(^{72}\)
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,\(^{73}\)
Making the people nothing, and the Prince
A pageant? In my life I have achieved
Tasks not less difficult – achieved for them,
Who thus repay me! Can I not requite them?
Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day
Of my full youth, while yet my body served
My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,
I would have dashed amongst them, asking few
In aid to overthrow these swollen 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 judgement.
The troops are few in –

\(^{71}\): Faliero compares himself to Christ.
\(^{72}\): Rulers addressing their headpieces are common in Shakespeare: Richard II and Prince Hal do so.
\(^{73}\): In the myth, Briareus had a hundred hands.
Enter Vincenzo.

Vincenzo: 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.

Vincenzo: My Lord, I will deliver your reply;
It cannot much import – he’s a plebeian,
The master of a galley, I believe.

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

Exit Vincenzo.

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

74: The first inkling that the play refers to Cato Street. No source allies Faliero with the working class. Israel Bertuccio is in the Dramatis Personae “Chief of the Arsenal”. In fact he was a ship-owner.
75: Genoa defeated Venice at the island of Sapienza in 1354 (in real terms, the previous year).
76: BYRON’S NOTE: An historical fact. See Marino Sanuto’s Lives of the Doges. See below, V ii 19-41, and Appendix II.
77: There was no way in which the historical Faliero wanted to “free Venice” from its oligarchy. Another reference to Cato Street.
Had been already where – how soon, I care not –  
The whole must be extinguished; better that  
They ne’er had been, than drag me on to be  
The thing these arch-oppressors fain would make me.  
Let me consider – of efficient troops  
There are three thousand posted at –

Enter Vincenzo and Israel Bertuccio.

Vincenzo:  
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?

Israel:  
Redress.

Doge:  
Of whom?

Israel:  
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.

Israel:  
’Twere in vain;  
For he who injured me is one of them.

Doge:  
There’s blood upon thy face78 – how came it there?  
Israel:  
’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?

Israel:  
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?

Israel:  
I am a man, my Lord.

Doge:  
Why so is he who smote you.

Israel:  
He is called so;79

Nay, more, a noble one – at least, in Venice:

78: Macbeth III iv, 12.
79: All this dialogue echoes that between Macbeth and the murderers in III, i.
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?
Israel: Barbaro.
Doge: What was the cause? or the pretext?
Israel: I am the Chief of the Arsenal, employed
At present in repairing certain galleys
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.\(^{80}\)
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 flowed
Dishonourably.

Doge: Have you long time served?
Israel: 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,\(^{81}\) and you were appointed
Chief of the Arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed you?

Israel: 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?
Israel: Irreparably in my self-esteem.\(^{82}\)

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

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

Doge: You come to me for justice – unto me!

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\(^{80}\): At Sapienza; see above, this scene, 299-300 and n.
\(^{81}\): Compare *Macbeth* I iii 144-5.
\(^{82}\): Bertuccio is, in his sense of injury, Faliero’s working-class *doppelgänger*. 
The Doge of Venice, and I cannot give it;  
I cannot even obtain it – ’twas denied  
To me most solemnly an hour ago!

Israel: How says your Highness?

Doge: Steno is condemned  
To a month’s confinement.

Israel: What! the same who dared  
To stain the ducal throne with those foul words,  
That have cried shame to every ear in Venice?  
Doge: Aye, doubtless they have echoed o’er the Arsenal,  
Keeping due time with every hammer’s clink,  
As a good jest to jolly artisans;  
Or making chorus to the creaking 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:

Israel: Is’t possible? a month’s imprisonment!  
No more for Steno?

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

Israel: Ah! dared I speak my feelings!

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

Israel: 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.

Israel: Wouldst thou be king?

Doge: Yes – of a happy people.

Israel: Wouldst thou be Sovereign Lord of Venice?

Doge: Aye,

If that the people shared that sovereignty,  
So that nor they nor I were further slaves  
To this o’ergrown aristocratic Hydra,  

83: The Hydra was a monster with multiple heads. Compare Briaraeus, above, this scene, 269n. The phrase describes the landed oligarchy which dictated the membership of the British parliament.
The poisonous heads of whose envenomed body
Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.

Israel: Yet, thou wast born, and still hast lived, patrician.
Doge: In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toiled a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the Senate;
Their good and my own honour were my guerdon.  
I have fought and bled; commanded, aye, and conquered;
Have made and marred peace oft in embassies,
As it might chance to be our country’s ’vantage;
Have traversed land and sea in constant duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for Venice,
My fathers’ and my birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o’er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this?

Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripped her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
She’d tell thee ’twas for all her little ones. 

Israel: 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.

Israel: You shall do both, if you possess the will;
And many thousands more not less oppressed,
Who wait but for a signal – will you give it?
Doge: You speak in riddles.
Israel: Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life – if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.
Doge: Say on.
Israel: Nor I alone, are injured and abused,
Contemned and trampled on; but the whole people

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84: guerdon – reward.
85: Compare Macbeth IV iii 216: All my pretty ones?
Groan with the strong conception of their wrongs:
The foreign soldiers in the senate’s pay
Are discontented for their long arrears;
The native mariners, and civic troops,
Feel with their friends; for who is he amongst them
Whose brethren, parents, children, wives, or sisters,
Have not partook oppression, or pollution,
From the patricians? And the hopeless war
Against the Genoese, which is still maintained
With the plebeian blood, and treasure wrung
From their hard earnings, has inflamed them further:
Even now – but, I forget that speaking thus,
Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death!

Doge: And suffering what thou hast done – fear’st thou Death?
Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten
By those for whom thou hast bled.

Israel: 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!

Israel: 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?

Israel: An hour to strike.

Doge (aside): Saint Mark’s shall strike that hour!

Israel: 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?

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86: B. intends a reference to the wars against France.
87: delator – informer.
88: Compare Hamlet, IV, iv, 45: I have cause, and will, and strength, and means / To do it.
89: Only the Doge could order St Mark’s bell to be rung.
Israel: I’ll not answer that
Till I am answered.

Doge: How, sir! do you menace?

Israel: No; I affirm. I have betrayed myself;
But there’s no torture in the mystic wells
Which undermine your palace,\(^{90}\) 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”,\(^{91}\)

Joyous that mine must be the last that e’er
Would echo o’er the Stygian\(^ {92}\) wave which flows
Between the murderers and the murdered, washing
The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on’t, and avenge me.

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

Israel: Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be

\(^{90}\): The pozzi were the dungeons beneath the Doge’s Palace: see *The Two Foscari*, IV i.

\(^{91}\): Compare CHP IV, first stanza, and B.’s note. One of many anachronisms in the play: the Bridge of Sighs did not exist in Faliero’s time. It was built in 1600.

\(^{92}\): Stygian – appertaining to Styx, the river of the Underworld.
Suspected of combining to destroy it.
Had I sat down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and muttered threats had made me
A marked man to the Forty’s inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily
It shapes its phrase, is little to be feared,
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
I had another reason.

Doge:    What was that?
Israel: Some rumours that the Doge was greatly moved
By the reference of the Avogadori
Of Michel Steno’s sentence to the Forty
Had reached me. I had served you, honoured you,
And felt that you were dangerously insulted,
Being of an order of such spirits, as
Requite tenfold both good and evil: ’twas
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.

Israel: And is this all?

Doge: Unless with all intrusted,

Israel: What would you have me answer?

Israel: I would have you

Trust him who leaves his life in trust with you.

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

Israel: We’re enough already;

You are the sole ally we covet now.

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

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

Doge: When? where?

Israel: 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?

Israel: You must come alone.

Doge: With but my nephew.

Israel: 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.

Israel: 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?

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

Doge: At what hour arises
The moon? 93

Israel: Late, but the atmosphere is thick and dusky,
’Tis a sirocco. 94

Doge: At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires; 95 the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola, with one oar only, 96 will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

Israel: I will not fail.

Doge: And now retire –

Israel: In the full hope your Highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave.

Exit Israel Bertuccio.

93: Compare Macbeth, II i, opening dialogue.
94: Sirocco: hot dry wind from the Sahara. See Don Juan XIV, 28, 2; or The Corsair, 434. Same as the Simoom (Don Juan IV, 57, 8).
95: “Sires” evidently means “predecessors”, not “forefathers”. B. wrote to Murray on October 12 1820: “The Doges … were all buried in Saint Mark’s before Faliero – it is singular that when his immediate 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 presentintent. – – So that all that is said of his Ancestral Doges as buried at Saint Johns & Paul’s is altered from the fact they being in Saint 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” (BLJ VII 201).
96: BYRON’S NOTE: 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 is often so from motives of privacy; and (since the decay of Venice) of economy.
Doge (*solus*): At midnight, by the church Saints John and Paul,
    Where sleep my noble fathers, \(^97\) 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 honoured.
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 spares the fame of him who fails,
But tries the Caesar, or the Catiline, \(^98\)
By the true touchstone of desert – success.

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\(^97\): The church of SS Giovanni e Paolo was still being built in Faliero’s time.

\(^98\): Catiline conspired against the Roman republic.
ACT II. scene I. – *An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.*

*Angiolina (wife of the Doge) and Marianna.*

Angiolina: What was the Doge’s answer?
Marianna: That he was
That moment summoned to a conference;
But ’tis by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the Senators embarking;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.

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

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

Angiolina: ’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.

Marianna: Assuredly
The Doge can not suspect you?
Angiolina: Suspect me!
Why Steno dared not: when he scrawled 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 frowned shame
Upon his coward calumny.

Marianna: ’Twere fit
He should be punished grievously.

Angiolina: He is so.
Marianna: What! is the sentence passed? is he condemned?
Angiolina: I know not that, but he has been detected.
Marianna: And deem you this enough for such foul scorn?
Angiolina: 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.

Marianna: Some sacrifice is due to slandered virtue.
Angiolina: 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”:
It were indeed no more, if human breath
Could make or mar it.

Marianna: 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.

Angiolina: 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 blazoned forth;
And those who have not kept it, seek its seeming
As they would look out for an ornament
Of which they feel the want, but not because
They think it so; they live in others’ thoughts,
And would seem honest as they must seem fair.

Marianna: You have strange thoughts for a patrician dame.
Angiolina: And yet they were my father’s; with his name,
The sole inheritance he left.

Marianna: You want none;
Wife to a Prince, the Chief of the Republic.

99: The dying Roman: Brutus, who said just before his suicide that virtue was only a word.
Angiolina: I should have sought none though a peasant’s bride, But feel not less the love and gratitude Due to my father, who bestowed my hand Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend, The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge: 
Marianna: And with that hand did he bestow your heart? 
Angiolina: He did so, or it had not been bestowed. 
Marianna: 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. 
Angiolina: The World will think with worldlings; but my heart Has still been in my duties, which are many, But never difficult. 
Marianna: And do you love him? 
Angiolina: 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 bestowed my hand Upon Faliero: he had known him noble, Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all Such have I found him as my father said. His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms Of men who have commanded; too much pride, And the deep passions fiercely fostered by The uses of patricians, and a life Spent in the storms of state and war; and also From the quick sense of honour, which becomes A duty to a certain sign, a vice When overstrained, and this I fear in him. And then he has been rash from his youth upwards, Yet tempered by redeeming nobleness In such sort, that the wariest of republics Has lavished all its chief employs upon him, From his first fight to his last embassy, From which on his return the dukedom met him. 
Marianna: 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? 

100: The wife of the historical Faliero was in her forties when they married.
Angiolina: I answered your first question when I said
     I married.
Marianna: And the second?
Angiolina: Needs no answer.
Marianna: I pray you pardon, if I have offended.
Angiolina: 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.
Marianna: Tis their past choice
     That far too often makes them deem they would
     Now choose more wisely, could they cancel it.
Angiolina: It may be so. I knew not of such thoughts.
Marianna: Here comes the Doge – shall I retire?
Angiolina: It may
     Be better you should quit me; he seems rapt
     In thought. How pensively he takes his way!

Exit Marianna. Enter the Doge and Pietro.

Doge (musing): There is a certain Philip Calendaro
     Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
     Of eighty men, and has great influence
     Besides on all the spirits of his comrades:
     This man, I hear, is bold and popular,
     Sudden and daring, and yet secret; 'twould
     Be well that he were won: I needs must hope
     That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
     But fain would be –

Pietro: 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.

Angiolina: My Lord!
Doge: My dearest child, forgive me – why delay
     So long approaching me? – I saw you not.
Angiolina: You were absorbed in thought, and he who now
     Has parted from you might have words of weight
     To bear you from the Senate.
Doge: From the Senate?
Angiolina: I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.

Doge: The Senate’s duty! you mistake;
’Tis we who owe all service to the Senate.

Angiolina: 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 levée 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.

Angiolina: You’re ever kind to me. I have nothing to desire, or to request, Except to see you oftener and calmer.

Doge: Calmer?

Angiolina: Aye, 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? 101

Doge: Disclose too much! of what?
What is there to disclose?

Angiolina: A heart so ill
At ease.

Doge: ’Tis nothing, child. – But in the state
You know what daily cares oppress all those
Who govern this precarious commonwealth;
Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within – ’tis this which makes me
More pensive and less tranquil than my wont.

Angiolina: Yet this existed long before, and never
Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me; there is something at your heart
More than the mere discharge of public duties,
Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have rendered light, nay, a necessity,
To keep your mind from stagnating. ’Tis not

101: Compare the scene between Hotspur and Lady Percy (Henry IV, II iii), or between Brutus and Portia (Julius Caesar, II i).
In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you –
You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
And climbed up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainted by the way, and stand
Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne’er feel dizzy.
Were Genoa’s galleys riding in the port,
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark’s,
You are not to be wrought on, but would fall,
As you have risen, with an unaltered brow:
Your feelings now are of a different kind;
Something has stung your pride, not patriotism.

Doge: Pride! Angiolina? Alas! none is left me.
Angiolina: Yes – the same sin that overthrew the angels,
And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature: 102
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.

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

Doge: To what I was! Have you heard Steno’s sentence?
Angiolina: No.

Doge: A month’s arrest.
Angiolina: 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.

Angiolina: There seems to be 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.

Angiolina: You would not have him die for this offence?

102: Faliero having compared himself to Jesus (see above, I ii 260), his wife now compares him to Lucifer.
Doge: Not now – being still alive, I’d have him live
Long as he can; he has ceased to merit Death;
The guilty saved hath damned his hundred judges,
And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.

Angiolina: 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 filled these veins with poison
For their once healthful current? is it nothing
To have stained your name and mine – the noblest names?
Is’t nothing to have brought into contempt
A Prince before his people? to have failed
In the respect accorded by mankind
To youth in woman, and old age in man?
To virtue in your sex, and dignity
In ours? But let them look to it who have saved him.

Angiolina: Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies.

Doge: Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is there not Hell
For wrath eternal?

Angiolina: Do not speak thus wildly –
Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.

Doge: Amen! May Heaven forgive them!

Angiolina: And will you?

Doge: Yes, when they are in Heaven!

Angiolina: And not till then?

Doge: What matters my forgiveness? an old man’s,
Worn out, scorned, spurned, abused; what matters then
My pardon more than my resentment, both
Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long;
But let us change the argument. My child!
My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
The brave, the chivalrous, how little deemed
Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend,
That he was linking thee to shame! Alas!
Shame without sin, for thou art faultless. Hadst thou
But had a different husband, any husband
In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this brand,
This blasphemy had never fallen upon thee.
So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure,
To suffer this, and yet be unavenged!

Angiolina: 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: 'Tis well,
And may be better; but whate’er betide,
Be thou at least kind to my memory.

Angiolina: 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.

Angiolina: Why should you doubt it? has it ever failed?
Doge: Come hither, child! I would a word with you.
Your father was my friend; unequal fortune
Made him my debtor for some courtesies
Which bind the good more firmly: when oppressed
With his last malady, he willed our union,
It was not to repay me, long repaid
Before by his great loyalty in friendship;
His object was to place your orphan beauty
In honourable safety from the perils,
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail
A lonely and undowered maid. I did not
Think with him, but would not oppose the thought
Which soothed his death-bed.

Angiolina: 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,
'Twas not a foolish dotard’s vile caprice,
Nor the false edge of aged appetite,
Which made me covetous of girlish beauty,
And a young bride: for in my fieriest youth
I swayed such passions; nor was this my age
Infected with that leprosy of lust,
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,
Making them ransack to the very last
The dregs of pleasure for their vanished joys.

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103: The phrase “leprosy of lust” is from Ford’s ‘Tis Pity she’s a Whore, I i 74 (“Beg Heaven to cleanse the leprosy of lust”); B. claimed he didn’t know he’d borrowed it: see Medwin ed. Lovell, p.139.
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.

Angiolina: I did so; I would do so
In face of Earth and Heaven; for I have never
Reptened 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\(^{105}\) 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.

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

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

\(^{104}\): B. alludes to Alessandro Guiccioli.

\(^{105}\): chicane – quibbling.
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.

Angiolina: 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,\(^{106}\) 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.

Angiolina: 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-strengthened, ’tis the rock
Of faith connubial: where it is not – where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart,
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
’Twere hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although ’twere wed to him it covets most:
An incarnation of the poet’s god
In all his marble-chiselled beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides,\(^{107}\) 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 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.

Angiolina: 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?

\(^{106}\): “The blood of Loredano” flowed in Faliero’s own veins, not those of his wife.
\(^{107}\): Alcides – Hercules.
Doge: You mistake me. It is not Steno who could move me thus; Had it been so, he should – but let that pass.

Angiolina: What’s’t you feel so deeply, then, even now?

Doge: The violated majesty of Venice, At once insulted in her Lord and laws.

Angiolina: Alas! why will you thus consider it?

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

Angiolina: 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.

Angiolina: But he has been condemned into captivity.

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

Angiolina: 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.

Angiolina: My Lord, in life, and after life, you shall
Be honoured 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 toiled
To make my country honoured. 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!

Angiolina: 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 favoured 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.

Angiolina: Remember what you were.
Doge: It were in vain!
Joy’s recollection is no longer joy,
While Sorrow’s memory is a sorrow still.

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

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

Angiolina:  
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.
Act II. scene II. – *A retired spot near the Arsenal.*

*Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro.*

Calendaro: How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint?

Israel: Why, well.

Calendaro: Is’t possible! will he be punished?

Israel: Yes.

Calendaro: With what? a mulct\(^{108}\) or an arrest?

Israel: With Death!

Calendaro: Now you rave, or must intend revenge,
Such as I counselled you, with your own hand.

Israel: Yes; and for one sole draught of hate, forego
The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of exile;
Leaving one scorpion crushed, and thousands 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.\(^{109}\)

Calendaro: 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.

Israel: Thank Heaven you were not – all had else been marred:
As ’tis, our cause looks prosperous still.

Calendaro: You saw
The Doge – what answer gave he?

Israel: That there was
No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Calendaro: I told you so before, and that ’twas idle
To think of justice from such hands.

Israel: At least,
It lulled suspicion, showing confidence.
Had I been silent, not a *sbirro*\(^{110}\) but
Had kept me in his eye, as meditating
A silent, solitary, deep revenge.

Calendaro: 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*?

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\(^{108}\): *mulct* – fine.

\(^{109}\): These three lines paraphrase many ideas in *Julius Caesar.*

\(^{110}\): *sbirro* – constable or police spy.
Israel: You shall know that hereafter.
Calendario: Why not now?
Israel: 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 tomorrow’s sun: delay beyond may breed us double danger. See that all be punctual at our place of meeting, and armed, excepting those of the Sixteen, who will remain among the troops to wait the signal.
Calendario: These brave words have breathed new life into my veins; I am sick of these protracted and hesitating councils: day on day crawled on, and added but another link to our long fetters, and some fresher wrong inflicted on our brethren or ourselves, helping to swell our tyrants’ bloated strength. Let us but deal upon them, and I care not for the result, which must be death or freedom! I’m weary to the heart of finding neither.
Israel: 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?
Calendario: All save two, in which there are twenty-five wanting to make up the number.
Israel: No matter; we can do without. Whose are they?
Calendario: Bertram’s and old Soranzo’s, both of whom appear less forward in the cause than we are.
Israel: Your fiery nature makes you deem all those who are not restless cold; but there exists oft in concentrated spirits not less daring than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.
Calendario: 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.
Israel: 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.

Calendaro: 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.

Israel: 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.

Calendaro: But if we fail –

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

Calendaro: 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 silkworms masters!
The first at least was man, and used his sword

111: Compare Macbeth I vii 58: If we should fail? But see below, II i 76.
112: Hun ... Tartar: indirect, ironical references to the Austrians (who did rule Venice in 1820), and the Russians.
As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a word
As with a spell.

Israel: It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness;
Today 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 obtained in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet. Are all supplied with arms?

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

Israel: You have said well. Have you remarked all such?
Calendaro: 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 tomorrow; but, till ’tis begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

Israel: 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.

Calendaro: We will not fail.
Israel: Let all the rest be there;
I have a stranger to present to them.

Calendaro: A stranger! doth he know the secret?
Israel: Yes.

Calendaro: And have you dared to peril your friends’ lives
On a rash confidence in one we know not?

Israel: I have risked no man’s life except my own –
Of that be certain: he is one who may
Make our assurance doubly sure,113 according
His aid; and if reluctant, he no less
Is in our power: he comes alone with me,

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113: Compare Macbeth, IV i 84: I’ll make assurance double sure ...
And cannot ’scape us; but he will not swerve.

Calendaro: I cannot judge of this until I know him:
Is he one of our order?

Israel: Aye, in spirit,
Although a child of greatness; he is one
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one –
One who has done great deeds, and seen great changes;
No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny;
Valiant in war, and sage in council; noble
In nature, although haughty; quick, yet wary:
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once stirred and baffled, as he has been
Upon the tenderest points, there is no fury
In Grecian story like to that which wrings
His vitals with her burning hands, till he
Grows capable of all things for revenge;
And add too, that his mind is liberal,
He sees and feels the people are oppressed,
And shares their sufferings.114 Take him all in all,
We have need of such, and such have need of us.

Calendaro: And what part would you have him take with us?

Israel: It may be, that of Chief.

Calendaro: What! and resign
Your own command as leader?

Israel: Even so.

My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had marked me out
To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear: if I have found such
As you yourselves shall own more worthy, think you
That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,115
Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,
Rather than yield to one above me in
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,
Know your friend better; but you all shall judge.
Away! and let us meet at the fixed hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.

Calendaro: 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

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114: Nothing Faliero says justifies Bertuccio’s estimate of him as the people’s champion.
115: Compare Measure for Measure, II ii 118: Man, proud Man, dressed in a little brief authority …
I am with you, as I have ever been,
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us met.

*Exeunt.*
ACT III. Scene I. – Scene, the space between the canal and the church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian statue before it. – A gondola lies in the canal at some distance. Enter the Doge alone, disguised.

Doge (solus): I am before the hour, the hour whose voice,
Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the cornerstone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes thee
A lazar-house of tyranny: the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not;
And therefore was I punished, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane!116
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,
Mouldered 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 dishonoured 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 perished in the field,117 where I since conquered,
Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
Of thine and Venice’ foes, there offered up
By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?

117: Faliero’s ancestor Ordelafo died in battle against the Hungarians and Croatians in 1117.
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.

Israel: Who goes there?
Doge: A friend to Venice.
Israel: ’Tis he.
Doge: Welcome, my Lord – you are before the time.
Israel: Have with you. I am proud and pleased to see
Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
Since our last meeting, then, are all dispelled?
Doge: Not so – but I have set my little left
Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
When I first listened to your treason. Start not!
That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
Though I be wrought on to commit them. When
I heard you tempt your Sovereign, and forbore
To have you dragged to prison, I became
Your guiltiest accomplice: now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.
Israel: Strange words, my Lord, and most unmerited;
I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.
Doge: We – We! – no matter – you have earned the right
To talk of us. But to the point. If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, rendered free
And flourishing, when we are in our graves,
Conducts her generations to our tombs,
And makes her children with their little hands
Strew flowers o’er her deliverers’ ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel; thou

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118: the two Bruti – Lucius Junius Brutus, who overthrew the last Roman king; and the Brutus who killed Caesar.
119: A direct quotation from Macbeth (I vii 58).
No less than he who was thy Sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.

Israel: '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.

Israel: We observed!

Let me discover – and this steel –

Doge: Put up;

Here are no human witnesses: look there –
What see you?

Israel: Only a tall warrior’s statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.  

Verrochio’s statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni, who was not an ancestor of Faliero, was not there in Faliero’s time. It dates from 1496.

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?

Israel: 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

120: Verrochio’s statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni, which is indeed before the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, dates from the fifteenth century.
Can rest, when he, their last descendant Chief,  
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves  
With stung plebeians?

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

Doge: No – but I feel, and shall do to the last.  
I cannot quench a glorious life at once,  
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be,  
And take men’s lives by stealth, without some pause:  
Yet doubt me not; it is this very feeling,  
And knowing what has wrung me to be thus,  
Which is your best security. There’s not  
A roused mechanic in your busy plot  
So wronged as I, so fall’n, so loudly called  
To his redress: the very means I am forced  
By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,  
That I abhor them doubly for the deeds  
Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.

Israel: Let us away – hark – the hour strikes.  
Doge: On – on –  
It is our knell, or that of Venice – on.

Israel: Say rather, ’tis her freedom’s rising peal  
Of triumph. This way – we are near the place.

_Exeunt._
Act III scene II. – The house where the Conspirators meet. Dagolino, Doro, Bertram, Fedele Trevisano, Calendaro, Antonio Delle Bende, &c., &c.

Calendaro: (entering): Are all here?
Dagolino: All with you; except the three
On duty, and our leader Israel,
Who is expected momentarily.
Calendaro: Where’s Bertram?
Bertram: Here!
Calendaro: Have you not been able to complete
The number wanting in your company?
Bertram: I had marked out some: but I have not dared
To trust them with the secret, till assured
That they were worthy faith.
Calendaro: 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,¹²¹
To punish some more dissolute young nobles
Who have defied the law in their excesses;
But once drawn up, and their new swords well fleshed
In the rank hearts of the more odious Senators,
They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
The example of their Chiefs, and I for one
Will set them such, that they for very shame
And safety will not pause till all have perished.
Bertram: How say you? all!
Calendaro: Whom wouldst thou spare?
Bertram: I spare?
I have no power to spare. I only questioned,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked men
There might be some, whose age and qualities
Might mark them out for pity.
Calendaro: 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,

¹²¹: BYRON’S NOTE: An historical fact. These men were pardoned at the trial.
Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert —
So let them die as one!

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

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

Bertram: Who distrusts me?

Calendaro: 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.

Bertram: 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!

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

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

Dagolino: 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.

Dagolino: Welcome, Israel.
Conspirators: Most welcome. Brave Bertuccio, thou art late –
Who is this stranger?
Calendaro: 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.

Israel: Stranger, step forth!

The Doge discovers himself.

Conspirators: To arms! We are betrayed – it is the Doge!
Down with them both! our traitorous captain, and
The tyrant he hath sold us to.
Calendaro: drawing his sword: Hold! hold!
Who moves a step against them dies. Hold! hear Bertuccio – What! are you appalled to see
A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you? Israel, speak! what means this mystery?

Israel: 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!

Calendaro: 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.

Israel: 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 who e’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.

Israel: My Lord, we would have perished 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.

Calendaro: Aye, speak;
We’re all listening in wonder.

Israel (addressing the conspirators): You are safe,
Nay, more, almost triumphant – listen then,
And know my words for truth.

Doge: You see me here,
As one of you hath said, an old, unarmed,
Defenceless man; and yesterday you saw me
Presiding in the hall of ducal State,
Apparent Sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters – the patricians.
Why I was there you know, or think you know;
Why I am here, he who hath been most wronged,
He who among you hath been most insulted,
Outraged and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him here?
You know my recent story, all men know it,
And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgement 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,

122: Compare *King Lear*, II iv 271 and III ii 20.
And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman’s weapons, but I need not urge you.
Our private wrongs have sprung from public vices,
In this – I cannot call it commonwealth,
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state
Without its virtues – temperance and 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 dressed out to head a pageant, as The Greeks of yore made drunk their slaves to form A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this monster of a state,
This mockery of a government, this spectre, Which must be exorcised with blood – and then We will renew the Times of Truth and Justice, Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights,
Proportioned like the columns to the temple, Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
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, dizenèd 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

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123: Compare King Lear, II iv 276.  
125: this monster of a state, / This mockery of a government: a good description of the government of Liverpool and Castlereagh.  
The sanction of “the Ten,” a council-fawner,
A tool – a fool – a puppet – they had ne’er
Fostered the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reached me through my pity for the people;
That many know, and they who know not yet
Will one day learn: meantime I do devote,
Whate’er the issue, my last days of life –
My present power such as it is, not that
Of Doge, but of a man who has been great
Before he was degraded to a Doge,
And still has individual means and mind;
I stake my fame (and I had fame) – my breath –
(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh)
My heart – my hope – my soul – upon this cast!
Such as I am, I offer me to you
And to your chiefs; accept me or reject me –
A prince who fain would be a citizen
Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so.

Calendaro: Long live Faliero! – Venice shall be free!
Conspirators: Long live Faliero!
Israel: Comrades! did I well?
Doge: This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you?
Calendaro: Aye, and the first among us, as thou hast been
Of Venice – be our General and Chief.
Doge: Chief! – General! – I was General at Zara,
And Chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, Prince in Venice:
I cannot stoop – that is, I am not fit
To lead a band of – patriots: when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
’Tis not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows – but now to the point:
Israel has stated to me your whole plan –
’Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.
Calendaro: 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.
Bertram: 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

127: The Council of Ten was a kind of interior cabinet, elected by the Grand Council.
128: The real Faliero was never “Chief in Rhodes or Cyprus”; Shakespeare’s Othello was.
The Council, and “the Ten?” the spies, the eyes
Of the patricians dubious of their slaves,
And now more dubious of the Prince they have made one?
I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly,
Full to the Hydra’s heart – its heads will follow.

Calendaro: 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!

Israel: And there? –

Doge: By different routes
Let your march be directed, every sixty
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of war
And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn
Discerned before the port; form round the palace,
Within whose court will be drawn out in arms
My nephew and the clients of our house,
Many and martial; while the bell tolls on,
Shout ye, “Saint Mark! the foe is on our waters!”

Calendaro: I see it now – but on, my noble Lord.

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

Calendaro: Would that the hour were come! we will not scotch,
But kill.\textsuperscript{129}

Bertram: Once more, sir, with your pardon, I
Would now repeat the question which I asked
Before Bertuccio added to our cause
This great ally who renders it more sure,
And therefore safer, and as such admits
Some dawn of mercy to a portion of

\textsuperscript{129}: Compare \textit{Macbeth} III ii 13: \textit{We have scotched the snake, not killed it.}
Our victims – must all perish in this slaughter?

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

Conspirators: All! all!

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

Israel: 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! ’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.

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

Doge: Dolfino’s father was my friend, and Lando
Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared
My Genoese embassy.130 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!

Calendaro: 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,

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130: B. just can’t get anything right. Marco Cornaro was with Faliero in Hungary, not Genoa.
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 revelled or we sorrowed 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
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 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 –
Oimè! Oimè! 131 – and must I do this deed?

Israel: 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 wronged me, for such was to right the State;
They could not right me – that would give suspicion;
So that I was a slave to my own subjects;
So that I was a foe to my own friends;
Begirt with spies for guards, with robes for power,
With pomp for freedom, gaolers for a council,
Inquisitors for friends, and Hell for life! 360

131: Oimè! Oimè! – Alas! Alas!
I had only one fount of Quiet left,  
And *that* they poisoned! My pure household gods 
Were shivered on my hearth, and o’er their shrine 
Sate grinning ribaldry, and sneering scorn.\(^{132}\)

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

Doge: I had borne all – it hurt me, but I bore it –  
Till this last running over of the cup 
Of bitterness – until this last loud insult, 
Not only unredressed, but sanctioned; then, 
And thus, I cast all further feelings from me – 
The feelings which they crushed for me, long, long 
Before, even in their oath of false allegiance! 
Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured 
Their friend and made a sovereign, as boys make 
Playthings, to do their pleasure – and be broken! 
I from that hour have seen but senators 
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge, 
Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear; 
They dreading he should snatch the tyranny 
From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants. 
To me, then, these men have no *private* life, 
Nor claim to ties they have cut off from others; 
As senators for arbitrary acts 
Amenable, I look on them – as such 
Let them be dealt upon.

Calendaro: 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!

Israel: 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!

Calendaro: 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

\(^{132}\) See above, I ii 187n.
By the foul aristocracy: he could not –
He dared not in more honourable days
Have risked it. I have merged all private wrath
Against him in the thought of our great purpose.
A slave insults me – I require his punishment
From his proud master’s hands; if he refuse it,
The offence grows his, and let him answer it.

Calendaro: 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 quenched two cities’ ashes.133

Israel: 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.

Calendaro: Farewell, then – until dawn!
Israel: Success go with you!
Conspirators: 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.

Israel: We have them in the toil – it cannot fail!
Now thou’rt indeed a Sovereign, and wilt make
A name immortal greater than the greatest:
Free citizens have struck at kings ere now;
Caesars have fallen, and even patrician hands
Have crushed dictators, as the popular steel
Has reached patricians: but, until this hour,
What Prince has plotted for his people’s Freedom?
Or risked a life to liberate his subjects?
For ever, and for ever, they conspire
Against the people, to abuse their hands
To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
Against the fellow nations, so that yoke
On yoke, and Slavery and Death may whet,

133: two cities – Sodom and Gomorrah.
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan!
Now, my Lord, to our enterprise – ’tis great,
And greater the reward; why stand you rapt?
A moment back, and you were all impatience!

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

Who?

My own friends by blood and courtesy,
And many deeds and days – the Senators?

Doge: Aye, so it seems, and so it is to you;
You are a patriot, a Plebeian Gracchus –
The rebel’s oracle, the people’s tribune –
I blame you not – you act in your vocation;
They smote you, and oppressed you, and despised you;
So they have me: but you ne’er spake with them;
You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt;
You never had their wine-cup at your lips:
You grew not up with them, nor laughed, nor wept,
Nor held a revel in their company;
Ne’er smiled to see them smile, nor claimed their smile
In social interchange for yours, nor trusted
Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have:
These hairs of mine are 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.

Israel: Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy
A child; if you are not in second childhood,
Call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor
Thus shame yourself and me. By Heavens! I’d rather
Forego even now, or fail in our intent,
Than see the man I venerate subside
From high resolves into such shallow weakness!
You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both
Your own and that of others; can you shrink then
From a few drops from veins of hoary vampires,
Who but give back what they have drained from millions?

134: Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus were tribunes of the people during the Roman republic. They agitated for various egalitarian causes, and were murdered. Another reference to Hobhouse and Cato Street as B. imagined it.

135: Compare The Corsair, 720-35.

136: Compare the speeches of Lady Macbeth to Macbeth in I iv. There a wife speaks to a husband; here, a plebeian to an aristocrat.
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,  
'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,  
Which shall unpeople many palaces,  
And hew the highest genealogic trees  
Down to the earth, strewed with their bleeding fruit,  
And crush their blossoms into barrenness:  
*This will* I – must I – have I sworn to do,  
Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;  
But still I quiver to behold what I  
Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.  

Israel: 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: Aye, there it is – *you* feel not, nor do I,  
Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save  
A thousand lives – and killing, do no murder;  
*You feel* not – *you* go to this butcher-work  
As if these high-born men were steers for shambles:  
When all is over, you’ll be free and merry,  
And calmly wash those hands incarnadine;  
But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows  
In this surpassing massacre, shall be,  
Shall see and feel – oh God! oh God! *'tis true,  
And thou dost well to answer that it was  
“My own free will and act”, and yet you err,  
For I *will* do this! Doubt not – fear not; I  
Will be your most unmerciful accomplice!  
And yet I act no more on my free will,  
Nor my own feelings – both compel me back;  
But there is *hell* within me and around,  
And like the demon who believes and trembles  
Must I abhor and do. Away! away!  
Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me  
To gather the retainers of our house.  
Doubt not, St. Mark’s great bell shall wake all Venice,  
Except her slaughtered senate: ere the sun  
Be broad upon the Adriatic there  
Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown  
The roar of waters in the cry of blood!  
I am resolved – come on.
Israel:     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 cheered me not;  
There came a heaviness across my heart,  
Which, in the lightest movement of the dance,  
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united  
Even with the lady of my love, oppressed me,  
And through my spirit chilled my blood, until  
A damp like Death rose o’er my brow; I strove  
To laugh the thought away, but ’twould not be;  
Through all the music ringing in my ears  
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,  
Though low and far, as e’er the Adrian wave  
Rose o’er the city’s murmur in the night,  
Dashing against the outward Lido’s bulwark:  
So that I left the festival before  
It reached its zenith, and will woo my pillow  
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.  
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light  
The lamp within my chamber.

Antonio: Yes, my Lord:  
Command you no refreshment?
Lioni: Nought, save sleep,  
Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it,  

Exit Antonio.

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

Goes to an open lattice.137

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,

137: Medwin reports B. as saying that he wrote this next long speech “one moonlight night after coming from the Benzon” (Medwin ed. Lovell, p.120); but that would mean he wrote it in Venice, not in Ravenna.
Which showed all things, but nothing as they were.
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of Youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,
Pranked forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,
Believed itself forgotten, and was fooled.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavished its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flushed and crowded wassailers, and wasted
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was Pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.
The music, and the banquet, and the wine,
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers,
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments,
The white arms and the raven hair, the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself, yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds ’twixt our gaze and heaven;\textsuperscript{138}
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry
Of the fair forms which terminate so well –
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments – Art and Nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of Beauty as the parched pilgrim’s
On Arab sands the false mirage, which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone. Around me are the stars and waters –
Worlds mirrored in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What Ocean is to Earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o’er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,

\textsuperscript{138}: Hobhouse objected to this and the previous line: see his letter quoted in the introduction. At Drury Lane the whole speech was cut.
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Reared up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Ægypt’s plains to Times that have
No other record. All is gentle: nought
Stirs rudely; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight; the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse;
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city –
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm!
I thank thee, Night! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate: and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence,
Now will I to my couch, although to rest
Is almost wronging such a night as this.

A knocking is heard from without.

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

Enter Antonio.

Antonio: My Lord, a man without, on urgent business,
Implores to be admitted.
Lioni: Is he a stranger?
Antonio: His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
I craved his name, but this he seemed reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni:  ’Tis a strange hour, and a suspicious bearing!
And yet there is slight peril: ’tis not in
Their houses noble men are struck at; still,
Although I know not that I have a foe
In Venice, ’twill 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.

Bertram:  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?

Bertram (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
Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,
Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode
Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit
Hath some mysterious import – but say on –
What has occurred, some rash and sudden broil?
A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab?
Mere things of every day; so that thou hast not
Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;
But then thou must withdraw, for angry friends
And relatives, in the first burst of vengeance,
Are things in Venice deadlier than the laws.

Bertram:  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 –
Bertram: 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 tomorrow!

Lioni: Wherefore not?
What means this menace?

Bertram: 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?

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

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

Bertram: 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.

Bertram: Say not so!
Once more, art thou determined to go forth?
Lioni: I am. Nor is there aught which shall impede me!
Bertram: 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.

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

Lioni: Bertram, ’tis thou who hast forgotten them.

Bertram: Nor now, nor ever; whatsoever betide,
I would have saved you: when to manhood’s growth
We sprung, and you, devoted to the State,
As suits your station, the more humble Bertram
Was left unto the labours of the humble,
Still you forsook me not; and if my fortunes
Have not been towering, ’twas no fault of him
Who oftentimes rescued and supported me,
When struggling with the tides of circumstance,
Which bear away the weaker: noble blood
Ne’er mantled in a nobler heart than thine
Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Bertram.
Would that thy fellow Senators were like thee!

Lioni: Why, what hast thou to say against the senate?

Bertram: Nothing.

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

Bertram: 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 villainy 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?

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

Lioni: And I be murdered! say,
Was it not thus thou said’st, my gentle Bertram?

Bertram: Who talks of murder? what said I of murder?
’Tis false! I did not utter such a word.

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

Bertram: 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: Aye, 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?

Bertram: Venice, and all that she inherits, are
Divided like a house against itself,
And so will perish ere tomorrow’s twilight!

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

Bertram: 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?

Bertram: 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?

Bertram: 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.

Bertram: 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.

Bertram: I have thought again: it must not be – I love thee –
Thou knowest it – that I stand here is the proof,
Not least though last; but having done my duty
By thee, I now must do it by my country!
Farewell – we meet no more in life! – farewell!

Lioni: What, ho! – Antonio – Pedro – to the door!
See that none pass – arrest this man!

Enter Antonio and other armed domestics, who seize Bertram.

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

Exit Antonio.

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

Bertram: Where wouldst thou
Bear me a prisoner?

Lioni: Firstly to “the Ten”;
Next to the Doge.

Bertram: To the Doge?

Lioni: Assuredly:
Is he not Chief of the State?

Bertram: Perhaps at sunrise –

Lioni: What mean you? – but we’ll know anon.

Bertram: Art sure?

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

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

Re-enter Antonio.

Antonio: 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.*
Act IV 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?

Bertuccio: They are arrayed, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo:139
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.

Bertuccio: Methinks, my Lord, ’tis better as it is:
A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion; and, though fierce and trusty,
The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long maintained
The 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 count of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord without
Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,
A Gradenigo or a Foscari;
They are not used to start at those vain names,
Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;
A chief in armour is their suzerain,
And not a thing in robes.

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

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

139: BYRON’S NOTE: The Doge’s private family palace.
A band of iron rustics at our backs.

Bertuccio: Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolve
To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge: Such blows
Must be struck suddenly or never. When
I had o’ermastered the weak false remorse
Which yearned about my heart, too fondly yielding
A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro,
I know not well the courage or the faith:
Today 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?

Bertuccio: Almost upon the dawn.

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

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

Doge: ’Tis well. Will the morn never put to rest
These stars which twinkle yet o’er all the heavens?
I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to
Resolve to cleanse this commonwealth with fire,
Now leaves my mind more steady. I have wept,
And trembled at the thought of this dread duty;
But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,

140: Compare Henry IV II, I i 157: … one spirit of the first-born Cain …
141: Compare Macbeth II i, opening and elsewhere.
142 Compare Macbeth I vii 79: I am settled, and bend up …
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\textsuperscript{143} needed more
To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal,\textsuperscript{144} than to face
The toils and dangers of a life of war.

Bertuccio: 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.

Bertuccio: True,
The morn is dappling in the sky.

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

\textsuperscript{143}: B.’s description of the Liverpool administration.
\textsuperscript{144}: The Corinthian leader Timoleon killed his own brother in taking over the city.
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!

Bertuccio: 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 St. Mark’s!

Exit Bertuccio Faliero.

Doge (solus): He is gone,
And on each footstep moves a life. 'Tis done.
Now the destroying angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey,
And for a moment, poised in middle air,
Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak. Thou day!
That slowly walk'st the waters! march – march on –
I would not smite i'the dark, but rather see
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea waves!
I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply too,
With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flowed too, but victorious:
Now thou must wear an unmixed crimson; no
Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this?
I, who was named Preserver of the City?
I, at whose name the million's caps were flung
Into the air, and cries from tens of thousands
Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me blessings,
And fame, and length of days – to see this day?
But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their crown;
I will resign a crown, and make the State
Renew its Freedom – but oh! by what means?
The noble end must justify them. What
Are a few drops of human blood? 'tis false,
The blood of tyrants is not human; they,
Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until ’tis time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous. Oh World!
Oh men! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime?
And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword superfluous?
And I, upon the verge of th’unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me?
I must not ponder this.

A pause.

Hark! was there not
A murmur as of distant voices, and
The tramp of feet in martial unison?
What phantoms even of sound our wishes raise!
It cannot be – the signal hath not rung –
Why pauses it? My nephew’s messenger
Should be upon his way to me, and he
Himself perhaps even now draws grating back
Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower portal,
Where swings the sullen huge oracular bell,
Which never knells but for a princely death,
Or for a state in peril, pealing forth
Tremendous bodements; let it do its office,
And be this peal its awfulest and last
Sound till the strong tower rock! What! silent still?¹⁴⁵
I would go forth, but that my post is here,
To be the centre of re-union to
The oft discordant elements which form
Leagues of this nature, and to keep compact
The wavering of the weak, in case of conflict;
For if they should do battle, ’twill be here,
Within the palace, that the strife will thicken:
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 Night¹⁴⁶ with guards &c., &c.
Signor: Doge, I arrest thee of high treason! 147
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: 148 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 weighed well thy life’s worth,
That thus you dare assume a lawless function?

Signor: ’Tis not my office to reply, but act –
I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide.

Doge (aside): I must gain time. So that the storm-bell sound,
All may be well yet. Kinsman, speed – speed – speed!
Our fate is trembling in the balance, and
Woe to the vanquished! be they Prince and people,
Or slaves and senate –

The great bell of St. Mark’s tolls. 149

147: This scene is a dramatic version of Hobhouse’s comical account of his own arrest in December 1819: I took both – read the warrant – and said “I cannot obey this – had I been called to the bar, I should have demurred to the tribunal – I now object to the warrant – it is not a legal instrument – I shall not go without force – I presume you are not come alone?” – The messenger said he wished to know what force meant. “I do not mean a regiment of dragoons,” – “Of course,” said the messenger – “well then, I have two men with me below.” – I answered, “I shall not go with you – take back the warrant to the Speaker, and tell him so”. – “Sir” said the little fellow, “I cannot do that – now I have seen you I cannot quit you.” – “Very well,” said I, “then use force – I shall not go without”. The messenger went out, and soon appeared with two tall fellows having certain badges on their breasts, they being other messengers. They waited in the other room – he came in again, and asked me if I should go – “Not without force.” – He seemed to hesitate, and not know what to do. “I am not going to shoot you,” I said. “Oh”, replied the man, “you are too much of a gentleman I am sure”. This made us both laugh. The man said – “Well then, Sir, you are my prisoner.” and saying so, laid his hand gently on my arm (B.L.Add.Mss. 56540, diary entry for December 14 1819). See Byron’s Bulldog p.281 for the version he sent B. in January 1820.

148: Either Faliero, or B., gets it wrong again. The Council could sit without the Doge, but not vice versa.

149: According to Sanuto (below, App. I/II), the Council had forbidden the bell to be rung.
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 missed 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 part of the Guard.

Doge: Wretch! if thou wouldst have thy vile life, implore it;
It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.
Aye, 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 earned the price
Of blood, and they who use thee will reward thee.
But thou wert sent to watch, and not to prate,
As thou said’st even now – then do thine office,
But let it be in silence, as 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.

2nd 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?
2nd 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.
Bertuccio: Uncle!
Doge: It is in vain to war with fortune;
      The glory hath departed from our house.
Bertuccio: Who would have deemed it? Ah! one moment sooner!
Doge: That moment would have changed the face of ages;
      This gives us to Eternity – we’ll meet it
      As men whose triumph is not in success,
      But who can make their own minds all in all,
      Equal to every fortune. Droop not, ’tis
      But a brief passage – I would go alone,
      Yet if they send us, as ’tis like, together,
      Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.
Bertuccio: 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.
      ’Tis 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.
Bertuccio: I’ll answer for thee – ’tis 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 stamped in story
      With the geese in the capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,
While Manlius, who hurled down the Gauls, was cast
From the Tarpeian.  

1st 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.

Bertuccio: Farewell, Uncle!
If we shall meet again in life I know not,
But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.

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

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150: For the story of Manlius and the geese in the Capitol, see Livy 5, 47. It was, however, not Manlius who was thrown from the Tarpeian rock, but a guard who had been lax on duty.
ACT V. scene I. – The hall of the Council of Ten assembled with the additional senators, who, on the trials of the conspirators for the treason of Marino Faliero, composed what was called the Giunta\textsuperscript{151} – guards, officers, &c., &c. Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro as prisoners. Bertram, Lioni, and witnesses, &c. The Chief of the Ten, Benintende.\textsuperscript{152}

Benintende: 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 opened India’s wealth
To Europe; the last Roman refuge from
O’erwhelming Attila; the Ocean’s queen;
Proud Genoa’s prouder rival! ’Tis to sap
The throne of such a city, these lost men
Have risked and forfeited their worthless lives –
So let them die the death.

Israel: We are prepared;
Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.

Benintende: 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.

Israel: We stand to hear, and not to speak.

Benintende: 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?

Israel: Justice!

\textsuperscript{151}: The Giunta was the Council of Ten, augmented by twenty more, all patricians.
\textsuperscript{152}: B. wrote to Murray on October 12 1820: “In the notes to Marino Faliero it may be as well to say – “Benintende” was not really of the ten – – hut merely Grand Chancellor – a separate office – – (although important) – – it was an arbitrary alteration of mine (BLJ VII 201).
Benintende: What
Your object?
Israel: Freedom!
Benintende: You are brief, sir.
Israel: So my life grows: I
Was bred a soldier, not a senator.
Benintende: Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity
To brave your judges to postpone the sentence?
Israel: Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,
I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.
Benintende: Is this your sole reply to the Tribunal?
Israel: Go, ask your racks what they have wrung from us,
Or place us there again; we have still some blood left,
And some slight sense of pain in these wrenched limbs:
But this ye dare not do; for if we die there –
And you have left us little life to spend
Upon your engines, gorged with pangs already –
Ye lose the public spectacle, with which
You would 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?
Benintende: Say, who were your accomplices?
Israel: The Senate.
Benintende: What do you mean?
Israel: Ask of the suffering people,
Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.
Benintende: You know the Doge?
Israel: 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.
Benintende: You have held conference with him?
Israel: I am weary –
Even wearier of your questions than your tortures:
I pray you pass to judgement.
Benintende: It is coming.
And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what
Have you to say why you should not be doomed?
Calendaro: I never was a man of many words,
And now have few left worth the utterance.
Benintende: A further application of yon engine
May change your tone.

Calendaro: Most true, it will do so;
A former application did so; but
It will not change my words, or, if it did –

Benintende: What then?

Calendaro: Will my avowal on yon rack
Stand good in law?

Benintende: Assuredly.

Calendaro: Whoe’er
The culprit be whom I accuse of treason?

Benintende: Without doubt, he will be brought up to trial.

Calendaro: And on this testimony would he perish?

Benintende: So your confession be detailed and full,
He will stand here in peril of his life.

Calendaro: Then look well to thy proud self, President!

For by the Eternity which yawns before me,
I swear that thou, and only thou, shalt be
The traitor I denounce upon that rack,
If I be stretched there for the second time.

One of the Giunta: Lord President, ’twere best proceed to judgement;
There is no more to be drawn from these men.

Benintende: 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,153
The Doge stands to be hold the chase of bulls,
Let them be justified: and leave exposed
Their wavering relics, in the place of judgement,
To the full view of the assembled people!
And Heaven have mercy on their souls!

The Giunta: Amen!

Israel: Signors, farewell! we shall not all again
Meet in one place.

Benintende: And lest they should essay
To stir up the distracted multitude –154
Guards! let their mouths be gagged even in the act155
Of execution. Lead them hence!

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

153: BYRON’S NOTE: “Giovedi Grassa,” “fat or greasy Thursday,” which I cannot literally
translate in the text, was the day.
154: Hamlet IV iii 4: He’s loved of the distracted multitude ...
155: BYRON’S NOTE: Historical fact. See Sanuto, in the Appendix to this tragedy. See also TVOJ,
73, 8: I’ll have him gagged ...
Benintende: A priest is waiting in the antechamber;
But, for your friends, such interviews would be
Painful to them, and useless all to you.

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

Israel: 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.

Calendaro: Israel, hadst thou but hearkened unto me
It had not now been thus; and yon pale villain,
The coward Bertram, would –

Israel: Peace, Calendaro!
What brooks it now to ponder upon this?

Bertram: Alas! I fain you died in peace with me:
I did not seek this task; ’twas forced upon me:
Say, you forgive me, though I never can
Retrieve my own forgiveness – frown not thus!

Israel: I die and pardon thee!

Calendaro (spitting at him)\(^\text{156}\) I die and scorn thee!

Exeunt Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro, Guards, &c.

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\(^{156}\) Foscolo objected to the spitting; B. defended it: ‘I know what F[oscolo] means about Calendaro’s spitting at Bertram – that’s national – the objection I mean – The Italians and French – with those “flags of Abomination – their pocket handkerchiefs – spit there – and here – and every – where else – in your face almost – and therefore object to it on the Stage as too familiar. – But – we who spit nowhere – but in a Man’s face – when we grow savage – are not likely to feel this. – Remember Massinger – and Kean’s Sir Giles Overreach.

“Lord! thus I Spit at thee and at thy Counsel!” –
Besides – Calendaro does not spit in Bertram’s face – he spits at him – as I have seen the Mussulmans do upon the ground when they are in a rage. – Again – he does not in fact despise Bertram – though he affects it – as we all do – when angry with one we think our inferior; he is angry at not being allowed to die in his own way – (though not afraid of death) and recollect that he suspected & hated Bertram from the first. – Israel Bertuccio – on the other hand – is a cooler and more concentrated fellow – he acts upon principle and impulse – Calendaro upon impulse and example. – – So there’s argument for you’ (BLJ VII, 194).
Benintende: Now that these criminals have been disposed of,
'Tis time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero!
The proofs and process are complete; the time
And crime require a quick procedure: shall
He now be called in to receive the award?

The Giunta: Aye, aye.

Benintende: Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the Council.

One of the Giunta: And the rest,
When shall they be brought up?

Benintende: When all the Chiefs
Have been disposed of. Some have fled to Chiozza;¹⁵⁷
But there are thousands in pursuit of them,
And such precaution ta’en on terra firma,¹⁵⁸
As well as in the islands, that we hope
None will escape to utter in strange lands
His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the senate.

Enter the Doge as Prisoner, with Guards, &c., &c.

Benintende: Doge – for such still you are, and by the law
Must be considered, till the hour shall come
When you must doff the ducal bonnet from
That head, which could not wear a crown more noble
Than empires can confer, in quiet 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 appeared against you; and more ample
Ne’er reared their sanguinary shadows to
Confront a traitor. What have you to say
In your defence?

Doge: What shall I say to ye,
Since my defence must be your condemnation?
You are at once offenders and accusers,
Judges and executioners! Proceed
Upon your power.

Benintende: Your chief accomplices
Having confessed, there is no hope for you.

Doge: And who be they?

¹⁵⁷: Chiozza – an island in the Venetian lagoon.
¹⁵⁸: terra firma – the mainland opposite Venice.
Benintende: 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.

Benintende: And two others, Israel Bertuccio, And Philip Calendario, have admitted Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!

Doge: And where are they?

Benintende: 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?159 How did they meet their doom?

Benintende: Think of your own: It is approaching. You decline to plead, then? 180

Doge: I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor Can recognise your legal power to try me.160 Show me the law!

Benintende: On great emergencies, The law must be remodelled or amended: Our fathers had not fixed the punishment Of such a crime, as on the old Roman tables The sentence against parricide was left In pure forgetfulness; they could not render That penal, which had neither name nor thought In their great bosoms; who would have foreseen 190 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!

Doge: The Signory of Venice! You betrayed me – You – you, who sit there, traitors as ye are! From my equality with you in birth, And my superiority in action, You drew me from my honourable toils In distant lands – on flood, in field, in cities – You singled me out like a victim to Stand crowned, but bound and helpless, at the altar Where you alone could minister. I knew not,

159: But Brutus and Cassius did not conspire against the whole state.
160: There is a parallel here with the trial of Charles I: see Moore’s section on Faliero, quoted above.
I sought not, wished not, dreamed not the election,
Which reached me first at Rome, and I obeyed;
But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you
To mock and mar your Sovereign’s best intents,
You had, even in the interregnum of
My journey to the capital, curtailed
And mutilated the few privileges
Yet left the Duke: all this I bore, and would
Have borne, until my very hearth was stained
By the pollution of your ribaldry,
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you –
Fit judge in such Tribunal! –

Benintende (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 judgement in a trial arduous
And novel as the present: he was set
Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the law,
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim
No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates!

Doge: His PUNISHMENT! I rather see him there,
Where he now sits, to glut him with my death,
Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show of justice
Decreed as sentence! Base as was his crime,
’Twas purity compared with your protection.

Benintende: 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 – ’tis the last drop
Which makes the cup run o’er, and mine was full
Already: you oppressed the Prince and people;
I would have freed both, and have failed in both:
The price of such success would have been glory,
Vengeance, and victory, and such a name
As would have made Venetian history
Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourished ages after,
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus.\textsuperscript{161} 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.

Benintende: You do confess then, and admit the justice Of our Tribunal?

Doge: I confess to have failed; 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.

Benintende: You do not then in aught arraign our equity?

Doge: Noble Venetians! stir me not with questions. I am resigned to the worst; but in me still Have something of the blood of brighter days, And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me Further interrogation, which boots nothing, Except to turn a trial to debate. I shall but answer that which will offend you, And please your enemies – a host already; ’Tis true, these sullen walls should yield no echo: But walls have ears – nay, more, they have tongues; and if There were no other way for truth to o’erleap them, You who condemn me, you who fear and slay me, Yet could not bear in silence to your graves What you would hear from me of good or evil; The secret were too mighty for your souls: Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court A danger which would double that you escape. Such my defence would be, had I full scope To make it famous; for true words are things,\textsuperscript{162} 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 make me live in wrath, Let me die calmly; you may grant me this; I deny nothing – defend nothing – nothing

\textsuperscript{161}: Gelon was a Syracusan despot; Thrasybulus an Athenian democrat. Faliero sees himself as a democratic despot.

\textsuperscript{162}: B. is very fond of this phrase: see CHP III 114, 4, Don Juan III 89 1, or PoD II 2.
I ask of you, but silence for myself,
And sentence from the court!

Benintende: 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.

Benintende: Say, conscript fathers, shall she be admitted?¹⁶³

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

Benintende: 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.*

Benintende: 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!¹⁶⁴
Place a chair instantly.

Angiolina: A moment’s faintness –
’Tis past; I pray you pardon me – I sit not
In presence of my Prince and of my husband,

¹⁶³: BYRON’S NOTE: The Venetian Senate took the same title as the Roman, of “Conscript Fathers”.
¹⁶⁴: A direct lift from *Macbeth*. See II iii 118 and 124.
While he is on his feet.

Benintende: Your pleasure, Lady?

Angiolina: Strange rumours, but most true, if all I hear
And see be sooth, have reached me, and I come
To know the worst, even at the worst; forgive
The abruptness of my entrance and my bearing.
Is it – I cannot speak – I cannot shape
The question – but you answer it ere spoken,
With eyes averted, and with gloomy brows –
Oh God! this is the silence of the grave!

Benintende: (after a pause): Spare us, and spare thyself the repetition
Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to Heaven and man!

Angiolina: Yet speak; I cannot –
I cannot – no – even now believe these things.
Is he condemned?

Benintende: Alas!

Angiolina: And was he guilty?

Benintende: 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.

Angiolina: Is it so?
My lord, my Sovereign, my poor father’s friend,
The mighty in the field, the sage in council,
Unsay the words of this man! thou art silent!

Benintende: He hath already owned to his own guilt,
Nor, as thou see’st, doth he deny it now.

Angiolina: Aye, 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 crowned with brave acts.

Benintende: His doom must be fulfilled without remission
Of time or penalty – ’tis a decree.

Angiolina: He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.

Benintende: Not in this case with justice.

Angiolina: Alas! Signor,
He who is only just is cruel; who
Upon the earth would live were all judged justly?165

Benintende: His punishment is safety to the State.

Angiolina: He was a subject, and hath served the State;

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165: Angiolina echoes Isabella at Measure for Measure II ii 74-6: How would you be / If He, which is the top of judgment, should / But judge you as you are?
He was your general, and hath saved the State;
He is your Sovereign, and hath ruled the State.

One of the Council: He is a traitor, and betrayed the State.
Angiolina: 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!
Angiolina: 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?

Benintende: Lady, it cannot be.
Angiolina (turning to the Doge): Then die, Faliero! since it must be so;
But with the spirit of my father’s friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half cancelled by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them, have prayed to them,
Have begged as famished mendicants for bread,
Have wept as they will cry unto their god
For mercy, and be answered as they answer –
Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes
Had not announced the heartless wrath within.
Then, as a Prince, address thee to thy doom!

Doge: I have lived too long not to know how to die!
Thy suing to these men were but the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge: I would not take
A life eternal, granted at the hands
Of wretches, from whose monstrous villainies
I sought to free the groaning nations!

Michel Steno: 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.

Angiolina: Sage Benintende, now chief judge of Venice,
I speak to thee in answer to yon signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words
Ne’er weighed in mind with Loredano’s daughter,
Further than to create a moment’s pity
For such as he is: would that others had
Despised him as I pity! I prefer
My 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 scorners words were as the wind
Unto the rock: but as there are – alas!
Spirits more sensitive, on which such things
Light as the whirlwind on the waters; souls
To whom 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 aiery; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson
To wretches how they tamper in their spleen
With beings of a higher order. Insects
Have made the lion mad ere now; a shaft
I’ the heel o’erthrew the bravest of the brave;\(^\text{166}\)
A wife’s dishonour was the bane of Troy;\(^\text{167}\)
A wife’s dishonour unkinged Rome for ever;\(^\text{168}\)
An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,\(^\text{169}\)
And thence to Rome, which perished for a time;
An obscene gesture cost Caligula\(^\text{170}\)
His life, while earth yet bore his cruelties;
A virgin’s wrong made Spain a Moorish province;\(^\text{171}\)
And Steno’s lie, couched in two worthless lines,
Hath decimated Venice,\(^\text{172}\) put in peril
A senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
Discrowned a Prince, cut off his crownless head,
And forged new fetters for a groaning people!

\(^\text{166}\): Achilles, killed by an arrow through his heel.
\(^\text{167}\): Helen of Troy, the queen of Sparta, whose abduction by Paris led to the Trojan War.
\(^\text{168}\): The rape of Lucretia by Tarquin led to the expulsion of the Tuscan kings from Rome.
\(^\text{169}\): This obscure story from Livy (V, 33), claims that the Gauls first crossed the Alps because of the wine.
\(^\text{170}\): Caligula made an obscene gesture at the man who subsequently assassinated him.
\(^\text{171}\): The rape of Florinda by Roderick led to the Moorish invasion of Spain; see Don Juan I, 190, 4.
\(^\text{172}\): But “Steno’s lie”, unlike all the foregoing, has not led to warfare or great political upheaval. Faliero speaks as though his conspiracy had succeeded.
Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this,
If it so please him – ’twere a pride fit for him!
But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate’er he now is, was a hero,
By the intrusion of his very prayers;
Nothing of good can come from such a source,
Nor would we aught with him, nor now, nor ever:
We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,
And not for reptiles – we have none for Steno,
And no resentment: things like him must sting,
And higher beings suffer; ’tis the charter
Of life. The man who dies by the adder’s fang
May have the crawler crushed, but feels no anger:
’Twas the worm’s nature; and some men are worms
In soul, more than the living things of tombs.

Doge (to Benintende): Signor! complete that which you deem your duty.
Benintende: Before we can proceed upon that duty,
We would request the Princess to withdraw;
’Twill move her too much to be witness to it.
Angiolina: I know it will, and yet I must endure it,
For ’tis a part of mine – I will not quit,
Except by force, my husband’s side – Proceed!
Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear;
Though my heart burst, it shall be silent. Speak!
I have that within which shall o’ermaster all.

Benintende: 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
Intrusted by the State with high employments,
Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.
Convict by many witnesses and proofs,
And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of treachery and treason, yet unheard of
Until this trial – the decree is Death –
Thy goods are confiscate unto the State.

173: Alexander the Great was tempted to set fire to Persepolis by a courtesan called Thais; but changed his mind.
174: Reviewing the play in the Quarterly for July 1821, Reginald Heber objected to this speech: Even in her longest and best speech, at the most touching moment of the catastrophe, she can moralize, in a strain of pedantry less natural to a woman than to any other person similarly circumstanced, on lions stung by gnats, Achilles, Helen, Lucretia, the siege of Clusium, Caligula, Caaba [Cava] and Persepolis! (RR V 2064).
175: Angiolina is a duchess, not a princess (she is the doaressa).
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!”[177] 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.

Benintende: Time must reply to that; our sons will judge
Their fathers’ judgement, which I now pronounce.
As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and cap,
Thou shalt be led hence to the Giants’ Staircase,[178]
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?
Benintende: It is.
Doge: I can endure it. – And the time?
Benintende: Must be immediate. – Make thy peace with God:
Within an hour thou must be in His presence.

[176] A direct quotation from *The Merchant of Venice*: see IV i 305-7: … thy lands and goods / Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate / Unto the state of Venice.
[177] Lines 499-506 (“His crimes! … his crimes!”) are missing from the first issue of the first edition.
[178] Another anachronism: the Giants’ Staircase had not been erected in 1355. It dates from the mid-sixteenth century.
Doge: I am already; and my blood will rise
To Heaven before the souls of those who shed it.
Are all my lands confiscated?
Benintende: 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.
Benintende: 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 widowed Princess,
Fear not, for we will do her justice.
Angiolina: 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 ’twill end.
Have I aught else to undergo save Death?
Benintende: 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!
Benintende: 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._
Act V scene II. – *The Doge’s apartment. The Doge as prisoner, and the Duchess attending him.*

Doge: Now, that the priest is gone, ’twere 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.

Angiolina: Alas!
And I have been the cause, the unconscious cause;
And for this funeral marriage, this black union,
Which thou, compliant with my father’s wish,
Didst promise at his death, thou hast sealed thine own.

Doge: Not so: there was that in my spirit ever
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse;
The marvel is, it came not until now –
And yet it was foretold me.

Angiolina: How foretold you?

Doge: Long years ago – so long, they are a doubt
In memory, and yet they live in annals:
When I was in my youth, and served the senate
And Signory as podesta and captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day
Of festival, the sluggish bishop who
Conveyed the Host aroused my rash young anger,
By strange delay, and arrogant reply
To my reproof: I raised my hand and smote him,
Until he reeled beneath his holy 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 turned to me, and said, “The hour will come
When he thou hast o’erthrown shall overthrow thee:
The glory shall depart from out thy house,
The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,
And in thy best maturity of mind
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease
In other men, or mellow into virtues;
And majesty which decks all other heads,
Shall crown to leave thee headless; 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 passed on. That hour is come.
Angiolina: And with this warning couldst thou not have striven
To avert the fatal moment, and atone,
By penitence, for that which thou hadst done?

Doge: I own the words went to my heart, so much
That I remembered them amid the maze
Of life, as if they formed a spectral voice,
Which shook me in a supernatural dream;
And I repented; but 'twas not for me
To pull in resolution:179 what must be
I could not change, and would not fear. Nay more,
Thou can'zt 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,180 like the columnar cloud
Which ushered Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembarked us
Between the pillars of Saint Mark’s, where ’tis
The custom of the State to put to death
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is –
So that all Venice shuddered at the omen.

Angiolina: 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 conquered for them.

Angiolina: Employ the minutes left in aspirations
Of a more healing nature, and in peace
Even with these wretches take thy flight to Heaven.

Doge: I am at peace: the peace of certainty
That a sure hour will come, when their sons’ sons,
And this proud city, and these azure waters,
And all which makes them eminent and bright,
Shall be a desolation and a curse,
A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel.

179: Macbeth, V v 42: I pull in resolution …
180: The Bucentaur was the Doge’s grand barge. See CHP IV 11 3.
Angiolina: 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 –
Aye, 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 everything, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will oft
With unimpaired but not a clamorous grief
Still keep – thou turn’st so pale! Alas! she faints,
She has no breath, no pulse! Guards! lend your aid –
I cannot leave her thus, and yet ’tis better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal. Call her women –
One look! how cold her hand! as cold as mine
Shall be ere she recovers. Gently tend her,
And take my last thanks – I am ready now.

The attendants of Angiolina enter, and surround their mistress, who has fainted.

Exeunt the Doge, guards, &c., &c.
Act V scene III. – *The court of the Ducal Palace; the outer gates are shut against the people.* – *The Doge enters in his ducal robes, in procession with the Council of Ten and other patricians, attended by the guards, till they arrive at the top of the “Giants’ Staircase” (where the Doges took the oaths); the executioner is stationed there with his sword. On arriving, a Chief of the Ten takes off the ducal cap from the Doge’s head.*

![](image)

The Giants’ Staircase was not there in Faliero’s time.¹⁸¹

Doge: So now the Doge is nothing, and at last  
I am again Marino Faliero:  
’Tis well to be so, though but for a moment.  
Here was I crowned, and here, bear witness, Heaven!  
With how much more contentment I resign  
That shining mockery, the ducal bauble,  
Than I received the fatal ornament.

One of the Ten: Thou tremblest, Faliero!  

Doge: ’Tis with age, then.¹⁸²

Benintende: 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.

¹⁸¹: Sanuto (below, Appendices I / II) says the the decree was that “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”.

¹⁸²: BYRON’S NOTE: This was the actual reply of Bailli, maire of Paris, to a Frenchman who made  
him the same reproach on his way to execution, in the earliest part of their revolution. I find in  
reading over (since the completion of this tragedy), for the first time these six years, “Venice  
Preserved,” a similar reply on a different occasion by Renault, and other coincidences arising from  
the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental,  
from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the  
ocloset as Otway’s chef d’œuvre.
Benintende: They shall be cared for;
    Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime.

Doge: Unheard of! aye, there’s not a history
    But shows a thousand crowned conspirators
Against the people; but to set them free,
    One Sovereign only died, and one is dying.

Benintende: And who were they who fell in such a cause?
Doge: The King of Sparta, and the Doge of Venice –
Agis—and Faliero!

Benintende: Hast thou more
    To utter or to do?

Doge: May I speak?

Benintende: Thou may’st;
    But recollect the people are without,
    Beyond the compass of the human voice.

Doge: I speak to Time and to Eternity,
    Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
    Ye Elements! in which to be resolved
    I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit
    Upon you! Ye blue waves! which bore my banner,
    Ye winds! which fluttered o’er as if you loved it,
    And filled my swelling sails as they were wafted
    To many a triumph! Thou, my native earth,
    Which I have bled for! and thou, foreign earth,
    Which drank this willing blood from many a wound!
    Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
    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 drained in shielding her,
    Shall pour in sacrifice. She shall be bought

183: Agis, King of Sparta, tried to cancel the people’s debts, and was forced to kill himself. A self-conscious meta-theatrical allusion to Alfieri’s tragedy Agide, on which Marino Faliero is in part based.
184: Faliero prophesies the advent of Napoleon, who finally destroyed Venice’s power by giving her to Austria at the treaty of Campo Formio in 1797.
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! 185
Then when the Hebrew’s in thy palaces, 186
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-regent, 187
Even in the palace where they swayed as Sovereigns,
Even in the palace where they slew their Sovereign,
Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
From an adulteress boastful of her guilt
With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
To the third spurious generation – when
Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
Slaves turned o’er to the vanquished by the victors,
Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
And scorned even by the vicious for such vices
As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
Defy all codes to image or to name them;
Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom,
All thine inheritance shall be her shame
Entailed on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
A wider proverb for worse prostitution –
When all the ills of conquered States shall cling thee, 188
Vice without splendour, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o’er,
But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitue,

185: BYRON’S NOTE: Should the dramatic picture seem harsh, let the reader look to the historical,
of the period prophesied, or rather of the few years preceding this period. Voltaire calculated their
“nostre bene merite Meretrici” at 12,000 of regulars, without including volunteers and local militia,
on what authority I know not; but it is perhaps the only part of the population not increased. Venice
once contained 200,000 inhabitants, there are now 90,000, and THESE!! few individuals can conceive,
and none could describe the actual into which the more than infernal tyranny of Austria has plunged
this unhappy city.
186: BYRON’S NOTE: The chief palaces on the Brenta now belong to the Jews; who in the earliest
times of the Republic were only allowed to inhabit Mestri, and not to inhabit the city of Venice. The
whole commerce is in the hands of the Jews and Greeks, and the Huns form the garrison.
187: Faliero prophecies Eugene de Beauharnais, Napoleon’s stepson, who was his Viceroy of North Italy.
188: Macbeth, V v 39-40: Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive, / Till famine cling thee …
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,
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!¹⁸⁹
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.

¹⁸⁹: BYRON’S NOTE: 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 St. 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!”

B. uses Foscari’s death from a burst blood-vessel is his note to Don Juan IV, 59, 1.
Act V scene IV. – *The Piazza and Piazzetta of St. Mark’s. The people in crowds gathered round the grated gates of the Ducal Palace, which are shut.*

First Citizen: I have gained the gate, and can discern the Ten,  
Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge:  
Second 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.  
First Citizen: One has approached the Doge, and now they strip  
The ducal bonnet from his head – and now  
He raises his keen eyes to Heaven; I see  
Them glitter, and his lips move – Hush! hush! no,  
’Twas but a murmur – curse upon the distance!  
His words are inarticulate, but the voice  
Swells up like muttered thunder; would we could  
But gather a sole sentence!  
Second Citizen: Hush! we perhaps may catch the sound.  
First Citizen: ’Tis vain.  
I cannot hear him. How his hoary hair  
Streams on the wind like foam upon the wave!  
Now – now – he kneels – and now they form a circle  
Round him, and all is hidden – but I see  
The lifted sword in air – Ah! hark! it falls!  

*The people murmur.*

Third Citizen: Then they have murdered him who would have freed us.  
Fourth Citizen: He was a kind man to the commons ever.  
Fifth Citizen: Wisely they did to keep their portals barred.  
Would we had known the work they were preparing  
Ere we were summoned here – we would have brought  
Weapons, and forced them!  
Sixth Citizen: Are you sure he’s dead?  
First Citizen: I saw the sword fall – Lo! what have we here?  

*Enter on the balcony of the palace which fronts St. Mark’s Place a Chief of the Ten,*  
*with a bloody sword. He waves it thrice before the people, and exclaims, “Justice hath dealt upon the mighty traitor!” The gates are opened; the populace rush in towards the “Giants’ Staircase,” where the execution has taken place. The foremost of them exclaim to those behind, “The gory head rolls down the Giants’ Steps!”*

*The curtain falls.*

*The End.*

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190: BYRON’S NOTE: “Un Capo de Dieci” are the words of Sanuto’s Chronicle.
I.
MCCCCLIV.
MARINO FALIERO.
DOGE XLIX.\(^{191}\)

‘Fu eletto da’ quarantuno Elettori, il quale era Cavaliere e conte di Valdemarino in Trivigiana, ed era ricco, sì si trovava Ambasciadore a Roma. E a di 9. di Settembre, dopo 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 promessione 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 impresstiti, 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 dianu 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 possono 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 to Doge, quando i Giudici faranno i suoi atti. E nota, perché fu fatto Doge uno, ch’era assente, che fu Vicedoge Ser Marino Badoero più vecchio de’ Consiglieri. \(^{Item}\), che’il governo del Ducato sia commesso a’ Consiglieri, e a’ Capi de’ Quaranta, quando vacherà il Ducato, finché sarà eletto 1’ altro Doge. E così a di II. di Settembre fu crearo il prefato Marino Faliero Doge E fu preso, che il governo del Ducato sia commesso a’ Consiglieri e a’ Capi di (Lunr.mo.i I quali stiano in Palazzo di continuo, fino che verrà il Doge. Sicché 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 net 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, \(^{deo}\) che il Bucintoro non si potè levare. Laonde il Doge co’ Gentiluomini nelle piatte vennero di lungo in questa Terra a’ 5. d’Ottobre del 1354. E dovendo smontare alla

\(^{191}\): This passage is from an eighteenth-century translation (in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, by the historian Lodovico Antonio Muratori, 1672-1750), of a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century chronicle (*Vite dei Doge*, by Marin Sanudo or Sanuto, 1466-1536).

* * * *

“Trattato di Messer Marino Faliero Doge, tratto da una Cronica antica. Essendo venuto il Giovedì della Caccia, fù 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 festicciuula, 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, motto giovane e povero Gentiluomo, ma arditu e astuto, il qual’ 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 tossegli stara 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 mantien. E la mattina furono vedute tali parole scritte. E parve una brutta cosa. E per la Signoria la fu commessa cosa agli Avvogadori del Comune con grande efficacia. I qual Avvogadori subito dierono 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 la Quarantia preso di riterarlo; 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 si per rispetto all’ età, come per la caldezza d’amore, di condannarlo a compiere due mesi in prigione serrato, e poi ch’ e’ fusse bandito di Venezia e dal distretto per un’anno. Per la qual condannazione tanto piccola il Doge ne prese grande signor, parendogli chi non fosse stata fatta quella stimolata delizia cosa, che ricercava la sua dignità del Ducato. E diceva, ch’ egli doveano averlo fatto appiccare per la gola, o saltatem 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 colerico, andasse all’ Arsenale, domandasse certe cose ai Padroni, ed era alla presenza de’ Signori l’Amiraglio dell’ Arsenale. Il quale intesa la domanda, disse, che non si poteva fare. Quel Gentiluomo venne a parole coll’ Amiraglio, e diedegli un pugno su un’occhio. E perchè avea un’anello in deto, coll’ anello gli ruppe la pelle, e fece sangue. E l’Amiraglio 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 fatta della persona nostra. Laonde l’Amiraglio gli disse: Messer lo Doge, se vuoi volete farvi Signore, e fare tagliare tutti questi becchi Gentiluomini a pezzi, mi basta l’animo, dandomi voi aiuto, di farvi Signore di questa Terra. E allora voi potrete castigare tutti costoro. Intese queste, il Doge disse, Come si può fare una simile cosa? E così entrarono in ragionamento.

Il Doge mandò a chiamare Ser Bertucci Faliero suo nipote, il quale stave con lui in Palazzo, & entrarono in questa machinazione. Nè si partirono di lì, che mandarono per Filippo Calendaro, uomo maritimo e di gran seguito, e per Bertucci 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, Niccolo dalle Bende, Niccolo Biondo, e Stefano Trivisano. E ordinò di fare sedici o diciasette Capi in diversi luoghi della Terra, i quali avessero cadaun di loro quarant’uomini provvigionati preparati, non dicenço 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 non comanda. E al suono delle Campane questi sedici o diciasette 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 chiamtto per Signore Messer Marino Faliero Doge. E fermate le cose tra loro, stabilito fu, che
questo dovess' essere a’ 15. d’Aprile del 1355. in giorno di Mercoledì. La quale machinazione trattata fu tra torn tanto segretamente, che mai nè pure se ne sospettu, non che se ne sapesse cos’ alcuna. Ma il Signor, Iddio, chc ha sempre ajutato questa gloriosissima Città, e che per le santimonie e giustizie sue mai non l’ha abandonata, 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, che doveva succedere, e il qual era di casa di Ser Niccolò Lioni de 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 particolarita, il detto Beltramo il pregò che to tenesse secreto, e glielo disse, acciocchè il detto Ser Niccolò non si partisse di casa a di 15. acciochè egli non fosse morto. Et egli volendo partirsi, il fece ritenere a’ suoi di casa, e serrarlo in una camera. Et 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 dettagli 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 rimascro morti. E deliberarono di mandare pel detto Beltramo, e fattolo venire cautamente, ed esaminatolo, e verificate le cose, anchorchè ne sentissero gran passione, pure pensarono la provisione. E mandarono pe’ Capi de’ Quaranta, pe’ Signori di notte, pe’ Capi de’ Sestieri, e pe’ Cinque delta Pace. E ordinato, ch’ eglino co’ loro uomini trovassero degli altri buoni uomini, c mandassero a casa de’ Capi de’ congiurati, ut supra mettessero loro le mani addosso. E tolsero i detti le Maestrerie dell’ Arsenale, acciocchè i provvisionati de’ congiurati non potessero offenderli. E si ridussero in Palazzo verso la sera. Dove ridotti fecero serrare le porte della corte del Palazzo. E mandarono a ordinate 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 delta 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 Caneregio; Ser Giovanni Sanudo del Sestiero di Santa Croce; Ser Pietro Trivisano del Sestiero di San Paolo; Ser Pantalione Barbo il Grando 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 Marccillo, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, e Ser Micheletto Dolfino, Capi del detto

E prima la beretta 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: *È 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 net Comune, e così degli altri traditori. E fu conceduto al detto Doge pel detto Consiglio de’ Dieci, ch’ egli potesse ordinate del suo per Ducati du’ mila. Ancora fu preso, che tutti i consiglieri, e Avvogadori del Comune, que’ del Consiglio de’ Dieci, e della Giunta, ch’ eran stati a fare la detta sentenza del Doge, e d’ altri, avessero licenza di portar’ armi di di e di notte in Venezia e da Grado fino a Cavarzere, ch’ 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 avesse fanti, potesse dar tal licenza a’ suoi figliuoli ovvero fratelli, due però e non più. Eziandio fu data licenza dell’ arme a quattro Notaj delta 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. Et 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 doppieri a seppelire nella sua area a San Giovanni e Paolo, la quale al presente è in quell’ andito per mezzo la Chiesuola di Santa Maria delta Pace, fatta fare pel Vescovo Gabriello di Bergomo, e un Cassone di pietra con queste lettere: *Heic jacet Dominus Marinus Faletro Dux.* E nel gran Consiglio non gli e stato fatto alcun Briefe, ma il luogo vacuo con lettere, che dicono così: *Heic est locus Marini 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 Faliéro, o che i Faliéro la ricuperassero con danari dalla Chiesa. Nè voglio restar di scrivere alcuni, che volevano, che fosse messo net suo breve, cioè: *Marinus Faletro Dux. Temeritas me cepit. Pœnas lui, decapitatus pro criminibus.* Altri vi fecero un Distico assai degno al suo merito, il quale è questo, da essere posto su la sua sepultura:

> “Dux Venetum jacet heic, patriam qui prodere tentans, Sceptra, Decus, Censum, perdidit, atgue Caput.”

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


II.

(translation of previous item)

MCCCLIV.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE XLIX.192

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.193

ON the eleventh day of September, in the year of our Lord 1354, Marino Faliero was elected and chosen to 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 despatched to Marino Faliero the Duke, who was then on his way from Rome; for when he was chosen, he was Embassador 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 December, 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

192: This appendix purports to be a translation of Appendix I. But see next note.

193: Francis Cohen was a London-based Italian expert. It was he who had pointed out the influence of Casti on Don Juan, on the day of its publication, and commented, “we are never scorched and drenched while standing on the same spot”. B.’s formal confidence in his scrupulosity may be misplaced. E.H.Coleridge comments, “[In the earlier editions (1821-1825) Francis Cohen’s translation (Appendix II.) is preceded by an Italian version (Appendix I.), taken directly from Muratori’s edition of Marin Sanudo’s Vita dei Dogi (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, 1733, xxii. 628-635). The two versions are by no means identical. Cohen’s “translation” is, presumably, an accurate rendering of Sanudo’s text, and must have been made either from the original MS. or from a transcript sent from Italy to England. Muratori’s Italian is a rifacimento of the original, which has been altered or condensed with a view to convenience or literary effect. Proper names of persons and places are changed, Sanudo’s Venetian dialect gives place to Muratori’s Italian, and notes which Sanudo added in the way of illustration and explanation are incorporated in the text. In the Life of Marino Faliero, pp.199, 200 of the original text are omitted, and a passage from an old chronicle, which Sanudo gives as a note, is made to appear part of the original narrative. (See Preface to La Vita dei Dogi di Marin Sanudo, by G.Monticolo, 1900; Marino Faliero, La Congiura, by V.Lazzarino; Nuovo Archivio Veneto, 1897, vol.xii, pt.i, p.15, note x.]) (Coleridge IV, p.462n.)
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 Avogadori of the
Commonwealth to proceed therein with the greatest diligence. A largesse of
great amount was immediately proffered by the Avogadori, in order to
discover who had written these words. And at length it was known that
Michele Steno had written them. It was resolved in the Council of Forty
that he should be arrested; and he then confessed, that in the fit of
vexation and spite, occasioned by his being thrust off the solajo in the
presence of his mistress, he had written the words. Therefore the Council
debated thereon. And the Council took his youth into consideration, and
that he was a lover, and 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 Bertucci 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 Fagianu, Niccolo dale Bende, Niccolo
Biondo, 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 Leoni 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 Leoni, 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. Set 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 Counsellors, the Avogadori, the Capi de’ Dieci, and those of the Great Council.

When all were assembled, the whole story was told to them. They were struck dead, as it were, with affright. They determined to send for Beltramo. He was brought in before them. They examined him, and ascertained that the matter was true; and, although they were exceedingly troubled, yet they determined upon their measures. And they sent for the Capi de’ 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 counsellors were the following: Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, of the Sestiero of San Marco; Ser Almoro Veniero da Santa Marina, of the Sestiero of Castello; Ser Tommaso Viadro, of the Sestiero of Canaregio; Ser Giovanni Sanudo, of the Sestiero of Santa Croce; Ser Pietro Trivisano, of the Sestiero of San Paolo; Ser Pantalone Barbo il Grando, of the Sestiero of Ossoduro. The Avogadori of the Commonwealth were Zufredo Morosini, and Ser Orio Pasqualigio; and these did not ballot. Those of the Council of Ten were Ser Giovanni Marcello, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, and Ser Micheletto Dolfin, 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 Nicoletto 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, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Niccolo Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser Marco Dicdo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser Andrea Cornaro, Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri da Mosto, Ser Ciazza Marcello, Ser Marino Morosini, Ser Stefano Belegno, Ser Nicolo Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trvisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini.

These twenty were accordingly called in to the Council of Ten; and they sent for My Lord Marino Faliero the Duke: and My Lord Marino was then consorting in the palace with people of great estate, gentlemen, and other good men, none of whom knew yet how the fact stood.

At the same time Bertucci Israello, who, as one of the 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 Bertucci 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 Zuccolo, Nicoletto Blondo, Nicoletto Doro, Marco Giuda, Jacomello Dagolino, Nicoletto Fidele, the son of Filippo Calendaro, Marco Torello, called Israello, Stefano Crivisano, the money changer of Santa Margherita, and Antonio dalle Bende. These were all taken at Chioiza, 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 Bartolomeo Ciriculo 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 balloted; that is to say, five councillors, and nine of the Council of Ten. And it was adjudged, that all the lands and chattels of the Duke, as well as of the other traitors, should be forfeited to the state. And as a grace to the Duke, it was resolved in the Council of Ten, that he should be allowed to dispose of two thousand ducats out of his own property. And it was resolved, that all the counsellors and all the Avogadori of the commonwealth, those of the Council of Ten, and the members of the junta who had assisted in passing sentence on the Duke and the other traitors, should have the privilege of carrying arms both by day and by night in Venice, and from Grado to Cavazere. And they were also to be allowed two footmen carrying arms, the aforesaid footmen living and boarding with them in their own houses. And he who did not keep two footmen might transfer the privilege to his sons or his brothers; but only to two. Permission of carrying arms was also granted to the four Notaries of the Chancery, that is to say, of the Supreme Court, who took the depositions; and they were, Amelio, Nicoletto do 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 engraven thereon: “Heic Jacet Dominus Marinus Faleto 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 Faleto decapitati pro crimínibus”. 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 Faleto Dux, temeritus me cepit. Pænas lui, de, decapitatus pro crimínibus”. – Others, also, indited a couplet, worthy of being inscribed upon his tomb.

“Dux Venelum jacet heic, patriam qui prodere tentans
Sceptra, decus, censum, perdidit, atque caput.”
“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, giacché 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’ieri fù decollato nel vestibolo dell’istesso palazzo. Discorrerei fin dal principio le cause di un tale evvento, e 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. Che desiderava egli di più? Io son d’ avviso che egli abbia ottenuto ciò che non si concedette a nessun altro: mentre adempiva gli uffici di legato presso il pontefice, e sulle rive del Rodano trattava la pace che io prima di lui aveva indarno tentato di concludere, gli fu conferito l’onore del ducato, che ne chiedeva, nè s’ aspettava. Tornato in patria, pensò a quello cui nessuno non pose mente giammai, e soffrì quello che a niuno accadde mai di soffrire: giacchè in quel luogo celeberrimo e chiarissimo e bellissimo infra tutti quelli che io vidi, ove i suoi antenati aveano ricevuti grandissimi onori in mezzo alle pompe trionfali, ivi egli fù 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 1’ anno del Natale di Cristo 1355, fu il giorno diciotto d’aprile. Si alto è il grido sparso, che se alcuno esaminerà la disciplina e le costumanze di quella città, e quanto mutamento di cose venga minciciato 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 il più grande avvenne ai nostri tempi nella Italia. Tu forse qui attendi il mio giudizio: assolvo il popolo, se credere si dee alla fama, benchè abbia potuto e gastigar più mitemente, e con maggior dolcezza vendicare il suo dolore: ma non così facilmente si modera un’ira giusta insieme e grande in un numeroso popolo principalmente, nel quale il precipitoso ed instabile volgo aguzza gli stimoli dell’iracondia con rapidi e sconsigliati clamori. Compatisco e nell’istesso tempo mi adiro con quell’infelice uomo, il quale adorno di un’insolito onore, non so che cosa si volesse negli estremi anni della sua vita: la calamità di lui diviene sempre più grave, perché dalla sentenza contra di esso promulgata apparirà che egli fù non

194: On February 11 1821, B. writes in his Ravenna Journal: … had a copy taken of an extract from Petrarch’s Letters, with reference to the conspiracy of the Doge, M[arino] Faliero, containing the poet’s opinion of the matter.
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 d’essere non signori ma duci, anzi nemmeno duci, ma onorati servi della repubblica. Tu sta sano; e giacché fluttuano le pubbliche cose, sforziamoci di governar modestissimamente i privati nostri affari.”

_Levati, Viaggi di Petrarca, vol. iv. p. 323._

**[IV.](new translation of previous item)**

The young Doge Andrea Dandolo was succeeded by an old man who took the helm of the Republic rather late in life, but somewhat earlier than he and his homeland needed. He is Marino Faliero, a character with whom I have been familiar for a long time.

People’s opinion of him was mistaken, because he revealed more courage than judgement. Not satisfied with having only this quality, he got his sinister foot in the door of the public palace. Yet now this Doge of the Venetians, this holy magistrate of the ages, venerated by the ancients as a deity of the city, was, two days ago, beheaded in the vestibule of the same palace.

I wish to discuss from the beginning the causes of such an event, whose reverberations are so various and ambiguous: nobody forgives him though, everybody claims he wanted to change something in the nature of the Republic that was handed down to him by his predecessors. What more did he want?

I believe he had obtained what could not have been given to anybody else. While performing the functions of legate for the Pope, and making on the banks of the Rhone the peace treaty I had earlier vainly attempted to sign, he was also granted the honour of a dukedom, which he neither asked for nor expected.

Returning to his homeland, he thought what nobody could ever have had in mind, and suffered what nobody has had to suffer. In the very place – which is among the most famous, illustrious and beautiful I have seen – where his ancestors received great honours amid triumphal pomps, he was dragged in a humiliating way, cheated of his ducal power, lost his mind, and stained with his own blood the threshold of the temple, the hall of the palace and the marble stairs made illustrious either by solemn festivities or awe-inspiring funeral processions.

I have named the place, now I name the time: it is the year 1355 since the Nativity of Christ, it was April 18th. The reverberations spread so wide that if one examines the law and customs of that city, and how much change is threatened by the death of a single man (even though many accomplices

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195: This set (Levati, _Viaggi di Petrarca in Francia, Germania ed in Italia_, 5 vol. Milan, 1820), forms item 125 in the 1827 sale catalogue of B.’s remaining library. The original passage has a note: “Petr., Var, ep. 18.”
either already underwent the same punishment, or still expect it), one will realize that nothing greater happened in Italy at that time.

Perhaps here you are waiting for my judgement: if one believes his fame, I acquit the people. They could have punished more gently and revenged his suffering with more tenderness, but one can not so easily moderate a fury both great and righteous, especially in a huge multitude, when the rushed and unstable masses become irascible and excited with quick and thoughtless clamouring.

I have pity, but at the same time I fly into a rage with that unhappy man who, ornamented with unusual honour, did not know what was needed in the last years of his life. His calamity becomes ever more grave because, from the sentence proclaimed against him, it is clear that he was not just miserable, but also insane and deranged, and that over many years he acquired a false fame for wisdom through vain arts.

I warn the doges who will come after him that this is an example placed before their eyes as a mirror in which they should see themselves not as gentlemen but as leaders, actually not even as leaders but as honourable servants of the Republic. Be sane; and because public affairs fluctuate, let us try to make an effort to rule our private affairs in a very modest way.

– translation by Valeria Vallucci.

BYRON’S TEXT RESUMES:

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 ne chiedeva ne aspettava”, and which had never been granted to any other in like circumstances, “cio che non si concedette a nessun altro”, a proof 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 usurpo 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?

V.

Extrait de L'Ouvrage Histoire de la République de Venise, par P. Daru de l'Academie Française,\textsuperscript{196} tom. v. livre xxxv. p. 95. &c. Edition de Paris MDCCXIX.

“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 de anciennes doctrines, c’était l’excès de la corruption.

“Cette liberté de mœurs, qu’on avait longtemps vantée comme le charme principal de la société de Venise, était devenue un désordre scandaleux; le lieu 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 empiétement sur la jurisdiction 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 on moment, ou sans doute le renversement des fortunes, la perte des jeunes gens, les discordes domestiques, déterminèrent le gouvernement a s’écarter de 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

\textsuperscript{196}: This set (Darù, Histoire Venise, 7 vol. Paris 1819), is number 59 in the 1827 sale catalogue of B.’s library. Hobhouse buys it for £1 16s.
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 casins. Il y avait un grand nombre de casins 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 robe de magistrature, implorant le hasard, passant des angoisses du désespoir aux illusions de l'espérance, et cela sans proferir une parole.

“Les riches avaient des casins 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.”

VI.

(translation of previous item)

Extract from the History of the Republic of Venice, by P. Darù, Member of the French Academy, vol. v. b. xxxiv. p. 95. &c. Paris Edit. 1819. 197

“To these attacks so frequently pointed by the government against the clergy, – to the continual struggles between the different constituted bodies, – to these enterprises carried on by the mass of the nobles against the depositaries of power, – to all those projects of innovation, which always ended by a stroke of state policy; we must add a cause not less fitted to spread contempt for ancient doctrines; this was the excess of corruption.

“That freedom of manners, which had been long boasted of as the principal charm of Venetian society, had degenerated into scandalous licentiousness; the tie of marriage was less sacred in that Catholic country, than among those nations where the laws and religion admit of its being dissolved. Because they could not break the contract, they feigned that it

197: This appendix translates the previous appendix. The translator is unknown.
had not existed; and the ground of nullity, immodestly alleged by the
married pair, was admitted with equal facility by priests and magistrates,
aliike corrupt. These divorces, veiled under another name, became so
frequent, that the most important act of civil society was discovered to be
amenable to a tribunal of exceptions; and to restrain the open scandal of
such proceedings became the office of the police. In 1782 the council of ten
decreed, that every woman who should sue for a dissolution of her
marriage should be compelled to await the decision of the judges in some
convent, to be named by the court. 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 courtisans
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
recal, 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,198 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
courtisans, 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 in their
magisterial robes, round a table, invoking chance, and giving way atone
instant to the agonies of despair, at the next to the illusions of hope, and
that without uttering a single word.

198: We have Shelley as witness that B. was very familiar with such things: "L[ord] B[yon] is familiar
with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He allows fathers &
mothers to bargain with him for their daughters, & though this is common enough in Italy, yet for an
Englishman to encourage such sickening vice is a melancholy thing. He associates with wretches who seem
almost to have lost the gait & phisognomy [sic] of man, & do not scruple to avow practices which are not
only not named but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, [sic] but he
endures. He is not yet an Italian & is heartily & deeply discontented with himself, & contemplating in the
distorted mirror of his own thoughts, the nature & the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of
contempt & despair?" (letter to Peacock, December 1818; LPBS II, 57).
“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.”

FROM the present decay and degeneration 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 Benzon, 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,’ 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, Bucati, &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).

VII.


“Il y en a une fort singulière sur Venise: “Si tu ne changes pas”, dit-il a 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 Venitienne jusqu’à l’établissement du gouvernement sous le quel 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 a 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 a Venise, que personne pourtant n’a remarqués:

“Se non cangi pensier, 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.”

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206: The Contessa Michelli was another Venetian society hostess.
207: Dandolo is perhaps Tullio Dandolo (1801-70); but he was not Venetian. Carrer is the nineteen-year-old Luigi Carrer (1801-50); he was known for his improvising from the age of seventeen.
208: The contessa Albrizzi (1761?-1836), Venetian society hostess from Corfu.
209: Francesco Aglietti (1757-1836), doctor. He is mentioned in B.’s dedication to Childe Harold IV.
210: Antonio Canova (1757-1822), celebrated sculptor.
211: Count Leopoldo Cicognara, Venetian historian and archaeologist.
212: Andreas Mustoxides (1785-1860), Corfiote editor and writer resident in Venice.
213: Probably Pietro Buratti (1772-1832), satirist who wrote very offensive poems in the Venetian dialect.
214: Two sets of this work (Ginguéné, Histoire Littéraire d’Italie, 9 vol. Paris 1811), form items 80 and 81 in the 1827 sale catalogue of B.’s remaining library.
VIII.

(translation of previous item)


"THERE is one very singular prophecy concerning Venice: "If thou dost not change", it says to that proud republic, "thy liberty, which is already on the wing, will not reckon a century more than the thousandth year."

"If we carry back the epocha of Venetian freedom to the establishment of the government under which the republic flourished, we shall find that the date of the election of the first Doge is 697; and if we add one century to a thousand, that is, eleven hundred years, we shall find the sense of the prediction to be literally this: "Thy liberty will not last till 1797". Recollect that Venice ceased to be free in the year 1796, the fifth year of the French republic; and you will perceive, that there never was prediction more pointed, or more exactly followed by the event. You will, therefore, note as very remarkable the three lines of Alamanni, addressed to Venice, which, however, no one had pointed out:

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

Many prophecies have passed for such, and many men have been called prophets for much less."

If the Doge’s prophecy seem remarkable, look to the above, made by Alamanni two hundred and seventy years ago.

THE author of “Sketches Descriptive of Italy”, &c. one of the hundred tours lately published, is extremely anxious to disclaim a possible charge of plagiarism from “Childe Harold” and “Beppo”. See p. 159, vol. iv. He adds, that still less could this presumed coincidence arise from “my conversation”, as he had “repeatedly declined an introduction to me while in Italy”.²¹⁶

Who this person may be I know not; but he must have been deceived by all or any of those who “repeatedly offered to introduce” him, as I have invariably refused to receive any English with whom I was not previously

²¹⁵: This appendix translates the previous appendix. Translator unknown.
²¹⁶: B. to Hobhouse, July 6 1821: You must not give letters to me. I have taken an oath against being civil, ever since — — you will see my reason in the last note to Marino Faliero (BLJ VIII, 149). On November 20 he wrote to Lord Kinnaird: The silly note (which by the way I desired Murray to suppress before publication – he printed it notwithstanding) was caused by a really impudent assertion of an anonymous traveller who said that he (or She) “had repeatedly declined an introduction to me” – now I never in my life proposed – and rarely would accept an English introduction since I came abroad (BLJ IX, 97). See next note.
acquainted, even when they had letters from England. If the whole assertion is not an invention, I request this person not to sit down with the notion that he COULD have been introduced, since there has been nothing I have so carefully avoided as any kind of intercourse with his countrymen, – excepting the very few who were a considerable time resident in Venice, or had been of my previous acquaintance. Whoever made him any such offer was possessed of impudence equal to that of making such an assertion without having had it. The fact is, that I hold in utter abhorrence any contact with the travelling English, as my friend the Consul General Hoppner, and the Countess Benzoni, (in whose house the Conversazione most frequented by them is held), could amply testify, were it worth while. I was persecuted by these tourists even to my riding ground at Lido, and reduced to the most disagreeable circuits to avoid them. At Madame Benzoni’s I repeatedly refused to be introduced to them; – of a thousand such presentations pressed upon me, I accepted two, and both were to Irish women.

I should hardly have descended to speak of such trifles publicly, if the impudence of this “sketcher”217 had not forced me to a refutation of a

217: The book was Sketches Descriptive of Italy in the Years 1816, 1817, with a brief of Travels in various Parts of France and Switzerland in the same years (John Murray, 4 vols 1820), by Miss E. A. Waldie, who writes of ... that charming picture by Giorgione, of himself, his wife, and his son, so admirably described in the witty “Beppo” of Lord Byron, and then has as a note: I cannot but be flattered by finding, in some cases, a similarity between my own ideas and those so admirably expressed by his lordship in Childe Harold [sic] and Beppo. Except the above, I have not altered a single sentence I wrote while at Venice, though sensible that by doing so I lay myself open to the charge of plagiarism – a charge I can solemnly, and with the strictest truth, assert, would be wholly unfounded: nor can I have borrowed his ideas from conversation, since I repeatedly declined an introduction to him while in Italy (IV 159-60n). The following extracts from Byron’s letters to Murray clock the next stages of the tale:

September 8th 1820:
Dear Murray – You will please to publish the enclosed note without altering a word – and to inform the author – that I will answer personally any offence to him. – He is a cursed impudent liar. – You shall not alter or [omit] a syllable – publish the [note at] the end of the play – and answer this –
P.S. – You sometimes take the liberty of omitting what I send for publication: if you do so in this instance I will never speak to you again as long as I breathe (BLJ VII 173).

September 11th 1820:
Last post I sent you a note fierce as Faliero hinself – in answer to a trashy tourist who pretends that he could have been introduced to me – Let me have a proof of it – that I may cut its lava into some shape – (BLJ VII 175).

September 29th 1820:
I open my letter to say – that on reading more of the 4 volumes on Italy – where the Author says “declined an introduction” I perceive (horresco referens) that it is written by a WOMAN!!! In that case you must suppress my note and answer – and all I have said about the book and the writer. – I never dreamed of it till now – in extreme wrath at that precious note – – I can only say that I am sorry that a Lady should say anything of the kind. – What I would have said to a person with testicles – you know already. – Her book too (as a She book) is not a bad one – but she evidently don’t know the Italians – or rather don’t like them – and forgets the causes of their misery and profligacy (Matthews and Forsyth are your men of truth and tact) and has gone over Italy in company always a bad plan. (BLJ VII 183).
disingenuous and gratuitously impertinent assertion; – so meant to be, for what could it import to the reader to be told that the author “had repeatedly declined an introduction”, even had it been true, which, for the reasons I have above given, is scarcely possible. Except Lords Lansdowne, Jersey, and Lauderdale; Messrs. Scott, Hammond, Sir Humphrey Davy, the late M. Lewis, W. Bankes, Mr. Hoppner, Thomas Moore, Lord Kinnaird, his brother, Mr. Joy, and Mr. Hobhouse, I do not recollect to have exchanged a word with another Englishman since I left their country; and almost all these I had known before. The other, – and God knows there were some hundreds, who bored me with letters or visits, I refused to have any communication with, and shall be proud and happy when that wish becomes mutual.