

**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.
- III.** Levati, *Viaggi di Petrarca*, vol.iv. p.323.
- IV.** Translation of III by Valeria Vallucci.
- V.** Extrait de L'Ouvrage *Histoire de la République de Venise*, par P. Daru de l'Academie Française, tom. v. livre xxxv. p.95. &c. Edition de Paris MDCCCXIX.
- VI.** Translation of V.
- VII.** Extract from the *Literary History of Italy*, by P.I.Ginguené. vol.ix. p.144. Paris Edit. 1819.
- 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”.<sup>1</sup> 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”?<sup>2</sup> 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”,<sup>3</sup> 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.”<sup>4</sup>

### Alessandro Guiccioli, and Vittorio Alfieri



*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.<sup>5</sup>

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*.<sup>6</sup>

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

4: BLJ VIII, 69.

5: BLJ IX, 11.

6: BLJ VI, 206.

the most extraordinary of writers”;<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup>

Guiccioli once wrote in his diary:

---

7: BLJ VIII, 152.

8: Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. Lovell (Princeton 1966), pp.21-2. Fletcher insisted contrariwise that Teresa always called her husband by his Christian name.

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.*)<sup>9</sup>

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 Faliero'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.



*Perhaps Alessandro.*

If Byron is to be 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.<sup>10</sup>

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":<sup>11</sup> 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

<sup>9</sup>: Guiccioli, Alessandro, edited by Annibale Alberti. *I Guiccioli 1796-1848: Memorie di una Famiglia Patrizia*. Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1934, p.3, tr. Origo, 25-26/6.

<sup>10</sup>: BLJ VII, 195.

<sup>11</sup>: 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,<sup>12</sup> 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<sup>13</sup> 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.

**12:** See John Gardner, *From 'Poverty to Guilt', Keats-Shelley Review* 16, 2002, pp.121-2.

**13:** *The Journal of Mrs Arbuthnot*, ed. Francis Bamford and the Duke of Wellington, two vols, Macmillan 1950, II p.17: entry for May 8th 1820.

Attempts have been made to link the play with Byron's involvement with the Carbonari,<sup>14</sup> 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, *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 – *I* for one will declare *off*, I have always been (*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 *clotted* – in short the Radicals seem to be no better than Jack Cade, or Wat Tyler – and to be dealt with accordingly ...<sup>15</sup>

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:

---

**14:** E.D.H. Johnson, *A Political Interpretation of Byron's Marino Faliero*, MLQ 3 1942.

**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.<sup>16</sup>

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.<sup>17</sup>

### 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.<sup>18</sup>

“... 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,

---

**16:** *The British Critic*, May 1821 (*The Romantics Reviewed* I p.305).

**17:** *The Edinburgh Monthly Review*, July 1821 (RR II p.808).

**18:** BLJ III, 24.



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.<sup>19</sup>

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 ...<sup>20</sup>

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 Congiura 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.) ...<sup>21</sup>

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*.<sup>22</sup>

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.<sup>23</sup>

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.<sup>24</sup>

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

---

**22:** *The Literary Gazette*, April 28 1821, (RR IV p.1417).

**23:** *The Edinburgh Review*, July 1821, (RR II p.911).

**24:** *The European Magazine*, May 1821, (RR II p.975).

## 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 Faliero'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. Ginguéné, 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*”.<sup>25</sup>

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 ...<sup>26</sup>

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,

---

<sup>25</sup>: BLJ VII, 190.

<sup>26</sup>: *Byron's Bulldog, The Letters of John Cam Hobhouse to Lord Byron*, ed. Peter W. Graham (Columbus Ohio 1984), 301-2.

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.<sup>27</sup>

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 ...<sup>28</sup>

... 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 ...<sup>29</sup>

Later he asked Murray to ask both the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Holland to intervene and prevent “this cursed attempt at representation”,<sup>30</sup> 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 ...”<sup>31</sup>

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,<sup>32</sup> 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.

28: BLJ VIII, 59.

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.<sup>33</sup>

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,<sup>34</sup> 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.<sup>35</sup>

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.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup>

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.<sup>38</sup>

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 protestate all'E.V. ...<sup>39</sup>

[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.

No. 4047 pres. 24/25 agosto 1821 / Ufficio di Censura Rimette un esemplare della tragedia di Lord Byron Marino Faliero doge di Venezia. / Al Sig. Direttore dalla Censura. / Consento che si applichi la formula *damnatur* alla tragedia di Lord Byron intitolata =Marino Faliero Doge of Venice.= Rimando il voto del Censore Nardini: / 25 agosto 182<sup>40</sup>

[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*<sup>41</sup> 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<sup>42</sup> and objected at once to the one word in it which he could understand – *hypochondrisch*. His friend Hoppner translated the entire review for him<sup>43</sup> and Byron, piqued by the rumour-mongering,<sup>44</sup> tried to send a jocular answer in the shape of the Dedication to *Marino Faliero* printed below,<sup>45</sup> with which, however, John Murray was unhappy, and so Byron agreed to its not being used.<sup>46</sup>

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*<sup>47</sup> and next dedicated *Sardanapalus* to him<sup>48</sup> although it was not to be found in the first edition, because Murray forgot to include it:<sup>49</sup>

---

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

41: *UkuA* II ii 186-92; reprinted at LJ V 503-5.

42: BLJ VII 106.

43: LJ V 506-7.

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.’<sup>50</sup>

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.<sup>51</sup> Byron heard of Goethe’s delight<sup>52</sup> was pleased in turn, and finally succeeded in getting a dedication to Goethe printed in a first edition – that of *Werner*.<sup>53</sup> “To / the illustrious Goëthe, / by one of his humblest admirers, / this tragedy / is dedicated”<sup>54</sup> (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. ( <i>Macbeth</i> , 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, Sardanapalus 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<sup>r</sup>. most obed<sup>t</sup>. & very hum<sup>ble</sup> Ser<sup>t</sup>. Byron

Ravenna.

8<sup>bre</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 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 (“Zeluco”) 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. Every thing 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. – *John Moore, M.D. A VIEW OF THE SOCIETY AND MANNERS OF ITALY, with ANECDOTES relating to some EMINENT CHARACTERS (1781), Vol. I, pp.144-52.*

### 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 Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d'Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome, at which last he received the news of his election to the Dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprized of his predecessor's death and his

own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podesta and captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this honest Sanuto “saddles him with a judgment”, as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of Count, by Lorenzo Count-Bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are, Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable Abbate Morelli, in his “*Monumenti Veneziani di varia letteratura*”, printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, 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 traspari, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe indipendente*”. The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their “*tre Capi*”. The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the “*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 – and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain – that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome – that a single verse of Frederick II of Prussia on the 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 republica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un’ ingiuria leggiera 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 1182. 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 any thing at all resembling them even in *person*: for this reason, we shall never see again Coriolanus or Macbeth. When Kean is blamed for want of dignity, we should remember that it is a grace and not an art, and not to be attained by study. In all, *not* 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."



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<sup>56</sup> is deep in council,  
 And long debate on Steno's accusation.<sup>57</sup>
- 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 10  
 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, 20  
 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.<sup>58</sup>
- 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

**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.*<sup>59</sup>

- Bertuccio: It cannot be but they will do you justice.  
Doge: Aye, such as the Avogadori<sup>60</sup> 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 10  
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 acceptance 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 20  
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, 30  
And wise, and just, and cautious – this I grant –  
And secret as the grave to which they doom

<sup>59</sup>: The idea that Bertuccio was Faliero's nephew is B.'s invention.

<sup>60</sup>: 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 – 40

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. 50

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 –” 60

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.”<sup>61</sup>

Doge: Proceed.  
 Bertuccio: My Lord, ’tis finished.  
 Doge: How say you? – finished! Do I dream? – ’tis false – 70  
 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 80  
 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! 90  
 Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!<sup>62</sup>  
 Oh, that the Huns whom I o’erthrew at Zara<sup>63</sup>  
 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: 100  
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? 110
- Bertuccio: The law, my Prince –
- Doge (*interrupting him*): You see what it has done;  
I asked no remedy but from the law<sup>64</sup> –  
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 – 120  
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 130  
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,

---

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. 140  
 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 150  
 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 160  
 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,<sup>65</sup>  
 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 – 170
- Doge: What is it that a Roman would not suffer,  
 That a Venetian Prince must bear? old Dandolo<sup>66</sup>  
 Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars,  
 And wore the ducal cap *I* trample on –  
 Because 'tis now degraded.
- Bertuccio: 'Tis even so.
- Doge: It is – it is – I did not visit on

<sup>65</sup>: *Wittol* – cuckolded rustic idiot. See CHP I, 48, 7.

<sup>66</sup>: 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.





- 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);<sup>69</sup>  
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair  
Of Steno's head – he shall not wear it long. 220
- 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.<sup>70</sup>
- 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. 230
- 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! 240  
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, 250  
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,<sup>71</sup> 260  
 Without investing the insulted brow  
 With the all-swaying majesty of Kings;  
 Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,<sup>72</sup>  
 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,<sup>73</sup> 270  
 Making the people nothing, and the Prince  
 A pageant? In my life I have achieved  
 Tasks not less difficult – achieved for them,  
 Who thus repay me! Can I not requite them?  
 Oh for one year! Oh! but for even a day  
 Of my full youth, while yet my body served  
 My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,  
 I would have dashed amongst them, asking few  
 In aid to overthrow these swoln patricians;  
 But now I must look round for other hands  
 To serve this hoary head; but it shall plan 280  
 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, Briaraeus had a hundred hands.



Had been already where – how soon, I care not – 320  
 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 330  
 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 face<sup>78</sup> – 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 340  
 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;<sup>79</sup>  
 Nay, more, a noble one – at least, in Venice:

<sup>78</sup>: *Macbeth* III iv, 12.

<sup>79</sup>: 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 350  
At present in repairing certain galleys  
But roughly used by the Genoese last year.<sup>80</sup>  
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, 360  
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,<sup>81</sup> 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 370  
(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.<sup>82</sup>  
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, 380  
Save Faliero filled the ducal throne,  
This blood had been washed out in other blood.  
Doge: You come to me for justice – unto *me!*

**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? 390

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 400  
 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. 410

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 420  
 To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra,<sup>83</sup>

**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.<sup>84</sup>  
 I have fought and bled; commanded, aye, and conquered; 430  
 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? 440  
 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.<sup>85</sup>

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 450  
 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: *Not thou,*  
 Nor I alone, are injured and abused, 460  
 Contemned and trampled on; but the whole people

<sup>84</sup>: *guerdon* – reward.

<sup>85</sup>: 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,<sup>86</sup> which is still maintained 470  
 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,<sup>87</sup> be the shame on him,  
 And Sorrow too; for he will lose far more 480  
 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, 490  
 And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.<sup>88</sup>
- Doge: For what then do they pause?
- Israel: An hour to strike.
- Doge (*aside*): Saint Mark's shall strike that hour!<sup>89</sup>
- 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?

**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? 500

Israel: No; I affirm. I have betrayed myself;  
But there's no torture in the mystic wells  
Which undermine your palace,<sup>90</sup> 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",<sup>91</sup>



*Built in 1600.*

Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er  
Would echo o'er the Stygian<sup>92</sup> wave which flows 510  
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.



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. 560

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?<sup>93</sup>

Israel: Late, but the atmosphere is thick and dusky, 570  
 'Tis a sirocco.<sup>94</sup>

Doge: At the midnight hour, then,  
 Near to the church where sleep my sires;<sup>95</sup> the same,  
 Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;  
 A gondola, with one oar only,<sup>96</sup> 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 presentiment*. – – 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.



*SS Giovanni e Paolo was still under construction in Faliero's day.*

Doge (*solus*): At midnight, by the church Saints John and Paul,  
 Where sleep my noble fathers,<sup>97</sup> I repair – 580  
 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 590  
 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 Cæsar, or the Catiline,<sup>98</sup>  
 By the true touchstone of desert – success.

---

**97:** The church of SS Giovanni e Paolo was still being built in Faliero's time.

**98:** Catiline conspired against the Roman republic.





- Angiolina: I should have sought none though a peasant's bride,  
 But feel not less the love and gratitude 80  
 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,<sup>100</sup>  
 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 90  
 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 100  
 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. 120  
 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.

130

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 (*musings*): 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 –

140

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!

150

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.                   160  
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                   170  
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?<sup>101</sup>
- Doge:                   Disclose too much! of what?  
What is there to disclose?
- Angiolina:                   A heart so ill                   180  
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,                   190  
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 I*, 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, 200  
 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:<sup>102</sup>  
 The vile are only vain; the great are proud. 210
- 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 220  
 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 230  
 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 240  
 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? 250  
 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. 260
- 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! 270  
 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! 280
- 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? 290
- 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 300  
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, 310  
'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<sup>103</sup>  
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,  
Making them ransack to the very last  
The dregs of pleasure for their vanished joys;<sup>104</sup>

**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, 320  
 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  
 Repented for my sake; sometimes for yours,  
 In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.
- Doge: I knew my heart would never treat you harshly;  
 I knew my days could not disturb you long;  
 And then the daughter of my earliest friend, 330  
 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<sup>105</sup> or envious kinsmen might  
 Have urged against her right; my best friend's child  
 Would choose more fitly in respect of years, 340  
 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 350  
 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 360  
 You had been won, but thought the change your choice;

---

104: B. alludes to Alessandro Guiccioli.

105: *chicane* – quibbling.







- 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! 450  
 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, 460  
 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, 470  
 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; 480  
 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. 490  
 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 500  
 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, 510  
 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<sup>108</sup> 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! 10  
 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.<sup>109</sup>  
 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. 20  
 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*<sup>110</sup> but  
 Had kept me in his eye, as meditating  
 A silent, solitary, deep revenge. 30  
 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*?

**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.
- Calendaro: 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 40  
 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.
- Calendaro: 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, 50  
 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?
- Calendaro: 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? 60
- Calendaro: 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.
- Calendaro: 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 70  
 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





And cannot 'scape us; but he will not swerve.  
 Calendaro: I cannot judge of this until I know him: 160  
 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 170  
 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.<sup>114</sup> 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. 180  
 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,<sup>115</sup>  
 Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,  
 Rather than yield to one above me in 190  
 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

**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.

200

*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; 10  
 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!<sup>116</sup>  
 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 20  
 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 30  
 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,<sup>117</sup> where I since conquered,  
 Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs  
 Of thine and Venice' foes, there offered up  
 By thy descendant, merit such acquittance? 40

**116:** *fane* – temple.

**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.  
 Welcome, my Lord – you are before the time.  
 Doge: I am ready to proceed to your assembly. 50  
 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 60  
 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, 70  
 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<sup>118</sup> in  
 The annals of hereafter; but if not,  
 If we should fail,<sup>119</sup> employing bloody means  
 And secret plot, although to a good end,  
 Still we are traitors, honest Israel; thou

**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. 80

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!

Doge: Let me discover – and this steel –  
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.<sup>120</sup>



*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 90  
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, 100  
 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, 110  
 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 120  
 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 10  
 Fully of our intent? They think themselves  
 Engaged in secret to the Signory,<sup>121</sup>  
 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 20  
 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 30  
 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.





- 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. 120
- 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, 130  
As one of you hath said, an old, unarmed,  
Defenceless man;<sup>122</sup> 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, 140  
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, 150  
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,<sup>123</sup> 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,<sup>124</sup> 160  
 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,<sup>125</sup> 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,<sup>126</sup> 170  
 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 180  
 As delegate of tyrants: such I am not,  
 And never have been – read it in our annals;  
 I can appeal to my past government  
 In many lands and cities; they can tell you  
 If I were an oppressor, or a man  
 Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.  
 Haply had I been what the senate sought,  
 A thing of robes and trinkets, dizened out  
 To sit in state as for a sovereign's picture;  
 A popular scourge, a ready sentence-signer, 190  
 A stickler for the senate and "the Forty,"  
 A sceptic of all measures which had not

**123:** Compare *King Lear*, II iv 276.

**124:** *Sybarites* – followers of pleasure; *Helots* – slaves.

**125:** *this monster of a state*, / *This mockery of a government*: a good description of the government of Liverpool and Castlereagh.

**126:** Faliero / B. distances himself from Painite egalitarianism. Compare *BoA*, 867-9.

The sanction of "the Ten,"<sup>127</sup> 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 200  
 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. 210

Calendaro: Long live Faliero! – Venice shall be free!  
 Conspirators: Long live Faliero!  
 Israel: Comrades! did I well?  
 Is not this man a host in such a cause?  
 Doge: This is no time for eulogies, nor place  
 For exultation. Am I one of you?  
 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,<sup>128</sup> Prince in Venice:  
 I cannot stoop – that is, I am not fit 220  
 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? 230  
 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, 240  
 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 250  
 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, 260  
 (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.<sup>129</sup>
- Bertram: Once more, sir, with your pardon, I  
 Would now repeat the question which I asked 270  
 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

129: Compare *Macbeth* III ii 13: *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: Bertram,  
 This false compassion is a folly, and 280  
 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 290  
 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 300  
 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:<sup>130</sup> 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, 310  
 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,

---

**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; 320  
 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 330  
 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 – 340  
*Oimé! Oimé!*<sup>131</sup> – 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; 350  
 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.<sup>132</sup>
- 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, 370  
 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 380  
 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; 390  
 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, 400  
 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, 410  
 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, 420  
 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.<sup>133</sup>
- 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! 430

*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;  
 Cæsars 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 440  
 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?  
 Israel: Who?  
 Doge: My own friends by blood and courtesy, 450  
 And many deeds and days – the Senators?  
 Israel: You passed their sentence, and it is a just one.  
 Doge: Aye, so it seems, and so it is to *you*;  
 You are a patriot, a Plebeian Gracchus<sup>134</sup> –  
 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,<sup>135</sup>  
 You never had their wine-cup at your lips: 460  
 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; 470  
 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!<sup>136</sup>  
 You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both 480  
 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, 490  
 '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, 500  
 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 510  
 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 520  
 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;	530
	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	540
	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; 10  
 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: 20  
 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.*<sup>137</sup>

And what a contrast with the scene I left,  
 Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'  
 More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls, 30  
 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 40  
 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 50  
 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;<sup>138</sup>  
 The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,  
 Suggesting the more secret symmetry 60  
 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; 70  
 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,

---

**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 80  
 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 90  
 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; 100  
 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 110  
 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! 120  
 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. 130

*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  
 Beseem one of thy station; I would promise  
 Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,  
 Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode  
 Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit 140  
 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? 150  
 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? 160  
 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 170  
 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, 180  
 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 190  
 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, 200  
 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; whatso'er betide,  
 I would have saved you: when to manhood's growth 210  
 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. 220  
 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 230  
 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!                   240
- 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,                   250  
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.                   260
- 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                   270  
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, 280  
 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, 290  
 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 300  
 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 310  
 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, 320  
 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, 330  
 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 340  
 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:<sup>139</sup>  
 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, 10  
 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 20  
 Where mercy may be madness; the fierce peasants,  
 Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,  
 Would do the bidding of their lord without  
 Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;  
 Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,  
 A Gradenigo or a Foscari;  
 They are not used to start at those vain names,  
 Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;  
 A chief in armour is their suzerain,  
 And not a thing in robes.
- Bertuccio: We are enough;  
 And for the dispositions of our clients 30  
 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. 40
- 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, 50  
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,<sup>140</sup>  
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, 60  
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.<sup>141</sup>  
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. 70
- 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,<sup>142</sup>  
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,

<sup>140</sup> Compare *Henry IV* II, I i 157: ... *one spirit of the first-born Cain* ...

<sup>141</sup> Compare *Macbeth* II i, opening and elsewhere.

<sup>142</sup> Compare *Macbeth* I vii 79: *I am settled, and bend up* ...



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 130  
 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 140  
 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? 150  
 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? 160  
 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? 170  
 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 180  
 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?<sup>145</sup>  
 I would go forth, but that my post is here,  
 To be the centre of re-union to  
 The oft discordant elements which form 190  
 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 Night*<sup>146</sup> *with guards &c., &c.*

**145:** Compare *Don Juan III, The Isles of Greece*, 8, 1: *What silent still? and silent All? / Ah! No ...*

**146: BYRON'S NOTE:** "I Signori di Notte" held an important charge in the old Republic.

Signor: Doge, I arrest thee of high treason!<sup>147</sup>  
 Doge: Me! 200  
 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:<sup>148</sup> 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. 210  
 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. 220  
 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.*<sup>149</sup>

---

**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 230  
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. 240

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 250  
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. 260

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 – 270  
 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, 280  
 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 290  
 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

300

Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,  
 While Manlius, who hurled down the Gauls, was cast  
 From the Tarpeian.<sup>150</sup>

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.

310

---

**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*<sup>151</sup> – *guards, officers, &c., &c. Israel Bertuccio and Philip Calendaro as prisoners. Bertram, Lioni, and witnesses, &c. The Chief of the Ten, Benintende.*<sup>152</sup>

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 10  
 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; 20  
 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 30  
 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!

**151:** The Giunta was the Council of Ten, augmented by twenty more, all patricians.

**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? 40

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 50  
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; 60  
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 70

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. 80  
 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. 90  
 Guards! lead them forth, and upon the balcony  
 Of the red columns, where, on festal Thursday,<sup>153</sup>  
 The Doge stands to behold 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 100  
 To stir up the distracted multitude –<sup>154</sup>  
 Guards! let their mouths be gagged even in the act<sup>155</sup>  
 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:** "Giovedì *Grasso*," "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 110  
 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 120  
 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: 130  
 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*):<sup>156</sup> I die and scorn thee!

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

---

**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? 140

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,<sup>157</sup>  
 But there are thousands in pursuit of them,  
 And such precaution ta'en on *terra firma*,<sup>158</sup>  
 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 150  
 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 160  
 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, 170  
Bertram of Bergamo – would you question him?

Doge (*looking at him contemptuously*): No.

Benintende: And two others, Israel Bertuccio,  
And Philip Calendaro, 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?<sup>159</sup>  
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.<sup>160</sup>  
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!  
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?  
What's nobler than the Signory of Venice?

Doge: The Signory of Venice! You betrayed me – 200  
*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; 210  
 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 – 220  
 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 230  
 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 240  
 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 250  
 Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse  
 When they were freed, and flourished ages after,

And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus:<sup>161</sup>  
 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! 260  
 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. 270  
 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, 280  
 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*,<sup>162</sup>  
 And dying men's are things which long outlive,  
 And oftentimes avenge them; bury mine, 290  
 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

**161:** Gelon was a Syracusan despot; Thrasybulus an Athenian democrat. Faliero sees himself as a democratic despot.

**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  
Spare 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 300  
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?<sup>163</sup>

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! 310  
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 320  
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!<sup>164</sup>  
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 330  
 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. 340  
 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, 350  
 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. 360
- 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?<sup>165</sup>
- Benintende: His punishment is safety to the State.
- Angiolina: He was a subject, and hath served the State;

---

**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 370  
 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. 380  
 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! 390  
 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: Doge,  
 A word with thee, and with this noble lady,  
 Whom I have grievously offended. Would  
 Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part, 400  
 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 410  
 For such as he is: would that others had  
 Despised him as I pity! I prefer  
 My honour to a thousand lives, could such  
 Be multiplied in mine, but would not have  
 A single life of others lost for that  
 Which nothing human can impugn – the sense  
 Of virtue, looking not to what is called  
 A good name for reward, but to itself.  
 To me the scorner's words were as the wind  
 Unto the rock: but as there are – alas! 420  
 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 430  
 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;<sup>166</sup>  
 A wife's dishonour was the bane of Troy;<sup>167</sup>  
 A wife's dishonour unkinged Rome for ever;<sup>168</sup>  
 An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,<sup>169</sup>  
 And thence to Rome, which perished for a time;  
 An obscene gesture cost Caligula 440  
 His life, while earth yet bore his cruelties;<sup>170</sup>  
 A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish province;<sup>171</sup>  
 And Steno's lie, couched in two worthless lines,  
 Hath decimated Venice,<sup>172</sup> 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!

---

**166:** Achilles, killed by an arrow through his heel.

**167:** Helen of Troy, the queen of Sparta, whose abduction by Paris led to the Trojan War.

**168:** The rape of Lucretia by Tarquin led to the expulsion of the Tuscan kings from Rome.

**169:** This obscure story from Livy (V, 33), claims that the Gauls first crossed the Alps because of the wine.

**170:** Caligula made an obscene gesture at the man who subsequently assassinated him.

**171:** The rape of Florinda by Roderick led to the Moorish invasion of Spain; see *Don Juan I*, 190, 4.

**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,<sup>173</sup> be proud of this,  
 If it so please him – 'twere a pride fit for him! 450  
 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 460  
 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.<sup>174</sup>
- Doge (*to Benintende*): Signor! complete that which you deem your duty.  
 Benintende: Before we can proceed upon that duty,  
 We would request the Princess<sup>175</sup> 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, 470  
 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. 480  
 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,<sup>176</sup>

---

**173:** Alexander the Great was *tempted* to set fire to Persepolis by a courtesan called Thaïs; 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 *dogaresa*).

- 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, 490  
 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. 500  
 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!"<sup>177</sup> *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, 510  
 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,<sup>178</sup>  
 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? 520  
 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 530  
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, 540  
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, 550  
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, 560  
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.

570

*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. 10
- 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 20  
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, 30  
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." 40  
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.<sup>179</sup> what must be 50  
I could not change, and would not fear. Nay more,  
Thou can'st 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,<sup>180</sup> 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 60  
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, 70  
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, 80  
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 90  
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. 100  
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 110  
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. 120

*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.*



*The Giants’ Staircase was not there in Faliero’s time.*<sup>181</sup>

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.<sup>182</sup>

Benintende: Faliero! hast thou aught further to commend,  
               Compatible with justice, to the senate?

10

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 closet as Otway’s chef d’œuvre.



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!<sup>185</sup>  
 Then when the Hebrew's in thy palaces,<sup>186</sup>  
 The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek  
 Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his; 60  
 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,<sup>187</sup>  
 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 70  
 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, 80  
 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,<sup>188</sup>  
 Vice without splendour, sin without relief  
 Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er,  
 But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,

---

**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 90  
 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!<sup>189</sup>  
 Gehenna of the waters! thou Sea-Sodom!  
 Thus I devote thee to the Infernal Gods! 100  
 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.



I.  
MCCCLIV.  
MARINO FALIERO.  
DOGE XLIX.<sup>191</sup>

'Fu eletto da' quarantuno Elettori, il quale era Cavaliere e conte di Valdemarino in Trivigiana, ed era ricco, c si trovava Ambasciadore a Roma. E a dì 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 dì 10. misero queste correzioni alla promessa del Doge che i Consiglieri non odano gli Oratori e Nunzi de' Signori, senza i Capi de' Quaranta, nè possano rispondere ad alcuno, se non saranno quattro Consiglieri e due Capi de' Quaranta. E che osservino la forma del suo Capitolare. E che Messer lo Doge si metta nella miglior parte, quando i Giudici tra loro non fossero d'accordo. E ch' egli non possa far vendere i suoi imprestiti, salvo con legitima 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 dì 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, perchè fu fatto Doge uno, ch'era assente, che fu Vicedoge Ser Marino Badoero più vecchio de' Consiglieri. *Item*, che'l governo del Ducato sia commesso a' Consiglieri, e a' Capi de' Quaranta, quando vaccherà il Ducato, finchè sarà eletto 1' altro Doge. E così a di II. di Settembre fu creato 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. Sicchè di continuo stiano in Palazzo due Consiglieri e un Capo de' Quaranta. E subito furono spedite lettere al detto Doge, il quale era a Roma Oratore al Legato di Papa Innocenzo VI. ch'era in Avignone. Fu preso 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, *adeo* 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).

riva delta Paglia per lo caligo andarono ad ismontare alla riva delta Piazza in mezzo alle due Colonne dove si fà la Giustizia, che fu un malissimo augurio. E a' 6. la mattina venne alla Chiesa di San Marco alla laudazione di quello. Era in questo tempo Cancellier Grande Messer Benintende. I quarantuno Elettori furono, Ser Giovanni Contarini, Ser Andrea Giustiniani, Ser Michele Morosini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Pietro Lando, Ser Marino Gradenigo, Ser Marco Dolfino, Ser Nicolò Faliero, Ser Giovanni Quirini, Ser Lorenzo Soranzo, Ser Marco Bembo, Sere Stefano Belegno, Ser Francesco Loredano, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, Ser Andrea Barbaro, Ser Lorenzo Barbarigo, Ser Bettino da Molino, Ser' Andrea Erizzo Procuratore, Ser Marco Celsi, Ser Paolo Donato, Ser Bertucci Grimani, Ser Pietro Steno, Ser Luca Duodo, Ser' Andrea Pisani, Ser Francesco Caravello, Ser Jacopo Trivisano, Sere Schiavo Marcello, Ser Maffeo Aimò, Ser Marco Capello, Ser Panerazio Giorgio, Ser Giovanni Foscarini, Ser Tommaso Viadro, Sere Schiava Polani, Ser Marco Polo, Ser Marino Sagredo, Sere Stefano Mariani, Ser Francesco Suriano, Ser Orio Pasqualigo, Ser' Andrea Gritti, Ser Buono da Mosto.

\* \* \* \*

“Trattato di Messer Marino Faliero Doge, tratto da una Cronica antica. Essendo venuto il Giovedì della Caccia, 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 festiciuola, 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 diedero taglia grande per venire in chiaro della verità di chi avea scritto tal lettera. E *tandem* si seppe, che Michele Steno aveale scritte. E fu per la Quarantia preso di ritenerlo; e ritenuto confessò, che in quella passione d'essere stato spinto giù dal Solajo, presente la sua amante, egli aveale scritte. Onde poi fu placitato nel detto Consiglio, e parve al

Consiglio sì per rispetto all' età, come per la caldezza d'amore, di condannarlo a compiere due mesi in prigione serrato, e poi ch' e' fusse bandito di Venezia e dal distretto per un'anno. Per la qual condennazione tanto piccola il Doge ne prese grande signor, parendogli chi non fosse stata fatta quella estimazione della cosa, che ricercava la sua dignità del Ducato. E diceva, ch' eglino doveano averlo fatto appiccare per la gola, o *saltem* bandirlo in perpetuo da Venezia. E perchè (quando dee succedere un' effetto è necessario che vi concorra la cagione a fare tal' effetto) era destinato, che a Messer Marino Doge fosse tagliata la testa, perciò occorse, che entrata la Quaresima il giorno dopo che fu condannato il detto Ser Michele Steno, un Gentiluomo da Cà Barbaro, di natura colerico, andasse all' Arsenal, domandasse certe cose ai Padroni, ed era alla presenza de' Signori l'Amiraglio dell' Arsenal. 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 ajuto, 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 li, 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 reducevano 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 diciassette Capi in diversi luoghi della Terra, i quali avessero cadaun di loro quarant'uomini provvigionati preparati, non dicenclo 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 not comanda. E al suono delle Campane questi sedici o diciassette co' suoi uomini venissero a San Marco alle strade, che buttano in Piazza. E così i nobili e primarj Cittadini, che venissero in piazza, per sapere del romore ciò ch'era, li tagliassero a pezzi. E seguito questo, che fosse chiamato per Signore Messer Marino Faliero Doge. E fermate le cose tra loro, stabilito fu, che



questo dovess' essere a' 15. 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, che ha sempre ajutato questa gloriosissima Città, e che per le santimonie e giustizie sue mai non l'ha abbandonata, ispirò a un Beltramo Bergamasco, il quale fu messo Capo di quarant' uomini per uno de' detti congiurati (il quale intese qualche parola, sicchè comprese l' effetto, 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 segreto, 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 qualearendogli, com'era, d'una grandissima importanza, tutti e due andarono a casa di Ser Marco Cornaro, che stava a San Felice. E dettogli il tutto, tutti e tre deliberarono di venire a casa del detto Ser Niccolò Lioni, ed esaminare il detto Beltramo. E quello esaminato, intese le cose, il fecero stare serrato. E andarono tutti e tre a San Salvatore in Sacristia, e mandarono i loro famigli a chiamare i Consiglieri, gli Avvogadori, i Capi de' Dieci, e que' del Consiglio. E ridotti insieme dissero loro le cose. I quali rimasero morti. E deliberarono di mandare pel detto Beltramo, e fattolo venire cautamente, ed esaminatolo, e verificate le cose, ancorchè ne sentissero gran passione, pure pensarono la 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 Maestriere dell' Arsenale, acciocchè i provisionati 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' primarij 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 Avogadori del Comune furono Ser Zufredo Morosini, e Ser Orio Pasqualigo, e questi non ballottarono. Que' del Consiglio de' Dieci; furono Ser Giovanni Marcclo, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, e Ser Micheletto Dolfino, Capi del detto

Consiglio de' Dieci; Ser Luca da Legge, e Ser Pietro da Mosto, Inquisitori del detto Consiglio; Ser Marco Polani, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Lando Lombardo, Ser Nicoletto Trivisanu da Sant' Angiolo. Questi elessero tra loro una Giunta, nella notte ridotti quasi sul romper del giorno, di venti Nobili di Venezia de' migliori, de' più Savj, e de' più antichi, per consultare, non però che mettessero pallottola. E non vi vollero alcuno da Cà Faliero. E cacciarono fuori del Consiglio Niccolò Faliero, e un' altro Niccolò Faliero da San Tommaso, per essere della Casata del Doge. E questa provigiune di chiamare i venti delta eiiunta fu molto commendata per tutta la Terra. Questi furono i venti delta Giunta, Ser Marco Giustiniani Procuratore, Ser' Andrea Erizzo Procuratore, Ser Lionardo Giustiniani Procuratore, Ser' Andrea Contarini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Niccolò Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser Marco Diedo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser' Andrea Cornaro Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri da Mosto, Ser Gazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosino, Sere Stetano Belegno, Ser Niccolò Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini. E chiamati questi venti nel Consiglio de' Dieci, fu mandato per Messer Marino Faliero Doge, il quale andava pel Palazzo con gran genre, gentiluomini, e altra buona gente, che non sapeano ancora come il fatto stava. In questo tempo fu condotto, preso, e legato, Bertucci Israello, uno de' Capi del trattato per que' di Santa Croce, e ancora fu preso Lanello del Brin, Nicoletto, di Rosa e Nicoletto Alberto, il Guardiaga, e altri uomini da mare, e d' altre condizioni. I quali furono esaminati, e trovata la verità del tradimento. A dì 16. d' Aprile fu sentenziato pet detto Consiglio de' Dieci, che Filippo Calandario, e Bertucci Israello fossero appiccati alle Colonne rosse del balconate del Palazzo, nella quali sta a vedere il Doge la festa della Caccia. E così furono appiccati con spranghe in bocca. E nel giorno seguente questi furono condannati, Niccolò Zuccuolo, Nicoletto Blondo, Nicoletto Doro, Marco Giuda, Jacomello Dagolino, Nicoletto Fedcle figliuolo di Filippo Calendaro, Marco Torello detto Israello, Stefano Trivisano Cambiatore di Santa Margherita, Antonio dalle Bende. Furono tutti presi a Chioggia, che fuggivano, e dipoi in diversi giorni a due a due, e a uno a uno, per sentenza fatta net detto Consiglio de' Dieci, furono appiccati per la gola alle Colonne, continuando dalle rosse del Palazzo, seguendo fin verso il Canale. E altri presi furono lasciati, perchè sentirono il fatto, ma non vi furono, tal che fu dato loro ad intendere per questi capi, che venissero coll'arme, per prendere alcuni malfatturi in scrvigio delta Signoria, nè altro sapeano. Fu ancora liberato Nicoletto Alberto, il Guardiaga, e Bartolommeo Ciriuola, e suo figliuolo, e molti altri, che non crano in colpa.

“E a dì 16. d' Aprile, giorno di Venerdi, fu sentenziato net detto Consiglio de' Dieci, di tagliare la testa a Messer Marino Faliero Doge sul pato delta Scala di pierra, dove i Dogi giurano il primo sagramento, quando montano prima in Palazzo. E così serrato il Palazzo, la mattina seguente a ora di Terza, fu tagliata la testa al detto Doge a dì 17. d'Aprile.

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: *E stata fatta la gran giustizia del Traditore.* E aperta la Porta tutti entrarono dentro con gran furia a vedere il Doge, ch' era stato giustiziato. E' da sapere, che a fare la detta giustizia non fu Ser Giovanni Sanudo il Consigliere, perchè era andato a casa per difetto della persona, sicchè furono quattordici soli, che ballottarono, cioè cinque consiglieri, e nove del Consiglio de' Dieci. E fu preso, che tutti i beni del Doge fossero confiscati net Comune, e così degli altri traditori. E fu concesso 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' erano stati a fare la detta sentenza del Doge, e d' altri, avessero licenza di portar' arme di dì e di notte in Venezia e da Grado fino a 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 doppiieri 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 Bergamo, e un Cassone di pietra con queste lettere: *Heic jacet Dominus Marinus Faletro Dux.* E nel gran Consiglio non gli e stato fatto alcun Brieve, 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 Faliero, o che i Falieri 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. Poenas 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, atque Caput.”*

“Non voglio restar di scrivere quello che ho letto in una cronica, cioè, che Marino Faliero trovandosi Podestà e Capitano a Treviso, e dovendosi fare una Processione, il Vescovo stette troppo a far venire il Corpo di Cristo. Il detto Faliero era di tanta superbia e arroganza, che diede un

buffetto al prefato Vescovo, per modo ch' egli quasi cadde in terra. Però fù permesso, che il Faliero perdette l'intelletto, e fece la mala morte, come ho scritto di sopra.”

*Cronica a di Sanuto* – Muratori S. S. *Rerum Italicarum* – vol. xxii 628-639.

## II.

(translation of previous item)

MCCCLIV.

MARINO FALIERO, DOGE XLIX.<sup>192</sup>

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.<sup>193</sup>

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 Ambassador at the court of the Holy Father, at Rome, – the Holy Father himself held his court at Avignon. When Messer Marino Faliero the Duke was about to land in this city, on the fifth day of 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. Ser Niccolo then went to the house of Messer Giovanni Gradenigo Nasoni, who afterwards became Duke, and who also lived at Santo Stefano, and told him all. The matter seemed to him to be of the very greatest importance, as indeed it was; and they two went to the house of Ser Marco Cornaro, who lived at San Felice; and, having spoken with him, they all three then determined to go back to the house of Ser Niccolo Lioni, to examine the said Beltramo: and having questioned him, and heard all that he had to say, they left him in confinement. And then they all three went into the sacristy of San Salvatore, and sent their men to summon the 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 Pantalione Barbo il Grando, of the Sestiero of Ossoduro. The Avogadori of the Commonwealth were Zufredo Morosini, and Ser Orio Pasqualigo; and these did not ballot. Those of the Council of Ten were Ser Giovanni Marcello, Ser Tommaso Sanudo, and Ser Micheletto Dolfino, the heads of the aforesaid Council of Ten. Ser Luca da Legge, and Ser Pietro da Mosto, inquisitors of the aforesaid Council. And Ser Marco Polani, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Lando Lombardo, and Ser 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 Ciazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosini, Ser Stefano Belegno, Ser Nicolo Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini.

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

At the same time Bertucci Israello, who, as one of the 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 Faletro Dux*”. – And they did not paint his portrait in the hall of the Great Council: – but in the place where it ought to have been, you see these words: “*Hic est locus Marini Faletro decapitati pro criminibus*”. And it is thought that his house was granted to the church of Sant’ Apostolo; it was that great one near the bridge. Yet this could not be the case, or else the family bought it back from the church; for it still belongs to Cà Faliero. I must not refrain from noting, that some wished to write the following words in the place where his portrait ought to have been, as aforesaid: – “*Marinus Faletro Dux, temeritus me cepit. Pœnas lui, de, decapitatus pro criminibus*”. – 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.”*

III.<sup>194</sup>

“AL giovane Doge Andrea Dandolo succedette un vecchio, il quale tardi si pose al timone della repubblica, ma sempre prima di quel che facea d’uopo a lui, ed alla patria: egli è Marino Faliero, personaggio a me noto per antica dimestichezza. Falsa era l’opinione intorno a lui, giacchè egli si mostrò fornito più di corraggio, 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 conchiudere, 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 l’ 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 minciato 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, perchè dalla sentenza contra di esso promulgata aparirà 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 succederano, 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 giacchè fluttuano le pubbliche cose, sforziamoci di governar modestissimamente i privati nostri affari.”

*Levati, Viaggi di Petrarca*, vol. iv. p. 323.<sup>195</sup>

#### [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

---

**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 *corraggio* 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'Académie Française,<sup>196</sup> tom. v. livre xxxv. p. 95. &c. Edition de Paris MDCCCXIX.

“A ces attaques si fréquentes que le gouvernement dirigeait contre le clergé, à ces luttes établies entre les différens 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 juridiction ecclésiastique, ayant occasionné des réclamations de la part de la cour de Rome, le conseil se réserva le droit de débouter les époux de leur demande; et consentit à la renvoyer devant l'officialité, toutes les fois qu'il ne l'aurait pas rejetée.

“Il y eut on moment, ou sans doute le renversement des fortunes, la perte des jeunes gens, les discordes domestiques, déterminèrent le gouvernement à 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

---

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

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

## 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.<sup>197</sup>

"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, alike corrupt. These divorces, veiled under another name, became so frequent, that the most important act of civil society was discovered to be amenable to a tribunal of exceptions; and to restrain the open scandal of such proceedings became the office of the police. In 1782 the council of ten decreed, that every woman who should sue for a dissolution of her marriage should be compelled to await the decision of the judges in some convent, to be named by the court. 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,<sup>198</sup> 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 at once 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[aron] 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 & physiognomy [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.<sup>199</sup> 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,<sup>200</sup> speak in the highest terms of Pasqualigo’s behaviour. There is the Abbate Morelli.<sup>201</sup> There is Alvise Querini,<sup>202</sup> 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,<sup>203</sup> the heroine of “La Biondina in Gondoletta”. There are the patrician poet Morosini,<sup>204</sup> and the poet Lamberti, the author of the ‘Biondina,’ &c.<sup>205</sup> and many other estimable productions; and, not least in an Englishman’s estimation,

---

**199:** Richard Belgrave Hoppner, B.’s friend the English Consul at Venice, took violent objection to this section. On May 22 1821 he wrote, ‘By Pasquale’s return from England I have been favoured with the sight of your tragedy & of your letter respecting Pope – the latter I delight in: the former in my opinion is very beautiful, particularly the Doge’s denunciation against Venice, in which you pourtray so exactly the state of this wretched & devoted city, but I cannot forgive you the praise you bestow in your notes on certain individuals here who never have nor ever can merit even the little you say in their behalf. – The [“]accomplished son[”] & his [“]accomplished mother[”] are worse than your worst lazzaroni of Naples – throughout the late events, the mother has shown herself the decided enemy of every liberal sentiment: the abject toadeater of the villainous tyrants of her adopted country: breathing hatred of the neapolitans for promising to wish themselves free, & the most ardent hopes that their invaders might succeed in crushing them – The [“]accomplished son[”] in the mean time has accepted the appointment of extra clerk in the C[ount] de Thurn’s office (one of the greatest scoundrels that ever breathed, a man who has advanced himself by the most notoriously dishonest practices) and is become by duty, as he was by inclination already[,] the devoted slave of the horde of slaves who rule here, as well as the spy of their base and suspicious administration – They are vicious Greeks, & modern Greeks – and after all do tell me what are the lady’s accomplishments? Have you forgot Washington? and Lodi & Pompeys pillar & fifty other proofs of her ignorance & stupidity? Excuse me my dear Sir but the other worthy individuals of whom you speak hardly know how to give compliment, considering what you say of them as a sneer rather than your curious opinion & feel at all counts uncomfortable in being produced in such society – –’ (John Murray Archive / National Library of Scotland). B. answers Hoppner at BLJ VIII 124-5.

**200:** For this 1811 naval engagement, see BLJ VIII 54n.

**201:** The Abbate Morelli was custodian of the Biblioteca Marciana.

**202:** Alvise Querini was a diplomat, pre-1797 Venetian amabassador to Paris.

**203:** The Countess Benzon had been one of Foscolo’s lovers. B. frequented her *conversazione*.

**204:** Morosini unidentified.

**205:** Lamberti wrote the lyrics to *La Biondina*; the music was by Giovanni Battista Peruchini.



Madame Michelli, the translator of Shakspeare.<sup>206</sup> There are the young Dandolo and the improvvisatore Carrer,<sup>207</sup> and Giuseppe Albrizzi, the accomplished son of an accomplished mother.<sup>208</sup> There is Aglietti,<sup>209</sup> and were there nothing else, there is the immortality of Canova.<sup>210</sup> Cicognara,<sup>211</sup> Mustoxithi,<sup>212</sup> Bucati,<sup>213</sup> &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.

Extract from the Literary History of Italy, by P. I. Ginguené.<sup>214</sup> vol. ix. p. 144. Paris Edit. 1819.

“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 apres 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.”

---

**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 (Ginguené, *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)

*Extract from the Literary History of Italy, by P.L.Ginguené, vol. ix p. 144. Paris Edit. 1819.*<sup>215</sup>

“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”.<sup>216</sup>

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”<sup>217</sup> 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 Harolde [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 himself – 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.