

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Ducal Palace.**Enter* LOREDANO and BARBARIGÒ, *meeting.*

Lor. WHERE is the prisoner?

Bar. Reposing from
The Question.

Over and above these papers there was direct evidence that Jacopo had written to the *Imperatore dei Turchi*, imploring him to send his galley and take him away from Candia. Here was a fresh instance of treachery to the Republic, and July 21, 1456, Jacopo returned to Venice under the custody of Lorenzo Loredano.

According to Romanin (*Storia, etc.*, iv. 284), he was not put to the torture, but confessed his guilt spontaneously, pleading, by way of excuse, that the letter to the Duke of Milan had been allowed to fall into the hands of spies, with a view to his being recalled to Venice and obtaining a glimpse of his parents and family, even at a risk of a fresh trial. On the other hand, the *Dolfin Cronaca*, the work of a kinsman of the Foscari, which records Jacopo's fruitless appeal to the sorrowful but inexorable Doge, and other incidents of a personal nature, testifies, if not to torture on the rack, "to mutilation by thirty strokes of the lash." Be that as it may, he was once more condemned to lifelong exile, with the additional penalty that he should be imprisoned for a year. He sailed from Venice July 31, 1456, and died at Candia, January 12, 1457. Jacopo's misconduct and consequent misfortune overshadowed the splendour of his father's reign, and, in very truth, "brought his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

After his son's death, the aged Doge, now in his eighty-fifth year, retired to his own apartments, and refused to preside at Councils of State. The Ten, who in 1446 had yielded to the Doge's plea that a father fretting for an exiled son could not discharge his public duties, were instant that he should abdicate the dukedom on the score of decrepitude. Accounts differ as to the mode in which he received the sentence of deposition. It is certain that he was compelled to abdicate on Sunday morning, October 23, 1457, but was allowed a breathing-space of a few days to make his arrangements for quitting the Ducal Palace.

On Monday, October 24, the Great Council met to elect his successor, and sat with closed doors till Sunday, October 30.

On Sunday, October 30, Pasquale Malipiero was declared Doge, and two days after, All Saints' Day, at the first hour of the morning, Francesco Foscari died. If the interval between ten o'clock on Sunday night and one o'clock on Tuesday morning disproves the legend that the discrowned Doge ruptured a blood-vessel at the moment when the bell was tolling for the election of his successor, the truth remains that, old as he was, he died of a broken heart.]

Lor. The hour's past—fixed yesterday
For the resumption of his trial.—Let us
Rejoin our colleagues in the council, and
Urge his recall.

Bar. Nay, let him profit by
A few brief minutes for his tortured limbs;
He was o'erwrought by the Question yesterday,
And may die under it if now repeated.

Lor. Well?

Bar. I yield not to you in love of justice,
Or hate of the ambitious Foscari, 10
Father and son, and all their noxious race;
But the poor wretch has suffered beyond
Nature's

Most stoical endurance.

Lor. Without owning
His crime?

Bar. Perhaps without committing any.
But he avowed the letter to the Duke
Of Milan, and his sufferings half atone for
Such weakness.

Lor. We shall see.

Bar. You, Loredano,
Pursue hereditary hate too far.

Lor. How far?

Bar. To extermination.

Lor. When they are
Extinct, you may say this.—Let's in to council

Bar. Yet pause—the number of our col-
leagues is not 21

Complete yet; two are wanting ere we can
Proceed.

Lor. And the chief judge, the Doge?

Bar. No—he,
With more than Roman fortitude, is ever
First at the board in this unhappy process
Against his last and only son.

Lor. True—true—
His last.

Bar. Will nothing move you?

Lor. Feels he, think you?

Bar. He shows it not.

Lor. I have marked *that*—the wretch!

Bar. But yesterday, I hear, on his return
To the ducal chambers, as he passed the
threshold 30

The old man fainted.

Lor. It begins to work, then.

Bar. The work is half your own.

Lor. And should be *all* mine—
My father and my uncle are no more.

Bar. I have read their epitaph, which says
they died

By poison.

Lor. When the Doge declared that he

Should never deem himself a sovereign till
The death of Peter Loredano, both
The brothers sickened shortly: — he *is*
Sovereign.

Bar. A wretched one.

Lor. What should they be who make
Orphans?

Bar. But *did* the Doge make you so?

Lor. Yes. 40

Bar. What solid proofs?

Lor. When Princes set themselves
To work in secret, proofs and process are
Alike made difficult; but I have such
Of the first, as shall make the second need-
less.

Bar. But you will move by law?

Lor. By all the laws
Which he would leave us.

Bar. They are such in this
Our state as render retribution easier
Than 'mongst remoter nations. Is it true
That you have written in your books of
commerce,

(The wealthy practice of our highest nobles) 50
"Doge Foscari, my debtor for the deaths
Of Marco and Pietro Loredano,
My sire and uncle?"¹

Lor. It is written thus.

Bar. And will you leave it uneras'd?

Lor. Till balanced.

Bar. And how?

[*Two Senators pass over the stage, as in
their way to "the Hall of the Council
of Ten."*

Lor. You see the number is complete.
Follow me. [Exit LOREDANO.

Bar. (*solus*). Follow *thee*! I have followed
long

Thy path of desolation, as the wave
Sweeps after that before it, alike whelming
The wreck that creaks to the wild winds,
and wretch

Who shrieks within its riven ribs, as gush 60
The waters through them; but this son and
sire

Might move the elements to pause, and yet
Must I on hardily like them—Oh! would
I could as blindly and remorselessly!—
Lo, where he comes!—Be still, my heart!
they are

Thy foes, must be thy victims: wilt thou beat
For those who almost broke thee?

¹ [Daru gives Palazzi's *Fasti Ducales* and *L'Histoire Vénitienne* of Vianolo as his authorities for this story.]

*Enter Guards, with young FOSCARI as
Prisoner, etc.*

Guard. Let him rest.
Signor, take time.

Jac. Fos. I thank thee, friend, I'm feeble;
But thou mayst stand reprov'd.

Guard. I'll stand the hazard.

Jac. Fos. That's kind:—I meet some pity,
but no mercy; 70

This is the first.

Guard. And might be the last, did they
Who rule behold us.

Bar. (*advancing to the Guard*). There is
one who does:

Yet fear not; I will neither be thy judge
Nor thy accuser; though the hour is past,
Wait their last summons—I am of "the
Ten,"

And waiting for that summons, sanction you
Even by my presence: when the last call
sounds,

We'll in together.—Look well to the prisoner!

Jac. Fos. What voice is that?—'Tis
Barbarigo's! Ah!

Our House's foe, and one of my few judges.

Bar. To balance such a foe, if such there
be, 81

Thy father sits amongst thy judges.

Jac. Fos. True,
He judges.

Bar. Then deem not the laws too harsh
Which yield so much indulgence to a sire,
As to allow his voice in such high matter
As the state's safety—

Jac. Fos. And his son's. I'm faint;
Let me approach, I pray you, for a breath
Of air, yon window which o'erlooks the
waters.

Enter an Officer, who whispers BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*to the Guard*). Let him approach.
I must not speak with him

Further than this: I have transgressed my
duty 90

In this brief parley, and must now redeem it
Within the Council Chamber.

[Exit BARBARIGO.]

[*Guard conducting JACOPO FOSCARI to
the window.*

Guard. There, sir, 'tis
Open.—How feel you?

Jac. Fos. Like a boy—Oh Venice!

Guard. And your limbs?

Jac. Fos. Limbs! how often have they borne me
Bounding o'er yon blue tide, as I have skimmed
The gondola along in childish race,
And, masqued as a young gondolier, amidst
My gay competitors, noble as I,
Raced for our pleasure, in the pride of strength;
While the fair populace of crowding beauties,
Plebeian as patrician, cheered us on 101
With dazzling smiles, and wishes audible,
And waving kerchiefs, and applauding hands,
Even to the goal!—How many a time have I
Cloven with arm still lustier, breast more daring,
The wave all roughened; with a swimmer's stroke
Flinging the billows back from my drenched hair,
And laughing from my lip the audacious brine,
Which kissed it like a wine-cup, rising o'er
The waves as they arose, and prouder still
The loftier they uplifted me; and oft, 111
In wantonness of spirit, plunging down
Into their green and glassy gulfs, and making
My way to shells and sea-weed, all unseen
By those above, till they waxed fearful; then
Returning with my grasp full of such tokens
As showed that I had searched the deep:
exulting,
With a far-dashing stroke, and, drawing deep
The long-suspended breath, again I spurned
The foam which broke around me, and pursued 120
My track like a sea-bird.—I was a boy then.
Guard. Be a man now: there never was
more need
Of manhood's strength.
Jac. Fos. (*looking from the lattice*). My
beautiful, my own,
My only Venice—*this is breath!* Thy breeze,
Thine Adrian sea-breeze, how it fans my face!
The very winds feel native to my veins,
And cool them into calmness! How unlike
The hot gales of the horrid Cyclades,
Which howled about my Candiote dungeon,¹
and
Made my heart sick.

¹ [The climate of Crete is genial and healthy; but the town of Candia is exposed to winds from the north and north-west. Ulysses was driven into Crete, Κρήτηνδε (Od. xix. 186), by a northern wind, and St. Paul (Acts, xxvii. 14) was driven by the same wind from the coast of Crete to Claudia.]

Guard. I see the colour comes 130
Back to your cheek: Heaven send you
strength to bear
What more may be imposed!—I dread to
think on't.
Jac. Fos. They will not banish me again?
—No—no,
Let them wring on; I am strong yet.
Guard. Confess,
And the rack will be spared you.
Jac. Fos. I confessed
Once—twice before: both times they exiled
me.
Guard. And the third time will slay you.
Jac. Fos. Let them do so,
So I be buried in my birth-place: better
Be ashes here than aught that lives elsewhere.
Guard. And can you so much love the soil
which hates you? 140
Jac. Fos. The soil!—Oh no, it is the seed
of the soil
Which persecutes me: but my native earth
Will take me as a mother to her arms.
I ask no more than a Venetian grave,
A dungeon, what they will, so it be here.
Enter an Officer.
Offi. Bring in the prisoner!
Guard. Signor, you hear the order.
Jac. Fos. Aye, I am used to such a
summons; 'tis
The third time they have tortured me:—then
lend me
Thine arm. [*To the Guard.*
Offi. Take mine, sir; 'tis my duty to
Be nearest to your person.
Jac. Fos. You!—you are he 150
Who yesterday presided o'er my pangs—
Away!—I'll walk alone.
Offi. As you please, Signor;
The sentence was not of my signing, but
I dared not disobey the Council when
They—
Jac. Fos. Bade thee stretch me on their
horrid engine.
I pray thee touch me not—that is, just now;
The time will come they will renew that
order,
But keep off from me till 'tis issued. As
I look upon thy hands my curdling limbs
Quiver with the anticipated wrenching, 160
And the cold drops strain through my brow,
as if—
But onward—I have borne it—I can bear
it.—
How looks my father?

Offi. With his wonted aspect.
Jac. Fos. So does the earth, and sky, the
 blue of Ocean,
 The brightness of our city, and her domes,
 The mirth of her Piazza—even now
 Its merry hum of nations pierces here,
 Even here, into these chambers of the
 unknown
 Who govern, and the unknown and the
 unnumbered
 Judged and destroyed in silence,—all things
 wear 170
 The self-same aspect, to my very sire!
 Nothing can sympathize with Foscari,
 Not even a Foscari.—Sir, I attend you.

[*Exeunt* JACOPO FOSCARI, *Officer*, etc.]

Enter MEMMO and another Senator.

Mem. He's gone—we are too late:—think
 you "the Ten"
 Will sit for any length of time to-day?

Sen. They say the prisoner is most obdurate,
 Persisting in his first avowal; but
 More I know not.

Mem. And that is much; the secrets
 Of yon terrific chamber are as hidden
 From us, the premier nobles of the state, 180
 As from the people.

Sen. Save the wonted rumours,
 Which—like the tales of spectres, that are rife
 Near ruined buildings—never have been
 proved,
 Nor wholly disbelieved: men know as little,
 Of the state's real acts as of the grave's
 Unfathomed mysteries.

Mem. But with length of time
 We gain a step in knowledge, and I look
 Forward to be one day of the decemvirs.

Sen. Or Doge?

Mem. Why, no; not if I can avoid it.

Sen. 'Tis the first station of the state, and
 may 190

Be lawfully desired, and lawfully
 Attained by noble aspirants.

Mem. To such
 I leave it; though born noble, my ambition
 Is limited: I'd rather be an unit
 Of an united and Imperial "Ten,"
 Than shine a lonely, though a gilded cipher.—
 Whom have we here? the wife of Foscari?

Enter MARINA, with a female Attendant.

Mar. What, no one?—I am wrong, there
 still are two:
 But they are senators.

Mem. Most noble lady,
 Command us.

Mar. *I command!*—Alas! my life 200
 Has been one long entreaty, and a vain one.

Mem. I understand thee, but I must not
 answer.

Mar. (*fiercely*). True—none dare answer
 here save on the rack,
 Or question save those—

Mem. (*interrupting her*). High-born dame!
 bethink thee

Where thou now art.

Mar. Where I now am!—It was
 My husband's father's palace.

Mem. The Duke's palace.

Mar. And his son's prison!—True, I have
 not forgot it;

And, if there were no other nearer, bitterer
 Remembrances, would thank the illustrious
 Memmo

For pointing out the pleasures of the place. 210

Mem. Be calm!

Mar. (*looking up towards heaven*). I am;
 but oh, thou eternal God!

Canst thou continue so, with such a world?

Mem. Thy husband yet may be absolved.

Mar. He is,

In Heaven. I pray you, Signor Senator,
 Speak not of that; you are a man of office,
 So is the Doge; he has a son at stake
 Now, at this moment, and I have a husband,
 Or had; they are there within, or were at least
 An hour since, face to face, as judge and
 culprit:

Will he condemn him?

Mem. I trust not.

Mar. But if 220

He does not, there are those will sentence both.

Mem. They can.

Mar. And with them power and will are one
 In wickedness;—my husband's lost!

Mem. Not so;

Justice is judge in Venice.

Mar. If it were so,

There now would be no Venice. But let it
 Live on, so the good die not, till the hour
 Of Nature's summons; but "the Ten's" is
 quicker,

And we must wait on't. Ah! a voice of wail!
 [*A faint cry within.*]

Sen. Hark!

Mem. 'Twas a cry of—

Mar. No, no; not my husband's—
 Not Foscari's.

Mem. The voice was—

Mar. *Not his: no.* 230
He shriek! No; that should be his father's
part,
Not his—not his—he'll die in silence.

[*A faint groan again within.*

Mem. What!
Again?

Mar. His voice! it seemed so: I will not
Believe it. Should he shrink, I cannot cease
To love; but—no—no—no—it must have been
A fearful pang, which wrung a groan from him.

Sen. And, feeling for thy husband's wrongs,
wouldst thou
Have him bear more than mortal pain in
silence?

Mar. We all must bear our tortures. I
have not
Left barren the great house of Foscari, 240
Though they sweep both the Doge and son
from life;

I have endured as much in giving life
To those who will succeed them, as they can
In leaving it: but mine were joyful pangs:
And yet they wrung me till I *could* have
shrieked,
But did not; for my hope was to bring forth
Heroes, and would not welcome them with
tears.

Mem. All's silent now.

Mar. Perhaps all's over; but
I will not deem it: he hath nerved himself,
And now defies them.

Enter an Officer hastily.

Mem. How now, friend, what seek you?

Offi. A leech. The prisoner has fainted.

[*Exit Officer.*

Mem. Lady, 251
'Twere better to retire.

Sen. (*offering to assist her*). I pray thee do so.

Mar. Off! I will tend him.

Mem. You! Remember, lady!
Ingress is given to none within those chambers
Except "the Ten," and their familiars.

Mar. Well,
I know that none who enter there return
As they have entered—many never; but
They shall not balk my entrance.

Mem. Alas! this
Is but to expose yourself to harsh repulse,
And worse suspense.

Mar. Who shall oppose me?

Mem. They 260
Whose duty 'tis to do so.

Mar. 'Tis their duty
To trample on all human feelings, all

Ties which bind man to man, to emulate
The fiends who will one day requite them in
Variety of torturing! Yet I'll pass.

Mem. It is impossible.

Mar. That shall be tried.
Despair defies even despotism: there is
That in my heart would make its way through
hosts

With levelled spears; and think you a few
jailors

Shall put me from my path? Give me, then,
way; 270

This is the Doge's palace; I am wife
Of the Duke's son, the *innocent* Duke's son,
And they shall hear this!

Mem. It will only serve
More to exasperate his judges.

Mar. What
Are *judges* who give way to anger? they
Who do so are assassins. Give me way.

[*Exit MARINA.*

Sen. Poor lady!

Mem. 'Tis mere desperation: she
Will not be admitted o'er the threshold.

Sen. And
Even if she be so, cannot save her husband.
But, see, the officer returns.

[*The Officer passes over the stage with another
person.*

Mem. I hardly 280
Thought that "the Ten" had even this touch
of pity,

Or would permit assistance to this sufferer.

Sen. Pity! Is't pity to recall to feeling
The wretch too happy to escape to Death
By the compassionate trance, poor Nature's
last

Resource against the tyranny of pain?

Mem. I marvel they condemn him not at
once.

Sen. That's not their policy: they'd have
him live,

Because he fears not death; and banish him,
Because all earth, except his native land, 290
To him is one wide prison, and each breath
Of foreign air he draws seems a slow poison,
Consuming but not killing.

Mem. Circumstance
Confirms his crimes, but he avows them not.

Sen. None, save the Letter, which, he says,
was written

Addressed to Milan's duke, in the full know-
ledge

That it would fall into the Senate's hands,
And thus he should be re-conveyed to Venice.

Mem. But as a culprit.
Sen. Yes, but to his country;
 And that was all he sought,—so he avouches.
Mem. The accusation of the bribes was
 proved. 301
Sen. Not clearly, and the charge of homicide
 Has been annulled by the death-bed confession
 Of Nicolas Erizzo, who slew the late
 Chief of “the Ten.”
Mem. Then why not clear him?
Sen. That
 They ought to answer; for it is well known
 That Almero Donato, as I said,
 Was slain by Erizzo for private vengeance.
Mem. There must be more in this strange
 process than
 The apparent crimes of the accused disclose—
 But here come two of “the Ten”; let us
 retire. 311

[*Exeunt MEMMO and Senator.*]

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. (*addressing LOR.*). That were too
 much: believe me, 'twas not meet
 The trial should go further at this moment.
Lor. And so the Council must break up,
 and Justice
 Pause in her full career, because a woman
 Breaks in on our deliberations?
Bar. No,
 That's not the cause; you saw the prisoner's
 state.
Lor. And had he not recovered?
Bar. To relapse
 Upon the least renewal.
Lor. 'Twas not tried.
Bar. 'Tis vain to murmur; the majority 320
 In council were against you.
Lor. Thanks to *you*, sir,
 And the old ducal dotard, who combined
 The worthy voices which o'er-ruled my own.
Bar. I am a judge; but must confess that
 part
 Of our stern duty, which prescribes the
 Question,
 And bids us sit and see its sharp infliction,
 Makes me wish—
Lor. What?
Bar. That *you* would *sometimes* feel,
 As I do always.
Lor. Go to, you're a child,
 Infirm of feeling as of purpose, blown
 About by every breath, shook by a sigh, 330
 And melted by a tear—a precious judge

For Venice! and a worthy statesman to
 Be partner in my policy.
Bar. He shed
 No tears.
Lor. He cried out twice.
Bar. A Saint had done so,
 Even with the crown of Glory in his eye,
 At such inhuman artifice of pain
 As was forced on him; but he did not cry
 For pity; not a word nor groan escaped him,
 And those two shrieks were not in supplication,
 But wrung from pangs, and followed by no
 prayers. 340
Lor. He muttered many times between his
 teeth,
 But inarticulately.
Bar. That I heard not:
 You stood more near him.
Lor. I did so.
Bar. Methought,
 To my surprise too, you were touched with
 mercy,
 And were the first to call out for assistance
 When he was failing.
Lor. I believed that swoon
 His last.
Bar. And have I not oft heard thee name
 His and his father's death your nearest wish?
Lor. If he dies innocent, that is to say, 349
 With his guilt unavowed, he'll be lamented.
Bar. What, wouldst thou slay his memory?
Lor. Wouldst thou have
 His state descend to his children, as it must,
 If he die unattainted?
Bar. War with *them* too?
Lor. With all their house, till theirs or mine
 are nothing.
Bar. And the deep agony of his pale wife,
 And the repressed convulsion of the high
 And princely brow of his old father, which
 Broke forth in a slight shuddering, though
 rarely,
 Or in some clammy drops, soon wiped away
 In stern serenity; these moved you not? 360
 [*Exit LOREDANO.*]
 He's silent in his hate, as Foscari
 Was in his suffering; and the poor wretch
 moved me
 More by his silence than a thousand outcries
 Could have effected. 'Twas a dreadful sight
 When his distracted wife broke through into
 The hall of our tribunal, and beheld
 What we could scarcely look upon, long used
 To such sights. I must think no more of this,
 Lest I forget in this compassion for

Our foes, their former injuries, and lose 370
The hold of vengeance Loredano plans
For him and me; but mine would be content
With lesser retribution than he thirsts for,
And I would mitigate his deeper hatred
To milder thoughts; but, for the present,
Foscari

Has a short hourly respite, granted at
The instance of the elders of the Council,
Moved doubtless by his wife's appearance in
The hall, and his own sufferings.—Lo! they
come:

How feeble and forlorn! I cannot bear 380
To look on them again in this extremity:
I'll hence, and try to soften Loredano.

[Exit BARBARIGO.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A hall in the DOGE'S Palace.

The DOGE and a Senator.

Sen. Is it your pleasure to sign the report
Now, or postpone it till to-morrow?

Doge. Now;
I overlooked it yesterday: it wants
Merely the signature. Give me the pen—

[The DOGE sits down and signs the paper.
There, Signor.]

Sen. (looking at the paper). You have for-
got; it is not signed.

Doge. Not signed? Ah, I perceive my eyes
begin

To wax more weak with age. I did not see
That I had dipped the pen without effect.

Sen. (dipping the pen into the ink, and
placing the paper before the DOGE).
Your hand, too, shakes, my Lord; allow
me, thus—

Doge. 'Tis done, I thank you.

Sen. Thus the act confirmed
By you and by "the Ten" gives peace to
Venice. II

Doge. 'Tis long since she enjoyed it: may
it be

As long ere she resume her arms!

Sen. 'Tis almost
Thirty-four years of nearly ceaseless warfare
With the Turk, or the powers of Italy;
The state had need of some repose.

Doge. No doubt:
I found her Queen of Ocean, and I leave her
Lady of Lombardy; it is a comfort
That I have added to her diadem

The gems of Brescia and Ravenna; Crema
And Bergamo no less are hers; her realm 21
By land has grown by thus much in my reign,
While her sea-sway has not shrunk.

Sen. 'Tis most true,
And merits all our country's gratitude.

Doge. Perhaps so.

Sen. Which should be made manifest.

Doge. I have not complained, sir.

Sen. My good Lord, forgive me.

Doge. For what?

Sen. My heart bleeds for you.

Doge. For me, Signor?

Sen. And for your—

Doge. Stop!

Sen. It must have way, my Lord:
I have too many duties towards you
And all your house, for past and present kind-
ness, 30

Not to feel deeply for your son.

Doge. Was this

In your commission?

Sen. What, my Lord?

Doge. This prattle
Of things you know not: but the treaty's signed;
Return with it to them who sent you.

Sen. I
Obey. I had in charge, too, from the Council,
That you would fix an hour for their reunion.

Doge. Say, when they will—now, even at
this moment,

If it so please them: I am the State's servant.

Sen. They would accord some time for your
repose.

Doge. I have no repose, that is, none which
shall cause 40

The loss of an hour's time unto the State.
Let them meet when they will, I shall be found
Where I should be, and what I have been ever.

[Exit Senator. The DOGE remains in
silence.]

Enter an Attendant.

Att. Prince!

Doge. Say on.

Att. The illustrious lady Foscari
Requests an audience.

Doge. Bid her enter. Poor
Marina!

[Exit Attendant. The DOGE remains in
silence as before.]

Enter MARINA.

Mar. I have ventured, father, on
Your privacy.

Doge. I have none from you, my child.
Command my time, when not commanded by
The State.

Mar. I wished to speak to you of *him*.

Doge. Your husband?

Mar. And your son.

Doge. Proceed, my daughter!

Mar. I had obtained permission from the
"the Ten" 51

To attend my husband for a limited number
Of hours.

Doge. You had so.

Mar. 'Tis revoked.

Doge. By whom?

Mar. "The Ten."—When we had reached
"the Bridge of Sighs,"¹

Which I prepared to pass with Foscari,
The gloomy guardian of that passage first
Demurred: a messenger was sent back to
"The Ten;"—but as the Court no longer sate,
And no permission had been given in writing,
I was thrust back, with the assurance that
Until that high tribunal reassembled 61
The dungeon walls must still divide us.

Doge. True,
The form had been omitted in the haste
With which the court adjourned; and till it
meets,

'Tis dubious.

Mar. Till it meets! and when it meets,
They'll torture him again; and he and I
Must purchase by renewal of the rack
The interview of husband and of wife,
The holiest tie beneath the Heavens!—Oh
God!

Dost thou see this?

Doge. Child—child—

Mar. (*abruptly*). Call *me* not "child!"
You soon will have no children—you deserve
none— 71

You, who can talk thus calmly of a son
In circumstances which would call forth tears
Of blood from Spartans! Though these did
not weep

Their boys who died in battle, is it written
That they beheld them perish piecemeal, nor
Stretched forth a hand to save them?

Doge. You behold me:
I cannot weep—I would I could; but if
Each white hair on this head were a young life,
This ducal cap the Diadem of earth, 80
This ducal ring with which I wed the waves

¹ [The Bridge of Sighs was not built till the end
of the sixteenth century.]

A talisman to still them—I'd give all
For him.

Mar. With less he surely might be saved.

Doge. That answer only shows you know
not Venice.

Alas! how should you? she knows not herself,
In all her mystery. Hear me—they who aim
At Foscari, aim no less at his father;
The sire's destruction would not save the son;
They work by different means to the same end,
And that is—but they have not conquered
yet. 90

Mar. But they have crushed.

Doge. Nor crushed as yet—I live.

Mar. And your son,—how long will he live?

Doge. I trust,

For all that yet is past, as many years
And happier than his father. The rash boy,
With womanish impatience to return,
Hath ruined all by that detected letter:
A high crime, which I neither can deny
Nor palliate, as parent or as Duke:
Had he but borne a little, little longer
His Candiote exile, I had hopes—— he
has quenched them— 100
He must return.

Mar. To exile?

Doge. I have said it.

Mar. And can I not go with him?

Doge. You well know

This prayer of yours was twice denied before
By the assembled "Ten," and hardly now
Will be accorded to a third request,
Since aggravated errors on the part
Of your Lord renders them still more austere.

Mar. Austere? Atrocious! The old
human fiends,

With one foot in the grave, with dim eyes,
strange

To tears save drops of dotage, with long
white 110

And scanty hairs, and shaking hands, and
heads

As palsied as their hearts are hard, they
counsel,

Cabal, and put men's lives out, as if Life
Were no more than the feelings long
extinguished

In their accursèd bosoms.

Doge. You know not——

Mar. I do—I do—and so should you,
methinks—

That these are demons: could it be else that
Men, who have been of women born and
suckled—

Who have loved, or talked at least of Love
—have given

Their hands in sacred vows—have danced
their babes 120

Upon their knees, perhaps have mourned
above them—

In pain, in peril, or in death—who are,
Or were, at least in seeming, human, could
Do as they have done by yours, and you
yourself—

You, who abet them?

Doge. I forgive this, for
You know not what you say.

Mar. You know it well,
And feel it nothing.

Doge. I have borne so much,
That words have ceased to shake me.

Mar. Oh, no doubt!
You have seen your son's blood flow, and
your flesh shook not;

And after that, what are a woman's words? 130
No more than woman's tears, that they
should shake you.

Doge. Woman, this clamorous grief of
thine, I tell thee,
Is no more in the balance weighed with that
Which—but I pity thee, my poor Marina!

Mar. Pity my husband, or I cast it from
me;

Pity thy son! *Thou* pity!—'tis a word
Strange to thy heart—how came it on
thy lips?

Doge. I must bear these reproaches,
though they wrong me.
Couldst thou but read—

Mar. 'Tis not upon thy brow,
Nor in thine eyes, nor in thine acts,—
where then 140

Should I behold this sympathy? or shall?

Doge. (*pointing downwards*). There.

Mar. In the earth?

Doge. To which I am tending: when
It lies upon this heart, far lightlier, though
Loaded with marble, than the thoughts
which press it

Now, you will know me better.

Mar. Are you, then,
Indeed, thus to be pitied?

Doge. Pitied! None
Shall ever use that base word, with which men
Cloak their soul's hoarded triumph, as a
fit one

To mingle with my name; that name shall be,
As far as *I* have borne it, what it was 150
When I received it.

Mar. But for the poor children
Of him thou canst not, or thou wilt not save,
You were the last to bear it.

Doge. Would it were so!
Better for him he never had been born;
Better for me.—I have seen our house
dishonoured.

Mar. That's false! A truer, nobler,
trustier heart,
More loving, or more loyal, never beat
Within a human breast. I would not change
My exiled, persecuted, mangled husband,
Oppressed but not disgraced, crushed,
overwhelmed, 160

Alive, or dead, for Prince or Paladin
In story or in fable, with a world
To back his suit. Dishonoured! — *he*
dishonoured!

I tell thee, Doge, 'tis Venice is dishonoured;
His name shall be her foulest, worst reproach,
For what he suffers, not for what he did.

'Tis ye who are all traitors, Tyrant!—ye!
Did you but love your Country like this victim
Who totters back in chains to tortures, and
Submits to all things rather than to exile, 170
You'd fling yourselves before him, and implore
His grace for your enormous guilt.

Doge. He was
Indeed all you have said. I better bore
The deaths of the two sons Heaven took
from me,

Than Jacopo's disgrace.

Mar. That word again?

Doge. Has he not been condemned?

Mar. Is none but guilt so?

Doge. Time may restore his memory—
I would hope so.

He was my pride, my—but 'tis useless now—
I am not given to tears, but wept for joy
When he was born: those drops were
ominous. 180

Mar. I say he's innocent! And were he
not so,

Is our own blood and kin to shrink from us
In fatal moments?

Doge. I shrank not from him:
But I have other duties than a father's;
The state would not dispense me from those
duties;

Twice I demanded it, but was refused:
They must then be fulfilled.

Enter an Attendant.

Att. A message from
"The Ten."

Doge. Who bears it?
Att. Noble Loredano.
Doge. He!—but admit him.
[Exit Attendant.]
Mar. Must I then retire?
Doge. Perhaps it is not requisite, if this 190
 Concerns your husband, and if not—Well,
 Signor,
[To LOREDANO entering.]
 Your pleasure?
Lor. I bear that of "the Ten."
Doge. They
 Have chosen well their envoy.
Lor. 'Tis *their* choice
 Which leads me here.
Doge. It does their wisdom honour,
 And no less to their courtesy.—Proceed.
Lor. We have decided.
Doge. We?
Lor. "The Ten" in council.
Doge. What! have they met again, and
 met without
 Apprising me?
Lor. They wished to spare your feelings,
 No less than age.
Doge. That's new—when spared they either?
 I thank them, notwithstanding.
Lor. You know well 200
 That they have power to act at their discretion,
 With or without the presence of the Doge.
Doge. 'Tis some years since I learned
 this, long before
 I became Doge, or dreamed of such
 advancement.
 You need not school me, Signor; I sate in
 That Council when you were a young patrician.
Lor. True, in my father's time; I have
 heard him and
 The Admiral, his brother, say as much.
 Your Highness may remember them; they
 both
 Died suddenly.
Doge. And if they did so, better 210
 So die than live on lingeringly in pain.
Lor. No doubt: yet most men like to
 live their days out.
Doge. And did not they?
Lor. The Grave knows best: they died,
 As I said, suddenly.
Doge. Is that so strange,
 That you repeat the word emphatically?
Lor. So far from strange, that never
 was there death
 In my mind half so natural as theirs.
 Think *you* not so?

Doge. What should I think of mortals?
Lor. That they have mortal foes.
Doge. I understand you;
 Your sires were mine, and you are heir
 in all things. 220
Lor. You best know if I should be so.
Doge. I do.
 Your fathers were my foes, and I have heard
 Foul rumours were abroad; I have also read
 Their epitaph, attributing their deaths
 To poison. 'Tis perhaps as true as most
 Inscriptions upon tombs, and yet no less
 A fable.
Lor. Who dares say so?
Doge. I!—'Tis true
 Your fathers were mine enemies, as bitter
 As their son e'er can be, and I no less
 Was theirs; but I was *openly* their foe: 230
 I never worked by plot in Council, nor
 Cabal in commonwealth, nor secret means
 Of practice against life by steel or drug.
 The proof is—your existence.
Lor. I fear not.
Doge. You have no cause, being what
 I am; but were I
 That you would have me thought, you
 long ere now
 Were past the sense of fear. Hate on;
 I care not.
Lor. I never yet knew that a noble's life
 In Venice had to dread a Doge's frown,
 That is, by open means.
Doge. But I, good Signor, 240
 Am, or at least *was*, more than a mere duke,
 In blood, in mind, in means; and that
 they know
 Who dreaded to elect me, and have since
 Striven all they dare to weigh me down:
 be sure,
 Before or since that period, had I held you
 At so much price as to require your absence,
 A word of mine had set such spirits to work
 As would have made you nothing. But
 in all things
 I have observed the strictest reverence;
 Not for the laws alone, for those *you* have
 strained 250
 (I do not speak of *you* but as a single
 Voice of the many) somewhat beyond what
 I could enforce for my authority,
 Were I disposed to brawl; but, as I said,
 I have observed with veneration, like
 A priest's for the High Altar, even unto
 The sacrifice of my own blood and quiet,
 Safety, and all save honour, the decrees,

The health, the pride, and welfare of the State.

And now, sir, to your business.

Lor. 'Tis decreed, 260
That, without further repetition of
The Question, or continuance of the trial,
Which only tends to show how stubborn
guilt is,

("The Ten," dispensing with the stricter law
Which still prescribes the Question till a full
Confession, and the prisoner partly having
Avowed his crime in not denying that
The letter to the Duke of Milan's his),
James Foscari return to banishment,
And sail in the same galley which conveyed
him. 270

Mar. Thank God! At least they will
not drag him more
Before that horrible tribunal. Would he
But think so, to my mind the happiest doom,
Not he alone, but all who dwell here, could
Desire, were to escape from such a land.

Doge. That is not a Venetian thought, my
daughter.

Mar. No, 'twas too human. May I share
his exile?

Lor. Of this "the Ten" said nothing.

Mar. So I thought!
That were too human, also. But it was not
Inhibited?

Lor. It was not named.

Mar. (to the Doge). Then, father, 280
Surely you can obtain or grant me thus much:
[To LOREDANO.

And you, sir, not oppose my prayer to be
Permitted to accompany my husband.

Doge. I will endeavour.

Mar. And you, Signor?

Lor. Lady!

'Tis not for me to anticipate the pleasure
Of the tribunal.

Mar. Pleasure! what a word
To use for the decrees of—

Doge. Daughter, know you
In what a presence you pronounce these
things?

Mar. A Prince's and his subject's.

Lor. Subject!

Mar. Oh!

It galls you:—well, you are his equal, as 290
You think; but that you are not, nor would be,
Were he a peasant:—well, then, you're a
Prince,

A princely noble; and what then am I?

Lor. The offspring of a noble house.

Mar. And wedded
To one as noble. What, or whose, then, is
The presence that should silence my free
thoughts?

Lor. The presence of your husband's Judges.

Doge. And
The deference due even to the lightest word
That falls from those who rule in Venice.

Mar. Keep
Those maxims for your mass of scared
mechanics, 300
Your merchants, your Dalmatian and Greek
slaves,

Your tributaries, your dumb citizens,
And masked nobility, your sbirri, and
Your spies, your galley and your other slaves,
To whom your midnight carryings off and
drownings,

Your dungeons next the palace roofs, or under
The water's level; your mysterious meetings,
And unknown dooms, and sudden executions,
Your "Bridge of Sighs," your strangling
chamber, and

Your torturing instruments, have made ye
seem 310

The beings of another and worse world!
Keep such for them: I fear ye not. I know ye;
Have known and proved your worst, in the
infernal

Process of my poor husband! Treat me as
Ye treated him:—you did so, in so dealing
With him. Then what have I to fear from you,
Even if I were of fearful nature, which
I trust I am not?

Doge. You hear, she speaks wildly.

Mar. Not wisely, yet not wildly.

Lor. Lady! words

Uttered within these walls I bear no further
Than to the threshold, saving such as pass 321
Between the Duke and me on the State's service.
Doge! have you aught in answer?

Doge. Something from
The Doge; it may be also from a parent.

Lor. My mission here is to the Doge.

Doge. Then say

The Doge will choose his own ambassador,
Or state in person what is meet; and for
The father—

Lor. I remember mine.—Farewell!
I kiss the hands of the illustrious Lady,
And bow me to the Duke.

[Exit LOREDANO.

Mar. Are you content? 330

Doge. I am what you behold.

Mar. And that's a mystery.

Doge. All things are so to mortals; who can
read them
Save he who made? or, if they can, the few
And gifted spirits, who have studied long
That loathsome volume—man, and pored upon
Those black and bloody leaves, his heart and
brain,
But learn a magic which recoils upon
The adept who pursues it: all the sins
We find in others, Nature made our own;
All our advantages are those of Fortune; 340
Birth, wealth, health, beauty, are her accidents,
And when we cry out against Fate, 'twere well
We should remember Fortune can take nought
Save what she *gave*—the rest was nakedness,
And lusts, and appetites, and vanities,
The universal heritage, to battle
With as we may, and least in humblest stations,
Where Hunger swallows all in one low want,
And the original ordinance, that man
Must sweat for his poor pittance, keeps all
passions 350
Aloof, save fear of famine! All is low,
And false, and hollow—clay from first to last,
The Prince's urn no less than potter's vessel.
Our Fame is in men's breath, our lives upon
Less than their breath; our durance upon days,
Our days on seasons; our whole being on
Something which is not *us*!—So, we are slaves,
The greatest as the meanest—nothing rests
Upon our will; the will itself no less
Depends upon a straw than on a storm; 360
And when we think we lead, we are most
led,
And still towards Death, a thing which comes
as much
Without our act or choice as birth, so that
Methinks we must have sinned in some old
world,
And *this* is Hell: the best is, that it is not
Eternal.
Mar. These are things we cannot judge
On earth.
Doge. And how then shall we judge each
other,
Who are all earth, and I, who am called upon
To judge my son? I have administered
My country faithfully—victoriously— 370
I dare them to the proof, the *chart* of what
She was and is: my reign has doubled realms;
And, in reward, the gratitude of Venice
Has left, or is about to leave, *me* single.
Mar. And Foscari? I do not think of such
things,
So I be left with him.

Doge. You shall be so;
Thus much they cannot well deny.
Mar. And if
They should, I will fly with him.
Doge. That can ne'er be.
And whither would you fly?
Mar. I know not, reckon not—
To Syria, Egypt, to the Ottoman— 380
Any where, where we might respire unfettered,
And live nor girt by spies, nor liable
To edicts of inquisitors of state.
Doge. What, wouldst thou have a renegade
for husband,
And turn him into traitor?
Mar. He is none!
The Country is the traitress, which thrust forth
Her best and bravest from her. Tyranny
Is far the worst of treasons. Dost thou deem
None rebels except subjects? The Prince who
Neglects or violates his trust is more 390
A brigand than the robber-chief.
Doge. I cannot
Charge me with such a breach of faith.
Mar. No; thou
Observ'st, obey'st such laws as make old
Draco's
A code of mercy by comparison.
Doge. I found the law; I did not make it.
Were I
A subject, still I might find parts and portions
Fit for amendment; but as Prince, I never
Would change, for the sake of my house, the
charter
Left by our fathers.
Mar. Did they make it for
The ruin of their children?
Doge. Under such laws, Venice
Has risen to what she is—a state to rival 401
In deeds and days, and sway, and let me add,
In glory (for we have had Roman spirits
Amongst us), all that history has bequeathed
Of Rome and Carthage in their best times, when
The people swayed by Senates.
Mar. Rather say,
Groaned under the stern Oligarchs.
Doge. Perhaps so;
But yet subdued the World: in such a state
An individual, be he richest of
Such rank as is permitted, or the meanest, 410
Without a name, is alike nothing, when
The policy, irrevocably tending
To one great end, must be maintained in vigour.
Mar. This means that you are more a Doge
than father.
Doge. It means, I am more citizen than either.

If we had not for many centuries
Had thousands of such citizens, and shall
I trust, have still such, Venice were no city.

Mar. Accurséd be the city where the laws
Would stifle Nature's! 419

Doge. Had I as many sons
As I have years, I would have given them all,
Not without feeling, but I would have given
them

To the State's service, to fulfil her wishes,
On the flood, in the field, or, if it must be,
As it, alas! has been, to ostracism,
Exile, or chains, or whatsoever worse,
She might decree.

Mar. And this is Patriotism?
To me it seems the worst barbarity.
Let me seek out my husband: the sage
"Ten,"

With all its jealousy, will hardly war 430
So far with a weak woman as deny me
A moment's access to his dungeon.

Doge. I'll
So far take on myself, as order that
You may be admitted.

Mar. And what shall I say
To Foscari from his father?

Doge. That he obey
The laws.

Mar. And nothing more? Will you not
see him

Ere he depart? It may be the last time.

Doge. The last!—my boy!—the last time
I shall see

My last of children! Tell him I will come.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The prison of JACOPO FOSCARI.*

Jac. Fos. (solus). No light, save yon faint
gleam which shows me walls
Which never echoed but to Sorrow's sounds,
The sigh of long imprisonment, the step
Of feet on which the iron clanked the groan
Of Death, the imprecation of Despair!
And yet for this I have returned to Venice,
With some faint hope, 'tis true, that Time,
which wears

The marble down, had worn away the hate
Of men's hearts; but I knew them not, and
here

Must I consume my own, which never beat to
For Venice but with such a yearning as

The dove has for her distant nest, when
wheeling

High in the air on her return to greet
Her callow brood. What letters are these
which [Approaching the wall.

Are scrawled along the inexorable wall?
Will the gleam let me trace them? Ah! the
names

Of my sad predecessors in this place,
The dates of their despair, the brief words of
A grief too great for many. This stone page
Holds like an epitaph their history; 20

And the poor captive's tale is graven on
His dungeon barrier, like the lover's record
Upon the bark of some tall tree, which bears
His own and his beloved's name. Alas!

I recognise some names familiar to me,
And blighted like to mine, which I will add,
Fittest for such a chronicle as this,
Which only can be read, as writ, by wretches.

[*He engraves his name.*]

Enter a Familiar of "the Ten."

Fam. I bring you food.

Jac. Fos. I pray you set it down;
I am past hunger: but my lips are parched—
The water! 31

Fam. There.

Jac. Fos. (after drinking). I thank you: I
am better.

Fam. I am commanded to inform you that
Your further trial is postponed.

Jac. Fos. Till when?

Fam. I know not.—It is also in my orders
That your illustrious lady be admitted.

Jac. Fos. Ah! they relent, then—I had
ceased to hope it:

'Twas time.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My best beloved!

Jac. Fos. (embracing her). My true wife,
And only friend! What happiness!

Mar. We'll part
No more.

Jac. Fos. How! would'st thou share a
dungeon?

Mar. Aye,
The rack, the grave, all—any thing with thee,
But the tomb last of all, for there we shall 41
Be ignorant of each other, yet I will

Share that—all things except new separation;
It is too much to have survived the first.

How dost thou? How are those worn limbs?
Alas!

Why do I ask? Thy paleness—

Jac. Fos. 'Tis the joy
Of seeing thee again so soon, and so
Without expectancy, has sent the blood
Back to my heart, and left my cheeks like thine,
For thou art pale too, my Marina!

Mar. 'Tis 50
The gloom of this eternal cell, which never
Knew sunbeam, and the sallow sullen glare
Of the familiar's torch, which seems akin
To darkness more than light, by lending to
The dungeon vapours its bituminous smoke,
Which cloud whate'er we gaze on, even thine
eyes—

No, not thine eyes—they sparkle—how they
sparkle!

Jac. Fos. And thine!—but I am blinded by
the torch.

Mar. As I had been without it. Couldst
thou see here?

Jac. Fos. Nothing at first; but use and time
had taught me 60

Familiarity with what was darkness;
And the grey twilight of such glimmerings as
Glide through the crevices made by the winds
Was kinder to mine eyes than the full Sun,
When gorgeously o'ergilding any towers
Save those of Venice; but a moment ere
Thou camest hither I was busy writing.

Mar. What?

Jac. Fos. My name: look, 'tis there re-
corded next

The name of him who here preceded me,—
If dungeon dates say true.

Mar. And what of him? 70

Jac. Fos. These walls are silent of men's
ends; they only
Seem to hint shrewdly of them. Such stern
walls

Were never piled on high save o'er the dead,
Or those who soon must be so.—*What of him?*
Thou askest.—What of me? may soon be
asked,

With the like answer—doubt and dreadful sur-
mise—

Unless thou tell'st my tale.

Mar. *I speak of thee!*

Jac. Fos. And wherefore not? All then shall
speak of me:

The tyranny of silence is not lasting,
And, though events be hidden, just men's
groans 80

Will burst all cerement, even a living grave's!
I do not *doubt* my memory, but my life;
And neither do I fear,

Mar. Thy life is safe.

Jac. Fos. And liberty?

Mar. The mind should make its own!
Jac. Fos. That has a noble sound; but 'tis
a sound,

A music most impressive, but too transient:
The Mind is much, but is not all. The Mind
Hath nerved me to endure the risk of death,
And torture positive, far worse than death 89
(If death be a deep sleep), without a groan,
Or with a cry which rather shamed my judges
Than me; but 'tis not all, for there are things
More woful—such as this small dungeon, where
I may breathe many years.

Mar. Alas! and this
Small dungeon is all that belongs to thee
Of this wide realm, of which thy sire is Prince.

Jac. Fos. That thought would scarcely aid
me to endure it.

My doom is common; many are in dungeons,
But none like mine, so near their father's palace;
But then my heart is sometimes high, and hope
Will stream along those moted rays of light
Peopled with dusty atoms, which afford 102
Our only day; for, save the gaoler's torch,
And a strange firefly, which was quickly caught
Last night in yon enormous spider's net,
I ne'er saw aught here like a ray. Alas!
I know if mind may bear us up, or no,
For I have such, and shown it before men;
It sinks in solitude: my soul is social.

Mar. I will be with thee.

Jac. Fos. Ah! if it were so! 110
But *that* they never granted—nor will grant,
And I shall be alone: no men; no books—
Those lying likenesses of lying men.

I asked for even those outlines of their kind,
Which they term annals, history, what you will,
Which men bequeath as portraits, and they
were

Refused me,—so these walls have been my
study,

More faithful pictures of Venetian story,
With all their blank, or dismal stains, than is
The Hall not far from hence, which bears on
high 120

Hundreds of Doges, and their deeds and dates.

Mar. I come to tell thee the result of their
Last council on thy doom.

Jac. Fos. I know it—look!

[*He points to his limbs, as referring to the
Question which he had undergone.*]

Mar. No—no—no more of that: even they
relent
From that atrocity.

Jac. Fos. What then?

Mar. That you
Return to Candia.

Jac. Fos. Then my last hope's gone.
I could endure my dungeon, for 'twas Venice;
I could support the torture, there was something
In my native air that buoyed my spirits up
Like a ship on the Ocean tossed by storms, 130
But proudly still bestriding the high waves,
And holding on its course; but *there*, afar,
In that accurséd isle of slaves and captives,
And unbelievers, like a stranded wreck,
My very soul seemed mouldering in my bosom,
And piecemeal I shall perish, if remanded.

Mar. And *here*?

Jac. Fos. At once—by better means, as
briefer.
What! would they even deny me my Sire's
sepulchre,
As well as home and heritage?

Mar. My husband!
I have sued to accompany thee hence, 140
And not so hopelessly. This love of thine
For an ungrateful and tyrannic soil
Is Passion, and not Patriotism; for me,
So I could see thee with a quiet aspect,
And the sweet freedom of the earth and air,
I would not cavil about climes or regions.
This crowd of palaces and prisons is not
A Paradise; its first inhabitants
Were wretched exiles.

Jac. Fos. Well I know *how* wretched!

Mar. And yet you see how, from their
banishment 150
Before the Tartar into these salt isles,
Their antique energy of mind, all that
Remained of Rome for their inheritance,
Created by degrees an ocean Rome;¹

¹ In Lady Morgan's fearless and excellent work upon Italy, I perceive the expression of "Rome of the Ocean" applied to Venice. The same phrase occurs in the "Two Foscari." My publisher can vouch for me, that the tragedy was written and sent to England some time before I had seen Lady Morgan's work, which I only received on the 16th of August. I hasten, however, to notice the coincidence, and to yield the originality of the phrase to her who first placed it before the public.

[Byron calls Lady Morgan's *Italy* "fearless" on account of her strictures on the behaviour of Great Britain to Genoa in 1814. The passage which Byron feared might be quoted as a plagiarism runs as follows: "As the bark glides on, as the shore recedes, and the city of waves, the Rome of the ocean, rises on the horizon, the spirits rally," etc. —*Italy*, 1821, ii. 449.]

And shall an evil, which so often leads
To good, depress thee thus?

Jac. Fos. Had I gone forth
From my own land, like the old patriarchs,
seeking

Another region, with their flocks and herds;
Had I been cast out like the Jews from Zion,
Or like our fathers, driven by Attila¹ 160
From fertile Italy, to barren islets,
I would have given some tears to my late
country

And many thoughts; but afterwards addressed
Myself, with those about me, to create
A new home and fresh state: perhaps I could
Have borne this—though I know not.

Mar. Wherefore not?
It was the lot of millions, and must be
The fate of myriads more.

Jac. Fos. Aye—we but hear
Of the survivors' toil in their new lands,
Their numbers and success; but who can
number 170
The hearts which broke in silence at that
parting,

Or after their departure; of that malady²
Which calls up green and native fields to view
From the rough deep, with such identity
To the poor exile's fevered eye, that he
Can scarcely be restrained from treading them?
That melody,³ which out of tones and tunes
Collects such pasture for the longing sorrow
Of the sad mountaineer, when far away
From his snow canopy of cliffs and clouds, 180
That he feeds on the sweet, but poisonous
thought,
And dies. You call this *weakness*! It is
strength,

¹ [Compare *Marino Faliero*, act ii. sc. 2, line 110, *Poetical Works*, 901, iv. 386, note 3.]

² The Calenture.—[From the Spanish *Calentura*, a fever peculiar to sailors within the Tropics—

"So, by a calenture misled,
The mariner with rapture sees,
On the smooth ocean's azure bed,
Enamelled fields and verdant trees."

—Swift, *The South-Sea Project*, 1721. *Works*, 1824, xiv. 147.]

³ Alluding to the Swiss air and its effects.—[The *Ranz des Vaches*, played upon the bag-pipe by the young cowkeepers on the mountains:—"An air," says Rousseau, "so dear to the Swiss, that it was forbidden, under the pain of death, to play it to the troops, as it immediately drew tears from them, and made those who heard it desert, or die of what is called *la maladie du país*, so ardent a desire did it excite to return to their country."]

I say,—the parent of all honest feeling.
He who loves not his Country, can love nothing.

Mar. Obey her, then: 'tis she that puts thee forth.

Jac. Fos. Aye, there it is; 'tis like a mother's curse

Upon my soul—the mark is set upon me.
The exiles you speak of went forth by nations,
Their hands upheld each other by the way,
Their tents were pitched together—I'm alone.

Mar. You shall be so no more—I will go with thee. 191

Jac. Fos. My best Marina!—and our children?

Mar. They,
I fear, by the prevention of the state's
Abhorrent policy, (which holds all ties
As threads, which may be broken at her
pleasure),

Will not be suffered to proceed with us.

Jac. Fos. And canst thou leave them?

Mar. Yes—with many a pang!
But—I *can* leave them, children as they are,
To teach you to be less a child. From this
Learn you to sway your feelings, when exacted
By duties paramount; and 'tis our first 201
On earth to bear.

Jac. Fos. Have I not borne?

Mar. Too much
From tyrannous injustice, and enough
To teach you not to shrink now from a lot,
Which, as compared with what you have
undergone
Of late, is mercy.

Jac. Fos. Ah! you never yet
Were far away from Venice, never saw
Her beautiful towers in the receding distance,
While every furrow of the vessel's track
Seemed ploughing deep into your heart; you
never 210

Saw day go down upon your native spires
So calmly with its gold and crimson glory,
And after dreaming a disturbéd vision
Of them and theirs, awoke and found them
not.

Mar. I will divide this with you. Let us think
Of our departure from this much-loved city,
(Since you must *love* it, as it seems,) and this
Chamber of state, her gratitude allots you.
Our children will be cared for by the Doge,
And by my uncles; we must sail ere night. 220

Jac. Fos. That's sudden. Shall I not behold my father?

Mar. You will.

Jac. Fos. Where?

Mar. Here, or in the ducal
chamber—
He said not which. I would that you could
bear

Your exile as he bears it.

Jac. Fos. Blame him not.

I sometimes murmur for a moment; but
He could not now act otherwise. A show
Of feeling or compassion on his part
Would have but drawn upon his agéd head
Suspicion from "the Ten," and upon mine
Accumulated ills.

Mar. Accumulated! 230
What pangs are those they have spared you?

Jac. Fos. That of leaving
Venice without beholding him or you,
Which might have been forbidden now, as 'twas
Upon my former exile.

Mar. That is true,
And thus far I am also the State's debtor,
And shall be more so when I see us both
Floating on the free waves—away—away—
Be it to the earth's end, from this abhorred,
Unjust, and—

Jac. Fos. Curse it not. If I am silent,
Who dares accuse my Country?

Mar. Men and Angels! 240
The blood of myriads reeking up to Heaven,
The groans of slaves in chains, and men in
dungeons,
Mothers, and wives, and sons, and sires, and
subjects,
Held in the bondage of ten bald-heads; and
Though last, not least, *thy silence!* *Couldst
thou say*

Aught in its favour, who would praise like *thee?*

Jac. Fos. Let us address us then, since so
it must be,
To our departure. Who comes here?

Enter LOREDANO attended by Familiars.

Lor. (to the Familiars). Retire,
But leave the torch.

[*Exeunt the two Familiars.*]

Jac. Fos. Most welcome, noble Signor.
I did not deem this poor place could have
drawn 250
Such presence hither.

Lor. 'Tis not the first time
I have visited these places.

Mar. Nor would be
The last, were all men's merits well rewarded.
Came you here to insult us, or remain
As spy upon us, or as hostage for us?

Lor. Neither are of my office, noble Lady!

I am sent hither to your husband, to
Announce "the Ten's" decree.

Mar. That tenderness
Has been anticipated: it is known.

Lor. As how?

Mar. I have informed him, not so gently, 260
Doubtless, as your nice feelings would
prescribe,
The indulgence of your colleagues; but he
knew it.

If you come for our thanks, take them, and
hence!

The dungeon gloom is deep enough without
you,

And full of reptiles, not less loathsome, though
Their sting is honester.

Jac. Fos. I pray you, calm you:
What can avail such words?

Mar. To let him know
That he is known.

Lor. Let the fair dame preserve
Her sex's privilege.

Mar. I have some sons, sir,
Will one day thank you better.

Lor. You do well 270
To nurse them wisely. Foscari—you know
Your sentence, then?

Jac. Fos. Return to Candia?

Lor. True—
For life.

Jac. Fos. Not long.

Lor. I said—for *life*.

Jac. Fos. And I
Repeat—not long.

Lor. A year's imprisonment
In Canea—afterwards the freedom of
The whole isle.

Jac. Fos. Both the same to me: the after
Freedom as is the first imprisonment.
Is't true my wife accompanies me?

Lor. Yes,
If she so wills it.

Mar. Who obtained that justice?

Lor. One who wars not with women.

Mar. But oppresses
Men: howsoever let him have *my* thanks 281
For the only boon I would have asked or taken
From him or such as he is.

Lor. He receives them
As they are offered.

Mar. May they thrive with him
So much!—no more.

Jac. Fos. Is this, sir, your whole mission?
Because we have brief time for preparation,
And you perceive your presence doth disquiet
This lady, of a house noble as yours.

Mar. Nobler!

Lor. How nobler?

Mar. As more generous!
We say the "generous steed" to express the
purity

Of his high blood. Thus much I've learnt, 290
although

Venetian (who see few steeds save of bronze),
From those Venetians who have skirred the
coasts

Of Egypt and her neighbour Araby:

And why not say as soon the "*generous man*?"
If race be aught, it is in qualities

More than in years; and mine, which is as old
As yours, is better in its product, nay—

Look not so stern—but get you back, and pore
Upon your genealogic tree's most green 300
Of leaves and most mature of fruits, and there
Blush to find ancestors, who would have
blushed

For such a son—thou cold inveterate hater!

Jac. Fos. Again, Marina!

Mar. Again! *still*, Marina.
See you not, he comes here to glut his hate
With a last look upon our misery?

Let him partake it!

Jac. Fos. That were difficult.

Mar. Nothing more easy. He partakes it
now—

Aye, he may veil beneath a marble brow 309
And sneering lip the pang, but he partakes it.
A few brief words of truth shame the Devil's
servants

No less than Master; I have probed his soul
A moment, as the Eternal Fire, ere long,
Will reach it always. See how he shrinks from
me!

With death, and chains, and exile in his hand,
To scatter o'er his kind as he thinks fit;
They are his weapons, not his armour, for
I have pierced him to the core of his cold heart.
I care not for his frowns! We can but die,
And he but live, for him the very worst 320
Of destinies: each day secures him more
His tempter's.

Jac. Fos. This is mere insanity.

Mar. It may be so; and *who* hath made us
mad?

Lor. Let her go on; it irks not me.

Mar. That's false!

You came here to enjoy a heartless triumph
Of cold looks upon manifold griefs! You came
To be sued to in vain—to mark our tears,
And hoard our groans—to gaze upon the
wreck

Which you have made a Prince's son—my
husband ; 329

In short, to trample on the fallen—an office
The hangman shrinks from, as all men from
him ?

How have you sped? We are wretched, Signor,
as

Your plots could make, and vengeance could
desire us,

And how *feel you*?

Lor. As rocks.

Mar. By thunder blasted:
They feel not, but no less are shivered. Come,
Foscari; now let us go, and leave this felon,
The sole fit inhabitant of such a cell,
Which he has peopled often, but ne'er fitly
Till he himself shall brood in it alone.

Enter the DOGE.

Jac. Fos. My father!

Doge (embracing him). Jacopo! my son—
my son! 340

Jac. Fos. My father still! How long it is
since I

Have heard thee name my name—*our* name!

Doge. My boy!

Couldst thou but know—

Jac. Fos. I rarely, sir, have murmured.

Doge. I feel too much thou hast not.

Mar. Doge, look there!

[*She points to LOREDANO.*

Doge. I see the man—what mean'st thou?

Mar. Caution!

Lor. Being

The virtue which this noble lady most
May practise, she doth well to recommend it.

Mar. Wretch! 'tis no virtue, but the policy
Of those who fain must deal perforce with vice:
As such I recommend it, as I would 350
To one whose foot was on an adder's path.

Doge. Daughter, it is superfluous; I have long
Known Loredano.

Lor. You may know him better.

Mar. Yes; worse he could not.

Jac. Fos. Father, let not these
Our parting hours be lost in listening to
Reproaches, which boot nothing. Is it—is it,
Indeed, our last of meetings?

Doge. You behold

These white hairs!

Jac. Fos. And I feel, besides, that mine
Will never be so white. Embrace me, father!
I loved you ever—never more than now. 360
Look to my children—to your last child's
children!

Let them be all to you which he was once,
And never be to you what I am now.

May I not see *them* also?

Mar. No—not *here*.

Jac. Fos. They might behold their parent
any where.

Mar. I would that they beheld their father in
A place which would not mingle fear with love,
To freeze their young blood in its natural
current.

They have fed well, slept soft, and knew not
that 369

Their sire was a mere hunted outlaw. Well,
I know his fate may one day be their heritage,

But let it only be their *heritage*,

And not their present fee. Their senses, though
Alive to love, are yet awake to terror;

And these vile damps, too, and yon *thick*
green wave

Which floats above the place where we now
stand—

A cell so far below the water's level,
Sending its pestilence through every crevice,

Might strike them: *this is not their atmosphere*,

However you—and you—and most of all, 380
As worthiest—*you*, sir, noble Loredano!

May breathe it without prejudice.

Jac. Fos. I had not

Reflected upon this, but acquiesce.

I shall depart, then, without meeting them!

Doge. Not so: they shall await you in my
chamber.

Jac. Fos. And must I leave them—*all*?

Lor. You must.

Jac. Fos. Not one?

Lor. They are the State's.

Mar. I thought they had been mine.

Lor. They are, in all maternal things.

Mar. That is,

In all things painful. If they're sick, they will
Be left to me to tend them; should they die,

To me to bury and to mourn; but if 391
They live, they'll make you soldiers, senators,

Slaves, exiles—what *you* will; or if they are
Females with portions, brides and *bribes*
for nobles!

Behold the State's care for its sons and
mothers!

Lor. The hour approaches, and the wind
is fair.

Jac. Fos. How know you that here, where
the genial wind

Ne'er blows in all its blustering freedom?

Lor. 'Twas so

When I came here. The galley floats within
A bow-shot of the "Riva di Schiavoni." 400

Jac. Fos. Father! I pray you to precede me, and
Prepare my children to behold their father.

Doge. Be firm, my son!

Jac. Fos. I will do my endeavour.

Mar. Farewell! at least to this detested
dungeon,
And him to whose good offices you owe
In part your past imprisonment.

Lor. And present
Liberation.

Doge. He speaks truth.

Jac. Fos. No doubt! but 'tis
Exchange of chains for heavier chains I
owe him.

He knows this, or he had not sought to
change them,
But I reproach not.

Lor. The time narrows, Signor. 410

Jac. Fos. Alas! I little thought so linger-
ingly

To leave abodes like this: but when I feel
That every step I take, even from this cell,
Is one away from Venice, I look back
Even on these dull damp walls, and—

Doge. Boy! no tears.

Mar. Let them flow on: he wept not
on the rack
To shame him, and they cannot shame
him now.

They will relieve his heart—that too kind
heart—

And I will find an hour to wipe away
Those tears, or add my own. I could weep
now, 420

But would not gratify yon wretch so far.

Let us proceed. *Doge*, lead the way.

Lor. (to the Familiar). The torch,
there!

Mar. Yes, light us on, as to a funeral
pyre,
With Loredano mourning like an heir.

Doge. My son, you are feeble; take
this hand.

Jac. Fos. Alas!
Must youth support itself on age, and I
Who ought to be the prop of yours?

Lor. Take mine.

Mar. Touch it not, Foscari; 'twill sting
you. Signor,
Stand off! be sure, that if a grasp of yours
Would raise us from the gulf wherein we
are plunged, 430

No hand of ours would stretch itself to
meet it.

Come, Foscari, take the hand the altar
gave you;

It could not save, but will support you ever.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in the Ducal Palace.*

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Bar. And have you confidence in such
a project?

Lor. I have.

Bar. 'Tis hard upon his years.

Lor. Say rather
Kind to relieve him from the cares of State.

Bar. 'Twill break his heart.

Lor. Age has no heart to break.
He has seen his son's half broken, and,
except

A start of feeling in his dungeon, never
Swerved.

Bar. In his countenance, I grant you,
never;

But I have seen him sometimes in a calm
So desolate, that the most clamorous grief
Had nought to envy him within. Where
is he? 10

Lor. In his own portion of the palace, with
His son, and the whole race of Foscari's.

Bar. Bidding farewell.

Lor. A last! as, soon, he shall
Bid to his Dukedom.

Bar. When embarks the son?

Lor. Forthwith—when this long leave is
taken. 'Tis

Time to admonish them again.

Bar. Forbear;
Retrench not from their moments.

Lor. Not I, now
We have higher business for our own.
This day

Shall be the last of the old Doge's reign,
As the first of his son's last banishment, 20
And that is vengeance.

Bar. In my mind, too deep.

Lor. 'Tis moderate—not even life for life,
the rule

Denounced of retribution from all time;
They owe me still my father's and my uncle's.

Bar. Did not the Doge deny this strongly?

Lor. Doubtless.

Bar. And did not this shake your suspicion?

Lor. No.

Bar. But if this deposition should take place
By our united influence in the Council,

It must be done with all the deference
Due to his years, his station, and his deeds. 30

Lor. As much of ceremony as you will,
So that the thing be done. You may, for
aught

I care, depute the Council on their knees,
(Like Barbarossa to the Pope,) to beg him
To have the courtesy to abdicate.

Bar. What if he will not?

Lor. We'll elect another,
And make him null.

Bar. But will the laws uphold us?¹

Lor. What laws?—"The Ten" are laws;
and if they were not,
I will be legislator in this business.

Bar. At your own peril?

Lor. There is none, I tell you, 40
Our powers are such.

Bar. But he has twice already
Solicited permission to retire,
And twice it was refused.

Lor. The better reason
To grant it the third time.

Bar. Unasked?

Lor. It shows
The impression of his former instances:
If they were from his heart, he may be
thankful:

If not, 'twill punish his hypocrisy.
Come, they are met by this time; let us
join them,

And be *thou* fixed in purpose for this once.
I have prepared such arguments as will not 50
Fail to move them, and to remove him:
since

Their thoughts, their objects, have been
sounded, do not

You, with your wonted scruples, teach us
pause,

And all will prosper.

Bar. Could I but be certain
This is no prelude to such persecution
Of the sire as has fallen upon the son,
I would support you.

Lor. He is safe, I tell you;
His fourscore years and five may linger on
As long as he can drag them: 'tis his
throne

Alone is aimed at.

¹ [According to the law, it rested with the six councillors of the Doge and a majority of the Grand Council to insist upon the abdication of a Doge. The action of the Ten was an usurpation of powers to which they were not entitled by the terms of the Constitution.]

Bar. But discarded Princes 60
Are seldom long of life.

Lor. And men of eighty
More seldom still.

Bar. And why not wait these few years?

Lor. Because we have waited long enough,
and he
Lived longer than enough. Hence! in
to council!

[*Exeunt* LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.]

Enter MEMMO and a Senator.

Sen. A summons to "the Ten!" why so?

Mem. "The Ten"
Alone can answer; they are rarely wont
To let their thoughts anticipate their purpose
By previous proclamation. We are
summoned—

That is enough.

Sen. For them, but not for us;
I would know why.

Mem. You will know why anon, 70
If you obey: and, if not, you no less
Will know why you should have obeyed.

Sen. I mean not
To oppose them, *but*—

Mem. In Venice "*but*" 's a traitor.
But me no "*buts*," unless you would pass o'er
The Bridge which few repass.

Sen. I am silent.

Mem. Why
Thus hesitate? "The Ten" have called
in aid

Of their deliberation five and twenty
Patricians of the Senate—you are one,
And I another; and it seems to me
Both honoured by the choice or chance
which leads us 80
To mingle with a body so august.

Sen. Most true. I say no more.

Mem. As we hope, Signor,
And all may honestly, (that is, all those
Of noble blood may,) one day hope to be
Decemvir, it is surely for the Senate's
Chosen delegates, a school of wisdom, to
Be thus admitted, though as novices,
To view the mysteries.

Sen. Let us view them: they,
No doubt, are worth it.

Mem. Being worth our lives
If we divulge them, doubtless they are
worth 90

Something, at least to you or me.

Sen. I sought not
A place within the sanctuary; but being

Chosen, however reluctantly so chosen,
shall fulfil my office.

Mem. Let us not
Be latest in obeying "the Ten's" summons.

Sen. All are not met, but I am of your
thought
So far—let 's in.

Mem. The earliest are most welcome
In earnest councils—we will not be least so.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Enter the DOGE, JACOPO FOSCARI,
and MARINA.*

Jac. Fos. Ah, father! though I must and
will depart,

Yet—yet—I pray you to obtain for me 100
That I once more return unto my home,
Howe'er remote the period. Let there be
A point of time, as beacon to my heart,
With any penalty annexed they please,
But let me still return.

Doge. Son Jacopo,
Go and obey our Country's will: 'tis not
For us to look beyond.

Jac. Fos. But still I must
Look back. I pray you think of me.

Doge. Alas!
You ever were my dearest offspring, when
They were more numerous, nor can be
less so 110

Now you are last; but did the State demand
The exile of the disinterréd ashes
Of your three goodly brothers, now in earth,
And their desponding shades came flitting
round

To impede the act, I must no less obey
A duty, paramount to every duty.

Mar. My husband! let us on: this but
prolongs
Our sorrow.

Jac. Fos. But we are not summoned yet;
The galley sails are not unfurled:— who
knows?

The wind may change.

Mar. And if it do, it will not 120
Change *their* hearts, or your lot: the
galley's oars

Will quickly clear the harbour.

Jac. Fos. O, ye Elements!
Where are your storms?

Mar. In human breasts. Alas!
Will nothing calm you?

Jac. Fos. Never yet did mariner
Put up to patron saint such prayers for
prosperous

And pleasant breezes, as I call upon you,
Ye tutelar saints of my own city! which
Ye love not with more holy love than I,
To lash up from the deep the Adrian waves,
And waken Auster, sovereign of the
Tempest! 130

Till the sea dash me back on my own shore
A broken corse upon the barren Lido,
Where I may mingle with the sands which
skirt

The land I love, and never shall see more!

Mar. And wish you this with *me* beside
you?

Jac. Fos. No—
No—not for thee, too good, too kind!
May'st thou

Live long to be a mother to those children
Thy fond fidelity for a time deprives
Of such support! But for myself alone,
May all the winds of Heaven howl down
the Gulf, 140

And tear the vessel, till the mariners,
Appalled, turn their despairing eyes on me,
As the Phenicians did on Jonah, then
Cast me out from amongst them, as an
offering

To appease the waves. The billow which
destroys me

Will be more merciful than man, and bear me
Dead, but *still bear* me to a native grave,
From fishers' hands, upon the desolate strand,
Which, of its thousand wrecks, hath ne'er
received

One lacerated like the heart which then 150
Will be.— But wherefore breaks it not?
why live I?

Mar. To man thyself, I trust, with time,
to master

Such useless passion. Until now thou wert
A sufferer, but not a loud one: why
What is this to the things thou hast borne
in silence—

Imprisonment and actual torture?

Jac. Fos. Double,
Triple, and tenfold torture! But you are
right,

It must be borne. Father, your blessing.

Doge. Would
It could avail thee! but no less thou hast it.

Jac. Fos. Forgive—

Doge. What?

Jac. Fos. My poor mother, for my birth,
And me for having lived, and you yourself 161
(As I forgive you), for the gift of life,
Which you bestowed upon me as my sire.

Mar. What hast thou done?

Jac. Fos. Nothing. I cannot charge
My memory with much save sorrow: but
I have been so beyond the common lot
Chastened and visited, I needs must think
That I was wicked. If it be so, may
What I have undergone here keep me from
A like hereafter!

Mar. Fear not: *that's* reserved 170
For your oppressors.

Jac. Fos. Let me hope not.

Mar. Hope not?

Jac. Fos. I cannot wish them *all* they
have inflicted.

Mar. *All!* the consummate fiends! A
thousandfold
May the worm which never dieth feed upon
them!

Jac. Fos. They may repent.

Mar. And if they do, Heaven will not
Accept the tardy penitence of demons.

Enter an Officer and Guards.

Offi. Signor! the boat is at the shore—
the wind
Is rising—we are ready to attend you.

Jac. Fos. And I to be attended. Once
more, father,
Your hand!

Doge. Take it. Alas! how thine own
trembles! 180

Jac. Fos. No—you mistake; 'tis yours that
shakes, my father.

Farewell!

Doge. Farewell! Is there aught else?

Jac. Fos. No—nothing.
[*To the Officer.*]

Lend me your arm, good Signor.

Offi. You turn pale—
Let me support you—paler—ho! some aid
there!

Some water!

Mar. Ah, he is dying!

Jac. Fos. Now, I'm ready—
My eyes swim strangely—where's the door?

Mar. Away!
Let me support him—my best love! Oh, God!
How faintly beats this heart—this pulse!

Jac. Fos. The light!
Is it the light?—I am faint.

[*Officer presents him with water.*]
Offi. He will be better,
Perhaps, in the air.

Jac. Fos. I doubt not. Father—wife— 190
Your hands!

Mar. There's death in that damp, clammy
grasp.

Oh, God!—My Foscari, how fare you?

Jac. Fos. Well! [*He dies.*]

Offi. He's gone!

Doge. He's free.

Mar. No—no, he is not dead;
There must be life yet in that heart—he could
not

Thus leave me.

Doge. Daughter!

Mar. Hold thy peace, old man!
I am no daughter now—thou hast no son.
Oh, Foscari!

Offi. We must remove the body.

Mar. Touch it not, dungeon miscreants!
your base office

Ends with his life, and goes not beyond murder,
Even by your murderous laws. Leave his re-
mains 200

To those who know to honour them.

Offi. I must
Inform the Signory, and learn their pleasure.

Doge. Inform the Signory from *me*, the
Doge,

They have no further power upon those ashes:
While he lived, he was theirs, as fits a subject—
Now he is *mine*—my broken-hearted boy!

[*Exit Officer.*]

Mar. And I must live!

Doge. Your children live, Marina.

Mar. My children! true—they live, and I
must live

To bring them up to serve the State, and die
As died their father. Oh! what best of blessings
Were barrenness in Venice! Would my mother
Had been so! 212

Doge. My unhappy children!

Mar. What!
You feel it then at last—*you!*—Where is now
The Stoic of the State?

Doge. (*throwing himself down by the body.*)
Here!

Mar. Aye, weep, on!
I thought you had no tears—you hoard them
Until they are useless; but weep on! he never
Shall weep more—never, never more.

Enter LOREDANO and BARBARIGO.

Lor. What's here?

Mar. Ah! the Devil come to insult the dead!
Avaunt!

Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground. 219
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine. Get thee back to thy place of torment!

Bar. Lady, we knew not of this sad event,
But passed here merely on our path from
council.

Mar. Pass on.

Lor. We sought the Doge.

Mar. (*pointing to the Doge, who is still on
the ground by his son's body*). He's busy,
look,

About the business *you* provided for him.
Are ye content?

Bar. We will not interrupt
A parent's sorrows.

Mar. No, ye only make them,
Then leave them.

Doge (*rising*). Sirs, I am ready.

Bar. No—not now.

Lor. Yet 'twas important.

Doge. If 'twas so, I can
Only repeat—I am ready.

Bar. It shall not be 230
Just now, though Venice tottered o'er the deep
Like a frail vessel. I respect your griefs.

Doge. I thank you. If the tidings which you
bring

Are evil, you may say them; nothing further
Can touch me more than him thou look'st on
there;

If they be good, say on; you need not *fear*
That they can *comfort* me.

Bar. I would they could!

Doge. I spoke not to *you*, but to Loredano.
He understands me.

Mar. Ah! I thought it would be so.

Doge. What mean you?

Mar. Lo! there is the blood beginning 240
To flow through the dead lips of Foscari—
The body bleeds in presence of the assassin.

[*To LOREDANO.*

Thou cowardly murderer by law, behold
How Death itself bears witness to thy deeds!

Doge. My child! this is a phantasy of grief.
Bear hence the body. [*To his attendants.*]

Signors, if it please you,
Within an hour I'll hear you.

(*Exeunt DOGE, MARINA, and attendants
with the body. Manent LOREDANO
and BARBARIGO.*

Bar. He must not
Be troubled now.

Lor. He said himself that nought
Could give him trouble farther.

Bar. These are words;
But grief is lonely, and the breaking in 250
Upon it barbarous.

Lor. Sorrow preys upon

Its solitude, and nothing more diverts it
From its sad visions of the other world,
Than calling it at moments back to this.
The busy have no time for tears.

Bar. And therefore
You would deprive this old man of all business?

Lor. The thing 's decreed. The Giunta
and "the Ten"

Have made it law—who shall oppose that law?

Bar. Humanity!

Lor. Because his son is dead?

Bar. And yet unburied.

Lor. Had we known this when 260
The act was passing, it might have suspended
Its passage, but impedes it not—once passed.

Bar. I'll not consent.

Lor. You have consented to
All that 's essential—leave the rest to me.

Bar. Why press his abdication now?

Lor. The feelings

Of private passion may not interrupt
The public benefit; and what the State

Decides to-day must not give way before
To-morrow for a natural accident.

Bar. You have a son.

Lor. I *have*—and *had* a father. 270

Bar. Still so inexorable?

Lor. Still.

Bar. But let him

Inter his son before we press upon him
This edict.

Lor. Let him call up into life
My sire and uncle—I consent. Men may,
Even agéd men, be, or appear to be,
Sires of a hundred sons, but cannot kindle
An atom of their ancestors from earth.

The victims are not equal; he has seen
His sons expire by natural deaths, and I 279

My sires by violent and mysterious maladies.
I used no poison, bribed no subtle master

Of the destructive art of healing, to
Shorten the path to the eternal cure.

His sons—and he had four—are dead, without
My dabbling in vile drugs.

Bar. And art thou sure
He dealt in such?

Lor. Most sure.

Bar. And yet he seems
All openness.

Lor. And so he seemed not long
Ago to Carmagnuola.

Bar. The attainted
And foreign traitor?

Lor. Even so: when *he*,
After the very night in which "the Ten" 290

(Joined with the Doge) decided his destruction,
Met the great Duke at daybreak with a jest,
Demanding whether he should augur him
"The good day or good night?" his Doge-
ship answered,
"That he in truth had passed a night of vigil,
"In which" (he added with a gracious smile)
"There often has been question about you."¹
'Twas true; the question was the death resolved
Of Carmagnuola, eight months ere he died;
And the old Doge, who knew him doomed,
smiled on him 300
With deadly cozenage, eight long months be-
forehand—

Eight months of such hypocrisy as is
Learnt but in eighty years. Brave Carmag-
nuola
Is dead; so is young Foscari and his brethren—
I never *smiled* on *them*.

Bar. Was Carmagnuola
Your friend?

Lor. He was the safeguard of the city.
In early life its foe, but in his manhood,
Its saviour first, then victim.

Bar. Ah! that seems
The penalty of saving cities. He
Whom we now act against not only saved
Our own, but added others to her sway. 311

Lor. The Romans (and we ape them) gave
a crown
To him who took a city: and they gave
A crown to him who saved a citizen
In battle: the rewards are equal. Now,
If we should measure forth the cities taken
By the Doge Foscari, with citizens
Destroyed by him, or *through* him, the account
Were fearfully against him, although narrowed
To private havoc, such as between him 320
And my dead father.

Bar. Are you then thus fixed?

Lor. Why, what should change me?

Bar. That which changes me.
But you, I know, are marble to retain
A feud. But when all is accomplished, when
The old man is deposed, his name degraded,
His sons all dead, his family depressed,
And you and yours triumphant, shall you
sleep?

Lor. More soundly.

Bar. That's an error, and you'll find it
Ere you sleep with your fathers.

Lor. They sleep not
In their accelerated graves, nor will 330
Till Foscari fills his. Each night I see them
Stalk frowning round my couch, and, pointing
towards

The ducal palace, marshal me to vengeance.

Bar. Fancy's distemperature! There is no
passion

More spectral or fantastical than Hate;
Not even its opposite, Love, so peoples air
With phantoms, as this madness of the heart.

Enter an Officer.

Lor. Where go you, sirrah?

Offi. By the ducal order
To forward the preparatory rites
For the late Foscari's interment.

Bar. Their 340
Vault has been often opened of late years.

Lor. 'Twill be full soon, and may be closed
for ever!

Offi. May I pass on?

Lor. You may.

Bar. How bears the Doge
This last calamity?

Offi. With desperate firmness.
In presence of another he says little,
But I perceive his lips move now and then;
And once or twice I heard him, from the ad-
joining
Apartment, mutter forth the words—"My
son!"

Scarce audibly. I must proceed.

[Exit Officer.]

Bar. This stroke
Will move all Venice in his favour.

Lor. Right! 350
We must be speedy: let us call together
The delegates appointed to convey
The Council's resolution.

Bar. I protest
Against it at this moment.

Lor. As you please—
I'll take their voices on it ne'ertheless,
And see whose most may sway them, yours
or mine.

[Exeunt BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.]

¹ An historical fact. [See DARU [1821], tom. ii. pp. 398, 399. Daru quotes as his authorities Sabellicus and Pietro Giustiniani. As a matter of fact, the Doge did his utmost to save Carmagnola, pleading that his sentence should be commuted to imprisonment for life.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The DOGE'S Apartment.**The DOGE and Attendants.*

Att. My Lord, the deputation is in waiting; But add, that if another hour would better Accord with your will, they will make it theirs.

Doge. To me all hours are like. Let them approach. *[Exit Attendant.*

An Officer. Prince! I have done your bidding.

Doge. What command?

Offi. A melancholy one—to call the attendance

Of—

Doge. True—true—true: I crave your pardon. I

Begin to fail in apprehension, and Wax very old—old almost as my years. Till now I fought them off, but they begin to To overtake me.

Enter the Deputation, consisting of six of the Signory and the Chief of the Ten.

Noble men, your pleasure!

Chief of the Ten. In the first place, the Council doth condole

With the Doge on his late and private grief.

Doge. No more—no more of that.

Chief of the Ten. Will not the Duke Accept the homage of respect?

Doge. I do

Accept it as 'tis given—proceed.

Chief of the Ten. "The Ten,"

With a selected giunta from the Senate Of twenty-five of the best born patricians, Having deliberated on the state 19

Of the Republic, and the o'erwhelming cares Which, at this moment, doubly must oppress Your years, so long devoted to your Country, Have judged it fitting, with all reverence, Now to solicit from your wisdom (which Upon reflection must accord in this),

The resignation of the ducal ring, Which you have worn so long and venerably: And to prove that they are not ungrateful, nor Cold to your years and services, they add An appanage of twenty hundred golden 30 Ducats, to make retirement not less splendid Than should become a Sovereign's retreat.

Doge. Did I hear rightly?

Chief of the Ten. Need I say again?

Doge. No.—Have you done?

Chief of the Ten. I have spoken. Twenty four

Hours are accorded you to give an answer.

Doge. I shall not need so many seconds.

Chief of the Ten. We

Will now retire.

Doge. Stay! four and twenty hours Will alter nothing which I have to say.

Chief of the Ten. Speak!

Doge. When I twice before reiterated My wish to abdicate, it was refused me: 40

And not alone refused, but ye exacted An oath from me that I would never more Renew this instance. I have sworn to die

In full exertion of the functions, which My Country called me here to exercise, According to my honour and my conscience—I cannot break my oath.

Chief of the Ten. Reduce us not To the alternative of a decree, Instead of your compliance.

Doge. Providence Prolongs my days to prove and chasten me; 50 But ye have no right to reproach my length Of days, since every hour has been the Country's.

I am ready to lay down my life for her, As I have laid down dearer things than life: But for my dignity—I hold it of The whole Republic: when the general will Is manifest, then you shall all be answered.

Chief of the Ten. We grieve for such an answer; but it cannot Avail you aught.

Doge. I can submit to all things, But nothing will advance; no, not a moment. What you decree—decree. 61

Chief of the Ten. With this, then, must we Return to those who sent us?

Doge. You have heard me.

Chief of the Ten. With all due reverence we retire.

[Exeunt the Deputation, etc.]

Enter an Attendant.

Att. My Lord, The noble dame Marina craves an audience.

Doge. My time is hers.

Enter MARINA.

Mar. My Lord, if I intrude— Perhaps you fain would be alone?

Doge. Alone!

Alone, come all the world around me, I Am now and evermore. But we will bear it.

Mar. We will, and for the sake of those who are,

Endeavour—Oh, my husband!

Doge. Give it way : 70
I cannot comfort thee.

Mar. He might have lived,
So formed for gentle privacy of life,
So loving, so beloved; the native of
Another land, and who so blest and blessing
As my poor Foscari? Nothing was wanting
Unto his happiness and mine save not
To be Venetian.

Doge. Or a Prince's son.

Mar. Yes; all things which conduce to
other men's
Imperfect happiness or high ambition, 79
By some strange destiny, to him proved deadly.
The Country and the People whom he loved,
The Prince of whom he was the elder born,
And——

Doge. Soon may be a Prince no longer.

Mar. How?

Doge. They have taken my son from me,
and now aim
At my too long worn diadem and ring.
Let them resume the gewgaws!

Mar. Oh, the tyrants!
In such an hour too!

Doge. 'Tis the fittest time;
An hour ago I should have felt it.

Mar. And
Will you not now resent it? — Oh, for
vengeance!

But he, who, had he been enough protected, 90
Might have repaid protection in this moment,
Cannot assist his father.

Doge. Nor should do so
Against his Country, had he a thousand lives
Instead of that——

Mar. They tortured from him. This
May be pure patriotism. I am a woman:
To me my husband and my children were
Country and home. I loved *him*—how I
loved him!

I have seen him pass through such an ordeal as
The old martyrs would have shrunk from:
he is gone,

And I, who would have given my blood for him,
Have nought to give but tears! But could I
compass 101

The retribution of his wrongs!—Well, well!
I have sons, who shall be men.

Doge. Your grief distracts you.

Mar. I thought I could have borne it, when
I saw him
Bowed down by such oppression; yes, I
thought
That I would rather look upon his corse

Than his prolonged captivity:—I am punished
For that thought now. Would I were in his
grave!

Doge. I must look on him once more.

Mar. Come with me!

Doge. Is he——

Mar. Our bridal bed is now his bier. 110

Doge. And he is in his shroud!

Mar. Come, come, old man!
[*Exeunt the DOGE and MARINA.*]

Enter BARBARIGO and LOREDANO.

Bar. (*to an Attendant*). Where is the Doge?

Att. This instant retired hence,
With the illustrious lady his son's widow.

Lor. Where?

Att. To the chamber where the body lies.

Bar. Let us return, then.

Lor. You forget, you cannot.
We have the implicit order of the Giunta
To await their coming here, and join them in
Their office: they'll be here soon after us.

Bar. And will they press their answer on
the Doge?

Lor. 'Twas his own wish that all should be
done promptly. 120

He answered quickly, and must so be
answered;

His dignity is looked to, his estate
Cared for—what would he more?

Bar. Die in his robes:
He could not have lived long; but I have done
My best to save his honours, and opposed
This proposition to the last, though vainly.
Why would the general vote compel me hither?

Lor. 'Twas fit that some one of such
different thoughts

From ours should be a witness, lest false
tongues

Should whisper that a harsh majority 130
Dreaded to have its acts beheld by others.

Bar. And not less, I must needs think, for
the sake

Of humbling me for my vain opposition.
You are ingenious, Loredano, in

Your modes of vengeance, nay, poetical,
A very Ovid in the art of *hating*;

'Tis thus (although a secondary object,
Yet hate has microscopic eyes), to you

I owe, by way of foil to the more zealous,
This undesired association in 140

Your Giunta's duties.

Lor. How!—*my* Giunta!

Bar. *Yours!*
They speak your language, watch your nod,
approve

Your plans, and do your work. Are they not
yours?

Lor. You talk unwarily. 'Twere best they
hear not

This from you.

Bar. Oh! they'll hear as much one day
From louder tongues than mine; they have
gone beyond

Even their exorbitance of power: and when
This happens in the most contemned and abject
States, stung humanity will rise to check it.

Lor. You talk but idly.

Bar. That remains for proof. 150
Here come our colleagues.

Enter the Deputation as before.

Chief of the Ten. Is the Duke aware
We seek his presence?

Att. He shall be informed.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

Bar. The Duke is with his son.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so,
We will remit him till the rites are over.

Let us return. 'Tis time enough to-morrow.

Lor. (*aside to Bar.*). Now the rich man's
hell-fire upon your tongue,
Unquenched, unquenchable! I'll have it torn
From its vile babbling roots, till you shall utter
Nothing but sobs through blood, for this!
Sage Signors,

I pray ye be not hasty. [*Aloud to the others.*]

Bar. But be human! 160

Lor. See, the Duke comes!

Enter the DOGE.

Doge. I have obeyed your summons.

Chief of the Ten. We come once more to
urge our past request.

Doge. And I to answer.

Chief of the Ten. What?

Doge. My only answer.

You have heard it.

Chief of the Ten. Hear *you* then the last
decree,

Definitive and absolute!

Doge. To the point—
To the point! I know of old the forms of office,
And gentle preludes to strong acts.—Go on!

Chief of the Ten. You are no longer Doge;
you are released

From your imperial oath as Sovereign;
Your ducal robes must be put off; but for 170
Your services, the State allots the appanage
Already mentioned in our former congress.

Three days are left you to remove from hence,
Under the penalty to see confiscated

All your own private fortune.

Doge. That last clause,
I am proud to say, would not enrich the treasury.

Chief of the Ten. Your answer, Duke!

Lor. Your answer, Francis
Foscari!

Doge. If I could have foreseen that my old
age

Was prejudicial to the State, the Chief
Of the Republic never would have shown 180
Himself so far ungrateful, as to place
His own high dignity before his Country;
But this *life* having been so many years
Not useless to that Country, I would fain
Have consecrated my last moments to her.
But the decree being rendered, I obey.

Chief of the Ten. If you would have the
three days named extended,
We willingly will lengthen them to eight,
As sign of our esteem.

Doge. Not eight hours, Signor, 189
Not even eight minutes—there's the ducal
ring, [*Taking off his ring and cap.*]
And there the ducal diadem! And so
The Adriatic's free to wed another.

Chief of the Ten. Yet go not forth so quickly.
Doge. I am old, sir,

And even to move but slowly must begin
To move betimes. Methinks I see amongst
you

A face I know not.—Senator! your name,
You, by your garb, Chief of the Forty!

Mem. Signor,
I am the son of Marco Memmo.

Doge. Ah!
Your father was my friend.—But *sons* and
fathers!—

What, ho! my servants there!

Att. My Prince!

Doge. No Prince— 200
There are the princes of the Prince! [*Point-
ing to the Ten's Deputation.*—Prepare
To part from hence upon the instant.

Chief of the Ten. Why
So rashly? 'twill give scandal.

Doge. Answer that;
[*To the Ten.*]

It is your province.—Sirs, bestir yourselves:
[*To the Servants.*]

There is one burthen which I beg you bear
With care, although 'tis past all farther harm—
But I will look to that myself.

Bar. He means
The body of his son.

Doge. And call Marina,
My daughter!

Enter MARINA.

Doge. Get thee ready, we must mourn
Elsewhere.

Mar. And everywhere.

Doge. True; but in freedom, 210
Without these jealous spies upon the great.
Signors, you may depart: what would you
more?

We are going: do you fear that we shall bear
The palace with us? Its *old* walls, ten times
As *old* as I am, and I'm very old,
Have served you, so have I, and I and they
Could tell a tale; but I invoke them not
To fall upon you! else they would, as erst
The pillars of stone Dagon's temple on
The Israelite and his Philistine foes. 220

Such power I do believe there might exist
In such a curse as mine, provoked by such
As you; but I curse not. Adieu, good Signors!
May the next Duke be better than the present!

Lor. The *present* Duke is Paschal Malipiero.

Doge. Not till I pass the threshold of these
doors.

Lor. Saint Mark's great bell is soon about
to toll

For his inauguration.

Doge. Earth and Heaven!
Ye will reverberate this peal; and I
Live to hear this!—the first Doge who e'er
heard 230

Such sound for his successor: happier he,
My attainted predecessor, stern Faliero—
This insult at the least was spared him.

Lor. What!
Do you regret a traitor?

Doge. No—I merely
Envy the dead.

Chief of the Ten. My Lord, if you indeed
Are bent upon this rash abandonment
Of the State's palace, at the least retire
By the private staircase, which conducts you
towards

The landing-place of the canal.

Doge. No. I 239
Will now descend the stairs by which I mounted
To sovereignty—the Giants' Stairs, on whose
Broad eminence I was invested Duke.
My services have called me up those steps,
The malice of my foes will drive me down them.
There five and thirty years ago was I
Installed, and traversed these same halls, from
which

I never thought to be divorced except
A corse—a corse, it might be, fighting for
them—

But not pushed hence by fellow-citizens.
But come; my son and I will go together— 250
He to his grave, and I to pray for mine.

Chief of the Ten. What! thus in public?

Doge. I was publicly
Elected, and so will I be deposed.
Marina! art thou willing?

Mar. Here 's my arm!

Doge. And here my *staff*: thus propped
will I go forth.

Chief of the Ten. It must not be—the
people will perceive it.

Doge. The people!—There 's no people, you
well know it,

Else you dare not deal thus by them or me.
There is a *populace*, perhaps, whose looks
May shame you; but they dare not groan
nor curse you, 260

Save with their hearts and eyes.

Chief of the Ten. You speak in passion,
Else—

Doge. You have reason. I have spoken
much

More than my wont: it is a foible which
Was not of mine, but more excuses you,
Inasmuch as it shows, that I approach
A dotage which may justify this deed
Of yours, although the law does not, nor will.
Farewell, sirs!

Bar. You shall not depart without
An escort fitting past and present rank.
We will accompany, with due respect, 270
The Doge unto his private palace. Say!
My brethren, will we not?

Different voices. Aye!—Aye!

Doge. You shall not
Stir—in my train, at least. I entered here
As Sovereign—I go out as citizen
By the same portals, but as citizen.
All these vain ceremonies are base insults,
Which only ulcerate the heart the more,
Applying poisons there as antidotes.
Pomp is for Princes—I am none!—That's
false,

I am, but only to these gates.—Ah!

Lor. Hark! 280

[*The great bell of St. Mark's tolls.*]

Bar. The bell!

Chief of the Ten. St. Mark's, which tolls
for the election
Of Malipiero.

Doge. Well I recognise
The sound! I heard it once, but once before,
And that is five and thirty years ago;
Even *then* I was not young.

Bar. Sit down, my Lord!
You tremble.

Doge. 'Tis the knell of my poor boy!
My heart aches bitterly.

Bar. I pray you sit.

Doge. No; my seat here has been a throne
till now.

Marina! let us go.

Mar. Most readily.

Doge (*walks a few steps, then stops*). I feel
athirst—will no one bring me here 290
A cup of water?

Bar. I—

Mar. And I—

Lor. And I—
[*The Doge takes a goblet from the hand of*
LOREDANO.

Doge. I take *yours*, Loredano, from the hand
Most fit for such an hour as this.

Lor. Why so?

Doge. 'Tis said that our Venetian crystal has
Such pure antipathy to poisons as
To burst, if aught of venom touches it.
You bore this goblet, and it is not broken.

Lor. Well, sir!

Doge. Then it is false, or you are true.
For my own part, I credit neither; 'tis
An idle legend.

Mar. You talk wildly, and 300
Had better now be seated, nor as yet
Depart. Ah! now you look as looked my
husband!

Bar. He sinks!—support him!—quick—a
chair—support him!

Doge. The bell tolls on!—let's hence—my
brain's on fire!

Bar. I do beseech you, lean upon us!

Doge. No!
A Sovereign should die standing. My poor
boy!

Off with your arms!—*That bell!*
[*The DOGE drops down and dies.*

Mar. My God! My God!

Bar. (*to Lor.*). Behold! your work's com-
pleted!

Chief of the Ten. Is there then
No aid? Call in assistance!

Att. 'Tis all over.

Chief of the Ten. If it be so, at least his
obsequies 310
Shall be such as befits his name and nation,
His rank and his devotion to the duties
Of the realm, while his age permitted him
To do himself and them full justice. Brethren,
Say, shall it not be so?

Bar. He has not had
The misery to die a subject where
He reigned: then let his funeral rites be
princely.

Chief of the Ten. We are agreed, then?

All, except Lor., answer, Yes.

Chief of the Ten. Heaven's peace be with
him! 319

Mar. Signors, your pardon: this is mockery.
Juggle no more with that poor remnant, which,
A moment since, while yet it had a soul,
(A soul by whom you have increased your
Empire,
And made your power as proud as was his
glory),
You banished from his palace and tore down
From his high place, with such relentless
coldness;
And now, when he can neither know these
honours,
Nor would accept them if he could, you, Signors,
Purpose, with idle and superfluous pomp,
To make a pageant over what you trampled. 330
A princely funeral will be your reproach,
And not his honour.

Chief of the Ten. Lady, we revoke not
Our purposes so readily.

Mar. I know it,
As far as touches torturing the living.
I thought the dead had been beyond even *you*,
Though (some, no doubt) consigned to powers
which may
Resemble that you exercise on earth.
Leave him to me; you would have done so for
His dregs of life, which you have kindly
shortened:
It is my last of duties, and may prove 340
A dreary comfort in my desolation.
Grief is fantastical, and loves the dead,
And the apparel of the grave.

Chief of the Ten. Do you
Pretend still to this office?

Mar. I do, Signor.
Though his possessions have been all con-
sumed
In the State's service, I have still my dowry,
Which shall be consecrated to his rites,
And those of— [She stops with agitation.

Chief of the Ten. Best retain it for your
children.

Mar. Aye, they are fatherless, I thank you.

Chief of the Ten. We
Cannot comply with your request. His relics
Shall be exposed with wonted pomp, and
followed 351

Unto their home by the new Doge, not clad
As *Doge*, but simply as a senator?

Mar. I have heard of murderers, who
have interred
Their victims; but ne'er heard, until this hour,
Of so much splendour in hypocrisy
O'er those they slew.¹ I've heard of widows'
tears—

Alas! I have shed some — always thanks
to you!

I've heard of *heirs* in sables—you have left
none

To the deceased, so you would act the
part

Of such. Well, sirs, your will be done!
as one day,

I trust, Heaven's will be done too!

Chief of the Ten. Know you, Lady,
To whom ye speak, and perils of such speech,

Mar. I know the former better than your-
selves;

The latter—like yourselves; and can face both.
Wish you more funerals?

Bar. Heed not her rash words:
Her circumstances must excuse her bearing.

Chief of the Ten. We will not note them
down.

Bar. (*turning to Lor., who is writing upon
his tablets*).

What art thou writing,
With such an earnest brow, upon thy tablets?

Lor. (*pointing to the Doge's body*). That
he has paid me!²

¹ The Venetians appear to have had a particular turn for breaking the hearts of their Doges. The following is another instance of the kind in the Doge Marco Barbarigo: he was succeeded by his brother Agostino Barbarigo, whose chief merit is here mentioned.—“Le doge, blessé de trouver constamment un contradicteur et un censeur si amer dans son frère, lui dit un jour en plein conseil: ‘Messire Augustin, vous faites tout votre possible pour hâter ma mort: vous vous flattez de me succéder; mais, si les autres vous connaissent aussi bien que je vous connais, ils n’auront garde de vous élire.’ Là-dessus il se leva, ému de colère, rentra dans son appartement, et mourut quelques jours après. Ce frère, contre lequel il s’était emporté, fut précisément le successeur qu’on lui donna. C’était un mérite dont on aimait à tenir compte; surtout à un parent, de s’être mis en opposition avec le chef de la république.”—DARU, *Hist. de Venise*, 1821, iii. 29.

² *L’ha pagata.* An historical fact. See *Hist. de Venise*, par P. DARU, 1821, ii. 528, 529.

[Daru quotes Palazzi’s *Fasti Ducales* as his authority for this story. According to Pietro

Chief of the Ten. What debt did he owe
you?

Lor. A long and just one; Nature’s debt
and mine.¹

[*Curtain falls.*²

CAIN :³

A MYSTERY.

“Now the Serpent was more subtil than any
beast of the field which the Lord God had made.”

Genesis,
Chapter 3rd, verse 1.

TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.,

THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.⁴

Giustiniani (*Storia*, lib. viii.), Jacopo Loredano was at pains to announce the decree of the Ten to the Doge in courteous and considerate terms, and begged him to pardon him for what it was his duty to do. Romanin points out that this version of the interview is inconsistent with the famous “*L’ha pagata.*”—*Storia, etc.*, iv. 290, note 1.]

¹ [Here the original MS. ends. The two lines which follow were added by Gifford.]

² [The *Appendix* to the First Edition of *The Two Foscari* consisted of (i.) an extract from P. Daru’s *Histoire de la République Française*, 1821, ii. 520-537; (ii.) an extract from J. C. L. Simonde de Sismondi’s *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes du Moyen Age*, 1815, x. 36-46; and (iii.) a note in response to certain charges of plagiarism brought against the author in the *Literary Gazette* and elsewhere; and to Southey’s indictment of the “Satanic School,” which had recently appeared in the Preface to the Laureate’s *Vision of Judgement* (*Poetical Works of Robert Southey*, 1838, x. 202-207). See too, the “Introduction to *The Vision of Judgement, Poetical Works*,” 1891, iv. pp. 475-480.]

³ [Cain was begun, at Ravenna, July 16, finished September 9, 1821, and published, with *Sardana-palus* and *The Two Foscari*, December 19, 1821.]

⁴ [“On the 13th December [1821] Sir Walter received a copy of *Cain*, as yet unpublished, from Murray, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the “Mystery” dedicated to him. He replied in these words—

PREFACE.

THE following scenes are entitled "A Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries, or Moralities." The author has by no means taken the

"Edinburgh, 4th December, 1821.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I accept, with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of 'Cain.' I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose line will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the 'Paradise Lost,' if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected,—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The Devil talks the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.

"To drop these speculations, you have much occasion for some mighty spirit, like Lord Byron, to come down and trouble the waters; for, excepting 'The John Bull,'* you seem stagnating strangely in London.

"Yours, my dear Sir,

"Very truly,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"To John Murray, Esq."

* [The first number of *John Bull*, "For God, the King, and the People," was published Sunday December 17, 1820. Theodore Hook was the editor, and it is supposed that he owed his appointment to the intervention of Sir Walter Scott. The *raison d'être* of *John Bull* was to write up George IV., and to write down Queen Caroline.]

same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;"¹ and that only because he was "the most subtil of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson² upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!"—holding up the Scripture. It is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza; in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis. They were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same

¹ [For the contention that "the snake was the snake," see *La Bible enfin Expliquée*, etc.; *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, Paris, 1837 vi. 338, note.]

² [Richard Watson (1737-1816), Bishop of Llandaff, 1782, was appointed Moderator of the Schools in 1762, and Regius Professor of Divinity, October 31, 1771.]

in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament. For a reason for this extraordinary omission he may consult Warburton's "Divine Legation;" whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to anything of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note.—The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, etc. etc., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a "tramelogedia" of Alfieri, called "Abele."¹ I have

¹ ["In a long Preface to the *Abele* Alfieri says that it "is neither a tragedy, a comedy, a drama, a tragi-comedy, nor a Greek tragedy, which last would, he thinks, be correctly described as melo-tragedy. Opera-tragedy would, in his opinion, be a fitting name for it; but he prefers interpolating the word 'melo' into the middle of the word 'tragedy,' so as not to spoil the ending, although

never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his *Life*.

RAVENNA, *Sept.* 20, 1821.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

ADAM.

CAIN.

ABEL.

SPIRITS.

ANGEL OF THE LORD.

LUCIFER.

WOMEN.

EVE.

ADAH.

ZILLAH.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Land without Paradise.*—
Time, Sunrise.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH,
offering a Sacrifice.

Adam. GOD, the Eternal! Infinite! All-wise!—

Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word—All Hail!
Jehovah! with returning light—All Hail!

Eve. God! who didst name the day, and
separate

Morning from night, till then divided never—
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament—All Hail!

Abel. God! who didst call the elements into
Earth, ocean, air and fire—and with the day to
And night, and worlds which these illuminate,
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love them both and thee—All Hail! All
Hail!

Adah. God, the Eternal! Parent of all
things!

Who didst create these best and beautiful
beings,

To be beloved, more than all—save thee—
Let me love thee and them:—All Hail! All
Hail!

by so doing he has cut in two . . . the root of the
word — *τραγος*."—*The Tragedies of Vittorio
Alfieri*, edited by E. A. Bowring, C.B., 1876,
ii. 472.

There is no resemblance whatever between
Byron's *Cain* and Alfieri's *Abele*.]

Zillah. Oh, God! who loving, making,
blessing all,
Yet didst permit the Serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise, 20
Keep us from further evil:—Hail! All Hail!
Adam. Son Cain! my first-born—where-
fore art thou silent?
Cain. Why should I speak?
Adam. To pray.
Cain. Have ye not prayed?
Adam. We have, most fervently.
Cain. And loudly: I
Have heard you.
Adam. So will God, I trust.
Abel. Amen!
Adam. But thou my eldest born! art silent
still?
Cain. 'Tis better I should be so.
Adam. Wherefore so?
Cain. I have nought to ask.
Adam. Nor aught to thank for?
Cain. No.
Adam. Dost thou not *live*?
Cain. Must I not die?
Eve. Alas!
The fruit of our forbidden tree begins 30
To fall.
Adam. And we must gather it again.
Oh God! why didst thou plant the tree of
knowledge?
Cain. And wherefore plucked ye not the
tree of life?
Ye might have then defied him.
Adam. Oh! my son,
Blaspheme not: these are Serpent's words.
Cain. Why not?
The snake spoke *truth*; it *was* the Tree of
Knowledge;
It *was* the Tree of Life: knowledge is good,
And Life is good; and how can both be evil?
Eve. My boy! thou speakest as I spoke in
sin,
Before thy birth: let me not see renewed 40
My misery in thine. I have repented.
Let me not see my offspring fall into
The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,
Which even in Paradise destroyed his parents.
Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,
Thou now hadst been contented.—Oh, my son!
Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,
Each to his task of toil—not heavy, though
Needful: the earth is young, and yields us
kindly
Her fruits with little labour.
Eve. Cain—my son— 50

Behold thy father cheerful and resigned—
And do as he doth.

[*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*

Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon
thy brow,

Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
The Eternal anger?

Adah. My beloved Cain
Wilt thou frown even on me?

Cain. No, Adah! no;
I fain would be alone a little while.

Abel, I'm sick at heart; but it will pass;
Precede me, brother—I will follow shortly.

And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind; 60
Your gentleness must not be harshly met:
I'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
Be on your spirit, brother!

[*Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAH.*

Cain (solus). And this is
Life?—Toil! and wherefore should I toil?—
because

My father could not keep his place in Eden?
What had *I* done in this?—I was unborn:
I sought not to be born; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why
did he

Yield to the Serpent and the woman? or 70
Yielding—why suffer? What was there in
this?

The tree was planted, and why not for him?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew
The fairest in the centre? They have but
One answer to all questions, "'Twas *his* will,
And *he* is good." How know I that? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow?
I judge but by the fruits—and they are bitter—
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here?—A shape like to the
angels

Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect 81
Of spiritual essence: why do I quake?

Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In Twilight's hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o'er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The Cherubim-defended battlements? 90

If I shrink not from these, the fire-armed
angels,

Why should I quail from him who now approaches?
 Yet—he seems mightier far than them, nor less
 Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
 As he hath been, and might be: sorrow seems
 Half of his immortality. And is it
 So? and can aught grieve save Humanity?
 He cometh.

Enter LUCIFER.

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain. Spirit, who art thou?

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou
 Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts 100
 Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!
 You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
 Worthy of thought;—'tis your immortal part¹
 Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?
 This has not been revealed: the Tree of Life
 Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
 While that of Knowledge, by my mother's
 haste,
 Was plucked too soon; and all the fruit is
 Death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou
 shalt live.

Cain. I live,
 But live to die; and, living, see no thing 110
 To make death hateful, save an innate cling-
 ing,

A loathsome, and yet all invincible
 Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
 Despise myself, yet cannot overcome—
 And so I live. Would I had never lived!

Lucifer. Thou livest—and must live for
 ever. Think not
 The Earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
 Existence—it will cease—and thou wilt be—
 No less than thou art now.

Cain. No less! and why
 No more?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we?

Cain. And ye? 121

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. We are mighty.

¹ [According to the Manichæans, the divinely created and immortal soul is imprisoned in an alien and evil body. There can be no harmony between soul and body.]

Cain. Are ye happy?

Lucifer. No: art thou?

Cain. How should I be so? Look on me!

Lucifer. Poor clay!

And thou pretendest to be wretched! Thou!

Cain. I am:—and thou, with all thy
 might, what art thou?

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made
 thee, and

Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain. Ah!

Thou look'st almost a god; and—

Lucifer. I am none:

And having failed to be one, would be nought
 Save what I am. He conquered; let him
 reign! 130

Cain. Who?

Lucifer. Thy Sire's maker—and the
 Earth's.

Cain. And Heaven's,
 And all that in them is. So I have heard
 His Seraphs sing; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say—what they must sing
 and say, on pain
 Of being that which I am,—and thou art—
 Of spirits and of men.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their im-
 mortality—

Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
 His everlasting face, and tell him that
 His evil is not good! If he has made, 140
 As he saith—which I know not, nor believe—
 But, if he made us, he cannot unmake:
 We are immortal!—nay, he'd *have* us so,
 That he may torture:—let him! He is great—
 But, in his greatness, is no happier than
 We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
 Evil; and what else hath he made? But let
 him

Sit on his vast and solitary throne—
 Creating worlds, to make eternity
 Less burthensome to his immense existence—
 And unparticipated solitude;¹ 151
 Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
 Indefinite, Indissoluble Tyrant;

¹ [Compare—

“Let him unite above
 Star upon star, moon, Sun;
 And let his God-head toil
 To re-adorn and re-illumine his Heaven,
 Since in the end derision
 Shall prove his works and all his efforts vain.”
Adam, a Sacred Drama, by Giovanni Battista
 Andreini; Cowper's *Milton*, 1810, iii. 24, *sqq.*]

Could he but crush himself, 'twere the best
boon

He ever granted: but let him reign on!
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and Men, at least we sympathize—
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable, more endurable,
By the unbounded sympathy of all 160
With all! But *He!* so wretched in his height,
So restless in his wretchedness, must still
Create, and re-create—perhaps he'll make¹
One day a Son unto himself—as he
Gave you a father—and if he so doth,
Mark me! that Son will be a sacrifice!

Cain. Thou speak'st to me of things which
long have swum

In visions through my thought: I never could
Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.

My father and my mother talk to me 170
Of serpents, and of fruits and trees: I see
The gates of what they call their Paradise
Guarded by fiery-sworded Cherubim,
Which shut them out—and me: I feel the
weight

Of daily toil, and constant thought: I look
Around a world where I seem nothing, with
Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
Could master all things—but I thought alone
This misery was *mine*. My father is
Tamed down; my mother has forgot the
mind 180

Which made her thirst for knowledge at the
risk

Of an eternal curse; my brother is
A watching shepherd boy,² who offers up
The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
The earth yield nothing to us without sweat;
My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
Than the birds' matins; and my Adah—my
Own and beloved—she, too understands not
The mind which overwhelms me; never till
Now met I aught to sympathize with me. 190
'Tis well—I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by
thine own soul

¹ [Lines 163-166 ("perhaps" . . . "sacrifice") which appear in the MS., were omitted from the text in the first and all subsequent editions. In the edition of 1832, etc. (xiv. 27), they are printed as a variant in a footnote. The present text follows the MS.]

² [According to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the word "Abel" signifies "shepherd" or "herdman." The Massorites give "breath" or "vanity," as an equivalent.]

For such companionship, I would not now
Have stood before thee as I am: a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before.

Cain. Ah! didst *thou* tempt my mother?

Lucifer. I tempt none,
Save with the truth: was not the Tree, the Tree
Of Knowledge? and was not the Tree of Life
Still fruitful? Did *I* bid her pluck them not?
Did I plant things prohibited within 200
The reach of beings innocent, and curious
By their own innocence? I would have
made ye

Gods; and even He who thrust ye forth, so
thrust ye

Because "ye should not eat the fruits of life,
"And become gods as we." Were those his
words?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from
those who heard them,

In thunder.

Lucifer. Then who was the Demon? He
Who would not let ye live, or he who would
Have made ye live for ever, in the joy
And power of Knowledge?

Cain. Would they had snatched both
The fruits, or neither! 211

Lucifer. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

Cain. How so?

Lucifer. By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things—'tis made
To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer. I?
Poor clay—what should I tempt them for, or
how?

Cain. They say the Serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer. Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high:
The proud One will not so far falsify, 220
Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the
snake—

No more;¹ and yet not less than those he
tempted,

In nature being earth also—*more* in *wisdom*,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys,
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things
that die?

¹ [*Vide ante*, "Preface," p. 625.]

Cain. But the thing had a demon?
Lucifer. He but woke one
 In those he spake to with his forky tongue. 230
 I tell thee that the Serpent was no more
 Than a mere serpent: ask the Cherubim
 Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand
 ages
 Have rolled o'er your dead ashes, and your
 seed's,
 The seed of the then world may thus array
 Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute
 To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
 That bows to him, who made things but to
 bend
 Before his sullen, sole eternity;
 But we, who see the truth, must speak it.
 Thy 240
 Fond parents listened to a creeping thing,
 And fell. For what should spirits tempt
 them? What
 Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
 Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
 Space—but I speak to thee of what thou
 know'st not,
 With all thy Tree of Knowledge.
Cain. But thou canst not
 Speak aught of Knowledge which I would
 not know,
 And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
 To know.
Lucifer. And heart to look on?
Cain. Be it proved.
Lucifer. Darest thou look on Death?
Cain. He has not yet 250
 Been seen.
Lucifer. But must be undergone.
Cain. My father
 Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
 Weeps when he's named; and Abel lifts his
 eyes
 To Heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
 And sighs a prayer; and Adah looks on me,
 And speaks not.
Lucifer. And thou?
Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
 Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
 Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
 Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him?
 I wrestled with the lion, when a boy, 260
 In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.
Lucifer. It has no shape; but will absorb
 all things
 That bear the form of earth-born being.
Cain. Ah!
 I thought it was a being: who could do
 Such evil things to beings save a being?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.
Cain. Who?
Lucifer. The Maker—Call him
 Which name thou wilt: he makes but to
 destroy.
Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it,
 since I heard
 Of Death: although I know not what it is—
 Yet it seems horrible. I have looked out 270
 In the vast desolate night in search of him;
 And when I saw gigantic shadows in
 The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequered
 By the far-flashing or the Cherubs' swords,
 I watched for what I thought his coming; for
 With fear rose longing in my heart to know
 What 'twas which shook us all—but nothing
 came.
 And then I turned my weary eyes from off
 Our native and forbidden Paradise,
 Up to the lights above us, in the azure, 280
 Which are so beautiful: shall they, too, die?
Lucifer. Perhaps—but long outlive both
 thine and thee.
Cain. I'm glad of that: I would not have
 them die—
 They are so lovely. What is Death? I fear,
 I feel, it is a dreadful thing; but what,
 I cannot compass: 'tis denounced against us,
 Both them who sinned and sinned not, as an
 ill—
 What ill?
Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.
Cain. But shall I know it?
Lucifer. As I know not death,
 I cannot answer.
Cain. Were I quiet earth, 290
 That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
 Aught else but dust!
Lucifer. That is a *grovelling* wish,
 Less than thy father's—for he wished to know!
Cain. But not to live—or wherefore plucked
 he not
 The Life-tree?
Lucifer. He was hindered.
Cain. Deadly error!
 Not to snatch first that fruit:—but ere he
 plucked
 The knowledge, he was ignorant of Death.
 Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
 And yet I fear it—fear I know not what!
Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear
 nothing; see 300
 What is true knowledge.
Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?
Lucifer. Aye, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.
Lucifer. That
 Thou dost fall down and worship me—thy
 Lord.
Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father
 worships.
Lucifer. No.
Cain. His equal?
Lucifer. No;—I have nought in common
 with him!
 Nor would: I would be aught above—
 beneath—
 Aught save a sharer or a servant of
 His power. I dwell apart; but I am great:—
 Many there are who worship me, and more
 Who shall—be thou amongst the first.
Cain. I never 310
 As yet have bowed unto my father's God.
 Although my brother Abel oft implores
 That I would join with him in sacrifice:—
 Why should I bow to thee?
Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bowed
 To him?
Cain. Have I not said it?—need I say it?
 Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee
 that?
Lucifer. He who bows not to him has
 bowed to me.
Cain. But I will bend to neither.
Lucifer. Ne'er the less,
 Thou art my worshipper; not worshipping
 Him makes thee mine the same.
Cain. And what is that? 320
Lucifer. Thou'lt know here—and hereafter.
Cain. Let me but
 Be taught the mystery of my being.
Lucifer. Follow
 Where I will lead thee.
Cain. But I must retire
 To till the earth—for I had promised—
Lucifer. What?
Cain. To cull some first-fruits.
Lucifer. Why?
Cain. To offer up
 With Abel on an altar.
Lucifer. Said'st thou not
 Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?
Cain. Yes—
 But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon
 me;
 The offering is more his than mine—and
 Adah—
Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate?
Cain. She is my sister, 330
 Born on the same day, of the same womb; and

She wrung from me, with tears, this promise;
 and
 Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
 Bear all—and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me

Cain. I will.

Enter ADAH.

Adah. My brother, I have come for thee;
 It is our hour of rest and joy—and we
 Have less without thee. Thou hast laboured
 not

This morn; but I have done thy task: the fruits
 Are ripe, and glowing as the light which
 ripens:

Come away.

Cain. Seest thou not?

Adah. I see an angel; 340

We have seen many: will he share our hour
 Of rest?—he is welcome.

Cain. But he is not like
 The angels we have seen.

Adah. Are there, then, others?
 But he is welcome, as they were: they deigned
 To be our guests—will he?

Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou?

Lucifer. I ask

Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him.

Adah. And leave us?

Cain. Aye.

Adah. And me?

Cain. Belovéd Adah!

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer. No, she must not.

Adah. Who

Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain. He is a God.

Adah. How know'st thou?

Cain. He speaks like
 A God.

Adah. So did the Serpent, and it lied. 351

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah!—was not the
 Tree that
 Of Knowledge?

Adah. Aye—to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge—
 so he lied not:

And if he did betray you, 'twas with Truth;
 And Truth in its own essence cannot be
 But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gathered
 Evil on ill; expulsion from our home,
 And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness
 Remorse of that which was—and hope of that

Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this
Spirit. 361

Bear with what we have borne, and love me
—I

Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy
sire?

Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer. No, not yet;
It one day will be in your children.

Adah. What!

Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God!

Shall they not love and bring forth things that
love

Out of their love? have they not drawn their
milk

Out of this bosom? was not he their father, 370
Born of the same sole womb,¹ in the same hour

With me? did we not love each other? and

In multiplying our being multiply

Things which will love each other as we love

Them?—And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my
making,

And cannot be a sin in you—whate'er

It seem in those who will replace ye in

Mortality.

Adah. What is the sin which is not 380

Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin

Or virtue?—if it doth, we are the slaves

Of—

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves:
and higher

Than them or ye would be so, did they not

Prefer an independency of torture

To the smooth agonies of adulation,

In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking
prayers,

To that which is omnipotent, because

It is omnipotent, and not from love,

But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence 390

Must be all goodness.

Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?

Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty;
thou art fairer

Than was the Serpent, and as false.

Lucifer. As true.

Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the
knowledge

Of good and evil?

Adah. Oh, my mother! thou

Hast plucked a fruit more fatal to thine off-
spring

Than to thyself; thou at the least hast passed
Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent

And happy intercourse with happy spirits:

But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden, 400

Are girt about by demons, who assume

The words of God, and tempt us with our own

Dissatisfied and curious thoughts—as thou

Wert worked on by the snake, in thy most
flushed

And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.

I cannot answer this immortal thing

Which stands before me; I cannot abhor him;

I look upon him with a pleasing fear,

And yet I fly not from him: in his eye

There is a fastening attraction which 410

Fixes my fluttering eyes on his; my heart

Beats quick; he awes me, and yet draws me
near,

Nearer and nearer:—Cain—Cain—save me
from him!

Cain. What dreads my Adah? This is no
ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God—nor God's: I have
beheld

The Cherubs and the Seraphs; he looks not
Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still—
The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah. Aye—but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
Consists in slavery—no.

Adah. I have heard it said, 420
The Seraphs love most—Cherubim know

most—¹

And this should be a Cherub—since he loves
not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge
quenches love,

What must *he be* you cannot love when known?

¹ [“The most common opinion is that a son and daughter were born together; and they go so far as to tell us the very name of the daughters. Cain's twin sister was called Calmana, or Cainiana, or Debora, or Azzrum; that of Abel was named Delbora or Awina.”—Bayle's *Dictionary*, 1735, ii. 854, art “Eve,” D.]

¹ [See Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, i. 28: “The first place is given to the Angels of loue, which are tearmed Seraphim, the second to the Angels of light, which are tearmed Cherubim.”]

Since the all-knowing Cherubim love least,
 The Seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
 That they are not compatible, the doom
 Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
 Choose betwixt Love and Knowledge—since
 there is
 No other choice: your sire hath chosen
 already: 430
 His worship is but fear.
Adah. Oh, Cain! choose Love.
Cain. For thee, my Adah, I choose not—It
 was
 Born with me—but I love nought else.
Adah. Our parents?
Cain. Did they love us when they snatched
 from the Tree
 That which hath driven us all from Paradise?
Adah. We were not born then—and if we
 had been,
 Should we not love them—and our children,
 Cain?
Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping
 sister!
 Could I but deem them happy, I would half
 Forget—but it can never be forgotten 440
 Through thrice a thousand generations! never
 Shall men love the remembrance of the man
 Who sowed the seed of evil and mankind
 In the same hour! They plucked the tree of
 science
 And sin—and, not content with their own
 sorrow,
 Begot *me—thee*—and all the few that are,
 And all the unnumbered and innumerable
 Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
 To inherit agonies accumulated 449
 By ages!—and *I* must be sire of such things!
 Thy beauty and thy love—my love and joy,
 The rapturous moment and the placid hour,
 All we love in our children and each other,
 But lead them and ourselves through many
 years
 Of sin and pain—or few, but still of sorrow,
 Interchecked with an instant of brief pleasure,
 To Death—the unknown! Methinks the
 Tree of Knowledge
 Hath not fulfilled its promise:—if they sinned,
 At least they ought to have known all things
 that are
 Of knowledge—and the mystery of Death. 460
 What do they know?—that they are miserable.
 What need of snakes and fruits to teach us that?
Adah. I am not wretched, Cain, and if thou
 Wert happy—
Cain. Be thou happy, then, alone—

I will have nought to do with happiness,
 Which humbles me and mine.
Adah. Alone I could not,
 Nor *would* be happy; but with those around us
 I think I could be so, despite of Death,
 Which, as I know it not, I dread not, though
 It seems an awful shadow—if I may 470
 Judge from what I have heard.
Lucifer. And thou couldst not
 Alone, thou say'st, be happy?
Adah. Alone! Oh, my God!
 Who could be happy and alone, or good?
 To me my solitude seems sin; unless
 When I think how soon I shall see my brother,
 His brother, and our children, and our parents.
Lucifer. Yet thy God is alone; and is he
 happy?
 Lonely, and good?
Adah. He is not so; he hath
 The angels and the mortals to make happy,
 And thus becomes so in diffusing joy. 480
 What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?
Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh
 from Eden;
 Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
 It is not tranquil.
Adah. Alas! no! and you—
 Are you of Heaven?
Lucifer. If I am not, enquire
 The cause of this all-spreading happiness
 (Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
 Maker of life and living things; it is
 His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
 And some of us resist—and both in vain, 490
 His Seraphs say: but it is worth the trial,
 Since better may not be without: there is
 A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
 To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
 Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
 The star which watches, welcoming the morn.
Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for
 Its beauty.
Lucifer. And why not adore?
Adah. Our father
 Adores the Invisible only.
Lucifer. But the symbols
 Of the Invisible are the loveliest 500
 Of what is visible; and yon bright star
 Is leader of the host of Heaven.
Adah. Our father
 Saith that he has beheld the God himself
 Who made him and our mother.
Lucifer. Hast thou seen him?
Adah. Yes—in his works.
Lucifer. But in his being?

In their abasement. I will have none such:
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
An hour, when, tossed upon some water-drops,
A man shall say to a man, "Believe in me,
And walk the waters;" and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe. I will not say, 20
Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
To save thee; but fly with me o'er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar'st not deny,—the history
Of past—and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh God! or Demon! or whate'er
thou art,
Is yon our earth?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise
The dust which formed your father?

Cain. Can it be?
Yon small blue circle, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet purpler still, 30
Which looks like that which lit our earthly
night?

Is this our Paradise? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them?

Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and
smaller,

And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise:
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars 41
Which are around us; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own—inhabited
By greater things—and they themselves far
more

In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living—and all doomed to death—and
wretched,

What wouldst thou think?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were
Linked to a servile mass of matter—and 51
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chained
down

To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome—and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoomed to be
As frail, and few so happy——

Cain. Spirit! I 60
Know nought of Death, save as a dreadful
thing

Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life—a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, Spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die—
Methinks is merely propagating Death, 70
And multiplying murder.

Lucifer. Thou canst not
All die—there is what must survive.

Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic: wouldst thou be as
I am?

Cain. I know not what thou art: I see thy
power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond *my*
power, 80
Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.

Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay?

Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality—and yet
Seem'st sorrowful?

Lucifer. I seem that which I am;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou 89
Wouldst be immortal?

Cain. Thou hast said, I must be
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately—but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

Cain. How?

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal?
Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But
 now, behold!
 Is it not glorious?

Cain. Oh thou beautiful
 And unimaginable ether! and
 Ye multiplying masses of increased 100
 And still-increasing lights! what are ye? what
 Is this blue wilderness of interminable
 Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
 The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
 Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
 Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
 Through an aërial universe of endless
 Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—
 Intoxicated with eternity?
 Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatso'er ye are!
 How beautiful ye are! how beautiful 111
 Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
 They may be! Let me die, as atoms die,
 (If that they die), or know ye in your might
 And knowledge! My thoughts are not in
 this hour
 Unworthy what I see, though my dust is;
 Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to
 thine earth!

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a
 mass
 Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there! 120

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. That!—yonder!

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?
 Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
 Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
 In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
 Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms
 and worlds,
 Each bright and sparkling—what dost think
 of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their own
 sphere,
 And that the night, which makes both beautiful,
 The little shining fire-fly in its flight, 130
 And the immortal star in its great course,
 Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold?

Cain. How know I what
 I dare behold? As yet, thou hast shown nought
 I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me.
 Wouldst thou behold things mortal or im-
 mortal?

Cain. Why, what are things?

Lucifer. Both partly: but what doth
 Sit next thy heart?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
 Sate nearest it?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
 Nor ever shall—the mysteries of Death. 140

Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things
 which have died,
 As I have shown thee much which cannot die?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then! on our mighty
 wings!

Cain. Oh! how we cleave the blue! The
 stars fade from us!
 The earth! where is my earth? Let me look
 on it,
 For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'Tis now beyond thee,
 Less, in the universe, than thou in it;
 Yet deem not that thou canst escape it; thou
 Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust:
 'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine. 150

Cain. Where dost thou lead me?

Lucifer. To what was before thee!
 The phantasm of the world; of which thy world
 Is but the wreck.

Cain. What! is it not then new?

Lucifer. No more than life is; and that
 was ere thou

Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us
 Greater than either: many things will have
 No end; and some, which would pretend to
 have

Had no beginning, have had one as mean
 As thou; and mightier things have been
 extinct

To make way for much meaner than we can
 Surmise; for *moments* only and the *space* 161
 Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.

But changes make not death, except to clay;
 But thou art clay—and canst but comprehend
 That which was clay, and such thou shalt
 behold.

Cain. Clay—Spirit—what thou wilt—I can
 survey.

Lucifer. Away, then!

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
 And some till now grew larger as we ap-
 proached,
 And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.
Cain. And Edens in them?
Lucifer. It may be.
Cain. And men?
Lucifer. Yea, or things higher. 171
Cain. Aye! and serpents too?
Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without
 them? must no reptiles
 Breathe, save the erect ones?
Cain. How the lights recede!
 Where fly we?
Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
 Are beings past, and shadows still to come.
Cain. But it grows dark, and dark—the
 stars are gone!
Lucifer. And yet thou seest.
Cain. 'Tis a fearful light!
 No sun—no moon—no lights innumerable—
 The very blue of the empurpled night
 Fades to a dreary twilight—yet I see 180
 Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds
 Wewereapproaching, which, 'begirt with light,
 Seemed full of life even when their atmosphere
 Of light gave way, and showed them taking
 shapes
 Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
 And some emitting sparks, and some display-
 ing
 Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
 With luminous belts, and floating moons,
 which took,
 Like them, the features of fair earth: instead,
 All here seems dark and dreadful.
Lucifer. But distinct.
 Thou seekest to behold Death, and dead
 things? 191
Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
 Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
 And all that we inherit, liable
 To such, I would behold, at once, what I
 Must one day see perforce.
Lucifer. Behold!
Cain. 'Tis darkness!
Lucifer. And so it shall be ever—but we will
 Unfold its gates!
Cain. Enormous vapours roll
 Apart—what's this?
Lucifer. Enter!
Cain. Can I return?
Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should
 Death be peopled? 200
 Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
 Through thee and thine.
Cain. The clouds still open wide
 And wider, and make widening circles round us!

Lucifer. Advance!
Cain. And thou!
Lucifer. Fear not—without me thou
 Couldst not have gone beyond thy world.
 On! on!
 [*They disappear through the clouds.*]

SCENE II.—Hades.

Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.

Cain. How silent and how vast are these
 dim worlds!
 For they seem more than one, and yet more
 peopled
 Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which
 swung
 So thickly in the upper air, that I
 Had deemed them rather the bright populace
 Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
 Than things to be inhabited themselves,
 But that on drawing near them I beheld
 Their swelling into palpable immensity
 Of matter, which seemed made for life to
 dwell on, 10
 Rather than life itself. But here, all is
 So shadowy, and so full of twilight, that
 It speaks of a day past.
Lucifer. It is the realm
 Of Death.—Wouldst have it present?
Cain. Till I know
 That which it really is, I cannot answer.
 But if it be as I have heard my father
 Deal out in his long homilies, 'tis a thing—
 Oh God! I dare not think on't! Curséd be
 He who invented Life that leads to Death!
 Or the dull mass of life, that, being life, 20
 Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it—
 Even for the innocent!
Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?
Cain. Curséd he not me in giving me my
 birth?
 Curséd he not me before my birth, in daring
 To pluck the fruit forbidden?
Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
 The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee—
 But for thy sons and brother?
Cain. Let them share it
 With me, their sire and brother! What else is
 Bequeathed to me? I leave them my inherit-
 ance!
 Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms 30
 Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
 Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
 Mighty and melancholy—what are ye?
 Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.
Cain. Then what is Death?
Lucifer. What? Hath not he who made ye
 Said 'tis another life?
Cain. Till now he hath
 Said nothing, save that all shall die.
Lucifer. Perhaps
 He one day will unfold that further secret.
Cain. Happy the day!
Lucifer. Yes; happy! when unfolded,
 Through agonies unspeakable, and clogged
 With agonies eternal, to innumerable 41
 Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
 All to be animated for this only!
Cain. What are these mighty phantoms
 which I see
 Floating around me?—They wear not the form
 Of the Intelligences I have seen
 Round our regretted and unentered Eden;
 Nor wear the form of man as I have viewed it
 In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine, 49
 Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's:
 And yet they have an aspect, which, though
 not
 Of men nor angels, looks like something,
 which,
 If not the last, rose higher than the first,
 Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
 Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
 Shape; for I never saw such. They bear not
 The wing of Seraph, nor the face of man,
 Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
 Now breathing; mighty yet and beautiful
 As the most beautiful and mighty which 60
 Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
 Can call them living.
Lucifer. Yet they lived.
Cain. Where?
Lucifer. Where
 Thou livest.
Cain. When?
Lucifer. On what thou callest earth
 They did inhabit.
Cain. Adam is the first.
Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee—but too
 mean to be
 The last of these.
Cain. And what are they?
Lucifer. That which
 Thou shalt be.
Cain. But what *were* they?
Lucifer. Living, high,
 Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
 As much superior unto all thy sire
 Adam could e'er have been in Eden, as 70

The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
 In its dull damp degeneracy, to
 Thee and thy son;—and how weak they are,
 judge
 By thy own flesh.
Cain. Ah me! and did *they* perish?
Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt
 fade from thine.
Cain. But was *mine* theirs?
Lucifer. It was.
Cain. But not as now.
 It is too little and too lowly to
 Sustain such creatures.
Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.
Cain. And wherefore did it fall?
Lucifer. Ask him who fells.
Cain. But how?
Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable
 Destruction and disorder of the elements, 81
 Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
 Subsiding has struck out a world; such things,
 Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity.—
 Pass on, and gaze upon the past.
Cain. 'Tis awful!
Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms!
 they were once
 Material as thou art.
Cain. And must I be
 Like them?
Lucifer. Let him who made thee answer that.
 I show thee what thy predecessors are,
 And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
 Inferior as thy petty feelings and 91
 Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
 Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
 What ye in common have with what they had
 Is Life, and what ye *shall* have—Death: the
 rest
 Of your poor attributes is such as suits
 Reptiles engendered out of the subsiding
 Slime of a mighty universe, crushed into
 A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
 Things whose enjoyment was to be in blind-
 ness— 100
 A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
 Knowledge was barred as poison. But behold
 What these superior beings are or were;
 Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
 The earth, thy task—I'll waft thee there in
 safety.
Cain. No: I'll stay here.
Lucifer. How long?
Cain. For ever! Since
 I must one day return here from the earth,
 I rather would remain; I am sick of all

That dust has shown me—let me dwell in shadows. 109

Lucifer. It cannot be: thou now beholdest as A vision that which is reality.

To make thyself fit for this dwelling, thou Must pass through what the things thou seest have passed—

The gates of Death.

Cain. By what gate have we entered Even now?

Lucifer. By mine! But, plighted to return, My spirit buoys thee up to breathe in regions Where all is breathless save thyself. Gaze on; But do not think to dwell here till thine hour Is come!

Cain. And these, too—can they ne'er repass To earth again?

Lucifer. Their earth is gone for ever— 120 So changed by its convulsion, they would not Be conscious to a single present spot Of its new scarcely hardened surface—'twas— Oh, what a beautiful world it *was!*

Cain. And is! It is not with the earth, though I must till it, I feel at war—but that I may not profit By what it bears of beautiful, untoiling, Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears Of Death and Life.

Lucifer. What thy world is, thou see'st, 130 But canst not comprehend the shadow of That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures, Phantoms inferior in intelligence (At least so seeming) to the things we have passed,

Resembling somewhat the wild habitants Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold In magnitude and terror; taller than The cherub-guarded walls of Eden—with Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them— 140

And tusks projecting like the trees stripped of Their bark and branches—what were they?

Lucifer. That which The Mammoth is in thy world;—but these lie By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But None on it?

Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war With them would render the curse on it use- less—

'Twould be destroyed so early.

Cain. But why war?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the denuncia- tion

Which drove your race from Eden—war with all things,

And death to all things, and disease to most things, 150

And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals—

Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for you,

As you for him.—You would not have their doom

Superior to your own? Had Adam not Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas! the hopeless wretches! They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons; Like them, too, without having shared the apple;

Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowledge!*

It was a lying tree—for we *know* nothing. 161 At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price* Of death—but *knowledge* still: but what *knows* man?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the *highest* knowledge;

And being of all things the sole thing certain, At least leads to the *surest* science: therefore The Tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms! I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot Comprehend spirit wholly—but 'tis something To know there are such realms. 171

Cain. We knew already

That there was Death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou knewest that there is A state, and many states beyond thine own— And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all Seems dim and shadowy.

Lucifer. Be content; it will Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us, Which looks like water, and which I should deem 180

The river which flows out of Paradise Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless And boundless, and of an ethereal hue— What is it?

Lucifer. There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it—'tis the phantasm of an Ocean.

Cain. 'Tis like another world; a liquid sun—
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface?

Lucifer. Are its inhabitants,
The past Leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense 190
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and
vasty

Head, ten times higher than the haughtiest
cedar,

Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately looked on—
Is he not of the kind which basked beneath
The Tree in Eden?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt
the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so
called) 200

But never that precisely, which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not?

Cain. No: 'twas my mother
Who tempted him — she tempted by the
serpent.

Lucifer. Good man! whene'er thy wife, or
thy son's wives,
Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or
strange,

Besure thou seest first who hath tempted *them!*

Cain. Thy precept comes too late: there
is no more

For serpents to tempt women to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may
tempt man to, 210

And man tempt woman:—let thy sons look
to it!

My counsel is a kind one; for 'tis even
Given chiefly at my own expense; 'tis true,
'Twill not be followed, so there's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou!—
Thy world and thou are still too young!
Thou thinkest

Thyself most wicked and unhappy—is it
Not so?

Cain. For crime, I know not; but for pain,
I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man!
Thy present state of sin—and thou art evil—220
Of sorrow—and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do.—
Now let us back to earth!

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge?

Cain. Yes—as being 230
The road to happiness!

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal Tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not plant-
ing it.

But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No—
I'll not believe it—for I thirst for good.

Lucifer. And who and what doth not?
Who covets evil

For its own bitter sake?—*None*—nothing! 'tis
The leaven of all life, and lifelessness. 241

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which
we behold,

Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come: they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar.

Cain. And what of that?
Distance can but diminish glory—they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most
beautiful,
And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this— 250
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion.—
What is that

Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote?

Cain. My sister Adah.—All the stars of
heaven,

The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world—
The hues of twilight—the Sun's gorgeous
coming—

His setting indescribable, which fills

My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold 260
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with
him

Along that western paradise of clouds—
The forest shade, the green bough, the
bird's voice—

The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of Cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls ;—

All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face : I turn from earth and
heaven

To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'Tis fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young
creation, 270

And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring ; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her brother.

Lucifer. Mortal !
My brotherhood's with those who have no
children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship
with us.

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be
for me.

But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched ?

Cain. Why do I exist ?
Why art *thou* wretched ? why are all things
so ? 280

Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker
Of things unhappy ! To produce destruction
Can surely never be the task of joy,

And yet my sire says he's omnipotent :
Then why is Evil—he being Good ? I asked

This question of my father ; and he said,
Because this Evil only was the path

To Good. Strange Good, that must arise
from out

Its deadly opposite. I lately saw
A lamb stung by a reptile : the poor
suckling 290

Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
And piteous bleating of its restless dam ;

My father plucked some herbs, and laid
them to

The wound ; and by degrees the helpless
wretch

Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain

The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.

Behold, my son ! said Adam, how from Evil
Springs Good !

Lucifer. What didst thou answer ?

Cain. Nothing ; for
He is my father : but I thought, that 'twere
A better portion for the animal 301

Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
Purchase renewal of its little life
With agonies unutterable, though
Dispelled by antidotes.

Lucifer. But as thou saidst
Of all beloved things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth
hers

Unto thy children—

Cain. Most assuredly :
What should I be without her ?

Lucifer. What am I ?

Cain. Dost thou love nothing ?

Lucifer. What does thy God love ? 310

Cain. All things, my father says ; but I
confess

I see it not in their allotment here.

Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst not
see if *I* love

Or no—except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like
snows.

Cain. Snows ! what are they ?

Lucifer. • Be happier in not knowing
What thy remoter offspring must encounter ;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no
winter.

Cain. But dost thou not love something
like thyself ?

Lucifer. And dost thou love *thyself* ?

Cain. Yes, but love more 320

What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it !

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 'tis
beautiful,

As was the apple in thy mother's eye ;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

Cain. Cease to be beautiful ! how can
that be ?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But time has passed, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair :
Not fair like Adah and the Seraphim— 330
But very fair.

Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it ; but
Cannot conceive my love for her the less :
And when her beauty disappears, methinks
He who creates all beauty will lose more
Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must
perish.

Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother—
Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well—so
does thy God. 340

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'Tis well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly!

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
And is his mother's favourite.

Cain. Let him keep
Her favour, since the Serpent was the first
To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
To me? should I not love that which all love?

Lucifer. And the Jehovah—the indulgent
Lord,
And bounteous planter of barred Paradise—
He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain. I
Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he
smiles. 350

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.

Cain. Rarely.

Lucifer. But
Sufficiently to see they love your brother:
His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they! wherefore speak to me
of this?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this
ere now.

Cain. And if
I *have* thought, why recall a thought that
——(*he pauses as agitated*)——Spirit!
Here we are in *thy* world; speak not of *mine*.
Thou hast shown me wonders: thou hast
shown me those
Mighty Pre-Adamites who walked the earth
Of which ours is the wreck: thou hast
pointed out 360
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life: thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us—Death; thou
hast shown me much
But not all: show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial Paradise—or *thine*:
Where is it?

Lucifer. Here, and o'er all space.

Cain. But ye

Have some allotted dwelling—as all things;
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their
tenants; 370
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element; and things which have
Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have
theirs, thou say'st;
And the Jehovah and thyself have thine—
Ye do not dwell together?

Lucifer. No, we reign
Together; but our dwellings are asunder.

Cain. Would there were only one of ye!
perchance
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarred in storms.
How came ye, being Spirits wise and infinite,
To separate? Are ye not as brethren in 381
Your essence — and your nature, and your
glory?

Lucifer. Art not thou Abel's brother?

Cain. We are brethren,
And so we shall remain; but were it not so,
Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out—
Infinity with Immortality?
Jarring and turning space to misery—
For what?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
Ye are both eternal?

Lucifer. Yea!

Cain. And what I have seen—
Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

Lucifer. Aye. 390

Cain. And cannot ye both *reign*, then?—
is there not
Enough?—why should ye differ?

Lucifer. We *both* reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which?

Cain. Thou! for
If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?

Lucifer. And why not he who made? *I*
made ye not;
Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine.

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee
Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
Of them for evermore.¹

¹ [In Byron's Diary for January 28, 1821, we find the following entry—

“Thought for a speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.”

“Were *Death* an evil, would I let thee *live*?
Fool! live as I live—as thy father lives,
And thy sons' sons shall live for evermore!”

Letters, 1901, v. 191.]

Cain. And why not now? 400

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely
grasp to gather

The little I have shown thee into calm
And clear thought: and *thou* wouldst go on
aspiring

To the great double Mysteries! the *two*
Principles!

And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!
Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see

Either of these would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There
The son of her who snatched the apple spake!
But thou wouldst only perish, and not see
them; 410

That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of Death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,
Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy
world,

Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,
Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep
—and die!

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these
things

Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require
Knowledge? And have I not, in what I
showed,

Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem 420
Nothing.¹

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's
nothingness;

Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'Twill spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit!

¹ ["Cain is a proud man: if Lucifer promised him kingdoms, etc., it would *elate* him: the object of the Demon is to *depress* him still further in his own estimation than he was before, by showing him infinite things and his own abasement, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere *internal* irritation, *not* premeditation, or envy of Abel (which would have made him contemptible), but from the rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against Life, and the author of Life, than the mere living."—Letter to Moore, November 3, 1821, *Letters*, 1901, v. 470.]

Thou speak'st it proudly; but thyself, though
proud,
Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No! By heaven, which he
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him—No!
I have a Victor—true; but no superior.

Homage he has from all—but none from me:
I battle it against him, as I battled 431

In highest Heaven—through all Eternity,

And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,

And the interminable realms of space,

And the infinity of endless ages,

All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,

And star by star, and universe by universe,

Shall tremble in the balance, till the great

Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,

Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quenched!

And what can quench our immortality, 441

Or mutual and irrevocable hate?

He as a conqueror will call the conquered
Evil; but what will be the *Good* he gives?

Were I the victor, *his* works would be deemed
The only evil ones. And you, ye new

And scarce-born mortals, what have been his
gifts

To you already, in your little world?

Cain. But few; and some of those but bitter.

Lucifer. Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
Of his celestial boons to you and yours. 451

Evil and Good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the Giver;

But if he gives you good—so call him; if

Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,

Till ye know better its true fount; and judge

Not by words, though of Spirits, but the fruits

Of your existence, such as it must be.

One good gift has the fatal apple given,—

Your *reason*:—let it not be overswayed 460

By tyrannous threats to force you into faith

'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling:

Think and endure,—and form an inner world

In your own bosom—where the outward fails;

So shall you nearer be the spiritual

Nature, and war triumphant with your own.

[*They disappear.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Earth, near Eden, as in
Act I.*

Enter CAIN and ADAH.

Adah. Hush! tread softly, Cain!

Cain. I will—but wherefore?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain. Cypress! tis
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourned
O'er what it shadows; wherefore didst thou
choose it

For our child's canopy?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore
seemed

Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Aye, the last—
And longest; but no matter—lead me to him.

[*They go up to the child.*]

How lovely he appears! his little cheeks, 10
In their pure incarnation,¹ vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted! No; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now: he will awake
soon—

His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'Tis closed.

Cain. You have said well; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps!—
sleep on,

And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young: sleep on, and
smile! 20

Thine are the hours and days when both are
cheering

And innocent! *thou* hast not plucked the fruit—
Thou know'st not thou art naked! Must the
time

Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not thine nor mine? But now
sleep on!

His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er
them;

Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must
dream— 30

Of what? Of Paradise!—Aye! dream of it,
My disinherited boy! 'Tis but a dream;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy!

Adah. Dear Cain! Nay, do not whisper
o'er our son

Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past:
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise?

¹ [An obsolete form of *carnation*, the colour of
"flesh."]

Can we not make another?

Cain. Where?

Adah. Here, or
Where'er thou wilt: where'er thou art, I feel
not

The want of this so much regretted Eden. 40
Have I not thee—our boy—our sire, and
brother,

And Zillah, our sweet sister—and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth?

Cain. Yes—Death, too, is amongst the debts
we owe her.

Adah. Cain! that proud Spirit, who with-
drew thee hence,

Hath saddened thine still deeper. I had hoped
The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,

Would have composed thy mind into the calm
Of a contented knowledge; but I see 50
Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank

him,

And can forgive him all, that he so soon
Hath given thee back to us.

Cain. So soon?

Adah. 'Tis scarcely
Two hours since ye departed: two *long* hours
To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approached that sun,
and seen

Worlds which he once shone on, and never
more

Shall light; and worlds he never lit: methought
Years had rolled o'er my absence.

Adah. Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time,
And measures it by that which it beholds, 61
Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.

I had beheld the immemorial works
Of endless beings; skirred extinguished worlds;
And, gazing on eternity, methought

I had borrowed more by a few drops of ages
From its immensity: but now I feel

My littleness again. Well said the Spirit,
That I was nothing!

Adah. Wherefore said he so?

Jehovah said not that.

Cain. No: *he* contents him 70

With making us the *nothing* which we are;
And after flattering dust with glimpses of

Eden and Immortality, resolves
It back to dust again—for what?

Adah. Thou know'st—

Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that

To us? they sinned, then *let them* die!

Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is
that thought

Thy own, but of the Spirit who was with thee,
Would *I* could die for them, so *they* might live!

Cain. Why, so say I—provided that one
victim

80

Might satiate the Insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from
him.

Adah. How know we that some such atone-
ment one day

May not redeem our race!

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what
have we

Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin—
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

90

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain:
thy words

Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?

Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel
made

During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would be
so ready

With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship—as a bribe
To the Creator?

101

Adah. Surely, 'tis well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no
offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth,¹ the early,
beautiful,
Blossom and bud—and bloom of flowers and
fruits—

These are a goodly offering to the Lord,
Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

¹ [It is Adah, Cain's wife, who suggests the disastrous compromise, not a "burnt-offering," but the "fruits of the earth," which would cost the giver little or nothing—an instance in point of Lucifer's cynical reminder (*vide ante*, act ii. sc. 2, line 210) "that there are some things still which woman may tempt man to."]

Cain. I have toiled, and tilled, and sweaten
in the sun,

109

According to the curse:—must I do more?

For what should I be gentle? for a war

With all the elements ere they will yield

The bread we eat? For what must I be
grateful?

For being dust, and grovelling in the dust,

Till I return to dust? If I am nothing—

For nothing shall I be an hypocrite,

And seem well-pleased with pain? For what
should I

Be contrite? for my father's sin, already

Expiate with what we all have undergone,

And to be more than expiated by

120

The ages prophesied, upon our seed.

Little deems our young blooming sleeper,
there,

The germs of an eternal misery

To myriads is within him! better 'twere

I snatched him in his sleep, and dashed him
'gainst

The rocks, than let him live to—

Adah. Oh, my God!

Touch not the child—my child—*thy* child!

Oh, Cain!

Cain. Fear not! for all the stars, and all
the power

Which sways them, I would not accost you
infant

With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

130

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech?

Cain. I said,

'Twere better that he ceased to live, than give
Life to so much of sorrow as he must

Endure, and, harder still, bequeath; but since

That saying jars you, let us only say—

'Twere better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so! Where were
then the joys,

The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,

And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet
Enoch!

[*She goes to the child.*]

Oh, Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of

joy—

141

How like to me—how like to thee, when
gentle—

For *then* we are *all* alike; is't not so, Cain?

Mother, and sire, and son, our features are

Reflected in each other; as they are

In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and

When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my
Cain!

And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.

Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,

And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine, 150
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as winged with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.

Cain. Bless thee, boy!

If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the Serpent's curse!

Adah. It shall.

Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain. Of that I doubt; 160

But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.

Cain. Thy brother Abel.

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast
been wandering,

In high communion with a Spirit, far
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our
father?

Cain. No.

Abel. Why then commune with him?
he may be

A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.

Has the Most High been so—if so you term
him? 170

Abel. Term him! your words are strange
to-day, my brother.

My sister Adah, leave us for awhile—
We mean to sacrifice.¹

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[*Exit ADAH, with her child.*

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

¹ ["From the beginning" the woman is ineligible for the priesthood—"He for God only, she for God in him" (*Paradise Lost*, iv. 299). "Let the women keep silence in the churches" (*Corinthians*, i. xiv. 34).]

Cain. The dead—
The Immortal—the Unbounded—the Omnipotent—

The overpowering mysteries of space— 179
The innumerable worlds that were and are—
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres

Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel,

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light—

Thy cheek is flushed with an unnatural hue—
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound—

What may this mean?

Cain. It means—I pray thee, leave me.

Abel. Not till we have prayed and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone—
Jehovah loves thee well. 191

Abel. Both well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better: I care not for that;

Thou art fitter for his worship than I am;
Revere him, then—but let it be alone—
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God, called not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood—'tis thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it. 201

Abel. The more my grief; I pray thee
To do so now: thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion; it will calm thee.

Cain. No;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm!* say I?
Never

Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements stilled. My Abel
leave me!

Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither; we must perform our task
together.

Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so—well, then,
What shall I do? 209

Abel. Choose one of those two altars.

Cain. Choose for me: they to me are so
much turf

And stone.

Abel. Choose thou!

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'Tis the highest,
And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine?

Abel. Behold them here—
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof—
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks ;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil—its fruit :

[*He gathers fruits.*
Behold them in their various bloom and ripe-
ness.

[*They dress their altars, and kindle
a flame upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first 220
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No—I am new to this ; lead thou
the way,
And I will follow—as I may.

Abel (kneeling). Oh, God !
Who made us, and who breathed the breath
of life

Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so tempered with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise, 230
Compared with our great crimes :—Sole Lord
of light !

Of good, and glory, and eternity !
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence !
Inscrutable, but still to be fulfilled !

Accept from out thy humble first of shepherds'
First of the first-born flocks—an offering,
In itself nothing—as what offering can be
Aught unto thee?—but yet accept it for 240
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven—bowing his own
Even to the dust, of which he is—in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore !

Cain (standing erect during this speech).
Spirit whate'er or whose'er thou art,
Omnipotent, it may be—and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from
evil ;

Jehovah upon earth ! and God in heaven !
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy
works :— 250

If thou must be propitiated with prayers,

Take them ! If thou must be induced with
altars,

And softened with a sacrifice, receive them ;
Two beings here erect them unto thee.

If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shrine,
which smokes

On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies ;

Or, if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstained
turf 260

I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripened them, may
seem

Good to thee—inasmuch as they have not
Suffered in limb or life—and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours ! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it ! and for him who dresseth it,
He is—such as thou mad'st him ; and seeks
nothing

Which must be won by kneeling : if he 's
evil, 270

Strike him ! thou art omnipotent, and may'st—
For what can he oppose ? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt ! since
all

Rests upon thee ; and Good and Evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy
will—

And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge
Omnipotence—but merely to endure
Its mandate ; which thus far I have endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles
into a column of the brightest flame,
and ascends to heaven ; while a whirl-
wind throws down the altar of CAIN,
and scatters the fruits abroad upon
the earth.*¹

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray !
Jehovah's wroth with thee. 280

Cain. Why so ?

Abel. Thy fruits are scattered on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth let
them return ;
Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the
summer :

Thy burnt flesh-offering prospers better ; see
How Heaven licks up the flames, when thick
with blood !

¹ [See Gessner's *Death of Abel.*]

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own—before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any—

Abel (rising). Cain! what meanest thou?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatterer of
the clouds, 290

The smoky harbinger of thy dull prayers—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroyed in
blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not:—add
not impious works to impious
Words! let that altar stand—'tis hallowed
now

By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. *His!*

His pleasure! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking
blood,

To the pain of the bleating mothers, which
Still yearn for the dead offspring? or the
pangs 301

Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody
record

Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not
touch my altar

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 'tis thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be—

Abel. What mean'st thou?

Cain. Give—

Give way!—thy God loves blood!—then
look to it:—

Give way, ere he hath *more!*

Abel. In *his* great name, 311
I stand between thee and the shrine which
hath

Had his acceptance.

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strewed this turf along
Its native soil:—else—

Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.

*Cain (striking him with a brand, on the
temples, which he snatches from the
altar).* Then take thy life unto thy
God,

Since he loves lives.

Abel (falls). What hast thou done—my
brother?

Cain. Brother!

Abel. Oh, God! receive thy servant! and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did—Cain, give me—give me thy hand
and tell 320

Poor Zillah—

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My
hand! 'tis all red, and with—

What? [*A long pause. — Looking slowly
round.*

Where am I? alone! Where's Abel?
where

Cain? Can it be that I am he? My brother,
Awake!—why liest thou so long on the green
earth?

'Tis not the hour of slumber:—why so pale?
What hast thou!—thou wert full of life
this morn!

Abel! I pray thee, mock me not! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me? This is mockery;
And only done to daunt me:—'twas a
blow— 330

And but a blow. Stir—stir—nay, only stir!
Why, so—that's well!—thou breathest!
Breathe upon me!

Oh God! Oh God!

Abel (very faintly). What's he who speaks
of God?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah:—she has but one
brother

Now. [ABEL dies.

Cain. And I none!—Who makes me
brotherless?

His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down
our lids.

His lips, too, are apart; why then he
breathes;

And yet I feel it not.—His heart!—his
heart!— 340

Let me see, doth it beat? methinks—No!
—no!

This is a vision, else I am become

The native of another and worse world.

The earth swims round me:—what is this?—
'tis wet;

[*Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks
at it.*

And yet there are no dews! 'Tis blood—
my blood—

My brother's and my own! and shed by me!
Then what have I further to do with life,
Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
But he can not be dead!—Is silence death?
No; he will wake; then let me watch by
him. 350

Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
Thus quickly!—he hath spoken to me since—
What shall I say to him?—My brother!—
No:

He will not answer to that name; for brethren
Smite not each other. Yet—yet—speak to
me.

Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can
it be?

'Tis Cain; and watching by my husband.
What

Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep?
Oh, Heaven!

What means this paleness, and yon stream?
—No, no! 361

It is not blood; for who would shed his blood?
Abel! what's this?—who hath done this?

He moves not;
He breathes not: and his hands drop down
from mine

With stony lifelessness! Ah! cruel Cain!

Why camest thou not in time to save him from
This violence? Whatever hath assailed him,
Thou wert the stronger, and shouldst have
stepped in

Between him and aggression! Father!—
Eve!— 369

Adah!—come hither! Death is in the world!

Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, etc.

Cain (solus). And who hath brought him
there?—I—who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoisoned all my life, before I knew

His aspect—I have led him here, and given
My brother to his cold and still embrace,

As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.

I am awake at last—a dreary dream
Had maddened me;—but *he* shall ne'er awake!

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings
me here— 380

What do I see?—'Tis true!—My son!—my
son!

Woman, behold the Serpent's work, and
thine! [To EVE.

Eve. Oh! speak not of it now: the
Serpent's fangs

Are in my heart! My best beloved, Abel!
Jehovah! this is punishment beyond

A mother's sin, to take *him* from me!

Adam. Who,
Or what hath done this deed?—speak, Cain,
since thou

Wert present; was it some more hostile angel,
Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild
Brute of the forest?

Eve. Ah! a livid light 390
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud!
yon brand

Massy and bloody! snatched from off the
altar,

And black with smoke, and red with—

Adam. Speak, my son!

Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not *thou*!

Eve. It was!

I see it now—he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine!

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong—
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent. 401

Eve. Hear, Jehovah!

May the eternal Serpent's curse be on him!
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.

May all his days be desolate! May—

Adah. Hold!

Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son—
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betrothed.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother—

Zillah no husband—me *no son*! for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore!

All bonds I break between us, as he broke 410
That of his nature, *in yon*—Oh Death!
Death!

Why didst thou not take *me*, who first in-
curred thee?

Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this,

Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;

And now that it begins, let it be borne
In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

Eve (pointing to Cain). His will! the will
of yon Incarnate Spirit

Of Death, whom I have brought upon the
earth 420

To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do by him
As he did by his brother! May the swords
And wings of fiery Cherubim pursue him
By day and night—snakes spring up in his
path—

Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth—the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strewed
With scorpions! May his dreams be of his
victim! 430

His waking a continual dread of Death!
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging
lip!

May every element shun or change to him!
May he live in the pangs which others die
with!

And Death itself wax something worse than
Death

To him who first acquainted him with man!
Hence, fratricide! henceforth that word is
Cain,

Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their
sire! 440

May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her
God! [Exit EVE.]

Adam. Cain! get thee forth: we dwell no
more together.

Depart! and leave the dead to me—I am
Henceforth alone—we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my
father: do not

Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head!

Adam. I curse him not: his spirit be his
curse.

Come, Zillah!

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse. 450

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.
Come, Zillah!

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm—my heart! my
heart!

[Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH weeping.]

Adah. Cain! thou hast heard, we must go
forth. I am ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines

Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night.—Nay, speak to me.
To me—*thine own.*

Cain. Leave me!

Adah. Why, all have left thee. 460

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou? Dost
thou not fear

To dwell with one who hath done this?

Adah. I fear

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee
brotherless.

I must not speak of this—it is between thee
And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims. Cain! Cain!

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice?

The Voice within. Cain! Cain!

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

*Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.*¹

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel?

Cain. Am I then

My brother's keeper?

Angel. Cain! what hast thou done?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries
out, 470

Even from the ground, unto the Lord!—
Now, art thou

Cursed from the earth, which opened late her
mouth

To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash
hand.

Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground,
it shall not

Yield thee her strength; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth!

Adah. This punishment is more than he
can bear.

Behold thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.

A fugitive and vagabond on earth, 480
'Twill come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

¹ ["I have avoided introducing the Deity, as in Scripture (though Milton does, and not very wisely either); but have adopted his angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shocking any feelings on the subject, by falling short of what all un-inspired men must fall short in, viz. giving an adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah. The Old Mysteries introduced him liberally enough, and this is avoided in the New."—Letter to Murray, February 8, 1822, *Letters*, 1901, vi. 13. Byron does not seem to have known that Catholic divines regard "Angel of the Lord" as a name for the Second Person of the Trinity.]

Cain. Would they could! but who
are they
Shall slay me? Where are these on the lone
earth
As yet unpeopled?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son?

Adah. Angel of Light! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his
father is,
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment 490
To him thou now seest so besmeared with
blood?

The fratricide might well engender parricides.—

But it shall not be so—the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal
On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance
shall

Be taken on his head. Come hither!

Cain. What
Wouldst thou with me?

Angel. To mark upon thy brow
Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die!

Angel. It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN'S
brow.*]

Cain. It burns 500
My brow, but nought to that which is within it!
Is there more? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn
from the womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till; but he
Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten;
Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The Serpent, and my Sire still mourned for
Eden.

That which I am, I am; I did not seek 509
For life, nor did I make myself; but could I
With my own death redeem him from the
dust—

And why not so? let him return to day,
And I lie ghastly! so shall be restored
By God the life to him he loved; and taken
From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder? what is
done, is done;

Go forth! fulfil thy days! and be thy deeds
Unlike the last! [*The ANGEL disappears.*]

Adah. He's gone, let us go forth;

I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.

Cain. Ah! little knows he what he
weeps for! 520

And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears!
But the four rivers¹ would not cleanse my soul.
Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I
would—

Cain (interrupting her). No,
No more of threats: we have had too many
of them:

Go to our children—I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the
dead—

Let us depart together.

Cain. Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou
now art 530

I know not! but if *thou* seest what *I* am,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul.—Farewell!
I must not, dare not touch what I have made
thee.

I, who sprung from the same womb with
thee, drained

The same breast, clasped thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst
have done

For me—compose thy limbs into their grave—
The first grave yet dug for mortality. 541

But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth!
Oh, earth!

For all the fruits thou hast rendered to me, I
Give thee back this.—Now for the wilderness!

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*]

Adah. A dreary, and an early doom, my
brother,

Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is
Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed
them;

But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.

Now, Cain! I will divide thy burden with
thee. 551

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take
our way;

'Tis the most desolate, and suits my steps.

¹ [The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden,
and consequently the only waters with which Cain
was acquainted upon earth.]