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GIORDANO.

A Tragedy.

BY JAMES LAWSON,
AUTHOR OF "TALES AND SKETCHES," &c.

"Accipe nunc insidias."—Vir.

NEW-YORK:
E. B. CLAYTON—G. & C. & H. CARVILL.

1832.

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TO
PROSPER MONTGOMERY WETMORE,

AS A RECORD OF HIS WORTH,

AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS GENIUS;

AND,

AS A TOKEN OF ESTEEM,

THIS TRAGEDY IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

1125446



PROLOGUE.

BY WILLIAM LEGGETT.

SPOKEN BY MR. BARRY.

To rouse each slumbering passion of the breast,
Bid cowering guilt his hideous form detest,
Add grace to goodness, energy to truth,
Ardour to age, and thoughtfulness to youth,
With guileless mirth the ills of life t' assuage,
For these did Wisdom first erect the Stage.

There, breathless Wonder, with dilated eyes,
Saw the pale shades of former ages rise—
Caught from the hero's glance a kindred glow,
Or mourned with real tears dissembled wo ;
With shuddering awe, heard mad Ambition own
The crimes that raised him to his tottering throne ;
And learned that power, achieved by guilty deed,
Decks with false glare the head it dooms to bleed—
As the red flames which burning domes illumine,
Mock what they gild, and whilst they light, consume.

True to the purpose of the scenic page,
An untried bard this night employs the stage ;
From no wild tale of necromantic sprite
He draws the scene, to charm your dazzled sight,
But boldly copies nature's mazy chart
Of vice and virtue, to instruct the heart.

Here learn what terrors rack Guilt's throbbing breast,
And pale his check, though fortune light his crest :
What generous ardor glows in honor's form,
Great in the calm, and greater in the storm.

Such are the scenes our bard presents to view,
And trembling trusts to nature and to *you*.
Mar not his hope—be candid, yet be just ;
Praise where you ought, blame only where you must.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ,

As first performed at the Park Theatre, New-York, November, 1828.

DUKE OF FLORENCE, - - - - -	Mr. Phillips.
COLONNI, <i>his Son</i> , - - - - -	Mr. Ritchings.
GIORDANO, - - - - -	Mr. Barry.
CONRADINE, <i>in love with Inelda</i> , - - - - -	Mr. Simpson.
MANIRI, } - - - - -	Mr. Porter.
CAVILIDO, } <i>Senators.</i> - - - - -	Mr. T. Placide.
NERI, <i>Captain of Guards, and friend of Giordano</i> , - - -	Mr. Woodhull.
COSMO, <i>Chief of the Outlaw Conspirators</i> , - - - - -	Mr. Nexsen.
IMELDA, <i>daughter of the Duke</i> , - - - - -	Mrs. Hilson.
BELLA, <i>her Attendant</i> , - - - - -	Mrs. Wallack.

*Senators, Officers, Soldiers, Citizens, Conspirators, a Jailer,
Attendants, &c.*

SCENE—FLORENCE.

GIORDANO.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The Palace. A flourish. Enter the DUKE, COLONNI, MANIRI, CAVILIDO, and Attendants: then enter an USHER.*

Usher. HERE'S one without, and newly from the camp,
Who seems of rank ; he prays your royal grace,
Will grant him audience.

Duke. Bid him before us.

[*Exit USHER.*]

He brings us tidings of a joyous note—
The last despatches from our loyal chief,
The brave Giordano, told that with the foe
He was on eve of battle.

Col. He is one,
My liege and father, worthy of all love.

Re-enter USHER, and an OFFICER.

Duke. What tidings, captain, bring you from the camp?

Offi. Our noble general has met the foe,
And victory perch'd upon his tempered shield :
But these despatches will inform your grace,
Of more than my poor knowledge can explain.

Duke. We love the herald of such happy news,
And shall anon requite him.

Man. Say, good Captain,
How stood young Conradine the shock of battle ?

Offi. Like one, whose training for an age had been,
Amidst the din of war : he bravely fought,
And veterans yield him well deserved praise.

Man. Then is a double victory achieved !

Duke. This adds new lustre to our country's fame,
Giordano, pride and glory of the realm,
Has tamed the haughty foe : herein he speaks
With most becoming modesty, and gives
Unto each soldier of whate'er degree,
So much renown he nothing claims himself.
Above them all, our Conradine is named
In terms of special praise. Thou'lt meet our favour.
We must confer on this :—your leisure, friends.

Flourish. Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A street. Enter NERI.*

The battle's won ; Giordano will return
With greener laurels circled round his brow.
He is my cherished friend, and to his power
Am I indebted for the rank I hold,
And therefore I have made his cause my own—
That noble cause, which, from his throne will hurl
The reigning despot, and a nation free.
He's ignorant of his heart, but well I know
He needs a spur to rouse his nature up.
That I will be:—first, for my love to him ;
And second, for the State lacks skilful hands,
To weed the useless roots that waste its sap.
But more than all, revenge will then be mine ;—
Revenge for wrongs which fester on my heart.
My wife already sways us powerful friends—
He comes, he comes! My lord!

Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. Neri, my friend!

Neri. I give you joy upon your safe return :
The great achievement has spread wide your fame.
The city is alive with joy, and all

Sound forth your name in terms of wondrous praise.

Gior. 'Twill do our cause some service.

Neri. Sooth it will.

But is it done? Is Conradine despatched?

Gior. Ay; Cosmo did his duty well.

Neri. And thou?

Gior. I'm blameless as the unstained sword.

Neri. Thank heaven!

Gior. The best of chances brought the headstrong fool,
Colomni, in my way; I touch'd him on't—

And now he's gone, wild as a wounded bear,

Unto the Duke :—nay, more, I've spared no pains

To pass the tale from ear to greedy ear.

A look of sorrow and a word of praise,

Was my addition to the tale of death;

While, when I hinted at Maniri's plots,

I seemed to feel all that a subject feels,

When treason threatens to depose his liege.

Neri. My lord, be bold in act as thou'rt in word,
And greatness will be thine. How of the Duke?

Gior. To him official notice I have sent,

With one remembrance to his weeping daughter,

Whom I must win—my heart inclines to her.

Neri. All will go well.

Gior. All shall go well. I am!

When saw you Cosmo's band?

Neri. This hour, my lord :

The gold you gave I lavished on them all,

The which has proved them men of daring souls.

Gior. Did they unto your reasons lend their thoughts ?

Neri. As on the issue every hope they placed.

Gior. When meet you them again ?

Neri. At dawn of day

We meet to-morrow in the Sibyl's cave :

I'll then inform them all that thou hast done,

And urge them on as our occasions need.

Gior. Thou wilt do right.

Neri. There thou, my lord, must be,

And ably use thy smooth-tongued eloquence,

That, should they need a prompter to the act,

Thou mayst inspire them all.

Gior. I will be there.

But let us part ; I think it is not well,

That we together meet observing eyes,

For it might wake suspicion to our deeds.

Neri. My lord, do idle fears still sway thy mind ?

Gior. I act with prudence, not with fear I'm ruled.

But let us part : I'll straightwith to the palace,

And learn how all our projects prosper there ;

A smile or tear is ready at command,

To meet each new occasion. Thou to the cave :
My friend, farewell.

Neri. Be strong of heart. Farewell.

[*Exit.*

Manet GIORDANO.

Yes! I remember that an eaglet, thrice
Forsook his lofty eyry in the sky,
To light upon my head, when but a boy,
And seemed delighted with its perching place.
Then, though no taller than my sword, I vowed
That I would fill the ducal throne. Old hags
Foretold I'd be ambitious and renowned :
Methinks, like oracles, they've spoken truth.
Now sleeps young Conradine, ne'er more to wake :
He stood before me in my hopes of love,
A venom'd serpent in my path to fame ;
But I have crushed him—and he stings no more.
To-night Maniri by his pupil falls,
Urged on by this audacious fabrication :
Too much I feared his scrutiuizing eye.—
Thou glorious sun! shed down thy golden beams,
Shine on! and nurse the laurels planted here,
And make the wreath of everlasting green,
That it may shadow all the dotard's deeds,

And in the self same shade scarf darkly up
The son's pretensions to succeed the sire.
Now to the palace; joy awhile reigned there
For public weal—for private grief, laments.
I'll mock the time, and suit myself to both.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. *Enter the DUKE and COLONNI.*

Duke. A day so happy and so hapless too,
So fraught with strange events, was never seen.
The battle's won, for that we all rejoice;
The plot is known and that we shall suppress—
But Conradine is dead!—for ever gone!

Col. This is a prologue to unruly times:
A bold and quick resolve alone preserves
The country's safety and our house's reign.

Duke. How was't discovered? let me know the truth.

Col. Giordano, in his letters has announced,
That he by chance a knowledge of it gained:
He has arrived. I met him hither bound,
And from him learned a history of the plot,
Which he had neither time nor power to write:
And my impatience has o'erstepped his speed,
To lay before your grace the dark account.

Duke. He is a noble one.

Col. He is my friend.

Duke. What is the plot, and who are all involved?

Col. Here comes he now, to answer for himself.

Enter GIORDANO.

Duke. Welcome, my lord, thou hast in sooth come well :
First, for thou art a victor safe from war ;
And second, for thou canst unveil this plot,
Which dares to aim against our life and throne :
Pray as you love us, let us hear the worst.

Gior. Maniri soars to grasp thy diadem,
And hold despotic rule o'er all, whom thou
More like a father than a monarch reign'st.
With him are leagued a gang of desperate men,
A discontented and a guilty rabble—
Who at his nod would murder sleeping babes.

Duke. O, villain, villain!—Say on, I pray thee.

Gior. The consummation of his rebel plot,
Is fixed for an ungracious hour indeed :
'Tis, as within the holy church we pay
The funeral rites to our lamented friend.

Duke. Can this be so!

Col. What! have I ears! revenge!

Duke. The time indeed is apt.

Gior. From which, my liege,
It is most certain he foreknowledge had
Of this foul murder—yea, promoted it ;
Else, had he never fixed on such a time.

Duke. Thy tale dispels the clouds which else had hung
Darkly above me :—all is now revealed,
And justice shall be swift and sure.

Col. Nay, more,—
Revenge, my sire, shall be both swift and sure.

Gior. Prithce, be tranquil and unfearful—both,
For knowledge gives us time for preparation ;
And in the sinews of this happy realm,
A strength immortal lives, that will, my liege,
Crush the foul traitor in his vaunted power.

Duke. I saw a serpent in my dream last night,
With double head and most envenomed sting :
Its eyes seemed brighter than two balls of fire,
Which flashed upon me with so wild a glare,
They tortured e'en my soul. I am an old man ;
My blood is cold, imagination tame,
And seldom do I conjure fancies up,
But look on things with calm and thoughtful eye.
Yet in this case, despite all former rule,
I think my better angel hovered near,
To wake my mind against some threatened ill.

Now is my dream explained—but I shall be
Prepared to meet the serpent, and to crush it.

Col. I am prepared : speak ! let me know thy will.

Gior. Be calm, my friend.

Duke. Who waits ? I'll move with care.

Enter an USHER.

Bid Neri straight attend our pleasure here. [*Exit Usher.*

Gior. Deem not that I o'erstep the subject's duty ;—

But thou, methinks, beyond the present fear,
Seem'st strongly moved : my friend Colonna too.
Stop thou the treason at its fountain head,
And the polluted channels soon will dry.

Col. Let not Maniri live.

Enter NERI.

Duke. Hear'st thou, Neri,
Of treason ? We shall quickly counteract
The foul designings of the unholy plot.

Neri. Command my utmost strength ; my sword, my life,
Are at my master's service : I live, my liege,
But to obey thy will.

Gior. And all.

Col. Ay, all.

Duke. Arrest the traitor, drag him to the dungeon—
To-morrow will the senate fix his doom.

Neri. It shall be done, my liege.

[*Exeunt COLONNI and NERI.*]

Gior. Eternal blights!

Why was his death not instantly decreed! [*Aside.*]

Be not desponding—all may yet be well.

Duke. What shall we think upon this chance, or how
Reward thy love and vigilance; we owe
More than our words or largess can repay.

Gior. Nay, speak not of't: my duty I have done,
Not more: each thought and act is thine, through me
Obedient all, in council or in field.
How does the fair Imelda bear her grief?

Duke. E'en woman like.

Gior. Alas! my liege, for her,
It was a chance too terrible to name.

Duke. Grief oft delights to think, or speak of that
Which was the source and fountain of its tears:
And thou, my lord, new from the camp, know'st all;
Thy story may alleviate her woes.

Gior. My liege, if I can shade the picture o'er,
That less of horrid coloring show forth,
'Twill be a pleasing duty.

Duke. Didst thou speak?

We do forget ourself—so does this plot
On our imagination fix withal,
That we are bankrupt in each thought beside,
And lack all courtesy. Good night.

[*Exit* DUKE.]

Gior. Good night.

May dreamless be your sleep—that's a kind wish.
Thus all flows well, and I shall sail to power.
Now to Imelda: love, be thou my theme.
Wed I the daughter, who will dare suppose
I am a parricide? 'Twill curtain all.—
She's seemly to my eye, and shall be mine.
But there's a worm that cankers in my heart—
Dungeons have tongues, but I must root them out;
First, will I win the keeper to my cause.
Gold is an advocate of great renown—
I'll try his all-persuasive eloquence.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV. IMELDA *discovered.* BELLA *in attendance.*

Imcl. They tell me he is dead! dead? O, no, no!
It cannot be—it passes all belief.
'Twas but as yesterday I saw him here,

In pride and dignity, a very god
Dwelling 'mongst men. I'll not believe the tale :
It is a thought too big for my poor brain.
O, gracious powers ! is this not some wild dream !
Some misconceit has surely turned the world
To an outrageous frenzy. Men hear false.
He lives ! ay, he must live. Death, wouldst thou dare
To touch with icy hand his matchless mould ?
But if 'tis so, then heaven itself must weep.

Bel. Alas, alas ! I fear it is too true.

Imcl. Were I convinced, I then should be resigned ;
But how can I believe the dreadful tale
Of his untimely end ? Dost thou believe 't ?

Bel. Lady, indeed, I cannot doubt its truth.

Imcl. My father and my brother, what say they ?

Bel. Fain would they doubt, but ah ! it is in vain.

Imcl. If it be true !

Bel. He was a matchless man.

Imcl. He was of such excelling worth, that heaven
Might mould a million, and not make his like.

Bel. Wo, wo ! he is no more : but, pray thee, turn
Thy thoughts away from melancholy themes.
Think of the living ; for there breathes the one,
Who loves thee well, and well deserves thy love.

Imcl. O, Bella, none.

Bel. The pride of all the realm,
 'Thy brother's friend—thy father's proudest boast :
 'The brave Giordano.

Imel. Thou dost talk ill-timed ;
 He ne'er can fill a corner of my heart,
 For now my love and lover both are dead.
 Pray thee, leave me.

Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. [*To BELLA.*] Wert faithful to thy trust ?

Bel. E'en now I touched on it, but 'twas in vain.

[GIORDANO motions her to withdraw. *Exit* BELLA.]

Gior. In tears ! yet I will speak to her. Imelda !

Imel. 'Tis ever thus,—unwelcome guests appear,
 At most unwelcome seasons. What wouldst thou ?

Gior. I come at an unwelcome time, 'tis true,
 But as a comforter and friend I come.

Imel. Speak on, my lord, and say what wouldst with me.

Gior. I am so moved to see thy settled grief,
 My heart almost denies the tongue to tell
 Its feelings.

Imel. Oh !

Gior. We all should be resigned !
 For what avail complaints, or sighs, or tears !

Fair one, can they our sad bereavement soothe,
Or bring departed worth to us again?
Tears are transparent, as it were, to prove
Their unavailingness.

Imcl. What dost thou mean?

Gior. But, when a man so justly dear to all
As Conradine expires, our better sense
Will yield unto the heart's complaint, and live
Awhile on sorrow: true, he is no more,—
But there's a something which will never die,
His fame and worth,—immortal as his soul.

Imcl. 'Thou speak'st like one who knows what 'tis to mourn.

Gior. This, the most luckless chance that e'er befell.

Imcl. Indeed, indeed!

Gior. But who can feel thy woes?

Imcl. My lot, in sooth, has been a hapless one;
For grief, like dismal clouds, has lowered on me,
And shaded all the spring-time of my life.

Gior. Now hope for gladness in the days to come;
For I will shield thee in these faithful arms
From every harm.

Imcl. Ah!

Gior. Hold, I sail too fast. [*Aside.*]
Since thou hast lost so dear and kind a friend,
Amidst the troubles which afflict the state,

Thy gentle nature will require some one
 To comfort thee: and therefore I beseech,
 Thou'lt let thy troubled thoughts repose on me.

Imel. Thou speak'st ambiguously—and yet, perhaps
 'Tis kindly meant.

Gior. Perhaps! nay 'tis, by heaven!

Imel. What wouldst thou swear?

Gior. I love thee.

Imel. What is this?—

Gior. Yet, with such love, as might a brother love.

Imel. Thou feign'st a grief—and in the proffer lies
 My warrant for the thought.

Gior. If I have erred,
 (Which I did not intend,) I crave your mercy.
 Put not a strange construction on my speech,
 Which my poor tongue meant not. All I desire,
 (Both in thy private and thy public grief,
 Is, to present my services—not more.

[*Aside.*] Thus does my courage play the fool again.

Imel. Strangely thou speak'st.

Gior. Judge me by my intents,
 And thou wilt think with kindness of my words.

Imel. I would it were I judged thee too severely.

Gior. Misfortune frowns on some, and every act
 (In thought and feeling both as pure as truth)

Moved by the mutinous and rebellious blood,
 Is construed oft, dark as the thunder cloud,
 Surcharged with dire combustion—such a one
 I am. If I've offended thee, Imelda,
 My sole offence is that I fondly love.

What maid so cruel as call love a crime?

Imcl. To what strange period does thy meaning tend?

Gior. Will not thine own dear heart my pleader be,
 And win me to thy favor? While I gaze
 Upon the fashion of thy matchless form,
 The throne of beauty, innocence and worth—
 I lose all thought of grief, and pride of power:
 The splendor too, which overpraising friends
 For poor achievements have shed round my name,
 Beside thy brightness sinks to worthless shade.

Imcl. I will not hear thee.

Gior. Stay, Imelda. Gone! [*Exit* IMELDA.

Eternal furies haunt her. Gone!

Enter BELLA.

Bel. My lord.

Gior. Peace, woman, peace! I'll not be questioned now.
 Thus has she left me—like a fool I seem;
 When next I sue, 'twill be as a command.

[*Exit* GIORDANO.

Re-enter IMELDA.

Imel. Has he departed?

Bel. Yes, sweet lady.

Imel. Leave me.

[*Exit BELLA.*

Wo's me! scarce have my tears begun to flow,
 For the most precious flower, that ever bloomed
 In the rich garden of a maiden's love,
 And I'm besieged with ill-becoming suits.
 Away! love, hope and happiness, farewell!
 I'll to a cloister's gloom, there spend my days,
 And give my sorrows unobstructed sway.

Enter BELLA.

Bel. There is a stranger waiting now without,
 Who fain would speak with thee.

Imel. I am not, Bella,

In proper mood to audience strangers now.
 Whence came he?

Bel. From the camp.

Imel. Then show him to me.

[*Exit BELLA.*

O, what am I to hear! they come, they come—
 Was e'er suspense so terrible as this!

A pause. Re-enter BELLA, showing in a STRANGER.

Imel. Stranger, thou'rt from the camp ?

Stran. This hour arrived.

Imel. Bella, retire. [*Exit BELLA.*]

Stran. I come——

Imel. O yes, you come,

To say you saw my Conradine expire.

Or, gracious heavens ! is not the story false ?

In mercy ! tell me, is he truly dead ?

Stran. 'Tis so reported. She bewildered seems. [*Aside.*]

Imel. Ere I am frozen in death's cold embrace,

Ere on my eyes he puts his fatal seal,

'Tell me thy errand. What has brought you hither ?

Stran. I can endure no longer. Imelda !

[*Throws off his disguise.*]

Imel. Conradine !

[*She faints, and is supported by CONRADINE.*]

Conrad. My faithful, dear and lovely one, look up.

Imel. [*Recovering, frantic.*]

Hark, hark ! but whisper, else they'll hear thee, love.

They watch thee : hide here, dearest, in my arms.

Sec ! 'tis a golden dagger : near, yet nearer,

For it will cut, yea deeper e'en than steel.

Conrad. Imelda!

Imel. Nay, insist no more: away!

I've seen this face before, these curling locks,
And sparkling eyes.

Conrad. Dost thou not know me, sweet?

Imel. No: hence, away! O heaven! 'tis Conradine!

Conrad. Be calm, my love; compose thyself, I pray.

Imel. Art thou alive! protecting power, I thank thee!

My heart aye thought the story was untrue.

Say, how didst thou escape the murderer's steel?

Conrad. Rest till the morrow; I will then relate
The marvel of my preservation. Thou'rt
Too much o'erpowered to hear the story now.

Imel. To think that thou art safe will be to me
An occupation joyous. I'm content.
To-morrow will the Senate be convened;
Till then remain unknown, when we will break,
Thrice welcome guests, on their deliberations.

Conrad. Thy wish shall be my will. Ne'er till this hour,
Could I believe thou didst so truly love—
Thou wert unkind before.

Imel. Nay, chide me not:
But let us part, lest observation's eye
Make foul of what is fair. I'll lead thee hence. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A romantic spot: a Cave in the back ground.
Several Conspirators assembled. Enter COSMO.*

1st. Con. Well, captain, come at last : you have been long absent.

Cosmo. Ay, and on rare sport. My dagger will speak for me.

2d. Con. Be your purse as well gilded, and I am satisfied.

3d. Con. What said Giordano ?

Cosmo. He loaded me with gold ; that is eloquent thanks. Hear me—I expect a visiter on the instant, who will speak of the noble deed I touched on.

1st. Con. Who is he? Giordano ?

Cosmo. No: your old friend, Neri. I beseech you, hear him patiently.

2nd. Con. If this achievement restore our wealth, and give us back our titles, it will be a noble doing.

Cosmo. It will.

1st. Con. Such liberty and absolution too, I hope, that we

may walk in Florence, and bask in the mid-day sun, fearless of the villanous law—not steal into it like hungry rats. 'Tis a galling thing, for men of our mettle to be thus cribbed up.

Cosmo. Would it were over, and well over !

1st. Con. You show great love for Giordano.

Cosmo. The name sounds well with me, and I burn to do its owner service: a name is sometimes as good as a charm. But hush—he comes !

Enter NERI.

Welcome to *our* palace: no gilded domes have we, no costly draperies, nor gaudy pictures to adorn our walls. The sky above us is our canopy, the casing air our halls; and these works of nature more nicely fashioned than art's most choice cunning, are all the embellishments of our domain.

Neri. I like them well.

Cosmo. The fashion changes here, oftener than in the stately palace of the Duke. Each day and night, and each revolving season, changes the drapery. Now shines the sun, then smile the sun and stars: now green, then yellow, are the annual buds. We satiate in variety. But to our present purpose.

Neri. My brave friends, I see you all are men, and though

I have hinted the dotard's downfall, you keep your spirits up like heroes.

Cosmo. So should they; they have passed the ordeal seven times seven.

Neri. From your brave Captain's beginning, I anticipate a rich result. Daring and blood are to him as familiar things.

Cosmo. I thank you for this character; rather let my deeds than your tongue speak for me.

Neri. Let this pass. Since his return, I have seen him—the name I will not trust aloud, even to air, to winging or to pacing things; for it is said, that strange couriers have carried tales of old: therefore, in such a cause, I shall be cautious. Before I speak what he said of you, or propose what should be done anon, retire with me into your cave.

Cosmo. It is like our hearts—secret as the charnel house.

Neri. Then within. [*Exeunt all into the Cave.*

SCENE II.—*The Senate House. The DUKE, GIORDANO, COLONNI, CAVILIDO, and Senators, Attendants, &c. MANIRI in chains and guarded.*

Duke. Conduct the traitor hence. Nay, never speak; Thy gray hairs only, saved thee from the rack.

[*Exit MANIRI, guarded.*

It is decreed : Maniri is immured,
 And all are lodged on whom suspicion breathes.
 Soon for the safety of ourself and state
 The anthem shall arise. We owe thee much.

Gior. Against our foreign and domestic foes,
 I've done a soldier's and a subject's duty,—
 Not more, my liege.

Duke. The reverend traitor was
 The chief adviser in our happy realm :
 He false, it now devolves on us to name
 One wise and loyal. Ere we speak our choice,
 We pray that brave Giordano will retire.

Gior. I take my leave. I soar above my hopes.

[*Aside Exit.*]

Duke. The weighty trust which late the traitor held,
 By one more worthy must with speed be filled—
 That one, my judgment and my heart proclaim
 To be our own victorious general.
 Grave senators, how stand you all disposed ?
 Speak freely each : meets this your approbation ?

Col. It does, my sire—their silence gives approval.

Cav. No ! I oppose : I will not lend my vote
 To raise a victor to such high control :
 I fear the sway his office might insure
 Over the people's mind. Success in war
 Circles the hero in a glare of light,

That dazzles those who move within his sphere.
Civilians, soldiers, all might bow to him ;
Pause at his word, or at his bidding move.

Duke. False are thy fears ; I know Giordano well.

Col. As I can vouch ! from boyhood we have been
In friendship strong as fable ever told.

Give him your voices, friends. Why sit you mute ?

Cav. I prize him dearly, and I hold his deeds
The proudest records on our history's page ;
For these, would yield him all becoming honor.
What is becoming ? Give him wealth immense—
The arch triumphal, titles proud, and love,
Yea boundless as the realm, or as his fame—
But dress no hero in our civil robes.

Duke. Why should you fear ? Does history not record
Examples parallel, and where renown,
As great in council as in tented field,
Has brightly marked the warrior-statesman's course !
Ay, in a land as brave and wise and free,
As the wide globe contains, there's proof supreme.

Cav. I grant you this, but does not history too
Record, that heroes by their country prized,
(And man is prone to love the brave in war)
Have made, without a stepping-stone like this,
Their martial deeds a claim to civil rule,

And won it too? Then tyranny hath marched
With ruthless vengeance, and with sword unsheathed,
Drenching the frightened land in native blood.
Why should I bring you instances to prove,
From ancient times, or e'en in modern days,
The truth and force of my asseveration?—
I say what has been once may be again,
And, though I speak not present fears, I would
Avoid all possibility of fear.

Col. Who else opposes? Silent all!—then none.

Duke. Yea, answer us! who does oppose our choice?—
Who will refuse all honor to the man
That's won his country's battles, and subdued
An insolent foe? Let him arise and speak.

Cav. Will none support me in the vote I give?
Grave Senators, to you I speak; hear me:
I pray ye all, beware. Lend not your votes
To yield such power to an ambitious man,
A daring soldier and the people's idol—
There's danger in 't. Who speaks? None! I'm resigned.

Col. He is alone. I thank ye for my friend.

Duke. No other voice! our motion is approved.
Now give him escort to the Senate-house. [*Exit COLONNI.*]
If he prove faithless none on earth are true:

If he strive not in loyalty and wisdom,
To shed a lustre on our state and throne,
Then never patriot lived.

Re-enter COLONNI and GIORDANO.

Welcome again ;
Our choice, which by the Senate is confirmed,
Bids us salute thee, as our Minister.

Gior. My liege, ambition teaches some to soar
Above their due—not me. I should decline
This high and undeserved proof of love,
Did not thy favor, and the Senate's voice,
Enforce me to the office. As I live
Not for myself, but for my country's weal,
I will support her to my utmost nerve.
We've beat the foe—peace is again restored,
And in its germ, domestic treason's crushed ;
Though here I now put on the civil robe,
I frankly tell, that whensoever I can
Better in field than cabinet serve the state,
I'll leave the luxuries and ease of peace,
To beard the foe.

Duke. Thou'rt living in our heart,

Enter an USHER.

Usher. The fair Imelda, now without, my liege,
Requests an audience in the Senate-house.

Duke. Colonna, pray thee, bid thy sister in.

[*Exeunt COLONNI and USHER.*

We should not see her here, if all were well.

We fear that grief has triumphed o'er her mind.

How, brave Giordano, didst thou leave my child?

Gior. My liege, depressed—but yet not so o'ercome,
That thou shouldst fear despair has stolen her wits.

Duke. How I have loved her tongue cannot express,
And when I saw her beauty budding fair,
E'en like the heathen statuary of old,
I worshipped my own creation. She comes!
Alas, she smiles! we fear it is too true.

Enter IMELDA, attended with COLONNI, BELLA, and MAIDS.

Duke. How dost thou feel, sweet daughter? art thou well?

Imel. Well! ay; look I not well?

Duke. Dost truly speak?

Imel. Yea, better than I look, my sire, I feel.
You did not send to bid my health good morrow!

Duke. We judged it best not to intrude on thee,
Nor vex thy hours of grief.

Imcl. My hours of grief!
I've taught my mind to invent new themes of joy,
And through our palace merriment shall reign
Until it sickens.

Duke. My dearly cherished!
Speak as thou feel'st?

Gior. Why, what does this portend! [*Aside.*

Imcl. Nor words nor looks express my feelings now.
Say, shall I show thee wherefore, sire?

Duke. Yea, do:
For thy proceedings have amazed us much.

[*Exit* IMELDA.

Gior. 'There is no frenzy in her looks or speech. [*Aside.*

Duke. Why, what is this! sawest aught without, my son?

Col. Not I.

Cav. 'Tis strange!

Duke. 'Tis strange indeed, and still we fear.
The tyrant's flatterer of old, who saw
Suspended o'er his head the naked sword,
Felt not the hour so terrible as this.

Re-enter IMELDA and CONRADINE.

Imcl. This is the wherefore!

Duke. What is it we see!

Gior. Am I alive? See I, or breathe, or hear?
What! can the shroud its corse again restore,
Or, can I for a moment be appalled?

[*Aside.*

Duke. O heaven and earth! is this reality?

Conrad. It is reality, and I appear
In body corporal, and in health as strong
As is the stoutest in the Council-chamber;
Or, as the dark Egyptian, when the sun
From Sagittarius shines upon his land.
And Theban winds salubriate the clime.

Duke. Thy hand, that we may grasp it, and be sure
The eyes do not deceive the other senses;
For legends tell that visions have appeared
In form as true. It is—it is my son!

Gior. This is the mystery of last night revealed. [*Aside.*

Duke. My child—we cannot speak!—for joy, my lords—
Where are your voices? O, this harvest home
More precious is that seed-time e'er presaged.

Gior. My honored liege, I know not how to speak;
His re-appearance hath so touched my heart,
That I am quite out-mastered: yet, I greet thee.
More can I say? Yes, more, much more, my friend:
Long may I live in such a heart as thine.
I turn, to wish thee worlds of joy, fair dame.

Col. Think not because I stood entranced so long,
That I esteem my new-found kinsman less
Than the most loving noble in the realm—
I bless this day that gives thee back again.

Cav. My friend, my friend! with wonder I've been mute,
And even now, I cannot speak my joy.

Conrad. For this, your proof of love, I thank you, friends;
And, as in after days you yet may read
The unturned pages of my book of life,
You shall not find one blot or stain thereon,
To change the love that welcomes my return.

Duke. My child, thou dost not speak.

Imel. I cannot, sire;
And yet, had I the power, I should request——

Conrad. Nay speak, Imelda.

Duke. Ay, and bravely speak.

Imel. That Conradine relate the chance, by which
He was preserved, and safe restored to us.

Duke. So poor a favor thou wilt not refuse.

Conrad. The battle o'er, it was my first desire
To view the bleeding pictures on the field,
And hear the tales related by the serfs.
With this intent, I changed my dress for that
My valet wore, and, thus disguised, set out.
An hour thereafter the report went round,

That I was murdered and my servant fled ;
 On whom suspicion rested of the deed.
 On hearing this, I judged how it might be—
 And 'twas—the servant for his master fell.
 Unknown to all I changed my dress again,
 (Remember, 'twas my first essay in arms,
 The sooner then you will forgive this act,)
 To test what soldiers would report of me,
 For truth is always spoken of the dead ;
 But, when I learned, that couriers were sent
 To Florence and my father—I resolved
 To gladden those who might lament my fall.
 Last night in haste and secret I arrived ;
 Yet, still disguised, an audience I obtained
 With fair Imelda—she, my friends, may tell
 Why the revelation was postponed till now.

Gior. Henceforth there's nothing certain in this world!

[*Aside.*

Cav. There surely is a just and unseen arm,
 Which shields the guiltless from the assassin's steel.

Duke. It is a tale of wonder. We are glad.

Conrad. Not for myself do I rejoice I'm safe,
 But, that I may for all thy favor, show
 My love and loyalty—though first for thee,
 Feel I the wealth of life. Thou art not sad!

Col. I cannot speak the great content I feel;
But like my sister will be mute ; she stands
With cheeks as crimson as the Persian rose,
And her blue eye is beaming with a tear,
Like the sweet violet when bathed in dew.

Duke. We pause to hear three speak.

Imel. What shall I say ?

If aught there be thou thinkest I should say,
Pray speak for me.

Conrad. Hast thou no boon to ask ?

Imel. Hast *thou* no boon to ask ?

Conrad. Yes, I have one,
But my o'erflowing heart can find no words
To give it utterance.

Duke. We wonder not :

Then, let us on our mind so settle yours,
That we may take the true impression thence;
And be the just interpreter of both.

Conrad. I could not trust a better than my liege.

Imel. I could not trust a fitter than my sire.

Duke. Then list, my court ;—here we bestow our child,
And they themselves shall name the day, on which
The rights of marriage shall be solemnized.
Nay, speak not now : we know you would but thank us :
Thanks from an untouched heart, unwelcome are ;

From those who feel, as we perceive you do,
They are too powerless to express the thought.

Gior. Yea, take thy thanks, else live unthanked for ever.

[*Aside.*

Conrad. Then silence be my good thanks-bearer now.

Gior. Hail, happy pair! health, joy, and love to both,
As strong and boundless as our loyalty.

Duke. Enough, enough; now let the trumpet speak,
Let dulcet sounds and merry peals awake.

Thy hand: my lords, thus break we up our court.

Flourish. Exeunt.

SCENE III. GIORDANO'S House. Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. He has returned, Imelda is his bride,
And thus, two cherished thoughts at once are crushed!
Each step I tread is on a treacherous mine;
To me, suspicion, scorpion-like may cling,
Perhaps this hour, and murder all my hopes.—
My brain's on fire, and tortures rack my mind!
They shall not riot in each others' arms,
And I be cast despised to dark perdition.
I must succeed, and wear the ducal crown,
Else with my vengeance will I shake the world:

And therefore on the instant must resolve
To fix the climax of a bold achievement—
This is already sure—he dies. My friends.

Enter CONRADINE and COLONNI.

I greet ye both, but thou above all name
Art dear, my friend, to every loyal heart :
How fares it with thee now ?—

Col. He is caressed ;

Each one he meets, more loving than before,
Scarce gives him time to spend a happy hour,
Where most his heart inclines.

Conrad. I must confess,

This day has brought assurance of esteem
From high and low, beyond my merits far :
This joyous day has fixed my future fate,
And I am blessed.

Gior. Thou art a bridegroom now !

Anon we'll have a festival of note,
And we shall hail thee husband of a dame,
The pride and pattern of her gentle sex.

Conrad. My heart confesses her excelling worth.

Col. Nay, prate not of 't ; while thou dost talk, she waits :
Let us begone, I'll lead thee to her presence.

Conrad. My heart is there already.

Gior. Fare thee well.

[*Exeunt* CONRADINE, and COLONNI.]

He dies! he stands between me and the sun.
 A thousand doubts are fretting in my mind,
 Which almost bid me pause in my career.
 I've found one heart that gold will not enslave—
 The hireling keeper of Maniri's cell—
 What now?

Enter BELLA.

Bel. My lord, I've stolen a moment hither,
 To bid thee act, and never fear this chance.

Gior. Nothing shall daunt me now, fair monitress.
 Where is thy husband? Bella, knows he this?

Bel. My lord, he does not: he has not returned,

Gior. Does Cosmo wait without?

Bel. He does, my lord.

Gior. Bring him to me.

Bel. Thou wilt not chide nor fret. [Exit BELLA.]

Gior. I will march onward to the golden top,
 Nor pause at trifles more. The deed that failed,
 Is fixed and proved upon Maniri's head,
 And dark suspicion sleeps.

Re-enter BELLA, with COSMO.

My noble captain,
The late mischance has stirred my heart anew,
To strike a bolder and a surer blow.

Cosmo. My lord, it was an unforeseen event :
I never dreamed that for a selfish end—
To hear, unknown, base soldiers speak his praise,
He, with a servant, would have changed his dress,

Gior. Thou didst thy utmost, and I blame thee not :
But now, good sir, thou must strike home, and sure.
There is a something working in my brain,
And that the great conception may have birth,
I need your friendly aid. By a device
I'll from the palace send this love-sick knight :
Near at my call be both. I'll give thee soon
The knowledge and advantage of my scheme.

Cosmo. I am prepared.

Bel. And I.

Gior. I know you well.

Bel. What may it be, my lord ?

Gior. I know not yet :

Stay not for askings. Go : I will resolve.

[Exeunt BELLA, and COSMO.]

What should it be?—A letter I will forge,
Before his nuptials can be solemnized,
That business speaks his presence with his sire—
And then, must Cosmo mark both time and place,
To find an easy and unwary prey.
I will not live in fear. His presence has
Rebuked me often in my great emprise;
But never will I pause or falter more
In my career. There is no failing now—
This, Conradine, shall be thy day of doom.

[*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Palace. The scene opens and discovers IMELDA rising from a Harp, and CONRADINE seated on an Ottoman.*

Conrad. My love, I pray thee, touch thy harp again.

Imel. Not now ; for more I feel inclined to hear
The music of thy voice.

Conrad. I will not urge thee ;
Yet when thou wak'st such language from these strings,
It seems as music bade my bosom swell,
And every thought aspire above this world.

Imel. In speaking thus, you mean to give me praise.

Conrad. In speaking thus, I only tell my mind,
For thou'rt above my praise. O, my sweet love !
Thou'rt all I live for.

Imel. Art not over-fond ?

Conrad. What now could better fill our thoughts than love ?
What other theme should please when thou art near ?

Imel. Thou art a hero, let us speak of war.

Conrad. Leave blood and battles to ambitious minds.

Imel. Who knows what's love?

Conrad. The world is full of it ;

There's not a living thing but loves its kind,
And nothing is 'twixt heaven and earth so true.
Sweet ever-living love ! and O, as pure
As wakening zephyrs, or as opening flowers !

Imel. It ne'er was praised by man so much before.

Conrad. It is great nature's first and sweet conception ;
It is God's gift, to prove he thinks of man ;
It is the link that binds us to Himself !
And in those hearts which have such cause as I,
To feel its heavenly power and influence,
It lives supreme : it rules in every thought,
It dwells in every vein—by day, by night,
In fiery youth and chilly age the same—
Heaven's first and best, and aye-enduring blessing !

Imel. Thou speak'st as thou hadst felt it.

Conrad. Hadst ! Do feel,
And with that pure and holy inspiration
None else could fire. Thou wilt be ever thus !

Imel. As I have been, my lord—as now I am,
Unchanged, unchanging will my heart remain,
And thine, I hope, will ever be the same.

Conrad. To hint a doubt is to imply mistrust :
My life ! thou surely wilt not be unkind.

Imel. As well as jealousy, love has its fear :
The more we love, the more do nameless fears
Distress the mind—of these alone I speak.
I could not love, where I would not repose
My wealth, my thoughts, and fame.

Conrad. O, that is kind,
And hath removed, more than I ever doubted :
But when shall come the day that makes us one ?

Imel. I do not know : I've scarcely thought of it.

Conrad. To-morrow ?

Imel. Not so soon.

Conrad. Call ye it soon !
In the delicious dream of that blessed time,
I've spent long days and never-ending nights,
And counted moments, longer for the counting.
O, I could tell thee of perplexing thoughts,
Of fears which shook me, and of hopes that smiled.

Imel. And I, like thee, might speak of hopes and fears.

Conrad. Ev'n as thou art—be ever thus : But when ?

Imel. Of this, my lord, we'll think some other time.

Conrad. My sweet, fair love !

Enter BELLA.

Why com'st so rudely hither ?

Bel. This instant has a messenger arrived,
And in such haste, that scarcely had he breath,
To say this letter was for thee, my lord.

Conrad. It is my brother's character.

Imel. My lord !

'Thy color changes, and thy looks are sad :
Pray, what is this ? Ill news ?

Conrad. Leave us. [*Exit BELLA.*] My love,
This is a wayward world ; the brightest shine
At times hath rain.

Imel. What new mischance is this ?

Conrad. A moment since, I hoped thou wouldst have had
A double father ; now, my love, I fear
That I myself, no longer have a father.

Imel. What says the letter ? It is sudden news.

Conrad. My aged, honored and revered sire,
Approaches dissolution ; 'tis his wish,
Which by my brother is in this expressed,
'That I be near him when his end arrives,
To meet his blessing, and to close his eyes.

Imel. Thou art his favorite son.

Conrad. Would I were not,
If that might save him from the hour of death.

Imel. To all that hour must come. Yet there is hope.

Conrad. I blame myself, that I unthinkingly,

In the sweet joy of meeting thee, my love,
Forgot to send discredit to the tale
Of my decease.

Imel. Be not so self-accusing.

Conrad. If it hath reached him in the fearful hour
Of nature's struggle, as perchance it did!—

Enter the DUKE.

My royal sire, so I may call thee now.

Duke. We've heard the news, too hapless and too true.

Imel. Father!

Duke. Compose thyself, my child. Nay, nay—
What should be done?

Conrad. Thither I'll go forthwith,
Attended only with one trusty squire.

Duke. Thy heart must be thy prompter; have thy will.

Conrad. No longer will I tarry: fare ye well.
To thee, my love,—again I turn to thee;
A strange foreboding haunts my spirits now,
And makes me sigh that we must part. Farewell.

[*Exeunt the DUKE and CONRADINE.*

Imel. Farewell. Again we part! [*One clap of thunder.*]
O, horror, horror!
This is prophetic of a dismal end,

For heaven's loud thunder speaks. Alas, alas!
Angels of mercy, guard him on his way!

Enter BELLA,

Is he gone?

Bel. Yes; I heard his horse's hoofs
Sound wild impatience in the palace court.
He boldly spurred the gallant steed, and, fleetly
As a proud ship impelled by quarter winds,
He onward rode—then hushed was every sound.

Imel. O, hapless, hapless me!

Bel. Cheer up, my lady;
From clouded mornings often come bright days,
And purest rain falls from the darkest sky;
So cheer thee then, and I presage, ere long,
Thy lover safely will return to thee,
With pleasant news and sunshine on his brow.

Imel. I fondly hope, what hope may never give.
Kind Heaven, protect him in his sad career,
And bring him safely to my love again.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. GIORDANO'S House.

Enter NERI and BELLA.

Neri. What! is this so?

Bel. Yes; all, as I have told.

Neri. There's too much human kindness in his heart;
That I must change, and turn his nature wild,
Else sail we, wife, upon a sea of peril.
It grieves me, too, to hear him laugh at fear,
And boast of courage he possesses not.
I'll make him cruel, else I'll tame myself,
And turn confessor to some silly girl.

Bel. O, what a contrast is between you twain!

Neri. I think there's not a mortal in the land,
Who, if he saw Giordano's lily heart,
Would not condemn him for so poor a tenant.

Bel. Pray urge him on.

Neri. I will; and if his soul
Be not encased in atmosphere of truth,
Of innocence and feeble-heartedness,
From which, like our great globe, nought can escape,
I'll change him, wife, and thou shalt see it soon.

Bel. That soon, can never soon enough arrive,

For should our daring project be revealed,
What will become of us?

Neri. Fear nothing, wife:

This deed achieved, thy husband and thyself
Will both be mighty in the realm. Thus far,
Thou hast done service to the cause. Bear up;
The time is near when all will be secure.

Bel. I would to Heaven thy words may be confirmed!

Neri. I hear a step; again! hush. Get thee hence.

[*Exit BELLA.*

I'll move aside, and over-hear his prate.

Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. Now he is gone, and I can freely breathe!
When next we hear of him—'twill be from Heaven:
I counselled Cosmo—he fails not again.
The Duke and daughter die, that is resolved:
To fondly love, where I so deeply hate,
Is treason 'gainst my passions, and is death.
Colonna? he shall live. I fear not him;
He is a fond and unsuspecting fool,
And I'll content him, though I wear the crown.
Let Neri fret; by Heaven! he shall not die.

NERI *advances.*

Hah !

Neri. Why dost start, why wouldst escape from me?
Why cover up thy breast, as 'twere to hide
The thoughts within? Thine eyes are inward turned,
Fearful to look on me, lest they reflect
The broodings of thy mind.

Gior. What should I fear?

Why question me?

Neri. My lord, excuse my speech;
For in a cause like this, it must be plain.
Why dost thou pale? why doth the blood now seek,
And then forsake thy cheeks? wilt answer me?

Gior. Command the ocean in its rage to calm,
And bid the hurricane abate its wrath;
If they obey, then will I hold the rein
Upon my blood, and with the self-same ease
Control it as I guide my horse: but no,—
The blood within is like the wind without;
Both have their sway beyond all mortal power,

Neri. Is this philosophy? Your erudition!

Gior. It has been proved by scientific sages.

Neri. I hate all sciences, and sages too;

Why should our great resolves commune with either?
Let's speak of that which will advantage us,
Nor heed those *sages*, who will turn their brains
To find the gender of a plant or worm,
And waste a life to anatomize a fly—
Pish on them all! What think'st thou now, my lord?

Gior. I almost yield before thy force of words.

Neri. If thou couldst set thy foot where now I stand,
And let the earth bear such a heart as mine,
Which neither tongue nor steel could e'er appal,
The envenomed bowl, nor midnight murder scare,
We should in this so nobly move to-night,
That morning's sun would hail us masters here.
But, as it is, I fear that we will fail.

Gior. Fail! we shall not.

Neri. Yes, we will surely fail,
If thou be not both resolute and brave,
Or if thou act, as I o'erheard thee say.

Gior. Why dost upbraid me thus? What overheard'st?

Neri. Who in the palace shall escape our swords?

Gior. None—yes, only one.

Neri. Who?

Gior. My friend—Colomi.

Neri. By Heaven, that wretch shall be the first to die!
Swift as the darts the fabled archer shot,

Which, as they flew, took fire, my sword shall pierce
His heart.

Gior. I am resolv'd—my friend must die :
None shall escape the havoc of that hour.

Neri. That tone I've heard before, but trust it not,
Till I have proof.

Gior. Demand what proof thou wilt.

Neri. And if I should, my lord, thou'lt quail again.

Gior. Wilt thou obey me ? Answer, sir.

Neri. My lord !

Gior. Sir, I command ye : ask of me a proof.

Neri. I am silent.

Gior. Thou shalt not trifle thus.

Beware, I say ; I'll strike thee else to hell.

Neri. My lord, art mad ? What wouldst ?

Gior. Propose a deed,
More damnable than even thou hast done,
More soul-accursing than the demons know,
And I will do't, to prove I am a man.

Neri. First answer me : where's Conradine ?

Gior. In hell :

When thou wert gone, the devil sent him back—

Neri. This I have heard, my lord ; and that you forged
A silly scrawl, to send him from the court.
What motive had you for an act like this ?

Gior. By Heaven! thou question'st as I were thy slave!
Do not provoke me further.

Neri. Speak, my lord.

Gior. It either was, or my racked mind conceived,
That in his presence nothing could succeed;
I dared not vent my hate and kill him here;
That would have roused suspicion from her den,
Where now she sits, as mute and dark as death.
His father's house is three days journey hence,
The which, I prophesy, he'll never reach.
Cosmo succeeds—I look for him anon.

Neri. As thou speak'st, like an evil thought, he comes.

Enter COSMO.

Gior. Is he dead? Say?

Cosmo. My lord.

Gior. Speak out, and quickly;
Declare he's dead, and give my heart content.

Cosmo. No; he escaped me, but I slew his squire.

Gior. Death and destruction! Double gifted slave,—
His servant slain—and what is that to me?
Thou art not fit to live; go, seek his soul—
And yet, too poor for me to kill.

Neri. Good Heaven!

Cosmo. Wilt hear me, my good lord!

Gior. Peace, villain, peace!

Life's whirlwind is all spent, and I am—nothing.

There's not a slave who battens in the sun,

That's half so base as thou art.

Neri. [*To COSMO.*] How is this? [*They speak apart.*]

Gior. Now I repent of all my deep designs,

And curse ambition, which has urged me on.

Could I recall my pristine state of mind,

With feelings pure and conscience undefiled,

How gladly then would I lie down to die;

And leave dominion to the bolder soul.

My schemes achieved, what should I then have been?

What is the brightest name on history's page?

When death approaches, who can then cry, "stay,"

Or nod the head, and awe him to subjection,

As man does millions of his fellow men?

O, none! the monarch, like the slave, must yield,

And give his life without one moment's pause!

Neri. [*Apart to COSMO.*] Art sure of this?

Cosmo. Most sure.

Neri. Then it is well,

And we will prosper yet; but heed him not:

He's inconsistent as a dream, or woman.

The fit will pass, so think not of't, nor tell;

But hasten to your friends. We'll meet anon :

They are assembled in the Sibyl's cave. [Exit COSMO.]

Gior. I've often thought upon this world—and wondered!
 What is ambition, why are men ambitious,
 And what avail their petty hopes and fears,
 Their brief authority and baseless pride?
 A few years pass—then, where are the renowned?
 Ask the dank charnel-house,—no voice responds:
 Ask the vain living,—we may hear, they were,
 But now are gone, and with them is entombed
 Each aim and action of life's fretful hour:
 The world has spared them, and regrets it not!
 The mausoleum proud, and towering pile,
 Crumble to dust; yea, all memorials die.

Neri. [*Advancing.*] What think'st, my lord? Wilt thou
 put down the helm,
 And now abandon this, thy dukedom voyage?

Gior. I have no skill to guide my fragile bark.

Neri. Not to the starting port—so steer thee on:
 I will be pilot. Where's thy courage?

Gior. Drowned!

Neri. Then, like a craven, also drown thyself.

Gior. Know ye to whom ye speak, sir?

Neri. I do not.

I took thee for a man—thou saidst thou wert;

But now, thy looks and fears belie thy speech :
I know thee not.

Gior. What! thou dost surely know,
For thee, I placed upon one single chance,
My life, nay more, my spotless reputation.
Our deed discovered, and that is most sure,
My fate is fixed—I must fall headlong down
The deep abyss of infamy and shame.

Neri. Pray, what new fit is this? Canst thou explain?

Gior. I've been thy friend, and made thee what thou art ;
Then bear with me.

Neri. I give thee thanks for all.

Gior. I ne'er forsook thee ; when thy ardent mind
Did deeds, which nature shudders to recite,
I stood 'twixt thee and law ; and made thy heart
Seem fair with men, that else had been a hell.

Neri. I do confess it, and am thy debtor.

Gior. I've borne from thee, what man has never dared
Before accuse me of. Do I lack courage?
Was it by lack of heart, that in the field,
Ere I had scarcely thrice seven summers seen,
I did such deeds as raised me to command?
Was't lack of courage, that, the late campaign
Led on by me, subdued the insolent foe,
And made him crave, on abject terms, a peace?

Or, was 't by lack of courage, that I'm now
First in the state, as I was in the camp?

Neri. I know thee well, and in a loyal cause
None can out-match thee; yet, in one like this,
Thy conscience rules thy valor: were't not so,
Thou wouldst march onward boldly, to the goal
Of thy renown, and free me from suspense.

Gior. And thou know'st, too, had it not been for thee,
I never should have sought to seize the crown.

Neri. It was my boundless love that urged thee on.

Gior. Thy love has lost me.

Neri. My love shall make thee:

To-night, with my advice, thou art a duke.

Gior. Dost say so?

Neri. Yes, I pledge my soul upon it.

Gior. I gain new hopes.

Neri. 'Then gain new courage too,
And thou shalt reign in Florence.

Gior. Has he gone?

Neri. Cosmo, my lord?—Yes, to the Sibyl's cave.

Gior. I lost my wits, and I forgot to question.

Neri. That I did.

Gior. Well? What said he? Is there hope?

Neri. The servant dead, the cotquean rich in life,

Impelled his courser on with double speed,
And fleet as fair report, was off and gone.

Gior. That doth unburden me !

Neri. Bear up, and bravely.

I've touched some men of moment on the guard,
And all are anxious for the glorious hour.

Gior. What can I say, my friend, or how express
My feelings for this love? I'm thine for ever.

Neri. The city's ripe, and all the country round;
None breathe aloud, but each rebellious looks;
And were one tongue to herald its heart-thoughts,
I would speak for millions. Succeed we will.

Gior. Thank Heaven! if this be so, I am a man.

Neri. I speak not unadvisedly, but know,
On certain proof, how stands the country's mind;
For I have seen some citizens of note,
Who lent their ears, as if the tale were life.

Gior. I'm screwed again unto the sounding pitch.
If here, irresolution ever dwelt,
It lives no longer. Me, my friend, imbue
With thy courageous and determined spirit;
For now, my heart is like the Caspian sea,
Which from a thousand streams its wave receives,
And nothing disembogues. Thou art my friend.

Neri. Now art thou worthy of the coming glory.

Gior. Ay! here I cast all pity and remorse
To the infernal gods—and freight my mind
With strength, revenge, with cruelty and daring;
All of that manly and immortal cast,
Which now becomes the ambition of my soul;
From which, if I do wince, great Jove, forget me!

Neri. Amen!

Gior. Speak out; by thee I will be ruled.

Neri. All are convened within the Sibyl's cave:
Let's thither go, and not a moment lose.

Gior. Ev'n fate's despite, I am resolved to dare.

Neri. To-night, to-night—our watch-word be, to-night.

Gior. To-night, to-night—to glory or to death.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A romantic spot; a Cave in the back ground.
Several Conspirators assembled. Enter COSMO.*

Cosmo. HUSH! they approach. Give them all ear.

Enter GIORDANO and NERI.

Gior. My friends,

I greet you all with best acknowledgments.

'Tis not alone, that I've by Neri heard

Your dauntless resolution; and I see

Stamped on each face the daring of the heart.

[*To COSMO.*] I grieve, that in the fury of chagrin

I gave such lawless license to my tongue,

As doubtless festers on the high-born soul;

But think no more of it, and be my friend.

Cosmo. Thy noble nature condescends too far;
The offence is past, and all's forgotten now.

Neri. Then, is the luckless breach entire again.

Gior. Some influential men await without,
With whom we should unite ; brave spirits all.
Shall they, my friends, have audience ?

Cosmo. Yes, surely,
If they can serve the state and cause.

Gior. They can.

Cosmo. Deny them not admittance.

Gior. My heart's friend,
Be thine this task.

Neri. My lord, thy servant ever. [Exit NERI.]

A pause, then re-enter NERI, followed by several Citizens.

Gior. Welcome. My trusty, brave, and cherished friends,
I need not now repeat again to you,
The sum and secret, you've from Neri heard ;
Yet, give me ear, that I may once essay
To speak the wrongs which force us to rebel.

Neri. Speak on, my lord.

Cosmo. Thy word to us is law.

Gior. Think not that selfish aims impel me on ;
No ! 'tis our dear and bleeding country's wrongs,
That call in thunder-tone for wide revenge.

Neri. 'Tis these alone, which instigate my heart,

To doom our proud oppressor's overthrow—
And I may answer for my valiant friends,
Who, robbed of liberty, life's richest boon,
Thirst for revenge upon the tyrant Duke.

Gior. Let us succeed, as we most surely will,
Again shall all your privileges be fixed
On such a firm and lasting pedestal,
That nothing, save Omnipotence himself,
Will e'er reduce you to your present thrall.

Conspir. All hail—Giordano!

Citizens. Hail to thee—Giordano!

Gior. I speak to you as men; and brave you are,
With hearts and hands prepared to strike for freedom.
The richest blood of olden times, has drenched
Our own loved land in freedom's holy cause:
The world applauds the daring of our sires,
And in each heart their monument is built.
We may rank with them in a future age,
If heaven should smile upon our great emprise;
And it will smile, if to ourselves we're true.

Conspir. We shall have liberty.

Citizens. And wide revenge.

Gior. O, could the noble Medician line,
From their sepulchral slumbers start to life,
How would they gaze upon our abject state!

Yea, as they gazed, their burning tears of blood
Would overflow the city, and arouse
Each mute and lifeless thing to shout aloud,
Death to oppressors, liberty to man!

Neri. This speaks a brave and patriotic heart.

Gior. What! shall our Florence, that for ages was
Ruled by her free-born sons, who held the reins,
Not as Dukes,—Dukes! tyrants I should have said,
But, by their fellow-citizens' consent,
Be lorded over thus, by royal blood?
Shall we ignobly crouch, and see this Duke,
(Whose family but as yesterday hath been,
By German monarch's power and Papal guile,
Placed on a guilty throne,) with sceptered hand
Enslave the people, and abuse their laws?
And, at his nod, shall we his vassals bow,
Or, rise like patriots and redress our wrongs?

Neri. Each word is magic; I am all a-fire,
To do a mighty deed.

Citizens. Death to all Dukes.

Cosmo. His eloquence is all-convincing proof.

Neri. Our wrongs are countless as the stars of eve,
And black as midnight are our tyrant's crimes.

Gior. Such hearts should only live in such a time.
They boast of ancient blood and noble birth!

What wondrous virtue has their blood from ours?
Where is nobility, save in the mind?
My friends, I speak to you on certain proofs,
Which have convinced me of such losel deeds,
That language burns, yet has not words to name
Our festering wrongs, and their outrageous crimes.

Neri. Our spirits flash like lightning from the cloud,
To strike and blast them.

Cosmo. We are doubly fixed.

Gior. It much behooves us, in a cause like this,
To move with secrecy, despatch and care;
But, pardon me, I do not mean to question
The great resolves by which you are combined;
Then, pray you all, retire with my good friend,
That, by a sacred covenant you seal
Each lip, and fix perdition on the soul
That breaks it. *Neri*, thou wilt lead them in.

[*Exeunt all into the Cave, except GIORDANO.*

They're gone! I thank thee, Destiny of man,
And thee, Ambition, that I worship, thank!
No longer do I fear my luke-warm heart,
Which often has my aspirations checked.
My bosom now is fraught with stern resolves—
Remorseless 'tis—here dwell all qualities
That man distinguish from the meaner clay,

Who breathe, and boast, and strut, and wear his form.
Hark, hark! again! 'tis done, and they approach.

Re-enter NERI, COSMO, CONSPIRATORS and CITIZENS.

Neri. It is performed, and all have freely sworn :
This is the cup, rich with the purple blood,
Warm from each vein.

Gior. My friends, that ye are men
Of noble daring, and high-reaching souls,
Each word and action, yea, each look, bespeaks.
When I craved blood, ye freely ope'd your veins :
That tells your virtues. Come—look in this goblet!
Mark how the blood congeals! stand forth, the one
Who can distinguish, or can separate
His own from this condition.

Cosmo. We cannot.

Gior. None? I beseech ye, friends, consider this
An emblem of ourselves—indivisible.

Neri. We shall, my lord.

Gior. Lo! see within this wall
There is a secret and a dark recess;
Approach!

Cosmo. As dark as is a charnel-house.

Gior. Whatever enters is as in the grave.

I pray ye, friends, entomb the chalice there :—
Stay, fellow bondmen, think well on the terms.

Cosmo. What are the terms?

Gior. This is the throne of silence.

If Neri place it on that pedestal,
Now, with the full consent of all around,
It is a seal of secrecy and silence.
This is a charmed spot, and two betide
Whoever breaks the Sibyl's requisition.
With one consent ye freely do accord?

Cosmo. We do.

Gior. Then place it there.

Neri. 'Tis done, my lord.

Gior. There's nought 'neath Heaven so silent as the grave!
Ye swear to hide, deep in your bosom's core,
This plot, e'en as the soul-interred thought.

Omnes. We swear!

Gior. By hopes of future bliss.

Omnes. We swear!

Gior. Amen! Our force is strong; we shall succeed,
If my poor service, ever at command,
Can aught avail; and when the yawning seas,
Which so beset our dear-loved native ship,
Are lulled to peace, the people's voice shall then,
Both free and unrestrained, appoint a pilot.

Neri. Thou art the noblest Florentine, my lord ;
'Tis thou, and thou alone, shalt hold the helm.

Gior. The army lies encamped a few miles hence,
And at my nod it is resolved to march.

Cosmo. Thou art the man, hereafter shall be Duke.

Neri. All hail, Giordano ! ruler that shall be.

Gior. No more, I pray thee—it is understood.
Despatch is victory, but delay is death ;
Then let us boldly strike. Our patriot deed
Will so alarm the Duke, and awe the Senate,
That long ere either summons nerve to move,
Each castle, fortress, citadel and tower,
Will call us masters.—Friends, I cry despatch !

Neri. Despatch our motto—wear it on your hearts.

Gior. What is arranged, and what is still to do,
I leave with thee, and with my honest friend,
While I forthwith proceed unto the palace,
And mark how lies our course.

Neri. What is the hour ?

Gior. Midnight.

Cosmo. The meeting place ?

Gior. My house ; and Neri,
Who is my counsellor and dearest friend,
Will lead ye thither, and mean time devise
Such plans as intervening hours require.

Away, brave souls, away ; nor rest nor sleep
Shall this heart know, till freedom is achieved.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Palace. Enter the DUKE and COLONNI,
opposite.*

Duke. My son !

Col. A wounded man is hither brought,
So much with gaping stabs and blood disguised,
By none around has he been recognised.

Duke. Well, what of that ? For such unruly times,
Is aught unnatural, although to nature
It speaks rebellion ?

Col. Sire, he strangely talks ;
In broken accents, and by gestures vague,
(For scarcely hath he breath to speak or live,)
Reveals all is not right.

Duke. So ! lead us to him.

Col. Come, question quickly, else he may be dead.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Palace. Enter IMELDA and BELLA.*

Imel. What are the guesses, pray ?

Bel. Some think he is
A traveller, who, by villains hath been robbed ;
While others fancy that he is the squire
Who bore thy lover company.

Imel. O, Heaven !

Bel. Be not distressed, for this is but surmise.

Imel. Yet bare surmise, in such a case as this,
Is horrible. Bella, can he not speak ?

Bel. But incoherently. [*Aside.*] I do repent,
And curse the gilded trash that bought my soul.

Imel. O, much I fear that there is something wrong.

Bel. E'en now thy royal father questions him,
And on the instant, doubtless, will return
To calm thy fears.

Imel. At parting I was sad,
And dreadful omens spoke in fearful tones ;
Now, this mischance seems to embody all
My worst imaginings in worst of shapes.
Divin'st thou aught ?

Bel. I cannot guess, my lady.

Enter the DUKE.

Imel. What hast discovered, father ?

Duke. He is the squire

Who with thy love so lately journeyed hence.

Imel. Mercy !

Duke. Fear nothing ; Conradine is safe.

Imel. Kind Heaven, I thank thee ! Father, tell me all.

Duke. We know not more : but strongly we suspect,
There is fresh treason stirring in the state.

Retire, while we proceed unto the cell

Where lies Maniri. Doubts are gathering o'er us,

Which we from him may have confirmed or stilled.

Imel. Good Heaven, conduct us through this fearful time !

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *A Dungeon.* MANIRI, *in chains.*

Man. Who could have thought that this would be my doom !
That I, who from green youth to wintry age
Had served the state, would in a dungeon close
A life of useful toil. No traitorous aim
Had ever being here. O that the world

Might, from my undeserved fate, behold
The ingratitude of man. Perchance I stood
Before the sun and an ambitious mind,
Who, for my place, has charged me with rebellion.
Hark! hark! the door unbars; some one approaches,
I know not what new doom awaits me now.

Enter the DUKE.

Duke. Canst look us in the face?

Man. Through the dim light
That sickly lives within my prison-house,
I gaze on thee; yea, were the brilliant sun
Shedding his golden beams full on thy brow,
Should not avoid thine eye.

Duke. Is guilt so bold?

Man. I never wronged thee: by my hoary hairs,
And by my name, which spotless was till now;
Yea, by the love I bore and bear thee still,
Before high Heaven's all-searching eye, avouch
That in intent or act, I never wronged thee.

Duke. Not in reality—thy hireling failed.

Man. Failed! what failed?

Duke. Yes! and Conradine still lives.

Man. Upon my knees, protecting powers, I thank thee!

Now will my innocence be proved, for he
Can speak how I have loved him, and can tell
That I have doted on him as my son.

O, thanks, kind Heaven! for now indeed, there's hope,
I may not in my wintry age descend
Into the grave, stained with a traitor's name.
Where is he now?

Duke. Alas! we cannot say;
To learn from thee, has been our errand hither.

Man. From me! what do I know? I'm ignorant.

Duke. Thou know'st he scarcely had returned from war,
(Ere he could turn a thought to thee, or else,)
When he set out to see his father die,—
For such a hapless message was received—
And thither bound, he was in Arno's vale
This day attacked by some rebellious hand:
Thank Heaven! he 'scaped, although his servant fell.

Man. Returned from war! attacked in Arno's vale!
Mysterious all! I do not comprehend.

Duke. Why did ye this?

Man. It was no act of mine.
I am amazed! Think, what converse had I,
Or could have had, with villains, here pent up?
As I am guiltless of the last attempt,
So was I also of the first, my liege.

Duke. [*Aside.*] Is this the face of guilt? it cannot be!
If thou didst not, who could have been so base?

Man. That I am guiltless, I again aver,
But who is guilty, there's no certain proof:
Yet, look to my accuser.

Duke. Ha! what's this?

Man. Yes, look to him.

Duke. What! know'st thou aught? Speak out.

Man. I say no more.

Duke. Unfold thy heart before us.

Man. 'Tis ever yours, yet nothing certain knows;
But I have watched him with a lynx-eye gaze,
And read his thoughts, and therefore do suspect.

Duke. Tush, tush! suspicion merely: not one charge
Canst bring against his sun-encircled name?
Think'st that aspersing him, will prove thee guiltless?

Man. I shall say nothing further of myself;
I am adjudged guilty by my peers,
And quietly yield unto my hapless fate.

Duke. [*Aside.*] More, and still more, our heart inclines to
him;
Each word and look assures us he is wronged.
We are resolved. My ancient friend.

Man. My sire!

Duke. Doubts have this day so settled on our mind,

That we believe thou mayst be innocent :
On one condition, therefore, we will open
Thy dungeon bars.

Man. Sire, what is this ! name it.

Duke. That thou before the Senate will appear,
To establish there, not plead, thy innocence,
Which, if thou fail to do, thy doom is death.

Man. Is there a chance that I may yet be free,
And stand acquitted of this horrid crime ?
To live to see that day, were life enough !

Duke. Dost thou consent ?

Man. With thanks and gladness, sire.

Duke. Jailer, attend !

Man. Bless thee, my reverend monarch !

Enter a JAILER.

Duke. Strike off his fetters. Now the door is open.

Jailer. This makes me glad.

Duke. Wherefore ?

Jailer. If my liege permit,
Before thee and Giordano I will speak.

Man. Now hope more brightly smiles.

Duke. Villain, beware !

Yet we'll confront thee with our minister.

Thy life's in danger, if thy words be false.
Doubts gather thicker o'er us. Now, lead on.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *The Palace. Enter GIORDANO.*

Gior. Although I feel the hour of carnage near,
My friend's bold challenge and my great designs,
O'er top all else. Ambition reigns supreme,
And rallies round its citadel, the heart,
The sternest passions, all in fierce array.
I am not what I was; my nature's changed,
And every feeling that once held control,
Yields to my dream of glory. What is this?
Who is't comes hither! Hah! Yea, let them come.

Enter the DUKE and MANIRI.

Duke. My friend, with cheek unblanched, with shrinkless
eye,
With voice unfaltering, and in look sincere,
I pray thee answer us: believ'st him guilty?

Gior. Your grace amazes me; this lawless act,

So far o'ersteps the prudence of thy life,
I know not how to answer. Why is this?

Man. My liege, look on him: watch his eye and lip,
They, not amazement show, but guilt.

Duke. Think'st so!

Gior. Why has the traitor's dungeon been unbarred?
I hope thou'rt wise, as thou wert in thy prime.

Duke. Strange doubts have lately gathered o'er our mind;
Yet we have loved thee, almost love thee still,
And, loving, doubt thy loyalty and truth.
Better to live in knowledge, good or ill,
Than have a something pendant o'er our head
We know not of, which tortures us with fear.

Gior. I know not what thy strange proceedings mean.

Duke. Believ'st him guilty?

Gior. Yes, my liege, I do.

Man. Of treason?

Gior. Ay! the Senate was convinced.

Man. As I shall answer at the judgment seat,
And as this hour He knows—I'm innocent.

Gior. Denying once, 'tis virtue still to swear.

Duke. Bring back thy proofs, we'll hear them all again.

Gior. I will not take a monstrous course like this,
Beyond all law or custom. Bear him back.

Man. Prithee, my liege, command the jailer hither.

Gior. [*Aside.*] I'll boldly stand this pass; the hour's at hand,
When I shall be the lord of all the realm;
Then what have I to fear? I will bear up:
To live in fear, is scarcely to exist.

Duke. Jailer, attend!

Gior. What! ha! the craven slave!

Enter the JAILER.

Duke. Dost still assert his guilt?

Gior. I only spoke
The damning proofs that swayed the Senate's mind,
Which Neri knew, and countless others proved.

Duke. Speak what thou know'st.

Jailer. Maniri scarcely was
Intrusted to my charge, till by Giordano—

Gior. Liar!

Jailer. A purse of gold was proffered me—

Gior. Slave, reptile, babbler, in thy falsehood die!

[*Stabs the JAILER.*]

Duke. This before our face!

Gior. Ay! before the face
Of greater power than thine—of Heaven itself!

Duke. Wherefore, rash man, didst thou this bloody deed?

Gior. The perjured fool now silent on the earth,

Should ne'er have raised his front erect to Heaven,
But slept for ever in ignoble dust.

Duke. Ho there ! within ! a guard—a guard !

Enter an OFFICER, and SOLDIERS.

Seize him !

Gior. Stand back, ye coward slaves, and bow to me,
Not to that dotard—see, he is insane ;
He's slain the jailer, and that traitor freed,
And now would also murder me. Stand back !
Look to Maniri well ; ye, to the Senate
Shall answer for his safety with your lives !
Stand back, I say ; who dares approach me dies. *[Exit.*

Duke. Disloyal knaves, obey !

Man. Treason, treason !

[Scene closes.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The Palace. A flourish. Enter the DUKE, MANIRI, and CAVILIDO, attended.*

Duke. It was an act of madness, or of guilt.

Cav. I must confess, it savors most of guilt.

Duke. Did we not awe the false guards with a look ?
Such is the gaze of majesty ! My friend,
We're almost sure that thou art much abused.

Man. I am indeed ; would thou, my liege, wert sure.

Cav. My heart believes thee guiltless, but the proof
Was with such skill arrayed, and seemed so true,
It ruled all feeling, and pronounced thy doom.

Man. I censure none—not thee.

Duke. To stab the jailer,
And chide us with disloyal words, and false !
We never can forget this, nor forgive.

Cav. I feared Giordano, and opposed his rise,
For secret doubts were fretting in my mind,
Yet none that now I feel.

Duke. Thou counselledst wisely :

But his exploits had so engaged our heart,
Our judgment was bewildered.

Cav. Say not so,

Nor turn reproachful glances on the past ;
But only think, my liege, of coming danger.

Duke. Thou must be innocent. Where tarry all ?

Enter COLONNI.

What news, my son ? Hast thou discovered aught ?

Col. A feeling strange prevails throughout the city ;
Some move with stealthy step, and speak by signs ;
Some whisper and start back, as if observed ;
While others pale or redden, as they gaze
Upon the firmament, and watch the stars
Twinkling their fires as darkness thickens round.
Old men appear as if distressed in thought,
And to inquiring looks, show doubt and fear.
Women address a prayer to Heaven, and sigh,
Then hug their infants closer to their breasts ;
While children, seeing them, do weep and tremble.

Duke. What does 't portend ?

Cav. It bodes a coming evil—
A fearful pause ere the tornado wakes.

Duke. Each moment brings alarm.

Col. Yea, in the palace

None seem as wont, but each appears to wear
A look of mystery. I sought for Neri,
That, by his aid, the surer I might move—
I found him not, and none will speak of him.

Duke. Where is the tainted one ?

Col. Of him no trace

Has been discovered since the monstrous act ;
Which done, my sire, he hurried from the palace.

Car. There is some danger near.

Duke. Treble the guards,

And with despatch send sentinels abroad ;
Command each one to keep a watchful eye,
And all they do observe, report to us. [*Exit COLONNI.*]

Man. Did Neri not advance the strongest proof ?

Car. He did : my liege, that, joined with present fears,
Adds doubt to doubt.

Duke. It does. Question his wife,
And if she speak not, give her to the rack :
Let torture force her guilty thoughts to light.

[*Exit an Attendant.*]

Proclaim a rich reward to him who brings
Assurance of our doubts. [*Exit another Attendant.*]
How dost thou feel ?

Man. My chains, not on the body now, but mind,
Make scarce a feather's poise.

Re-enter COLONNI.

Duke. What new report?

Col. One has returned, who gives it as belief,
That armed men suspiciously convene
Within Giordano's house.

Duke. Can this be so!

Then 'tis no time to talk—Come, follow us. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A street. Enter GIORDANO.*

Gior. Now is the crisis near : my heart is firm,
And at the dawn I'll wear supreme command.
But if I fail!—what then will be my fate?
—To overleap the rugged height of time,
Into thy shoreless sea, eternity!
Fleety as speeds the demon of the storm,
When, mounted on his desolating car,
He lashes the whirlwind. The heartless slave
Who spurned my gold, now trembles 'fore his doom :
That, and its sequent, prove revelation near,
But wrest nor hope, nor daring from this soul.

Enter NERI.

Are all prepared? Stands every one resolved?

Neri. Thirsting like famished tigers for their prey.

Gior. Soon shall they clutch it. I've no pause to tell
The deed that's done. Hear thou, this instant may
Unto the world voice out our great emprise.

Neri. What! how is this, my lord?

Gior. No matter now:

Be dauntless as I am.

Neri. Fear not my heart!

It hungers for the festival of blood.

Gior. Lose not a moment, summon from my house
Unto the palace-court, my valiant friends—
The signal sound, to stir the city up,
And speed a courier to the camp. Tell all,
The glorious harvest's ripe, and they, the reapers,
Like sturdy serfs, must use the sickle well,
And garner too.

Neri. Thou art thyself, my lord,
And greatness beckons thee.

[*Exit.*

Gior. Away! Now like
The forest's king, when first he gorges blood,
I madly thirst for more—in it I'll glut.

With hand of iron, I'll seize the golden crown,
And in as firm a grasp will ever hold it.
Ha! now alarm hath waked throughout the palace,
And in fit time to gaze upon my deeds.
Louder it sounds! Ambition, from thy throne,
(That 'bove the Apennines is pedestaled,
Higher than is their summit from the base,)
Smile on my great intent. Hah! let it rage.
Now to the strife: to all opposers, death! [Exit.

SCENE III. *The Palace. Alarms. Enter the DUKE,
MANIRI, and CAVILIDO, attended, and COLONNI, opposite.*

Col. Treason, treason! our fears are all confirmed,
And foul rebellion terrifies the realm.

Duke. What! how discovered? speak!

Col. She has confessed,
And told a history of atrocious guilt.

Cav. Merciful powers!

Duke. Thou art acquitted now;
Thy titles, power and love, are all restored.
Sound the alarm, and rouse each loyal heart
Against the rebel knaves. [Exit an Attendant.

Man. Justice is mine;

And now my innocence will be inscribed
 Upon my country's archives. Bless thee, liege.
 Protect him, Heaven, and quell the coming storm.

Cav. This is a fearful night!

Duke. What hast thou heard?

Col. I cannot speak, how one I dearly prized,
 Has friendship, love, and loyalty belied.
 Here comes my sister, she can tell thee all.

Enter IMELDA.

Duke. My daughter, speak!

Imel. All, Bella has confessed;
 And 'tis enough to make the stoutest quail.
 Protect me, sire; where shall I hide my fears?

Duke. Quick, tell us all thou'st heard.

Imel. Urged on by Neri,
 Giordano aims against thy life and throne;
 Yea, all are doomed to swell the general wreck.

Man. Said I not so!

Duke. Henceforth I'll never trust
 The looks, or words, or actions of mankind—
 The treason and the traitor vex our heart.
 Wears this rebellion a determined front?

Imel. Ay, fearful numbers round his standard flock,

And all his motions are with skill arranged.

Duke. Out, out, my son, and arm the royal guard,
And rouse each spirit up, to boldly meet
The dread emergency.

Col. 'Tis done, my sire.

[*Exit.*

Imel. Thou wert abused.

Man. Spoke she of me?

Imel. The deed

For which thou sufferedst, was the villain's act.

Duke. How we have been deceived! What is their hour?

Imel. Midnight.

Cav. So near! Time's never-tiring tread

Hath almost turned, my liege, the night to morning.

Duke. Can such things be? They do amaze us much.

Imel. Father, what shall I do? My heart's approved
May be in danger still.

Duke. Fear not, my child;

These joyous shouts speak his return. He comes!

Enter CONRADINE.

Conrad. My love! my liege, and friends! how fares the state?

Duke. Treason most foul, and sacrilegious murder,
Are the ascendants of the time.

Conrad. Ha, so!

It was a forgery most foul: my sire
Is hale and well. The tale of my decease,
Despatched my brother onward to the city;
Upon the road we met, in great surprise.

Imel. O, thou art safe!

Conrad. Strange thoughts perplexed me then,
And fearing more than I dared think upon,
I hurried hither, and find all confirmed.

Duke. O much abused and most loyal friend!
Thou hadst no aims against his life—'twas false—
Yes, it was false as hell: forgive, forgive.

Conrad. Thou art no foe of mine. I'll tell the one
Who dares accuse thee, to his teeth, he lies—
My foster father, ever fond and kind!

Man. I am, I am, indeed!

Duke. We have no time
To lose in idle disquisition now.
Retire, my child, for in such rebel times,
We all must buckle resolution on.
Retire, my love, nor risk thy precious life,
Where thou canst do no service. [*Exit* IMELDA.
Come, despatch!

Conrad. This is the time for energy and strength.

Man. My aged limbs will now renew their youth;
Give me a sword, my liege, and I will prove
As true a son as Florence ever bore.

Duke. Be this one thine. May glory crown thy deeds.

[*Exit* MANIRI.]

Ring the alarm! the utmost must be done.

My child says little, but she deeply feels:

It is no time to talk of nuptials now.

Conrad. Revenge, revenge alone pervades my heart.

Cav. The state alone engrosses all my thoughts.

Re-enter COLONNI.

Col. The city is in arms, and flambeaux glare
In every street. The fearful storm is up.
Traitors are rushing to the palace-court,
And every omen speaks a bloody fray.
Your aged servant, lately freed from thrall,
Achieves more wonders with his silver tongue,
Than I believed was in the power of words.
He has already armed a powerful band,
And thousands, pre-disposed to foul rebellion,
Are the most loyal subjects in the realm.

Duke. We'll meet them manfully; ourself will lead
The royal troops, and rout the rebel fools.

Conrad. My liege, command, we will defend thy throne.

Duke. No longer parley: for the onset, arm!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV. *The Palace Court. Alarms. Enter NERI, COSMO, Conspirators, and Citizens.*

Neri. I feel as all were o'er and all were well ;
 If not, 'twill be no fault of mine—for now
 Revenge, and hate for former wrongs arise,
 With hydra heads, to wither and destroy.
 There comes he, like the lion from his lair.

Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. The hour's arrived : prepare for the assault ;
 Our glorious enterprise is now revealed,
 And willing slaves are armed to beat us back.

Cosmo. The answer flashes on my sword's keen edge.

Gior. For freedom boldly strike.

Neri. Our souls are roused,
 A strength immortal now directs each arm,
 And every spirit here is mad for blood.

Gior. Ay, blood! upon a sea we'll sail. Be like
 The torrent rushing from the mountain brow,
 Which nothing can resist—like it dash on,
 And carry death and havoc in your course.

Neri. He is your liege ; now let all kneel to him.

Omnes. Long live Giordano ! Duke of Florence, hail !

Gior. This is no time for idle homage, friends ;

Arise, arise, around my banner flock,

And prove your love and fealty with your swords.

Alarms. Enter the Ducal Party, opposite, led on by the

DUKE, MANIRI, COLONNI, CONRADINE, and CAVILIDO.

They come ! advance ! for liberty or death !

Col. Down with the traitors.

Gior. Thoughtless, prating fool,

Thy doom is near ; yea, vengeance waits on all.

Duke. Ye discontented rabble, who obey

A lawless leader, hear me, and spare blood.

Gior. My brave hearts, on ! advance ! for freedom strike.

Let these sharp weapons be *your* eloquence.

[*Alarms.* A fight. GIORDANO and his party
are repulsed.]

SCENE V. A Street. Several Soldiers flying.

Enter NERI.

Neri. Fear you the contest, in this peril shrink !

What, though the tide against us turns, will you,
 Borne by the current, thus desert the field?
 Though you should crouch as slaves, like cowards fly,
 I will alone—alone, defy them still.
 Yea, while my arm hath strength to wield this weapon,
 I will fight on. I will not bow the neck,
 In suppliance low, before this dotard Duke,
 But die, or conquer, as a freeman should.
 Ah! now I see you're men: Then on with me. [*Exeunt.*

Alarms. A pause, then Enter CONRADINE.

Conrad. I will have wide revenge! see, his legions fly!
 Where is the master fiend? Would I might meet him.
 [*Exit.*

SCENE VI. *The Palace Court. Alarms—a pause.*
Enter GIORDANO.

Gior. My cause is hopeless, but my heart is strong,
 And I will brave them to the last. Strike on!
 Where is my evil star! Come, viper, come!
 I'll fight amid the hottest of the fray.
 What now?

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. All's lost, all's lost.

Gior. Thou coward fool,

Were all like thee, we surely were undone ;
Hence to the strife, else I will cleave thee, slave. [*Exit Offi.*
Yea, e'en in this extremity of ill,
I will not play the scorpion, but I'll fight
Though death before me yawns. Villain, speak out.

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. My lord, not e'en a gleam of hope remains :
The lion-hearted in a rally fell,
Buried mid countless heaps of daring friends.

Gior. Still I am unsubdued ! I cannot weep thee !
Like Gorgon's blood, thine falls into the earth ;
From every drop shall start an armed man,
To wreak wide vengeance on this royal brood.
I'll never yield.

Offi. Hear me, my noble lord :
What will thy arm against a host avail ?
At yonder turn, some chosen friends await,
To give thee escort hence.

Gior. What! bid me flee?

Never: this is my throne or sepulchre.

Away!

[*Exit Officer.*]

Enter CONRADINE.

Ah! have we met! I thank thee, Heaven;

I'm satisfied!

Conrad. Can face so foul as thine

Look on the day? Is light not dazzling to thee?

Is not the air too pure for such a fiend?

Gior. Thou blaster of my hopes! I have no words:

Hark, hark! thy death knell tolls. I may not live,

But thou shalt not exist to triumph o'er me.

Conrad. Hast not enough of guilt upon thy soul?

Then yield thee, rebel, to thy country's law.

Gior. Dastard! darest use such taunting phrase to me?

If thou'rt a man, nay, if thou art and more,

Thy hour is come,—for I, myself, am here.

Prepare! Come on!

[*They fight.*]

Enter IMELDA.

Imel. Hold, hold! Be duke, be king,

Be any thing, but O! in mercy spare him.

Gior. Away, vile woman! hence, I say; begone!
Else will a direr fate than his be thine.

Conrad. Peace, peace, my love; I will avenge thy wrongs.

Gior. Thou shalt not 'scape, nor shalt thou parley more;
Thy friends approach—my heart thirsts for thy blood.

Conrad. That hapless one has as an angel come,
To give assurance that the just will conquer.

A giant's power is in this arm. Traitor!

Gior. Prepare! my sword shall drink thy blood, and hers.

[Alarms. They fight. GIORDANO falls.]

Conrad. I will protect thee, love: behold the traitor.
Cheer up; thou wilt.

Imel. Thou art alive! O thanks!

Conrad. Hark, hark! the cry is victory!

Imel. But Bella

Hears it not; for her own traitress hand
Hath paid her great account.

Enter the DUKE, CAVILIDO, MANIRI, COLONNI, and Attendants.

Duke. We are victorious!

To thee, brave friend, we owe the great result,
This, thy reward, and live long years of bliss.

Gior. Ay, blisters! live; and be this world thy hell,

A burning hell to all. Within thy veins
May blood like lava course, an endless fire.
May all thy joys connubial turn to pain,
And give vile monsters birth : and may the crown
Upon thy head, be as a scorching zone,
To torture thee through ages.

Imel. O!—horror!

Gior. The furies come with a triumphal car,
To bear me onward to the Ducal throne!
Hark! millions hail me duke! Gods! what is this?

[*Dies.*

Duke. Lo! how ambition and unlawful pride
Hath lost a stately bark.—Look where it lies,—
Forced by the waves of passion's stormy sea,
Upon the shoals of crime—a worthless wreck.

The Curtain falls.

EPILOGUE.

BY PROSPER M. WETMORE.

SPOKEN BY MRS. HILSON.

[*Spoken at the Wing.*]

NAY—Mr. Barry—'tis indeed too hard,
Thus late to send me forth, to please the bard;
I do not like an Epilogue—the play
Is long enough—well, if I must obey,
I'll try.

[*Enters.*]

The Author's fate I've come to ask—
A five-act Tragedy's a fearful task—
Glad plaudits cheer the lucky wight who wins,
But, failing, all the town will count his sins.
What say ye then?—I hope the question's clear.
Now pray don't smile—I'm looking for a tear.
Ah! yes, on many a blooming cheek I trace
The pearly drop that gems the speaking face.
Nay, blush not, ye, of manhood's sterner heart,
Nor shame to own the influence of our art:
No greener wreath will circle round your name,
Than feeling twines, and sympathy may claim.

The plot—how like you that? is't good or ill?—
The *dénouement* must show the master skill—
The characters—well drawn? the interest—strong?
The time—nor short for action, nor too long?

The incidents, arranged with cunning hand,
 To hold attention breathless at command ?
 On all of these, in judgment you must sit,
 And try—the poet's strength, or lack of wit.
 Before the bar of taste we bring our cause,
 And I'm retained to plead for your applause.

Poetic justice, sure the bard hath shown—
 The villain dies, his plots are overthrown ;
 The lady lives—the lover too survives—
 We are not prodigal of tragic lives.
 Critics may deem this faulty—'tis to you,
 Ye kindly fair, for pardon we must sue.
 Ye would not see the fond confiding maid,
 By ruthless violence in marble laid,
 Nor wish *that* manly heart should cease to beat,
 To make the catalogue of deaths complete ;
 No—rather will we dare the critic's fiat,
 Than needlessly disturb your bosom's quiet.
 Besides, you know, if death were thus in vogue,
 I could'nt come to speak the Epilogue.
 —Between us, don't believe in tragic sorrow—
 The dead will all be well enough to-morrow.

Friends of the drama, for the drama's weal—
 With hands to speak how well your hearts can feel—
 Our author asks for your approving voice ;
 Your smiles can bid his anxious heart rejoice.
 No fame-nursed laurels bloom upon his brow ;
 His first appeal is made for favor now.
 Then, patrons—shall I say our cause is won ?
 I see the verdict's right—my plea is done.

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