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Bridges

Palicio

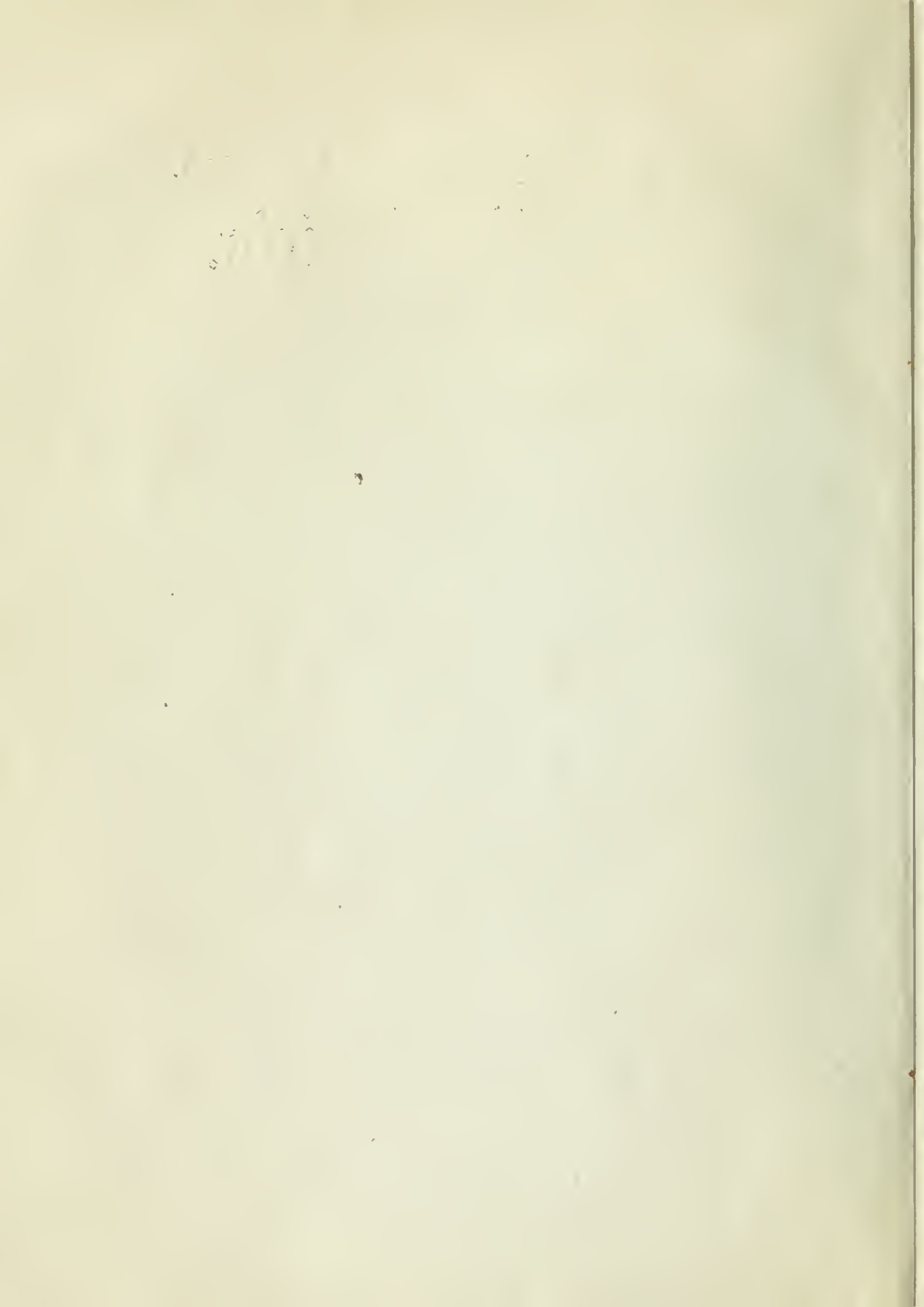


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Plays by Robert Bridges.

No. ii. Palicio.



2

PALICIO

A ROMANTIC DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS IN THE
ELIZABETHAN MANNER

BY /
ROBERT BRIDGES.

Ἦ καὶ ΠΑΛΙΚΩΝ εὐλόγως μινεῖ φάτις;
Πάλιν γὰρ ἴκουσ' ἐκ σκότου τόδ' ἐς φάος.

Æsch. Ætneæ, frag.

Published by EDWARD BUMPUS, HOLBORN BARS, LONDON, E.C. 1890.



PALICIO.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HUGO	Viceroj of Sicily.
LIVIO	his son, lover of Margaret.
MANUEL	Chief Justiciary, betrothed to Constance.
PHILIP, Duke	Spanish commissioner.
FERDINAND	his secretary.
BLASCO	a Sicilian count.
MICHAEL ROSSO	a surgeon, lover of Margaret.
GIOVANNI PALICIO	brigand.
SQUARCIALUPU	his lieutenant.
MARGARET	sister to Manuel.
CONSTANCE	daughter to Hugo.
LUCIA	servant to Margaret.

Brigands, soldiers, messengers, servants.

The scene is in PALERMO, and sometimes in the hills above MONREALE.

Time, Spanish occupation of Sicily.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Palermo. Reception-room in the Palace.

Blasco and Ferdinand.

Blasco.

AVE you not been in Sicily before?

Fer. Never.

Bl. And, sir, what think you of Palermo?

Have you as fine cities in Spain?

Fer. Your city,

Approached by sea or from the roofs surveyed,
Smiles back upon the gazer like a queen
That hears her praise. Nearer to speak I'll grudge
not,

When I may nearer know: but since we came
Th're's been no hour a stranger might dare shew
His face in the streets.

Bl. The time is now unquiet.

Fer. Rather I'd say government given over
To murderous bandits, who range up and down
Unchecked: to whom the king's commissioners
Were just the daintiest pricking. If I may brag
Of home, our cities are more orderly.

Bl. 'Tis a hot-blooded race, sir, full of stirrings,
Subject to fermentation, and like good wine
Ever the better for it.

Fer. But can you tell me
The real cause of these disturbances?

Bl. Nothing is easier, sir. Your viceroj, Hugo,
This is the point, is plunged in disesteem.

He has lost the fear and won the hate of the people.
Already, ere ye came, the news ye bring
Of the king being dead, was buzzed. Since at his
death

His viceroj's office falls to ground, our townsmen
Seize on this interval, wherein they hold
He hath no jurisdiction, to discredit him,
Kill him maybe, if nothing else will hinder
His reappointment. They but make the most
Of their occasion: that is all.

Fer. But how
Can a mere handful of such ruffians hold
The city, when the loyal troops are his?
Bl. 'Tis known to the people that their cause hath

found
An ear in Spain : and here among the barons
Are many who wish well to the revolt.
Should Hugo push to extremes he might discover
Most potent enemies. Remember, sir,
'Twas a street scuffle in this very town,
That drove the French from Sicily.

Fer. The thought
Brings me no comfort.

Bl. Wherefore 'tis his policy
To meet the present rage by such concessions
As may be popular, and to give forth
The king is ill, not dead. 'Tis for this reason
No mass is sung nor mourning liveries worn :
To-night's festivity, such as it is,
Hath only this pretence.

Fer. Are the two ladies
His daughters both?

Bl. The taller and the fairer,
The lady Constance, is his only daughter.
Your fine duke Philip, who comes now from court
With such a mightiness, was once her lover.

Fer. That doth not single her.

Bl. But then it did.
She was his first. 'Twas when duke Philip's father
Was viceroy here ; Hugo was then chief justice,
And Manuel, who succeeded him, was only
Young Philip's tutor ;—he succeeds moreover
Now to his pupil's leavings, and will marry
The long-forgotten Constance.

Fer. 'Twas the other
I asked of, in white satin, she who sat
On Philip's right at supper ; who is she?

Bl. That, sir, is Margaret.

Fer. And who is Margaret?

Bl. Sister to Manuel.

Fer. She far outshines

Her future sister.

Bl. They that can see have thought it :
And, sir, 'twill tax your better wit to add
A title to her full accustomed homage.
Your broken heart were but a pinch of pepper
Sprinkled on porridge. Now for full two years
Her reign hath made a melancholy madness
The fashion 'mongst our youth.

Fer. I should much like
To be presented.

Bl. O, sir, at your will.
Judge for yourself. See, here they come. (*Aside.*)

A moth!

Fer. (aside). A very civil fellow.

[*They retire to back.*]

*Enter R. Hugo, Philip, Manuel, Margaret,
Constance and Livio.*

Hu. I am sorry, your grace,
We make so small a party. For our poor
Reception, and for all shortcomings else,
Accuse the occasion.

Ph. I think, your excellence,
I cannot play the guest. This house was once
So long my home, that here I look to find

As little ceremony as I fear I have shewn.

Hu. So should it be. Make it your home again.

Ph. I shall forget I have ever been away.

Man. Five years.

Ph. Ay, but five years of wandering,
Such as can but endear one's home the more.
My memory still would serve me to walk blindfold
From any point of the city to these doors.

Man. What is your memory for our studies,
Philip?

Ph. Too slippery for my profit. Yet the pleasure
Lives very brightly ;—nay, I could but name
One deprivation I have more regretted.

Mar. But now
My brother has a new philosophy.

Ph. Ah ! If you share the secret, and I be thought
Worthy of initiation, may I hear it?

Mar. And welcome. Manuel, in his deep research
For the first cause and harmony of things,
Hit upon both together—they are one :
'Tis love. And now, since I profess it not,
And since 'twas learnt of you . . .

Man. (to Mar.) Hush, sister, hush !

Ph. I am very proud of such a pupil. (*Aside.*)
Since

He has learned my love so readily, it may be
That he may catch my jealousy—

Hu. Come, duke,
Sit here by me. There's more to talk of. Livio,
Fetch us the papers.

Philip crosses to L. and sits by Hugo.

Man. (crossing to R.). They must grant us,
Constance,

A moment now. All day I have been away, ¹⁰⁰
And yesterday I saw you not at all.

Can you forgive a lover so remiss?

Con. If I could think it negligence, No.

Man. The time
Can be but short, but it shall make amends.

[*They talk together.*]

Bl. (coming forward with Fer.). Fair lady Mar-
garet,

Count Ferdinand of Vergas ; I present him
At his desire.

Fer. Your ladyship's true servant.

Mar. I am much honoured.

Fer. Lady, 'tis worth the pains
To cross from Spain to see you.

Mar. From that I guess

That you are a better sailor than the duke.

Fer. Nay, you judge wrong.

Mar. Have you then ate no dinner?

Fer. Now if I had not, I'd blame your stormy
town

Before the sea for that : since we left ship
We are cabined in this house ; to pass the door
Were to leap overboard in a whole gale.

Mar. I fear this is no country for you, sir,
If noises in the street keep you indoors.

Liv. Take warning, count ; Sicily's fairest rose
Blooms on an angry plant.

Mar. But we can boast
Of warriors that for fragrance shame the rose.

(*To Liv.*) Is't musk to-day?

Liv. (to Fer.). I told you.

Enter Messenger R., crosses to Hugo L.

Mes. This paper, sire, is posted thro' the town.

Hu. Eh, eh! what have we here? [*Reads.*

Citizens of Palermo, King Pedro is dead. God rest his soul! The office of Viceroy being vacant, the Parliament of townsmen, assembled in the church of San Lorenzo, have this day elected Manuel to be your viceroy, in place of Hugo. Death to Hugo! Long live the king!

Why, Manuel, what's this parliament?

Man. I know

No more than doth your excellence. But 'tis plain

That they are orderers who put on a dress

Of regular authority; they use

The senatorial voice, and over all

They have now usurped my name to have it thought

That I have set their hatch.

[*Shouts without of "Death to Hugo! The Despatches!"*]

Ph. Here comes the parliament.

Hu. Now this is what I feared. Manuel, I pray you,

Go to the balcony, you have their ear;

Use then your credit.

Man. What, sire, shall I say?

Hu. Well, you should know.

Liv. (to Man.). Look, if they ask to hear

The last despatches, gull them with some paper;

Which while you show, you make as if therefrom

You read the king's not dead.

Ph. (to Liv.). Nay, Livio:

The word is wanted for a troop of horse.

My father never would have brooked this insult

From such a mob.

Liv. Our soldiers are not idle.

They laid hands yesterday upon the chief

And head of all, one John Palicio.

We have certain information that the rebels

Cannot be kept together but by him.

Hark! they are quiet now.

Hu. (to Man. returning). What is your charm

To win such meek obedience?

Man. They're gone, your excellence;

But not from aught I said: for ere I spoke

Some rumour reached them, and the skirt of the

throng,

That far beyond my hearing stood apart

In scattered groups, broke hastily away:

Then the next ranks shed off, and then the next

Loosened and followed them: till the voice came

To the very midst and huddle, where they pressed

With upturned faces; then all heads went down,

And with a cry they fled.

Hu. Whither?

Man. I think

To the prison, my lord.

Enter a Soldier.

Hu. What now? give me thy matter.

Sold. The prisoner Palicio is escaped.

He killed his guards, and fled beyond pursuit.

Ph. (to Liv.). Why, is not this the man you spoke

of?

Liv. Ay,

That is the man.

Hu. Let the patrol be doubled for the night,

And give not o'er the search. Alive or dead,
A hundred florins to whoever finds him.

Blasco, go see to it: he must not escape.

Bl. (aside). But if he be escaped, who's viceroy
then? [*Exit with soldier.*]

Hu. This same Palicio, duke, is the chief rebel:

While he was caged, I could despise the rest.

But he's a dangerous fellow; bred in the hills,

He is yet of noble blood and high descent:

A proud and lofty temper, that hath taken

A graft of wildness, and shot forth afresh

In base luxuriance. Tho' yet unbearded,

Bandits and exiles own him; and the people,

Who hold such men in honour, can be drawn

But by his name to any enterprise.

'Tis he that with his bread-tax cry hath stirred

The commons to rebel, and be he 'scaped

Clear, as 'tis thought, there will be more ado.

I'll not so much as vouch, duke, for your safety,

If you should sleep in the palace.

Man. Let the duke

Come to my house. What say you?

Hu. What say you, Philip?

They would not seek you there.

Ph. If 'tis your wish,

I would not bring you trouble. (*To Fer.*) Ferdinand,

These papers must be copied: take them straight

Into your chamber. [*Exit Ferdinand.*]

Hu. 'Tis but truth, your grace,

We may be driven hence. The people's cry

Is *Sack and fire the palace.*

Mar. See if Livio

Have not gone pale! Now, Livio, if you think

'Tis safer at our house, for pity's sake

Spare your complexion and come back with us.

Liv. No doubt that sleep were sweeter, and all

things else

Beneath thy roof, lady: and came there danger,

That my sword might protect thee . . .

Mar. The heavens shield us,

When we be left to that.

Liv. Didst thou not treat

All men with like contempt, I were much wronged:

But there's none thou wilt praise.

Mar. Now, if I needed

A man to look at, I would pass my time

Searching for this Palicio. As for you,

When you can lead the people, and cut your way

Thro' guards and prison walls, and get a price

Set on your head . . . I'll marry you.

Man. Come, sister,

This goes too far.

Mar. Why, no. Be generous.

If I be wrong, what makes you ill at ease

When this man's free? Palicio is in prison,

And all goes cheerfully; you sit to feast,

You have no care, a joke will raise a laugh.

Palicio is escaped—hey! at that news

What blackness reigns! Forgive me, friends; I see

This man's your master, and I like him for it.

Bravery I love, and there's no cause so poor

It cannot justify.

Hu. If we should take him,

I'll send him to you stuffed.

Mar. Is that a speech

One should forgive?

Man. Enough. We take our leave.
We pass by a private way, duke.
Ph. I come with you.
Good-night.
All. Good-night.
[*Exeunt Philip, Manuel, and Margaret.*
Hu. (to Con.) And you to bed.
Con. I pray there's nought to fear?
Hu. Nay, nay. Good-night, child; sleep you sound.
Con. Dear father,
Heaven keep you safe. Good-night.
Hu. Fear not for me.
[*Exit Constance.*
Hark, Livio.
I have learned somewhat from Philip: the Spanish court
Is open to my enemies. My best hope
If things go worse will be to sail for Spain
And face them boldly there. 'Tis an extremity
'Twere best to avoid; but since my hands are tied
I may be forced; and am so far resolved,
That if Palicio now should raise the town,
And come to attack the palace, I shall fly.
I have had a way cut thro' the chapel wall,
Whence by a covered passage I can reach
The harbour, where I keep a ship prepared.
Thee I must leave. But let this news be spread,
That Philip is with Manuel; it may serve
To draw the people thither—his being here
Would have impeded my escape. And first
We'll go the rounds, and see that at all points
The watch is strong and wakeful. Come with me.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Hall in Manuel's house. Enter Palicio in woman's clothes, bleeding, a dagger in his hand.

Pal. No one, no sound. Can I hide here I am safe. ²⁴¹
I have given the curs the slip, if I can hide.
Safe . . . But this wound, the blood runs like a river:
Unless they track me by it I am clear—so far.
A paltry stab. I'll bind it round and tie it
To stop the blood—so, so. Now, where to hide?
For here is no protection; 'tis the house
Of the chief justiciary . . . a doubtful 'scape
From prison here. Yet when I saw the wall
'Twas home; then, oh, my God! this flip-flap gear
Shackling my knees—Over! ha, ha! the fools
Will never guess that leap. But I must hide:
Slip out ere morn: or if not that, be bold,
Give myself up to Manuel. Is that hope?
Manuel the just. 'Twere best reserve that hope
Till others fail. Hark!—steps. Where can I get?
Behind this curtain—so. [*Hides.*

Enter Manuel, Philip, Margaret, and Servant.

Man. (to servt.) Giuseppe, show the duke my room.
(*To Ph.*) Taking us unawares o'erlook, I pray,
The want of ceremony. You will find all comfort
For sleep or wakefulness.
Ph. This is the flower

Of hospitality. Now, for old sakes,
I'd beg some meaner shift, to prove me mindful
Of ancient benefits.

Mar. O, be content:
My brother's luxury will not o'erwhelm you
With obligation.

Man. Rest you well. Good-night!

Mar. and Ph. Good-night!

[*Exit Philip with servant.*

Man. Margaret!

Mar. My brother!

Man. You did ill to-night.

Mar. Forgive me. I said in jest you had learned
your love

From Philip. I was sorry.

Man. Nay, what's that?

Yet 'twas ill said, and may have wounded Philip;
Though he must wish us to assume there's nothing
'Twixt him and Constance: and now he's our guest
We must not let our courtesy be tainted
By his own lightness; nay, the tales told of him
Are nought to us. He's of a generous nature,
And not forbidding to what faults beset
His age and rank. But we make no man better
By lower estimation; an open kindness
And trust may help him; let us use such toward him.

Mar. I will. But then what was't I said?

Man. Ah! Why,

Your praise of John Palicio. See you not
'Twill injure me with Hugo? Our relations
Are tried by public matters: 'tis in the scope
Of private intercourse to ease the strain,
Or force the rupture.

Mar. Brother, I am very sorry.

I thought . . .

Man. I do not blame your thought. I grant

These Spaniards are bad masters. First they wrecked
This island to possess it; then the prize,
Which kindness might have much enriched, is stripped
Even to the bone by cruelty and rapine.
Their viceroy too, this Hugo—a man who governs
But to be governor, and even at that
Fails like a fool. To see the folk misruled
More grieves me than to see the folk misled.
And if they have much cause to rise, there's none
Hath more to lead them, than the native outlaw,
Whom you so praised.

Re-enter Servant.

Mar. Then you forgive me, brother?

Man. Well, well, good-night!

Mar. Good-night! [*Exit.*

Man. Giuseppe, prepare ³⁰⁰
The little room at the end of the corridor;
I will sleep there. I shall not want thee more.

[*Exit Servant.*

It matters not what happens, day by day
The rupture grows. 'Tis plain Hugo and I
Are foes at heart—and what a pitiful trick
To put the question of my marriage by,
Withholding his consent just for the thought,
That while my happiness hangs on his nod,
I must be closer bound to serve his interest,
Now, when his credit totters. Doth he not know
That honourable minds, thro' very fear
Of their self-interest, are thrust away

Beyond their counter-judgment? Nay, 'tis clear
He falls, he falls; and were 't not now for Constance,
I'd gladly see him fall.

Palicio comes forward.

A woman here!

Why, who art thou?

Pal. Hush, hush! I am no woman.

[Lays his dagger on the table.]

Draw not your sword. See here my dagger.

Man. Ha!

And bloodied freshly.

Pal. Let me bar the door. *[Goes to door.]*

Man. Why, can it be?—

Pal. I am Palicio.

Man. Thou here!

Pal. You see.

Man. From prison?

Pal. Escaped, thank God!

I skirmish'd with my guards, and being pursued
Came thro' your orange garden. Here none will
seek me.

Hide me!

Man. Thee, madman, here?

Pal. Ay, call me madman.

I am mad, and praise God for it . . . if to hate tyrants
Be madness, I'm past cure: or if 'tis madness
To escape from prison . . .

Man. Nay, neither. I blamed thee not
In these; but that thou thinkest to overbear
The troops of Spain with thy small brigand crew:
To escape from justice flying to my house,—
The chief justiciary.

Pal. What will you do?

Man. Return thee straight to prison.

Pal. First, I beseech you,

Help me to bind my wound. ³⁸⁰

Man. Art thou much hurt?

Pal. A thrust in the arm, a petty prick, which yet
bleeds uncontrolledly.

Man. Undo it. It spurts.
Hold here thy hand, while with thy handkerchief
I bind thy arm.

Pal. Look you, 'tis lower down.

Man. Peace, man! 'Twill stay the blood to
bind thee here.

Hast thou no other hurt?

Pal. Nay, none but this.

And see, 'tis staunch'd already. I must thank you,
Tho' here your help should end. Call in the hirelings;
They'll not be far. I will go back with them.
And yet 'twere pity; for 'tis certain death:
I have killed three of them. Manuel, I pray you—
I pray you, Manuel, crush not all my hopes,
My just cause. Give me a sword and a man's dress,
And let me forth to try my fortune!

Man. Nay.

Pal. Then if I take my dagger and venture out . . .
[Takes it.]

I'll yet escape. Deny me not this chance.

See, I'll not ask your leave, but only go. *[Going.]*

Man. Giovanni, stay. Thou hast done me a
great wrong

In flying here. Why didst thou choose my house?

Pal. 'Twas as I fled for life: the hue-and-cry
Came gathering faster round me: being still clear,

And seeing your wall, it seem'd my safety lay
In that leap, could I make it.

Man. Thou'rt the last,
And only off-spring of a noble stock.

The blood that I have staunch'd in thy veins,
Sprang from the heart of Sicily, and flows
Redder than mine, tho' mine too once was mixed,
And not unworthily, with thine, and now
From my great grandsire's marriage both our bloods
Are even as one, and thy blood on my hands
Is mine, and mine within my veins is thine.
I cannot send thee to thy death, Giovanni;
I may not shelter thee from justice: See,
Thou hast done me a grievous wrong.

Pal. Yet hide me awhile.

This house may be my prison.

Man. Thou hast this hope:

The king being dead . . .

Pal. Is't true that Pedro is dead?

Man. Ay, true enough.

Pal. Then are you free. I am safe.

[Puts dagger in his bosom.]

Man. I say this is thy hope. The king being dead,

Such offices as hold under the crown

Need confirmation. Now I do not say

Allegiance lapses; but, if I be quick

To guess the new king's will, that he will change

Our viceroy—which I doubt not,—I may be bold

Now to withhold my duties from a servant

Discredited, contending that they hang

Upon my judgment, for my deeds to give

After-account. See, 'tis a subtle point

I strain for thee, rather than hurt the claim

Of kinship. Thou shalt be my prisoner

For these few days. By chance I have a room

Fit for thy lodging: there I'll shew thee now,

And thence thou must not stir. I'll bring thee food,

Look to thy wants, and try to cure thy wound.

Thou on thy part must lie as still as one

That hushes for his life. What, man; thou'rt faint

For loss of blood, and strain? Cannot you stand?

Stand up, or I must carry you. Indeed,

Carry him I must . . . see, now, where be my keys?

[Going, carryin' Palicio.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Hall in Manuel's house. Margaret and Constance.

Mar. Sweet, happy Constance, tell me why thou
sighest. ³⁹⁰

What canst thou lack?

Con. I am not very happy.

Mar. Not happy, thou? Woe, for the world!
I thought

Love was God's perfect recipe, to drowse

All mortal stings. Yet sainted marriage hath

One threat—the loss of liberty: is't that?

It well may fright. To have been a girl with me

So long, and make at last the outrageous stroke,

And live as do our aunts! Were't not my brother,

I'd kill the man.

Con. Margaret!
Mar. Well mayst thou sigh :
 I can sigh for thee.
Con. I should love to hear thee.
 Thou owest me sighs, for mine were thoughts of thee.
Mar. Because I love not? Hast thou forgot
 already ⁴⁰²
 Life may be tolerable for a woman
 Without thy joy?
Con. You treat poor Livio
 Unkindly, Margaret.
Mar. Now, if that's the grief,
 We have threshed it out before.
Con. I shall not spare you,
 Till you are kinder.
Mar. Yet if I were kinder,
 And he should build a hope upon that kindness,
 Until it proved unkind than unkindness?
Con. He loves you well.
Mar. No better than the others ;
 Than Ventimiglia loves, or Chiaramonte,
 Good Michael Rosso, or the impudent Blasco,
 Or my new courtier Ferdinand.
Con. He loves
 With all his heart. Life is as tedious to him
 As to the dark and dusty wheel, which jerks
 Behind the dial-face, until he see you :
 When for his joy you give him but disdain.
Mar. Thou didst not tell him, thou wouldst speak
 for him?
Con. Why not?
Mar. Now I, Constance, have something fresh :
 A mystery.
Con. A mystery?
Mar. Yes, a mystery.
 Guess what it is.
Con. How should I guess?
Mar. Indeed,
 Guessing would never wind it.
Con. Then, prithee, tell me.
Mar. I died to tell thee ere thou camest, and now
 I grudge it sadly. Yet, for the fresh mount
 'Twill give thy thoughts, I'll tell. 'Twas yesternight,
 Just on the stroke of one . . .
Con. 'Tis not a ghost?
Mar. If after all 'twere but a ghost!
Con. Come, tell me.
Mar. Thou wilt not breathe a word?
Con. No, not a word.
Mar. Thou know'st the casement of my bedroom
 looks
 Across the court. There as I stood last night,
 Watching the moon awhile, ere I shut out
 The sleepless splendour from my dreams, I heard
 A heavy step pass down the gallery.
 'Tis Manuel, I thought, who goes to lie
 In the little chamber at the back,—for Philip
 Had his ;—but, for some strangeness in the step
 Pricked my attention, and to content my thought,
 I lent my ear to the sound, until it reached
 The door at the end : there, standing by the window
 I saw him plain : 'twas he, but in his arms
 A woman, fainting as I thought, or dead.
 Her arms hung loose, and o'er his shoulder thrown
 Her head fell back.
Con. A woman ! art thou sure ?

Mar. He could not carry a ghost. Besides, this
 morning
 I watched him : he took thither meat and drink,
 And locked the door, and strictly bade the servants
 They should not enter.
Con. Hast thou questioned him?
Mar. I have not so much as let him speak with
 me.
 He might forbid me : and, O my curiosity,
 I must know more.
Con. What dost thou think to learn?
Mar. I have neither guess nor hope ; I lay ⁴⁵³
 awake
 An hour, and thought of fifty things, not one
 Of any likelihood. In all romance
 No lady in distress ere came at midnight
 To the house of the chief justice. I could wish
 This beauteous maiden were a young princess
 Fled o'er the seas disguised.
Con. Then thou couldst see
 What she was like.
Mar. Why, no,—how could I see?
 I only saw that she was dark.
Con. Thou saidst
 That she was beautiful.
Mar. Of course she is young
 And beautiful. Why,—you are not jealous, Constance?
Con. Not jealous, no.
Mar. And the only pity of it
 Is that she'll prove in the end a poor relation
 Fall'n to our care, or some more hapless girl
 Left on the doorstep dying.
Con. In such case,
 What were the need of secrecy?
Mar. I wish
 I had never told thee aught. Why shouldst thou
 fancy
 Impossibilities?
Con. What is impossible?
Mar. I fear now that the sight of thy old love,
 Philip the false, hath turned thy happier trust.
 Thou'rt changed.
Con. Nay, nay : I am not : and yet 'tis true
 His coming is my trouble. [*Weeps.*]
Mar. Forgive me, sweetest,
Con. Margaret, you know I have none at all but
 you
 To unfold my heart to : only you can tell
 What I must feel at his return : you know
 How far I loved, how much I was deceived.
 His oaths of faith you heard from me, and shared
 The joy of my delusion : and at last,
 When he deserted me, you made your heart
 The prison of my sorrows : you exhorted,—
 O, you advised me well,—Be sure, you said,
 Love that so breaks cannot be trusted more.
 You bade me cast it off like an ill dream.
 You found what life he led : how he profaned
 His honourable passion in the play
 Of errant gallantries. All that sad time
 I leaned on you, and 'twas your friendship gave
 The occasions whence my love with Manuel sprung.
 You led me still, you gave me confidence ;
 Your comfort turned to joy, Manuel was mine.
 When suddenly on some mysterious cause
 He holds aloof : my joy is bid await.

O, Margaret, if you understood love's joy,
How closely 'tis inwoven with fear to lose,
You would not wonder that I tremble, seeing
This shadow blot my sunshine, that my fear
Discolours every circumstance. To me
The common course of things on which men count
Is the only miracle, all chances else
As they are feared are likely. O, do not blame me.
Philip is like an evil spirit beside me ⁵⁰¹
That stands to smile on what I dread to think.
Mar. Philip being false can give no cause to doubt
Of Manuel's faith.

Con. I doubt him not : and yet
If I speak of my brother you only laugh,
But if you speak of yours . . .

Mar. Round, round again.
Betwixt our brothers grant some difference.
Thy Livio is a boy of slender parts,
Led by his passions. Manuel is a man
Austere and stern ; he is above suspicion.

Con. I do not doubt his truth, but find such stern-
ness

Unkind to love. My brother's love for you
Is simple : Manuel's love hath some reserve ;
A veil, behind which, since I have never seen,
I have dreamed or feared a terror lay : oft-times
When I have been with him, a pleasant hour
Has ended suddenly, as if his spirit
Was angered, and withdrew : then in his eyes
Is nothing left but barren contemplation,
To which I am an object as another ;
Until he sighs, as conscious of the change.
The disappointment of our marriage brings
Scarce a regret to him : I heard him speak
Late to my father of it, as 'twere a thing
He held indifferently. There is some secret
Which I would know : maybe this is a clue.

Mar. What is the clue ?

Con. This lady.

Mar. O, thou'rt sick.
But I can cure thee, wilt thou do my bidding.

Con. What would you bid ?

Mar. Give rein to jealousy,
Ay, spur it on to falling. Fear the worst,
Believe the worst. Thou shalt suspect my brother ;
He trifles, loves this lady : choose your tale :
Thou wilt not doubt again.

Con. I do not doubt him.
Nay, I will bid him tell me all.

Mar. And so
Betray thy doubt to him. Be wiser, madam !
Look to thy cure : indulge thy jealousy :
To which end I encourage it. Indeed,
I am come to think there's cause, and thy suspicion
Hath much enhanced my mystery. Go thou home :
There make thyself unhappy. I meanwhile
Will root this out, and since I am housekeeper
I can go where I will.

Con. I pray thee, Margaret . . .

Mar. I must be jealous where my brother is
wronged.

Thou art the accuser, and the evidence
Tells now for thee : 'tis my part to acquit us.
Hinder me not.

Con. When wilt thou know ?

Mar. Maybe

'Tis as thou fearest.

Con. Wilt thou mock me so ?

Mar. I bid thee go. Be sure I'll come to thee
Or send thee word.

Con. But when ?

Mar. I make no promise.
I cannot pity thee, and till thou goest

I can do nothing.

Con. Promise me to send.

Mar. I have promised that. Farewell !

Con. To-day ?

Mar. To-day.
Trust me, I go at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Room in the Palace. Enter Blasco.

Bl. I have sucked this Ferdinand. Duke Philip ⁶⁵⁴
bears

Secret despatches sealed, not to be broken
Save on emergency ; from which I gather
That if emergency arise, this Philip
Will be our viceroy. Palicio being escaped
Must make the emergency.—Then, where am I ?
Packed off to Spain with Hugo's broken service,
To answer his impeachment. 'Tis high time
I cast by these old friends, such as they are,
And turn my face to the rising sun, this Philip.
I see the way too. Manuel's love for Constance
Hath roused again his former love for her
To a burning jealousy ; if I feed that
I win his ear, and make my foe his foe.
As for Palicio, should he hold back
I have a way with him, and can contrive
He shall seize Hugo, or himself be seized,
As may suit best. The mischief set on foot,
Philip must break his seals ; and I come in
With him as friendly to the people's rights,
And trusted servant of the crown. By heav'n,
I shall deserve their credit. See, here he comes.

Enter Philip.

Good morrow to your grace.

Ph. Good morrow, Blasco.

Bl. I served thy father well.

Ph. I know it, Blasco.

What of it now ?

Bl. I do not urge my service

Looking for recompense ; I do not ask
So much as that your grace remember me
At court, to mention my forgotten name
In the new king's ear ; as, When I was in Sicily
I saw old Blasco ; nay, 'twas for good-will
I served, and now 'tis that I want a master
Which bids me speak. If but your grace could find me
Employment worth my wits, I would serve well.

Ph. I'll think of it.

Bl. Let your grace know my life
Spent in this court should make my loyalty
More than a counsellor. In this rebellion
I know where Hugo fails, where Manuel leans ;
Could blow upon the flame or snuff it out,
Could bring you to the leaders.

Ph. Honest Blasco,

Thou know'st the world.

Bl. I know that one who come

To make peace in a quarrel that he knows not,
Needs other knowledge than he is like to get
From either party. The strings of policy
Are coiled in private chambers; if your grace
Would pull at these . . .

Ph. True. If thou serve me thus
I'll take instruction.

Bl. Let your grace now prove me
In any question.

Ph. This, then. We in Spain 600
Supposed that your revolt stood on two legs,
Over-taxation and the hate of Hugo;
And had its claim for justice countenanced
By Manuel's voice; but coming here, I find
That he and Hugo's daughter are betrothed.
Now here's a private matter, which, I take it,
Involves the public. Say, doth Manuel play
His policy on Hugo, or hath Hugo
Trumped up a match with Manuel to support
His failing credit?

Bl. They are not betrothed, your grace.
What passes between lovers is unknown:
But this is sure, Hugo withholds consent,
And doth so to win Manuel to his side.

Ph. Doth not that win him?

Bl. Nay.
Ph. Then I conclude

He loves not.

Bl. Nay, indeed; it gives me pain
To witness his indifference; for the lady
Deserves the best.

Ph. Stay, count. Remember
In what has passed that word may well blame me.

Bl. I hearken not to idle tales. Your grace
May be punctilious; but in Manuel's instance
There's no excuse.

Ph. I care not what men say.

And now it hurts me more to hear thee blame
Another for the fault I stumbled in,
Than if 'twas said of me. I need thy knowledge.
Look, thou canst serve me; and I let none serve
For nothing. Take my purse (*gives it*); thou mayst
have need

To spend so much for me.

Bl. I thank your grace.

I shun no obligation, and I am poor.

Ph. True, all men are so. Come now to my
chamber,

Where we may talk in private.

Bl. (aside). 'Tis well begun.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*A room in Manuel's house. Palicio reclining
on a long chair half-dressed. Daylight
nearly excluded: one candle burns.*

Pal. I seem to have lived a life in these few days;
To have died, and waked in no less strange a place,
Than where I think departed spirits will fly
In doom of death and unendurable silence
After their day of doing. Oh! 'tis strange
What just the shedding a few drops of blood
Will bring about—to loosen a handkerchief,
And on her undiscoverable journey

The soul sets forth. Nay, but to bleed so far
As I have done, breeds fancies more akin
To death; else would my spirit more revolt
'Gainst this enforced quiet and idleness:
This blocking of my life just on the stir
And hurry of hope, when all my operations
Pressed to success. I am surely very weak,
That I can lie and fret not, when I hear
The distant cries, passing from street to street,
Which tell how prompt and ripe my people were
For this their lost occasion. (*Knocking heard*). Some
one knocks.

Nay, the key turns. 'Tis Manuel.

Mar. (at door). May I come in?

Pal. (aside). Ah! who is this? Who's there?
[*Covering himself.*]

Mar. (entering). 'Tis only I,

Manuel's sister. I have come to see
If I can do you any service, lady. 653

Pal. He did not send you?

Mar. Nay, but I may hope
I shall not seem to intrude, thus waiting on you.

Pal. (aside). What's to be done?

Mar. The room is dark. I fear you
are ill.

Pal. I am hurt and must not stir.

Mar. Then lying here
In pain you must want help and company.

'Tis well I came. May I draw back the curtains?

Pal. Nay, there was reason, madam, why your
brother

Shut door and window: I have enemies.

Mar. Alas, alas!

I can shew equal care. First to relock the door.

(*Aside, going to door.*) She is a lady.

Pal. (aside). 'Tis the famous Margaret.

Mar. Now let me light these candles.

[*Stage brightens.*]

Pal. (aside). Surely in God's paradise, that rest
of souls,

His angels and pure spirits look and speak
And move like this. O wonder! Wherefore comes
she?

And how to keep her but a moment longer

From the discovery? and how to tell her?

Mar. Now while I sit. [*Finds gown on the chair.*]

. . . Why, oh! 'tis drenched with blood,

Your gown. Are you so hurt?

Pal. A sword-thrust, lady.

Mar. A sword-thrust. Ah!

Pal. Thou camest unadvised,

Lady: I wore the gown; if that deceived thee.

Yet 'twas but a disguise to save my life.

I am Palicio.

Mar. Sir!

Pal. Escaped from prison

And my pursuers hither. Thy brother's kindness

Hides me from death awhile.

Mar. I pray thy pardon.

'Twas not mere idle curiosity

That made my fault; but made I'll mend it, sir,

As soon as may be. [*Going.*]

Pal. (springing up). Stay, nay, put down that key.

I bid thee stay. Thou hast forced my secret. I hear

The whole, and when thou hast heard I shall not fear

The unlocking of thy lips.

Mar. Why, sir, the thing
My brother means to hide is hidden to me.
Pal. 'Tis not alone my life . . .
Mar. Ah! see the blood is trickling down thy
hand!
Pal. Pest! it hath started freshly.
Mar. Cannot I help thee?
Pal. Ay, 'tis the bandage on this arm.
Mar. To tie it?
Pal. My moving hath displaced it.
Mar. See, alas!
The ill I have done. Sit, I will bind it for thee.
Pal. Myself I cannot.
Mar. Nay. Tell thou me how.
Pal. Here, round this pad. As tightly as thou
wilt.
Nay, tighter yet.
Mar. Shall I not harm thee?
Pal. Tighter.
Mar. I cannot pull it tighter.
Pal. Knot it so.
'Twill do: the blood hath ceased.
Mar. Oh, I am glad.
Do not thou stir: see, now, to wash thine arm
I'll bring thee water. *{Goes for it.*
Pal. (aside). By heaven, where have I lived,
Like a wild beast beneath the open skies,
In dens and caves, and never known the taste
Of this soft ravishment? The rich of the earth
Are right: their bars and bolts are wisely wrought
Having such treasure in their closed chambers.
Mar. Here 'tis. Reach forth thine arm.
Pal. Nay, give 't to me.
Stain not thy hands.
Mar. I pray thee.
Pal. As thou wilt.
Mar. How did it happen?
Pal. Wouldst thou hear it?
Mar. Tell me.
Pal. I had been two days in prison . . .
Mar. Tell me, first,
How could they catch thee?
Pal. Treachery: I was taken
By Hugo's soldiers as I knelt at mass.
Three stole behind me, seized me by the arms,
And dragged me forth. I knew I was betrayed;
I had entered but that morning in the town;
I was not known to them, nor did the hirelings
Look on my face. They led me straight to prison,
Thrust me in a cell so dank and dark and small,
That to be built alive into the grave
Were not more horrible.
Mar. Hugo would have killed thee.
Pal. Or let me starve; or else some gentle mercy;
Gonged my live eyeballs out, or lopped my hands.
Mar. How couldst thou 'scape?
Pal. Now thou wilt see our people
Have their account. The second night my gauler
Brought in a woman with a deed to sign.
I knew my hope, and to her feigned reproach
Answered in anger back; but when she bade
I took the deed, and felt, beneath the paper
A dagger's edge. That was my key to heaven,
Could I strike silently. To make occasion,
I thrust her from me with an oath: she fell,
As well she knew, against the foe, who, stooping,

Stooped to his death and fell without a groan.
Then quick she doffed her gown for my disguise,
Telling me in few words how this was planned
By friends who had seen me taken: they had not
means
For present rescue, but discovering soon
Who had betrayed me, used his cursed name
With the governour of the prison, to admit
Her, his pretended wife, that she might claim
Settlement of some debt before I died.
So was it paid. Then we went forth together,
I in her woman's garments, following her,
Who wore the habit of the soldier slain:
And she went clear: but I, for some suspicion
Was questioned at the gate. Of those two men,
One I slew straight: the other, as I struck,
Thrust thro' my arm, yet not so hurtfully
But that he fell for it too. But thence alarm
Was given: I fled pursued, and gat me clear,
Leaping your garden wall.
Mar. Who was the woman?
Pal. One of our people. ⁷⁵⁰
Mar. May her name be told?
Pal. I never heard it.
Mar. Yet she knew thee well.
I had been proud to have done her deed. I think
There are not many men as brave as she.
Pal. O, lady, there are many, women and men,
Sworn to risk life in our good cause.
Mar. Alas,
That such fine courage should be so misled!
Pal. Misled? how, if I lead it?
Mar. I had forgot.
Pardon me, sir. It was my brother's word.
Pal. Ay, 'tis his word. And yet I honour Mannel.
Were't not for him there scarce would be a man
Of all our people who would reverence
Justice and order, and those other names
Of social welfare. 'Tis to him alone
We have looked to give us these. But if he stand
Where he can take our tyrants by the arm
And show them baits of righteousness, and lead them
Where they should go, shall we who lie beneath
Forbear to sting the laggard heel of justice,
Or think it crime to obstruct the path of wrong?
I blame not him that from his higher place
He finds offence in outcry and disorder:
To such as without loss or shame outride
The storms of shifting fortune this is easy.
Mar. What dost thou but exasperate ill-will?
Pal. Already our bread has been untaxed two
days.
Mar. And may be two days more.
Pal. I have better hope,
Or had: for if I had once provoked the Spaniard
To set his troops against us, all the nobles,
Who now retired hold neutral parliament,
Would then have joined the people, and compelled
The justice of our claim by force of arms.
Mar. All, say'st thou?
Pal. All save one or two, who are bought
With Hugo's money.
Mar. Say'st thou bought?
Pal. O lady,
Unto their great dishonour they are bought,
Even with the amassed duties our poor folk pay,

Ere they can bake a loaf to feed their children
Out of the corn their hands have sown and reaped.
Is not this shame?

Mar. 'Tis shame.

Pal. And shall Palicio
See this thing done, because he hath not office,
Or those few paltry florins, which might turn
The scale for poor Sicilians?

Mar. Ah, indeed,
I knew, I felt that thou wert right; and now
I see it: I never blamed thee.

Pal. No, nor Manuel
Blames me at heart, tho' he forbid my means.
Think, had I kept my old estate, and he
Had fallen as I, should I not do as he,
And he as I am doing?

Mar. Oh, I think
'Tis nobler to be poor. To share the suffering
Of them we pity ranks above redress.
I came to envy thee.

Pal. And certain it is, ⁸⁰⁰
They who have least to lose will venture most.

Mar. Yet those that have can give. What's the
best hope
Of this rebellion?

Pal. We would make thy brother
Viceroy in place of Hugo.

Mar. Will that he?

Pal. Here I know nothing, save that nought is
done.

Mar. Is there no leader then but thee?

Pal. The people
Are limbs without a head.

Mar. When will thy wound
Be healed?

Pal. Thy brother says that any surgeon
Could mend it quickly, but that his own skill,
Which knows the injury, was never practised
To find out and to bind the wounded vessel,
Which, being unhelped of art, may run to death.

Mar. To death! And hath he sent no surgeon?

Pal. Nay,
That were the greater risk for him and me.

Mar. Not so, if he could cure thee. I shall bring
one. [*As going.*]

Pal. It cannot be.

Mar. Thou mayst believe there's none
In all Palermo but myself could do it:
Yet can I do it.

Pal. Speak with Manuel first.

Mar. Oh! I shall tell him all. He will consent.
'Tis well I came. No surgeon for thee! Ah!
I go.

Pal. Thou wilt return?

Mar. Be sure, be sure.

And with the leech. [*Exit.*]
Pal. She is gone. [*Scene shuts across.*]

SCENE IV.

*In Manuel's house. Margaret and Manuel
meeting.*

Mar. Brother, what wilt thou say? Wilt thou
forgive me?

Hear me confess.

Man. What now, my mischief-maker?

Mar. I have seen Palicio.

Man. Hey! 'twas thy evil genius
Led thee that way.

Mar. I thinking him a woman,
Offered some service: whereupon he told me
Who he was, all his story, and of his wound.

Man. I am sorry; I should have warned thee, for
the knowledge

Makes thee so far accomplice, and I know not
How 'twill be taken when 'tis known.

Mar. O, brother,
Thou hast done nobly.

Man. I will tell to thee
My motives.

Mar. Nay, I need no motives.

Man. Hear them.

Palicio's life is forfeit, for he has killed
Three of his guards: but to the dangerous deed
He had provocation, such as I should hold
Clears him of crime: wherefore I take upon me
To force a loan of Justice while she sleeps,
For fear a thief should rob her: to this, moreover,
The claim of kinship binds me,—nay, be patient,
And hear me out.—Already our disorders
Have been reported at the Spanish court;
The enquiry set on foot will much endamage
Hugo's good name: I doubt not we shall have
Another viceroy, and the revolution
Will justify the movers.

Mar. Oh! all that,
Be as it may, will never cure his wound.

He needs a surgeon: we must find a surgeon.

Man. No: he must lie concealed till I procure
His pardon. His discovery now were death. ⁸⁵⁰

Mar. But if I bring one secretly?

Man. How secretly?

Better cry down the streets the man is here:
That might escape attention.

Mar. I know a man.
Have I not sometimes shewn thee certain sonnets
Writ in Sicilian speech?

Man. Eh! Michael Rosso?

Mar. 'Tis he. I think he'd love to do my bidding
In a more dangerous matter. Give me leave,
I'll bring him here to-night.

Man. I had thought of him,
But shrank from taxing his good-will. And yet—
(*Aside.*) For his own sake 'twere kind . . . and
Margaret asks it . . .

Secrets, they say, discover sympathies.—

(*Aloud.*) Ay, 'tis well thought of.

Mar. I can answer for him.

Man. I see. Yet there's no cause why he should
know.

Escort him blindfold hither; let Palicio
Have his face covered. Let him ask no questions:
And when 'tis done convey him blindfold back.

'Twere best he should not know.

Mar. O, brother, I thank thee.

Man. Why, girl, thou'rt crazed.

Mar. May I not go at once?

Man. Nay, wait till dusk; and see, take here
my seal,

Since thou must go alone: 'twill be thy freedom

From any questionings of any people.
Use all precautions, and impose on Rosso
Sacreddest secrecy: 'tis thou and he
Must carry it thro'. Be careful.

Mar. I will put on
Some common clothing, and disguise my face.
I thank thee. *[Exit.]*

Man. The girl's in love. Now, bravo Rosso!
I wish thee well. There's not a purer spirit
Flesh'd in all Sicily; nay, nor a man
I'd sooner call brother. Why, 'twas my choice,
Long urged in vain. That chanceth in an hour
Which comes not in nine years. 'Tis very true,
Fancy resents all judgment, and another's
Will often kill it quite. Now, when I looked
Rather for anything than my own wish,—heigh-ho!
'Tis I that stand in the way. I must discourage it.

Enter Philip (with some papers).

Ah, Philip.
Ph. Let me give you hack the papers.
I have read them.

Man. Well?
Ph. The viceroy's guilt is plain.
Your purpose cannot be to press this count.

Man. If the complaints, which I have already
made,

Be quashed at court, I shall.
Ph. 'Tis speculation
So gross, 'twould ruin Hugo to expose it.
Wished you to break with him,—yet his disgrace
Cannot be nothing to you; I should marvel
You had no associations, no affections,
Shocked at the thought.

Man. To interests manifold
As manifest, Justice is blind. If Spain
Remove not Hugo on the charges laid,
I have shewn thee what's to follow. Would you
avert it,
Press his dismissal. I must to the palace.
Guard thou the papers for me till I am back. *[Exit.]*

Ph. These papers are conviction. Blasco is
right:
He loves not. That is clear; for he would ruin,
Her father. Then again my rivalry
Avowed,—ay, if he had an ear, avowed,—
He doth not see. So cold, how could he win her?
Or wish to win her? She is mine.—And yet I would
'Twere any man but Manuel. Ah! who comes? 908
'Tis she. Now may I prove her.

Enter Constance with Servant.

Con. (to servt.). If she be not within, prithee en-
quire
Where she is gone. I will await thee here.

[Exit servt.]
I have been most foolish. *(Seeing Philip.)* Philip!
Ph. Yes, 'tis I.

Constance.
Con. What wouldst thou?
Ph. (kneeling). I entreat a favour,
Which is to me the one boon in the world.

Con. Rise, sir, what is't?
Ph. That I may speak, nor leave
Love's wound unhealed.

Con. 'Twere well to seal forgiveness,
Companion of forgetfulness. Say, therefore,

The few words that are due.

Ph. Tho' I repent,
Repentance cannot own forgetfulness.
It pleads forgiveness in the name of love.

Con. How in that name?
Ph. Constance, I love thee still.

Con. Sir!
Ph. Oh! 'tis true . . .
Reproach me not, Constance: my evil life
I have quite renounced. I used it but to learn
The wisdom of that other. I come back
From folly and idleness and evil days.

Whate'er hath been, Constance, I have not left thee:
There hath been nothing near thee, nothing like thee,
Nothing but thee: and I return to find thee
More beautiful than ever . . .

Con. Pray you, sir,
Remember.

Ph. Let me speak.
Con. When thou didst ask to speak,
I looked for that one word, which thou in honour
Wert, to amend thy silence, bound to speak.

'Twas in thy power to salve thy breach of faith
With full and free renoucement. Thine earlier ill
I had then forgiven: for if thou art not changed,
Philip, I am: then I was ignorant—
Maybe we both were—both mistook; but thou
Didst add an injury, and to-day thou addest
Another worse. Knowing me now betrothed,
How canst thou offer to renew thy love?

Ph. O, Constance, Manuel doth not, cannot, love
thee

As I.
Con. I pray he doth not.
Ph. Hear me, Constance!
Con. Nay, sir; no more. *[Exit.]*
Ph. My passion hath aroused

Passion in her; and that must work for me.
Is it likely such a temper would sit down
And eat cold fare at Manuel's feast of reason?
She will be mine. Ay, tho' she said betrothed—
Once 'twas to me. So now to see her father;
He's but a market where I rule with ease.
The papers! By heav'n, I had left them lying! *[Stoops.]*

11a!
Blood! blood upon the floor! I have knelt in blood.—
Here were an omen, were I superstitious.—
And scarcely dry. This city hath fallen accurst.
There is nothing spoke of . . . Ah! but what if this
Should be the track they seek? Palicio
Took shelter here! Impossible. Even Blasco
Thought not so ill of Manuel. Yet the other
Under the wall, and this within the house . . .
They tally. Peace! I will go search the garden. *[Exit.]*

SCENE V.

*Room in Manuel's house. Palicio as before
(sitting).*

Fal. To stand true to a cause because 'tis noble,
Tho' it be thankless; to command a people
Against a tyranny, and teach their arms
To enforce the reasonable rights of life,
Beneath the crushing bond of wealth and power;—
To be an outcast, but to leave a name

Untarnished and beloved, remembered long ;—
That was my choice, my hope. Can I now waver ?
Shall I—having so well begun—
Step up into a throne above the throng,
And smiling on them from the hated height,
Take life at ease ? Nay, when 'tis reasoned so,
'Tis hideous.—But, oh ! thou treacherous enemy,
Thou selfish and unanswerable passion,
That bluntest resolution, and criest down
The voice of virtue ! Margaret, Margaret !
Would I had never seen thee, or believed
I could not win thee. If I now could fly,
I might go free.

Squarcialupu, who has appeared at the window, gradually thrusting his head between the curtains, and peering round, enters.

Sq. Captain !

Pal. Ha ! Squarcialupu !
Why, what ! how com'st thou here ? what dost thou ?

Sq. Hush !
Pal. Begone, I pray.

Sq. Nay, now I have found thee, captain.
Thine arm is it only ?

Pal. A prick in the arm.

Sq. So, so !

Then thou canst come.

Pal. Tell me, how didst thou learn

That I was here ?

Sq. We guessed it from thy track.

Pal. O, God ! I'm tracked ?

Sq. Thy blood is on the wall.

I undertook to tell thee. In the dusk

I scaled this window at the back of the house :

Had my old luck, captain. Make haste and fly.

Pal. Stay, stay ! I cannot. Is it known to any
I am hiding here ?

Sq. What use to stay for that ?

Come ere they know it.

Pal. I cannot.

Sq. I can help thee.

Pal. Nay, 'tis not that, altho' I am bled to death.
'Tis honour holds me.

Sq. Honour will not help

Manuel nor thee, if they should search his house.

But if thou fliest . . .

Pal. I may not.

Sq. That's no word

Where life's at stake. What shall I tell thy men ?

Pal. Where are they ?

Sq. At the news of thy escape

They gathered on the hills, and wait thee there.

I met a man in the town an hour ago,

Who said he had seen thee riding on the road

To Monreale. All the folk's astr. 1000

Pal. I cannot come.

Sq. Give me not such a word.

Who would believe I had seen thee, if I said

Palicio lieth safe in Manuel's house,

And saith he cannot come ?

Pal. Begonc, I bid thee,

Lest thou be found here.

Sq. Nay, I'll not be gone.

'Tis but some twenty feet : I'll lift thee down.

The street is watched.

Pal. Hark, Squarcialupu, tell me ;

Is't true I'm tracked ?

Sq.

'Tis certain.

Pal.

Then I think

If Manuel knew of this . . . Hark, I will come.

Go thou and tell my men that I will come.

To-morrow morning let them look to find me

At Monreale. If I come not then

Let none look for me more. But if I come

All shall be well. Go thou and tell them this.

Sq. Come, captain, while thou mayst.

Pal.

I bid thee go.

Obey me at once.

Sq. (*whistles at window and is answered*). I have
thy promise.

To-morrow we shall see thee. [Exit.

Pal.

But for this cursed wound

I had fled. To cure it must I risk my soul ?

Fool that I was, had I escaped with him

I might have found a surgeon—now when she comes

I will say nothing. Nothing . . . yet, that's no

hope ;

For seeing her I must love her : and if I fail

To win her wholly, I must lose my soul.

She is here. (*Aside.*) Ah ! what is this ?

Enter Margaret, with Rosso blindfold.

Mar. (*to Rosso*). You now are in the room. Stand
in your place.

While I make ready. (*To Pal.*) Let me wrap this
cloth

About thy face. Lie ever still, and speak not.

(*To Rosso.*) Your eyes, sir, are at liberty.

Ros. (*unbandaging*). Coming hither,

I thought 'twould make a pretty poem to tell

Of one, whose cruel mistress ne'er allowed

The meanest favour, till he dreamed one night

That he was blind, and she, in pity of him,

Led him forth by the hand where he would go,

But left him suddenly ; whereat he awoke,

And wished no more to see . . .

Mar. Now, sir Apollo, come. Here lies your
patient.

Give him your aid, and tell your poem after.

Ros. Well, let us see. Ay, here is all I need.

Set them thus on the table, and here the light,

So. (*arranging.*) 'Tis the right arm. (*unbinding.*)

Ah ! when was this done ?

Mar. Have you forgot, sir ? questions are for-
bidden.

Ros. See, thou must hold his arm for me. Press
here

Thy fingers ; firmly,—so. Thou dost not faint

At sight of blood ?

Mar. Nay, nay. And yet I know not.

If there be much, I faint.

Ros. (*operating*). I had forgotten

I might not question ;—'tis a surgeon's habit.—

First,—for where all are eager with their tale,—

'Tis only courteous to invite the telling :—

But chiefly—that it stablishes his judgment—

Built on appearances,—and banishes 1050

Conjecture from experience ;—as 'twould now

For me,—should this man say,—'twas yesterday

The wound was made ;—and he that dealt it me

Stood on my left,—and thro' my arm outstretched,—

In attitude of striking at another,—

Thrust with—a sword.—Stir not, 'tis nearly done.—
But I withdrew my arm ere he his weapon.—
Loose not thy grasp: loose not!

Mar. Sir, my attention
Was taken by your story. Never speak:
'Twill mar your work.

Ros. 'Tis a small thing. 'Tis done.
'Twas an unlucky lunge that lanced thee there.

(*To Mar.*) What thinkest thou of my story?

Mar. 'Twas but guessing.
Ros. Nay, inference. 'Twere guess to say, the
skill

Which staunch'd the running blood, but could no
more,

Might be thy brother's: that this sunburnt arm,
Fine skin, and youthful fibre, were the body
Of John Palicio.

Pal. (discovering). I am betrayed!

Ros. Not so:
Then had I held my tongue.

Pal. True.—What's thy name?

Ros. My name is Rosso. Sling thine arm across:
There must it rest until the wound be healed.

Mar. You have guessed the secret, sir, which we
withheld

In your respect. This is my brother's house;
This is Palicio. Guard now what you have learned
As closely, I pray, as if we had freely told it.

Ros. Not to thee, lady, though in this and all
I am thy servant; yet not now to thee

I speak, but to Giovann Palicio;

To whom I say he need not ask of me

Promise or oath. The good I am proud to have
done

I shall not spoil by blabbing. ¹⁰⁸⁰

Pal. Thank thee, Rosso.

Ros. Noble and brave Palicio, mayst thou prosper.
[*Bandaging his own eyes.*]

Pal. Thank thee, I thank thee, Rosso. So now
my arm

Is mended. By heaven! this surgery hath a trick
Worth knowing, could one learn it easily.

Ros. (blindfold). Come, lady, and lead me forth.

Mar. Why, what is this?

You know your way: there's nothing now to hide.

Ros. Didst thou not bargain with me to lead me
back?

Mar. But there's no need.

Ros. Yet will I claim my fee.

Where is thy hand?

Mar. Sir, you but trifle.

Ros. And thou
Refus't me in a trifle? Then I will dare (*unbandaging*)

To raise my terms. If I may kiss thy hand
I'll be content.

Mar. 'Tis I, sir, should kiss yours.

'Tis that hath earned the homage: and I'll be kind.

That hath done well; and thus I kiss it. (*Kisses*
Rosso's hand.) Now,

Go, go in peace: thou'rt paid. [*Making him go out.*
[*Exit Rosso.*]

Pal. (sitting). Why didst thou that?

Mar. He loves me.

Pal. Wouldst thou be as kind to me,
If I should love thee?

Mar. But he sends me sonnets.

Pal. I could write sonnets.

Mar. Ah, but his are writ
In pure Sicilian.

Pal. 'Tis my proper tongue.

Mar. I have kept my promise, sir, and now must
leave. ¹¹⁰⁰

Your wound is healed.

Pal. I fear I scarce can thank thee,
If 'tis thy word to go. Or, if thou stayest

But to cure wounds,—I have another wound
I shewed thee not, which hath a deeper seat:

This hand may cure it.

Mar. Nay, what mean you, sir?

Pal. Margaret, I love thee. There, thou hast it
all.

Thou hast stolen my soul. I thought—my pride, my
hope—

O, I thought wrong—'tis nothing. All I have done,
Or would do, I cast aside: I love thee only.

Mar. Giovanni.

Pal. O, 'tis true, there's nothing noble,
Beautiful, sacred, dear, familiar to me,

I hold now at a straw's worth: body and soul

I am thine, Margaret, I am thine. O, answer me!

Mar. Giovanni, 'tis so strange. 'Tis best I go.

Pal. Thou didst kiss Rosso's hand.

Mar. For love of thee.

Didst thou not guess?

Pal. O, then, my dearest, kiss me
Now for myself. Can it be true thou lovest me?

Mar. Alas! 'tis learned too quickly.

Pal. Can I think it,
Spite of my savage life, my outlawry,

My poverty?

Mar. O, what are these?

Pal. Indeed,

My blood is noble.

Mar. These are not the checks

Or lures of love. Nay, what is noble blood?

What were't to be a lion, and to fly

The hunter like a hare? And if man shew

Less fearless fierce and hungry for the right

Than doth a beast for food, what is his title

To be God's image worth? That best nobility

Hath no more claim.

Pal. But canst thou share my life?

Mar. I am restless for it.

Pal. Leave thy rank? thy wealth?

Mar. I have lived too long that counterfeit of life.

I'll strive like thee: something I'll do, like thee,

To lessen misery. Nay, if man's curse

Flang in necessity, I have the heart

To combat that, and find it in some part

Fate be not vulnerable.

Pal. O joy, my dearest:

I wronged thee ages by a moment's thought

That thou wouldst shrink . . . Then is our marriage
fixed?

Mar. There's none can hinder it.

Pal. O, blessed joy!

Yet how can I be sure, love, that thou knowest,

Finding the word so easy, what a mountain

There lies to lift? Pledging to me and mine

Thy heart this hour, a hundred thousand stings

Will plague thee from this moment, to drive thee back.

Mar. Try me, Giovanni.
Pal. Wilt thou aid me, love,
 To fly to-night? By morning I may meet
 My men at San Martino: all my schemes
 May yet be saved.
Mar. Ah! wilt thou go, Giovanni?
 Thou'rt yet too weak.
Pal. My presence, not my strength,
 Is needed.
Mar. Alas! I fear.
Pal. What, Margaret, dost thou fear?
Mar. Only for thee. Yet go; I can be with thee
 By noon. My brother has a little house ¹¹⁵¹
 At Monreale, where I am used to stay
 When the wish takes me. There I'll go to-morrow,
 And thence can visit thee. Thou didst not mean
 I should not come? I shall not hinder thee.
Pal. Nay, nay.
Mar. I'll let thee from the house to-night,
 And give thee money which will aid thee well.
 My brother need know nothing. I can make
 The journey thither in an hour, and choose
 My time to beg his grace.
Pal. What do I owe thee!
 Freedom, and life, and love,—thy love . . . O, Mar-
 garet,
 What I shall do will pay thee.
Mar. I must leave:
 For Manuel else will question of my stay.
Pal. My treasure lost so soon!
Mar. I go to save
 What we have won. Farewell.
Pal. Say at what hour
 I may go hence; and how.
Mar. At dead of night:
 'Tis safest then.
Pal. And wilt thou come thyself?
Mar. When the church bell with double stroke
 hath tolled
 The death-knell of to-morrow's second hour,
 While its last jar yet shelters in the ear,
 Listen: and at thy door when thou shalt catch
 A small and wakeful noise, such as is made
 By the sharp teeth of an unventurous mouse,
 Scraping his scanty feast when all is still,
 Come forth. Thou'lt meet my hand, and at the gate
 I'll give thee what I have. Tied in thy bundle
 Will be a letter shewing thee the place
 Where thou must send me tidings. Now, farewell.
Pal. Yet not farewell.
Mar. To-night I shall not see thee:
 Nor must thou speak. So, till to-morrow's sun
 Lasts our farewell.
Pal. Then with to-morrow, Margaret,
 My life begins.
Mar. O, 'tis the greater joy
 For me than thee.
Pal. Ay, for the giver ever
 Hath the best share. And thus I kiss thee, love.
 Farewell.
Mar. Be ready.
Pal. Trust me.
Mar. And take thy dagger.
 Farewell. [Going.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Hall in Manuel's house. Manuel and Margaret.

Man. Nay, 'twas ill done. The open window
 shews
 He made a breakneck leap into the street.
 I searched the room, in case he might have left
 Some explanation written: there was none.
 I am vexed. 'Tis a most graceless breach of trust.
Mar. What promise made he?
Man. None was asked. The knowledge
 Of duty were enough to bind a man
 Far less obliged. And then 'tis thankless, Margaret.
 Twice have we saved his life: first I, then thou:
 And while we sleep he flies. I blame myself,
 I should have pledged his word.
Mar. Hadst thou so done,
 He would have stayed.
Man. I know not. Now he is gone . . .
 Go set his room as if he had never been.
 We must forget the matter. I have summons ¹²⁰⁰
 From Ilugo, and must leave.
Mar. And when I have done
 Thy bidding may I go to Monreale?
Man. You wish it?
Mar. Yes.
Man. What calls you there?
Mar. A visit.
 I'll take Lucia, and can ride Rosamund.
Man. Nay, nay, I would not have it. Thou
 wilt meet
 With Rosso's people, maybe Rosso himself;
 And he might misinterpret . . . and I think
 So soon after your game of blindman's buff,
 That since thou canst not love him . . .
Mar. Manuel, I promise—
Man. I want no promises; but if thou goest
 Remember . . .
Mar. Why, I'll promise . . .
Man. Nay, I bid.
 Only be wise. Wilt thou be back to-night?
Mar. To-morrow, may I stay so long.
Man. Ay, stay.
 Have good care of thyself. Farewell. [Exit.]
Mar. Farewell.
 (Calling.) Lucia, Lucia;—come, Lucia, come!
 Enter Lucia.
Lu. My lady.
Mar. To horse, Lucia! we start at once.
 Order the horses.
Lu. Holy Mary, defend us!
 It cannot be thou meanest . . .
Mar. What is this, now?
 Last night didst thou not promise?
Lu. If I did,
 'Twas madness: think of the risk.
Mar. I take the risk.
Lu. Consider.
Mar. I have considered.
Lu. O, dear mistress,

I fear all will not end well ; think again.

Think what thou leavest.

Mar. I think I shall leave thee.

Lu. But when shall we return ?

Mar. Maybe to-morrow.
Order the horses. I shall go without thee.

Quick, quick, begone !

Lu. Well, well. Thou hast found a man :
I being a woman must help thee, tho' 'tis madness.

Mar. Go, girl ; I know it. Thou'lt be true, Lucia :
Only be quick.

Lu. Well, well : may heaven forgive us.

Mar. Forgive, she saith. Forgive me rather, oh
heaven !

The sourness of my spirit hitherto :

Yet now forgive me not if I dare tamper
With this intrinsic passion. O joy, my joy !

This beautiful world is mine :

All Sicily is mine :

This morning mine. I saw the sun, my slave,

Poising on high his shorn and naked orb

For my delight. He there had stayed for me,

Had he not read it in my heart's delight

I bade him on. The birds at dawn sang to me,

Crying "Is life not sweet ? O is't not sweet ?"

I looked upon the sea ; there was not one,

Of all his multitudinous waves, not one,

That with its watery drift at raking speed

Told not my special joy. O happy lovers

In all the world, praise God with me : his angels

Envy us, seeing we are his favourites.

What else could grant such joy ? Now on my journey

Must I set forth, to be a brigand's wife . . .

That's but the outward of it, and looks strange :

For, oh, the heart of it is a fire of passion

To liek up trifling life. Away, such dainty stuff :

Let me stand forth myself.—Yet ere I go

I must send Constance word. To whom to trust

My letter ? Ah, Philip . . .

1253

Enter Philip.

Ph. Good morning, Margaret.

Mar. Good morning, duke : thou goest to the
palace ?

Ph. Ay.

Mar. May I ask thee, then, to bear this letter
To Constance ? I'd not trust it willingly
Where it might wander.

Ph. 'Twill pass from my hands

To hers.

Mar. Pray tell her, for my health I go

To Monreale, or would have come myself.

Ph. I'll tell her so. I pray the change restore
thee,—

And soon. Indeed thou look'st not well. Farewell.

Mar. Farewell. (*Aside.*) Look I then ill ? I
never felt

So light and keen in spirit.

[*Exit.*

Ph. (*solus.*) This fits in, too. She is sent to
Monreale,

Lest she should make discovery. 'Tis thus

I join the threads. Palicio climbed the wall,

Came hither thro' the garden : here he stayed

And bound his wound. So far the track. There has
been

At least no care to hide it ; and now he lies

In the room across the courtyard : wherefore else

Drawn curtains, and the lamp, which yesterday

Burnt, as I saw, in the afternoon ? All credit

To the king's commissioner. Yet must I dissemble,

And not appear in the matter. 'Tis incredible

Of Manuel. What will he allege ? He is gone

To the palace now : thither must I, and face him.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

On the hills above Monreale. Brigands fantastically dressed and armed are seated about on the rocks, with drinking cups and remains of feast. Palicio, in a black suit, his right arm in a sling. Much talking and singing, or the scene may open with the following song—

SONG.

I would not change the hills that I range

For a house in the city street :

Nor the price on my head for a tax on my bread.

Liberty, lads, is sweet.

(*Palicio getting up on a rock waves them to silence.*)

Sq. Long live Lord Palicio !

All. Huzzah ! Huzzah !

Pal. Thank you, my men. Now silence ; I must
tell you

The feast is o'er, our meeting at an end.

We have laid our plans : but their success depends

On zealous preparation. Ye must to work.

A brigand. We have another song yet, captain.

Pal. See ye the sun is on this side of the city.

Brigands. The song, the song !

Pal. What is this song ye call for ?

A brigand. May't please your honour,

If Squarcia sing we'll be content.

Sq. I know

What they would have.

Pal. Sing then : and cut it short.

Sq. Nay, that lies with the chorus. Who hath
the lute ?

SONG.

If you'd hear me sing,

Why give me a skin of wine.

Creatures have their several ways,

Edod ! and I have mine,

CHOR. *And I have mine. (ad lib.)*

Edod ! and I have mine.

1300

If you'd see me fight,

Why let me taste good cheer.

Was not I as good as my word ?

Edod ! am I not here ?

CHOR. *Am I not here ? (ad lib.)*

(*Palicio gets up as before.*)

Sq. Enough, enough ! silence ! Now were ye not
A set of loons . . . make silence for the captain.

Pal. Mark, men : I bid you leave, each silently
And separately to his allotted task.

Gather your companies at tryst to-night ;
Acquaint them of our plans. Once, ere ye go,
Look on those tyrannous towers, and swear revenge.
Revenge on them that grind the people down !
That tax our bread and wine ! To-morrow night
Hugo shall need no candles.

Brigands. Revenge, revenge. Huzzah ! Death to
Hugo !

Burn him !

Pal. Not him, the palace : 'tis to burn the palace.
Him we must take alive.

Brigands. Not kill him, no.

Treat him as he would us.

Pal. If ye love colour,
His gold is ruddier than his coward blood.

Brigands. Ay, ay, his gold—a ransom. Bleed
his bags.

Pal. Above all, none forget good Manuel's kindness,
And what I have told you. If any meet with him
And hurt a hair of his head, 'tis . . .

Brigands. Death.
Pal. 'Tis death.

Swear all, 'tis death.

All. We swear.

Pal. Now to your work.

Brigands. Huzzah !

Pal. Secretly, then. Farewell ! To-morrow
night

I'll meet you all. God grant us a good meeting.
Farewell. [Exit.

Brigands. Huzzah !

*During following scene the brigands going, carrying
off things to cave.*

Sq. Come, help clear off this gear to the cave.

A brig. Any wine in yon skin, good Squarcia ?

Sq. Ay, for the chewing.

Brig. Thank ye. I'm off. Good-day, lads. [Exit.

Sq. Did I not well, I say ?

A brig. But how didst thou find him ?—tell us.

Sq. Trust me. Not that 'twas a thing within the
bounds of mortal cleverness if a man should want
luck. But I'd buy the dog that would have run as
straight for him, as 'twere denoted by scent or in-
stinct. To climb the very wall, and in at the window,
and there to see him just face to face : on a fine
couch in a pleasant chamber enough, with his arm
bandaged . . .

Brig. Is his arm broke ?

Sq. Ay, and where the nerve runs to the heart :
the lady told me a thousand times that 'twere mortal
to move it ; and the surgeon who bound it said that
his balance hung by a thread.

Brig. The lady was with him, then. Didst thou
see her ? 1350

Sq. It's not all I see I'm bound to tell. But if
she was not there, how should she be here ? And
had I not persuaded her, would she have let him
come, think you ? And that a matter of disputation,
an hour and more.

Brig. How could she stay him ?

Sq. Let alone wounds and surgeons, shall a lady
have nothing to say ? And she's hard hit, I take it.
A fine piece, and brings money with her.

Brig. And what may spoil his fighting.

Sq. Wilt thou grudge the captain what he has
fairly won ?

Or must thou be served first ?

Brig. Serve me soon, and serve me well. Yet
I like not the lady. [Exit.

Sq. Nay, nor the coin neither, I'll go bound.
How should he ? Nay . . . Wouldn't old Beedo
now have liked to have been here ?

A brig. Well, he would.

Another. Why came he not ?

Sq. A bad reason, man, but a good excuse.

Brig. How mean you ?

Sq. As if thou hadst never been on the wrong
side of four walls ! tell not me. [Exit.

Enter Palicio and Margaret.

Pal. Now thou know'st all.

Mar. But is that all, Giovanni ?

Pal. Saw'st thou them well from where thou wert ?

Mar. Ay, tell me :

The man in the blue jacket, who is he ?

Pal. That's Squarcialupu : he's my first lieutenant.

Did they not greet me ?

Mar. I could count eighteen.

Are there no more ?

Pal. The least of these can muster

Twenty as brave.

Mar. That's not six hundred men.

Pal. But with them I can raise the town.

Mar. 'Tis pity

The barons stand aloof.

Pal. They hold together

On certain claims that touch their own estate.

But in their hate of Hugo they will join us

At first report of our success ; and that

I'll make flame forth.

Mar. Alas ! what canst thou do,

Having so little means ?

Pal. To-morrow night

We shall surround the palace and capture Hugo.

Mar. One regiment could drive all thy men away.

Pal. He dare not give the word.

Mar. How know'st thou that ?

Pal. I have sprung a cranny in his council-board,

Thro' which crumbs fall to me.

Mar. Nay, but you force him . . .

The viceroiy to yield up his power to a rebel !

Hugo, his person to your hated hands !

Pal. Well, he may fly ; and then my word is,

Sack

And fire the palace.

Mar. Giovanni, if he fight,

Thou wilt be killed or taken.

Pal. And what of that ?

Mar. What, askest thou ! ask what ! Methinks
the world

Holds but one treasure—thee : and thou dost wrong

Creation, staking all her store at once 1351

On such a sleight of fortune. It shall not be.

Nay, for my sake it shall not. Dost thou love me ?

Pal. Love thee ? O, Margaret, when I look on
thee,

And see the dazzling wealth, with which I hardly

Shall scrape to heaven, may God forgive me, love,

But I would be for ever pinched in hell,

Rather than miss thee.

Mar. To me art thou as precious :
Therefore be wise. Where is the list of names ?

Pal. 'Tis here.

Mar. What read I here ? These are thy
captains,

Palicio : these thy rivals, Margaret !

Why, 'mongst these names—nay, tho' I here see
names

Renowned for outrage—there is not one name

Of such respect, that I can think it possible

Its leadership can bid thee cast away

Thy life, my life, our love.

Pal.

They are all brave men.

Mar. They are ignorant, desperate, and reckless
men.

Pal. 'Tis by such recklessness I come at right.

Mar. 'Tis recklessness throughout. See, thou
art wounded

And weak ; a price upon thy head : think of it,—

And trust the people's rights to Manuel ;

Leave them to the barons : we've a better task :

Sail o'er to Rome, there reassume thy rank ;

Let us be married, and await the day

That Manuel finds thy pardon.

Pal.

Tempt me not, Margaret.

Mar. Else are we lost.

Pal. Nay, fear not : there's a traitor

In the enemy's camp ; from whom I'll have such
tidings

As will ensure success.

Mar.

Who is it ?

Pal.

Blasco.

Mar. Blasco !

Pal. He hath your money ; and for
that price

Will tell how Hugo may be best surprised. ¹⁴³⁰

That is my venture, Margaret . . . If it fail . . .

Mar.

Thou wilt be slain.

Pal.

Nay, I may still escape.

Mar. And then thou'lt come ?

Pal.

I will.

Mar. Promise but that :

That if this venture fail, and thou escape,

Thou wilt not risk again.

Pal.

Ay, if I fail.

Mar.

Promise.

Pal. I promise.

Mar. Thou wilt lose nothing, for my brother alone

Can do much more than thou with these base men,

Who stain the cause. One favour more.

Pal.

What is it ?

Mar. 'Tis that this evening, love, be spent to-
gether.

Pal. I mean it should. To-night our fellows meet

In various rendezvous, as you may see

Upon the paper. There are ten in all.

They will not need my presence till to-morrow,

When the bands join at sundown. O, Margaret :

I knew that thou wouldst come.

Mar.

I think, Giovanni,

Thou shouldst have met me first thyself : thy men

Are rough.

Pal.

Was any rude ?

Mar.

Nay, 'twas well meant,

But sounded strangely.

Pal.

Say but who it was.

Mar. No, 'tis forgiven.

Pal. (*going*).

Kiss me.

Mar.

Ah, now, Giovanni,

Where wilt thou go ?

Pal.

But for one hour, my dearest,

I must be absent. Then shall I be yours

For all the day.

Mar.

Farewell. And prithee send

Lucia. I will await thee.

Pal.

Farewell.

[*Exit.*

Mar.

I have his promise,

If this scheme fail. 'Tis mine to make it fail.

O, 'tis too dangerous : to trust so far

That dollar-ballasted Iscariot,

The weather-trimming Blasco.—The paper ! the list !

I'll have their names. Where can I write them ? Ah !

My prayer-book. I will send them straight to Hugo.

Poor Constance ! Burn the palace ! Ay, and thee,

For aught they care. Now, who comes first ? Ben-

dettu

Jacupu . . . and your place ?—within the cloister

Of Santo Spirito. Next, Squarcialupu . . .

Why, that's the ruffian who would like a dozen

Wives such as I. He'll find one were too many.

Go you to prison, sir, and cool your thoughts.

You burn the palace !—Messer Vincentiu

Lazaru . . . at his peltry shed at Baido.

Now there's two pages of them : the little prayers

Will hardly shrieve them . . . here's one I cannot read.

B-o-n-o-Bononio, now I have him.

Why who could trust such men ? Set them in power

But for a day . . . say this next villain here,

Fardello . . . he's a murderer—ay, for him

I write his death, maybe : but for the rest

I'll take such care that Manuel's voice shall ease

Their accusation. Now I have them all.

Lucia ! Ho, Lucia !

1479

Enter Lucia.

See, take this book :

Return straight to Palermo : find some friend,

Whom thou canst trust : commit it to her hands ;

Tell her to give it secretly to Livio,

Bidding him read what is writ down in the margins ;

And say 'twas given to her by one she knew not,

And with that message. All our happiness

Is staked on this. Begone. Haste for thy life.

Lu. Alas ! what's this ?

Mar.

Why, have I frightened thee ?

Be brave : I tell thee on this single thread

My life is hanging.

Lu.

Trust me, lady, I'd risk

Ten lives for that.

Mar.

Hide it. I trust thee. Go.

I have played a bold stroke here : but if it prosper,

For Constance, and Giovanni, and myself,

'Tis not ill done.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*A room in the palace. Enter Hugo and
Constance.*

Hu. Thou hast a daughter's duty, I a father's :

'Tis mine to seek thy good, thine to obey.

Con. I pray thee, father, hear me.

Hu. I have heard thee.
Thou tellest me nought but what I know. The duke
Hath been with me : his purpose to renew
His suit hath my support. 'Tis very honourable—
It shall be welcome. Though thy words to him
Betrayed reluctance, that makes yet no reason
To shun him. He will presently be here :
Stay and receive him.

Con. O, if I do not dream,
Heaven help me now !

Hu. Constance, I pray, be sober.
I am sorry for thee : but what seems thy grief
Will be thy comfort, when thou learn'st the cause
Which presses me to urge it.

Con. What lies behind ?
What misery ? Say !

Hu. Manuel, whom late we trusted,
Hath turned against me. He hath joined the
rebels. 1509

Con. Who dares to slander him ?

Hu. Fact makes no room
For slander. The devil himself could not invent
A tale to blacken him. First to the court
He hath writ of me in secret, in the sense
That I have stirred the king's men to rebellion
By my misrule ; and all the while at home
He feeds the mischief, and most treacherously
Favours the rebels, so to magnify
The blame on me he charges.

Con. The crime's too great.
If this be all I breathe again. The time
When thou wilt prove this 'twill away like smoke.
Not till 'tis proved question our marriage, father.

Hu. The question now with him is not of marriage,
But of his head.

Con. Shame, shame ! if these be words,
What is their sense ?

Hu. To-morrow, or to-day,
I shall have proof.

Con. I knew 'twas all unproven.
Who brought this lie, and propped it with the
promise

To make it true ?
Hu. Go, girl, I hear the duke.
He must not see thee thus.

Con. So far is well.
I gladly go.—Dear father !

Hu. Go take thy grief
Where thou canst comfort it. This Manuel
Hath not deceived thee more than me, and me
Would have more grossly wronged.

Con. Alas ! alas ! [*Exit.*]
Hu. The proof will be to search his house, and so
Both knaves are caught at once. Now to that end
Lest he get wind of it I have bid him hither,
And shall detain him till 'tis done.

Enter Philip.

Your grace,

I have stayed for you.

Ph. 'Tis well. I bring conviction.
Palicio lies in Manuel's house. His room
Is locked and darkened : save for that, and orders
That none shall enter, there is no precaution.

Hu. The abominable Pharisee !

Ph. Now Margaret hath been hurried from the
house

On plea of health : I bear a letter from her
To Constance.

Hu. Give't me.

Ph. Pardon, your excellence ;
I promised I would see it in Constance's hands.

Hu. My hands are hers : a daughter cannot read
Letters her father may not. Nay, the more
Such right's resented, more's the need to use it.—
And from a traitor's house !

Ph. (giving). Your privilege, sir,
Invades my honour.

Hu. Tut, tut, tut, 'tis mine : [*Takes it.*]
Be not so squeamish. [*Reads.*]

I can write all's well.

Yet, as thou lovest Manuel, breathe no word

Of aught I saw. I go from home to-day ;

Will see thee when returned.—Why, this is nothing.

Ph. Taken alone 'twere nothing ; but there's
nothing

Could better fit our knowledge ; nay it adds :

To what we know. I see that Margaret lies

From the discovery that she hath made herself ;

And fears for Manuel. I grieve but for her.

It is enmity to you precludes all pity. 1560

I have come to see his papers, which contain

Charges against your excellence, prepared

With such unfriendly skill, that to discredit them,

Should ever they reach court, would cost far more

Than any price or pains you now might spend

In their suppression.

Hu. O, the double-faced
Pretentious Greek ! But in this other matter
We have him. I'll charge the deed to his face. He'll
not

Deny it. The embassy delayed last night
May sail this evening, and with them aboard
Shall Manuel fare to the king with his accusers.

We shall at least be rid of him. I will call him.

[*Rings a bell.*]

Thou hast done me a good service.

Ph. Shall I remain ?

Hu. I beg you. The cursed villain !

Enter Servant.

I await

The chief justiciary. Shew him hither. [*Exit servt.*]

Ph. (aside). I shall not face him well. He must
not guess

My part in this : say he be proved a traitor,

And I abhor all such as undermine

The fabric of the throne,—yet have I shared

It is guilt at heart, both in my wish to find it

And from my profit in it ! 'Twould seem less foul

To steal a man's fair earnings than to glean

The waste of his crime. I'll stand and take what
comes.

Enter Manuel.

Man. My service to your excellence.

Hu. Ay, well.

'Tis of thy service I would speak. Attend me.

Thou art an honest man ; in all Palermo

No name so fair as thine. There's none would dream

That thou at any press wouldst blink the right

In thine own interest : now for these three years

Thou hast done justice honour, holding up

Her majesty for worship : we ourselves

Have strained or waived opinion oftentimes
In trust of thee. 'Twas not then at first hearing
We took the tale which strong concurrent proofs
Now make me charge thee with. Know that 'tis said
That thou hast given a refuge in thy house
To John Palicio. Deny 't I pray thee.

Man. 'Tis true, your excellence.

Hu. Then first I bid thee
Return him into custody.

Man. Last night

He left me without warning. 1600
Hu. Gone! Then, by heaven!
Thou'rt doubly guilty.

Man. I admit my guilt
Upon the point of negligence: for the rest
I beg your excellence will hear my plea.
Palicio is my kinsman: he was driven
Without his purpose, nor with my connivance,
To shelter in my house. The claim of nature
Withstood the challenge of my royal duty
Suspended now in the interregnum . . .

Hu. Enough!
Thou dost admit the act: 'tis downright treason.
I'll hear no answer. Though thou wouldst deny
My authority, thou shalt not doubt my power.
Thou art my prisoner. To-night the embassy
Will sail for Spain. Thou goest with them to plead
Thy cause before the king.

Man. I shall be ready, sire.

Hu. Thou wilt be here detained until thy house
Is searched: which done thou wilt go home, and
there

Resign thy keys. Knowing thy doings, sir,
I treat thee as I find thee. We are enemies.

Man. I pray your excellence, for your daughter's
sake . . .

Hu. My daughter! could I wed her to a traitor,
Would she herself consent?

Enter Livio with the book, and Blasco.

Man. Call me not traitor,
Ere I be proved one.

Hu. (to Bl.). Ho! call in the guard. [*Exit Blasco.*
(*To Liv.*) What bring you, son? [*Talks with him.*

Man. (to Ph.). Philip, before I go;—
Thou see'st my case. Fate would look black upon me,
Left I no friend to speak for me: but thee
I trust. Tell Constance what thou knowest; the rest
Margaret can tell you. Add thereto assurance
Both of my innocence and speedy acquittal.

Enter Blasco with Guards.

One word and I am gone. Beware of Blasco.
He bears two faces. See he be not trusted
With aught of moment.

Hu. (to officer of guard). The chief justiciary is your
prisoner

On charge of treason. Guard him in the palace
Till you hear more.

Man. (to Ph.). Stand my friend, and God aid thee.
[*Exit guarded.*

Ph. (aside). And so I may. I am not yet stepped
so far

That I must push my purpose, where it wounds
Such ample trust.

Hu. Philip, see here.

Ph. What, sire?

Hu. From some most friendly hand we have full
tidings
Of all the rebels; where they may be seized
This very night.

Ph. (to Liv.). You bring it?

Liv. They are betrayed
By some one of themselves.

Hu. 'Twill end the matter.

Ph. How came you by it?

Liv. A woman brought it me,
Who said 'twas thrust into her hands by one
She knew not, who escaped. She hath since confessed
That 'twas a maid of Manuel's.

Bl. Look you, tho',

How close this follows the discovery
Of Manuel's treason. It must be that some,
On whom he used constraint, smelling his fall
Return to loyalty.

Hu. Most like. Now, Livio,
Seize them to-night. See thou observe in all
The dispositions which I have shewn thee. Stay,
There's first a vacancy to fill: I make thee
Justiciary in Manuel's place: in thine

I will take Blasco for my secretary. 1654
Meanwhile I lend him thee: thou wilt have need
Of his experience.

Liv. I thank thee, father.

Bl. And I, your excellence.

Hu. Now to your work.
And then to Manuel's house, and take possession
Of all thy office gives thee.

[*Exeunt Livio and Blasco.*

Hu. (to Ph.). Thy matter next:

I will fetch Constance.

Ph. Not now, I pray, not now!

Hu. Nay, wherefore wait? This business shall
be settled
In a few words. I'll bring her to thee straight.

[*Exit.*

Ph. I pray you. Nay, he is gone. I must stand
to it.

I play to win; and now the stakes are mine;
Unless against myself for friendship's claim
I should uphold my rival. And he's guilty.
The papers were his own: them he confessed,
And only deepened treason by the excuse
Of kinship with the rebel. And then his servants
Cognizant.—On the other hand his confidence
Staggering the evidence: his trust in me
To comfort Constance. How should Margaret know
More than the facts, or I deny the facts,
Should I plead for him? And yet against the facts
The man himself: his soul revealed to me;
And my persuasion of him. O, he has fallen
To the popular side. Moreover, his acquittal
Were Hugo's ruin. I cannot help him: nay,
Not though I would; and Fate, which thrusts him
down,
Is kind to me.

Enter Hugo with Constance.

Hu. Constance, see here the duke:
He hath asked your hand of me: and I most happy
In such a match have granted it.

Con. I am here
Fooled by a promise of evil, but not this.

This is not Manuel's treason. First of that :
Where's the pretended proof?

Hu. He hath confessed it.

Con. This tale convicts itself. Treason is close,
And doth not bare the breast. Though here the man
Ye wrong were likelier to confess such crime
Than once be guilty of it.

Hu. He both is guilty

And hath confessed.

Con. To what hath he confessed?

What deed that hatred thus can magnify?

Hu. 'Twas he contrived Palicio's late escape ;
And being detected and charged by me therewith,
He hath here this hour confessed it. Since which
time

One of his household hath been traced in league
With the conspirators.

Con. I believe it not.

Would he speak for you, he were here to speak.

Hu. But if at least he hath gone out from the
palace

Under strict guard, and sails to-night for Spain?

Con. He is gone?

Hu. He is gone.

Con. Under constraint?

Hu. Most certain,

And charged with treason.

Con. (*turning to Ph.*) Now, Philip, I bid thee
speak. 1701

Ph. Ay, Constance, it is true, but . . .

Con. Ay? thou too.

Ay and but : falsest falsehood, seeking grace

In shame. I knew devilry lurked about

When I came hither. I'll go. I'll not believe.

I shall know truth at last. [*Going.*]

Hu. Nay, Constance, stay.

Philip will answer thee. Thou questionest him ;

Hear him with patience. I shall leave thee with him.

Thou hast been a duteous daughter hitherto,

Recover my good grace ere I return.

(*To Ph.*) 'Twas an omission, duke, I gave no order
To seize the villain's servants. I'll go do it.

Use thy occasion. [*Exit.*]

Ph. Constance, I beg thy favour.

Con. I stay, your grace,—why should I go? My
father

Hath bid me hear thee : and 'tis nought to me.

Say what thou wouldst : speak on, nor be officious

To suit thy meaning to me, for there's nothing

I can believe or doubt.

Ph. O, Constance, think not

That could I end thy sorrow by denial

Of what thou hast heard, I would not. All is true.

My kindest office is to unmask the ill

That this ill hath prevented, and to show thee

A balance of good. There lies 'gainst Manuel

Far more than we have charged and he confessed.

He loves thee, thinkest thou?—He hath used his
place

To plot against thy father. I here have papers

In which thyself mayest see what accusation

He hath writ in secret. They are addressed to Spain,

And would have been presented . . .

Con. 'Tis his writing.

Whence was this filched?

Ph. He gave them me himself.

Con. O, a most open foe. Did he enjoin thee
To bear them to my father?

Ph. Nor have I done so.

Con. Then this, duke, yet remains for thee to do.

Take them at once. I know not what they mean :

But if 'tis secret it may be betrayed.

Do it, I pray thee, do it. [*Exit.*]

Ph. And I could wince

At such reproach, had I dissembled further

Than loyalty may deign, grappling with treason.

Her anger springs but of that nobleness

Which makes her love worth winning ; and in the
end

It shall be mine again. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

*On the hills above Monreale, as before. Enter
Palicio and Margaret.*

Mar. How fresh the morning air is. See how
the mist

Melts in the sun, and while we look is gone,

Leisurely gathered on his sloping beams.

And guarded by her angel towers the city

Sleeps like an island in the solemn gray :

'Tis beauteous.—

Pal. I love the city : it holds the stir.

To-night I shall be there, and to do something

Worthy of thee.

Mar. Whate'er thou dost, Giovanni,

I could not love thee more.

Pal. Beneath yon roofs

There's many a heart that quicker beats and leaps

To hear my name.

Mar. Thinkest thou still of them?

They love thee not. 1753

Pal. Not?

Mar. Nay ; the thousandth part

Of my love dealt among them were enough

To make each man a hero. Now they are brave

Only to cheer thee on : and I that love thee,

And love but thee, shall lose thee.

Pal. Have better faith,

All will be well.

Mar. Pray heaven it be.

Pal. O, Margaret,

Speak not so sadly : I would have thee brave

To cheer me on as they. Last night I dreamed

That thou hadst turned against me.

Mar. What, Giovanni?

Pal. Thou didst deride me.

Mar. I deride thy dream.

Pal. I thought I failed, and lost thy love.

Mar. O, faithless,

That could not lose my love. If thou succeed

Or fail, 'tis one. But tell me, giv'st thou heed

To visions? Are they not a fickle fabric,

Distorted fancies of the spirit, intruding

By night in memory's darkened cell? Or holdst thou

They come from heaven?

Pal. Ay. Talk not of them now.

Let me not think of it.—

Mar. See here the flowers

I have plucked. Know'st thou, Giovanni, why they

grow?

Pal. How meanest thou?

Mar. Why in one place one flower
Will grow, and not another.

Pal. Canst thou tell?

Mar. The spirits of good men, allowed to wander
After their death about the mortal sites
Where once they dwelt, there where they love to rest
Shed virtue on the soil, as doth a ray
Of sunlight : but the immortal qualities
By which their races differ, as they once
Differed in blood alive, with various power
Favour the various vegetable germs
With kindred specialty. This herb, I think,
Grows where the Greek hath been. Its beauty shows
A subtle and full knowledge, and betrays
A genius of contrivance. Seest thou how
The fading emerald and azure blent
On the white petals are immeshed about
With delicate sprigs of green? 'Tis therefore called
Love-in-a-mist.

Pal. Who is this thistle here?

Mar. O, he, with plum'd crest, springing all
armed

In steely lustre, and erect as Mars,
That is the Roman.

Pal. Find the Saracen.

Mar. This hot gladiolus, with waving swords
And crying colour.

Pal. And this marigold?

Mar. That is the Norman : nay, his furious blood
Blazes the secret. 'Tis said where'er he roamed
This flower is common ; but 'tis in those climes
Where he wrought best it wears the strongest hue,
And so with us 'tis bravest.

Pal. And that's thy countryman !
Dost thou know Greek ? ¹⁵⁰⁰

Mar. My father ever spoke it ;
And Manuel made me study in it, because
Their learning was the best.

Pal. And yet their books
Were little thought of till great Frederick's time,—
The infidel.

Mar. Was he an infidel?

Pal. He loved their heathen books and mocked
the Pope :

And brought into his court a Scottish wizard,
Who trafficked with the devil.—See, Margaret ;
Their courts are all alike. Here is the letter
Fat Blasco writes me. He betrays his master
For those few coins thou gav'st me in thy bag.

[*Mar. takes letter.*]

Gold goeth in at any gate but heaven's.
Ay, 'tis his writing, tho' it be not signed.
It tells how Hugo would escape by ship,
And how to intercept him.

Enter hastily a Brigand.

Brig. Captain, a word.

Pal. Speak, Roger.

Brig. 'Tis for thee, captain, alone.

Pal. I am alone, this lady is as I.
What is't?

Brig. Thou biddest?

Pal. Speak, man, by heav'n !

Brig. Our men
Are all betrayed. They were in dark of night

Closely surrounded at their several trysts
By Hugo's soldiers ; bound, and taken to prison.

Pal. O, Christ ! my dream.

Mar. (aside). Now, well done, Livio !
Done like a man.

Pal. Thou say'st all taken?

Brig. All.

Mar. (aside). I fear joy will betray me.

Pal. It cannot be
They are all betrayed.

Brig. As many as had assembled
At the ten trysts were taken.

Pal. Who hath done it ?

(*To Mar.*) Take courage, dearest.

Mar. Ay, ay.

Pal. Nay, thou'rt pale.

Mar. I thought that I should faint. (*To Pal.*
aside.) O, fly, Giovanni !

Fly now with me ! thou see'st this game is lost.

Pal. Be still awhile. (*To Brigand.*) And where
wert thou?

Brig. In the city,
From house to house.

Pal. What say they there ?

Brig. This tale
I heard. 'Tis told that 'mongst our men was one

Of Benedettu's band, who, being engirt,
Stabbed himself to the heart. Some cried thereon
That he was the betrayer. There are others
Who dare the thought I would not breathe if thou
Couldst think I thought it.

Pal. Hold ! I know, I see.
All hath been like to build it. Who is with thee ?

Brig. Three, and the boy Federigo.

Pal. Go to the hut :
There I will join you. [*Exit Brigand.*]

Now for some time. This most untoward treason
Demands my care. Lucia is not far.

Mar. What wilt thou do ?

Pal. Whatever may be done :
Trust me.

Mar. O, while thou'rt safe, Giovanni, fly.
I claim thy promise. Remember it : thou wilt see
If I deride thee. We will make this ill
Our perfect good.

Pal. It cannot be. It cannot.

Mar. What wilt thou do ?

Pal. I know not. Thou remain.
I will go see these men, and send thee word.

Farewell. [*Exit.*]

Mar. O, I had betrayed myself but that my
fear ¹⁸⁰⁰

Took other pretext. Ah ! well done, well done !

The ruffians caught—Giovanni safe, and mine ;
Giovanni mine. Ah, Messer Squarcialupu,
And all your gang. Lucia, ho, Lucia ! [*Calling.*]

Yet will I have them treated well. Ay, now,
Manuel must know. No drop of their base blood
Shall stain my hand. Lucia !

Enter Lucia.

Lu. Here I am.

Mar. The men are caught, Lucia ; all goes well.
There's none to take Giovanni from me now.
We go to Rome. But first I must see Manuel.

Lu. I pray he take all kindly.
Mar. I fear him not.
 Giovanni promised, should this venture fail,
 To sail to Rome.
Lu. And I? shall I to Rome?
Mar. See, see! who is it, that gallops down the
 hill?
 Why, 'tis Giovanni!
Lu. Where, my lady, where?
Mar. See'st thou not by the firs?
Lu. I hear the hoofs,
 But cannot see the rider.
Mar. There he goes :
 Now on the road.
Lu. I see him.
Mar. Look, Lucia ;
 That is his horse.
Lu. Maybe a messenger
 He mounts for speed. He rides to Monreale.
Mar. Now we shall see. Nay, nay : he turns to
 the left.
 He's for Palermo : and 'tis he, 'tis he,
 Giovanni.

Enter the Brigand with a letter.

Brig. A letter for the lady, from the captain.
Mar. Give 't me. I faint. Lucia, take it, read it.
 Look! Read it me. I cannot see. The letters
 dance.
Lu. (*reading*).
Margaret, there's but one course. My men suspect me.
Of those who held this secret, I alone
Was absent. Manuel's shelter, my escape,
Thy presence here, all point alike at me.
I could not say farewell! When thou hast this
I am gone. I ride to join my men in prison.
Mar. Ah! ah! I knew it, I knew it! what have
 I done?
Lu. Mistress, my dearest mistress!
1884

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

*The hall in Manuel's house : it is hung with
 black. Philip and Livio ; the latter dressed
 in black, at a desk.*

Ph. Argue not with me, Livio : Manuel's death
 Lies at my door. This last catastrophe
 Followed on his disgrace, which I was main
 To bring about.
Liv. But since his guilt was clear,
 Your deed was honourable.
Ph. I am not sure.
 I was too hasty. How can I quit myself
 In the ill I have done thy sister?
Liv. Her fever, duke,
 Cannot be laid to you.
Ph. 'Twas the three shocks
 Following so fast. Manuel's disgrace, and then
 My suit urged out of time, and last his death :
 'Twill be no wonder if her mind give way.

Liv. Please heaven it pass. I never thought she
 loved him
 So well.
Ph. Nor I, be sure. Where is that Blasco?
Liv. He went to gather what the sailors know
 Of Manuel's end.
Ph. No hope but that he's drowned.
 I go now to the palace. Should I meet
 With Blasco, it may be I shall detain him. [*Going*.
Liv. Ah!
Ph. He has lied to me.
Liv. If there be better tidings
 Of Constance, send them hither.
Ph. Indeed I will.
 Is there no news of Margaret?
Liv. Not a word.
[*Exit Philip*.]
 She knows I am here, no doubt : but when she hears
 Of Manuel's death she must return.—I think
 That when her brother lived to do his worst,
 My suit had fairer chance.

Enter Blasco.

Well, count, what news?
Bl. Excellent.—Manuel was drowned, drowned
 like a dog.
 I have seen the captain of the ship that 'scaped.
 He tells that, putting forth at night, they kept
 Their course till dawn, when in a fog they drave
 On the French fleet, some two-and-twenty sail.
 Of our five vessels three were taken : one,
 His own, escaped, and the other—that's the one
 On which sailed Manuel—by a tall ship,
 Which flew the admiral's pennon, was run down,
 And sunk in sight.
Liv. The news will please my father,
 As it doth thee. For me 'tis ruin : my hope
 I might please Margaret working for her brother
 Is gone. Now will she hate me more than ever.
Bl. You never could have won her while he lived.
Liv. Well, take these papers. There are here
 the orders 1823

For the execution of Palicio
 To-morrow, in the public square, at noon.
 See them in proper hands. They need a seal.
Bl. 'Twill be a pleasure. 'Twas the kindest
 freak,

This self-surrender.
Liv. He was strangely dashed,
 Looking for Manuel, to find me here.
Bl. He'll find that friend no more.
Liv. Take them and go.
 And for the present, count, avoid the duke :
 He is angry with thee. [*Exit Blasco*.
 I shall not leave this house
 Till I be sure Margaret means not to come.
 The unkindest tempers are broke down by grief :
 And since she cannot blame me, she may find
 Comfort in my compassion,—ay, and thank me
 For some consideration.—She will see
 I have put on black, and set the house in mourning,
 I have ordered mass, have had his room shut up . . .
 Is there now nothing more? Why, who is this?

Enter Margaret, throwing off a veil.

Mar. Livio ! thou here ! Where is my brother ?

Liv. Oh!
 Margaret!
Mar. Where is my brother? I am come
 To speak with him. Where is he?
Liv. Hast thou heard nothing?
Mar. Heard what? Where is he?
Liv. O, if thou knowest not . . .
Mar. What is it? speak. Why is the house in
 black?
 What means it? say.
Liv. Nay, let it not be me
 To tell thee.
Mar. Thinkest thou my fancy's horror
 Is gentler than thy bluntest tale? Speak quickly.
Liv. 'Twas on his own confession of connivance
 In John Palicio's shelter and escape,¹⁹⁵⁰
 My father put him from his place, and sent him
 To answer to this charge before the king.
 He sailed two nights ago. The ship . . .
Mar. Go on, sir!
Liv. Our ships fell in with the enemy, and all
 But two were captured, one on which he sailed,
 And one which brought the news.
Mar. And Manuel's ship?
Liv. 'Tis said the ship on which he sailed was
 sunk.
Mar. (*falling on a chair*). Sunk, say you, and
 he? . . .
Liv. My sister at the tidings straight fell ill,
 And her mind wanders. Bear a braver heart.
Mar. O, fatal day. 'Tis I, 'tis I have done it.—
 And did none see him?
Liv. Margaret, dearest Margaret,
 Take courage. I have shared thy sorrow, Margaret:
 Cannot I comfort thee? O, sweetest Margaret,
 Thou dost not know my love.
Mar. (*standing, and showing the dagger*). Away!
 away!
Liv. Nay, wherefore treat me thus?
Mar. Is this an hour
 To force thy love upon me?
Liv. Margaret,
 Hast thou no pity?
Mar. Think if I have pity
 To spend on thee.
Liv. If thou wouldst slay me, Margaret,
 Thou need'st not dagger.
Mar. Sir, stand back, I say:
 And first tell plainly what thou knowest. One ship
 Of three escaped?
Liv. The hindmost 'twas, that fled . . .
Mar. And brought the tidings?
Liv. Ay.
Mar. And was none saved
 Out of the ship which sunk?
Liv. I know not.
Mar. Know'st not?
 There's hope, thank God. And thou!—Why, if in
 thy heart
 Lurked the least feeling, 'twould have shewn this
 side,
 Not leapt to the worst . . . Come, sir, I'll keep
 this sorrow:
 'Tis not with thee I'd share my fear for Manuel . . .
 Nor any other; tho' my need compels me,
 If thou'rt the man sits in his place.

Liv. I am.
Mar. He would have aided me.
Liv. But I will aid thee
 More than a brother. Thou canst ask no favour
 I will not grant.
Mar. Sir, I shall ask no favour:
 Nor aught but what it is thy part to grant,
 Unless it be promise of secrecy.
Liv. O, but one secret with thee! there's no jewel
 In all the world I would esteem as that.
Mar. Where's Giovanni Palicio, sir?
Liv. Palicio!
Mar. Ay, he's my kinsman.
Liv. He is in the palace dungeon,
 Awaiting death.
Mar. He's my near kinsman, Livio,
 And must not die: and, being condemned to die,
 I, as his kinswoman, desire a pass²⁰⁰²
 To visit him in prison when I choose. [*Livio writes*.
 My purpose with him is to extort a pledge
 That he will leave the country, on which condition
 I look for his release.
Liv. Here is the order.
 And use it as thou wilt.
Mar. (*taking*). I thank you for it.
Liv. If 'tis so near thee he go quit, what means
 Better than mine to work it?
Mar. I have means.
Liv. With whom?
Mar. I have the means.
Liv. Believe it not.
 There's none could win this favour of my father.
 Hath not his cry been *Death to Hugo*?
 He's more than rebel. There's a private hate
 Which makes his sentence grateful.
Mar. I have means.
Liv. 'Twere easier wouldst thou trust me. See,
 'tis done
 Without more words. Margaret, I'll risk this thing
 For thee. Palicio shall escape to Spain,
 To Naples, where thou wilt, if thou . . .
Mar. If what?
Liv. Margaret, accept my love.
Mar. O, Livio,
 I am too sad to be angry with thee now.
 But know if ever thou wouldst merit love
 By generosity, thou must not beg
 A bargain. "Do this and I'll love thee," ay,
 That may be said, but not "I'll do this thing
 If thou wilt love me": and thou, Livio,
 A chief justiciary!
Enter Blasco.
Liv. Hush, I pray thee!
Bl. The lady Margaret! We are very happy
 In this return.
Mar. (*aside to Blasco*). What hadst thou of
 Palicio?
Bl. Ha! Sayst thou? . . .
Mar. (*aside*). Meet me at the palace, count.
 I have thy letter. (*To Liv.*) I see there is no place
 here
 In my house for me. I have still a hope, and in it
 Shall fortify my comfort . . . If aught is heard
 I shall be with thy sister. Thou and Blasco
 May serve me if ye will. [*Exit.*

Liv. What said she to you?

Bl. Art not thou too accustomed to her wit?
I bring ill news. Thy sister still is worse,
And calls for thee, and Rosso thinks 'tis well
That thou shouldst go.

Liv. Bide thou here in my place . . .

Bl. Nay, I must go with thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A public place. Manuel disguised as a friar
meeting Rosso.*

Man. 'Tis doctor Rosso.

Ros. At your service, father.

Man. May I speak with thee?

Ros. With pleasure.

Man. Stand we aside.

Hast thou forgotten me?

Ros. Nay, for I think

I have never seen thee . . . or I ask thy pardon.

Man. Now thou shouldst know me well.

Ros. Thy voice I think

I do remember.

Man. (*discovering*). Do you know me now?

Ros. Manuel! Thank God!

Man. Is it a good disguise?

Ros. Metamorphosis . . . if indeed 'tis thou,

In such a husk. Then thou'rt not drowned!

Man. Indeed,

There was a time when I had some fear to be;

But how came you to know it? 2050

Ros. Of the ships

One returned home with news that thine was sunk.

Was not that true?

Man. Ay, ay.

Ros. How didst thou 'scape?

Man. I took my only chance, leapt overboard
And swam to the enemy. By heavenly fortune

The ship that ran us down was Raymond's, he

Who served so long with us. I had left my foes

To find old friends: and when the fight was o'er,

I told him in what hapless case I stood,

And promising to hold myself no less

His prisoner, and surrender to his master

At Naples if need were, I bade him land me

By night at Cefaledi; there arrived,

By the good sailor friars I was clad

In the disguise you see, and came in speed

To look to matters here.

Ros. There is great need.

Man. Ay, my affairs with Constance?

Ros. I grieve to tell

Constance is lying ill.

Man. She is in your hands?

Ros. Ay.

Man. Doth she doubt of me?

Ros. At your committal

A fever must have seized her. Then your death,
Which should have been concealed, was urged upon
her,

In countenance of duke Philip's suit . . .

Man. How? Philip!

Ros. Did you not guess?

Man. Is't possible?

Ros. At that

Her mind gave way: 'tis question of her life.

Man. I bring the medicine to work her cure.
Is't not enough?

Ros. I trust so.

Man. And I think it.

How blind I have been! I trusted Philip, and he
Was playing against me. Time will right me,

Rosso,
In this as in the other. Patience. And what
Of your affairs . . .

Ros. How mine?

Man. Your love affairs.

Ros. My love affairs?

Man. Ay,—Margaret.

Ros. Margaret?

Man. Can I be wrong? Her head was turned
the day

She brought you to Palicio.

Ros. O, Manuel,

This makes it sure.

Man. Yes, and I'm glad of it.

Ros. Nay, nay: pray hear me. On the very day
Palicio left your house, she went, 'twas said,
To Monreale: there she hath not been seen.

Was't to Palicio?

Man. Now, please God, thou'rt wrong.

Say, where is he?

Ros. Stranger than all, he has made

Surrender of himself to Livio,

Our new justiciary, and awaits his death

In Hugo's dungeon.

Man. How! And Margaret?

Ros. She hath now this morn returned, full of
distraction

As well might be, but firm beyond her wont.

She is in the palace, where she nurses Constance

With the cool skill of one that hath his stake

Ventured elsewhere . . .

Man. Good God! Now if thou'rt right,

Rosso, this matter needs me more than the other.

Thank heaven I am here. Constance is in thy
hands:

Thou hast her cure. Yet use it with discretion,

Knowing my hazard. I shall visit at once 2100

The archbishop; he will stand my friend, and give me

Commission in the habit of a priest

To see Palicio. Nay, there's not a moment

To lose. Thou mayst contrive that Constance too

Should send for me; maybe I thus might see her.

Farewell. I go, yet must I take a name;

Let it be Thomas, father Thomas. To-night

Can I rest at thy house?

Ros. I pray you will.

Man. An hour hence couldst thou meet me there?

Ros. I will.

God speed you.

Man. O, Rosso, Rosso, I fear thou'rt right . . .

[*Exit.*]

Ros. Ay, ay. I'm right. Alas for Manuel.

'Tis almost pity he is escaped from death.

I would tell Constance, but her throbbing brain

Hath no interpreter, and in her ear

All words are meaningless, or mean alike

Something insane, which in her eager dreaming

Steals the world's place. I have no power to tell.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

Room in the palace. Hugo and Philip meeting.

Hu. No cheer. Thy questioning looks may not be answer'd

With any brightness, duke : and yet take heart.
The fever of our climate is in the onset
Oft overmasked as this. 'Twill clear and pass.

'Twere quite incredible she should so sicken
Of mere affection. The compacted body
Hath its machinery for health and action,
Its appetites for food and rest, too firm
To be unfixed by fancy. Like a river
Our life flows on, whose surface storms may vex,
But never move the current from its bed.

Ph. I heartily repent my part in this.
I wronged poor Manuel.

Hu. Now thou wrong'st me.
Him being dead thou canst not wrong. 'Tis plain
The objection falls. If once there was a motive
That might have stayed thee . . .

Ph. Nay, upbraid me not.

Hu. How, I upbraid thee?

Ph. That I pressed my suit.

Hu. Rather for slackness in it.

Ph. If she recover
'Tis all I pray for.

Hu. Not so. This will pass.
'Twill be forgotten. All will be forgotten.
Look but on Margaret, doth her brother's death
Craze her?

Ph. Indeed, I think she is nigh distracted ;
And if she bear up better there's a reason :
She hath a comforter. Nay, I may tell you
I saw your doctor here take her aside,
And when he spoke, her face of woe lit up.
She loves him. 'Twas a match that Manuel wished.

Hu. Nay, nay ! what ! Rosso, the apothecary !

Enter Livio and Blasco.

Ah, Livio ; Constance calls thy name, 'tis hoped
That she may know thee.

Liv. Is she better, sire ?

Hu. Nay : but she asked for thee, and Rosso said
Thou shouldst be sent for. Come within.

Ph. May I ²¹⁵⁰
Far as the door ?

Hu. Ay, come.

Bl. (*aside to Liv.*) Tell Margaret,
Who hath some matter for me, that I am here.

Ph. Count, thou hast lied to me. If that suffice
To raise thy temper, meet me when thou wilt :
If not, and Constance die, I'll use thee worse. [*Exit.*]

Bl. Ay, ay. No doubt there may be danger for me
Even from that quarter : but I have a foe
That threatens me more. How came she by the letter ?
Only Palicio and his messenger
Could know 'twas mine.

Enter Margaret.

Mar. 'Tis business with thee, count :
Therefore few words. I have thy treasonous letter
And other proofs, which I shall bring against thee
Unless thou do my bidding.

Bl. What is that,
My lady Peremptory ? speak thy will.

Mar. Attend. Palicio is condemned to die
At noon to-morrow. I require that thou
Contrive that he escape, ay, and go clear
Three hours before that time.

Bl. Impossible.

Mar. 'Tis not so, count. For Livio had promised
me

The very thing ; but since his price exceeds
What I need pay to thee . . .

Bl. My price, how mean you ?

Mar. I will give back thy letter to thy hands,
And promise secrecy in every matter
I had against thee.

Bl. Give me now the letter,
And I will do it.

Mar. Nay. Thou'lt do it first.

Bl. Then say that if at nine to-morrow morn
I have a friendly guard—

Mar. Keep to that hour :
'Twill do. I shall be there to see it done.

I'll bring the letter with me. I can provide
Him further safety. If thou fail, the enquiry,
Which I can set on foot, delays his death,
Till I find other means.

Bl. But still I see not
My own security.

Mar. Thou hast my promise :
And thy security is only this,

To keep to thine. I go. Remember, nine. [*Exit.*]

Bl. When ! wheu ! Who hath the secret now ?
Indeed,

I see this dainty lady hath a lover
We little dreamed of. Therefore was he housed
With Manuel. O, Giovanni Palicio :
Thus Livio's rival. And thou blab of me
To mistress Margaret, dost thou ? well, well !
I'll see thee die for that. Die now thou must.
I have, sir, but to tell this tale in the ear
Of the chief justiciary, and I am saved.

Enter Livio.

Livio, thou hast a rival.

Liv. I know.

Bl. Thou knowest ?

Liv. My father saith Margaret will marry Rosso.

Bl. Rosso ! Rosso be hanged ! 'Tis John Palicio.

Liv. Palicio !

Bl. Yes, Palicio.

Liv. Nay.

Bl. I'll tell thee.

Mark.—Was he not concealed in Manuel's house ?

Liv. Well ?

Bl. And escaping from his house by night,
The next day where was Margaret ? ²²⁰⁰

Liv. Ah !

Bl. And then

'Twas she betrayed the rebels.

Liv. Eh !

Bl. We traced

The little book to her servant.

Liv. That's against it.

Bl. Nay : it explains why all the names were
there,
Only not his.

Liv. But then . . nay, why should he
Surrender?
Bl. That's but madness any way.
But now she comes demanding his deliverance.
Liv. Ay, she doth. O, the villain! he shall die.
Bl. He shall; but hark, I have promised Margaret
To set Palicio free at nine to-morrow.
Say that we go together. Margaret comes
To see her lover freed. Her we will take
And keep confined until his execution;
Which for our purpose may be hurried on.
Or if . . .
Liv. Stay; why this promise? In the course
Of justice he must die.
Bl. Not so. My promise
To set him free was made for two good reasons.
First hearing thou hadst offered her the like:
Next for the knowledge that on my refusal
She could find other means. Beside all which
She bargains to restore me certain letters
I sent her years ago, which I confess
I am now ashamed of: (*aside*.)—Any lie will serve
To smooth this idiot.—These she brings with her,
And I can take them from her. My object gained
I hand her o'er to thee. For all her scorns
Repay her as thou wilt.
Liv. I fear her.
Bl. Nay,
I can secure thee. Come. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*Dungeon of the palace. Palicio discovered.
A door at back of prison is L. of centre.*

Pal. I cannot think of death. Imagination
Is barren on that point, and hath no picture;—
To be so near should better prick the fancy.—
I see a grave—but stand beside the grave . . .
Nothing.—And yet I am so near.—I judge
From this how dizzily deep rides the division
'Twixt this world and the next; tho' in Time's face
'Tis thin, ay, more invisibly sharp than is
The axe's edge, which makes it.—Is our life's stuff
So different? All the joys and hopes of earth
Wrought of too coarse a fibre to invest
An inkling of that other unseen world,
Which hath this only entrance? Wherefore my mind
Wanders in wasteful contemplation back
O'er what I have done, pitifully seeking
To wear renewed the robe of those proud deeds,
To dream again her disappointed dreams;
And over all is Margaret, ever Margaret;
Floating before these vain soul-treacherous eyes,—
My tempter and tormentor. 2247

Enter Gaoler.

Gaoler. A priest sent from the archbishop. Shall
he enter?
Pal. Yea: bid him enter. But I pray thee now,
Thou execrable minion of that devil
Who sucks our people's blood, come not thyself:
Each time I see thee I must wish to kill thee.
Thou art my soul's last peril. Keep away.
Gaoler. What'er I be, I can be civil, sir. [*Exit.*]
Pal. Ay, I was wrong. Now must I ask his
pardon.

I am not yet fit to die. Yet is't not written
"If hand or foot offend thee, cut it off;
If thine eye, pluck it out"? I have done all this;
Yet lurks there something in the accusing balance
Which my soul sickens at. What if I have lost
My world and soul? This good priest comes in time.

Enter Manuel disguised as priest.

Father, if thou be come to shrive my soul,
I need thee sorely.
Man. I am here for that.
Pal. There's comfort in thy face. I have much to
tell.
Thou know'st me, who I am?
Man. Ay, son.
Pal. I pray
What said the archbishop of me?
Man. Pause not now
To ask and weigh man's judgment, who so soon
Must answer to the Judge of all.
Pal. Nay, nay.
If thou bring hither such a thought of me,
What can I tell thee? How shall I begin?
Man. If there be any one thing on your mind,
More than another, which now brings you shame,
Begin with that.
Pal. Ay: such a thing there is.
Man. What is't?
Pal. 'Tis the story of the mischief,
Which makes me need thee; which hath sent me
here.
For I was single-hearted, single-eyed,
As thou or any of the saints, who hold
Their place in heaven secure, three days ago,—
But three days: If thou then hadst come to me
I should have said, My sins are all forgiven;
I only beg of thee the heavenly bread
To be my passport to my home prepared.
My earthly sword hath won a heavenly crown.
I have not left undone aught, save where God's will
Forbade accomplishment, and if I have done
Aught unpermitted 'twas in zeal's excess.
My errors are the saints'—three days ago . . .
And now my boast is gone, my soul is stained.
Hark, while I tell. Satan, who saw me thus
Pure-hearted and elect, an envied prey,
Used all his skill to take me: Ay, he came
And showed me, in the room where I lay sick,
Wounded, and weak and faint, a beauteous woman,
And all love's world. He said, *Take this*; but I
Was ready awhile, and answered, *Not for me.
I thread the narrow way; I climb at heaven.
If I touch this, I perish.* But he said,
Not so, 'tis thy due prize. Take it, Palicio!
'Twas the old tale—"Thou shalt not surely die."
I took it. God deserted me that hour: 2300
My friends suspected me: all things went ill:
And now . . .
Man. Stay. First, this woman, who misled you,
Is she your wife?
Pal. Nay, 'tis but now three days . . .
Man. You say she is not your wife. Is then
your sin
To have leapt the bounds which hold unmarried
lovers?
Pal. O, father, thou couldst never ask such thing

If thou didst know who 'twas. Nay, thou mayst know :

'Twas Manuel's sister,—Margaret of Palermo.

Man. (*partly discovering*). See, I am Manuel.
* * * * * Ay, and so far is well.

Now say, did Margaret contrive thy flight ?

Pal. . . . (*assents*).

Man. And after followed thee to Monreale ?

And met thee on the hills ?

Pal. . . . (*assents*).

Man. Then tell me now

Why hast thou left her ?

Pal. Nay. Question me not.

Man. Why hast thou left her ?

Pal. Why come to me thus ?

I needed but a priest to comfort me,
And show me on death's road : thou drag'st me back
To torture me. Thou canst not understand.

Man. Thou ow'st to me more than to any priest,
Who for thy sake might hear, to tell me true.
Why hast thou left her ?

Pal. If thou wert a priest,
Then wouldst thou see how well the stalking fiend
Snared for my soul. I planned for yesternight
To storm the palace : and I had promised Margaret
To make no further venture if that failed,
But sail with her to Rome and there be married,
Using thy interest to reclaim my rank.

But on the day I gave that word, my men
Were all betrayed, taken, and led to prison.
I was with Margaret, as well they knew :
My love for her, my shelter at thy house,
My flight permitted, set them on the thought
That I had been corrupted, was the traitor.

Fly with me, then cried Margaret. Ay, the fiend too
Said, *Fly : go safe*. I foiled him. I came here.
That was my only answer.

Man. And didst thou not
Betray them ?

Pal. I ! Palicio ! when did I

Betray ?
Man. Stay, while in turn I shew to thee
Another tale made of the self-same matter.—

A price set on thy head, pursued by justice,
Bleeding to death, thou camest to my house
Asking for shelter, begging but for life.

I gave it at my risk,—how great that risk
I'll shew thee soon ;—there at my house my sister
Secretly tended thee, and won thy cure.
Thou in return didst, all unknown to me,
Obtain her love, and use it to break trust,
Flying by stealth at night : and then, being fled,
Didst scruple not to use thy flight, to work
The very thing for which thy life was owed.
Further, when that went wrong, merely for fear
Men should think ill of thee, thou didst desert
Her, to whose love was due that thou wert free ;
Wronging her then again, as me before . . .

Pal. Manuel, forbear ; thee I confess I wronged :
For the rest thy taunts are vain.

Man. Wait : there is more.—
Thy refuge being discovered, I was charged
With treason, and in course shipped hence for Spain.
My ship was sunk, and I, but for God's mercy,
Drowned. My disgrace and rumoured death so
wrought

On Constance, that she lies in life's last hope.
To all of us thou hast done unmeasured ill :
What is thy plea ?

Pal. Though God himself should curse me,
My purpose hath been good.

Man. Ay, that I'll grant :
Thou'rt for the right, but being too hot upon it
Mistakest right. Thou art numbered with the
madmen

Who, thinking the whole world's unhappiness
Hangs on one string, tread all else underfoot
So they may reach to cut it.—And where's the good ?
Thyself, too, in what plight, that after all
This sacrifice of others' rights, thou rushest
To die to save thine honour from a stain,
That needs no washing !

Pal. Enough : there let it end :
I die to-morrow.

Man. Nay, thou must escape :
Retrieve all that thou canst. I now shall go
To Margaret, whom before I feared to meet.
She will be working for thee. If she fail,
The archbishop yet hath power to stay thy death
Till I can serve thee. If thy love for her,
And hers for thee abide, you must be married.
Nay, all she urged was good.

Pal. O, 'tis impossible.
Work not for my escape : 'tis best I die.

Man. Nay, nay. Thou that canst fight, fight with
thyself.

The brave despair that fear not : that's the shock
The strongest suffer. Thou wast ill of late ;
Wert thou now strong, shame would not crush thy
spirit. [*Going*].

Pal. Manuel, go not !

Man. Yes, I must go. Remember
My name is Father Thomas. None must guess
Who hath been with thee.—Farewell. Fight with
thyself,
Palicio, with thyself. Thou shalt be saved. [*Exit*].

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same. Palicio as before.

Pal. Three hours have fully passed since first I
marked
Yon grated hole grow rosy, and exchange
Moonlight for dawn. Now soon will Margaret come :
And I must go forth to the world disgraced,
To fly my country or hide : ay, at the cue
Of the chief justiciary, led by a woman.
Hast thou the heart, Giovanni Palicio,
To call this freedom ? Nay, since thy right hand
Was raised 'gainst wrong in vain, and thou thyself
Art charged with wrong, and must admit the wrong,
Were't not now best to end, and shroud thy fortune
In veils of death ? Thou that hast led the people,
Hast thou a knee for favours ? Will thy tongue
Confess I wronged thee, Manuel, I come forth
To be thy prisoner : and I wronged thee, Margaret :
I will come forth to be thy pensioner ?
Shame : rather would I die.

Enter Margaret.

Mar. 'Tis I, Giovanni : all is well : thou'rt safe, Manuel has told me all. Thou dost repent. All is prepared. Ask not my pardon : give me One kiss—I have forgiven thee. Be not sad. 'Twas like thee as I love thee, nobly done : And being so cruel to thyself 'twas easy Thou shouldst forget what I too now forget, Recovering thee. I saw thee ride away, And guessed before the letter. O, Giovanni, Thank God, thou'rt safe. Look, I have brought the money

To serve thee on thy journey till the day We meet again ; and more. Thy ship will sail But to Messina : there thou wilt disembark. Nay, take the money ; thou wilt need it, love, 'Tis Manuel's gift, not mine.

Pal. (taking). I have no heart, Margaret, for what is done on my behalf. I thank him, but . . .

Mar. Alas, alas ! Giovanni : I looked to find thee glad of heart and happy. Our troubles all are over. Manuel lives, Whom we thought drowned : Constance, who lay in death,

Hath risen from her bed : and even our marriage Is furthered by my brother. How can it be Thou art so dismal, and thy kiss as cold As is this prison ?

Pal. I would not leave this prison.

Mar. Thou wouldst not leave it ?

Pal. No : dankness and darkness Are now my friends. I have failed. How can I wish To step in the light of heaven ?

Mar. O, then I see This death-delivering dungeon hath o'ercome thee. —There's news. This morn the ships arrived from Spain.

They must bring tidings of the king's accession. We shall learn all to-day. When he's proclaimed, There's nought that thou couldst do if thou wert free. What thou hast done may have determined much.

Pal. When shall I hear of it ?

Mar. Love, thou must sail Quickly and secretly : and canst not hear Until thou come to land. But then if I Should meet thee there with Manuel, oh, what joy, Could I be first to tell thee.

Pal. Dost thou think That Manuel hath forgiven me for the wrong I did him, stealing from his house by night ?

Mar. That was my theft, Giovanni ; and he forgives :

Cry not thou forfeit.—See, I bring thy dagger.

Pal. But, Margaret, I wronged thee too. I fled From thee ; canst thou forgive me ?

Mar. Ask not me If I have forgiven. Hearken, I will tell thee,— This dagger is the dagger which the woman, Whose name thou didst not know, brought thee in prison : 2453

By help of this thou madest thy first escape. 'Tis I that bring it now. These two days past, These days of misery, I have held and worn it But for one purpose ; that if thou shouldst die,

I might have something which had once been thine To end my life with.

Pal. Thou !

Mar. Ay. I had promised This caseless blade my empty heart for sheath.

Pal. Margaret !

Mar. Now take it. I have better hope. *[Palicio takes dagger, and puts it in his breast.* Thou shouldst be armed.

Pal. And thou hast thought of death ?

Mar. Only if thou hadst died.

Pal. O, Margaret, Margaret, I am not worthy of thy love.

Thou seest I am not. Look how poor a heart I bring to take thee : 'tis too base. I thought I loved thee overmuch. Now, fool, I see I love too little.

Mar. 'Tis this hateful prison Hath chilled thy spirits. When again thou'rt free Thou'lt be Giovanni.

Pal. Canst thou love me so ?

Mar. O, what hath come to thee ? Did I not love The hour I bound thy wound : the day I brought Rosso to heal thee, and led thee by the hand, Threading the blindest midnight silently, To set thee free ? Dost thou forget ?

Pal. But then, Then I was brave, a leader of the people Against their tyrant : thou didst hold of me As of a hero : now I have failed, I am shamed.

Mar. O, no, Giovanni ; thou mistakest sadly My love for thee.

Pal. I am no more myself.

Mar. Then dare I prove to thee how I love thee, How little thy renown. Remember, thou didst scheme

To burn the palace.

Pal. Ay.

Mar. Didst thou not promise Me, trembling for thy life, that if that failed, Thou wouldst to Rome with me ?

Pal. My scheme miscarried : I broke my promise.

Mar. The cause of that miscarriage Was the betrayal ?

Pal. How should I forget ?

Mar. Now wilt thou say I love but thy success ? 'Twas I betrayed thy men.

Pal. Ha ! thou was't ! was't thou ? *(Leaping up from Margaret, who staggers against the wall.)*

From me, sorceress, thou viper, go from me ! Traitor, was't thou ? Thou wast my secret curse ! Sent by the devil, wast thou, to destroy me, To kill my soul ? And bringest now thy money 2500

[Strews it about.]
To buy thy happiness : and of thy love Pratest, and sayst, *Come forth with me !* With thee ? Rather all deaths, a thousand deaths of shame,— The axe, the gallows. O, my faithful men, My brave men ! and for them !—Ah ! I will love My executioner more than thee. Love thee ! There is not any tyrant or crowned fiend Whom I will hate like thee.

Mar. Then kill me, Giovanni. *[Swoons falling.]*

Pal. (taking out dagger). This dagger in my heart,
and I am avenged.

Nay, nay, O God, I am adding wrong to wrong.

[Putting dagger back.]
And Manuel. Alas! what have I done?

[Runs to Margaret.]
I spake too roughly, Margaret; I was angry:

I knew not what I said. Margaret, I am sorry.

Forgive me, Margaret. Nay, I meant it not.

I am not angry with thee now. I think

I can forgive thee. Hear me! She doth not hear me.
She doth not breathe. Her eyes are fixed and
sightless.

Her hands are cold.

My God, oh, if I have killed her! Margaret, Margaret!

Dost thou not hear?—I have killed her.—Margaret!

I do forgive thee. I forgive thee all.

O God, she is dead, she is dead.—Now if I kiss her,

If she can feel *(kissing)*. She stirs. O, Margaret,

Hear me. I do forgive thee all.

Mar. Giovanni:

I did it for thy love.

Pal. Thank God, thank God.

Now thou dost breathe and speak. O, I was cruel;

I was too angry.—Margaret, forgive me.

Kiss me, forgive. *[Noise at door.]*

Mar. Hark, at the door they come;

'Tis now thy time to fly.

Pal. How can I leave thee?

I cannot thus.

*Enter Blasco with sword drawn, Livio and two
soldiers.*

Mar. Go for thy life, Giovanni:

Fly, fly: think not of me!

Bl. Stay, not so fast,

You pretty pair of loving turtle-doves,

Cooing your sweet farewells in such a cote;

We shall not separate you yet so far.

Mar. Ah me!

Pal. What means this insult?

Bl. Forward, fellows.

Take ye the lady to the cell I shewed,

And bind her arms.

Pal. Who dares?

Bl. Fool, stand aside!

Seest thou my sword?

Pal. Ho! villain, die!

Bl. God! I am

slain. *[Falls.]* *Palicio springs on Blasco*

Pal. And thou,

Thinking to find me here

unarmed, go thou!

Soldier. Ah!

[Dies . . . the rest fly.]

Pal. Two are es-

caped. *[Two are es-*

Mar. And one was Livio.

Pal. What means this damnable design?

Mar. Giovanni,

I see, I know. Fly now—take thou the sword.

Give me the dagger. Follow. I know the way.

There will be none to stay thee. If there be,

Serve them as Blasco. Come, come; follow quickly.

Pal. (following). Margaret, Margaret. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.

*Room in the palace. Manuel, disguised as
priest, meeting Rosso.*

Ros. In good time, Manuel: welcome. All is
well.

Man. Thank God. And doth she know?

Ros. Ay, thou shalt hear.

'Twas Margaret's doing: all night long she sat

By Constance' bed, and there with gentlest presence

And soft accustomed voice most gradually

She soothed and won the wandering spirit back.

But, oh, the sweetest skill!—she, as she saw

Constance take note of her, made no discovery,

But spoke of thee and all things else, as if

There never had been change: and that so well,

That Constance, who lay gazing on the wall,

And questioning of her error, whence it grew,

Soon laid it on herself, and by and by

Told Margaret of her dream, and asked how long

She had lain so sick in bed; nor ever learned

How real had her woe been, till she knew

That all was over.

Man. I thank God,—and thee,

Rosso, thee too. Margaret has had some cause

To blame herself,—to have helped in the repair

Will ease her heart of much. May I see Constance?

Ros. At once. But come prepared to find her

weak.

Enter Philip.

Ph. Father, a word.

Man. I pray you excuse me now.

Ph. 'Tis that I know thy errand that I ask.

I would speak through thee to the lady Constance.

Man. What would you say?

Ph. Let me be private with thee.

Man. (to Ros.). Doctor, I'll follow. *(Aside.)* Now

to act my best. *[Exit Rosso.]*

Ph. Thou seest in me the man who wrought this

ill.

I'd have thee use thine office with the lady,

To win her grace, that I may make confession

Of that which burdens me.

Man. How! what is this?

What should I say?

Ph. I'll tell thee: and thou must know

First, that I once was Manuel's friend and pupil,—

My pride, alas! self-wrested to my shame—

And in those early days loved her, whom he

Should at this time have married. Five years

spent

In graceless life meanwhile had far removed

My heart from my first love, nor had my thought

Once ventured back to think or wish her mine:

But, as it happened,—and being at the time;

Stung by the sharp remorse of idle hours,—

Chance sent me hither, and her presence soon

Awaked those memories that I had thought were

dead.

Then vainly felt I worthier than I was,

Seeing my better part desired to win

What I too surely had deserved to lose.

Constance denied me:—but now hear my crime.

I won her father's ear; and then, being lodged

In Manuel's house, I lit on a discovery
Of some suspicion, and contrived thereby—
Betraying him who was my friend and host—
His absence and disgrace : whence by ill fate
His death and all this lady's trouble sprung.

Man. 'Tis a sad tale you tell.

Ph. I was misled
To think he loved the lady less than I.

Yet urge I no excuse, nor look for pardon :
But if 'twould not add sorrow to her sorrow,
I would discharge this burden from my soul.

Man. Do so : for you shall find pity and pardon.

Ph. Nay, nay : that could not be.

Man. Though hard it seem,
Ay, and may force awhile some generous tears ;

She cannot yet fail in the foremost duty ²⁶⁰¹
Of all that sin. I shall prepare her well.

Ph. I thank thee, father. [*Exit Manuel.*]

There is in these men
A quiet strength, which shames our self-esteem.

Enter Ferdinand and Hugo with despatches.

Hu. Philip, we have the news. Frederick is
crowned.
See, here's for thee. (*Gives a despatch.*) It bears the
new king's seal.

Ph. Well, 'twill help nought. (*Opens.*)

Hu. I pray there may be nothing
That meddles with my place.

Ph. Read here, your excellence. [*Reads.*
*By reason of advices late received,
The king's commands are that the sealed despatch
Writ for emergency be now held valid,
And put in force by you.*]

Hu. Where's the despatch ?

Fer. 'Tis in my keeping.

Hu. (*to Philip*). Know'st thou its contents ?

Ph. Nay, sir ; not I.

Hu. Pray let us see it, straight.

Ph. Adjourn we to my secretary's chamber :
A moment will discover it. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*Reception-room at the palace. As first scene
of first act. Constance, Rosso, and Manuel
disguised.*

Con. Nay, I can walk. I am very well. See,
Manuel,

There's no one here : thou mayst be Manuel
Yet awhile. Is not this, love, a recovery
To make the memories of sickness glad ?
The days seem years since I stood here. But now
Must I see Philip ?

Man. Be kind to him, Constance.
The self-condemned need more than full forgiveness
Ere they forgive themselves.

Con. I am too happy
To be unkind. And where is Margaret ?

I long to rally her about her lover.
Sweet Margaret caught : Margaret who mocked us
all.

I hath she not chosen a madcap brother for us ?

Man. Well, I had wished for Rosso, love ; but
women

Favour strange fellows.

Ros. She was difficult

To win, and now at least she has met her match.

Man. I pray all may go well. Indeed I have hope

That Hugo is by this possessed of orders

Which will resolve all trouble.

Con. Hush, father Thomas ;
See, here they come.

Enter Hugo, Philip, Livio, and Ferdinand.

Hu. My dearest daughter, 'tis a happy day.

Thy health and safety—Ay, I am glad to see

Thy face of happiness, and I can add

Now to thy joy. King Frederick is crowned,

And I shall rule in Sicily.

Man. (*aside*). How is this ?

Con. Then for this happy news grant me, dear
father,

One favour. Philip here will join in asking.

Ph. Ere it be asked, I wish before all here

To say some words. Good father, hast thou won

The lady's ear for me ?

Man. I have, your grace.

Ph. May I speak, Constance ?

Con. Philip, you may speak.

Ph. Once I asked this, and thou didst bid me then

Speak and end all. Hear while I speak my last.

I have wronged thee, Constance.

Con. That is now forgiven.

Hu. O, well done, Constance.

Ph. And I wronged Manuel.

I violated friendship, and the bond ²⁶⁵¹
Of hospitality.

Con. All that I know,

And all forgive.

Hu. Forgive him, and forget it.

So should it be.

Ph. Yet if thou sayest that,

Thou dost not know that 'twas my treachery

Procured his exile, whence ensued his death.

Con. All this I know, and I forgive it all.

Hu. (*aside*). This is too soft. Doth her mind
wander still ?

Ph. Thou understandest ? Knowest thou that did
he live

To-day he were the ruler of his country ?

Con. Nay ; now, sir, this is new. How came
you by it ?

Ph. In a despatch I hold, his full appointment
Is writ and sealed.

Con. He will be very glad

To hear of this.

Ph. What sayst thou, then ?

Hu. (*aside*). O misery !

Con. I know you call him dead ; but still to me

He makes his visitations. I have seen him

This morning in my chamber. Nay, I say,

I see him now.

Hu. What saith she ? (*To Livio.*) Alas, alas !

Thy sister's mind is gone. This was the reason

Of her strange cheerfulness.

Ph. May God forgive us

Our fatal mischief.

Con. Give me the despatch :

I'll shew it him, sirs, else he might not believe me :

But if I take it . . .

Ph. (to *Hu.*). What, sir, shall I do?

Ros. Humour her fancy, I will lead her out.

Hu. Ferdinand, give it to her. Alas, alas!

Con. (taking). I thank thee, sir. (To *Man.*) Now, father, here's a matter To make us laugh within.

[*Exeunt Rosso, Constance, and Manuel.*]

Hu. Philip, she is mad.

Ph. I see it, and I the cause.

Hu. A laughing idiot. O, cruel heavens, Ye had no stroke more fearful. Would to God That Manuel yet were living, tho' I hate him, Rather than this.

[*Shouting without of "Palicio," etc.*]

What noise is that?

Liv. The rebels, sir, again.

Enter an Officer.

Officer. The city, sire, is risen; and the people, With John Palicio at their head, demand The king's despatches.

Hu. John Palicio! Is he escaped again? Send Blasco hither.

Livio, where is he?

Liv. Sir, I do not know.

Hu. 'Tis this accursed rebellion hath done all: I have been too merciful. I tell thee, Philip, That was the cause of all, of Constance's madness, Of Manuel's death. By heaven, the sword shall fall. I will have blood for blood, and wail for wail. None of these villains whom I hold in prison Shall see the sunset. Send me Blasco hither. Call out the troops.

Ph. Pray you remember, sire, Pardon to all is urged in the despatch.

Hu. Send pardon to the devil. Oppose me not! I'll teach these rebels I am master now.

[*Cries heard without.*]

Enter Manuel (as himself, with paper in hand) and Constance. Margaret, Lucia, and Rosso following.

Manuel! why, Manuel!

Ph. O, Manuel, My friend, I am saved.

Con. My father, 2700 Let me present to you my ghostly father; And at your will my loving living husband.

Hu. Why, what! How's this? Is't thou? Is this a trick?

Man. Ay; but a trick of fortune. Let my escape, Which makes you wonder, be explained hereafter. But now, since here I hold my title, sire, I'll fill my place at once. Philip, I pray thee Go to the window, and make known to all These latest tidings. Send the people home.

[*Philip goes to window.*]

Meanwhile, sir; if before thou hadst some warrant For anger shewn against me, now I ask Thy pardon; and for wrongs against me done Assure thee, that if freely thou make over Thy daughter for my wife, there is in my love Means for full reconciliation. May I say Constance is mine?

Hu. I see that she is thine.

Man. I pray thou never shalt regret this day.

Ph. (returning from window). There is John Palicio, with half the town

At their old cries. I can make nothing of him.

Man. Bid him surrender as my prisoner. I will receive him here.

Hu. Thou must not think He comes at asking thus.

Man. He will obey.

But I will show myself. [Goes to window.]

Hu. How comes he out of prison?

Mar. That I can tell.

Your secretary Blasco promised me, Who desired nothing more than the release Of John Palicio, that he would contrive To free him, if on my part I returned A certain letter to his hands, wherein, [Showing.] As you may read, he had betrayed your person To John Palicio for a price. Then I, As holder of this written ransom, came To see my kinsman freed; when in the dungeon False Blasco, with two villains and another, Who was your son, appeared before us armed: And thinking there to find Palicio Defenceless, would have slain him, and forced me To give them back this writing: but Palicio Sprang up, slew Blasco, and escaped.

Ph. His death Was due from me.

Hu. Give me the letter, pray. Say, Livio, is this true?

Liv. I never knew Of this betrayal, sir; I trusted Blasco.

Mar. He counts for nothing, since he ran away.

Enter Palicio.

Hu. Is this the man?

Man. Thou art my prisoner.

Pal. I make submission to your excellence.

[*Offering (Blasco's) sword.*]

Man. Dost thou surrender of thy own free-will

To me, as legal viceroy of this island, Under King Frederick, and now abjuring Thy late rebellion, wilt thou trust henceforth The people's welfare to my lawful hands? 2750

Pal. I do, and all will trust thee as do I.

Man. That is thy pardon. (Takes sword.) For the king's good will

Is grace to all. Yet there will be for thee Question in Blasco's death. But now I need Elsewhere thy presence. (Returning sword.) Go forth to the people,

And make it known that I am their governour:

And that for all disorder ere this day

There will be pardon, but from this day none.

Bid them disperse.

Pal. Those hundred men of mine, Who lie in prison: is their pardon granted?

Mar. 'Tis I should plead for them. 'Twas I betrayed them.

Hu. Thou didst betray them?

Mar. Ay, sir.

Hu. 'Tis nought but wonder.

Man. (to *Pal.*). This is a day of grace. None will resent

Our stretching mercy. I shall grant their pardon, But not without some cautions; for among them—

Hear me, Palicio, thou who so dost cry
Against the taxes—many among thy men
Are a most burdensome and fruitless tax.
They go free but to work, and with such measures
As will ensure it. [Palicio is going.]

Now, sir, ere thou goest,
Is there none here to whom a word is due?

Pal. O, Manuel, I dare not, nay,—I pray thee,
Be not too generous towards me: since my heart
Has fallen so far, let me have trial yet
That I may win what I but falsely stole,
And now would leave in thy security,
Till I may bring some right to claim it. Yet
I lack the worth to ask. But there's one thing
Which I will ask (*goes to Margaret*), forgiveness; and
for that
I kneel.

Mar. I will not hide it from thee, sir,
That in the mutual interchange of pardons,
Which is our friendly game, I have had some pain
Standing out in the cold, merely for lack
Of such a suit as thine. I have looked and longed
To find a debtor; and I will take thee.
Rise, sir. I must present thee to a kinsman.

[Leads Palicio to Hugo.]
(*To Hugo.*) Do you remember, sir, a cruel saying
Spoken to me against this gentleman?
Since that I have been his friend, ay, and yours too,
For I betrayed his people to your hands,
When they were setting forth to burn the palace;
And so prevented Blasco's treachery;

From which him too I saved, and for that deed
He takes me now in marriage.

Hu. All thou sayst
Margaret, with much of what hath happed to-day
Needs explanation. I must see so far
That Livio by his conduct is cut off:
But if you tell me now that you will marry
This man . . .

Man. Palicio is of noble blood,
My lord. Yourself have given him oft such praise
As by an enemy must be well deserved ²⁸⁰¹
Ere it be spoken. The king's pardon proves
Justification: he is quit of treason.

We shall restore his rank, the loss of which,
Due to his grandsire in the civil wars,
Brings him no stain: nay, we shall further make him
Chief secretary, where his ancient zeal
For all the commons' rights may still be shewn.

Con. Margaret, we may be married the same day.

Hu. I see indeed this is a day of grace,
Of wondrous grace: and where I take so much
I should be churlish did I not rejoice
That I may rank behind no one of you
In the free dispensation of my favour.
And there's one act would set the balance even,
Lay it even lower against me: it is this,
For I will do it: John Palicio,
I do forgive thee . . .

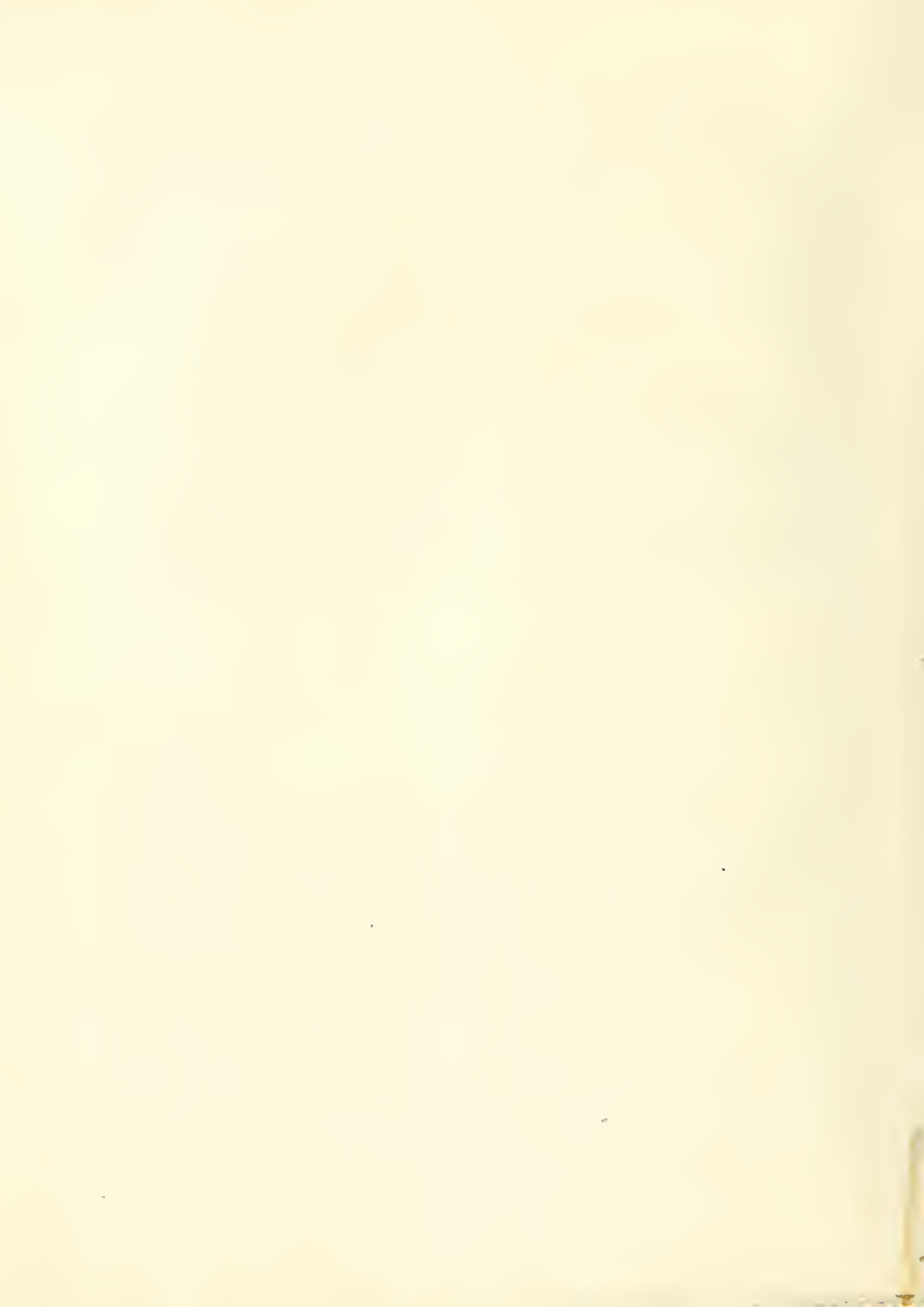
Mar. Now I thank thee, sire.

Pal. And I, my lord, who never thought to do it,
Will forgive thee. DO YOU FORGIVE US ALL.

THE END.

NOTE.—The fragment of Æschylus on the title suggests a truly ancient origin for the family of Palicio: its known history is given in the *Nobiliario viceregio capitaniale e pretoriano in Palermo nobile*. Parte terza degli annali di Agostino Inveges. Palermo. MDCLI. p. 104. PALIZZI. Hugo, Squarcialupu and some of the others may be found in *Sicilian histories about the year 1500*, the supposed date of this play: their characters and the political situation are quasi-historical. The incidents connecting Margaret and Palicio are mostly adapted from a bad French story by De Stendhal, called *Vanina Vanini*, in a book titled *Chroniques Italiennes*, published by Michel Levy, in 1855.

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