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ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

ACTED at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

By his MAJESTY's Servants.

Printed in the Year MDCCLVIII.

PERSONS.

ALFRED.	*Mr.* GARRICK.
Earl of DEVON.	*Mr.* LEE.
EDWIN.	*Mr.* BURTON.
HERMIT.	*Mr.* BERRY.
CORIN.	*Mr.* BLAKES.
DANISH *king.*	*Mr.* SOWDON.
First DANE.	*Mr.* PALMER.
Second DANE.	*Mr.* MOZEEN.
ELTRUDA.	*Miss* BELLAMY.
EMMA.	*Mrs.* BENNET.
SHEPHERDESS.	*Miss* MINORS.

The Vocal Parts by
Mrs. CLIVE, *Miss* NORRIS, *Mr.* BEARD, *Mr.* REINHOLD, *Mr.* WILDER, *Mr.* VERNON, *&c.*

Shepherdesses, Soldiers, Attendants, Spirits.

The SCENE *represents a plain, surrounded with woods. On one side, a cottage; on the other, flocks and herds in distant prospect. A hermit's cave in full view, over-hung with trees, wild and grotesque.*

Advertiſement.

HAving been obliged to diſcontinue the duke of MARLBOROUGH'*s hiſtory for a few months paſt, till I could receive from a foreign country ſome papers of importance; that I might not be quite idle in the mean while, I read over, in order to improve, this* MASQUE; *the firſt draught of which had been written by the late Mr.* THOMSON, *in conjunction with me, ſeveral years ago. But, to fit it for the ſtage, I found it would be neceſſary to new-plan the whole, as well as write the particular ſcenes over again; to enlarge the deſign, and make* ALFRED, *what he ſhould have been at firſt, the principal figure in his own* MASQUE. *This I have done; but, according to the preſent arrangement of the fable, I was obliged to reject a great deal of what I had written in the other: neither could I retain, of my friend's part, more than three or four ſingle ſpeeches, and a part of one ſong. I mention this expreſsly; that, whatever faults are found in the preſent performance, they may be charged, as they ought to be, entirely to my account.*

A 2 D. Mallet.

PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. GARRICK.

IN arms renown'd, for arts of peace ador'd,
ALFRED, *the nation's father, more than lord,*
A British *author has presum'd to draw,*
Struck deep, even now, with reverential awe;
And sets the godlike figure fair in view——
O may discernment find the likeness true.
When Danish *fury, with wide wasting hand,*
Had spread pale fear, and ravage o'er the land,
This prince arising bade confusion cease,
Bade order shine, and blest his isle with peace;
Taught liberal arts to humanize the mind,
And heaven-born science to sweet freedom join'd.
United thus, the friendly sisters shone,
And one secur'd, while one adorn'd, his throne.
Amidst these honors of his happy reign,
Each grace and every muse compos'd his train:
As grateful servants, all exulting strove,
At once to spread his fame, and share his love.
To night, if aught of fiction you behold,
Think not, in virtue's cause, the bard too bold.
If ever angels from the skies descend,
It must be—truth and freedom to defend.
Thus would our author please—be it your part,
If not his labours, to approve his heart.
True to his country's, and to honor's cause,
He fixes, there, his fame, and your applause;
Wishes no failing from your sight to hide,
But, by free BRITONS, *will be freely try'd.*

ALFRED:

A

MASQUE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

CORIN *and* EMMA *appear at the door of their cottage.*

Two SHEPHERDESSES.

First SHEPHERDESS *sings.*

O PEACE, the fairest child of heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given,
The vale, the fountain, and the grove,
With every softer scene of love;
Return, sweet peace, to chear the weeping swain:
Return, with ease and pleasure in thy train.

EMMA, *coming forward.*

Shepherd, 'tis he. Against yon aged oak,
Pensive and lost in thought, he leans his head.
Corin. Soft: let us not disturb him. Gentle *Emma*,
Poor tho' he be, unfriended and unknown,
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune.
Modest of carriage, and of speech most gracious,
As if some saint or angel in disguise
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his presence,
He steals, I know not how, into the heart,
And makes it pant to serve him. Trust me, *Emma*,
He is no common man.
Emma. Some lord, perhaps,
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,
The haughty, cruel, unbelieving *Dane*,
Seeks shelter here.

Corin. And ſhelter he ſhall find:
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother.
Behold him well. Fair manhood in it's prime,
Even thro' the homely ruſſet that conceals him,
Shines forth, and proves him noble.

Emma. 'Tis moſt like,
He is not what his preſent fortunes ſpeak him.
But, ah! th' inhuman foe is all around us:
We dare not keep him here.

Corin. Thou haſt not weigh'd
This iſland's force; the deep defence of woods,
Nature's own hand hath planted ſtrong around;
The rough encumbrance of perplexing thorns,
Of intertwining brakes that riſe between,
And choak up every inlet from abroad.
Yet more; thou know'ſt, beyond this woody verge
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in;
Along whoſe border ſpreads the gulphy pool,
And trembling quagmire to betray the foot
It's treacherous greenſword tempts. One path alone
Winds to this plain, ſo difficult and ſtrait,
My ſingle arm, againſt a band of foes,
Could long, perhaps, defend it.

Emma. Yet, my *Corin*,
Revolve the ſtern decree of that fierce tyrant,
The *Daniſh* king: "Who harbours, or relieves
"An *Engliſh* captain, dies the death of traitors:
"But who their haunts diſcovers, ſhall be ſafe,
"And high rewarded."

Corin. Now, juſt heaven forbid,
An *Engliſhman* ſhould ever count for gain
What villainy muſt earn. No: are we poor?
Be honeſty our riches. Are we mean,
And humbly born? The true heart makes us noble.
Theſe hands can toil; can ſow the ground and reap
For thee and thy ſweet babes. Our daily labour
Is daily wealth: it finds us bread and raiment.
Could *Danish* gold give more?

Emma. Alas the while!

That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,
To dwell with village-ſwains!

Corin. Ah look! behold,
Where *Edith*, all-abandon'd to deſpair,
Hangs weeping o'er the brook.

Second Shepherdeſs *approaches ſlowly to ſoft muſic.*

Is there not cauſe?

She ſings.

I.

A youth adorn'd with every art,
To warm and win the coldeſt heart,
In ſecret mine poſſeſt:
The morning bud that faireſt blows,
The vernal oak that ſtraiteſt grows,
His face and ſhape expreſt.

II.

In moving ſounds he told his tale,
Soft as the ſighings of the gale
That wakes the flowery year.
What wonder he could charm with eaſe!
Whom happy nature form'd to pleaſe,
Whom love had made ſincere.

III.

At morn he left me—fought, and fell;
The fatal evening heard his knell,
And ſaw the tears I ſhed:
Tears that muſt ever, ever fall;
For ah! no ſighs the paſt recall,
No cries awake the dead!

Corin. Unhappy maid! yet not alone in woe:
For look, where our ſad gueſt, like ſome fair tree
Torn from the root by winter's cruel blaſt,
Lies on the ground o'erthrown.

Emma. I weep, to ſee it!

Corin. Thou haſt a heart ſweet pity loves to dwell in:
But, dry thy tears, and lean on this juſt hope ——
If yet to do away his country's ſhame,
To ſerve her bravely on ſome bleſt occaſion;

If for theſe ends this ſtranger ſought our cottage,
The heavenly hoſts are hovering here unſeen,
To guard his ſacred life, and bleſs us all.
But let us hence: he riſes to embrace
His friend, a woodman of the neighbouring dale,
Whom late, as yeſter-evening ſtar aroſe,
At his requeſt I bid to meet him here.

SCENE II.

ALFRED *earl of* DEVON.

ALFRED.

How long, juſt heaven! how long
Shall war's fell ravage deſolate this land?
All, all is loſt—and *Alfred* lives to tell it!
Are theſe things ſo? and he without the means
Of great revenge? caſt down below the hope
Of ſuccouring thoſe he weeps for?

Devon. Gracious *Alfred*,
England's laſt hope, whoſe feeling goodneſs ſhews
What angels are; to bear, with ſuch a prince,
The worſt of ills, exile, or chains, or death,
Is happineſs, is glory.

Alfred. Ah! look round thee—
That mud-built cottage is thy ſovereign's palace.
Yon hind, whoſe daily toil is all his wealth,
Lodges and feeds him. Are theſe times for flattery?
Or call it praiſe: ſuch gaudy attributes
Would miſbecome our beſt and proudeſt fortunes.
But what are mine? What is this high-priz'd *Alfred?*
Among ten thouſand wretches moſt undone!
That prince who ſees his country laid in ruins,
His ſubjects periſhing beneath the ſword
Of foreign war; who ſees and cannot ſave them,
Is but ſupreme in miſery!—But on,
Proceed, my lord; compleat the mournful tale,
My griefs broke off.

Devon. From yonder heath-clad hill,
Far as my ſtraining eye could ſhoot it's beam

look'd, and ſaw the progreſs of the foe,
As of ſome tempeſt, ſome devouring tide,
That ruins, without mercy, where it ſpreads.
The riches of the year, the bread of thouſands
That liberal crown'd our plains from vale to hill,
With intermingled foreſts, temples, towers,
Now ſmoak to heaven, one broad-aſcending cloud.
But oh for pity! on each mountain's height,
Shivering and ſad the pale inhabitants,
Gray-headed age and youth, all ſtood and mark'd
This boundleſs ravage: motionleſs and mute,
With hands to heaven up-rais'd, they ſtood and weep—
My tears attended theirs ——

Alfred. If this ſad ſight
Could pain thee to ſuch anguiſh, what muſt I
Their king and parent feel?

Devon. Sir, be of comfort.
Who has not known ill fortune, never knew
Himſelf, or his own virtue.

Alfred. Well—no more——
Complaint is for the vulgar: kings muſt act;
Reſtore a ruin'd ſtate, or periſh with it.
Deſpair ſhall be our ſtrength ——

Devon. Behold, my lord,
From yonder hazle copſe, who iſſues forth,
And moves this way—a ſtranger—but his look
Speaks haſte and apprehenſion——

Alfred. Ha! beyond
My utmoſt hope!—'Tis *Edwin* ——

SCENE III.

ALFRED, DEVON, EDWIN.

ALFRED.

Haſt thou ought
Of joyful to impart? or is the ſoul
Of *England* dead indeed?

Edwin. My gracious maſter,
This journey has been fruitful to our wiſh.

Awak'd, as from the laſt and mortal trance,
That ſoul, which ſeem'd extinguiſh'd, lives again:
By me aſſur'd, their ſovereign ſtill ſurvives,
Survives to take due vengeance on thoſe robbers,
Who violate the ſanctity of leagues,
The reverend ſeal of oaths; who baſely broke,
Like midnight ruffians, on the hour of peace,
And ſtole a victory from men unarm'd;
Of this aſſur'd, your people breathe once more.
The ſpirit of our anceſtors is up!
The ſpirit of the free! and, with one voice
Of happy omen, all demand their king. [deign to guide
Alfred. Then heaven, who knows our wrongs, will
The virtue it inſpires—my lord, how ſound
Theſe tidings in your ears?
Devon. As the ſure omen
Of better fate, my heart receives and hails them.
For know, my liege, the fury of thoſe *Danes*,
This laſt dire ſcene of total deſolation,
Will kindle up the flame to ſeven-fold fierceneſs;
New-wing each ſhaft, edge every lifted ſword,
And drive ——
Alfred. A moment—*Edwin*, yet inform me
What numbers have you gather'd? how diſpos'd,
Where poſted them?
Edwin. In theſe ſurrounding woods,
Soon as the ſhade of night deſcends to veil them,
A generous few, the veteran hardy gleanings
Of many a well-fought field, all at one hour,
Behind the ruſhy brook from hence due eaſt,
By different paths, and in ſmall parties meet,
Accoutred at all points: and, as I judge,
Their numbers count twelve hundred.
Alfred. Ha! twelve hundred—
Incredible—ſoft—let me duly weigh
What I, unhoping, ſcarce believing, hear.
Something muſt, now, be done—ay, that attempt
Is great—but greatly hazardous—why then,
Neceſſity, our juſt plea, muſt excuſe

The desperate daring her hard law imposes.
Hear, my brave friends. One castle still is ours,
Tho' close begirt and shaken by the *Danes*.
Devon, speed thither: find out that close path,
By *Edwin*'s eye and aid, which from the midst,
The central point of *Kinwith-forest* winds
In deep descent; and, under ground prolong'd,
Safe in the fortress ends.

Devon. Suppose me there:
What follows this, my lord?

Alfred. Be it your part
To animate our brothers of the war,
Those *Englishmen*, who yet deserve that name.
The foe—dwell much on this—by our known weakness
Made daring and secure, will now the rein
Of discipline relax, and to loose revel
Indulge the midnight hour. Therefore, at three—
O count the clock with more than lovers' vigilance—
At three, that chosen band shall from behind,
Rising at once, with *Alfred* at their head,
Assail the hostile camp: while your warm sally,
That very moment, pours upon it's front.
Hence: and success be thine.

Devon. On this our purpose,
The sacred cause of liberty and vengeance,
Smile, righteous heaven!

Alfred. O urge it home, my friend,
That each man's sword now wears upon it's point
The present age, and last posterity!
Farewell. *Edwin*, within the hour return,
And find me here.

SCENE IV.

ALFRED.

[illegible] day declines apace.
What anxious thoughts, in this wild solitude,
My darker hours must know? And now, the veil
Of evening, o'er these murmuring woods around,

A lonely horror ſpreads—but ſoft : the breeze
Is dumb ! and more than midnight ſilence reigns !
Why beats my boſom ?—muſic ! Shield me, heaven !
Whence ſhould it come ?—Hark !—now the meaſur'd [ſtrains,
In awful ſweetneſs warbling, ſtrike my ſenſe,
As if ſome wing'd muſician of the ſky
Touch'd his ethereal harp.

SCENE V.

Solemn muſic is heard at a diſtance. It comes nearer in a full ſymphony : after which a ſingle trumpet ſounds a high and awakening air. Then the following ſtanzas are ſung by two aereal ſpirits.

Firſt SPIRIT.

Hear, Alfred, *father of the ſtate,*
Thy genius heaven's high will declare !
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to deſpair.

Both Spirits.

Is never to deſpair.

Second Spirit.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand
With all its vigour, all its fires :
Ariſe, and ſave a ſinking land !
Thy country calls and heaven inſpires.

Both Spirits.

Earth calls and heaven inſpires.

SCENE VI.

ALFRED.

Am I awake ! and is it no illuſion
That heaven thus deigns to look with mercy on me ?
Thus, by his miniſters, to chear my heart,
And warm it into hope ? But lo ! he comes,
Whom angels deign to viſit and inſpire,
The holy ſage, deſcending from his cell
In yon hill's cavern'd ſide: ſweet ſylvan ſcene
Where ſhade and ſilence dwell !

SCENE VII.

ALFRED, HERMIT.

Alfred.

Thrice happy *Hermit!*
Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,
Bleſſing thy calm retreat; while ruthleſs war
Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes.
In this extremity of *England*'s fate,
Led by thy ſacred character, I come
For comfort and advice. Say what remains,
What yet remains to ſave our proſtrate country?
Nor ſcorn this anxious queſtion even from me,
A nameleſs ſtranger.

Her. *Alfred*, *England*'s king,
All hail, and welcome to this humble cell.

Alf. Amazement!--by theſe humble weeds obſcur'd,
I deem'd my ſtate beyond diſcovery's reach:
How is it then to thee alone reveal'd? [cool fountain

Her. Laſt night, when with a draught from that
I had my wholeſome ſober ſupper crown;
As is my ſtated cuſtom, forth I walk'd
Beneath the ſolemn gloom and glittering ſky,
To feed my ſoul with prayer and meditation.
And thus to inward harmony compos'd,
That ſweeteſt muſic of the grateful heart,
Whoſe each emotion is a ſilent hymn,
I to my couch retir'd. Strait on mine eyes
A pleaſing ſlumber fell, whoſe myſtic power
Seal'd up my ſenſes, but enlarg'd my ſoul.
Led by thoſe ſpirits, who diſcloſe futurity,
I liv'd thro' diſtant ages; felt the virtue,
The great, the glorious paſſions that will fire
Remote poſterity; when guardian laws
Are by the patriot, in the glowing ſenate,
Won from corruption; when th' impatient arm
Of liberty, invincible, ſhall ſcourge
The tyrants of mankind —and when the deep,

Thro' all her ſwelling waves, from pole to pole
Shall ſpread the boundleſs empire of thy ſons.
I ſaw thee, *Alfred*, too—but o'er thy fortunes
Lay clouds impenetrable.

Alf. To Heaven's will,
In either fortune, mine ſhall ever bend
With humbleſt reſignation—Yet, O ſay,
Does that unerring providence, whoſe juſtice
Has bow'd me to the duſt; whoſe miniſters,
Sword, fire and famine, ſcourge this ſinful land,
This tomb of it's inhabitants—does he
Reſerve me in his hand, the glorious inſtrument
From fierce oppreſſion to redeem my country?

Her. What mortal eye, by his immediate beam
Not yet enlighten'd, dare preſume to look
Thro' time's abyſs? But ſhould the flatterer, hope,
Anticipating ſee that happy time,
Thoſe whiter moments—prince, remember, then,
The noble leſſons by affliction taught:
Preſerve the quick humanity it gives,
The pitying ſocial ſenſe of human weakneſs;
Yet keep thy generous fortitude entire,
The manly heart, that to another's woe
Is tender, as ſuperior to it's own.
Learn to ſubmit: yet learn to conquer fortune.
Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life: to life itſelf,
With all it's vain and tranſient joys, ſit looſe.
Chief, let devotion to the ſovereign mind,
A ſteady, chearful, abſolute dependance
On his beſt wiſeſt government, poſſeſs thee.

Alf. I thank thee, father: and O witneſs, heaven,
Whoſe eye the heart's profoundeſt depth explores!
That if not to perform my regal taſk;
To be the common father of my people,
Patron of honour, virtue and religion;
If not to ſhelter uſeful worth, to guard
His well earn'd portion from the ſons of rapine,
And deal out juſtice with impartial hand;

If not to ſpread, on all good men, thy bounty,
The treaſures truſted to me, not my own;
If not to raiſe anew our *English* name,
By peaceful arts that grace the land they bleſs,
And generous war to humble proud oppreſſors:
Yet more; if not to build the public weal,
On that firm baſe which can alone reſiſt
Both time and chance, on liberty and law;
If I for theſe great ends am not ordain'd——
May I ne'er poorly fill the throne of *England!*

Her. Still may thy breaſt theſe ſentiments retain,
In proſperous life.

Alf. Could it deſtroy or change
Such thoughts as theſe, proſperity were ruin.

Two SPIRITS *ſing the following hymn.*

First.

O joy of joys, to lighten woe!
Beſt pleaſure, pleaſure to beſtow!
What raptures then his *heart expand,*
Who lives to bleſs a grateful land.

Second Spirit.

For him, ten thouſand boſoms beat;
His name conſenting crouds repeat:
From ſoul to ſoul the paſſion runs,
And ſubjects kindle into ſons.

Her. Alfred, once more—ſince favour'd thus of heaven,
Since thus to chear thee and confirm thy virtue
He ſends his angels forth—remember well,
Should better days reſtore thy proſperous fortunes,
The vows theſe awful beings hear thee make:
Remember and fulfil them.

Alf. O no more——
When thoſe whom heaven diſtinguiſhes o'er millions,
And ſhowers profuſely power and ſplendor on them,
Whate'er th' expanded heart can wiſh; when they,
Accepting the reward, neglect the duty,
Or worſe, pervert thoſe gifts to deeds of ruin,

Is there a wretch they rule ſo baſe as they?
Guilty, at once, of ſacrilege to heaven!
And of perfidious robbery to man!

Her. Such thoughts become a monarch—but behold,
The glimmering duſk, involving air and ſky,
Creeps ſlow and ſolemn on. Devotion now,
With eye enraptur'd, as the kindling ſtars
Light, one by one, all heaven into a glow
Of living fire, adores the hand divine,
Who form'd their orbs and pour'd forth glory on them.

Alf. Then, this good moment, ſnatch'd from earth's [affairs,
Let us employ aright: and, in yon cell,
To him, with heart ſincere, our homage pay,
Who glorious ſpreads and gracious ſhuts the day.

End of the firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

EMMA, *and other Peaſants.*

WISH'D evening now is come: but her ſoft hour,
Cloſe of our daily toil, that wont to ſound
Sweet with the ſhepherd's pipe and virgin's voice,
Is chearleſs all and mute.

Second Shep. Heaven's will be ours.
And ſince no grief can yeſterday recall,
Nor change to-morrow's face; now let us ſoothe
The preſent as we may with dance and ſong,
To lighten ſad remembrance.

Firſt Shepherdeſs *ſings.*

I.

The shepherd's plain life,
Without guilt, without ſtrife,
Can only true bleſſings impart.
As nature directs,
That bliſs he expects
From health and ſ om quiet of heart.

II.

Vain grandeur and power,
Those toys of an hour,
Tho' mortals are toiling to find;
Can titles or show
Contentment bestow?
All happiness dwells in the mind.

III.

Behold the gay rose,
How lovely it grows,
Secure in the depth of the vale.
Yon oak, that on high
Aspires to the sky,
Both lightning and tempest assail.

IV.

Then let us the snare
Of ambition beware,
That source of vexation and smart:
And sport on the glade,
Or repose in the shade,
With health and with quiet of heart.

Here a pastoral dance.

SCENE II.

CORIN, EMMA, PEASANTS.

CORIN.

O happy hour! wife, neighbours—such, such news!
I shall run wild with joy!
Emma. Speak, shepherd; say,
What moves thee thus?
Corin. The king is in our isle!
Emma. Can it be possible?
Pea. What do I hear?
Corin. As now I pass'd beneath the hermit's cell,
I heard that wonderous man pronounce his name.
O *Emma*, the poor stranger whom we serv'd
And honour'd, all-unknowing o' his state,
Is he! our great and gracious *Alfred!*

Alf. Heaven!
Then are we bleſt indeed!
Corin. My humble cottage,
Long ages hence, when we are duſt, my friends,
In holy pilgrimage oft viſited,
Will draw true *English* knees to worſhip there,
As at the ſhrine of ſome propitious ſaint,
Or angel friendly to mankind—the thought
Brings tears into mine eyes.——
Emma. Does joy deceive
My ſenſe? or did I hear a diſtant voice
Sigh thro' the vale and wake the mournful echo?

The following ſong
is ſung by a perſon unſeen.

I.

Ye woods and ye mountains unknown,
Beneath whoſe pale shadows I ſtray,
To the breaſt of my charmer alone
Theſe ſighs bid ſweet echo convey.
Wherever he penſively leans,
By fountain, on hill, or in grove,
His heart will explain what she means,
Who ſings both from ſorrow and love.

Corin. The evening wood-lark warbles in her voice.
Who can this be?
Emma. Peace, peace: ſhe ſings again.

II.

More ſoft than the nightingale's ſong,
O waſt the ſad ſound to his ear:
And ſay, tho' divided ſo long,
The friend of his boſom is near.
Then tell him what years of delight,
Then tell him what ages of pain,
I felt while I liv'd in his ſight!
I feel till I ſee him again!

[ſoftneſs

Corin. What think ye, friends? Such moving, melting

Breathes in these sweet complainings, as till now
Mine ear was never blest with. Let us go
And find out this new wonder.

Second Shep. Look, the king!

Emma. Now, by my holidame, a goodly person,
And of most noble mein.

Corin. Disturb him not.

SCENE III.

ALFRED, HERMIT.

Hermit.

Your enterprise is bold—and may be fatal:
Yet I condemn it not. All is not rashness,
That valour of more common size might think,
And caution term so. Souls of nobler scope,
Whose comprehensive sight beholds at once
And weighs the sum of things, are their own rule,
And to be judg'd but by themselves alone.

Alf. Then, in the name of that inspiring power,
Whose deputy I am, who sends me forth
His minister of vengeance, on I go
To victory, or death.

[*As he is going out, he stops short.*

What do I feel?
Save me! a holy horror stirs my frame,
And shivers thro' each vein— what shapes are these,
Athwart the gloom, that strike my dazled sense?
Betwixt and where yon mist along the marsh
Rowls blue it's vapoury wave, some unseen hand
Pourtrays in air the visionary scene
Distinct and full, in brighter colours drawn
Than summer suns reflect on evening cloud,
When all it's fluid bosom glows with gold—
And now, it reddens into blood!

Hermit, who had observed him fixedly, half-aside.

Ere night
Withdraws her shade, new accidents and strange

Will ſhake this iſland's peace.
[*To him.*
Now, *Alfred*, now,
Be all the hero ſhewn.
Alf. What may this mean?

SCENE IV.

ALFRED, CORIN.

Corin, kneeling.

My honour'd ſovereign——
Alf. How is this! ha! what!
Diſcover'd by this peaſant—be it ſo:
The plain man is moſt loyal.
Corin. *England*'s wealth,
The pearly ſtores her circling ſeas contain,
Should never ſhake your *Corin*'s faith——
Alf. But what
Alarms thee thus?
Corin. My fears are for my king.
Some ſtrangers, Sir—their habits ſpeak them *Danes*—
Have found our iſle. Look this way.
Alf. Be of courage.
Now, I perceive them. Thro' the evening ſhade
Their armour gleams a faint and moving light.
Weſtward they turn, and ſtrike into the path
That opens on this plain. Retire we, ſhepherd,
Behind yon duſky elm; from whence, unſeen,
We may diſcern their numbers and their purpoſe.

SCENE V.

DANES *paſſing along.*

Firſt Dane.

No more. 'Twas ſhe: I could not be deceiv'd.
A lover's eye is as the eagle's ſharp,
And kens his prey from far—but liſt a while,
If ſound of human voice, or bleat of flocks
May guide our loſt enquiry thro' this wild.

Second Dane. No: all is loneliness around, and hush'd
As our dead northern wastes at midnight hour.
Our gods protect us! Prince, it was most rash,
So few our numbers, at this close of day
Headlong to plunge amid these horrid shades,
Where danger lurks unseen.

First Dane. How! know'st thou not
That *England* is no more? Her sons of war,
To dens and caverns fled, like fearful hares
Sit trembling at each blast the chill wind blows.
Her king himself or sleeps in dust, or roams
Wild on the pathless mountain. As for me;
Our country gods, those spirits that possess
The boundless wilderness, that love to dwell
With dreary solitude and night profound,
Will guard the son of *Ivar*, to whose house
Their vassalage is bound by magic spell.
Come on. She must be found, this unknown fair
Who fir'd me at first view; and rages still
A fever in my youthful blood. Away.

SCENE VI.

ALFRED, CORIN, *advancing.*

Corin.

They are but three.

Alf. And were that number trebled,
This island is their grave; this sacred spot,
Fair freedom's last retreat. We must, we will
Preserve it, all-inviolate and holy,
From impious infidels: or, with our blood,
If now we perish, sanctify it's earth
For after-times to visit and revere.

Corin. List, list, my lord——

Alf. What noise was that?—By heaven,
The shrieks of women! Now, stern vengeance guide
The sword we draw.

SCENE VII.

EMMA, *and other peasants.*

Emma.

Ah, whither shall we fly?
Immortal virgin! queen of mercy! save us——
See, see, my friends, they seize the lovely stranger—
They bear her off—behold the king appears—
My husband too—now, heaven, defend alike
The mighty and the mean, the prince and peasant!
Two of them fall beneath our monarch's arm——
The third, my *Corin*—O I dare no more
Look that way—Yet I must—The third is slain!
O gallant shepherd! O most happy hour!

SCENE VIII.

ALFRED, CORIN,
supporting the lady.

Alfred.

This way, brave shepherd, from these closer shades—
Here the free air and breezy glade will rouse
Her fainting spirits—So—Who may she be?
Perhaps, some worthy heart at this sad moment
Akes for her safety.

Elt. Save me, save me, heaven! [she!

Alf. Ye powers! what do I hear?—Yes—yes—'tis
My wife, my queen! the treasure of my soul!

Elt. My *Alfred!*

Alf. My *Eltruda!*

Elt. Can it be?
Or is it all th' illusion of my fear?
O no: 'tis he—my lord! my life! my husband!
My guardian angel *Alfred.*

Alf. My *Eltruda!*
Black horror chills me while I view the brink,
The dreadful precipice, on which we stood——

And was it thee I rescu'd from these ruffians——
O providence amazing !—thee, *Eltruda!*
Elt. I tremble still--from worse than death deliver'd !
And am I then secure in *Alfred*'s arms ?
Alf. There let me hold thee : lull thy fears to rest:
There hush thy soul with everlasting fondness.
The panting bird so flutters, just escap'd
The fowler's snare.
Elt. My heart, my heart is full——
And must o'erflow in tears. A thousand thoughts
Are busy here—that ever we should meet
In such a dire extremity !—Ah me !
That ever *Alfred*'s family and children
Should need the shelter of his single arm !
Alf. My children !—where, where are they ?
Elt. Turn thine eyes
To yonder cottage : there conceal'd——
Alf. My *Corin*,
Fly, bring them to my arms. But say, my love,
Why didst thou leave the convent, where I plac'd thee ?
Why, unprotected, trust thee to a land,
A barbarous land, where violence inhabits ?
Our hospitable *England* is no more.
Elt. Alas ! my *Alfred*, even the peaceful cells,
Where safe beneath religion's holy veil
Her cloister'd votaries dwelt, from impious *Danes*
No reverence claim. The villages around,
Dispers'd and flying wild before their arms,
Inform'd us, a near party, on whose course
Destruction waits, were marching full to us.
Instant I fled. Two faithful servants bore
Our children off : and heaven has sav'd us all !
Alf. O welcome to my soul !—O happy *Alfred!*
Thus to have rescu'd what the feeling heart
Most dear and precious holds, from men who war
With earth and heaven.
Elt. Tho' terrible at first,
Blest be the tempest that has driven me hither,
Into this safe, this sacred harbour !

Alf. Come,
O come, and here repoſe thee from the ſtorm,
Within theſe ſheltering arms.

Eltruda, *holding him off.*

Yet—let me view thee——
My king and huſband—do I find thee thus?

[*falling into his arms.*

Unknown! unſerv'd! unhonour'd! none to tend thee!
To ſoothe thy woes, to watch thy broken ſlumbers,
With every fonder ſervice, pious love
Beſt knows to pay!—There is in love a power,
There is a ſoft divinity that draws,
Even from diſtreſs, thoſe tranſports that delight
The breaſt they pain, and it's beſt powers exalt
Above all taſte of joys from vulgar life!

Alf. O 'tis too much—thou all that makes life glorious!
Nay look not on me with this ſweet dejection;
Thro' tears that pierce the ſoul——
My children too!
My little ones! Come to your ſire's embrace:
'Tis all he can beſtow—In them behold
What human grandeur is—The peaſant's offspring
Have ſome retreat, ſome ſafe, tho' lowly home:
But you, my babes, you have no habitation!
With pain and peril wandering thro' a land,
A ruin'd country you were born to rule!
The thought unmans my reaſon.

SCENE IX.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

Hermit.

I have heard
Thy fond complainings, *Alfred.*

Alf. You have then,
Good father, heard the cauſe that wrings them from me.

Her. The human race are ſons of ſorrow born:
And each muſt have his portion. Vulgar minds

Refuſe, or crouch beneath their load: the brave
Bear theirs without repining.

Al. Who can bear
The ſhaft that wounds him thro' an infant's ſide?
When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,
Implore the hand we cannot reach to ſave them.

Her. Weep not, *Eltruda.*—Yet, thou art a king;
All private paſſions fall before that name.
Thy ſubjects claim thee whole.

Al. Can public truſt,
O reverend ſage! deſtroy the ſofter ties
That twine around the parent's yearning heart?
This holy paſſion heaven itſelf infus'd,
And blended with the ſtream that feeds our life.
All nature feels it intimate and deep,
And all her ſons of inſtinct and of reaſon.

Her. Then ſhew that paſſion in it's nobleſt form.
Think what a taſk it is, to rear thoſe minds,
On whom the fate of millions, general bliſs,
Or univerſal miſery, depends.

Al. That taſk then, difficult alike and noble,
Be thine, O ſacred ſage; to whoſe try'd wiſdom
I, henceforth, ſolely truſt their tender years.
Let truth and virtue be their earlieſt teachers.
Keep from their ear the ſyren-voice of flattery;
Keep from their eye the harlot-form of vice,
Who ſpread, in every court, their ſilken ſnares,
And charm but to betray. Betimes inſtruct them,
Superior rank demands ſuperior worth;
Pre-eminence of valor, juſtice, mercy:
But chief, that tho' exalted o'er mankind,
They are themſelves but men—frail ſuffering duſt;
From no one injury of human lot
Exempt: but fever'd by the ſame heat, chill'd
By the ſame cold, torn by the ſame diſeaſe,
That ſcorches, freezes, racks, and kills the beggar.
Should fairer days, returning, ſmile again
On *England* and on me——
Ha! *Edwin* here?

This way, my friend—ſpeak ſoftly ——
Edwin *whiſpers the king aſide.*
How!—'tis well!——
Back to thy poſt: I follow on the inſtant——
Yet ſtay—Behold my queen, and infant-ſons!
Edwin—thy king's whole wealth is there ſumm'd up!
Nay, wipe thine eyes: and tell my gallant friends
What thou haſt ſeen. The tale will lend new force
To each man's arm, and with redoubled weight
Urge every well-aim'd blow. Hence! ſpeed thee well.
Eltruda—we muſt part——
El. What do I hear?
My life, my love——
Al. Part for a few ſad moments,
That our next meeting may be long and happy.
El. What leave me now? O my preſaging heart!
Already leave me! 'Tis the dreadful call
Of glory, ſomewhat perilouſly great,
And big with urgent haſte, that tears thee from me.
Oh *Alfred*——
Al. No fond weakneſs now be ſhewn,
Eltruda, no diſtruſt of virtue's fate.
Thou and thy children are, at preſent, ſafe
In this wiſe hermit's care. For what remains;
My cauſe is juſt, my fortune in his hand
Who reigns ſupreme, almighty and all-good.
* That power who ſtills the raging of the main,
The rage of all our foes can render vain.
To his unerring will reſign'd ſincere,
I fear that God, and know no other fear!

End of the ſecond act.

* Tranſlated from RACINE'S ATHALIE.

Celui, qui met un frein à la fureur des flots,
Sçait auſſi des méchans arreſter les complots.
Soûmis avec reſpect à ſa volonté ſainte,
Je crains dieu, cher Abner, & n'ay point d'autre crainte.

ACT III. SCENE I.

EMMA, *and other ſhepherdeſſes.*

Emma.

YES, *Edith*, we will watch, till morning ſhines,
Around this cottage, now made rich and glorious —
Who durſt have thought ſuch wonders ?—by a queen,
And her bright offspring ! Thou, mean while, invoke,
With ſounds of ſoothing ſtrain, the gentle ſleep
To pour his timely vapours on their eye-lids.

Edith *ſings.*

I.

In cooling ſtream, O ſweet repoſe,
Thoſe balmy dews diſtill,
That ſteal the mourner from his woes,
And bid deſpair be ſtill.

II.

Prolong the ſmiling infant's reſt,
Who yet no ſorrow knows :
But O the mother's bleeding breaſt
To ſofteſt peace compoſe !

III.

For her the faireſt dreams adorn,
That wave on fancy's wing;
The purple of aſcending morn,
The bloom of opening ſpring.

IV.

Let all, that ſooths the ſoul or charms,
Her midnight hour employ;
Till bleſt again in Alfred's *arms,*
She wakes to real joy.

Emma. Alas ! ſhe comes. Let us withdraw, my friends:
Her ſorrows claim all reverence : and 'tis meet
We leave her to herſelf.

SCENE II.

ELTRUDA.

Amid the depth of this ſurrounding gloom,
While nature all is huſh'd, *Eltruda* wakes
To think—and to be wretched. Oh my love!
My heart's ſole reſt and refuge! Where is he!
Victor or vanquiſh'd—what is now his fate?
Moments of terror—Ha! what noiſe was that?
Each ſound appalls me, and each thought is death!
'Twas more than fancy ſure: it ſeem'd the groan
Of bleeding men—O every guardian wing
Of ſaints and angels ſhield him! from his breaſt
Turn wide the flying ſhaft, the lifted ſteel,
And, ſheltering him, a ruin'd nation ſave.
Who comes? Speak, quickly ſpeak.

SCENE III.

ELTRUDA, *an* ATTENDANT.

Attendant.

My gracious miſtreſs,
Why to the breath of this untimely ſky
Expoſe your health?

Elt. Away—the health, the life
Of *England* is at ſtake: my *Alfred* fights——
Perhaps he bleeds: and I am loſt for ever!
But is there none, no meſſenger return'd
From that dark ſcene of death?

At. No, madam, none.

Elt. O my torn, tortur'd heart! What is the hour?

At. By yon faint light, that glimmering ſteals along
From eaſt to north, I gueſs the morning near.

Elt. Then all my hopes and fears ſuſpended hang
On this dread moment's wing—Ah! hear'ſt thou not
The trumpet's diſtant voice?

At. It ſpeaks aloud,
And ſhakes the echoing woods.

SCENE IV.

ELTRUDA, ATTENDANT, EMMA, *and others.*

Emma.

O mighty queen,
They come, the murderers come. Protect us, heaven,
[*kneeling.*
Our husbands, and our infants, from their rage.
Without thine aid we perish.

Elt. O my soul!
Why what a sight is this? A tyrant's eye
Might melt with pity o'er it. Thou supreme,
[*kneeling.*
All-ruling Arbiter of human fate!
Whose universal family is nature,
On *Alfred*, on his children, on his people,
Look down with mercy—for their cause is thine,
And now, even now, deciding!

SCENE V.

HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *and others.*

Hermit.

Glorious princess!
This is indeed to reign. Comfort, great queen:
It comes, it comes! the promis'd scene discloses!
I see the *Danish* raven droop his wing!
See *England*'s genius soar again to heaven,
And better days in white succession roll,
Without a cloud between!

The clouds break away; and on the edge of a rock, in full view, a spirit is seen amidst a blaze of light, who sings the following

ODE.

From those eternal regions bright,
Where suns that never set in night,
Diffuse the golden day;

Where ſpring, unfading, pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thouſand colors gay;
The meſſenger of heaven's high king,
I come; and happy tidings bring,
To chear this drooping iſle:
Behold her cruel foes are fled!
Behold fair freedom lifts the head,
And all his children ſmile!
The dawn, that now unveils her ſkies,
See England's *future glory riſe:*
A better age is born!
Then, let each voice of ſprightly ſtrain,
Around from warbling hill and plain,
Hail this triumphant morn!

Grand Chorus.

Then let each voice of ſprightly ſtrain,
Around from warbling hill and plain,
Hail this triumphant morn!

SCENE VI.

ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *earl of* DEVON.

Devon, *kneeling.*

Succeſs is ours ———
Elt. The king, my lord———
Devon. Returns,
Victorious and unhurt.
Elt. Then, firſt, to heaven,
For this beſt news I humbly bend the knee
In grateful adoration —Now proceed,
My lord; and leave no circumſtance untold
Of this amazing night.
Devon. Her miſty ſhade
Had now enclos'd us round; when, led ſecure
By *Edwin's* eye, the darkeſt depth I reach'd
Of *Kinwith-wood.* We parted —He, in haſte,
Back to his charge. I thro' the cavern'd path,

Whoſe inlet there is found, deſcending dark,
Long, under ground, it's ſolitary maze
Purſu'd as beſt I could; and roſe at length
Safe in the fort our foes had cloſe begirt.
'Twas joy, 'twas rapture there, among the few
Who wiſh'd, not hop'd, my unforeſeen return.
Elt. What follow'd this, my lord?
Devon. Prepare, I cry'd,
To live or die like men. Our king ſurvives;
And, now in arms, expects your inſtant aid.
To him then let us cut our glorious way
Thro' yonder camp: or, if we nobly fall,
There offer to the genius of our country
Whole hecatombs of *Danes.*—As if one ſoul
Had mov'd them all, around their heads they whirl'd
Their ſounding faulchions—" Lead us to thoſe *Danes*:
Revenge and *England*"—was the general cry.
Elt. I feel it here: my heart applauds their virtue.
How was this follow'd on?
Devon. To ſouls reſolv'd
Small preparation needs—the clock ſtruck three——
At once our gates flew wide: at once we ruſh'd
Prone on the *Daniſh* trenches—while behind,
Juſt to the fatal inſtant, *Alfred* roſe
In all his terrors; o'er the mounded camp
Tempeſtuous drove; from ſpace to ſpace along
Spred ſlaughter and diſmay. Nor reſt, nor pauſe:
Back'd by his ardent band, right on he bore
Even to the tent, where ſunk in ſleep profound
The *Daniſh* monarch lay. His guards, a few
Whom honor prompted to defend their prince,
Fell round him. He yet lives: but, O dire chance
Of cruel war!—a priſoner and in chains.
Elt. A fall how terrible! my breaſt is thrill'd,
And in the fierce barbarian mourns the captive.
Her. Such fortune ever wait on wild ambition!
On war unjuſt that deſolates whole nations,
And leaves a world in tears for one man's guilt!
But yet— fallen as he is—he knows not yet

What new diſtreſs, what keener pangs attend
To wound his inmoſt heart—that trumpet ſpeaks
The king's approach—ye miniſters unſeen!

Spirits, whom the King of kings
Gives to watch o'er human things,
Hither, from each bleſt abode:
From the morning's purple road;
From the ſolar world of light;
From the planet of the night;
From the rainbow's evening-round;
From the blue horizon's bound;
Hither, borne thro' ſeas of air,
Sons of life and love repair!
And now, with all that charms the eye,
This monarch's triumph dignify.

SCENE VII.

To a grand flouriſh of inſtruments the ſcene, gradually opening, diſcovers ſeveral triumphal arches, adorned with trophies and garlands, and from ſpace to ſpace beautifully illuminated. The proceſſion is led by ſhepherdeſſes, ſtrewing flowers.

Firſt Shepherdeſs.

Ariſe, ſweet meſſenger of morn,
With thy mild beams our ſkies adorn:
For long as ſhepherds pipe and play,
This, this ſhall be a holy-day.

Second Shep. *See, morn appears; a roſy hue*
Steals ſoft o'er yonder orient blue:
Soon let us meet in trim array,
And frolic out this holy-day!

Theſe are followed by ſoldiers with palm branches in their hands. An officer behind bears the Daniſh *ſtandard. Flouriſh of inſtruments.*

Firſt Voice. *Swell the trumpet's boldeſt note!*
Second Voice. *Let the drum it's thunders roll!*

Both. *And, as on aery wings they float,*
Spread Alfred'*s name from pole to pole!*
Cho. *Our ſons unborn,*
Still on this morn
With annual joy ſhall tell
How by his might,
In daring fight,
The foes of England *fell.*
Air. *Prince, of every fame poſſeſt!*
Prince and patriot both confeſt!
Thy grateful Albion *ſhall to lateſt days*
Roll down thy glories in a tide of praiſe!
Cho. *Thy grateful* Albion *ſhall to lateſt days*
Roll down thy glories in a tide of praiſe!

Elt. Yon pictur'd raven—tell me is it not
Their wonderous magic ſtandard!
Devon. 'Tis the ſame:
Wrought by the ſiſters of the *Danish* king,
At midnight's blackeſt hour; when the ſick moon,
Wrapt in eclipſe by their enchanting ſong,
Down thro' the turbid clouds her influence ſhed
Of baleful power. The ſiſters ever ſung——
"Shake, ſtandard, ſhake deſtruction on our foes."

SCENE VIII.

ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *and the others.*

ALFRED *paſſing under the triumphal arches: the ſun, at the ſame time, riſing above the horizon.*

Eltruda.

He comes! the conqueror comes——
Alf. In theſe lov'd arms
To loſe all ſorrow, and all bliſs to find!
Elt. O from what fears deliver'd for thy life,
And in that life for a whole people's being,
I thus receive thee back! thus fold thee ſafe!
Love only, love like mine, can feel, not utter!
Alf. To him aſcend all praiſe! whoſe will inſpir'd,

Whoſe arm ſuſtain'd this action, that reſtores
My better name—and, O more glorious ſtill,
Of nobler, dearer conſequence!—reſtores
Loſt *England* to her vigor, fame and freedom.

Her. For her, O *Alfred*, your more arduous taſk
But now begins: this conqueſt to ſecure;
To ſpread it's influence wide, and, well improv'd
By unremitting vigilance and valor,
Make this one blow deciſive of her fate.
But now behold, to animate thy hope,
In myſtic ſhew expreſs'd what late thy fortune
Seem'd to portend; and what the brightening ſcene
With fairer promiſe opens.

Four furies ariſe, to the ſound of inſtruments in diſcord, at four different openings from under ground, with torches in their left hands, and bloody ſwords in their right. They form a confuſed Pyrrhic *dance, shaking and pointing their ſwords and torches round the king in their centre: till, upon a change of the muſic into regular harmony, deſcends the Genius of* England, *with a crowned ſword in one hand, and a lawrel wreathe in the other. On ſight of whom the four furies ſink thro' the openings they aroſe from. He preſents the crowned ſword and lawrel-branch at the feet of the king, and reaſcends, while the following ſong is ſung.*

At laſt, at laſt,
Our night is paſt,
The gloomy night of fear:
And o'er our ſkies
Fair beams ariſe
Of peace and joy ſincere.
Then let triumph abound!
Let ecſtacy reign!
Till theſe hills all around,—around
Improving each ſtrain,
Our tranſports reſound;—reſound
The heart-felt tranſport that ſucceeds to pain!

Alf. I hail th' auſpicious omen—but ah me!
Eltruda, ſee, where comes th' unhappy king!
Elt. Oh ſight of woe!
Alf. Retire, my gentle love:
An interview like this were too ſevere
For thy ſoft nature.

SCENE IX.

ALFRED, HERMIT, DANISH KING.

Alfred, *after a pauſe.*
See, at laſt, O king,
In thy ſad fate, which even a foe laments,
See and acknowlege heaven's impartial hand.
For violated oaths and plunder'd realms,
For the heap'd guilt of baſe perfidious war,
This retribution is moſt juſt.
Dane. Away——
I own no guilt: or kings of every age
Are criminal, thy anceſtors and mine.
What is all war, but more diffuſive robbery
Made ſacred by ſucceſs? What object ſwells
A monarch's higheſt aim?—increaſe of power
And univerſal ſway. This glorious end
All means muſt ſanctify, that can ſecure.
For what remains—Of bondage, or of death,
The leſſer ill, I reck not. But, by *Thor*,
The gloomy thunderer! one diſtracting thought
Bends my ſoul's ſtrongeſt temper; ſinks me down
Beneath my own contempt.
Alf. Such fears diſmiſs
As muſt diſhonor both. The truly brave
His foe in equal arms will dare to meet:
Vanquiſh'd, he dares not injure, nor inſult him.
Dane. Nor that, nor ought without myſelf could thus
Unman me. No: my hell is here, within——
How! like a wretch, a nameleſs ſlave who fights
But for vile hire—in my own tent ſurpris'd! [me,
Aſleep! unarm'd!—theſe ſhameful chains thrown o'er

And not one blow exchang'd! O baſer far
Than that low herd, who fled without a wound
Before thy ſword.—They but deſerted him,
Who firſt himſelf abandon'd—but thy gods
Were vigilant for thee: while mine all ſlept.

Alf. Your gods are idols: that ſole power I ſerve,
Supreme and one, is univerſal Lord
O'er earth and heaven. Be it my daily taſk,
As 'tis my nobleſt theme, to own, by him
Alone I conquer'd: as for him alone
I wiſh to reign—by making mankind bleſt!

Dane. No more—convey me to your baſeſt dungeon.
Let me explore it's darkeſt depth; ſhut out
The light of heaven; forget there is a ſun
Who ſhines on my diſhonor. Would I might
Exclude too my own thoughts—but yet, my ſon
Lives—and is free! lives to revenge my fall!
To waſh my ſtains in blood—ha! where was he
This fatal night, when every god forſook me!
Where, where was *Ivar* then?

Her. Unhappy prince!
That ſon, alas!——

Dane. Ha! what! why, who art thou?
What of my ſon?

Her. Thy truſt in him is vain.
To his own raſhneſs and intemperate luſt,
This very night, a victim, here, he fell——
Lo! where he lies.

Dane. My ſon—my ſon—ha! dead——
My only child!—but no: I will not weep.
Is he not ſafe, beyond misfortune's hand?
Beyond all feeling of his father's ſhame?
Falſe hope, farewell!—Let madneſs, let deſpair
Surround me, ſeize me whole; till life's loath'd flame,
For ever quench'd in death, reſigns me o'er
To darkneſs and oblivion.

Alf. Dire reverſe!
Dreadful impatience!—But theſe roving *Danes*
A ſtricter watch demand. Means more effectual

Muſt now be try'd, from our inſulted ſhores
To keep aloof this ſtill-deſcending war.
'Tis naval ſtrength, that muſt our peace aſſure.
Be this the firſt high object of my care,
To wall us round with well-appointed fleets.
In them our ſole dominion of the ſea,
Our wealth and grandeur, can alone be found,
The one great bulwark of our ſeparate world.

Her. *Alfred*, go on; the noble taſk purſue,
Thy ſafety urges, and thy fame demands.
Yes, in her fleets, let *England* ever ſeek
Her ſure defence: by them, thro' every age,
At home ſecure, renown'd and fear'd abroad,
Great arbitreſs of nations—ha! the ſcene,
The radiant proſpect opens full before me!
Thro' diſtant depths of time tranſported down,
I ſee whole moving foreſts, from her hills
Uprooted, bound triumphant o'er the main!
White tracks of glory brighten *Albion*'s ſkies,
As navies grow, as commerce ſwells her ſail
With every breeze that under heaven can blow,
From either pole; thro' worlds yet unexplor'd,
In eaſt and weſt, that to thy ſons diſcloſe
Their golden ſtores, their wealth of various name,
And laviſh pour it on *Britannia's* lap!

Alf. Thy words new ſun-ſhine thro' my breaſt diffuſe,
And ſmiling calm. But let us, *Hermit*, try,
By juſtice, mercy, arms and arts improv'd,
By freedom fenc'd around with ſacred laws,
Our promis'd bliſs to merit and adorn.
Now, to my glorious taſk——

Her. Yet ere you go,
One moment, *Alfred*, backward caſt your eyes
On this unfolding ſcene; where, pictur'd true,
As in a mirror, riſes fair to ſight
Our *England*'s genuine ſtrength and future fame.

Here is seen the ocean in prospect, and ships sailing along. Two boats land their crews. One sailor sings the following ode: after which, the rest join the lively dance.

I.

When Britain *first at heaven's command,*
Arose from out the azure main;
This was the charter of the land,
And guarding angels sung this strain:
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves:*
Britons *never will be slaves.*

II.

The nations, not so blest as thee,
Must in their turns to tyrants fall:
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves:*
Britons *never will be slaves.*

III.

Should war, should faction shake thy isle,
And sink to poverty and shame;
Heaven still shall on Britannia *smile,*
Restore her wealth, and raise her name.
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves!*
Britons *never will be slaves.*

IV.

As the loud blast, that tears thy skies,
Serves but to root thy native oak;
Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
From foreign, from domestic stroke.
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves:*
Britons *never will be slaves.*

V.

How bleſt the prince, reſerv'd by fate,
In adverſe days to mount thy throne!
Renew thy once triumphant ſtate,
And on thy grandeur build his own!
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves:*
Britons *never will be ſlaves.*

VI.

His race ſhall long, in times to come,
So Heaven ordains, thy ſceptre wield,
Rever'd abroad, belov'd at home,
And be, at once, thy ſword and ſhield.
Rule, Britannia, *rule the waves:*
Britons *never will be ſlaves.*

The end of the Maſque.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CLIVE.

WHile our grave hermit, busy above stairs,
Employs his serious head on state affairs,
Gallants, look here—faith I have plaid the rogue,
And stole his wand—by way of epilogue.
You critics, there below, had best be civil:
For I, with this same rod, can play the devil;
Ty all your busy tongues up, one by one,
And turn what share of brains you have—to stone:
The beau's soft scull convert to solid rock ——
What then?—the wig will always have it's block.
But for the men of sad and solemn face,
The deep dark sages in or out of place,
Who much in port and politics delight,
Small change, Gods knows, will make them statues quite.
The ladies too—but now these witlings sneer ——
No, fair ones, you shall meet no insult here:
I only hint my power—that, if I list,
I yet can charm you two long hours from whist.
But, cards are ready, you are all bespoke——
To spoil a dozen drums, would be no joke.
Besides, 'twould be mere arbitrary sway:
Such as, of old, was us'd at Nero's *play,*
Who, when he sung and fiddled to the town,
Still, as his subjects yawn'd, would knock them down.
No, Sirs; to gain a heart, we must not teize:
Who would engage it, first should aim to please.
This part be mine: and, if I now succeed
To my own wish, you will be pleas'd indeed.
Then—for a trial: thus, I wave my hand,
To prove the power of this inchanting wand.

On waving her wand,

The ſcene opens, and diſcovers a beautiful valley, bordered on each hand by foreſt trees, riſing irregularly, and forming from ſpace to ſpace various groves. The proſpect behind is a landſchape of woodlands, and of mountains that aſcend above one another, till the laſt ſeem to loſe themſelves in the ſky. From the ſummit of the neareſt hill a river pours down, by ſeveral falls, in a natural caſcade. The warbling of birds is heard.

FIRST ENTRY.

A husband, his wife, and family.

She. *How soft is the scene!*
The woodlands how green!
What charms in the nightingale's lay!
He. *Fair peace, that now reigns*
On our hills and our plains,
'Tis peace bids all nature be gay.
Cho. *'Tis peace bids all nature be gay.*
She. *The distaff,*
He. *The plow,*
Both. *Shall employ our hands now,*
For ourselves and our children alone.
He. *Secure from the foe,*
We shall reap what we sow:
And the year, the whole year is our own!
Cho. *And the year, the whole year is our own.*

She waves her hand. SECOND ENTRY.

A shepherd, and shepherdess.

They run into each others arms.

She. *If to meet is all this pleasure,*
Sure, to part was killing pain!
Both. *Yes, to part was killing pain!*
He. *If 'twas grief to lose our treasure,*
How transporting to regain!
Both. *O 'tis transport to regain!*
He. *Thus possessing* ——
She. *every blessing*
Crowns the maid ——
He. *And crowns her swain.*
Both. *Crowns the happy maid and swain!*

She waves her wand. THIRD ENTRY.

Soldiers descend the mountain by two different paths: at the bottom they lay down the spoils with which they are loaded; and then, advancing, two of them sing the following ballad.

FIRST MAN.

We have fought; we have conquer'd: and England *once more*
Shall flourish in fame, as she flourish'd before.
Our fears are all fled, with our enemies slain:
* *Could they rise up anew* ——
Second *We would slay them again.*
His monarch to serve, or to do himself right,
No Englishman *yet ever flinch'd from the fight.*
For why, neighbours all, we are free as the king:
* *'Tis this makes us brave* ——
First. *And 'tis this makes us sing.*
Our prince too, for this, will be thankful to fate ——
It is, in our freedom, he finds himself great!
No force can be wanting, nor meaner court-arts:
* *He is master of all* ——
Second. *Who will reign in our hearts?*
Should rebels within, or should foes from without,
Bring the crown on his head, or his honor, in doubt;
We are ready ——
First. *Still ready—and boldly foretell,*
* *That conquest shall ever with liberty dwell!*
Second. *But now, bring us forth, as the crown of our labor,*
Much wine and good chear ----
First. *With the pipe and the tabor.*
Let our nymphs all be kind, and our shepherds be gay:
For England, *old* England, *is happy to day.*
Cho. *Let our nymphs all be kind, and our shepherds be gay:*
For England, *old* England, *is happy to day!*

They all mix in a dance,
to the pipe and tabor.

* The verses marked with an asterisk to be sung a second time by both.

THE END.

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