Hing. Yet I know
A way to open them. That bitter smile
I reck not; no, nor those averted eyes.
Know, I have turn’d thy arts against thyself;
And caught thee in thy own deceitful snare.
From impotence of mind, thou hast reveal’d
The important secret, that the bard was Alfred.
Now, if he dies, it is thy folly kills him:
He lives, by thee discover’d to his foe.

Eth. Does Alfred live, and has my tongue betray’d him?

Have I discover’d Alfred to his foe?—

Barbarian!

Hing. Still thou may’st preserve his life,
His fate on thee depends.

Eth. On me!

Hing. On thee.
Accept my offer’d hand, and Alfred lives;
Nay, re-ascends, in peace, his father’s throne.
If not; I swear by Odin, awful name,
The God of battles whom alone I serve,
This hour my rival dies.

Eth. Is this thy mercy?

Would Hinguar, conscious that my heart is full
Of love to Alfred, take a faithless hand?
Hing. I would; I will this instant; speak the word.

Eth. I shudder at the thought, and loath thee more,

Much more than ever. Brutal is thy passion,
And horrible to womankind thy love.

Hing. Is this thy answer? Whilst the Saxon lives
Thou hast some hope. Of him I will dispose,
Without delay.

[Going.

Eth. Stay, I conjure thee, stay!

Hing. My time is precious. I have deeply sworn,
And fix’d the only ransom of his life.

Eth. Touch not the life of Alfred.

Hing. Every word
Thy passion speaks accelerates his doom.
I go to see him die.

Eth. [Seizing his robe.] Thou shalt not go.
By all that’s holy, I will not survive him!

Hing. Some of thy sex, I know, have sworn as much,
And have survived the vow.

[Going.

Eth. One moment stay!
Hing. Her countenance is like a troubled sky,
When the wind veers about.

Eth. [Aside.] Inspire me, heaven!
The life of Alfred, and the fate of England,
Are in the balance. Yes, I am inspired.
Heaven, that suggests the thought, will give me
strength
To act the generous deed.

Hing. Her mind gives way.

Eth. Hinguar! should I consent to be thy bride,
Would Alfred’s life be safe? What pledge for
that?
What hostage hast thou worth the King of Eng-
land?

Hing. Consider and demand.

Eth. Set Alfred free:
The English camp is near; conduct him thither:
Let me have full assurance of his safety;
Then lead me to the altar. When my vow
Is made, though made to thee, our holy faith
Enjoins, till death, observance. [Exit.

Manet Hinguar.

Set him free,
And trust a woman’s word!—I like it not.
Fortune hath favour'd me beyond my hopes;
My rival, both in empire and in love,
Is in my power. How shall I best improve
The prosperous hour, which my good planet rules?

Enter Erick.

Erick. My lord, the valiant Rollo craves admittance.

Hing. I will not see him. He is sent by Rorke,
With some ungrateful message. Ask his business.

Erick. Unask'd he told it. In the field, to-day,
His brother press'd too near the English horse:
They turn'd and took him pris'ner. Rollo begs
That he may be exchanged.

Hing. For whom?

Erick. For Surrey,
Whom in the tent he saw.

Hing. He and his brother,
And all their tribe, are not worth such a ransom.
Erick; that Surrey is the King of England,—
Alfred himself.

Erick. Alfred!

Hing. He is, by heaven!
And my fair captive is the Mercian maid,
By Alfred loved, the beauteous Ethelswida!  
Go, bring the Saxon hither.  

[Exit Erick.]

Manet Hinguar.

Now, I'll sound him.
The policy of state enjoins his death:
The politics of love suspend his doom.
The instrument he is, by which I'll work
This woman to my will. If I can make
Her lover false to her, pride and revenge
Will bring her not reluctant to my arms.
Thus play the passions of her wayward sex.
Birds of a kind they build their nests alike;
And one true falcon like another flies.
So, every woman, when her love is scorn'd,
By certain instinct, takes the same revenge.—

Enter Alfred, in his first dress; advances resolutely.

Twice have we met to-day, and both the times,
With borrow'd names and forms, thou hast deceived me.

Alfred! I know thee now.

Alf. Hinguar, thou dost.

Hing. Repine not at this chance. If we had met
In lists of combat or embattled field,
Death or captivity had been thy portion.

Alf. Uncertain ever is the fate of arms.

Hing. I have not found it so. In every battle,
On my victorious banners fortune waits.
Suppose, then, that thou wert, by chance of war,
My pris’ner; say, what wouldst thou now expect
Should be thy doom?

Alf. 'Tis Hinguar's part to say,
And mine to suffer.

Hing. Thou shalt suffer nothing
Unworthy of a king. Though of the race
Of war and battle, who have stretch'd the spear
Of conquest o'er mankind, yet I will speak
The words of peace. The English and the Danes
Have fought too long for this contested land,
Whose spacious kingdoms can, with ease, contain
The rival nations; and the fertile fields
Glut, with luxurious plenty, their desires.
Let us divide the land, and join in league
Eternal. Then, united, shake the world.

Alf. Treaties of peace and leagues have oft been
made;
But how observed, thou know'st.

Hing. There was no bond.
To make the former treaties fast and sure,
The peace I offer now shall be confirm'd
By ties which bind the nations to each other.
My valiant brother left an only child,
In Denmark born, but here in England bred.
Matchless in form and feature is the maid;
Straight as the pine that grows on Norway's hills.
She rises tall above the virgin-train:
Blue rolls her melting eye. Her heaving breast
Is whiter than the snow that's newly fall'n.
This maid of beauty I will give to Alfred,
The pledge and bond of union and of peace.

[Alfred remains silent.]

Why dost thou not reply? Dost thou disdain
A bride of Danish race?

Alf: Silent I stand,
To learn the full extent of thy design.
Mean'st thou not still to blend the nations more;
To mix the royal blood of either land;
And wed thyself a wife of English race?

Hing. I do.

Alf: And 'tis my bride that thou hast chosen?

Hing. Call her not thine. Nothing belongs to thee.

A captive has no right
Alf.: Thou keep'st thy word,
And treat'st me like a king!

Hing.: I'll make thee one,
Which now thou art not. Wed the maid of Den-
mark,
And o'er thy father's ancient kingdom reign.

Alf.: Unworthy I should be to reign—-to live,
If I could make such barter of my honour.
Is this the peace of Hinguar?

Hing.: Yes; no other.

Alf.: Are these the terms that thou propound'st
to Alfred?

Hing.: They are.

Alf.: I am a captive and unarm'd;
So, with impunity, thou may'st insult me.

Hing.: I stand astonish'd at thy pride, thy folly
Thou ruin'd Alfred! think of thy condition.
Thy life or death upon my nod depends.

Alf.: Ruin'd I am; but it was human weakness,
And no disgraceful fault, that ruin'd Alfred.
Impell'd by tender, anxious, jealous love,
Despising danger, to thy tents I came;
And dost thou think I am so quickly alter'd?
Dost thou imagine, that the dread of death
Can move my soul to yield to thee, my bride,
And lead, if she would follow me, to shame?
Hinguar, the meanest man of Saxon race,
In freedom born, would from such baseness shrink,
And scorn with infamy to purchase life.

_Hing._ Thou talk'st it well; and I have often heard
Of the persuasive eloquence of Alfred.
Plain are my words. They speak thy certain doom.
If not the friend and firm ally of Hinguar,
Thou diest.

_Alf._ My death will not conclude the war.
One course there is, if greatly thou aspireset
To reign supreme in England, and possess,
With honour gain'd, fair Ethelswida's charms.

_Hing._ I do.

_Alf._ Then mark me, Dane! Though thou art sprung
From heroes more than human,—Odin's race,
Who stretch'd the spear of conquest o'er the world;
And thou thyself, in war and battles bred,
Chain'd to thy sword submissive fortune lead'st;
Alfred, whose fathers have in battle fall'n,
Whose valour ne'er could fix inconstant fortune,
Offers to meet thee in the listed field;
And, by his single arm, to thine opposed,
Decide the sovereignty of England's realm,
By the award of heaven. In this encounter,
My nobles and my people will abide;
And, if thou conquer'st, Ethelswida's thine.

_Hing_. What folly to presume, thou fallen Alfred!

That I will free my captive, and contend
With him on equal terms!

_Alf_. Braved as I was,
I thought it fitting, thus to meet thy scorn.
Perhaps I entertain'd a glimpse of hope,
That thou might'st chase thus nobly to prevail,
'To gain by valour warlike England's crown;
And to the beauteous Ethelswida come,
The victor, not the murderer, of her husband.

_Hing_. The beauteous Ethelswida has consented
To give her hand. The terms which thou disdains't,

Vain-glorious Saxon! are more ample far,
Than those which she did stipulate for thee.
Thus she rewards the constancy of Alfred.
Consider that.

_Alf_. No, not one moment, Dane.
Thy faith in love and war to me are known.

_Hing_. I will take no advantage of thy passion.
Hear my determined purpose? Thou shalt die,
Or wed the maid of Denmark. Heated now,
And chafed with keen contention, pride rebels
Against thy reason. I will give thee time
To cool, and take the counsel of thy judgment.
One hour thou hast to think.—

[To Erick.] Conduct him hence.

Alf. Prudence requires that Hinguuar too should think.

Behold yon banners streaming to the wind!
The host of England will revenge their King.

[Exeunt Alfred and Erick.

Hing. This Alfred bears a high and haughty mind,
Not likely to submit. Over his grave
The path of Hinguuar lies. When he is dead,
After a storm of rage, a flood of tears,
The changeful sky of woman will grow clear,
And beauty's beams on the new lover shine.

Enter Edda.

Edda. The tidings which I bring, my pardon plead
For this intrusion.

Hing. Say what has befall'n?

VOL. II.
Edda. Ronex, the Queen, pursues the captive's life.
Rollo, devoted to her will, address'd me,
With promises of infinite reward.
If I would lend my aid. When I refused,
He threaten'd me. The party of the Queen
Was strong enough, he said, by force to right her.

Hing. That was his errand here?

Edda. I seem'd to slight
His monaces. He kindled into rage;
Swore that the bravest chiefs of Denmark's host
Were in his tent assembled with the Queen,
And waited his return, to rise in arms,
And execute her orders.

Hing. I'll prevent them,
And crush this nest of traitors.—Rollo's tent,
That is the place?

Edda. It is.

Hing. Look to thy charge.
Here thou art absolute; the guards obey thee.

[Exit.

Manet Edda.

This lovely captive will at last be Queen.
I must endeavour to regain her favour.  

[Exit.
ACT IV.

SCENE, &c. as before.

ALFRED and ERICK.

Erick. For England's and for Ethelswida's sake, To gain a little time, appear to yield. Ere this, the valiant Edwin is inform'd Of thy disaster. Night approaches fast, And Danish discord aids the English arms. Shew not thy soul so open to the Dane.

Alf. My friend, to whom my favour has been fatal, It is thy fortune to behold the last And darkest scene of Alfred's tragic life. Something it grieves me, that mankind, who judge By the event, perhaps may blame my rashness. Do thou defend the ashes of thy friend, And publish to the world—
Enter Edda, who speaks to Erick.

Edda. Erick, the Captive
Desires once more to see the Saxon Prince.
For thy permission to the King I'll answer.

Erick. 'Tis not my part to question, but obey.—

[Exit Edda.

What can this woman mean?

Alf. Surrey, I tremble,
And, like a coward, shake from head to foot.
My mind for this encounter is not arm'd;
Stern was my preparation, firm the mail
That bound my breast against approaching death;
This trial takes me on another quarter,—
The woes of Ethelswida?—Rise, my soul,
Against the storm. I ought to strengthen her,
And stand myself a rock.

Enter Ethelswida and Edda.

Edda. [To Erick.] Retire with me;
Let their discourse be, as she wishes, private.

[Exeunt Erick and Edda.

[Ethelswida comes towards Alfred with
great emotion.
Alf: O Ethelswida, do not pierce my heart
With looks so full of pity and of love!

Eth. My soul looks through my eyes, my love,
my lord,
My king, my husband!

Alf: Oh! thou fann'st the fire,
On which my reason ashes heaps, in vain.
Like Hercules, I wear the poison'd robe:
Thou pull'st the garment, and my nerves are torn.
Why didst thou wish to see the ruin'd Alfred?

Eth. Not ruin'd yet. His love endanger'd Alfred:
My love shall save him still.

Alf: Can there be truth
In Hinguar? Now my soul begins to fear.

Eth. What dost thou fear?

Alf: The weakness of thy sex.

Eth. The weakness of my sex?—I guess thy thoughts.

What did the tyrant say of Ethelswida?

Alf: What I despised, discredited, and scorn'd.
He said, that he had sought and won thy love:
That thou consented'st to become his bride.

Eth. On what conditions?
Alf: Then thou didst consent!
Hear, men and angels, hear!

Eth. Angels and men,
And Alfred, hear and judge! To save thy life,
To stop the bloody tyrant's lifted arm,
I did consent, on this express condition,
That Hinguar instantly should set thee free.
When certain of thy safety, Alfred, then
I was prepared and arm'd to mock the Dane——
To die.

Alf: Forgive me, noblest of thy sex,
Greater than fancied heroine of the song,
Forgive the wrong I offer'd to thy virtue.

Eth. Accept thy freedom; let my hand restore
The King of England to his injured people,
Robb'd of their hero by my luckless love.
And when the time shall come, as come it will,
Unless the planet of this hour shou'd strike,
That Alfred his predicted fate fulfils,
And in the circle of his empire sits,
With glory crown'd, remember Ethelswida,
Who died, exulting, to preserve her lord.

Alf: Remember thee! This is no time to speak,
To ope the flood-gates of my bursting heart.
Remember thee! Whatever be my fate,
Thou ne'er shalt be forgot, while Albion lifts
Her head above the waves. But know, my love,
That this barbarian never was sincere;
For other terms to me he has proposed,—
A Danish bride.

_Eth._ To thee a Danish bride!

_Alf._ Or instant death to follow the refusal.

_Eth._ Alfred, thou livest!—

_Alf._ I live till he returns;
For though I scorn'd his offer, he persisted,
Gave me one hour more calmly to consider.
The time's expired.

_Eth._ Thou must not, shalt not die.

Rather—

_Alf._ Rash is the counsel of affection.
I know the character of Hinguar well:
Nor life nor liberty will he bestow
On those whom he has wrong'd. If I should wed
The Danish maid, I but embrace dishonour,
And perish with addition of disgrace.

_Eth._ What means the crafty Dane?

_Alf._ I think he meant
To circumvent the soul of Ethelswida.
Should I consent to wed a Danish bride,
He hopes to rouse the woman in thy heart,
And profit by the rage of slighted beauty.

_Eth._ Perhaps the women of his savage land
Have taught him thus to judge of womankind.
If they are like the clouds, that change their form,
And careless fly before each shifting gale,
Far different is the soul of Ethelswida.
Alfred, thy love is dearer than my life;
Dearer than both is Alfred's life or fame.
In this extreme distress remove me far,
Exclude me from thy thoughts, suppose me dead,
And act as if I never had been born.

_Alf._ Thy magnanimity gives edge to mine.
Rather than wed the Danish maid, I die:
Yet, to elude the deadly rage of Hinguar,
And wait the chances of the coming night,
Big with event—

_Enter Erick._

_Erick._ My lord, a num'rous band,
Led by the Queen and the fierce Bothnic chief,
Surrounds the tents.

_Alf._ Give me a sword.

_Erick._ Take this.
If through their squadrons I can win my way,
At midnight I return. [Exit.

_Alf._ One moment past,
On whose uncertain wing perdition floats;
The next may bring salvation. O, my love!
Ere Ronex comes, retire; shun the first shock
Of her impetuous rage.

_Eth._ Here I remain,
And live or die with thee. To fly from her,
Were to confess myself the wretch she thinks me.
I'll meet her as I ought. Wrong'd by her hate,
And by her husband's love, my innocence
I will not plead, but urge my injuries,
And crave of her redress.

**Ronex, entering with Danish Soldiers.**

_Ron._ Spare those that yield:
Kill all that dare resist. [Seeing Ethelswida.
See where she stands,
Like an enchantress in the magic circle.—
Advance and seize her.

_Alf._ [Drawing his sword.] Hold! he dies that
stirs
Till I have spoken.—Hear, mistaken Queen!
And learn from me how wide thy anger errs.
Ron. Ha! who art thou, that bears so brave a
form?
Yct in this place, to shame devoted, dwell'st
The pander and the guard of Hinguar's love.
What is thy name?

Alf. My name!

Ron. Fear'st thou to tell?
Alf. It will amaze thee much: My name is
Alfred.

Ron. The King of England!
Alf. Ycs.

Ron. Thou look'st a King,
Yet most incredible thou should'st be Alfred.

Eth. Not more incredible, than that the person,
Whose life thy rash resentment now pursues,
Is Alfred's bride, the Princess Ethelswida.
Born of a race dishonour never stain'd,
And to the strictest rules of virtue bred,
My soul, O Queen, devoted to my lord,
But one affection knows, and worse than death
Abhors the love of Hinguar! Thy protection
My sex demands, and my misfortunes claim.
Embrace this fair occasion to be just,
And generously repair the cruel wrong
Thy thoughts have offer'd to my spotless fame.
Ron. The Princess Ethelswida!—Do I dream?
Or does each waking sense assure a scene
Of things and persons, more incredible
Than ever vision of the night combined?

Enter Rollo.

Rol. Odin be praised! I come in time to save
them.—
Hearken, my liege, to faithful Rollo's voice,—
This is the King of England.

Ron. I believe it.
Before thou camest, he had himself reveal'd;
His royal presence warrants what he is.—
Princess, the hatred and the fell intent
With which, confessedly, at first I came,
Do not relate to thee, unlike in all
To the imagined object of my wrath.
My error pardon; and my deeds shall shew
The pity which I feel for thy misfortunes,
The high esteem in which I hold thy virtue.

Eth. Thy pity for distress, thy love of virtue,
Nobly thy deeds may prove. Deliver Alfred,
The victim of his love and of his virtue.
Long is the tale, too long to tell it now,
But Hinguar’s voice has doom’d my lord to death,
Because to him he would not yield his bride.
If, then, the cause of that decree offend thee,
Treat with the King of England, and prevent it.

_Rol._ By Thor's right arm, the lady counsels well.
Renounce all thoughts of amity with Hinguar,
Who never will forgive thy friends or thee
The insult of this day. Unite with England,
And give the nations peace.

_Ron._ Thy daring soul
Soars to the highest pitch of bold emprise.
But will the Danish chiefs adopt thy counsel?

_Rol._ Make trial; prove their hearts; if they should faint,
Ruin abides them. They have gone too far,
With safety to recede. If he who draws
His sword against a king, away should throw
The useless scabbard, what ought be to do
Who draws his sword against a fell usurper,
Who dares not shew the mercy of a Prince?

_Ron._ That argument comes near. I'll urge it home;
And, when we have consulted and resolved,
The King of England then—

_Alf._ To their demands
Will cordially agree. A common cause,
In time of danger, leads to sure accord.

[Exeunt Ronex and Rollo.

Manent Alfred and Ethelswida.

Alf. My love, look up; and, with a face of joy,
Welcome the dawn of hope.

Eth. Used to despair,
Like one in darkness long immured, as yet
I relish not the light.

Alf. Soon shalt thou see
The rock of danger prove the rock of refuge,
And from the foe we dreaded safety come.

Eth. Still I suspect the faith of Danish friends;
But, most of all, my soul distrusts the Queen,
That furious woman, who puts off the sex,
And, in her rage, against her husband arms.

Alf. Let us of what she is avail ourselves;
And, o'er the bridge she builds, the torrent cross,
Which roars unfordable.

Eth. Before she came,
Of the approaching night, big with event,
Thou wast about to speak. Fain would I hear
Of aught that's good, and not derived from Ronex.
Alf: This hour,—for now the shades of night descend,—
A chosen band, by valiant Edwin led,
Draw near the Danish camp; and, in the wood,
My orders wait. If noble Surrey lives,
Deeds will be done to-night.

Eth. And Hinguar too,
He will not slumber.—See, the Dane returns!

Enter Rollo.

Rollo. The Queen of Denmark, and the chiefs in council,
Thy presence wait, to fix their last resolve.

Alf: What'er on me depends, they may command. [Exeunt Alfred and Rollo.

Manet Ethelswida.

Is the defect peculiar to myself?
Or is it incident to womankind,
By sudden strong impressions to be sway'd?
The image of this dreadful Ronex haunts me,
And, like a ghost, excites inhuman fears.
When I was toss'd upon a sea of peril,
In which my foot could reach no ground of hope,
I swam with courage on the stormy waves;
In shallower water now, fearful I wade,
And reel at every surge. She gazed on Alfred;
Avow’d her admiration of his form——

Enter Edda.

Edda. Lady, I bring alarming news.
Eth. To whom?
Edda. To thee. When thou hast heard my tidings, judge.
Among the Danish captains, one there is,
To me by blood and friendship strictly join’d:
He told me, that the chiefs at last agreed
To join with England, upon this condition,
That English Alfred weds the Danish Queen.

Eth. I saw it in her eyes; foretold my fate.—
Should he refuse, what then?
Edda. In that event,
They mean to treat with Hinguar, and restore
To him his captives; but their hope is high,
That Alfred will consent.

Eth. Not whilst I live.—
But will the Danes permit a woman’s life
To stand a wall between them and their purpose?
The rage of Ronex, like a swelling wave,
Over that slender mound will burst amain:
Woman to woman is the fellest foe.

_Edda._ And such a woman! Search from end to end
The world, all nations and religions try,
There is not to be found a parallel
To this unprincipled, unbridled Ronex;
The passion of the moment is the god
She always serves.

_Eth._ Alas! what shall I do,
Who in the level of her fury stand?

_Edda._ Ronex, thy deadly foe, is also mine.
Ere now, beneath her hatred I had fall’n,
But for my powerful friend.

_Eth._ Thy friend!—Is he
High in command?

_Edda._ To Bothnic Rollo next.
Many and brave the warriors he commands:
Behind thy tent, the passage to the plain
This night he guards.

_Eth._ My hopes revive again.
Should I escape, or if perchance I perish,
No more my destiny entangles Alfred.
For me the eagle left his airy way,
And, stooping in my track, his freedom lost.—
Edda, if pity of my lost estate
Can move a woman's heart, or vast reward
Induce thy soul to do an act humane,
Persuade thy friend.

Edda. To what?

Eth. To let me pass.

Edda. Then, whither wilt thou go?

Eth. If I can gain
The shelter of the neighbouring wood, I'm safe;
But any place I hold more safe than this.
Wilt thou assist me?

Edda. I embrace thy fate.

Through the dark night, and through surrounding arms,
I shall attend thee hence, if I can win
My friend to guide our steps. Forthwith, I'll try.

Please to thy tent repair.

Eth. I wrong'd thee once,
And thou at last hast proved thyself my friend.
With perfect trust, my soul on thee relies.
May angels prompt thy tongue! [Exit.
Manet Edda.

No art of mine;
The dread of Ronex, working on her mind,
Conjured each spectre up I wish'd to raise.
I'll guide her steps committed to my care,
And lead her safe to Hinguar's longing arms.

[ Exit. ]
ACT V.

SCENE,—The Tents.—At a distance Mountains and Trees; the Moon in Crescent, and the Stage darkened.

Enter Ethelswida.

Eth. Had she not fail’d, ere this she had return’d.
Unbraced by vain suspense and expectation,
My spirit flags, and, like a racer tired,
Swerves in the course. I am not what I was.—
Hark to that hollow sound! Is it the hum
Of voices roll’d together in the wind?
Or roars the blast of autumn through the woods?
Alas! I was not wont to fear the night,
When, wand’ring on the pleasant banks of Trent
By moon-light, oft I traced the glittering stream,
And mused on Alfred. Peaceful were the sounds,
And to my temper tuned, which then I heard.
My steps, light as they were, amongst the leaves,
From her high roost the fluttering stock-dove

Or startled from his lair the bounding stag.
Begirt with armies now, hemm'd round with spears,
I fear at every step to rouse a foe.—
Through the dim shades behold a human form.
"Tis Edda.—Ah! what tidings?

Enter Edda.

Edda. Good—and bad.

Eth. Of Alfred, what?

Edda. Enraged at his refusal
To wed their willing Queen, the Danish chiefs
His sword demanded, and to Rollo gave
Charge of his person. Still they sit in council,
New courses to devise.

Eth. Would I were hence,
Before those dreadful counsellors determine!—
What says thy friend?

Edd. He answers for thy safety,
If firm thy purpose be, this night to fly.

Eth. Blest be thy tongue!

Edda. What else remains to say
Or do, the cover of the tent will hide.
Fth. Yet, ere I plunge into the stream of fate,

[Kneels.

Angels and saints, who once yourselves were hu-
man,
Now perfect spirits, and, with seraphs mix’d,
Administer to heaven’s eternal King,
O hear my suppliant voice! and to the throne
Where sovereign mercy sits, prefer the prayer
Of one in deep distress, who, in the hour
Of her prosperity, never forgot
To bow before your shrines! Gracious, descend!
Through darkness, night, and death, my footsteps
guide!

But, if I’m doom’d in the rough path to fall,
O, guard the King of England from the rage
Of cruel foes—preserve the life of Alfred!

[Exit to the tent.

Enter Rollo, with two Danish Soldiers.

Rollo. It is the Queen’s command.

1 Sol. The warrant’s good.
The Queen commands our swords.

2 Sol. Yes, to kill men,
Arm’d and resisting; that’s a soldier’s task.
To kill a helpless woman likes me not.
Rollo. If you demand!—

[First Soldier speaks aside to the second; then turns to Rollo.

1 Sol. My lord, we are resolved.

Rollo. I know you resolute and secret both;
Selected you as worthy of reward,
Besitting such a service.

1 Sol. We'll perform it.

Rollo. The deed, when done, must never be avow'd;
But to the chance of this unruly night
Solely imputed.

1 Sol. Silent is the grave!—
Whoever sees us dies.

2 Sol. Look there, my lord,

[Ethelswida and Edda in the background.
Who may they be, who yonder steal along,
Timid their step and mien?

Rollo. Forthwith pursue.
She in the azure mantle is the Princess;
Of her make sure. [Exeunt the Danes.

Manet Rollo.

Not without much regret
Did I consent to Ethelswida’s death.
My soul was loth to hurt the lovely maid;
Loth to put out the radiant star of beauty,
Ere half her course was run. Necessity
Imposed this deed on my reluctant mind;
For, though the star was bright, she beam'd de-
struction,
And, like a comet, from her tresses shook
Discord and war.

Enter Ronex.

Ron. Are my commands obey'd?

Rollo. Just as my soldiers were about to enter
And execute their orders, from the tent,
With silent steps, she stole: they saw, pursued,
And have ere now o'ertaken.

Ron. Speed their swords!—
My fortune, now, is on the anvil placed,
For fate to strike, and fashion good or evil.
Hinguar comes on, dark as the night that shades him.

Rollo. He shall be met.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Hail, sovereignty of Denmark!
A foe, whom we expected not, draws near;
The host of England—-
Rollo. Ha!
Mess. Cover the plain.
Along their line I heard the voice of Erick;
That traitor leads them on.

Rollo. Caught in a net
Spread by the hand of chance!—

Ron. What shall we do?
What refuge now, in counsel or in arms?

Rollo. The King of England is our only refuge.
Make him thy friend, and he will quickly turn
On Hinguar's troops the torrent of his arms.

Ron. No choice is left.—Fly and bring Alfred
hither. [To the Officer.

Rollo. In pledge of amity, restore his sword.

Manent Rollo and Ronex.

Ron. Rollo, thou look'st as if thou didst repent
What we have done. My soul's a constant stream,
Which knows no changeful ebb.

Rollo. If Alfred should,
Desire to see that Ethelswida's safe—

Ron. I'll find an answer fit.—He comes! Be-
hold, him.
O'er his fix'd eye his frowning brows project;
His mind is high wound up.
Enter Alfred.

Rollo. Now, King of England,
Let no resentment of the past provoke
Thy soul to judge with passion of the present.
Hinguar, thy mortal foe, comes on, resolved
His lovely prize by valour to regain.
Opposed to him we stand, equal in arms,
But from their hill the English host descend,
To turn the scale of combat. Dost thou wish
The tyrant to prevail?

Alf. Answer direct
Thy question needs not. Hinguar is my foe.
Grant me those equal terms I ask'd at first,
And to your arms I join the force of England.

Ron. Thy terms are more agreeable to Ronex
Than those the policy of Denmark named.
By Frea, eldest goddess of the sky,
The ancient arbiter of human things,
I swear to the performance.

Alf. In that tent,
If Ethelswida rests, I wish to see her.

Ron. Far from this spot, where Hinguar points
his march,
The Princess to a safer place is moved,
Near my pavilion.

*Alf.* Ha!

---

*Enter Messenger.*

*Mess.* A fierce attack
Is on the right begun.

*Rollo.* The troops of England!—
If Alfred gives his aid, it must be now.
This officer will on thy steps attend,
And to the Danish chiefs announce thy purpose:
That is the way direct. Along this path
I go to combat Hinguar. [Exit Rollo.

*Alf.* Queen of Denmark,
To the afflicted captive comfort give:
She is the bond and cement of our friendship.

[Exit Alfred.

*Ron.* Then we shall ne'er unite. He does suspect me.
He rivetted on mine his jealous eyes.
There is no proof, and I will brave suspicion
With loud appeals, with vows and protestations
Of purest innocence.—That shout is near;
It comes against the wind: My foes prevail.—
Nearer and nearer still!—'Tis time to fly.
On one side Alfred, on the other Hinguar,
Here let them meet, and fight for Ethelswida.

[Exit.

Hing. [Behind the scenes.] Pursue along the vale; the leaders kill,
But spare the common men.

Enter Hinguar, with Soldiers.

Hing. This is the place.
Now I have reach'd the port of my desire;
The prize of love and conquest anchors here.
Where are the guards? where she whom they should guard?
What does this awful solitude portend?

Enter, from the opposite side of the Stage, the two Assassins, with the robe of Ethelswida stained with blood.

1 Assass. Twice have we changed our course.
To keep this robe
We lose ourselves.

Hing. By Hela's sulphur'd fires,
The robe of Ethelswida stain'd with blood!
Infernal villains!—

2 Assass. Caught, undone,—the King!
1 Assas. [Throwing down the mantle.] We are but instruments to work the will of our superiors.

Hing. Have you kill'd the lady who own'd this garment?

1 Assas. To deny were vain.

The Queen commanded us, and we obey'd.

2 Assas. We know our fate, and we will die like men.

Hing. Long shall you live in pain, and wish for death.

The ragged saw shall tear your tortured limbs;
And when your carcases are all one wound,
Fasten'd on iron hooks you shall be hung,
And die by inches.—Bear them to their fate.

[Exeunt, guarded.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. My lord, the troops which on the left advanced,
Attack'd, and soon subdued the guards of Ronex;
But, charg'd by English Alfred, in their turn
Before him fly.

Hing. My trumpets, sound a charge,
And call the straggling soldiers to my spear.
The charm that drew me to this spot, will bring
The Saxon hither.—Odin, brace my arm,
And let my sword, like thine own thunder, fall
On Alfred’s crest! [The trumpets sound.

Enter Alfred, with English Soldiers, and the
Officer of the first Act.

Alf. Behold the man—

Hing. Whose steel
Shall pierce thy heart.

Alf. Thy menaces, barbarian,
Though fierce and rude, become thee better now
Than when I heard them last.

Hing. I threaten’d then,
And now I will perform.

Alf. My soldiers brave,
Restrain your ardour.

[To Hinguar.] Spare thy people, King!
Let us alone in mortal strife engage,
Whilst every Dane and Saxon shall look on,
And by the fortune of their prince abide.

Hing. ’Tis what I wish’d; but did not think
thou durst
Come from the crowd, and, single, meet my arm.
Alf: In more than this mistaken: But, by deeds, Not words, I will convince thee.

Hing: Prompt thy tongue,
But slow thy hand. Come on! Odin for Denmark!

[Draws.

Alf: For England and her King, the living God!

[They fight, Hinguar falls.

Now, where is Hinguar's pride?

Hing: Here in his heart,
Unconquer'd still, the pride of Hinguar dwells.
To die in battle is a warrior's death.
The hero fights and falls, but never yields.
Hinguar has fought. From sea to sea his sword
'Through England blazed, a meteor dropping blood;
The wolf and eagle follow'd to the feast,
Tracking its course. 'The warrior, old in arms,
The youthful chief, by many a virgin loved,
Lay reeking in their gore.

Alf: As thou dost now.
The virgin's and the widow's curse have found thee. And laid in dust the troubler of the land.

Hing: In dust thy hopes are laid. Behold that robe!

Belike thou know'st it.

Alf: Ethelswida's robe
With bloody gashes torn!—More fell than bears
That starve on hill of snow, how durst thou lift
Thy cursed hand?

Hing. No. Ethelswida fell
By Ronex; yet, although I kill’d her not,
Her death delights me. Saxon, I rejoice
At thy calamity. Happy my lot
 Compared with thine. To the Valkyrian maids
I go, to Odin and the hall of joy.
Thou, of thy love bereft, shalt waste thy days
In lamentation, like the wretch who pines
By Hela’s lake, and drinks the poison’d stream
Pour’d from the jaws of snakes. I laugh at thee,
And, like my fathers, die. [Dies.

Alf. His dying voice
Of me prophetic spake. O, Ethelswida!
And Surrey, too, in Alfred’s cause has fall’n!
Now on the top, the summit of affliction,
Like a tree stript of bark and branch, I stand,
Baré on all sides, and naked to the storm. [F’ulls.

[Voice behind the Scenes.]
Where is the conquering King, my lord, my hus-
band?
Make way, and let me rush—where is my Alfred?
Etelswida enters and sees him. Edwin following.

Eth. Eternal powers! Is this the scene of joy?

[After a pause, looking at the robe.
I am the cause accurst of Alfred's death
And England's ruin. Bear me witness, heaven!—
But words are vain. Let those bewail their doom
Who live to suffer, and prolong their pain.
The gleam of hope, extinguish'd by despair,
Sharpens my sense of misery, and spreads
A deeper horror on my tortured mind.—
My sure, and now my only friend, come forth.

[Draws a dagger.

Spirit of Alfred, stay! [Alfred revives.

Alf. The shades of death
Still swim before my eyes. I heard the ghost
Of Etelswida call!

Eth. He lives, he lives!
My heart, surcharged, bursts with a flood of joy.

Alf. Her voice, her form; 'tis she, 'tis she herself!

My Ethelswida! [Runs into her arms.

Eth. Alfred! Gracious heaven,
For ever blest thy providence divine!
Alf. In error lost, upon the brink we stood
Of bottomless perdition. O, my love,
Most certain seem'd thy death.

Eth. I saw thee dead,
And raised my arm to join my lot to thine.

Alf. I heard the dagger fall. It was reserved
For thee, thou pride and glory of thy sex,
To give the noblest proof of love—and live.

Eth. E'er since the sad commencement of our
woes,
Deep on my heart engraved was the resolve,
Not to survive thee in the storms of fortune;
That anchor held like fate.

Alf. Whence came that sign,
Which friends and foes deceived?

Eth. True was the sign
Of death. The wearer of my garment died,
For me mistaken.

Alf. 'Twas a wounded mind
Which laid me low. Oppress'd with grief I sunk.
Edwin, my friend——

Devon. Complete is Edwin's joy,
'To see his Prince with love and glory crown'd.

Alf. The scene is ghastly, and with death de-
form'd.
In place more fitting, of our friends and foes,
According to desert, we will decree.
The nations now are one; with Hinguar died
The enmity of England and of Denmark.
My people with their monarch shall be blest,
While such a partner of my empire reigns.

_Eth._ Nor shall the story of the toils of Alfred
Sink to oblivion in the tide of time,
Or to posterity descend in vain.
From hence the people of the land he loved,
And future princes of that land, may learn,
Fearless to stem the torrent of disaster,
And ne'er of England, or themselves, despair.

[Execunt]
EPISODE.

BY MR GARRICK.

Our bards, of late, so tragic in their calling,
Have scarce preserved one heroine from falling:
Whether the dame be widow, maid, or wife,
She seldom from their hands escapes with life.
If this green cloth could speak, would it not tell,
Upon its well-worn nap how oft I fell?
To death, in various forms deliver'd up,
Steel kills me one night, and the next the cup.
The tragic process is as short as certain;
With this,*—or this,† I drop—then drops the curtain.
No saint can lead a better life than I,
For half is spent in studying how to die.
The learn'd dispute how tragedies should end;
O, happily, say some—Some death defend.
Mild critics wish good fortune to the good;
While others, hot-brain'd, roar for blood! blood! blood!
The fair, though nervous, tragic to the soul,
Delights in daggers, and the poison'd bowl.
"I would not give a black-pin for a play,
Unless in tenderness I melt away:
From pangs and death no lovers would I save,
They should be wretched, and despair and rave,
And ne'er together lie—but in the grave!"

* She makes the motion of stabbing.
† And here of drinking poison.
The brave rough soldier a soft heart discovers,
He swears and weeps at once, when dead the lovers,
As down his cheeks runs trickling nature's tide,
"Damn it—I wish those young ones had not died:"
Though from his eyes the drop of pity falls,
He fights like Caesar, when his country calls.
In spite of critic laws, our bard takes part,
And joins in concert with the soldier's heart.
O let your feelings with this party side,
For once forgive me that I have not died;
Too hard that fate, which kills a virgin bride.
THE

HISTORY

OF THE

REBELLION

IN THE YEAR 1745.
TO

THE KING.

SIR,

Your Majesty, at every crisis of a most eventful reign, has acted in such a manner, as to captivate the hearts of your people, who love a brave and steady Prince. It becomes not one whose praise may be thought partial, to celebrate the virtues of his Sovereign; for the first book I published was dedicated to your Majesty, then Prince of Wales; and when his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland presented my petition, for leave to dedicate this History
to your Majesty, the petition was granted, in terms that I shall be proud of as long as I live.

I am, with the most profound respect,

Sir,

YOUR MAJESTY'S

Most faithful subject,

And most obedient,

Humble servant,

JOHN HOME.
PREFACE.

History assumes various forms, and attains different degrees of excellence, from the importance of the subject, from those opportunities the Author has had to know the truth, and from the manner in which he relates the most interesting events of that period he hath chosen.

It is universally acknowledged, that the most complete instruction and entertainment are to be found in histories written by those illustrious persons, who have transmitted to posterity an account of the great actions which they themselves performed.

Small is the number of such historians; and at this day, Xenophon and Caesar seem to stand unrivalled and alone. Instructed by them and other ancient authors, men of learning, in modern times, are made acquainted with the military art and civil policy of Greece and Rome. But in the year 1745, when the Highlanders took arms against govern-
ment, the condition and manners of the Highlanders at home, in time of peace, with their arms, array, and alacrity in making war, were unknown in England, and the Low-country of Scotland, to a degree almost incredible. One author, Wishart,* Bishop of Edinburgh, (who had been the Marquis of Montrose's chaplain, and an eye-witness of all his battles,) published a History of the Wars of Montrose, who gained so many victories, with a body of men consisting almost entirely of Highlanders: but very few people in the Low-country of Scotland had read the Bishop's History of Montrose; and when the rebel army was marching from the North to Edinburgh, though every body talked of nothing but the Highlanders, no mortal ever mentioned Wishart's name.

In the preface to a History of the Rebellion, it seems proper, for more than one reason, to take some farther notice of the Revolution, which is but slightly mentioned in the History itself.

That memorable event, which took place in England and Scotland at the same time, forms a new

* Soon after the Restoration, episcopacy was established in Scotland, and Wishart made Bishop of Edinburgh.
epoch in the constitution of both nations; for the great precedent of deposing one King, and soon after transferring the crown to another family, the nearest Protestant heir, but more remote than several Roman Catholic families, gave such an ascendant to popular principles, as puts the nature of the constitution beyond all controversy.

From the accession of James I. to the Revolution, (one short interval excepted,)* there had been a continued struggle between the King and the Parliament; during which, foreign affairs were either altogether neglected, or treated in such a manner as greatly lessened that weight which Britain ought to have in the scale of Europe. But the Revolution put a period to the hereditary succession of the Stuart line; and the settlement of the crown upon the Prince and Princess of Orange, was accompanied with a Declaration of Rights, where all the points disputed between the King and the Parliament were finally determined, and the powers of the royal prerogative were more narrowly circumscribed, and more accurately defined,

* The despotism of Cromwell, which was called the Commonwealth.
than they had been in any former period of the government.

To the Revolution it is owing, that the people of this island have ever since enjoyed the most perfect system of liberty that ever was known amongst mankind. To the Revolution it is owing, that at this moment, in the year 1801, Great Britain stands the bulwark of Europe; whilst her fleets and armies, in regions the most remote, defend the cause of Government and Order, against Anarchy and Confusion.

The greater part of this account of the Revolution is given in the very words of Mr Hume, in his History of England; for no words can express more perfectly the advantage of the Revolution settlement. The same author, in the last volume of his History, has given the speech which James II. made to the Privy Council, assembled at his brother’s death; in which he professed his resolution to maintain the established government, both in church and state; saying, that he knew the laws of England were sufficient to make him as great a monarch as he wished to be, and he was determined not to depart from them; that as he had heretofore ventured his life in defence of this na-
tion, he would still go as far as any man in maintaining all its just rights and privileges.

This speech was received with great applause, not only by the council, but by the nation; and addresses full of loyalty and zeal came from every quarter of his dominions; so that the whole nation seemed disposed of themselves to resign their liberties, had not James, at the same time, made an attempt upon their religion; for, notwithstanding that regard which he professed for the established government in church and state, either he was not sincere in his professions, or he had entertained such a lofty idea of his prerogative, as left his subjects little or no right to liberty, but what was dependent on his will and pleasure. Besides this account, given by Mr Hume, of the behaviour of James at his accession, and of the disposition of his people at that time, there is a manuscript in Lord Lonsdale's possession, written by one of his ancestors, John Lord Lonsdale, * who says expressly, that when James succeeded his

* John Lord Lonsdale was first Lord of the Treasury in the reign of King William.
brother, Charles II., the current of public favour ran so strong for the Court, that if the King had desired only to make himself absolute, he would not have met with much opposition; but James took the bull by the horns, and without the least regard to the laws, endeavoured to introduce Popery, which his subjects abhorred.