KING ARTHUR
OR
THE BRITISH WORTHY

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Conon, Aurelius, Albanačt.

Con. Then this is the deciding Day, to fix
Great Britain’s Scepter in great Arthur’s Hand.

Aur. Or put it in the bold Invaders gripe.

Arthur and Oswald, and their different Fates,
Are weighing now within the Scales of Heaven.

Con. In Ten fet Battels have we driven back
These Heathen Saxons, and regain’d our Earth.
As Earth recovers from an Ebbing Tide,
Her half-drown’d Face, and lifts it o’er the Waves.

From Severn’s Banks, even to this Barren-Down,
Our foremoft Men have preft their fainty Rear,
And not one Saxon Face has been beheld;
But all their Backs, and Shoulders have been stuck
KING ARTHUR

With foul dishoneste Wounds: Now here, indeed,
Because they have no further Ground they stand.
Aur. Well have we chose a Happy day, for Fight;
For every Man, in course of time, has found
Some days are lucky, some unfortunate.
Alb. But why this day more lucky than the rest?
Con. Because this day
Is Sacred to the Patron of our Isle;
A Chriftian, and a Soulender's Annual Feast.
Alb. Oh, now I understand you, This is St. George of Cappadocia's Day.
Well, it may be so, but Faith I was Ignorant; we Souliders
Seldom examine the Rubrick; and now and then a Saint may
Happen to slip by us; But if he be a Gentleman Saint, he will
Forgive us.
Con. Ofwald, undoubtedly, will Fight it bravely.
Aur. And it behoves him well, 'tis his last Stake. [To Alb.
But what manner of Man is this Ofwald?
Have ye ever seen him?
ACT I. SCENE I

Alb. Ne’er but once; and that was to my Cost too; I follow’d him too clofe; And to say Truth, somewhat Uncivilly, upon a Rout; But he turn’d upon me, as quick and as round, as a chaf’d Boar; And gave me two Licks acros’t the Face, to put me In mind of my Chriftianity.

Con. I know him well; he’s free and open Hearted.

Aur. His Countries Character: That Speaks a German.

Con. Revengeful, rugged, violently brave; and once resolv’d, is never to be mov’d.

Alb. Yes, he’s a valiant Dog, Pox on him.

Con. This was the Character he then maintain’d,

When in my Court he fought my Daughter’s Love:

My Fair, Blind, Emmeline.

Alb. I cannot blame him for Courting the Heirefs of Cornwall:

All Heirefs are Beautiful; and as Blind as she is, he would have had No Blind Bargain of her.

Aur. For that Defeat in Love, he rais’d this War.
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KING ARTHUR

For Royal Arthur Reign'd within her Heart,
E'er Ofwald mov'd his Sute.

Con. Ay, now Aurelius, you have Nam'd
a Man;
One, whom besides the Homage that I owe,
As Cornwal's Duke, to his Imperial Crown,
I wou'd have chofen out, from all Mankind,
To be my Soveraign Lord.

Aur. His worth divides him from the croud
of Kings;
So Born, without Desert to be so Born;
Men, set aloft, to be the Scurge of Heaven;
And with long Arms, to lash the Under-World.

Con. Arthur is all that's Excellent in Ofwald;
And void of all his Faults: In Battel brave;
But still Serene in all the Stormy War,
Like Heaven above the Clouds; and after
Fight,
As Merciful and Kind, to vanquisht Foes,
As a forgiving God; but fee, he's here,
And Praise is Dumb before him.

Enter King Arthur, Reading a Letter,
with Attendants.

Arthur } Go on, Auspicious Prince, the
Reading. } Stars are kind:
Unfold thy Banners to the willing Wind;
While I, with Airy Legions, help thy Arms:
ACT I. SCENE I

Confronting Art with Art, and Charms with Charms.
So Merlin writes; nor can we doubt
th’ event,
[To Con.
With Heav’n and you to Friends; Oh Noble Conon,
You taught my tender Hands the Trade of War;
And now again you Helm your Hoary Head,
And under double weight of Age and Arms,
Assert your Country’s Freedom, and my Crown.
Con. No more, my Son.
Arth. Moft happy in that Name!
Your Emmeline, to Oswald’s Vows refus’d,
You made my plighted Bride:
Your Charming Daughter, who like Love,
Born Blind,
Un-aiming hits, with sureft Archery,
And Innocently kills.
Con. Remember, Son,
You are a General, other Wars require you.
For see the Saxon Grofs begins to move.
Arth. Their Infantry Embattel’d, square and close,
March firmly on, to fill the middle space:
Cover’d by their advancing Cavalry.
By Heav’n, ’tis Beauteous Horreur:
The Noble Oswald has provok’d my Envy.
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KING ARTHUR

Enter Emmeline, led by Matilda.

Ha! Now my Beauteous Emmeline appears, Anew, but Oh, a softer Flame, inspires me: Even Rage and Vengeance, slumber at her fight.

Con. Haste your Farewel; I'll chear my Troops, and wait ye. [Exit Conon.

Em. Oh Father, Father, I am sure you're here; Because I see your Voice.

Arth. No, thou mistak'ft thy hearing for thy fight;
He's gone, my Emmeline;
And I but stay to gaze on those fair Eyes, Which cannot view the Conquest they have made.

Oh Star-like Night, dark only to thy self, But full of Glory, as those Lamps of Heav'n That see not when they shine.

Em. What is this Heav'n, and Stars, and Night, and Day, To which you thus compare my Eyes and me?
I understand you, when you say you love: For, when my Father clasps my Hand in his, That's cold, and I can feel it hard and wrinckl'd;
But when you grasp it, then I sigh and pant, And something smarts, and tickles at my Heart.
ACT I. SCENE I

Arth. Oh Artless Love! where the Soul
moves the Tongue,
And only Nature speaks what Nature thinks!
Had she but Eyes!
Em. Jut now you said I had:
I see 'em, I have two.
Arth. But neither see.
Em. I'm sure they hear you then:
What can your Eyes do more?
[Arth. They view your Beauties.
Em. Do not I see You have a Face like mine,
Two Hands, and two round, pretty, rising
Breasts,
That heave like mine.
Arth. But you describe a Woman.
Nor is it sight, but touching with your Hands.
Em. Then 'tis my Hand that sees, and that's all one:
For is not seeing, touching with your Eyes?
Arth. No, for I see at distance, where I
touch not.
Em. If you can see so far, and yet not touch,
I fear you see my Naked Legs and Feet
Quite through my Cloaths; pray do not see so well.
Arth. Fear not, sweet Innocence;
I view the lovely Features of your Face;
Your Lips Carnation, your dark shaded
Eye-brows,
KING ARTHUR

Black Eyes, and Snow-white Forehead; all
the Colours
That make your Beauty, and produce my Love.

Em. Nay, then, you do not love on equal
terms:
I love you dearly, without all these helps:
I cannot see your Lips Carnation,
Your shaded Eye-brows, nor your Milk-
white Eyes.

Arth. You still mistake.

Em. Indeed I thought you had a Nose
and Eyes,
And such a Face as mine; have not Men Faces?

Arth. Oh, none like yours, so excellently fair.

Em. Then wou’d I had no Face; for I
wou’d be
Just such a one as you.

Arth. Alas, ’tis vain to instruct your
Innocence,
You have no Notion of Light or Colours.

[Trumpet sounds within.

Em. Why, is not that a Trumpet?

Arth. Yes.

Em. I knew it.

And I can tell you how the sound on’t looks.
It looks as if it had an angry fighting Face.

Arth. ’Tis now indeed a sharp unpleasant
found,
Because it calls me hence, from her I love,
ACT I. SCENE I

To meet Ten thousand Foes.

Em. How does so many Men e’er come to meet?
This Devil Trumpet vexes ’em, and then
They feel about, for one anothers Faces;
And so they meet, and kill.

Arth. I’ll tell ye all, when we have gain’d the Field;
One kiss of your fair Hand, the pledge of Conquest,
And so a short farewell.

[Kisses her Hand, and Exit with Aurel. Alb. and Attendants.

Em. My Heart, and Vows, go with him to the Fight:
May every Foe be that, which they call blind,
And none of all their Swords have Eyes to find him.
But lead me nearer to the Trumpet’s Face;
For that brave Sound upholds my fainting Heart;
And while I hear, methinks I fight my part.
[Exit, led by Matilda.

Enter Ofwald and Ofmond.

The Scene represents a place of Heathen Worship;

Ofmo. ’Tis time to haften our mysterious Rites;
KING ARTHUR

Because your Army waits you.

[Ofwald making three Bows before the three Images.

Ofwa. Thor, Freya, Woden, all ye Saxon Powers,
Hear and revenge my Father Hengist's Death.
Ofmo. Father of Gods and Men, great Woden, hear.
Mount thy hot Courfer, drive amidst thy Foes;
Lift high thy thund’ring Arm, let every blow
Dash out a mis-believing Briton’s Brains.
Ofwa. Father of Gods and Men, great Woden hear;
Give Conquest to thy Saxon Race, and me.
Ofmo. Thor, Freya, Woden, hear, and spell your Saxons,
With Sacred Runick Rhimes, from Death in Battel.
Edge their bright Swords, and blunt the Britons Darts.
No more, Great Prince, for see my trusty Fiend,
Who all the Night has wing’d the dusky Air.
[Grimbald, a fierce earthy Spirit arise.

What News, my Grimbald?

Grim. I have plaid my part;
For I have Steel’d the Fools that are to die;
Six Fools, fo prodigal of Life and Soul,
That, for their Country, they devote their Lives