

# The Dynasts - Part One

Thomas Hardy

# Contents

CONTENTS . . . . .	5
PREFACE . . . . .	6
PART FIRST . . . . .	9
CHARACTERS . . . . .	9
II. PERSONS [The names in lower case are mute figures.] . . . . .	9
FORE SCENE . . . . .	12
ACT FIRST . . . . .	18
SCENE I . . . . .	18
SCENE II . . . . .	22
SCENE III . . . . .	25
SCENE IV . . . . .	36
SCENE V . . . . .	37
SCENE VI . . . . .	40
ACT SECOND . . . . .	45
SCENE I . . . . .	45
SCENE II . . . . .	48
SCENE III . . . . .	50
SCENE IV . . . . .	53
SCENE V . . . . .	55
ACT THIRD . . . . .	62
SCENE I . . . . .	62
SCENE II . . . . .	67
SCENE III . . . . .	68
ACT FOURTH . . . . .	68
SCENE I . . . . .	69
SCENE II . . . . .	73
SCENE III . . . . .	74
SCENE IV . . . . .	78
SCENE V . . . . .	79
SCENE VI . . . . .	82
ACT FIFTH . . . . .	85
SCENE I . . . . .	85
SCENE II . . . . .	88
SCENE III . . . . .	93
SCENE IV . . . . .	95

SCENE V . . . . .	102
SCENE VI . . . . .	106
SCENE VII . . . . .	107
I . . . . .	108
II . . . . .	109
III . . . . .	109
ACT SIXTH . . . . .	109
SCENE I . . . . .	109
SCENE II . . . . .	113
SCENE III . . . . .	115
SCENE IV . . . . .	119
SCENE V . . . . .	121
SCENE VI . . . . .	125
SCENE VII . . . . .	127
SCENE VIII . . . . .	131
PART SECOND . . . . .	135
II. PERSONS [The names in lower case are mute figures.] . . . . .	135
ACT FIRST . . . . .	139
SCENE I . . . . .	139
SCENE II . . . . .	144
I . . . . .	145
II . . . . .	145
I . . . . .	145
I . . . . .	145
I . . . . .	145
II . . . . .	145
I . . . . .	146
II . . . . .	146
I . . . . .	146
II . . . . .	146
II . . . . .	146
I . . . . .	146
II . . . . .	146
II . . . . .	147
I . . . . .	147
II . . . . .	147
II . . . . .	147
I . . . . .	148
II . . . . .	148
I . . . . .	148
II . . . . .	149
SCENE III . . . . .	149

SCENE IV . . . . .	152
SCENE V . . . . .	155
SCENE VI . . . . .	158
SCENE VII . . . . .	161
SCENE VIII . . . . .	164

Hardy's epic drama of the war with Napoleon was published in three parts, nineteen acts and one hundred and thirty scenes in 1904, 1906 and 1908 respectively. Written in verse, the action is impossible to present on stage due to its complex battle-scenes, so the play is best described as a closet drama.

The Dynasts is extremely ambitious, some critics having likened it to Tolstoy's momentous War and Peace. Scenes of ordinary life are placed beside acts of major historical figures of the times, concentrating on their desire to found dynasties and preserve their power. Also, there are extensive descriptions of landscape and battle scenes that are characterised by shifts of visual perspective that anticipate cinematic techniques. The drama is notable for the tragic chorus of metaphysical figures that observe and comment on the events.

Hardy regarded the drama as his magnum opus and devoted much of his later life to its completion, but the work was treated harshly by critics and has yet to achieve the renown of his poetry and novels.

The Lower Bockhampton Schoolhouse, which was attended by a young Hardy  
AN EPIC-DRAMA OF THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON,  
IN THREE PARTS, NINETEEN ACTS, AND  
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SCENES

The Time covered by the Action being about ten Years

“And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars.”

## CONTENTS

- PART FIRST
- CHARACTERS
- ACT FIRST
- ACT SECOND
- ACT THIRD
- ACT FOURTH
- ACT FIFTH
- ACT SIXTH
- PART SECOND
- ACT FIRST

- ACT SECOND
- ACT THIRD
- ACT FOURTH
- ACT FIFTH
- ACT SIXTH
- PART THIRD
- ACT FIRST
- ACT SECOND
- ACT THIRD
- ACT FOURTH
- ACT FIFTH
- ACT SIXTH
- ACT SEVENTH
- For the detailed Table of Contents, [click here](#)

## **PREFACE**

The Spectacle here presented in the likeness of a Drama is concerned with the Great Historical Calamity, or Clash of Peoples, artificially brought about some hundred years ago.

The choice of such a subject was mainly due to three accidents of locality. It chanced that the writer was familiar with a part of England that lay within hail of the watering-place in which King George the Third had his favourite summer residence during the war with the first Napoleon, and where he was visited by ministers and others who bore the weight of English affairs on their more or less competent shoulders at that stressful time. Secondly, this district, being also near the coast which had echoed with rumours of invasion in their intensest form while the descent threatened, was formerly animated by memories and traditions of the desperate military preparations for that contingency. Thirdly, the same countryside happened to include the village which was the birthplace of Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar.

When, as the first published result of these accidents, *The Trumpet Major* was printed, more than twenty years ago, I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits

of plan, knowledge, and opportunity, to enter further into its events; a restriction that prevailed for many years. But the slight regard paid to English influence and action throughout the struggle by those Continental writers who had dealt imaginatively with Napoleon's career, seemed always to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re-embody the features of this influence in their true proportion; and accordingly, on a belated day about six years back, the following drama was outlined, to be taken up now and then at wide intervals ever since.

It may, I think, claim at least a tolerable fidelity to the facts of its date as they are given in ordinary records. Whenever any evidence of the words really spoken or written by the characters in their various situations was attainable, as close a paraphrase has been aimed at as was compatible with the form chosen. And in all cases outside the oral tradition, accessible scenery, and existing relics, my indebtedness for detail to the abundant pages of the historian, the biographer, and the journalist, English and Foreign, has been, of course, continuous.

It was thought proper to introduce, as supernatural spectators of the terrestrial action, certain impersonated abstractions, or Intelligences, called Spirits. They are intended to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them, in the words of Coleridge, "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith." The wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation, even in verse, and excluded the celestial machinery of, say, *Paradise Lost*, as peremptorily as that of the *Iliad* or the *Eddas*. And the abandonment of the masculine pronoun in allusions to the First or Fundamental Energy seemed a necessary and logical consequence of the long abandonment by thinkers of the anthropomorphic conception of the same.

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only, that of the Pities, approximates to "the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator idealized" of the Greek Chorus; it is impressionable and inconsistent in its views, which sway hither and thither as wrought on by events. Another group approximates to the passionless Insight of the Ages. The remainder are eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned. In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted Choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern expression of a modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes.

It may hardly be necessary to inform readers that in devising this chronicle-piece no attempt has been made to create that completely organic structure of action, and closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama

strictly self-contained. A panoramic show like the present is a series of historical "ordinates" [to use a term in geometry]: the subject is familiar to all; and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the junctions required to combine the scenes into an artistic unity. Should the mental spectator be unwilling or unable to do this, a historical presentment on an intermittent plan, in which the *dramatis personae* number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable.

In this assumption of a completion of the action by those to whom the drama is addressed, it is interesting, if unnecessary, to name an exemplar as old as Aeschylus, whose plays are, as Dr. Verrall reminds us, scenes from stories taken as known, and would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination.

Readers will readily discern, too, that *The Dynasts* is intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage. Some critics have averred that to declare a drama as being not for the stage is to make an announcement whose subject and predicate cancel each other. The question seems to be an unimportant matter of terminology. Compositions cast in this shape were, without doubt, originally written for the stage only, and as a consequence their nomenclature of "Act," "Scene," and the like, was drawn directly from the vehicle of representation. But in the course of time such a shape would reveal itself to be an eminently readable one; moreover, by dispensing with the theatre altogether, a freedom of treatment was attainable in this form that was denied where the material possibilities of stagery had to be rigorously remembered. With the careless mechanism of human speech, the technicalities of practical mumming were retained in these productions when they had ceased to be concerned with the stage at all.

To say, then, in the present case, that a writing in play-shape is not to be played, is merely another way of stating that such writing has been done in a form for which there chances to be no brief definition save one already in use for works that it superficially but not entirely resembles.

Whether mental performance alone may not eventually be the fate of all drama other than that of contemporary or frivolous life, is a kindred question not without interest. The mind naturally flies to the triumphs of the Hellenic and Elizabethan theatre in exhibiting scenes laid "far in the Unapparent," and asks why they should not be repeated. But the meditative world is older, more invidious, more nervous, more quizzical, than it once was, and being unhappily perplexed by—

Riddles of Death Thebes never knew,

may be less ready and less able than Hellas and old England were to look through the insistent, and often grotesque, substance at the thing signified.

In respect of such plays of poesy and dream a practicable compromise may conceivably result, taking the shape of a monotonic delivery of speeches, with dreamy conventional gestures, something in the manner traditionally maintained by the old Christmas mummers, the curiously hypnotizing impressiveness of whose automatic style—that of persons who spoke by no will of their own—may be remembered by all who ever experienced it. Gauzes or screens to blur outlines might still further shut



off the actual, as has, indeed, already been done in exceptional cases. But with this branch of the subject we are not concerned here.

T.H.

September 1903.

## **PART FIRST**

### **CHARACTERS**

#### **I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES**

THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS/CHORUS OF THE YEARS.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES/CHORUS OF THE PITIES.

SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC/CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS.

THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR/CHORUS OF RUMOURS.

THE SHADE OF THE EARTH.

SPIRIT-MESSENGERS.

RECORDING ANGELS.

## **II. PERSONS [The names in lower case are mute figures.]**

#### **MEN**

GEORGE THE THIRD.

The Duke of Cumberland

PITT.

FOX.

SHERIDAN.

WINDHAM.

WHITBREAD.

TIERNEY.

BATHURST AND FULLER.

Lord Chancellor Eldon.

EARL OF MALMESBURY.

LORD MULGRAVE.

ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER.

Lord Grenville.

Viscount Castlereagh.

Viscount Sidmouth.

ANOTHER NOBLE LORD.

ROSE.

Canning.

Perceval.

Grey.  
 Speaker Abbot.  
 TOMLINE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.  
 SIR WALTER FARQUHAR.  
 Count Munster.  
 Other Peers, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Members of Parliament,  
 and Persons of Quality.  
 .....  
 NELSON.  
 COLLINGWOOD.  
 HARDY.  
 SECRETARY SCOTT.  
 DR. BEATTY.  
 DR. MAGRATH.  
 DR. ALEXANDER SCOTT.  
 BURKE, PURSER.  
 Lieutenant Pasco.  
 ANOTHER LIEUTENANT.  
 POLLARD, A MIDSHIPMAN.  
 Captain Adair.  
 Lieutenants Ram and Whipple.  
 Other English Naval Officers.  
 Sergeant-Major Secker and Marines.  
 Staff and other Officers of the English Army.  
 A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS.  
 Regiments of the English Army and Hanoverian.  
 SAILORS AND BOATMEN.  
 A MILITIAMAN.  
 Naval Crews.  
 The Lord Mayor and Corporation of London.  
 A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION.  
 WILTSHIRE, A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN  
 A HORSEMAN.  
 TWO BEACON-WATCHERS.  
 ENGLISH CITIZENS AND BURGESSES.  
 COACH AND OTHER HIGHWAY PASSENGERS.  
 MESSENGERS, SERVANTS, AND RUSTICS.  
 NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.  
 DARU, NAPOLEON'S WAR SECRETARY.  
 LAURISTON, AIDE-DE-CAMP.  
 MONGE, A PHILOSOPHER.  
 BERTHIER.

MURAT, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF NAPOLEON.

SOULT.

NEY.

LANNES.

Bernadotte.

Marmont.

Dupont.

Oudinot.

Davout.

Vandamme.

Other French Marshals.

A SUB-OFFICER.

.....

VILLENEUVE, NAPOLEON'S ADMIRAL.

DECRES, MINISTER OF MARINE.

FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE.

LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.

LIEUTENANT FOURNIER.

Captain Lucas.

OTHER FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS AND PETTY OFFICERS.

Seamen of the French and Spanish Navies.

Regiments of the French Army.

COURIERS.

HERALDS.

Aides, Officials, Pages, etc.

ATTENDANTS.

French Citizens.

.....

CARDINAL CAPRARA.

Priests, Acolytes, and Choristers.

Italian Doctors and Presidents of Institutions.

Milanese Citizens.

.....

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS.

THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND.

Prince John of Lichtenstien.

PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG.

MACK, AUSTRIAN GENERAL.

JELLACHICH.

RIESCH.

WEIROOTHER.

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN GENERAL.

TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

.....

The Emperor Alexander.

PRINCE KUTUZOF, RUSSIAN FIELD-MARSHAL.

COUNT LANGERON.

COUNT BUXHOVDEN.

COUNT MILORADOVICH.

DOKHTOROF.

.....

Giulay, Gottesheim, Klenau, and Prschebiszewsky.

Regiments of the Austrian Army.

Regiments of the Russian Army.

WOMEN

Queen Charlotte.

English Princesses.

Ladies of the English Court.

LADY HESTER STANHOPE.

A LADY.

Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs. Damer, and other English Ladies.

.....

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.

Princesses and Ladies of Josephine's Court.

Seven Milanese Young Ladies.

.....

City- and Towns-women.

Country-women.

A MILITIAMAN'S WIFE.

A STREET-WOMAN.

Ship-women.

Servants.

## FORE SCENE

THE OVERWORLD

[Enter the Ancient Spirit and Chorus of the Years, the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities, the Shade of the Earth, the Spirits Sinister and Ironie with their Choruses, Rumours, Spirit-Messengers, and Recording Angels.]

SHADE OF THE EARTH

What of the Immanent Will and Its designs?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

It works unconsciously, as heretofore,

Eternal artistries in Circumstance,  
 Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic rote,  
 Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,  
 And not their consequence.  
 CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music]  
 Still thus? Still thus?  
 Ever unconscious!  
 An automatic sense  
 Unweeting why or whence?  
 Be, then, the inevitable, as of old,  
 Although that SO it be we dare not hold!  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Hold what ye list, fond believing Sprites,  
 You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss,  
 Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought,  
 Unchecks Its clock-like laws.  
 SPIRIT SINISTER [aside]  
 Good, as before.  
 My little engines, then, will still have play.  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 Why doth It so and so, and ever so,  
 This viewless, voiceless Turner of the Wheel?  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 As one sad story runs, It lends Its heed  
 To other worlds, being wearied out with this;  
 Wherefore Its mindlessness of earthly woes.  
 Some, too, have told at whiles that rightfully  
 Its warefulness, Its care, this planet lost  
 When in her early growth and crudity  
 By bad mad acts of severance men contrived,  
 Working such nescience by their own device.—  
 Yea, so it stands in certain chronicles,  
 Though not in mine.  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 Meet is it, none the less,  
 To bear in thought that though Its consciousness  
 May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed,  
 Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon?  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Nay. In the Foretime, even to the germ of Being,  
 Nothing appears of shape to indicate  
 That cognizance has marshalled things terrene,

Or will [such is my thinking] in my span.  
Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed,  
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,  
The Will has woven with an absent heed  
Since life first was; and ever will so weave.

#### SPIRIT SINISTER

Hence we've rare dramas going—more so since  
It wove Its web in the Ajaccian womb!

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Well, no more this on what no mind can mete.  
Our scope is but to register and watch  
By means of this great gift accorded us—  
The free trajection of our entities.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

On things terrene, then, I would say that though  
The human news wherewith the Rumours stirred us  
May please thy temper, Years, 'twere better far  
Such deeds were nulled, and this strange man's career  
Wound up, as making inharmonious jars  
In her creation whose meek wraith we know.  
The more that he, turned man of mere traditions,  
Now profits naught. For the large potencies  
Instilled into his idiosyncrasy—  
To throne fair Liberty in Privilege' room—  
Are taking taint, and sink to common plots  
For his own gain.

#### SHADE OF THE EARTH

And who, then, Cordial One,  
Wouldst substitute for this Intractable?

#### CHORUS OF THE EARTH

We would establish those of kindlier build,  
In fair Compassions skilled,  
Men of deep art in life-development;  
Watchers and warders of thy varied lands,  
Men surfeited of laying heavy hands,  
Upon the innocent,  
The mild, the fragile, the obscure content  
Among the myriads of thy family.  
Those, too, who love the true, the excellent,  
And make their daily moves a melody.

#### SHADE OF THE EARTH

They may come, will they. I am not averse.

Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade  
 Of her the Travailler, herself a thrall  
 To It; in all her labourings curbed and kinged!  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Shall such be mooted now? Already change  
 Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded here.  
 But old Laws operate yet; and phase and phase  
 Of men's dynastic and imperial moils  
 Shape on accustomed lines. Though, as for me,  
 I care not thy shape, or what they be.  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 You seem to have small sense of mercy, Sire?  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Mercy I view, not urge;—nor more than mark  
 What designate your titles Good and Ill.  
 Tis not in me to feel with, or against,  
 These flesh-hinged mannikins Its hand upwinds  
 To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws;  
 But only through my centuries to behold  
 Their aspects, and their movements, and their mould.  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 They are shapes that bleed, mere mannikins or no,  
 And each has parcel in the total Will.  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Which overrides them as a whole its parts  
 In other entities.  
 SPIRIT SINISTER [aside]  
 Limbs of Itself:  
 Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise?  
 I'll fear all men henceforward!  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 Go to. Let this terrestrial tragedy—  
 SPIRIT IRONIC  
 Nay, Comedy—  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 Let this earth-tragedy  
 Whereof we spake, afford a spectacle  
 Forthwith conned closelier than your custom is.—  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 How does it stand? [To a Recording Angel]  
 Open and chant the page  
 Thou'st lately writ, that sums these happenings,

In brief reminder of their instant points  
 Slighted by us amid our converse here.  
 RECORDING ANGEL [from a book, in recitative]  
 Now mellow-eyed Peace is made captive,  
 And Vengeance is chartered  
 To deal forth its dooms on the Peoples  
 With sword and with spear.  
 Men's musings are busy with forecasts  
 Of muster and battle,  
 And visions of shock and disaster  
 Rise red on the year.  
 The easternmost ruler sits wistful,  
 And tense he to midward;  
 The King to the west mans his borders  
 In front and in rear.  
 While one they eye, flushed from his crowning,  
 Ranks legions around him  
 To shake the enisled neighbour nation  
 And close her career!  
 SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS [aerial music]  
 O woven-winged squadrons of Toulon  
 And fellows of Rochefort,  
 Wait, wait for a wind, and draw westward  
 Ere Nelson be near!  
 For he reads not your force, or your freightage  
 Of warriors fell-handed,  
 Or when they will join for the onset,  
 Or whither they steer!  
 SEMICHORUS II  
 O Nelson, so zealous a watcher  
 Through months-long of cruising,  
 Thy foes may elide thee a moment,  
 Put forth, and get clear;  
 And rendezvous westerly straightway  
 With Spain's aiding navies,  
 And hasten to head violation  
 Of Albion's frontier!  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 Methinks too much assurance thrills your note  
 On secrets in my locker, gentle sprites;  
 But it may serve.—Our thought being now reflexed  
 To forces operant on this English isle,



Behoves it us to enter scene by scene,  
 And watch the spectacle of Europe's moves  
 In her embroil, as they were self-ordained  
 According to the naive and liberal creed  
 Of our great-hearted young Compassionates,  
 Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear,  
 As puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings.—  
 You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte  
 As he with other figures foots his reel,  
 Until he twitch him into his lonely grave:  
 Also regard the frail ones that his flings  
 Have made gyrate like animalcula  
 In tepid pools.—Hence to the precinct, then,  
 And count as framework to the stagery  
 Yon architraves of sunbeam-smitten cloud.—  
 So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be  
 No fugged by one Will, but function-free.  
 [The nether sky opens, and Europe is disclosed as a prone and  
 emaciated figure, the Alps shaping like a backbone, and the  
 branching mountain-chains like ribs, the peninsular plateau of  
 Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from  
 the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed  
 by the Ural mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean.  
 The point of view then sinks downwards through space, and draws  
 near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples,  
 distressed by events which they did not cause, are seen writhing,  
 crawling, heaving, and vibrating in their various cities and  
 nationalities.]  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to the Spirit of the Pities]  
 As key-scene to the whole, I first lay bare  
 The Will-webs of thy fearful questioning;  
 For know that of my antique privileges  
 This gift to visualize the Mode is one  
 [Though by exhaustive strain and effort only].  
 See, then, and learn, ere my power pass again.  
 [A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduring  
 men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one  
 organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and  
 vitalized matter included in the display.]  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 Amid this scene of bodies substantive  
 Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible,

Which bear men's forms on their innumerable coils,  
Twining and serpentine round and through.  
Also retracting threads like gossamers—  
Except in being irresistible—  
Which complicate with some, and balance all.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins,  
Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,  
That heave throughout the Earth's compositure.  
Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain  
Evolving always that it wots not of;  
A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere,  
And whose procedure may but be discerned  
By phantom eyes like ours; the while unguessed  
Of those it stirs, who [even as ye do] dream  
Their motions free, their orderings supreme;  
Each life apart from each, with power to mete  
Its own day's measures; balanced, self complete;  
Though they subsist but atoms of the One  
Labouring through all, divisible from none;  
But this no further now. Deem yet man's deeds self-done.  
GENERAL CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES [aerial music]  
We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,  
We'll traverse Space, as spirits can,  
Link pulses severed by leagues and years,  
Bring cradles into touch with biers;  
So that the far-off Consequence appear  
Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause.—  
The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was,  
Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought its laws,  
Which we as threads and streams discern,  
We may but muse on, never learn.  
[image not archived]

### ACT FIRST

[image not archived]

### SCENE I

ENGLAND. A RIDGE IN WESSEX

[The time is a fine day in March 1805. A highway crosses the

ridge, which is near the sea, and the south coast is seen  
bounding the landscape below, the open Channel extending beyond.]

SPIRITS OF THE YEARS

Hark now, and gather how the martial mood  
Stirs England's humblest hearts. Anon we'll trace  
Its heavings in the upper coteries there.

SPIRIT SINISTER

Ay; begin small, and so lead up to the greater. It is a sound  
dramatic principle. I always aim to follow it in my pestilences,  
fires, famines, and other comedies. And though, to be sure, I did  
not in my Lisbon earthquake, I did in my French Terror, and my St.  
Domingo burlesque.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

THY Lisbon earthquake, THY French Terror. Wait.  
Thinking thou will'st, thou dost but indicate.  
[A stage-coach enters, with passengers outside. Their voices  
after the foregoing sound small and commonplace, as from another  
medium.]

FIRST PASSENGER

There seems to be a deal of traffic over Ridgeway, even at this time  
o' year.

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. It is because the King and Court are coming down here later  
on. They wake up this part rarely!... See, now, how the Channel  
and coast open out like a chart. That patch of mist below us is the  
town we are bound for. There's the Isle of Slings beyond, like a  
floating snail. That wide bay on the right is where the "Abergavenny,"  
Captain John Wordsworth, was wrecked last month. One can see half  
across to France up here.

FIRST PASSENGER

Half across. And then another little half, and then all that's  
behind—the Corsican mischief!

SECOND PASSENGER

Yes. People who live hereabout—I am a native of these parts—feel  
the nearness of France more than they do inland.

FIRST PASSENGER

That's why we have seen so many of these marching regiments on the  
road. This year his grandest attempt upon us is to be made, I reckon.

SECOND PASSENGER

May we be ready!

FIRST PASSENGER

Well, we ought to be. We've had alarms enough, God knows.

[Some companies of infantry are seen ahead, and the coach presently overtakes them.]

SOLDIERS [singing as they walk]

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty;  
If he won't sail, lest the wind should blow,  
We shall have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty;  
If he be sea-sick, says "No, no!"  
We shall have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

[The soldiers draw aside, and the coach passes on.]

SECOND PASSENGER

Is there truth in it that Bonaparte wrote a letter to the King last month?

FIRST PASSENGER

Yes, sir. A letter in his own hand, in which he expected the King to reply to him in the same manner.

SOLDIERS [continuing, as they are left behind]

We be the King's men, hale and hearty,  
Marching to meet one Buonaparty;  
Never mind, mates; we'll be merry, though  
We may have marched for nothing, O!  
Right fol-lol!

THIRD PASSENGER

And was Boney's letter friendly?

FIRST PASSENGER

Certainly, sir. He requested peace with the King.

THIRD PASSENGER

And why shouldn't the King reply in the same manner?

FIRST PASSENGER

What! Encourage this man in an act of shameless presumption, and give him the pleasure of considering himself the equal of the King of England—whom he actually calls his brother!

THIRD PASSENGER

He must be taken for what he is, not for what he was; and if he calls King George his brother it doesn't speak badly for his friendliness.

FIRST PASSENGER

Whether or no, the King, rightly enough, did not reply in person, but through Lord Mulgrave our Foreign Minister, to the effect that

his Britannic Majesty cannot give a specific answer till he has communicated with the Continental powers.

THIRD PASSENGER

Both the manner and the matter of the reply are British; but a huge mistake.

FIRST PASSENGER

Sir, am I to deem you a friend of Bonaparte, a traitor to your country—

THIRD PASSENGER

Damn my wig, sir, if I'll be called a traitor by you or any Court sycophant at all at all!

[He unpacks a case of pistols.]

SECOND PASSENGER

Gentlemen forbear, forbear! Should such differences be suffered to arise on a spot where we may, in less than three months, be fighting for our very existence? This is foolish, I say. Heaven alone, who reads the secrets of this man's heart, can tell what his meaning and intent may be, and if his letter has been answered wisely or no.

[The coach is stopped to skid the wheel for the descent of the hill, and before it starts again a dusty horseman overtakes it.]

SEVERAL PASSENGERS

A London messenger! [To horseman] Any news, sir? We are from Bristol only.

HORSEMAN

Yes; much. We have declared war against Spain, an error giving vast delight to France. Bonaparte says he will date his next dispatches from London, and the landing of his army may be daily expected.

[Exit horseman.]

THIRD PASSENGER

Sir, I apologize. He's not to be trusted! War is his name, and aggression is with him!

[He repacks the pistols. A silence follows. The coach and passengers move downwards and disappear towards the coast.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Ill chanced it that the English monarch George  
Did not respond to the said Emperor!

SPIRIT SINISTER

I saw good sport therein, and paeon'd the Will  
To unimpel so stultifying a move!  
Which would have marred the European broil,  
And sheathed all swords, and silenced every gun

That riddles human flesh.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

O say no more;

If aught could gratify the Absolute

Twould verily be thy censure, not thy praise!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

The ruling was that we should witness things

And not dispute them. To the drama, then.

Emprizes over-Channel are the key

To this land's stir and ferment.—Thither we.

[Clouds gather over the scene, and slowly open elsewhere.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

PARIS. OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF MARINE

[ADMIRAL DECRES seated at a table. A knock without.]

DECRES

Come in! Good news, I hope!

[An attendant enters.]

ATTENDANT

A courier, sir.

DECRES

Show him in straightway.

[The attendant goes out.]

From the Emperor

As I expected!

COURIER

Sir, for your own hand

And yours alone.

DECRES

Thanks. Be in waiting near.

[The courier withdraws.]

DECRES reads:

"I am resolved that no wild dream of Ind,

And what we there might win; or of the West,

And bold re-conquest there of Surinam

And other Dutch retreats along those coasts,

Or British islands nigh, shall draw me now

From piercing into England through Boulogne

As lined in my first plan. If I do strike,

I strike effectively; to forge which feat

There's but one way—planting a mortal wound  
 In England's heart—the very English land—  
 Whose insolent and cynical reply  
 To my well-based complaint on breach of faith  
 Concerning Malta, as at Amiens pledged,  
 Has lighted up anew such flames of ire  
 As may involve the world.—Now to the case:  
 Our naval forces can be all assembled  
 Without the foe's foreknowledge or surmise,  
 By these rules following; to whose text I ask  
 Your gravest application; and, when conned,  
 That steadfastly you stand by word and word,  
 Making no question of one jot therein.  
 First, then, let Villeneuve wait a favouring wind”  
 For process westward swift to Martinique,  
 Coaxing the English after. Join him there  
 Gravina, Missiessy, and Ganteaume;  
 Which junction once effected all our keels—  
 While the pursuers linger in the West  
 At hopeless fault.—Having hoodwinked them thus,  
 Our boats skim over, disembark the army,  
 And in the twinkling of a patriot's eye  
 All London will be ours.  
 ”In strictest secrecy carve this to shape—  
 Let never an admiral or captain scent  
 Save Villeneuve and Ganteaume; and pen each charge  
 With your own quill. The surelier to outwit them  
 I start for Italy; and there, as 'twere  
 Engrossed in fetes and Coronation rites,  
 Abide till, at the need, I reach Boulogne,  
 And head the enterprize.—NAPOLEON.”

[DECRES reflects, and turns to write.]

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

He buckles to the work. First to Villeneuve,  
 His onetime companion and his boyhood's friend,  
 Now lingering at Toulon, he jots swift lines,  
 The duly to Ganteaume.—They are sealed forthwith,  
 And superscribed: "Break not till on the main."

[Boisterous singing is heard in the street.]

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I hear confused and simmering sounds without,  
 Like those which thrill the hives at evenfall

When swarming pends.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

They but proclaim the crowd,  
Which sings and shouts its hot enthusiasms  
For this dead-ripe design on England's shore,  
Till the persuasion of its own plump words,  
Acting upon mercurial temperaments,  
Makes hope as prophecy. "Our Emperor  
Will show himself [say they] in this exploit  
Unwavering, keen, and irresistible  
As is the lightning prong. Our vast flotillas  
Have been embodied as by sorcery;  
Soldiers made seamen, and the ports transformed  
To rocking cities casemented with guns.  
Against these valiants balance England's means:  
Raw merchant-fellows from the counting-house,  
Raw labourers from the fields, who thumb for arms  
Clumsy untempered pikes forged hurriedly,  
And cry them full-equipt. Their batteries,  
Their flying carriages, their catamarans,  
Shall profit not, and in one summer night  
We'll find us there!"

RECORDING ANGEL

And is this prophecy true?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Occasion will reveal.

SHADE OF EARTH

What boots it, Sire,  
To down this dynasty, set that one up,  
Goad panting peoples to the throes thereof,  
Make wither here my fruit, maintain it there,  
And hold me travelling through fineless years  
In vain and objectless monotony,  
When all such tedious conjuring could be shunned  
By uncreation? Howsoever wise  
The governance of these massed mortalities,  
A juster wisdom his who should have ruled  
They had not been.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Nay, something hidden urged  
The giving matter motion; and these coils  
Are, maybe, good as any.



SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But why any?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Sprite of Compassions, ask the Immanent!

I am but an accessory of Its works,

Whom the Ages render conscious; and at most

Figure as bounden witness of Its laws.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

How ask the aim of unrelaxing Will?

Tranced in Its purpose to unknowingness?

[If thy words, Ancient Phantom, token true.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Thou answerest well. But cease to ask of me.

Meanwhile the mime proceeds.—We turn herefrom,

Change our homuncules, and observe forthwith

How the High Influence sways the English realm,

And how the jacks lip out their reasonings there.

[The Cloud-curtain draws.]

[image not archived]

### SCENE III

LONDON. THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS

[A long chamber with a gallery on each side supported by thin columns having gilt Ionic capitals. Three round-headed windows are at the further end, above the Speaker's chair, which is backed by a huge pedimented structure in white and gilt, surmounted by the lion and the unicorn. The windows are uncurtained, one being open, through which some boughs are seen waving in the midnight gloom without. Wax candles, burnt low, wave and gutter in a brass chandelier which hangs from the middle of the ceiling, and in branches projecting from the galleries.

The House is sitting, the benches, which extend round to the Speaker's elbows, being closely packed, and the galleries likewise full. Among the members present on the Government side are PITT and other ministers with their supporters, including CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, LORD C. SOMERSET, ERSKINE, W. DUNDAS, HUSKISSON, ROSE, BEST, ELLIOT, DALLAS, and the general body of the party. On the opposite side are noticeable

FOX, SHERIDAN, WINDHAM, WHITBREAD, GREY, T. GRENVILLE, TIERNEY,

EARL TEMPLE, PONSONBY, G. AND H. WALPOLE, DUDLEY NORTH, and

TIMOTHY SHELLEY. Speaker ABBOT occupies the Chair.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

As prelude to the scene, as means to aid  
Our younger comrades in its construing,  
Pray spread your scripture, and rehearse in brief  
The reasonings here of late—to whose effects  
Words of to-night form sequence.

[The Recording Angels chant from their books, antiphonally, in a minor recitative.]

ANGEL I [aerial music]

Feeble-framed dull unresolve, unresourcefulness,  
Sat in the halls of the Kingdom's high Councillors,  
Whence the grey glooms of a ghost-eyed despondency  
Wanned as with winter the national mind.

ANGEL II

England stands forth to the sword of Napoleon  
Nakedly—not an ally in support of her;  
Men and munitions dispersed inexpediently;  
Projects of range and scope poorly defined.

ANGEL I

Once more doth Pitt deem the land crying loud to him.—  
Frail though and spent, and an-hungered for restfulness  
Once more responds he, dead fervours to energize,  
Aims to centre, slack efforts to bind.

ANGEL II

Ere the first fruit thereof grow audible,  
Holding as hapless his dream of good guardianship,  
Jestingly, earnestly, shouting it serviceless,  
Tardy, inept, and uncouthly designed.

ANGELS I AND II

So now, to-night, in slashing old sentences,  
Hear them speak,—gravely these, those with gay-heartedness,—  
Midst their admonishments little conceiving how  
Scarlet the scroll that the years will unwind!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [to the Spirit of the Years]

Let us put on and suffer for the nonce  
The feverish fleshings of Humanity,  
And join the pale debaters here convened.  
So may thy soul be won to sympathy  
By donning their poor mould.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll humour thee,

Though my unpassioned essence could not change  
Did I incarn in moulds of all mankind!

SPIRIT IRONIC

Tis enough to make every little dog in England run to mixen to  
hear this Pitt sung so strenuously! I'll be the third of the  
incarnate, on the chance of hearing the tune played the other way.

SPIRIT SINISTER

And I the fourth. There's sure to be something in my line toward,  
where politicians gathered together!

[The four Phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise  
of ordinary strangers.]

SHERIDAN [rising]

The Bill I would have leave to introduce  
Is framed, sir, to repeal last Session's Act,  
By party-scribes intituled a Provision  
For England's Proper Guard; but elsewhere known  
As Mr. Pitt's new Patent Parish Pill. [Laughter.]  
The ministerial countenances, I mark,  
Congeal to dazed surprise at my straight motion—  
Why, passes sane conjecture. It may be  
That, with a haughty and unwavering faith  
In their own battering-rams of argument,  
They deemed our buoyance whelmed, and sapped, and sunk  
To our hope's sheer bottom, whence a miracle  
Was all could friend and float us; or, maybe,  
They are amazed at our rude disrespect  
In making mockery of an English Law  
Sprung sacred from the King's own Premier's brain!  
—I hear them snort; but let them wince at will,  
My duty must be done; shall be done quickly  
By citing some few facts.  
An Act for our defence!  
It weakens, not defends; and oversea  
Swoln France's despot and his myrmidons  
This moment know it, and can scoff thereat.  
Our people know it too—those who can peer  
Behind the scenes of this poor painted show  
Called soldiering!—The Act has failed, must fail,  
As my right honourable friend well proved  
When speaking t'other night, whose silencing  
By his right honourable vis a vis  
Was of the genuine Governmental sort,

And like the catamarans their sapience shaped  
 All fizzle and no harm. [Laughter.] The Act, in brief,  
 Effects this much: that the whole force of England  
 Is strengthened by—eleven thousand men!  
 So sorted that the British infantry  
 Are now eight hundred less than heretofore!  
 In Ireland, where the glamouring influence  
 Of the right honourable gentleman  
 Prevails with magic might, ELEVEN men  
 Have been amassed. And in the Cinque-Port towns,  
 Where he is held in absolute veneration,  
 His method has so quickened martial fire  
 As to bring in—one man. O would that man  
 Might meet my sight! [Laughter.] A Hercules, no doubt,  
 A god-like emanation from this Act,  
 Who with his single arm will overthrow  
 All Buonaparte's legions ere their keels  
 Have scraped one pebble of our fortless shore!...  
 Such is my motion, sir, and such my mind.  
 [He sits down amid cheers. The candle-snuffers go round, and Pitt  
 rises. During the momentary pause before he speaks the House assumes  
 an attentive stillness, in which can be heard the rustling of the  
 trees without, a horn from an early coach, and the voice of the watch  
 crying the hour.]

PITT

Not one on this side but appreciates  
 Those mental gems and airy pleasantries  
 Flashed by the honourable gentleman,  
 Who shines in them by birthright. Each device  
 Of drollery he has laboured to outshape,  
 [Or treasured up from others who have shaped it,]  
 Displays that are the conjurings of the moment,  
 [Or mellowed and matured by sleeping on]—  
 Dry hoardings in his book of commonplace,  
 Stored without stint of toil through days and months—  
 He heaps into one mass, and light and fans  
 As fuel for his flaming eloquence,  
 Mouthed and maintained without a thought or care  
 If germane to the theme, or not at all.  
 Now vain indeed it were should I assay  
 To match him in such sort. For, sir, alas,  
 To use imagination as the ground

Of chronicle, take myth and merry tale  
 As texts for prophecy, is not my gift  
 Being but a person primed with simple fact,  
 Unprinked by jewelled art.—But to the thing.  
 The preparations of the enemy,  
 Doggedly bent to desolate our land,  
 Advance with a sustained activity.  
 They are seen, they are known, by you and by us all.  
 But they evince no clear-eyed tentative  
 In furtherance of the threat, whose coming off,  
 Ay, years may yet postpone; whereby the Act  
 Will far outstrip him, and the thousands called  
 Duly to join the ranks by its provisions,  
 In process sure, if slow, will ratch the lines  
 Of English regiments—seasoned, cool, resolved—  
 To glorious length and firm prepotency.  
 And why, then, should we dream of its repeal  
 Ere profiting by its advantages?  
 Must the House listen to such wilding words  
 As this proposal, at the very hour  
 When the Act's gearing finds its ordered grooves  
 And circles into full utility?  
 The motion of the honourable gentleman  
 Reminds me aptly of a publican  
 Who should, when malting, mixing, mashing's past,  
 Fermenting, barrelling, and spigoting,  
 Quick taste the brew, and shake his sapient head,  
 And cry in acid voice: The ale is new!  
 Brew old, you varlets; cast this slop away! [Cheers.]  
 But gravely, sir, I would conclude to-night,  
 And, as a serious man on serious things,  
 I now speak here... I pledge myself to this:  
 Unprecedented and magnificent  
 As were our strivings in the previous war,  
 Our efforts in the present shall transcend them,  
 As men will learn. Such efforts are not sized  
 By this light measuring-rule my critic here  
 Whips from his pocket like a clerk-o'-works!...  
 Tasking and toilsome war's details must be,  
 And toilsome, too, must be their criticism,—  
 Not in a moment's stroke extemporized.  
 The strange fatality that haunts the times

Wherein our lot is cast, has no example.  
 Times are they fraught with peril, trouble, gloom;  
 We have to mark their lourings, and to face them.  
 Sir, reading thus the full significance  
 Of these big days, large though my lackings be,  
 Can any hold of those who know my past  
 That I, of all men, slight our safeguarding?  
 No: by all honour no!—Were I convinced  
 That such could be the mind of members here,  
 My sorrowing thereat would doubly shade  
 The shade on England now! So I do trust  
 All in the House will take my tendered word,  
 And credit my deliverance here to-night,  
 That in this vital point of watch and ward  
 Against the threatenings from yonder coast  
 We stand prepared; and under Providence  
 Shall fend whatever hid or open stroke  
 A foe may deal.  
 [He sits down amid loud ministerial cheers, with symptoms of  
 great exhaustion.]

WINDHAM

The question that compels the House to-night  
 Is not of differences in wit and wit,  
 But if for England it be well or no  
 To null the new-fledged Act, as one inept  
 For setting up with speed and hot effect  
 The red machinery of desperate war.—  
 Whatever it may do, or not, it stands,  
 A statesman' raw experiment. If ill,  
 Shall more experiments and more be tried  
 In stress of jeopardy that stirs demand  
 For sureness of proceeding? Must this House  
 Exchange safe action based on practised lines  
 For yet more ventures into risks unknown  
 To gratify a quaint projector's whim,  
 While enemies hang grinning round our gates  
 To profit by mistake?  
 My friend who spoke  
 Found comedy in the matter. Comical  
 As it may be in parentage and feature,  
 Most grave and tragic in its consequence  
 This Act may prove. We are moving thoughtlessly,

We squander precious, brief, life-saving time  
On idle guess-games. Fail the measure must,  
Nay, failed it has already; and should rouse  
Resolve in its progenitor himself  
To move for its repeal! [Cheers.]

WHITBREAD

I rise but to subjoin a phrase or two  
To those of my right honourable friend.  
I, too, am one who reads the present pinch  
As passing all our risks heretofore.  
For why? Our bold and reckless enemy,  
Relaxing not his plans, has treasured time  
To mass his monstrous force on all the coigns  
From which our coast is close assailable.  
Ay, even afloat his concentrations work:  
Two vast united squadrons of his sail  
Move at this moment viewless on the seas.—  
Their whereabouts, untraced, unguessable,  
Will not be known to us till some black blow  
Be dealt by them in some undreamt-of quarter  
To knell our rule.

That we are reasonably enfenced therefrom  
By such an Act is but a madman's dream...  
A commonwealth so situate cries aloud  
For more, far mightier, measures! End an Act  
In Heaven's name, then, which only can obstruct  
The fabrication of more trusty tackle  
For building up an army! [Cheers.]

BATHURST

Sir, the point  
To any sober mind is bright as noon;  
Whether the Act should have befitting trial  
Or be blasphemed at sight. I firmly hold  
The latter loud iniquity.—One task  
Is theirs who would inter this corpse-cold Act—  
[So said]—to bring to birth a substitute!  
Sir, they have none; they have given no thought to one,  
And this their deeds incautiously disclose  
Their cloaked intention and most secret aim!  
With them the question is not how to frame  
A finer trick to trounce intrusive foes,  
But who shall be the future ministers

To whom such trick against intrusive foes,  
 Whatever it may prove, shall be entrusted!  
 They even ask the country gentlemen  
 To join them in this job. But, God be praised,  
 Those gentlemen are sound, and of repute;  
 Their names, their attainments, and their blood,  
 [Ironical Opposition cheers.]  
 Safeguard them from an onslaught on an Act  
 For ends so sinister and palpable! [Cheers and jeerings.]  
 FULLER  
 I disapprove of censures of the Act.—  
 All who would entertain such hostile thought  
 Would swear that black is white, that night is day.  
 No honest man will join a reckless crew  
 Who'd overthrow their country for their gain! [Laughter.]  
 TIERNEY  
 It is incumbent on me to declare  
 In the last speaker's face my censure, based  
 On grounds most clear and constitutional.—  
 An Act it is that studies to create  
 A standing army, large and permanent;  
 Which kind of force has ever been beheld  
 With jealous-eyed disfavour in this House.  
 It makes for sure oppression, binding men  
 To serve for less than service proves it worth  
 Conditioned by no hampering penalty.  
 For these and late-spoke reasons, then, I say,  
 Let not the Act deface the statute-book,  
 But blot it out forthwith. [Hear, hear.]  
 FOX [rising amid cheers]  
 At this late hour,  
 After the riddling fire the Act has drawn on't,  
 My words shall hold the House the briefest while.  
 Too obvious to the most unwilling mind  
 It grows that the existence of this law  
 Experience and reflection have condemned.  
 Professing to do much, it makes for nothing;  
 Not only so; while feeble in effect  
 It shows it vicious in its principle.  
 Engaging to raise men for the common weal  
 It sets a harmful and unequal tax  
 Capriciously on our communities.—



The annals of a century fail to show  
 More flagrant cases of oppressiveness  
 Than those this statute works to perpetrate,  
 Which [like all Bills this favoured statesman frames,  
 And clothes with tapestries of rhetoric  
 Disguising their real web of commonplace]  
 Though held as shaped for English bulwarking,  
 Breathes in its heart perversities of party,  
 And instincts toward oligarchic power,  
 Galling the many to relieve the few! [Cheers.]  
 Whatever breadth and sense of equity  
 Inform the methods of this minister,  
 Those mitigants nearly always trace their root  
 To measures that his predecessors wrought.  
 And ere his Government can dare assert  
 Superior claim to England's confidence,  
 They owe it to their honour and good name  
 To furnish better proof of such a claim  
 Than is revealed by the abortiveness  
 Of this thing called an Act for our Defence.  
 To the great gifts of its artificer  
 No member of this House is more disposed  
 To yield full recognition than am I.  
 No man has found more reason so to do  
 Through the long roll of disputatious years  
 Wherein we have stood opposed...  
 But if one single fact could counsel me  
 To entertain a doubt of those great gifts,  
 And cancel faith in his capacity,  
 That fact would be the vast imprudence shown  
 In staking recklessly repute like his  
 On such an Act as he has offered us—  
 So false in principle, so poor in fruit.  
 Sir, the achievements and effects thereof  
 Have furnished not one fragile argument  
 Which all the partiality of friendship  
 Can kindle to consider as the mark  
 Of a clear, vigorous, freedom-fostering mind!  
 [He sits down amid lengthy cheering from the Opposition.]  
 SHERIDAN  
 My summary shall be brief, and to the point.—  
 The said right honourable Prime Minister

Has thought it proper to declare my speech  
 The jesting of an irresponsible;—  
 Words from a person who has never read  
 The Act he claims him urgent to repeal.  
 Such quips and qizzings [as he reckons them]  
 He implicates as gathered from long hoards  
 Stored up with cruel care, to be discharged  
 With sudden blaze of pyrotechnic art  
 On the devoted, gentle, shrinking head  
 O' the right incomparable gentleman! [Laughter.]  
 But were my humble, solemn, sad oration [Laughter.]  
 Indeed such rattle as he rated it,  
 Is it not strange, and passing precedent,  
 That the illustrious chief of Government  
 Should have uprisen with such indecent speed  
 And strenuously replied? He, sir, knows well  
 That vast and luminous talents like his own  
 Could not have been demanded to choke off  
 A witcraft marked by nothing more of weight  
 Than ignorant irregularity!  
 Nec Deus intersit—and so-and-so—  
 Is a well-worn citation whose close fit  
 None will perceive more clearly in the Fane  
 Than its presiding Deity opposite. [Laughter.]  
 His thunderous answer thus perforce condemns him!  
 Moreover, to top all, the while replying,  
 He still thought best to leave intact the reasons  
 On which my blame was founded!  
 Thus, them, stands  
 My motion unimpaired, convicting clearly  
 Of dire perversion that capacity  
 We formerly admired.— [Cries of "Oh, oh."]  
 This minister  
 Whose circumventions never circumvent,  
 Whose coalitions fail to coalesce;  
 This dab at secret treaties known to all,  
 This darling of the aristocracy—  
 [Laughter, "Oh, oh," cheers, and cries of "Divide."]  
 Has brought the millions to the verge of ruin,  
 By pledging them to Continental quarrels  
 Of which we see no end! [Cheers.]  
 [The members rise to divide.]

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

It irks me that they thus should Yea and Nay  
As though a power lay in their oraclings,  
If each decision work unconsciously,  
And would be operant though unloosened were  
A single lip!

#### SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

There may react on things  
Some influence from these, indefinitely,  
And even on That, whose outcome we all are.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Hypotheses!—More boots it to remind  
The younger here of our ethereal band  
And hierarchy of Intelligences,  
That this thwart Parliament whose moods we watch—  
So insular, empiric, un-ideal—  
May figure forth in sharp and salient lines  
To retrospective eyes of afterdays,  
And print its legend large on History.  
For one cause—if I read the signs aright—  
To-night's appearance of its Minister  
In the assembly of his long-time sway  
Is near his last, and themes to-night launched forth  
Will take a tincture from that memory,  
When me recall the scene and circumstance  
That hung about his pleadings.—But no more;  
The ritual of each party is rehearsed,  
Dislodging not one vote or prejudice;  
The ministers their ministries retain,  
And Ins as Ins, and Outs as Outs, remain.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Meanwhile what of the Foeman's vast array  
That wakes these tones?

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Abide the event, young Shade:  
Soon stars will shut and show a spring-eyed dawn,  
And sunbeams fountain forth, that will arouse  
Those forming bands to full activity.  
[An honourable member reports that he spies strangers.]  
A timely token that we dally here!  
We now cast off these mortal manacles,  
And speed us seaward.

[The Phantoms vanish from the Gallery. The members file out to the lobbies. The House and Westminster recede into the films of night, and the point of observation shifts rapidly across the Channel.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

### THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

[The morning breaks, radiant with early sunlight. The French Army of Invasion is disclosed. On the hills on either side of the town and behind appear large military camps formed of timber huts. Lower down are other camps of more or less permanent kind, the whole affording accommodation for one hundred and fifty thousand men.

South of the town is an extensive basin surrounded by quays, the heaps of fresh soil around showing it to be a recent excavation from the banks of the Liane. The basin is crowded with the flotilla, consisting of hundreds of vessels of sundry kinds: flat-bottomed brigs with guns and two masts; boats of one mast, carrying each an artillery waggon, two guns, and a two-stalled horse-box; transports with three low masts; and long narrow pinnaces arranged for many oars.

Timber, saw-mills, and new-cut planks spread in profusion around, and many of the town residences are seen to be adapted for warehouses and infirmaries.]

### DUMB SHOW

Moving in this scene are countless companies of soldiery, engaged in a drill practice of embarking and disembarking, and of hoisting horses into the vessels and landing them again. Vehicles bearing provisions of many sorts load and unload before the temporary warehouses. Further off, on the open land, bodies of troops are at field-drill. Other bodies of soldiers, half stripped and encrusted with mud, are labouring as navvies in repairing the excavations. An English squadron of about twenty sail, comprising a ship or two of the line, frigates, brigs, and luggers, confronts the busy spectacle from the sea.

The Show presently dims and becomes broken, till only its flashes and gleams are visible. Anon a curtain of cloud closes over it.

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

LONDON. THE HOUSE OF A LADY OF QUALITY

[A fashionable crowd is present at an evening party, which includes the DUKES of BEAUFORT and RUTLAND, LORDS MALMESBURY, HARROWBY, ELDON, GRENVILLE, CASTLEREAGH, SIDMOUTH, and MULGRAVE,

with their ladies; also CANNING, PERCEVAL, TOWNSHEND, LADY ANNE HAMILTON, MRS. DAMER, LADY CAROLINE LAMB, and many other notables.]

A GENTLEMAN [offering his snuff-box]

So, then, the Treaty anxiously concerted  
Between ourselves and frosty Muscovy  
Is duly signed?

A CABINET MINISTER

Was signed a few days back,  
And is in force. And we do firmly hope  
The loud pretensions and the stunning dins  
Now daily heard, these laudable exertions  
May keep in curb; that ere our greening land  
Darken its leaves beneath the Dogday suns,  
The independence of the Continent  
May be assured, and all the rumpled flags  
Of famous dynasties so foully mauled,  
Extend their honoured hues as heretofore.

GENTLEMAN

So be it. Yet this man is a volcano;  
And proven 'tis, by God, volcanos choked  
Have ere now turned to earthquakes!

LADY

What the news?—  
The chequerboard of diplomatic moves  
Is London, all the world knows: here are born  
All inspirations of the Continent—  
So tell!

GENTLEMAN

Ay. Inspirations now abound!

LADY

Nay, but your looks are grave! That measured speech  
Betokened matter that will waken us.—  
Is it some piquant cruelty of his?  
Or other tickling horror from abroad

The packet has brought in?

GENTLEMAN

The treaty's signed!

MINISTER

Whereby the parties mutually agree  
To knit in union and in general league  
All outraged Europe.

LADY

So to knit sounds well;  
But how ensure its not unravelling?

MINISTER

Well; by the terms. There are among them these:  
Five hundred thousand active men in arms  
Shall strike [supported by the Britannic aid  
In vessels, men, and money subsidies]  
To free North Germany and Hanover  
From trampling foes; deliver Switzerland,  
Unbind the galled republic of the Dutch,  
Rethrone in Piedmont the Sardinian King,  
Make Naples sword-proof, un-French Italy  
From shore to shore; and thoroughly guarantee  
A settled order to the divers states;  
Thus rearing breachless barriers in each realm  
Against the thrust of his usurping hand.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

They trow not what is shaping elsewhere  
The while they talk this stoutly!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

Bid me go  
And join them, and all blandly kindle them  
By bringing, ere material transit can,  
A new surprise!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Yea, for a moment, wouldst.  
[The Spirit of Rumour enters the apartment in the form of a  
personage of fashion, newly arrived. He advances and addresses  
the group.]

SPIRIT

The Treaty moves all tongues to-night.—Ha, well—  
So much on paper!

GENTLEMAN

What on land and sea?

You look, old friend, full primed with latest thence.

SPIRIT

Yea, this. The Italy our mighty pact  
Delivers from the French and Bonaparte  
Makes haste to crown him!—Turning from Boulogne  
He speeds toward Milan, there to glory him  
In second coronation by the Pope,  
And set upon his irrepressible brow  
Lombardy's iron crown.

[The Spirit of Rumour mingles with the throng, moves away, and disappears.]

LADY

Fair Italy,  
Alas, alas!

LORD

Yet thereby English folk  
Are freed him.—Faith, as ancient people say,  
It's an ill wind that blows good luck to none!

MINISTER

Who is your friend that drops so airily  
This precious pinch of salt on our raw skin?

GENTLEMAN

Why, Norton. You know Norton well enough?

MINISTER

Nay, 'twas not he. Norton of course I know.  
I thought him Stewart for a moment, but—

LADY

But I well scanned him—'twas Lord Abercorn;  
For, said I to myself, "O quaint old beau,  
To sleep in black silk sheets so funnily:—  
That is, if the town rumour on't be true."

LORD

My wig, ma'am, no! 'Twas a much younger man.

GENTLEMAN

But let me call him! Monstrous silly this,  
That don't know my friends!

[They look around. The gentleman goes among the surging and babbling guests, makes inquiries, and returns with a perplexed look.]

GENTLEMAN

They tell me, sure,  
That he's not here to-night!

MINISTER

I can well swear

It was not Norton.—'Twas some lively buck,

Who chose to put himself in masquerade

And enter for a whim. I'll tell our host.

—Meantime the absurdity of his report

Is more than manifested. How knows he

The plans of Bonaparte by lightning-flight,

Before another man in England knows?

LADY

Something uncanny's in it all, if true.

Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden sweat,

That fairly makes my linen stick to me!

MINISTER

Ha-ha! 'Tis excellent. But we'll find out

Who this impostor was.

[They disperse, look furtively for the stranger, and speak of the incident to others of the crowded company.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Now let us vision onward, till we sight

Famed Milan's aisles of marble, sun-alight,

And there behold, unbid, the Coronation-rite.

[The confused tongues of the assembly waste away into distance, till they are heard but as the babblings of the sea from a high cliff, the scene becoming small and indistinct therewith.

This passes into silence, and the whole disappears.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

MILAN. THE CATHEDRAL

[The interior of the building on a sunny May day.

The walls, arched, and columns are draped in silk fringed with gold. A gilded throne stand in front of the High Altar. A closely packed assemblage, attired in every variety of rich fabric and fashion, waits in breathless expectation.]

DUMB SHOW

From a private corridor leading to a door in the aisle the EMPRESS JOSEPHINE enters, in a shining costume, and diamonds that collect rainbow-colours from the sunlight piercing the clerestory windows. She is preceded by PRINCESS ELIZA, and surrounded by her ladies. A pause follows, and then comes the procession of the EMPEROR,



consisting of hussars, heralds, pages, aides-de-camp, presidents of institutions, officers of the state bearing the insignia of the Empire and of Italy, and seven ladies with offerings. The Emperor himself in royal robes, wearing the Imperial crown, and carrying the sceptre. He is followed by his ministers and officials of the household. His gait is rather defiant than dignified, and a bluish pallor overspreads his face.

He is met by the Cardinal Archbishop of CAPRARA and the clergy, who burn incense before him as he proceeds towards the throne. Rolling notes of music burn forth, and loud applause from the congregation.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

A local cult, called Christianity,  
Which the wild dramas of the wheeling spheres  
Include, with divers other such, in dim  
Pathetical and brief parentheses,  
Beyond whose span, uninfluenced, unconcerned,  
The systems of the suns go sweeping on  
With all their many-mortaled planet train  
In mathematic roll unceasingly.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I did not recognize it here, forsooth;  
Though in its early, lovingkindly days  
Of gracious purpose it was much to me.  
ARCHBISHOP [addressing Bonaparte]  
Sire, with that clemency and right goodwill  
Which beautify Imperial Majesty,  
You deigned acceptance of the homages  
That we the clergy and the Milanese  
Were proud to offer when your entrance here  
Streamed radiance on our ancient capital.  
Please, then, to consummate the boon to-day  
Beneath this holy roof, so soon to thrill  
With solemn strains and lifting harmonies  
Befitting such a coronation hour;  
And bend a tender fatherly regard  
On this assembly, now at one with me  
To supplicate the Author of All Good  
That He endow your most Imperial person  
With every Heavenly gift.

[The procession advances, and the EMPEROR seats himself on the

throne, with the banners and regalia of the Empire on his right,  
and those of Italy on his left hand. Shouts and triumphal music  
accompany the proceedings, after which Divine service commences.]

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Thus are the self-styled servants of the Highest  
Constrained by earthly duress to embrace  
Mighty imperiousness as it were choice,  
And hand the Italian sceptre unto one  
Who, with a saturnine, sour-humoured grin,  
Professed at first to flout antiquity,  
Scorn limp conventions, smile at mouldy thrones,  
And level dynasts down to journeymen!—  
Yet he, advancing swiftly on that track  
Whereby his active soul, fair Freedom's child  
Makes strange decline, now labours to achieve  
The thing it overthrew.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Thou reasonest ever thuswise—even if  
A self-formed force had urged his loud career.

#### SPIRIT SINISTER

Do not the prelate's accents falter thin,  
His lips with inheld laughter grow deformed,  
While blessing one whose aim is but to win  
The golden seats that other b—s have warmed?

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Soft, jester; scorn not puppetry so skilled,  
Even made to feel by one men call the Dame.

#### SHADE OF THE EARTH

Yea; that they feel, and puppetry remain,  
Is an owned flaw in her consistency  
Men love to dub Dame Nature—that lay-shape  
They use to hang phenomena upon—  
Whose deftest mothering in fairest sphere  
Is girt about by terms inexorable!

#### SPIRIT SINISTER

The lady's remark is apposite, and reminds me that I may as well  
hold my tongue as desired. For if my casual scorn, Father Years,  
should set thee trying to prove that there is any right or reason  
in the Universe, thou wilt not accomplish it by Doomsday! Small  
blame to her, however; she must cut her coat according to her  
cloth, as they would say below there.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

O would that I could move It to enchain thee,  
And shut thee up a thousand years!—[to cite  
A grim terrestrial tale of one thy like]  
Thou Iago of the Incorporeal World,  
As they would say below there.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Would thou couldst!

But move That scoped above percipience, Sire,  
It cannot be!

SHADE OF THE EARTH

The spectacle proceeds.

SPIRIT SINISTER

And we may as well give all attention thereto, for the evils at  
work in other continents are not worth eyesight by comparison.  
[The ceremonial in the Cathedral continues. NAPOLEON goes to  
the front of the altar, ascends the steps, and, taking up the  
crown of Lombardy, places it on his head.]

NAPOLEON

Tis God has given it to me. So be it.

Let any who shall touch it now beware! [Reverberations of applause.]  
[The Sacrament of the Mass. NAPOLEON reads the Coronation Oath in  
a loud voice.]

HERALDS

Give ear! Napoleon, Emperor of the French  
And King of Italy, is crowned and throned!

CONGREGATION

Long live the Emperor and King. Huzza!

[Music. The Te Deum.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

That vulgar stroke of vauntery he displayed  
In planting on his brow the Lombard crown,  
Means sheer erasure of the Luneville pacts,  
And lets confusion loose on Europe's peace  
For many an undawned year! From this rash hour  
Austria but waits her opportunity  
By secret swellings of her armaments  
To link her to his foes.—I'll speak to him.  
[He throws a whisper into NAPOLEON'S ear.]  
Lieutenant Bonaparte,  
Would it not seemlier be to shut thy heart  
To these unhealthy splendours?—helmet thee  
For her thou swar'st-to first, fair Liberty?

NAPOLEON

Who spoke to me?

ARCHBISHOP

Not I, Sire. Not a soul.

NAPOLEON

Dear Josephine, my queen, didst call my name?

JOSEPHINE

I spoke not, Sire.

NAPOLEON

Thou didst not, tender spouse;

I know it. Such harsh utterance was not thine.

It was aggressive Fancy, working spells

Upon a mind o'erwrought!

[The service closes. The clergy advance with the canopy to the foot of the throne, and the procession forms to return to the Palace.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Officious sprite,

Thou art young, and dost not heed the Cause of things

Which some of us have inkled to thee here;

Else wouldst thou not have hailed the Emperor,

Whose acts do but outshape Its governing.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I feel, Sire, as I must! This tale of Will

And Life's impulsion by Incognizance

I cannot take!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Let me then once again

Show to thy sceptic eye the very streams

And currents of this all-inhering Power,

And bring conclusion to thy unbelief.

[The scene assumes the preternatural transparency before mentioned, and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of a Universal Will, of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Enough. And yet for very sorriness

I cannot own the weird phantasma real!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Affection ever was illogical.

SPIRIT IRONIC [aside]

How should the Sprite own to such logic—a mere juvenile— who only

came into being in what the earthlings call their Tertiary Age!  
[The scene changes. The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place  
of the interior, and the point of view recedes, the whole fabric  
smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved  
alabaster ornament. The city itself sinks to miniature, the Alps  
show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of  
Genoa appear on this and on that hand, with Italy between them,  
till clouds cover the panorama.]  
[image not archived]

## ACT SECOND

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

THE DOCKYARD, GIBRALTAR

[The Rock is seen rising behind the town and the Alameda Gardens,  
and the English fleet rides at anchor in the Bay, across which the  
Spanish shore from Algeciras to Carnero Point shuts in the West.  
Southward over the Strait is the African coast.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Our migratory Proskenion now presents  
An outlook on the storied Kalpe Rock,  
As preface to the vision of the Fleets  
Spanish and French, linked for fell purposings.

RECORDING ANGEL [reciting]

Their motions and manoeuvres, since the fame  
Of Bonaparte's enthronment at Milan  
Swept swift through Europe's dumbed communities,  
Have stretched the English mind to wide surmise.  
Many well-based alarms [which strange report  
Much aggravates] as to the pondered blow,  
Flutter the public pulse; all points in turn—  
Malta, Brazil, Wales, Ireland, British Ind—  
Being held as feasible for force like theirs,  
Of lavish numbers and unrecking aim.  
Where, where is Nelson? questions every tongue;—  
How views he so unparalleled a scheme?  
Their slow uncertain apprehensions ask.  
"When Villeneuve puts to sea with all his force,  
What may he not achieve, if swift his course!"

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll call in Nelson, who has stepped ashore  
For the first time these thrice twelvemonths and more,  
And with him one whose insight has alone  
Pierced the real project of Napoleon.  
[Enter NELSON and COLLINGWOOD, who pace up and down.]

## SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Note Nelson's worn-out features. Much has he  
Suffered from ghoulisn ghast anxiety!

## NELSON

In short, dear Coll, the letter which you wrote me  
Had so much pith that I was fain to see you;  
For I am sure that you indeed divine  
The true intent and compass of a plot  
Which I have spelled in vain.

## COLLINGWOOD

I weighed it thus:  
Their flight to the Indies being to draw us off,  
That and no more, and clear these coasts of us—  
The standing obstacle to his device—  
He cared not what was done at Martinique,  
Or where, provided that the general end  
Should not be jeopardized—that is to say,  
The full-united squadron's quick return.—  
Gravina and Villeneuve, once back to Europe,  
Can straight make Ferrol, raise there the blockade,  
Then haste to Brest, there to relieve Ganteaume,  
And next with four-or five-and fifty sail  
Bear down upon our coast as they see fit.—  
I read they aim to strike at Ireland still,  
As formerly, and as I wrote to you.

## NELSON

So far your thoughtful and sagacious words  
Have hit the facts. But 'tis no Irish bay  
The villains aim to drop their anchors in;  
My word for it: they make the Wessex shore,  
And this vast squadron handled by Villeneuve  
Is meant to cloak the passage of their strength,  
Massed on those transports—we being kept elsewhere  
By feigning forces.—Good God, Collingwood,  
I must be gone! Yet two more days remain  
Ere I can get away.—I must be gone!

COLLINGWOOD

Wherever you may go to, my dear lord,  
You carry victory with you. Let them launch,  
Your name will blow them back, as sou'west gales  
The gulls that beat against them from the shore.

NELSON

Good Collingwood, I know you trust in me;  
But ships are ships, and do not kindly come  
Out of the slow docks of the Admiralty  
Like wharfside pigeons when they are whistled for:—  
And there's a damned disparity of force,  
Which means tough work awhile for you and me!  
[The Spirit of the Years whispers to NELSON.]  
And I have warnings, warnings, Collingwood,  
That my effective hours are shortening here;  
Strange warnings now and then, as 'twere within me,  
Which, though I fear them not, I recognize!...  
However, by God's help, I'll live to meet  
These foreign boasters; yea, I'll finish them;  
And then—well, Gunner Death may finish me!

COLLINGWOOD

View not your life so gloomily, my lord:  
One charmed, a needed purpose to fulfil!

NELSON

Ah, Coll. Lead bullets are not all that wound...  
I have a feeling here of dying fires,  
A sense of strong and deep unworded censure,  
Which, compassing about my private life,  
Makes all my public service lustreless  
In my own eyes.—I fear I am much condemned  
For those dear Naples and Palermo days,  
And her who was the sunshine of them all!...  
He who is with himself dissatisfied,  
Though all the world find satisfaction in him,  
Is like a rainbow-coloured bird gone blind,  
That gives delight it shares not. Happiness?  
It's the philosopher's stone no alchemy  
Shall light on this world I am weary of.—  
Smiling I'd pass to my long home to-morrow  
Could I with honour, and my country's gain.  
—But let's adjourn. I waste your hours ashore  
By such ill-timed confessions!

[They pass out of sight, and the scene closes.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II.

OFF FERROL

[The French and Spanish combined squadrons. On board the French admiral's flag-ship. VILLENEUVE is discovered in his cabin, writing a letter.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

He pens in fits, with pallid restlessness,  
Like one who sees Misfortune walk the wave,  
And can nor face nor flee it.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

He indites

To his long friend the minister Decres  
Words that go heavily!...

VILLENEUVE [writing]

"I am made the arbiter in vast designs  
Whereof I see black outcomes. Do I this  
Or do I that, success, that loves to jilt  
Her anxious wooer for some careless blade,  
Will not reward me. For, if I must pen it,  
Demoralized past prayer in the marine—  
Bad masts, bad sails, bad officers, bad men;  
We cling to naval technics long outworn,  
And time and opportunity do not avail me  
To take up new. I have long suspected such,  
But till I saw my helps, the Spanish ships,  
I hoped somewhat.—Brest is my nominal port;  
Yet if so, Calder will again attack—  
Now reinforced by Nelson or Cornwallis—  
And shatter my whole fleet... Shall I admit  
That my true inclination and desire  
Is to make Cadiz straightway, and not Brest?  
Alas! thereby I fail the Emperor;  
But shame the navy less.—

Your friend, VILLENEUVE""""

[GENERAL LAURISTON enters.]

LAURISTON

Admiral, my missive to the Emperor,  
Which I shall speed by special courier



From Ferrol this near eve, runs thus and thus:—

”Gravina’s ships, in Ferrol here at hand,  
Embayed but by a temporary wind,  
Are all we now await. Combined with these  
We sail herefrom to Brest; there promptly give  
Cornwallis battle, and release Ganteaume;  
Thence, all united, bearing Channelwards:  
A step that sets in motion the first wheel  
In the proud project of your Majesty  
Now to be engined to the very close,  
To wit: that a French fleet shall enter in  
And hold the Channel four-and-twenty hours.—”  
Such clear assurance to the Emperor  
That our intent is modelled on his will  
I hasten to dispatch to him forthwith.

VILLENEUVE

Yes, Lauriston. I sign to every word.

[Lauriston goes out. VILLENEUVE remains at his table in reverie.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

We may impress him under visible shapes  
That seem to shed a silent circling doom;  
He’s such an one as can be so impressed,  
And this much is among our privileges,  
Well bounded as they be.—Let us draw near him.

[The Spirits of Years and of the Pities take the form of sea-birds,  
which alight on the stern-balcony of VILLENEUVE’s ship, immediately  
outside his cabin window. VILLENEUVE after a while looks up and  
sees the birds watching him with large piercing eyes.]

VILLENEUVE

My apprehensions even outstep their cause,  
As though some influence smote through yonder pane.

[He gazes listlessly, and resumes his broodings.]

—Why dared I not disclose to him my thought,  
As nightly worded by the whistling shrouds,  
That Brest will never see our battled hulls  
Helming to north in pomp of cannonry  
To take the front in this red pilgrimage!  
—If so it were, now, that I’d screen my skin  
From risks of bloody business in the brunt,  
My acts could scarcely wear a difference.  
Yet I would die to-morrow—not ungladly—  
So far removed is carcase-care from me.

For no self do these apprehensions spring,  
But for the cause.—Yes, rotten is our marine,  
Which, while I know, the Emperor knows not,  
And the pale secret chills! Though some there be  
Would beard contingencies and buffet all,  
I'll not command a course so conscienceless.  
Rather I'll stand, and face Napoleon's rage  
When he shall learn what mean the ambiguous lines  
That facts have forced from me.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [to the Spirit of Years]

O Eldest-born of the Unconscious Cause—  
If such thou beest, as I can fancy thee—  
Why dost thou rack him thus? Consistency  
Might be preserved, and yet his doom remain.  
His olden courage is without reproach;  
Albeit his temper trends toward gaingiving!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I say, as I have said long heretofore,  
I know but narrow freedom. Feel'st thou not  
We are in Its hand, as he?—Here, as elsewhere,  
We do but as we may; no further dare.  
[The birds disappear, and the scene is lost behind sea-mist.]  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

THE CAMP AND HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE

[The English coast in the distance. Near the Tour d'Ordre stands  
a hut, with sentinels and aides outside; it is NAPOLEON's temporary  
lodging when not at his headquarters at the Chateau of Pont-de-  
Briques, two miles inland.]

DUMB SHOW

A courier arrives with dispatches, and enters the Emperor's quarters,  
whence he emerges and goes on with other dispatches to the hut of  
DECRES, lower down. Immediately after, NAPOLEON comes out from his  
hut with a paper in his hand, and musingly proceeds towards an  
eminence commanding the Channel.

Along the shore below are forming in a far-reaching line more  
than a hundred thousand infantry. On the downs in the rear of  
the camps fifteen thousand cavalry are manoeuvring, their  
accoutrements flashing in the sun like a school of mackerel.  
The flotilla lies in and around the port, alive with moving

figures.

With his head forward and his hands behind him the Emperor surveys these animated proceedings in detail, but more frequently turns his face toward the telegraph on the cliff to the southwest, erected to signal when VILLENEUVE and the combined squadrons shall be visible on the west horizon.

He summons one of the aides, who descends to the hut of DECRES.

DECRES comes out from his hut, and hastens to join the Emperor.

Dumb show ends.

[NAPOLEON and DECRES advance to the foreground of the scene.]

NAPOLEON

Decres, this action with Sir Robert Calder

Three weeks ago, whereof we dimly heard,

And clear details of which I have just unsealed,

Is on the whole auspicious for our plan.

It seems that twenty of our ships and Spain's—

None over eighty-gunned, and some far less—

Engaged the English off Cape Finisterre

With fifteen vessels of a hundred each.

We coolly fought and orderly as they,

And, but for mist, we had closed with victory.

Two English were much mauled, some Spanish damaged,

And Calder then drew off with his two wrecks

And Spain's in tow, we giving chase forthwith.

Not overtaking him our admiral,

Having the coast clear for his purposes,

Entered Coruna, and found order there

To open the port of Brest and come on hither.

Thus hastes the moment when the double fleet

Of Villeneuve and of Ganteaume should appear.

[He looks again towards the telegraph.]

DECRES [with hesitation]

And should they not appear, your Majesty?

NAPOLEON

Not? But they will; and do it early, too!

There's nothing hinders them. My God, they must,

For I have much before me when this stroke

At England's dealt. I learn from Talleyrand

That Austrian preparations threaten hot,

While Russia's hostile schemes are ripening,

And shortly must be met.—My plan is fixed:

I am prepared for each alternative.

If Villeneuve come, I brave the British coast,  
 Convulse the land with fear ['tis even now  
 So far distraught, that generals cast about  
 To find new modes of warfare; yea, design  
 Carriages to transport their infantry!].—  
 Once on the English soil I hold it firm,  
 Descend on London, and the while my men  
 Salute the dome of Paul's I cut the knot  
 Of all Pitt's coalitions; setting free  
 From bondage to a cold manorial caste  
 A people who await it.  
 [They stand and regard the chalky cliffs of England, till NAPOLEON  
 resumes]:  
 Should it be  
 Even that my admirals fail to keep the tryst—  
 A thing scarce thinkable, when all's reviewed—  
 I strike this seaside camp, cross Germany,  
 With these two hundred thousand seasoned men,  
 And pause not till within Vienna's walls  
 I cry checkmate. Next, Venice, too, being taken,  
 And Austria's other holdings down that way,  
 The Bourbons also driven from Italy,  
 I strike at Russia—each in turn, you note,  
 Ere they can act conjoined.  
 Report to me  
 What has been scanned to-day upon the main,  
 And on your passage down request them there  
 To send Daru this way.  
 DECRES [as he withdraws]  
 The Emperor can be sanguine. Scarce can I.  
 His letters are more promising than mine.  
 Alas, alas, Villeneuve, my dear old friend,  
 Why do you pen me this at such a time!  
 [He retires reading VILLENEUVE'S letter. The Emperor walks up and  
 down till DARU, his private secretary, joins him.]  
 NAPOLEON  
 Come quick, Daru; sit down upon the grass,  
 And write whilst I am in mind.  
 First to Villeneuve:—  
 "I trust, Vice-Admiral, that before this date  
 Your fleet has opened Brest, and gone. If not,  
 These lines will greet you there. But pause not, pray:

Waste not a moment dallying. Sail away:  
Once bring my coupled squadrons Channelwards  
And England's soil is ours. All's ready here,  
The troops alert, and every store embarked.  
Hold the nigh sea but four-and-twenty hours  
And our vast end is gained.”  
Now to Ganteaume:—  
”My telegraphs will have made known to you  
My object and desire to be but this,  
That you forbid Villeneuve to lose an hour  
In getting fit and putting forth to sea,  
To profit by the fifty first-rate craft  
Wherewith I now am bettered. Quickly weigh,  
And steer you for the Channel with all your strength.  
I count upon your well-known character,  
Your enterprize, your vigour, to do this.  
Sail hither, then; and we will be avenged  
For centuries of despite and contumely.”

DARU

Shall a fair transcript, Sire, be made forthwith?

NAPOLEON

This moment. And the courier will depart  
And travel without pause.

[DARU goes to his office a little lower down, and the Emperor  
lingers on the cliffs looking through his glass.

The point of view shifts across the Channel, the Boulogne cliffs  
sinking behind the water-line.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

SOUTH WESSEX. A RIDGE-LIKE DOWN NEAR THE COAST

[The down commands a wide view over the English Channel in front  
of it, including the popular Royal watering-place, with the Isle  
of Slings and its roadstead, where men-of-war and frigates are  
anchored. The hour is ten in the morning, and the July sun glows  
upon a large military encampment round about the foreground, and  
warms the stone field-walls that take the place of hedges here.  
Artillery, cavalry, and infantry, English and Hanoverian, are  
drawn up for review under the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND and officers  
of the staff, forming a vast military array, which extends  
three miles, and as far as the downs are visible.

In the centre by the Royal Standard appears KING GEORGE on horseback, and his suite. In a coach drawn by six cream-coloured Hanoverian horses, QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits with three Princesses; in another carriage with four horses are two more Princesses. There are also present with the Royal Party the LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD MULGRAVE, COUNT MUNSTER, and many other

luminaries of fashion and influence.

The Review proceeds in dumb show; and the din of many bands mingles with the cheers. The turf behind the saluting-point is crowded with carriages and spectators on foot.]

A SPECTATOR

And you've come to the sight, like the King and myself? Well, one fool makes many. What a mampus o' folk it is here to-day! And what a time we do live in, between wars and wassailings, the goblin o' Boney, and King George in flesh and blood!

SECOND SPECTATOR

Yes. I wonder King George is let venture down on this coast, where he might be snapped up in a moment like a minney by a her'n, so near as we be to the field of Boney's vagaries! Begad, he's as like to land here as anywhere. Gloucester Lodge could be surrounded, and George and Charlotte carried off before he could put on his hat, or she her red cloak and pattens!

THIRD SPECTATOR

Twould be so such joke to kidnap 'em as you think. Look at the frigates down there. Every night they are drawn up in a line across the mouth of the Bay, almost touching each other; and ashore a double line of sentinels, well primed with beer and ammunition, one at the water's edge and the other on the Esplanade, stretch along the whole front. Then close to the Lodge a guard is mounted after eight o'clock; there be pickets on all the hills; at the Harbour mouth is a battery of twenty four-pounders; and over-right 'em a dozen six-pounders, and several howitzers. And next look at the size of the camp of horse and foot up here.

FIRST SPECTATOR

Everybody however was fairly gallied this week when the King went out yachting, meaning to be back for the theatre; and the eight or nine o'clock came, and never a sign of him. I don't know when 'a did land; but 'twas said by all that it was a foolhardy pleasure to take.

FOURTH SPECTATOR

He's a very obstinate and comical old gentleman; and by all account a wouldn't make port when asked to.

SECOND SPECTATOR

Lard, Lard, if 'a were nabbed, it wouldn't make a deal of difference! We should have nobody to zing, and play singlestick to, and grin at through horse-collars, that's true. And nobody to sign our few documents. But we should rub along some way, goodnow.

FIRST SPECTATOR

Step up on this barrow; you can see better. The troopers now passing are the York Hussars—foreigners to a man, except the officers—the same regiment the two young Germans belonged to who were shot four years ago. Now come the Light Dragoons; what a time they take to get all past! Well, well! this day will be recorded in history.

SECOND SPECTATOR

Or another soon to follow it! [He gazes over the Channel.] There's not a speck of an enemy upon that shiny water yet; but the Brest fleet is zaid to have put to sea, to act in concert with the army crossing from Boulogne; and if so the French will soon be here; when God save us all! I've took to drinking neat, for, say I, one may as well have innerds burnt out as shot out, and 'tis a good deal pleasanter for the man that owns 'em. They say that a cannon-ball knocked poor Jim Popple's maw right up into the futtock-shrouds at the Nile, where 'a hung like a nightcap out to dry. Much good to him his obeying his old mother's wish and refusing his allowance o' rum!

[The bands play and the Review continues till past eleven o'clock. Then follows a sham fight. At noon precisely the royal carriages draw off the ground into the highway that leads down to the town and Gloucester Lodge, followed by other equipages in such numbers that the road is blocked. A multitude comes after on foot. Presently the vehicles manage to proceed to the watering-place, and the troops march away to the various camps as a sea-mist cloaks the perspective.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. RAINBARROW'S BEACON, EGDON HEATH

[Night in mid-August of the same summer. A lofty ridge of heathland reveals itself dimly, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a

brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition, the other of wood, for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imparts a sense of uninterrupted space around, the view by day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the Valley of the Frome to the ridge that screens the Channel. Two men with pikes loom up, on duty as beacon-keepers beside the ricks.]

OLD MAN

Now, Jem Purchess, once more mark my words. Black'on is the point we've to watch, and not Kingsbere; and I'll tell 'ee for why. If he do land anywhere hereabout 'twill be inside Deadman's Bay, and the signal will straightaway come from Black'on. But there thou'st stand, glowering and staring with all thy eyes at Kingsbere! I tell ee what 'tis, Jem Purchess, your brain is softening; and you be getting too old for business of state like ours!

YOUNG MAN

You've let your tongue wrack your few rames of good breeding, John.

OLD MAN

The words of my Lord-Lieutenant was, whenever you see Kingsbere-Hill Beacon fired to the eastward, or Black'on to the westward, light up; and keep your second fire burning for two hours. Was that our documents or was it not?

YOUNG MAN

I don't gainsay it. And so I keep my eye on Kingsbere because that's most likely o' the two, says I.

OLD MAN

That shows the curious depths of your ignorance. However, I'll have patience, and say on. Didst ever larn geography?

YOUNG MAN

No. Nor no other corrupt practices.

OLD MAN

Tcht-tcht!—Well, I'll have patience, and put it to him in another form. Dost know the world is round—eh? I warrant dostn't!

YOUNG MAN

I warrant I do!

OLD MAN

How d'ye make that out, when th'st never been to school?

YOUNG MAN

I larned it at church, thank God.

OLD MAN



Church? What have God A'mighty got to do with profane knowledge?  
Beware that you baint blaspheming, Jems Purchess!

YOUNG MAN

I say I did, whether or no! 'Twas the zingers up in gallery that  
I had it from. They busted out that strong with "the round world  
and they that dwell therein," that we common fokes down under could  
do no less than believe 'em.

OLD MAN

Canst be sharp enough in the wrong place as usual—I warrant canst!  
However, I'll have patience with 'en and say on!—Suppose, now, my  
hat is the world; and there, as might be, stands the Camp of Belong,  
where Boney is. The world goes round, so, and Belong goes round too.  
Twelve hours pass; round goes the world still—so. Where's Belong  
now?

[A pause. Two other figures, a man's and a woman's, rise against  
the sky out of the gloom.]

OLD MAN [shouldering his pike]

Who goes there? Friend or foe, in the King's name!

WOMAN

Piece o' trumpery! "Who goes" yourself! What d'ye talk o', John  
Whiting! Can't your eyes earn their living any longer, then, that  
you don't know your own neighbours? 'Tis Private Cantle of the  
Locals and his wife Keziar, down at Bloom's-End—who else should  
it be!

OLD MAN [lowering his pike]

A form o' words, Mis'ess Cantle, no more; ordained by his Majesty's  
Gover'nment to be spoke by all we on sworn duty for the defence o' the  
country. Strict rank-and-file rules is our only horn of salvation in  
these times.—But, my dear woman, why ever have ye come lumpering up  
to Rainbarrows at this time o' night?

WOMAN

We've been troubled with bad dreams, owing to the firing out at sea  
yesterday; and at last I could sleep no more, feeling sure that  
sommatt boded of His coming. And I said to Cantle, I'll ray myself,  
and go up to Beacon, and ask if anything have been heard or seen to-  
night. And here we be.

OLD MAN

Not a sign or sound—all's as still as a churchyard. And how is  
your good man?

PRIVATE [advancing]

Clk. I be all right! I was in the ranks, helping to keep the ground  
at the review by the King this week. We was a wonderful sight—

wonderful! The King said so again and again.—Yes, there was he, and there was I, though not daring to move a' eyebrow in the presence of Majesty. I have come home on a night's leave—off there again to-morrow. Boney's expected every day, the Lord be praised! Yes, our hopes are to be fulfilled soon, as we say in the army.

OLD MAN

There, there, Cantle; don't ye speak quite so large, and stand so over-upright. Your back is as holler as a fire-dog's. Do ye suppose that we on active service here don't know war news? Mind you don't go taking to your heels when the next alarm comes, as you did at last year's.

PRIVATE

That had nothing to do with fighting, for I'm as bold as a lion when I'm up, and "Shoulder Fawlocks!" sounds as common as my own name to me. 'Twas— [lowering his voice.] Have ye heard?

OLD MAN

To be sure we have.

PRIVATE

Ghastly, isn't it!

OLD MAN

Ghastly! Frightful!

YOUNG MAN [to Private]

He don't know what it is! That's his pride and puffery. What is it that' so ghastly—hey?

PRIVATE

Well, there, I can't tell it. 'Twas that that made the whole eighty of our company run away—though we be the bravest of the brave in natural jeopardies, or the little boys wouldn't run after us and call us and call us the "Bang-up-Locals."

WOMAN [in undertones]

I can tell you a word or two on't. It is about His victuals. They say that He lives upon human flesh, and has rashers o' baby every morning for breakfast—for all the world like the Cernal Giant in old ancient times!

YOUNG MAN

Ye can't believe all ye hear.

PRIVATE

I only believe half. And I only own—such is my challengeful character—that perhaps He do eat pagan infants when He's in the desert. But not Christian ones at home. Oh no—'tis too much.

WOMAN

Whether or no, I sometimes—God forgive me!—laugh wi' horror at

the queerness o't, till I am that weak I can hardly go round the house. He should have the washing of 'em a few times; I warrant a wouldn't want to eat babies any more!

[A silence, during which they gaze around at the dark dome of the starless sky.]

YOUNG MAN

There'll be a change in the weather soon, by the look o't. I can hear the cows moo in Froom Valley as if I were close to 'em, and the lantern at Max Turnpike is shining quite plain.

OLD MAN

Well, come in and taste a drop o' sommat we've got here, that will warm the cockles of your heart as ye wamble homealong. We housed eighty tuns last night for them that shan't be named—landed at Lullwind Cove the night afore, though they had a narrow shave with the riding-officers this run.

[They make toward the hut, when a light on the west horizon becomes visible, and quickly enlarges.]

YOUNG MAN

He's come!

OLD MAN

Come he is, though you do say it! This, then, is the beginning of what England's waited for!

[They stand and watch the light awhile.]

YOUNG MAN

Just what you was praising the Lord for by-now, Private Cantle.

PRIVATE

My meaning was—

WOMAN [simpering]

Oh that I hadn't married a fiery sojer, to make me bring fatherless children into the world, all through his dreadful calling! Why didn't a man of no sprawl content me!

OLD MAN [shouldering his pike]

We can't heed your innocent pratings any longer, good neighbours, being in the King's service, and a hot invasion on. Fall in, fall in, mate. Straight to the tinder-box. Quick march!

[The two men hasten to the hut, and are heard striking a flint and steel. Returning with a lit lantern they ignite a blaze.

The private of the Locals and his wife hastily retreat by the light of the flaming beacon, under which the purple rotundities of the heath show like bronze, and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull.]

SPIRIT SINISTER

This is good, and spells blood. [To the Chorus of the Years.] I assume that It means to let us carry out this invasion with pleasing slaughter, so as not to disappoint my hope?

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music]

We carry out? Nay, but should we  
Ordain what bloodshed is to be it!

SEMICHORUS II

The Immanent, that urgeth all,  
Rules what may or may not befall!

SEMICHORUS I

Ere systemed suns were globed and lit  
The slaughters of the race were writ,

SEMICHORUS II

And wasting wars, by land and sea,  
Fixed, like all else, immutably!

SPIRIT SINISTER

Well; be it so. My argument is that War makes rattling good history; but Peace is poor reading. So I back Bonaparte for the reason that he will give pleasure to posterity.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Gross hypocrite!

CHORUS OF THE YEARS

We comprehend him not.

[The day breaks over the heathery upland, on which the beacon is still burning. The morning reveals the white surface of a highway which, coming from the royal watering-place beyond the hills, stretched towards the outskirts of the heath and passes away eastward.]

DUMB SHOW

Moving figures and vehicles dot the surface of the road, all progressing in one direction, away from the coast. In the foreground the shapes appear as those of civilians, mostly on foot, but many in gigs and tradesmen's carts and on horseback. When they reach an intermediate hill some pause and look back; others enter on the next decline landwards without turning their heads.

From the opposite horizon numerous companies of volunteers, in the local uniform of red with green facings, are moving coastwards in companies; as are also irregular bodies of pikemen without uniform; while on the upper slopes of the downs towards the shore regiments of the line are visible, with cavalry and artillery; all passing over to the coast.

At a signal from the Chief Intelligences two Phantoms of Rumour enter on the highway in the garb of country-men.

FIRST PHANTOM [to Pedestrians]

Wither so fast, good neighbours, and before breakfast, too? Empty bellies be bad to vamp on.

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

He's landed west'ard, out by Abbot's Beach. And if you have property you'll save it and yourselves, as we are doing!

SECOND PEDESTRIAN

All yesterday the firing at Boulogne  
Was like the seven thunders heard in Heaven  
When the fierce angel spoke. So did he draw  
Full-manned, flat-bottomed for the shallowest shore,  
Dropped down to west, and crossed our frontage here.  
Seen from above they specked the water-shine  
As will a flight of swallows toward dim eve,  
Descending on a smooth and loitering stream  
To seek some eyot's sedge.

SECOND PHANTOM

We are sent to enlighten you and ease your soul.  
Even now a courier canters to the port  
To check the baseless scare.

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

These be inland men who, I warrant 'ee, don't know a lerret from a lighter! Let's take no heed of such, comrade; and hurry on!

FIRST PHANTOM

Will you not hear  
That what was seen behind the midnight mist,  
Their oar-blades tossing twinkles to the moon,  
Was but a fleet of fishing-craft belated  
By reason of the vastness of their haul?

FIRST PEDESTRIAN

Hey? And d'ye know it?—Now I look back to the top o' Rudgeway the folk seem as come to a pause there.—Be this true, never again do I stir my stumps for any alarm short of the Day of Judgment! Nine times has my rheumatical rest been broke in these last three years by hues and cries of Boney upon us. 'Od rot the feller; now he's made a fool of me once more, till my inside is like a wash-tub, what wi' being so gallied, and running so leery!—But how if you be one of the enemy, sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings, and coax us into a fancied safety? Hey, neighbours? I don't, after all, care for this story!

## SECOND PEDESTRIAN

Onwards again!

If Boney's come, 'tis best to be away;

And if he's not, why, we've a holiday!

[Exeunt Pedestrians. The Spirits of Rumour vanish, while the scene seems to become involved in the smoke from the beacon, and slowly disappears.]

[image not archived]

## ACT THIRD

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

BOULOGNE. THE CHATEAU AT PONT-DE-BRIQUES

[A room in the Chateau, which is used as the Imperial quarters.

The EMPEROR NAPOLEON, and M. GASPARD MONGE, the mathematician and philosopher, are seated at breakfast.]

OFFICER

Monsieur the Admiral Decres awaits

A moment's audience with your Majesty,

Or now, or later.

NAPOLEON

Bid him in at once—

At last Villeneuve has raised the Brest blockade!

[Enter DECRES.]

What of the squadron's movements, good Decres?

Brest opened, and all sailing Channelwards,

Like swans into a creek at feeding-time?

DECRES

Such news was what I'd hoped, your Majesty,

To send across this daybreak. But events

Have proved intractable, it seems, of late;

And hence I haste in person to report

The featless facts that just have dashed my—

NAPOLEON [darkening]

Well?

DECRES

Sire, at the very juncture when the fleets

Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard

L'Achille and "l'Algeciras": later on,

Mischief assailed our Spanish comrades' ships;  
 Several ran foul of neighbours; whose new hurts,  
 Being added to their innate clumsiness,  
 Gave hap the upper hand; and in quick course  
 Demoralized the whole; until Villeneuve,  
 Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode,  
 And prescient of unparalleled disaster  
 If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim,  
 Bowed to the inevitable; and thus, perforce,  
 Leaving to other opportunity  
 Brest and the Channel scheme, with vast regret  
 Steered southward into Cadiz.  
 NAPOLEON [having risen from the table]  
 What!—Is, then,  
 My scheme of years to be disdained and dashed  
 By this man's like, a wretched moral coward,  
 Whom you must needs foist on me as one fit  
 For full command in pregnant enterprise!  
 MONGE [aside]  
 I'm one too many here! Let me step out  
 Till this black squall blows over. Poor Decres.  
 Would that this precious project, disinterred  
 From naval archives of King Louis' reign,  
 Had ever lingered fusting where 'twas found.  
 [Exit Monge.]  
 NAPOLEON  
 To help a friend you foul a country's fame!—  
 Decres, not only chose you this Villeneuve,  
 But you have nourished secret sour opinions  
 Akin to his, and thereby helped to scathe  
 As stably based a project as this age  
 Has sunned to ripeness. Ever the French Marine  
 Have you decried, ever contrived to bring  
 Despair into the fleet! Why, this Villeneuve,  
 Your man, this rank incompetent, this traitor—  
 Of whom I asked no more than fight and lose,  
 Provided he detain the enemy—  
 A frigate is too great for his command!  
 what shall be said of one who, at a breath,  
 When a few casual sailors find them sick,  
 When falls a broken boom or slitten sail,  
 When rumour hints that Calder's tubs and Nelson's

May join, and bob about in company,  
Is straightway paralyzed, and doubles back  
On all his ripened plans!—  
Bring him, ay, bodily; hale him out from Cadiz,  
Compel him up the Channel by main force,  
And, having doffed him his supreme command,  
Give the united squadrons to Ganteaume!

DECRES

Your Majesty, while umbraged, righteously,  
By an event my tongue dragged dry to tell,  
Makes my hard situation over-hard  
By your ascription to the actors in't  
Of motives such and such. 'Tis not for me  
To answer these reproaches, Sire, and ask  
Why years-long mindfulness of France's fame  
In things marine should win no confidence.  
I speak; but am unable to convince!  
True is it that this man has been my friend  
Since boyhood made us schoolmates; and I say  
That he would yield the heel-drops of his heart  
With joyful readiness this day, this hour,  
To do his country service. Yet no less  
Is it his drawback that he sees too far.  
And there are times, Sire, when a shorter sight  
Charms Fortune more. A certain sort of bravery  
Some people have—to wit, this same Lord Nelson—  
Which is but fatuous faith in one's own star  
Sworn to the very verge of childishness,  
[Smugly disguised as putting trust in God,  
A habit with these English folk]; whereby  
A headstrong blindness to contingencies  
Carries the actor on, and serves him well  
In some nice issues clearer sight would mar.  
Such eyeless bravery Villeneuve has not;  
But, Sire, he is no coward.

NAPOLEON

Well, have it so!—What are we going to do?  
My brain has only one wish—to succeed!

DECRES

My voice wanes weaker with you, Sire; is nought!  
Yet these few words, as Minister of Marine,  
I'll venture now.—My process would be thus:—



Our projects for a junction of the fleets  
Being well-discerned and read by every eye  
Through long postponement, England is prepared.  
I would recast them. Later in the year  
Form sundry squadrons of this massive one,  
Harass the English till the winter time,  
Then rendezvous at Cadiz; where leave half  
To catch the enemy's eye and call their cruizers,  
While rounding Scotland with the other half,  
You make the Channel by the eastern strait,  
Cover the passage of our army-boats,  
And plant the blow.

NAPOLEON

And what if they perceive  
Our Scottish route, and meet us eastwardly?

DECRES

I have thought of it, and planned a countermove;  
I'll write the scheme more clearly and at length,  
And send it hither to your Majesty.

NAPOLEON

Do so forthwith; and send me in Daru.

[Exit DECRES. Re-enter MONGE.]

Our breakfast, Monge, to-day has been cut short,  
And these discussions on the ancient tongues  
Wherein you shine, must yield to modern moils.  
Nay, hasten not away; though feeble wills,  
Incompetence, ay, imbecility,  
In some who feign to serve the cause of France,  
Do make me other than myself just now!—  
Ah—here's Daru.

[DARU enters. MONGE takes his leave.]

Daru, sit down and write. Yes, here, at once,  
This room will serve me now. What think you, eh?  
Villeneuve has just turned tail and run to Cadiz.  
So quite postponed—perhaps even overthrown—  
My long-conned project against yonder shore  
As 'twere a juvenile's snow-built device  
But made for melting! Think of it, Daru,—  
My God, my God, how can I talk thereon!  
A plan well judged, well charted, well upreared,  
To end in nothing!... Sit you down and write.  
[NAPOLEON walks up and down, and resumes after a silence.]

Write this.—A volte-face 'tis indeed!—Write, write!

DARU [holding pen to paper]

I wait, your Majesty.

NAPOLEON

First Bernadotte—

Yes; "Bernadotte moves out from Hanover

Through Hesse upon Wurzburg and the Danube.—

Marmont from Holland bears along the Rhine,

And joins at Mainz and Wurzburg Bernadotte...

While these prepare their routes the army here

Will turn its back on Britain's tedious shore,

And, closing up with Augereau at Brest,

Set out full force due eastward...

By the Black forest feign a straight attack,

The while our purpose is to skirt its left,

Meet in Franconia Bernadotte and Marmont;

Traverse the Danube somewhat down from Ulm;

Entrap the Austrian column by their rear;

Surround them, cleave them; roll upon Vienna,

Where, Austria settled, I engage the Tsar,

While Massena detains in Italy

The Archduke Charles.

Foreseeing such might shape,

Each high-and by-way to the Danube hence

I have of late had measured, mapped, and judged;

Such spots as suit for depots chosen and marked;

Each regiment's daily pace and bivouac

Writ tablewise for ready reference;

All which itineraries are sent herewith."

So shall I crush the two gigantic sets

Upon the Empire, now grown imminent.

—Let me reflect.—First Bernadotte—but nay,

The courier to Marmont must go first.

Well, well.—The order of our march from hence

I will advise... My knock at George's door

With bland inquiries why his royal hand

Withheld due answer to my friendly lines,

And tossed the irksome business to his clerks,

Is thus perforce delayed. But not for long.

Instead of crossing, thitherward I tour

By roundabout contrivance not less sure!

DARU

I'll bring the writing to your Majesty.  
[NAPOLEON and DARU go out severally.]  
CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music]  
Recording Angel, trace  
This bold campaign his thought has spun apace—  
One that bids fair for immortality  
Among the earthlings—if immortal deeds  
May be ascribed to so extemporary  
And transient a race!  
It will be called, in rhetoric and rhyme,  
As son to sire succeeds,  
A model for the tactics of all time;  
The Great Campaign of that so famed year Five,  
By millions of mankind not yet alive.  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE FRONTIERS OF UPPER AUSTRIA AND BAVARIA  
[A view of the country from mid-air, at a point south of the River Inn, which is seen as a silver thread, winding northward between its junction with the Salza and the Danube, and forming the boundaries of the two countries. The Danube shows itself as a crinkled satin riband, stretching from left to right in the far background of the picture, the Inn discharging its waters into the larger river.]

### DUMB SHOW

A vast Austrian army creeps dully along the mid-distance, in the detached masses and columns of a whitish cast. The columns insensibly draw nearer to each other, and are seen to be converging from the east upon the banks of the Inn aforesaid.

A RECORDING ANGEL [in recitative]

This movement as of molluscs on a leaf,  
Which from our vantage here we scan afar,  
Is one manoeuvred by the famous Mack  
To countercheck Napoleon, still believed  
To be intent on England from Boulogne,  
And heedless of such rallies in his rear.  
Mack's enterprise is now to cross Bavaria—  
Beneath us stretched in ripening summer peace  
As field unwonted for these ugly jars—  
Outraged Bavaria, simmering in disquiet

At Munich down behind us, Isar-fringed,  
And torn between his fair wife's hate of France  
And his own itch to gird at Austrian bluff  
For riding roughshod through his territory,  
Wavers from this to that. The while Time hastes  
The eastward streaming of Napoleon's host,  
As soon we see.

The silent insect-creep of the Austrian columns towards the banks of  
the Inn continues to be seen till the view fades to nebulousness and  
dissolves.

[image not archived]

### SCENE III

BOULOGNE. THE ST. OMER ROAD

[It is morning at the end of August, and the road stretches out  
of the town eastward.]

The divisions of the "Army-for-England" are making preparations  
to march. Some portions are in marching order. Bands strike  
up, and the regiments start on their journey towards the Rhine  
and Danube. Bonaparte and his officers watch the movements from  
an eminence. The soldiers, as they pace along under their eagles  
with beaming eyes, sing "Le Chant du Depart," and other martial  
songs, shout "Vive l'Empereur!" and babble of repeating the days  
of Italy, Egypt, Marengo, and Hohenlinden.]

NAPOLEON

Anon to England!

CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES [aerial music]

If Time's weird threads so weave!

[The scene as it lingers exhibits the gradual diminishing of  
the troops along the roads through the undulating August  
landscape, till each column is seen but as a train of dust;  
and the disappearance of each marching mass over the eastern  
horizon.]

[image not archived]

### ACT FOURTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX

[A sunny day in autumn. A room in the red-brick royal residence known as Gloucester Lodge.

At a front triple-lighted window stands a telescope on a tripod.

Through the open middle sash is visible the crescent-curved expanse of the Bay as a sheet of brilliant translucent green, on which ride vessels of war at anchor. On the left hand white cliffs stretch away till they terminate in St. Aldhelm's Head, and form a background to the level water-line on that side. In the centre are the open sea and blue sky. A near headland rises on the right, surmounted by a battery, over which appears the remoter bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingsers.

In the foreground yellow sands spread smoothly, whereon there are sundry temporary erections for athletic sports; and closer at hand runs an esplanade on which a fashionable crowd is promenading. Immediately outside the Lodge are companies of soldiers, groups of officers, and sentries.

Within the room the KING and PITT are discovered. The KING'S eyes show traces of recent inflammation, and the Minister has a wasted look.]

KING

Yes, yes; I grasp your reasons, Mr. Pitt,  
And grant you audience gladly. More than that,  
Your visit to this shore is apt and timely,  
And if it do but yield you needful rest  
From fierce debate, and other strains of office  
Which you and I in common have to bear,  
Twill be well earned. The bathing is unmatched  
Elsewhere in Europe,—see its mark on me!—  
The air like liquid life.—But of this matter:  
What argue these late movements seen abroad?  
What of the country now the session's past;  
What of the country, eh? and of the war?

PITT

The thoughts I have laid before your Majesty  
Would make for this, in sum:—  
That Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, and their friends,  
Be straightway asked to join. With Melville gone,  
With Sidmouth, and with Buckinghamshire too,  
The steerage of affairs has stood of late

Somewhat provisional, as you, sir, know,  
With stop-gap functions thrust on offices  
Which common weal can tolerate but awhile.  
So, for the weighty reasons I have urged,  
I do repeat my most respectful hope  
To win your Majesty's ungrudged assent  
To what I have proposed.

KING

But nothing, sure,  
Has been more plain to all, dear Mr. Pitt,  
Than that your own proved energy and scope  
Is ample, without aid, to carry on  
Our just crusade against the Corsican.  
Why, then, go calling Fox and Grenville in?  
Such helps we need not. Pray you think upon't,  
And speak to me again.—We've had alarms  
Making us skip like crackers at our heels,  
That Bonaparte had landed close hereby.

PITT

Such rumours come as regularly as harvest.

KING

And now he has left Boulogne with all his host?  
Was it his object to invade at all,  
Or was his vast assemblage there a blind?

PITT

Undoubtedly he meant invasion, sir,  
Had fortune favoured. He may try it yet.  
And, as I said, could we but close with Fox—

KING

But, but;—I ask, what is his object now?  
Lord Nelson's Captain—Hardy—whose old home  
Stands in a peaceful vale hard by us here—  
Who came two weeks ago to see his friends,  
I talked to in this room a lengthy while.  
He says our navy still is in thick night  
As to the aims by sea of Bonaparte  
Now the Boulogne attempt has fizzled out,  
And what he schemes afloat with Spain combined.  
The "Victory" lay that fortnight at Spithead,  
And Nelson since has gone aboard and sailed;  
Yes, sailed again. The "Royal Sovereign" follows,  
And others her. Nelson was hailed and cheered

To huskiness while leaving Southsea shore,  
Gentle and simple wildly thronging round.

PITT

Ay, sir. Young women hung upon his arm,  
And old ones blessed, and stroked him with their hands.

KING

Ah—you have heard, of course. God speed him, Pitt.

PITT

Amen, amen!

KING

I read it as a thing  
Of signal augury, and one which bodes  
Heaven's confidence in me and in my line,  
That I should rule as King in such an age!...  
Well, well.—So this new march of Bonaparte's  
Was unexpected, forced perchance on him?

PITT

It may be so, your Majesty; it may.  
Last noon the Austrian ambassador,  
Whom I consulted ere I posted down,  
Assured me that his latest papers word  
How General Mack and eighty thousand men  
Have made good speed across Bavaria  
To wait the French and give them check at Ulm,  
That fortress-frontier-town, entrenched and walled,  
A place long chosen as a vantage-point  
Whereon to encounter them as they outwind  
From the blind shades and baffling green defiles  
Of the Black Forest, worn with wayfaring.  
Here Mack will intercept his agile foe  
Hasting to meet the Russians in Bohemia,  
And cripple him, if not annihilate.  
Thus now, sir, opens out this Great Alliance  
Of Russia, Austria, England, whereto I  
Have lent my earnest efforts through long months,  
And the realm gives her money, ships, and men.—  
It claps a muffler round the Cock's steel spurs,  
And leaves me sanguine on his overthrow.  
But, then,—this coalition of resources  
Demands a strong and active Cabinet  
To aid your Majesty's directive hand;  
And thus I urge again the said additions—

These brilliant intellects of the other side  
Who stand by Fox. With us conjoined, they—  
KING

What, what, again—in face of my sound reasons!  
Believe me, Pitt, you underrate yourself;  
You do not need such aid. The splendid feat  
Of banding Europe in a righteous cause  
That you have achieved, so soon to put to shame  
This wicked bombardier of dynasties  
That rule by right Divine, goes straight to prove  
We had best continue as we have begun,  
And call no partners to our management.  
To fear dilemmas horning up ahead  
Is not your wont. Nay, nay, now, Mr. Pitt,  
I must be firm. And if you love your King  
You'll goad him not so rashly to embrace  
This Fox-Grenville faction and its friends.  
Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!  
Hey, what? But what besides?

PITT  
I say besides, sir,... nothing!

[A silence.]

KING [cheerfully]  
The Chancellor's here, and many friends of mine: Lady Winchelsea,  
Lord and Lady Chesterfield, Lady Bulkeley, General Garth, and Mr.  
Phipps the oculist—not the least important to me. He is a worthy  
and a skilful man. My eyes, he says, are as marvellously improved  
in durability as I know them to be in power. I have arranged to go  
to-morrow with the Princesses, and the Dukes of Cumberland, Sussex,  
and Cambridge [who are also here] for a ride on the Ridgeway, and  
through the Camp on the downs. You'll accompany us there?

PITT  
I am honoured by your Majesty's commands.  
[PITT looks resignedly out of the window.]  
What curious structure do I see outside, sir?

KING  
It's but a stage, a type of all the world. The burgesses have  
arranged it in my honour. At six o'clock this evening there are  
to be combats at single-stick to amuse the folk; four guineas  
the prize for the man who breaks most heads. Afterward there  
is to be a grinning match through horse-collars—a very humorous  
sport which I must stay here and witness; for I am interested in



whatever entertains my subjects.

PITT

Not one in all the land but knows it, sir.

KING

Now, Mr. Pitt, you must require repose;  
Consult your own convenience then, I beg,  
On when you leave.

PITT

I thank your Majesty.

[He departs as one whose purpose has failed, and the scene shuts.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II

BEFORE THE CITY OF ULM

[A prospect of the city from the east, showing in the foreground a low-lying marshy country bounded in mid-distance by the banks of the Danube, which, bordered by poplars and willows, flows across the picture from the left to the Elchingen Bridge near the right of the scene, and is backed by irregular heights and terraces of espaliered vines. Between these and the river stands the city, crowded with old gabled houses and surrounded by walls, bastions, and a ditch, all the edifices being dominated by the nave and tower of the huge Gothic Munster.

On the most prominent of the heights at the back—the Michaelsberg—to the upper-right of the view, is encamped the mass of the Austrian army, amid half-finished entrenchments. Advanced posts of the same are seen south-east of the city, not far from the advanced corps of the French Grand-Army under SOULT, MARMONT, LANNES, NEY, and DUPONT, which occupy in a semicircle the whole breadth of the flat landscape in front, and extend across the river to higher ground on the right hand of the panorama.

Heavy mixed drifts of rain and snow are descending impartially on the French and on the Austrians, the downfall nearly blotting out the latter on the hills. A chill October wind wails across the country, and the poplars yield slantingly to the gusts.]

DUMB SHOW

Drenched peasants are busily at work, fortifying the heights of the Austrian position in the face of the enemy. Vague companies of Austrians above, and of the French below, hazy and indistinct in the thick atmosphere, come and go without apparent purpose near their respective lines.

Closer at hand NAPOLEON, in his familiar blue-grey overcoat, rides hither and thither with his marshals, haranguing familiarly the bodies of soldiery as he passes them, and observing and pointing out the disposition of the Austrians to his companions. Thicker sheets of rain fly across as the murk of evening increases, which at length entirely obscures the prospect, and cloaks its bleared lights and fires.  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

ULM. WITHIN THE CITY

[The interior of the Austrian headquarters on the following morning. A tempest raging without.

GENERAL MACK, haggard and anxious, the ARCHDUKE FERDINAND, PRINCE

SCHWARZENBERG, GENERAL JELLACHICH, GENERALS RIESC, BIBERBACH, and

other field officers discovered, seated at a table with a map spread out before them. A wood fire blazes between tall andirons in a yawning fireplace. At every more than usually boisterous gust of wind the smoke flaps into the room.]

MACK

The accursed cunning of our adversary  
Confounds all codes of honourable war,  
Which ever have held as granted that the track  
Of armies bearing hither from the Rhine—  
Whether in peace or strenuous invasion—  
Should pierce the Schwarzwald, and through Memmingen,  
And meet us in our front. But he must wind  
And corkscrew meanly round, where foot of man  
Can scarce find pathway, stealing up to us  
Thiefwise, by out back door! Nevertheless,  
If English war-fleets be abreast Boulogne,  
As these deserters tell, and ripe to land there,  
It destines Bonaparte to pack him back  
Across the Rhine again. We've but to wait,  
And see him go.

ARCHDUKE

But who shall say if these bright tales be true?

MACK

Even then, small matter, your Imperial Highness;

The Russians near us daily, and must soon—  
Ay, far within the eight days I have named—  
Be operating to untie this knot,  
If we hold on.

ARCHDUKE

Conjectures these—no more;  
I stomach not such waiting. Neither hope  
Has kernel in it. I and my cavalry  
With caution, when the shadow fall to-night,  
Can bore some hole in this engirdlement;  
Outpass the gate north-east; join General Werneck,  
And somehow cut our way Bohemia-wards:  
Well worth the hazard, in our straitened case!

MACK [firmly]

The body of our force stays here with me.  
And I am much surprised, your Highness, much,  
You mark not how destructive 'tis to part!  
If we wait on, for certain we should wait  
In our full strength, compacted, undispersed  
By such partition as your Highness plans.

SCHWARZENBERG

There's truth in urging we should not divide,  
But weld more closely.—Yet why stay at all?  
Methinks there's but one sure salvation left,  
To wit, that we conjunctly march herefrom,  
And with much circumspection, towards the Tyrol.  
The subtle often rack their wits in vain—  
Assay whole magazines of strategy—  
To shun ill loomings deemed insuperable,  
When simple souls by stumbling up to them  
Find the grim shapes but air. But let use grant  
That the investing French so ring us in  
As to leave not a span for such exploit;  
Then go we—throw ourselves upon their steel,  
And batter through, or die!—

What say you, Generals? Speak your minds, I pray.

JELLACHICH

I favour marching out—the Tyrol way.

RIESCH

Bohemia best! The route thereto is open.

ARCHDUKE

My course is chosen. O this black campaign,

Which Pitt's alarmed dispatches pricked us to,  
All unforeseeing! Any risk for me  
Rather than court humiliation here!  
[MACK has risen during the latter remarks, walked to the  
window, and looked out at the rain. He returns with an air  
of embarrassment.]

MACK [to Archduke]

It is my privilege firmly to submit  
That your Imperial Highness undertake  
No venturous vaulting into risks unknown.—  
Assume that you, Sire, as you have proposed,  
With your light regiments and the cavalry,  
Detach yourself from us, to scoop a way  
By circuits northwards through the Rauhe Alps  
And Herdenheim, into Bohemia:  
Reports all point that you will be attacked,  
Enveloped, borne on to capitulate.  
What worse can happen here?—  
Remember, Sire, the Emperor deposes me,  
Should such a clash arise as has arisen,  
To exercise supreme authority.  
The honour of our arms, our race, demands  
That none of your Imperial Highness' line  
Be pounded prisoner by this vulgar foe,  
Who is not France, but an adventurer,  
Imposing on that country for his gain.

ARCHDUKE

But it seems clear to me that loitering here  
Is full as like to compass our surrender  
As moving hence. And ill it therefore suits  
The mood of one of my high temperature  
To pause inactive while await me means  
Of desperate cure for these so desperate ills!  
[The ARCHDUKE FERDINAND goes out. A troubled, silence follows,  
during which the gusts call into the chimney, and raindrops spit  
on the fire.]

SCHWARZENBERG

The Archduke bears him shrewdly in this course.  
We may as well look matters in the face,  
And that we are cooped and cornered is most clear;  
Clear it is, too, that but a miracle  
Can work to loose us! I have stoutly held

That this man's three years' ostentatious scheme  
To fling his army on the tempting shores  
Of our Allies the English was a—well—  
Scarce other than a trick of thimble-rig  
To still us into false security.

JELLACHICH

Well, I know nothing. None needs list to me,  
But, on the whole, to southward seems the course  
For lunging, all in force, immediately.

[Another pause.]

SPIRIT SINISTER

The Will throws Mack again into agitation:

Ho-ho—what he'll do now!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Nay, hard one, nay;

The clouds weep for him!

SPIRIT SINISTER

If he must;

And it's good antic at a vacant time!

[MACK goes restlessly to the door, and is heard pacing about  
the vestibule, and questioning the aides and other officers  
gathered there.]

A GENERAL

He wavers like this smoke-wreath that inclines

Or north, or south, as the storm-currents rule!

MACK [returning]

Bring that deserter hither once again.

[A French soldier is brought in, blindfolded and guarded. The  
bandage is removed.]

Well, tell us what he says.

AN OFFICER [after speaking to the prisoner in French]

He still repeats

That the whole body of the British strength

Is even now descending on Boulogne,

And that self-preservation must, if need,

Clear us from Bonaparte ere many days,

Who momentarily is moving.

MACK

Still retain him.

[He walks to the fire, and stands looking into it. The soldier  
is taken out.]

JELLACHICH [bending over the map in argument with RIESC]

I much prefer our self-won information;  
And if we have Marshal Soult at Landsberg here,  
[Which seems to be truth, despite this man,]  
And Dupont hard upon us at Albeck,  
With Ney not far from Gunzburg; somewhere here,  
Or further down the river, lurking Lannes,  
Our game's to draw off southward—if we can!

MACK [turning]

I have it. This we'll do. You Jellachich,  
Unite with Spangen's troops at Memmingen,  
To fend off mischief there. And you, Riesc,  
Will make your utmost haste to occupy  
The bridge and upper ground at Elchingen,  
And all along the left bank of the stream,  
Till you observe whereon to concentrate  
And sever their connections. I couch here,  
And hold the city till the Russians come.

A GENERAL [in a low voice]

Disjunction seems of all expedients worst:  
If any stay, then stay should every man,  
Gather, inlace, and close up hip to hip,  
And perk and bristle hedgehog-like with spines!

MACK

The conference is ended, friends, I say,  
And orders will be issued here forthwith.

[Guns heard.]

AN OFFICER

Surely that's from the Michaelsberg above us?

MACK

Never care. Here we stay. In five more days  
The Russians hail, and we regain our bays.

[Exeunt severally.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

BEFORE ULM. THE SAME DAY

[A high wind prevails, and rain falls in torrents. An elevated  
terrace near Elchingen forms the foreground.]

DUMB SHOW

From the terrace BONAPARTE surveys and dictates operations against  
the entrenched heights of the Michaelsberg that rise in the middle

distance on the right above the city. Through the gauze of descending waters the French soldiery can be discerned climbing to the attack under NEY.

They slowly advance, recede, re-advance, halt. A time of suspense follows. Then they are seen in a state of irregular movement, even confusion; but in the end they carry the heights with the bayonet. Below the spot whereon NAPOLEON and his staff are gathered, glistening wet and plastered with mud, obtrudes on the left the village of Elchingen, now in the hands of the French. Its white-walled monastery, its bridge over the Danube, recently broken by the irresistible NEY, wear a desolated look, and the stream, which is swollen by the rainfall and rasped by the storm, seems wanly to sympathize.

Anon shells are dropped by the French from the summits they have gained into the city below. A bomb from an Austrian battery falls near NAPOLEON, and in bursting raises a fountain of mud. The Emperor retreats with his officers to a less conspicuous station.

Meanwhile LANNES advances from a position near NAPOLEON till his columns reach the top of the Frauenberg hard by. The united corps of LANNES and NEY descend on the inner slope of the heights towards the city walls, in the rear of the retreating Austrians. One of the French columns scales a bastion, but NAPOLEON orders the assault to be discontinued, and with the wane of day the spectacle disappears.

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. THE MICHAELSBERG

[A chilly but rainless noon three days later. At the back of the scene, northward, rise the Michaelsberg heights; below stretches the panorama of the city and the Danube. On a secondary eminence forming a spur of the upper hill, a fire of logs is burning, the foremost group beside it being NAPOLEON and his staff, the former in his shabby greatcoat and plain turned-up hat, walking to and fro with his hands behind him, and occasionally stopping to warm himself. The French infantry are drawn up in a dense array at the back of these.

The whole Austrian garrison of Ulm marches out of the city gate opposite NAPOLEON. GENERAL MACK is at the head, followed by GIULAY, GOTTESHEIM, KLINAU, LICHTENSTEIN, and many other officers, who advance to BONAPARTE and deliver their swords.]

MACK

Behold me, Sire. Mack the unfortunate!

NAPOLEON

War, General, ever has its ups and downs,  
And you must take the better and the worse  
As impish chance or destiny ordains.

Come near and warm you here. A glowing fire  
Is life on the depressing, mired, moist days  
Of smitten leaves down-dropping clammily,  
And toadstools like the putrid lungs of men.

[To his Lieutenants.] Cause them so stand to right and left of me.  
[The Austrian officers arrange themselves as directed, and the  
body of the Austrians now file past their Conqueror, laying down  
their arms as they approach; some with angry gestures and words,  
others in moody silence.]

Listen, I pray you, Generals gathered her.  
I tell you frankly that I know not why  
Your master wages this wild war with me.  
I know not what he seeks by such injustice,  
Unless to give me practice in my trade—  
That of a soldier—whereto I was bred:  
Deemed he my craft might slip from me, unplied?  
Let him now own me still a dab therein!

MACK

Permit me, your Imperial Majesty,  
To speak one word in answer; which is this,  
No war was wished for by my Emperor:  
Russia constrained him to it!

NAPOLEON

If that be,  
You are no more a European power.—  
I would point out to him that my resources  
Are not confined to these my musters here;  
My prisoners of war, in route for France,  
Will see some marks of my resources there!  
Two hundred thousand volunteers, right fit,  
Will join my standards at a single nod,  
And in six weeks prove soldiers to the bone,  
Whilst you recruits, compulsion's scavengings,  
Scarce weld to warriors after toilsome years.  
But I want nothing on this Continent:  
The English only are my enemies.



Ships, colonies, and commerce I desire,  
 Yea, therewith to advantage you as me.  
 Let me then charge your Emperor, my brother,  
 To turn his feet the shortest way to peace.—  
 All states must have an end, the weak, the strong;  
 Ay; even may fall the dynasty of Lorraine!  
 [The filing past and laying down of arms by the Austrian army  
 continues with monotonous regularity, as if it would never end.]  
 NAPOLEON [in a murmur, after a while]  
 Well, what cares England! She has won her game;  
 I have unlearned to threaten her from Boulogne...  
 Her gold it is that forms the weft of this  
 Fair tapestry of armies marshalled here!  
 Likewise of Russia's drawing steadily nigh.  
 But they may see what these see, by and by.  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 So let him speak, the while we clearly sight him  
 Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide.  
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,  
 The all-compelling crystal pane but drags  
 Wither the showman wills.  
 SPIRIT IRONIC  
 And yet, my friend,  
 The Will itself might smile at this collapse  
 Of Austria's men-at-arms, so drolly done;  
 Even as, in your phantasmagoric show,  
 The deft manipulator of the slide  
 Might smile at his own art.  
 CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music]  
 Ah, no: ah, no!  
 It is impassible as glacial snow.—  
 Within the Great Unshaken  
 These painted shapes awaken  
 A lesser thrill than doth the gentle lave  
 Of yonder bank by Danube's wandering wave  
 Within the Schwarzwald heights that give it flow!  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 But O, the intolerable antilogy  
 Of making figments feel!  
 SPIRIT IRONIC  
 Logic's in that.  
 It does not, I must own, quite play the game.

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

And this day wins for Ulm a dingy fame,

Which centuries shall not bleach from her name!

[The procession of Austrians continues till the scene is hidden  
by haze.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

LONDON. SPRING GARDENS

[Before LORD MALMESBURY'S house, on a Sunday morning in the  
same autumn. Idlers pause and gather in the background.

PITT enters, and meets LORD MULGRAVE.]

MULGRAVE

Good day, Pitt. Ay, these leaves that skim the ground

With withered voices, hint that sunshine-time

Is well-nigh past.—And so the game's begun

Between him and the Austro-Russian force,

As second movement in the faceabout

From Boulogne shore, with which he has hocused us?—

What has been heard on't? Have they clashed as yet?

PITT

The Emperor Francis, partly at my instance,

Has thrown the chief command on General Mack,

A man most capable and far of sight.

He centres by the Danube-bank at Ulm,

A town well-walled, and firm for leaning on

To intercept the French in their advance

From the Black Forest toward the Russian troops

Approaching from the east. If Bonaparte

Sustain his marches at the break-neck speed

That all report, they must have met ere now.

—There is a rumour... quite impossible!...

MULGRAVE

You still have faith in Mack as strategist?

There have been doubts of his far-sightedness.

PITT [hastily]

I know, I know.—I am calling here at Malmesbury's

At somewhat an unceremonious time

To ask his help to translate this Dutch print

The post has brought. Malmesbury is great at Dutch,

Learning it long at Leyden, years ago.

[He draws a newspaper from his pocket, unfolds it, and glances it down.]

There's news here unintelligible to me  
Upon the very matter! You'll come in?

[They call at LORD MAMESBURY'S. He meets them in the hall, and welcomes them with an apprehensive look of foreknowledge.]

PITT

Pardon this early call. The packet's in,  
And wings me this unreadable Dutch paper,  
So, as the offices are closed to-day,  
I have brought it round to you.

[Handling the paper.]

What does it say?

For God's sake, read it out. You know the tongue.

MALMESBURY [with hesitation]

I have glanced it through already—more than once—  
A copy having reached me, too, by now...

We are in the presence of a great disaster!  
See here. It says that Mack, enjailed in Ulm  
By Bonaparte—from four side shutting round—  
Capitulated, and with all his force  
Laid down his arms before his conqueror!

[PITT's face changes. A silence.]

MULGRAVE

Outrageous! Ignominy unparalleled!

PITT

By God, my lord, these statement must be false!  
These foreign prints are trustless as Cheap Jack  
Dumfounding yokels at a country fair.  
I heed no word of it.—Impossible.

What! Eighty thousand Austrians, nigh in touch  
With Russia's levies that Kutuzof leads,  
To lay down arms before the war's begun?  
Tis too much!

MALMESBURY

But I fear it is too true!  
Note the assevered source of the report—  
One beyond thought of minters of mock tales.  
The writer adds that military wits  
Cry that the little Corporal now makes war  
In a new way, using his soldiers' legs  
And not their arms, to bring him victory.

Ha-ha! The quip must sting the Corporal's foes.

PITT [after a pause]

O vacillating Prussia! Had she moved,  
Had she but planted one foot firmly down,  
All this had been averted.—I must go.

Tis sure, 'tis sure, I labour but in vain!

[MALMESBURY accompanies him to the door, and PITT walks away  
disquietedly towards Whitehall, the other two regarding him  
as he goes.]

MULGRAVE

Too swiftly he declines to feebleness,  
And these things well might shake a stouter frame!

MALMESBURY

Of late the burden of all Europe's cares,  
Of hiring and maintaining half her troops,  
His single pair of shoulders has upborne,  
Thanks to the obstinacy of the King.—  
His thin, strained face, his ready irritation,  
Are ominous signs. He may not be for long.

MULGRAVE

He alters fast, indeed,—as do events.

MALMESBURY

His labour's lost; and all our money gone!  
It looks as if this doughty coalition  
On which we have lavished so much pay and pains  
Would end in wreck.

MULGRAVE

All is not over yet;  
The gathering Russian forces are unbroke.

MALMESBURY

Well; we shall see. Should Boney vanquish these,  
And silence all resistance on that side,  
His move will then be backward to Boulogne,  
And so upon us.

MULGRAVE

Nelson to our defence!

MALMESBURY

Ay; where is Nelson? Faith, by this time  
He may be sodden; churned in Biscay swirls;  
Or blown to polar bears by boreal gales;  
Or sleeping amorously in some calm cave  
On the Canaries' or Atlantis' shore

Upon the bosom of his Dido dear,  
For all that we know! Never a sound of him  
Since passing Portland one September day—  
To make for Cadiz; so 'twas then believed.

MULGRAVE

He's staunch. He's watching, or I am much deceived.

[MULGRAVE departs. MALMESBURY goes within. The scene shuts.]

[image not archived]

## ACT FIFTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR

[A bird's eye view of the sea discloses itself. It is daybreak,  
and the broad face of the ocean is fringed on its eastern edge  
by the Cape and the Spanish shore. On the rolling surface  
immediately beneath the eye, ranged more or less in two parallel  
lines running north and south, one group from the twain standing  
off somewhat, are the vessels of the combined French and Spanish  
navies, whose canvases, as the sun edges upward, shine in its  
rays like satin.

On the western horizon two columns of ships appear in full sail,  
small as moths to the aerial vision. They are bearing down  
towards the combined squadrons.]

RECORDING ANGEL I [intoning from his book]

At last Villeneuve accepts the sea and fate,  
Despite the Cadiz council called of late,  
Whereat his stoutest captains—men the first  
To do all mortals durst—  
Willing to sail, and bleed, and bear the worst,  
Short of cold suicide, did yet opine  
That plunging mid those teeth of treble line  
In jaws of oaken wood

Held open by the English navarchy  
With suasive breadth and artful modesty,  
Would smack of purposeless foolhardihood.

RECORDING ANGEL II

But word came, writ in mandatory mood,  
To put from Cadiz, gain Toulon, and straight

At a said sign on Italy operate.  
 Moreover that Villeneuve, arrived as planned,  
 Would find Rosily in supreme command.—  
 Gloomy Villeneuve grows rash, and, darkly brave,  
 Leaps to meet war, storm, Nelson—even the grave.  
 SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music]  
 Ere the concussion hurtle, draw abreast  
 Of the sea.  
 SEMICHORUS II  
 Where Nelson's hulls are rising from the west,  
 Silently.  
 SEMICHORUS I  
 Each linen wing outspread, each man and lad  
 Sworn to be  
 SEMICHORUS II  
 Amid the vanmost, or for Death, or glad  
 Victory!  
 [The point of sight descends till it is near the deck of the  
 Bucentaure, the flag-ship of VILLENEUVE. Present thereupon  
 are the ADMIRAL, his FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANT  
 DAUDIGNON, other naval officers and seamen.]  
 MAGENDIE  
 All night we have read their signals in the air,  
 Whereby the peering frigates of their van  
 Have told them of our trend.  
 VILLENEUVE  
 The enemy  
 Makes threat as though to throw him on our stern:  
 Signal the fleet to wear; bid Gravina  
 To come in from manoeuvring with his twelve,  
 And range himself in line.  
 [Officers murmur.]  
 I say again  
 Bid Gravina draw hither with his twelve,  
 And signal all to wear!—and come upon  
 The larboard tack with every bow anorth!—  
 So we make Cadiz in the worst event.  
 And patch our rags up there. As we head now  
 Our only practicable thoroughfare  
 Is through Gibraltar Strait—a fatal door!  
 Signal to close the line and leave no gaps.  
 Remember, too, what I have already told:

Remind them of it now. They must not pause  
For signallings from me amid a strife  
Whose chaos may prevent my clear discernment,  
Or may forbid my signalling at all.

The voice of honour then becomes the chief's;  
Listen they thereto, and set every stitch  
To heave them on into the fiercest fight.

Now I will sum up all: heed well the charge;  
EACH CAPTAIN, PETTY OFFICER, AND MAN  
IS ONLY AT HIS POST WHEN UNDER FIRE.

[The ships of the whole fleet turn their bows from south to north as directed, and close up in two parallel curved columns, the concave side of each column being towards the enemy, and the interspaces of the first column being, in general, opposite the hulls of the second.]

AN OFFICER [straining his eyes towards the English fleet]

How they skip on! Their overcrowded sail  
Bulge like blown bladders in a tripeman's shop  
The market-morning after slaughterday!

PETTY OFFICER

It's morning before slaughterday with us,  
I make so bold to bode!

[The English Admiral is seen to be signalling to his fleet. The signal is: "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." A loud cheering from all the English ships comes undulating on the wind when the signal is read.]

VILLENEUVE

They are signalling too—Well, business soon begins!  
You will reserve your fire. And be it known  
That we display no admirals' flags at all  
Until the action's past. 'Twill puzzle them,  
And work to our advantage when we close.—  
Yes, they are double-ranked, I think, like us;  
But we shall see anon.

MAGENDIE

The foremost one  
Makes for the "Santa Ana." In such case  
The "Fougueux" might assist her.

VILLENEUVE

Be it so—  
There's time enough.—Our ships will be in place,  
And ready to speak back in iron words

When theirs cry Hail! in the same sort of voice.

[They prepare to receive the northernmost column of the enemy's ships headed by the "Victory," trying the distance by an occasional single shot. During their suspense a discharge is heard southward, and turning they behold COLLINGWOOD at the head of his column in the "Royal Sovereign," just engaging with the Spanish "Santa Ana." Meanwhile the "Victory's" mizzen-topmast, with spars and a quantity of rigging, is seen to have fallen, her wheel to be shot away, and her deck encumbered with dead and wounded men.]

VILLENEUVE

Tis well! But see; their course is undelayed,  
And still they near in clenched audacity!

DAUDIGNON

Which aim deft Lucas o' the "Redoubtable"  
Most gallantly bestirs him to outscheme.—  
See, how he strains, that on his timbers fall  
Blows that were destined for his Admiral!

[During this the French ship "Redoubtable" is moving forward to interpose itself between the approaching "Victory" and the Bucentaure.]

VILLENEUVE

Now comes it! The "Santisima Trinidad,"  
The old "Redoubtable's" hard sides, and ours,  
Will take the touse of this bombastic blow.  
Your grapnels and your boarding-hatchets—ready!  
We'll dash our eagle on the English deck,  
And swear to fetch it!

CREW

Ay! We swear. Huzza  
Long live the Emperor!

[But the "Victory" suddenly swerves to the rear of the "Bucentaure," and crossing her stern-waters, discharges a broadside into her and the "Redoubtable" endwise, wrapping the scene in folds of smoke. The point of view changes.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE SAME. THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE "VICTORY"

[The van of each division of the English fleet has drawn to the windward side of the combined fleets of the enemy, and broken their order, the "Victory" being now parallel to and alongside



the "Redoubtable," the "Temeraire" taking up a station on the other side of that ship. The "Bucentaure" and the "Santisima Trinidad" become jammed together a little way ahead. A smoke and din of cannonading prevail, amid which the studding-sail booms are shot away.

NELSON, HARDY, BLACKWOOD, SECRETARY SCOTT, LIEUTENANT PASCO,

BURKE the Purser, CAPTAIN ADAIR of the Marines, and other officers are on or near the quarter-deck.]

NELSON

See, there, that noble fellow Collingwood,  
How straight he helms his ship into the fire!—  
Now you'll haste back to yours [to BLACKWOOD].  
—We must henceforth

Trust to the Great Disposer of events,  
And justice of our cause!...

[BLACKWOOD leaves. The battle grows hotter. A double-headed shot cuts down seven or eight marines on the "Victory's" poop.]

Captain Adair, part those marines of yours,  
And hasten to disperse them round the ship.—  
Your place is down below, Burke, not up here;  
Ah, yes; like David you would see the battle!

[A heavy discharge of musket-shot comes from the tops of the "Santisima Trinidad. ADAIR and PASCO fall. Another swathe of Marines is mowed down by chain-shot.]

SCOTT

My lord, I use to you the utmost prayers  
That I have privilege to shape in words:  
Remove your stars and orders, I would beg;  
That shot was aimed at you.

NELSON

They were awarded to me as an honour,  
And shall I do despite to those who prize me,  
And slight their gifts? No, I will die with them,  
If die I must.

[He walks up and down with HARDY.]

HARDY

At least let's put you on  
Your old greatcoat, my lord—[the air is keen].—  
'Twill cover all. So while you still retain  
Your dignities, you baulk these deadly aims  
NELSON

Thank 'ee, good friend. But no,—I haven't time,  
I do assure you—not a trice to spare,  
As you well will see.

[A few minutes later SCOTT falls dead, a bullet having pierced his skull. Immediately after a shot passes between the Admiral and the Captain, tearing the instep of Hardy's shoe, and striking away the buckle. They shake off the dust and splinters it has scattered over them. NELSON glances round, and perceives what has happened to his secretary.]

NELSON

Poor Scott, too, carried off! Warm work this, Hardy;  
Too warm to go on long.

HARDY

I think so, too;  
Their lower ports are blocked against our hull,  
And our charge now is less. Each knock so near  
Sets their old wood on fire.

NELSON

Ay, rotten as peat.  
What's that? I think she has struck, or pretty nigh!  
[A cracking of musketry.]

HARDY

Not yet.—Those small-arm men there, in her tops,  
Thin our crew fearfully. Now, too, our guns  
Have dipped full down, or they would rake  
The Temeraire"" there on the other side."

NELSON

True.—While you deal good measure out to these,  
Keep slapping at those giants over here—  
The "Trinidad," I mean, and the "Bucentaure,"  
To win'ard—swelling up so pompously.

HARDY

I'll see no slackness shall be shown that way.  
[They part and go in their respective directions. Gunners, naked to the waist and reeking with sweat, are now in swift action on the several decks, and firemen carry buckets of water hither and thither. The killed and wounded thicken around, and are being lifted and examined by the surgeons. NELSON and HARDY meet again.]

NELSON

Bid still the firemen bring more bucketfuls,  
And dash the water into each new hole  
Our guns have gouged in the "Redoubtable,"

Or we shall all be set ablaze together.

HARDY

Let me once more advise, entreat, my lord,  
That you do not expose yourself so clearly.  
Those fellows in the mizzen-top up there  
Are peppering round you quite perceptibly.

NELSON

Now, Hardy, don't offend me. They can't aim;  
They only set their own rent sails on fire.—  
But if they could, I would not hide a button  
To save ten lives like mine. I have no cause  
To prize it, I assure 'ee.—Ah, look there,  
One of the women hit,—and badly, too.  
Poor wench! Let some one shift her quickly down.

HARDY

My lord, each humblest sojourner on the seas,  
Dock-labourer, lame longshore-man, bowed bargee,  
Sees it as policy to shield his life  
For those dependent on him. Much more, then,  
Should one upon whose priceless presence here  
Such issues hang, so many strivers lean,  
Use average circumspection at an hour  
So critical for us all.

NELSON

Ay, ay. Yes, yes;  
I know your meaning, Hardy;; and I know  
That you disguise as frigid policy  
What really is your honest love of me.  
But, faith, I have had my day. My work's nigh done;  
I serve all interests best by chancing it  
Here with the commonest.—Ah, their heavy guns  
Are silenced every one! Thank God for that.

HARDY

Tis so. They only use their small arms now.  
[He goes to larboard to see what is progressing on that side  
between his ship and the "Santisima Trinidad."]

OFFICER [to seaman]

Swab down these stairs. The mess of blood about  
Makes 'em so slippery that one's like to fall  
In carrying the wounded men below.

[While CAPTAIN HARDY is still a little way off, LORD NELSON turns  
to walk aft, when a ball from one of the muskets in the mizzen-

top of the "Redoubtable" enters his left shoulder. He falls upon his face on the deck. HARDY looks round, and sees what has happened.]

HARDY [hastily]

Ah—what I feared, and strove to hide I feared!...

[He goes towards NELSON, who in the meantime has been lifted by SERGEANT-MAJOR SECKER and two seamen.]

NELSON

Hardy, I think they've done for me at last!

HARDY

I hope not!

NELSON

Yes. My backbone is shot through.

I have not long to live.

[The men proceed to carry him below.]

Those tiller ropes

They've torn away, get instantly repaired!

[At sight of him borne along wounded there is great agitation among the crew.]

Cover my face. There will be no good be done

By drawing their attention off to me.

Bear me along, good fellows; I am but one

Among the many darkened here to-day!

[He is carried on to the cockpit over the crowd of dead and wounded.]

Doctor, I'm gone. I am waste o' time to you.

HARDY [remaining behind]

Hills, go to Collingwood and let him know

That we've no Admiral here.

[He passes on.]

A LIEUTENANT

Now quick and pick him off who did the deed—

That white-bloused man there in the mizzen-top.

POLLARD, a midshipman [shooting]

No sooner said than done. A pretty aim!

[The Frenchman falls dead upon the poop.

The spectacle seems now to become enveloped in smoke, and the point of view changes.]

[image not archived]

### SCENE III

THE SAME. ON BOARD THE "BUCENTAURE"

[The bowsprit of the French Admiral's ship is stuck fast in the stern-gallery of the "Santisima Trinidad," the starboard side of the "Bucentaure" being shattered by shots from two English three-deckers which are pounding her on that hand. The poop is also reduced to ruin by two other English ships that are attacking her from behind.]

On the quarter-deck are ADMIRAL VILLENEUVE, the FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANTS DAUDIGNON, FOURNIER, and others, anxiously occupied. The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling among the dead and dying, who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.]

VILLENEUVE

We shall be crushed if matters go on thus.—

Direct the "Trinidad" to let her drive,  
That this foul tangle may be loosened clear!

DAUDIGNON

It has been tried, sir; but she cannot move.

VILLENEUVE

Then signal to the "Hero" that she strive  
Once more to drop this way.

MAGENDIE

We may make signs,  
But in the thickened air what signal's marked?—  
Tis done, however.

VILLENEUVE

The "Redoubtable"  
And "Victory" there,—they grip in dying throes!  
Something's amiss on board the English ship.  
Surely the Admiral's fallen?

A PETTY OFFICER

Sir, they say  
That he was shot some hour, or half, ago.—  
With dandyism raised to godlike pitch  
He stalked the deck in all his jewellery,  
And so was hit.

MAGENDIE

Then Fortune shows her face!  
We have scotched England in dispatching him. [He watches.]  
Yes! He commands no more; and Lucas, joying,

Has taken steps to board. Look, spars are laid,  
And his best men are mounting at his heels.

VILLENEUVE

Ah, God—he is too late! Whence came the hurl  
Of heavy grape? The smoke prevents my seeing  
But at brief whiles.—The boarding band has fallen,  
Fallen almost to a man.—’Twas well assayed!

MAGENDIE

That’s from their ”Temeraire,” whose vicious broadside  
Has cleared poor Lucas’ decks.

VILLENEUVE

And Lucas, too.

I see him no more there. His red planks show  
Three hundred dead if one. Now for ourselves!

[Four of the English three-deckers have gradually closed round  
the ”Bucentaure,” whose bowsprit still sticks fast in the gallery  
of the ”Santisima Trinidad.” A broadside comes from one of the  
English, resulting in worse havoc on the ”Bucentaure.” The main  
and mizzen masts of the latter fall, and the boats are beaten to  
pieces. A raking fire of musketry follows from the attacking  
ships, to which the ”Bucentaure” heroically continues still to  
keep up a reply.]

CAPTAIN MAGENDIE falls wounded. His place is taken by LIEUTENANT  
DAUDIGNON.]

VILLENEUVE

Now that the fume has lessened, code my biddance  
Upon our only mast, and tell the van  
At once to wear, and come into the fire.

[Aside] If it be true that, as HE sneers, success  
Demands of me but cool audacity,  
To-day shall leave him nothing to desire!

[Musketry continues. DAUDIGNON falls. He is removed, his post  
being taken by LIEUTENANT FOURNIER. Another crash comes, and  
the deck is suddenly encumbered with rigging.]

FOURNIER

There goes our foremast! How for signalling now?

VILLENEUVE

To try that longer, Fournier, is in vain  
Upon this haggard, scorched, and ravaged hulk,  
Her decks all reeking with such gory shows,  
Her starboard side in rents, her stern nigh gone!  
How does she keep afloat?—

Bucentaure, O lucky good old ship!  
My part in you is played. Ay—I must go;  
I must tempt Fate elsewhere,—if but a boat  
Can bear me through this wreckage to the van.

FOURNIER

Our boats are stove in, or as full of holes  
As the cook's skimmer, from their cursed balls!  
[Musketry. VILLENEUVE'S Head-of-Staff, DE PRIGNY, falls wounded,  
and many additional men. VILLENEUVE glances troublously from  
ship to ship of his fleet.]

VILLENEUVE

How hideous are the waves, so pure this dawn!—  
Red-frothed; and friends and foes all mixed therein.—  
Can we in some way hail the "Trinidad"  
And get a boat from her?  
[They attempt to distract the attention of the "Santisima  
Trinidad" by shouting.]

Impossible;

Amid the loud combustion of this strife  
As well try holloing to the antipodes!...  
So here I am. The bliss of Nelson's end  
Will not be mine; his full refulgent eve  
Becomes my midnight! Well; the fleets shall see  
That I can yield my cause with dignity.  
[The "Bucentaure" strikes her flag. A boat then puts off from the  
English ship "Conqueror," and VILLENEUVE, having surrendered his  
sword, is taken out from the "Bucentaure." But being unable to  
regain her own ship, the boat is picked up by the "Mars," and  
the French admiral is received aboard her. Point of view changes.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE COCKPIT OF THE "VICTORY"

[A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied  
by a continuous ground-bass roar from the guns of the warring  
fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded  
are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some  
silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-  
beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood,  
and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and  
candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell

from abdominal wounds.

NELSON, his face now pinched and wan with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman's berth, dimly lit by a lantern. DR.

BEATTY, DR. MAGRATH, the Rev. DR. SCOTT the Chaplain, BURKE the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.]

MAGRATH [in a low voice]

Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone..

BEATTY

There was no hope for them.

NELSON [brokenly]

Who have just died?

BEATTY

Two who were badly hit by now, my lord;

Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple.

NELSON

Ah!

So many lives—in such a glorious cause...

I join them soon, soon, soon!—O where is Hardy?

Will nobody bring Hardy to me—none?

He must be killed, too. Surely Hardy's dead?

A MIDSHIPMAN

He's coming soon, my lord. The constant call

On his full heed of this most mortal fight

Keeps him from hastening hither as he would.

NELSON

I'll wait, I'll wait. I should have thought of it.

[Presently HARDY comes down. NELSON and he grasp hands.]

Hardy, how goes the day with us and England?

HARDY

Well; very well, thank God for't, my dear lord.

Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment struck,

And put himself aboard the "Conqueror."

Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about,

Thus far we've got. The said "Bucentaure" chief:

The "Santa Ana," the "Redoubtable,"

The "Fougueux," the "Santisima Trinidad,"

San Augustino, San Francisco," "Aigle";

And our old "Swiftsure," too, we've grappled back,

To every seaman's joy. But now their van

Has tacked to bear round on the "Victory"

And crush her by sheer weight of wood and brass:

Three of our best I am therefore calling up,



And make no doubt of worsting theirs, and France.

NELSON

That's well. I swore for twenty.—But it's well.

HARDY

We'll have 'em yet! But without you, my lord,  
We have to make slow plodding do the deeds  
That sprung by inspiration ere you fell;  
And on this ship the more particularly.

NELSON

No, Hardy.—Ever 'twas your settled fault  
So modestly to whittle down your worth.  
But I saw stuff in you which admirals need  
When, taking thought, I chose the "Victory's" keel  
To do my business with these braggarts in.  
A business finished now, for me!—Good friend,  
Slow shades are creeping me... I scarce see you.

HARDY

The smoke from ships upon our win'ard side,  
And the dust raised by their worm-eaten hulks,  
When our balls touch 'em, blind the eyes, in truth.

NELSON

No; it is not that dust; 'tis dust of death  
That darkens me.

[A shock overhead. HARDY goes up. On or two other officers go up,  
and by and by return.]

What was that extra noise?

OFFICER

The "Formidable" passed us by, my lord,  
And thumped a stunning broadside into us.—  
But, on their side, the "Hero's" captain's fallen;  
The "Algeciras" has been boarded, too,  
By Captain Tyler, and the captain shot:  
Admiral Gravina desperately holds out;  
They say he's lost an arm.

NELSON

And we, ourselves—

Who have we lost on board here? Nay, but tell me!

BEATTY

Besides poor Scott, my lord, and Charles Adair,  
Lieutenant Ram, and Whipple, captain's clerk,  
There's Smith, and Palmer, midshipmen, just killed.  
And fifty odd of seamen and marines.

NELSON

Poor youngsters! Scarred old Nelson joins you soon.

BEATTY

And wounded: Bligh, lieutenant; Pasco, too,  
and Reeves, and Peake, lieutenants of marines,  
And Rivers, Westphall, Bulkeley, midshipmen,  
With, of the crew, a hundred odd just now,  
Unreckoning those late fallen not brought below.

BURKE

That fellow in the mizzen-top, my lord,  
Who made it his affair to wing you thus,  
We took good care to settle; and he fell  
Like an old rook, smack from his perch, stone dead.

NELSON

Tw'as not worth while!—He was, no doubt, a man  
Who in simplicity and sheer good faith  
Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to him!  
And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,  
If such be had, be tided through their loss,  
And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me.

[HARDY re-enters.]

Who's that? Ah—here you come! How, Hardy, now?

HARDY

The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be wounded,  
We know not with what truth. But, be as 'twill,  
He sheers away with all he could call round,  
And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port.  
[A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises on deck.  
A midshipman goes above and returns.]

MIDSHIPMAN [in the background]

It is the enemy's first-rate, the "Achille,"  
Blown to a thousand atoms!—While on fire,  
Before she burst, the captain's woman there,  
Desperate for life, climbed from the gunroom port  
Upon the rudder-chains; stripped herself stark,  
And swam for the Pickle's boat. Our men in charge,  
Seeing her great breasts bulging on the brine,  
Sang out, "A mermaid 'tis, by God!"—then rowed  
And hauled her in.—

BURKE

Such unbid sights obtrude  
On death's dyed stage!

MIDSHIPMAN

Meantime the "Achille" fought on,  
Even while the ship was blazing, knowing well  
The fire must reach their powder; which it did.  
The spot is covered now with floating men,  
Some whole, the main in parts; arms, legs, trunks, heads,  
Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,  
And splinter looped with entrails of the crew.

NELSON [rousing]

Our course will be to anchor. Let me know.

HARDY

But let me ask, my lord, as needs I must,  
Seeing your state, and that our work's not done,  
Shall I, from you, bid Admiral Collingwood  
Take full on him the conduct of affairs?

NELSON [trying to raise himself]

Not while I live, I hope! No, Hardy; no.

Give Collingwood my order. Anchor all!

HARDY [hesitating]

You mean the signal's to be made forthwith?

NELSON

I do!—By God, if but our carpenter  
Could rig me up a jury-backbone now,  
To last one hour—until the battle's done,  
I'd see to it! But here I am—stove in—  
Broken—all logged and done for! Done, ay done!

BEATTY [returning from the other wounded]

My lord, I must implore you to lie calm!

You shorten what at best may not be long.

NELSON [exhausted]

I know, I know, good Beatty! Thank you well

Hardy, I was impatient. Now I am still.

Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare?

[BEATTY and others retire, and the two abide in silence, except  
for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths.]

NELSON is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze.]

NELSON [suddenly]

What are you thinking, that you speak no word?

HARDY [waking from a short reverie]

Thoughts all confused, my lord:—their needs on deck,

Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past;

Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—

Old childish things at home, down Wessex way.  
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill  
Where I was born. The tumbling stream, the garden,  
The placid look of the grey dial there,  
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,  
And the red apples on my father's trees,  
Just now full ripe.

NELSON

Ay, thus do little things  
Steal into my mind, too. But ah, my heart  
Knows not your calm philosophy!—There's one—  
Come nearer to me, Hardy.—One of all,  
As you well guess, pervades my memory now;  
She, and my daughter—I speak freely to you.  
Twas good I made that codicil this morning  
That you and Blackwood witnessed. Now she rests  
Safe on the nation's honour... Let her have  
My hair, and the small treasured things I owned,  
And take care of her, as you care for me!

[HARDY promises.]

NELSON [resuming in a murmur]

Does love die with our frame's decease, I wonder,  
Or does it live on ever?...

[A silence. BEATTY approaches.]

HARDY

Now I'll leave,  
See if your order's gone, and then return.

NELSON [symptoms of death beginning to change his face]

Yes, Hardy; yes; I know it. You must go.—

Here we shall meet no more; since Heaven forbend

That care for me should keep you idle now,

When all the ship demands you. Beatty, too.

Go to the others who lie bleeding there;

Them can you aid. Me you can render none!

My time here is the briefest.—If I live

But long enough I'll anchor... But—too late—

My anchoring's elsewhere ordered!... Kiss me, Hardy:

[HARDY bends over him.]

I'm satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty!

[HARDY brushes his eyes with his hand, and withdraws to go above,  
pausing to look back before he finally disappears.]

BEATTY [watching Nelson]

Ah!—Hush around!...

He's sinking. It is but a trifle now  
Of minutes with him. Stand you, please, aside,  
And give him air.

[BEATTY, the Chaplain, MAGRATH, the Steward, and attendants  
continue to regard NELSON. BEATTY looks at his watch.]

BEATTY

Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell,  
And now he's going.

[They wait. NELSON dies.]

CHAPLAIN

Yes... He has homed to where  
There's no more sea.

BEATTY

We'll let the Captain know,  
Who will confer with Collingwood at once.  
I must now turn to these.

[He goes to another part of the cockpit, a midshipman ascends to  
the deck, and the scene overclouds.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

His thread was cut too slowly! When he fell.  
And bade his fame farewell,  
He might have passed, and shunned his long-drawn pain,  
Endured in vain, in vain!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Young Spirits, be not critical of That  
Which was before, and shall be after you!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But out of tune the Mode and meritless  
That quickens sense in shapes whom, thou hast said,  
Necessitation sways! A life there was  
Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles—  
Who visioned it too clearly, even while  
He dubbed the Will "the gods." Truly said he,  
"Such gross injustice to their own creation  
Burdens the time with mournfulness for us,  
And for themselves with shame.—Things mechanized"  
By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes  
Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule,  
And governance of sweet consistency,  
Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide  
With That Which holds responsibility,

Or inexist.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Yea, yea, yea!

Thus would the Mover pay

The score each puppet owes,

The Reaper reap what his contrivance sows!

Why make Life debtor when it did not buy?

Why wound so keenly Right that it would die?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Nay, blame not! For what judgment can ye blame?—

In that immense unweeting Mind is shown

One far above forethinking; processive,

Yet superconscious; a Clairvoyancy

That knows not what It knows, yet works therewith.—

The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel,

If I report it meetly, came unmeant,

Emerging with blind gropes from impercipience

By listless sequence—luckless, tragic Chance,

In your more human tongue.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

And hence unneeded

In the economy of Vitality,

Which might have ever kept a sealed cognition

As doth the Will Itself.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music]

Nay, nay, nay;

Your hasty judgments stay,

Until the topmost cyme

Have crowned the last entablature of Time.

O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will;

O pause, till all things all their days fulfil!

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

LONDON. THE GUILDHALL

[A crowd of citizens has gathered outside to watch the carriages as they drive up and deposit guests invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet, for which event the hall is brilliantly lit within. A cheer rises when the equipage of any popular personage arrives at the door.]

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, well! Nelson is the man who ought to have been banqueted to-night. But he is coming to Town in a coach different from these.!

SECOND CITIZEN

Will they bring his poor splintered body home?

FIRST CITIZEN

Yes. They say he's to be tombed in marble, at St. Paul's or Westminster. We shall see him if he lays in state. It will make a patriotic spectacle for a fine day.

BOY

How can you see a dead man, father, after so long?

FIRST CITIZEN

They'll embalm him, my boy, as they did all the great Egyptian admirals.

BOY

His lady will be handy for that, won't she?

FIRST CITIZEN

Don't ye ask awkward questions.

SECOND CITIZEN

Here's another coming!

FIRST CITIZEN

That's my Lord Chancellor Eldon. Wot he'll say, and wot he'll look! Mr. Pitt will be here soon.

BOY

I don't like Billy. He killed Uncle John's parrot.

SECOND CITIZEN

How may ye make that out, youngster?

BOY

Mr. Pitt made the war, and the war made us want sailors; and Uncle John went for a walk down Wapping High Street to talk to the pretty ladies one evening; and there was a press all along the river that night—a regular hot one—and Uncle John was carried on board a man-of-war to fight under Nelson; and nobody minded Uncle John's parrot, and it talked itself to death. So Mr. Pitt killed Uncle John's parrot; see it, sir?

SECOND CITIZEN

You had better have a care of this boy, friend. His brain is too precious for the common risks of Cheapside. Not but what he might as well have said Boney killed the parrot when he was about it. And as for Nelson—who's now sailing shinier seas than ours, if they've rubbed Her off his slate where he's gone to,—the French papers say that our loss in him is greater than our gain in ships; so that logically the victory is theirs. Gad, sir, it's almost

true!

[A hurrahing is heard from Cheapside, and the crowd in that direction begins to hustle and show excitement.]

FIRST CITIZEN

He's coming, he's coming! Here, let me lift you up, my boy.— Why, they have taken out the horses, as I am man alive!

SECOND CITIZEN

Pitt for ever!—Why, here's a blade opening and shutting his mouth like the rest, but never a sound does he raise!

THIRD CITIZEN

I've not too much breath to carry me through my day's work, so I can't afford to waste it in such luxuries as crying Hurrah to aristocrats. If ye was ten yards off y'd think I was shouting as loud as any.

SECOND CITIZEN

It's a very mean practice of ye to husband yourself at such a time, and gape in dumbshow like a frog in Plaistow Marshes.

THIRD CITIZEN

No, sir; it's economy; a very necessary instinct in these days of ghastly taxations to pay half the armies in Europe! In short, in the word of the Ancients, it is scarcely compass-mentas to do otherwise! Somebody must save something, or the country will be as bankrupt as Mr. Pitt himself is, by all account; though he don't look it just now.

[PITT's coach passes, drawn by a troop of running men and boy. The Prime Minister is seen within, a thin, erect, up-nosed figure, with a flush of excitement on his usually pale face. The vehicle reached the doorway to the Guildhall and halts with a jolt. PITT gets out shakily, and amid cheers enters the building.]

FOURTH CITIZEN

Quite a triumphal entry. Such is power;  
Now worshipped, now accursed! The overthrow  
Of all Pitt's European policy  
When his hired army and his chosen general  
Surrendered them at Ulm a month ago,  
Is now forgotten! Ay; this Trafalgar  
Will botch up many a ragged old reputé,  
Make Nelson figure as domestic saint  
No less than country's saviour, Pitt exalt  
As zenith-star of England's firmament,  
And uncurse all the bogglers of her weal



At this adventurous time.

THIRD CITIZEN

Talk of Pitt being ill. He looks hearty as a buck.

FIRST CITIZEN

It's the news—no more. His spirits are up like a rocket for the moment.

BOY

Is it because Trafalgar is near Portugal that he loves Port wine?

SECOND CITIZEN

Ah, as I said, friend; this boy must go home and be carefully put to bed!

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, whatever William's faults, it is a triumph for his virtues to-night!

[PITT having disappeared, the Guildhall doors are closed, and the crowd slowly disperses, till in the course of an hour the street shows itself empty and dark, only a few oil lamps burning. The SCENE OPENS, revealing the interior of the Guildhall, and the brilliant assembly of City magnates, Lords, and Ministers seated there, Mr. PITT occupying a chair of honour by the Lord Mayor. His health has been proposed as that of the Saviour of England, and drunk with acclamations.]

PITT [standing up after repeated calls]

My lords and gentlemen:—You have toasted me

As one who has saved England and her cause.

I thank you, gentlemen, unfeignedly.

But—no man has saved England, let me say:

England has saved herself, by her exertions:

She will, I trust, save Europe by her example!

[Loud applause, during which he sits down, rises, and sits down again. The scene then shuts, and the night without has place.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Those words of this man Pitt—his last large words,

As I may prophesy—that ring to-night

In their first mintage to the feasters here,

Will spread with ageing, lodge, and crystallize,

And stand embedded in the English tongue

Till it grow thin, outworn, and cease to be.—

So is't ordained by That Which all ordains;

For words were never winged with apter grace.

Or blent with happier choice of time and place,

To hold the imagination of this strenuous race.

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

AN INN AT RENNES

[Night. A sleeping-chamber. Two candles are burning near a bed in an alcove, and writing-materials are on the table. The French admiral, VILLENEUVE, partly undressed, is pacing up and down the room.]

VILLENEUVE

These hauntings have at last nigh proved to me  
That this thing must be done. Illustrious foe  
And teacher, Nelson: blest and over blest  
In thy outgoing at the noon of strife  
When glory clasped thee round; while wayward Death  
Refused my coaxings for the like-timed call!  
Yet I did press where thickest missiles fell,  
And both by precept and example showed  
Where lay the line of duty, patriotism,  
And honour, in that combat of despair.  
[He see himself in the glass as he passes.]  
Unfortunate Villeneuve!—whom fate has marked  
To suffer for too firm a faithfulness.—  
An Emperor's chide is a command to die.—  
By him accursed, forsaken by my friend,  
Awhile stern England's prisoner, then unloosed  
Like some poor dolt unworth captivity,  
Time serves me now for ceasing. Why not cease?...  
When, as Shades whisper in the chasmal night,  
Better, far better, no percipience here.—  
O happy lack, that I should have no child  
To come into my hideous heritage,  
And groan beneath the burden of my name!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I'll speak. His mood is ripe for such a parle.  
[Sending a voice into VILLENEUVE'S ear.]  
Thou dost divine the hour!

VILLENEUVE

But those stern Nays,  
That heretofore were audible to me  
At each unhappy time I strove to pass?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Have been annulled. The Will grants exit freely;  
Yea, It says "Now." Therefore make now thy time.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

May his sad sunken soul merge into nought  
Meekly and gently as a breeze at eve!

VILLENEUVE

From skies above me and the air around  
Those callings which so long have circled me  
At last do whisper "Now." Now it shall be!

[He seals a letter, and addresses it to his wife; then takes a dagger from his accoutrements that are hanging alongside, and, lying down upon his back on the bed, stabs himself determinedly in many places, leaving the weapon in the last wound.]

Ungrateful master; generous foes; Farewell!

[VILLENEUVE dies; and the scene darkens.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VII

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX

[The interior of the "Old Rooms" Inn. Boatmen and burghers are sitting on settles round the fire, smoking and drinking.]

FIRST BURGHER

So they've brought him home at last, hey? And he's to be solemnized with a roaring funeral?

FIRST BOATMAN

Yes, thank God... 'Tis better to lie dry than wet, if canst do it without stinking on the road gravewards. And they took care that he shouldn't.

SECOND BOATMAN

Tis to be at Paul's; so they say that know. And the crew of the Victory have to walk in front, and Captain Hardy is to carry his stars and garters on a great velvet pincushion.

FIRST BURGHER

Where's the Captain now?

SECOND BOATMAN [nodding in the direction of Captain Hardy's house]

Down at home here biding with his own folk a bit. I zid en walking with them on the Esplanade yesterday. He looks ten years older than he did when he went. Ay—he brought the galliant hero home!

SECOND BURGHER

Now how did they bring him home so that he could lie in state afterwards to the naked eye!

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, as they always do,—in a cask of sperrits.

SECOND BURGHER

Really, now!

FIRST BOATMAN [lowering his voice]

But what happened was this. They were a long time coming, owing to contrary winds, and the "Victory" being little more than a wreck.

And grog ran short, because they'd used near all they had to peckle his body in. So—they broached the Adm'l!

SECOND BURGHER

How?

FIRST BOATMAN

Well; the plain calendar of it is, that when he came to be unhooped, it was found that the crew had drunk him dry. What was the men to do? Broke down by the battle, and hardly able to keep afloat, 'twas a most defendable thing, and it fairly saved their lives. So he was their salvation after death as he had been in the fight. If he could have knowed it, 'twould have pleased him down to the ground! How 'a would have laughed through the spigot-hole: "Draw on, my hearties! Better I shrivel than you famish." Ha-ha!

SECOND BURGHER

It may be defendable afloat; but it seems queer ashore.

FIRST BOATMAN

Well, that's as I had it from one that knows—Bob Loveday of Overcombe—one of the "Victory" men that's going to walk in the funeral. However, let's touch a livelier string. Peter Green, strike up that new ballet that they've lately had prented here, and were hawking about town last market-day.

SONG

THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR

## I

In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round the land,  
And the Back-sea met the Front-sea, and our doors were blocked  
with sand,

And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where bones of thousands are,  
We knew not what the day had done for us at Trafalgar.

[All] Had done,

Had done,

For us at Trafalgar!

## II

Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go! one says, says he.  
We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm; but snug at home slept we.  
Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through the day,  
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of Cadiz Bay.  
The dark,  
The dark,  
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay!

## III

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and tore,  
As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly shore;  
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and far,  
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Trafalgar!  
The deep,  
The deep,  
That night at Trafalgar!  
[The Cloud-curtain draws.]  
CHORUS OF THE YEARS  
Meanwhile the month moves on to counter-deeds  
Vast as the vainest needs,  
And fiercely the predestined plot proceeds.  
[image not archived]

## ACT SIXTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

THE FIELD OF AUSTERLITZ. THE FRENCH POSITION  
[The night is the 1st of December following, and the eve of the battle. The view is from the elevated position of the Emperor's bivouac. The air cuts keen and the sky glistens with stars, but the lower levels are covered with a white fog stretching like a sea, from which the heights protrude as dusky rocks.  
To the left are discernible high and wooded hills. In the front mid-distance the plateau of Pratzen outstands, declining suddenly on the right to a low flat country covered with marshes and pools now mostly obscured. On the plateau itself are seen innumerable

and varying lights, marking the bivouac of the centre divisions of the Austro-Russian army. Close to the foreground the fires of the French are burning, surrounded by soldiery. The invisible presence of the countless thousand of massed humanity that compose the two armies makes itself felt indefinitely.

The tent of NAPOLEON rises nearest at hand, with sentinel and other military figures looming around, and saddled horses held by attendants. The accents of the Emperor are audible, through the canvas from inside, dictating a proclamation.]

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

"Soldiers, the hordes of Muscovy now face you,  
To mend the Austrian overthrow at Ulm!  
But how so? Are not these the self-same bands  
You met and swept aside at Hollabrunn,  
And whose retreating forms, dismayed to flight,  
Your feet pursued along the trackways here?  
Our own position, massed and menacing,"  
Is rich in chance for opportune attack;  
For, say they march to cross and turn our right—  
A course almost at their need—their stretching flank  
Will offer us, from points now prearranged—"

VOICE OF A MARSHAL

Shows it, your Majesty, the wariness  
That marks your usual far-eye policy,  
To openly announce your tactics thus  
Some twelve hours ere their form can actualize?

THE VOICE OF NAPOLEON

The zest such knowledge will impart to all  
Is worth the risk of leakages. [To Secretary]  
Write on.

[Dictation resumed]

"Soldiers, your sections I myself shall lead;  
But ease your minds who would expostulate  
Against my undue rashness. If your zeal  
Sow hot confusion in the hostile files  
As your old manner is, and in our rush  
We mingle with our foes, I'll use fit care.  
Nevertheless, should issues stand at pause  
But for a wink-while, that time you will eye  
Your Emperor the foremost in the shock,  
Taking his risk with every ranksman here.  
For victory, men, must be no thing surmised,

As that which may or may not beam on us,  
Like noontide sunshine on a dubious morn;  
It must be sure!—The honour and the fame  
Of France's gay and gallant infantry—  
So dear, so cherished all the Empire through—  
Binds us to compass it!  
Maintain the ranks;  
Let none be thinned by impulse or excuse  
Of bearing back the wounded: and, in fine,  
Be every one in this conviction firm:—  
That 'tis our sacred bond to overthrow  
These hirelings of a country not their own:  
Yea, England's hirelings, they!—a realm stiff-steeled  
In deathless hatred of our land and lives.  
The campaign closes with this victory;"  
And we return to find our standards joined  
By vast young armies forming now in France.  
Forthwith resistless, Peace establish we,  
Worthy of you, the nation, and of me!"  
NAPOLEON.

[To his Marshals]

So shall we prostrate these paid slaves of hers—  
England's, I mean—the root of all the war.

VOICE OF MURAT

The further details sent of Trafalgar  
Are not assuring.

VOICE OF LANNES

What may the details be?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON [moodily]

We learn that six-and-twenty ships of war,  
During the fight and after, struck their flags,  
And that the tigerish gale throughout the night  
Gave fearful finish to the English rage.

By luck their Nelson's gone, but gone withal  
Are twenty thousand prisoners, taken off  
To gnaw their finger-nails in British hulks.  
Of our vast squadrons of the summer-time  
But rags and splintered remnants now remain.—  
Thuswise Villeneuve, poor craven, quitted him!  
And England puffed to yet more bombastry.  
—Well, well; I can't be everywhere. No matter;  
A victory's brewing here as counterpoise!

These water-rats may paddle in their salt slush,  
And welcome. 'Tis not long they'll have the lead.  
Ships can be wrecked by land!

ANOTHER VOICE

And how by land,  
Your Majesty, if one may query such?

VOICE OF NAPOLEON [sardonically]

I'll bid all states of Europe shut their ports  
To England's arrogant bottoms, slowly starve  
Her bloated revenues and monstrous trade,  
Till all her hulls lie sodden in their docks,  
And her grey island eyes in vain shall seek  
One jack of hers upon the ocean plains!

VOICE OF SOULT

A few more master-strokes, your Majesty,  
Must be dealt hereabout to compass such!

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

God, yes!—Even here Pitt's guineas are the foes:  
Tis all a duel 'twixt this Pitt and me;  
And, more than Russia's host, and Austria's flower,  
I everywhere to-night around me feel  
As from an unseen monster haunting nigh  
His country's hostile breath!—But come: to choke it  
By our to-morrow's feats, which now, in brief,  
I recapitulate.—First Soult will move  
To forward the grand project of the day:  
Namely: ascend in echelon, right to front,  
With Vandamme's men, and those of Saint Hilaire:  
Legrand's division somewhere further back—  
Nearly whereat I place my finger here—  
To be there reinforced by tirailleurs:  
Lannes to the left here, on the Olmutz road,  
Supported by Murat's whole cavalry.  
While in reserve, here, are the grenadiers  
Of Oudinot, the corps of Bernadotte,  
Rivaud, Drouet, and the Imperial Guard.

MARSHAL'S VOICES

Even as we understood, Sire, and have ordered.  
Nought lags but day, to light our victory!

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

Now let us up and ride the bivouacs round,  
And note positions ere the soldiers sleep.



—Omit not from to-morrow's home dispatch  
 Direction that this blow of Trafalgar  
 Be hushed in all the news-sheets sold in France,  
 Or, if reported, let it be portrayed  
 As a rash fight whereout we came not worst,  
 But were so broken by the boisterous eve  
 That England claims to be the conqueror.  
 [There emerge from the tent NAPOLEON and the marshals, who all  
 mount the horses that are led up, and proceed through the frost  
 and time towards the bivouacs. At the Emperor's approach to the  
 nearest soldiery they spring up.]  
 SOLDIERS  
 The Emperor! He's here! The Emperor's here!  
 AN OLD GRENADIER [approaching Napoleon familiarly]  
 We'll bring thee Russian guns and flags galore.  
 To celebrate thy coronation-day!  
 [They gather into wisps the straw, hay, and other litter on which  
 they have been lying, and kindling these at the dying fires, wave  
 them as torches. This is repeated as each fire is reached, till  
 the whole French position is one wide illumination. The most  
 enthusiastic of the soldiers follow the Emperor in a throng as  
 he progresses, and his whereabouts in the vast field is denoted  
 by their cries.]  
 CHORUS OF PITIES [aerial music]  
 Strange suasive pull of personality!  
 CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS  
 His projects they unknow, his grin unsee!  
 CHORUS OF THE PITIES  
 Their luckless hearts say blindly—He!  
 [The night-shades close over.]  
 [image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION  
 [Midnight at the quarters of FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE KUTUZOF at  
 Kresnowitz. An inner apartment is discovered, roughly adapted  
 as a council-room. On a table with candles is unfolded a large  
 map of Austerlitz and its environs.  
 The Generals are assembled in consultation round the table,  
 WEIROTHER pointing to the map, LANGERON, BUXHOVDEN, and  
 MILORADOVICH standing by, DOKHTOROF bending over the map,

PRSCHEBISZEWSKY indifferently walking up and down. KUTUZOF, old and weary, with a scarred face and only one eye, is seated in a chair at the head of the table, nodding, waking, and nodding again. Some officers of lower grade are in the background, and horses in waiting are heard hoofing and champing outside.

WEIROTHER speaks, referring to memoranda, snuffing the nearest candle, and moving it from place to place on the map as he proceeds importantly.]

WEIROTHER

Now here, our right, along the Olmutz Road  
Will march and oust our counterfacers there,  
Dislodge them from the Sainton Hill, and thence  
Advance direct to Brunn.—You heed me, sirs?—  
The cavalry will occupy the plain:  
Our centre and main strength,—you follow me?—  
Count Langeron, Dokhtorof, with Prschebiszewsky  
And Kollowrath—now on the Pratzen heights—  
Will down and cross the Goldbach rivulet,  
Seize Tilnitz, Kobelnitz, and hamlets nigh,  
Turn the French right, move onward in their rear,  
Cross Schwarsa, hold the great Vienna road:—  
So, with the nightfall, centre, right, and left,  
Will rendezvous beneath the walls of Brunn.

LANGERON [taking a pinch of snuff]

Good, General; very good!—if Bonaparte  
Will kindly stand and let you have your way.

But what if he do not!—if he forestall

These sound slow movements, mount the Pratzen hills

When we descend, fall on OUR rear forthwith,

While we go crying for HIS rear in vain?

KUTUZOF [waking up]

Ay, ay, Weirother; that's the question—eh?

WEIROTHER [impatiently]

If Bonaparte had meant to climb up there,

Being one so spry and so determinate,

He would have set about it ere this eve!

He has not troops to do so, sirs, I say:

His utmost strength is forty thousand men.

LANGERON

Then if so weak, how can so wise a brain

Court ruin by abiding calmly here

The impact of a force so large as ours?  
He may be mounting up this very hour!  
What think you, General Miloradovich?

MILORADOVICH

I? What's the use of thinking, when to-morrow  
Will tell us, with no need to think at all!

WEIROTHER

Pah! At this moment he retires apace.  
His fires are dark; all sounds have ceased that way  
Save voice of owl or mongrel wintering there.  
But, were he nigh, these movements I detail  
Would knock the bottom from his enterprize.

KUTUZOF [rising]

Well, well. Now this being ordered, set it going.  
One here shall make fair copies of the notes,  
And send them round. Colonel van Toll I ask  
To translate part.—Generals, it grows full late,  
And half-a-dozen hours of needed sleep  
Will aid us more than maps. We now disperse,  
And luck attend us all. Good-night. Good-night.  
[The Generals and other officers go out severally.]

Such plans are—paper! Only to-morrow's light  
Reveals the true manoeuvre to my sight!

[He flaps out with his hand all the candles but one or two,  
slowly walks outside the house, and listens. On the high  
ground in the direction of the French lines are heard shouts,  
and a wide illumination grows and strengthens; but the hollows  
are still mantled in fog.]

Are these the signs of regiments out of heart,  
And beating backward from an enemy!

[He remains pondering. On the Pratzen heights immediately in front  
there begins a movement among the Russians, signifying that the plan  
which involves desertion of that vantage-ground is about to be put  
in force. Noises of drunken singing arise from the Russian lines at  
various points elsewhere.

The night shades involve the whole.]

[image not archived]

### SCENE III

THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION

[Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 2nd of December. A

white frost and fog still prevail in the low-lying areas; but overhead the sky is clear. A dead silence reigns.

NAPOLEON, on a grey horse, closely attended by BERTHIER, and surrounded by MARSHALS SOULT, LANNES, MURAT, and their aides-de camp, all cloaked, is discernible in the gloom riding down from the high ground before Bellowitz, on which they have bivouacked, to the village of Puntowitz on the Goldbach stream, quite near the front of the Russian position of the day before on the Pratzen crest. The Emperor and his companions come to a pause, look around and upward to the hills, and listen.]

NAPOLEON

Their bivouac fires, that lit the top last night,  
Are all extinct.

LANNES

And hark you, Sire; I catch  
A sound which, if I err not, means the thing  
We have hoped, and hoping, feared fate would not yield!

NAPOLEON

My God, it surely is the tramp of horse  
And jolt of cannon downward from the hill  
Toward our right here, by the swampy lakes  
That face Davout? Thus, as I sketched, they work!

MURAT

Yes! They already move upon Tilnitz.

NAPOLEON

Leave them alone! Nor stick nor stone we'll stir  
To interrupt them. Nought that we can scheme  
Will help us like their own stark sightlessness!—  
Let them get down to those white lowlands there,  
And so far plunge in the level that no skill,  
When sudden vision flashes on their fault,  
Can help them, though despair-stung, to regain  
The key to mastery held at yestereve!  
Meantime move onward these divisions here  
Under the fog's kind shroud; descend the slope,  
And cross the stream below the Russian lines:  
There halt concealed, till I send down the word.  
[NAPOLEON and his staff retire to the hill south-east of Bellowitz  
and the day dawns pallidly.]  
Tis good to get above that rimy cloak  
And into cleaner air. It chilled me through.  
[When they reach the summit they are over the fog: and suddenly

the sun breaks forth to the left of Pratzen, illuminating the ash-hued face of NAPOLEON and the faces of those around him. All eyes are turned first to the sun, and thence to look for the dense masses of men that had occupied the upland the night before.]

MURAT

I see them not. The plateau seems deserted!

NAPOLEON

Gone; verily!—Ah, how much will you bid,  
An hour hence, for the coign abandoned now!  
The battle's ours.—It was, then, their rash march  
Downwards to Tilnitz and the Goldbach swamps  
Before dawn, that we heard.—No hurry, Lannes!  
Enjoy this sun, that rests its chubby jowl  
Upon the plain, and thrusts its bristling beard  
Across the lowlands' fleecy counterpane,  
Peering beneath our broadest hat-brims' shade...  
Soult, how long hence to win the Pratzen top?

SOULT

Some twenty minutes or less, your Majesty:  
Our troops down there, still mantled by the mist,  
Are half upon the way.

NAPOLEON

Good! Set forthwith

Vandamme and Saint Hilaire to mount the slopes—

[Firing begins in the marsh to the right by Tilnitz and the pools, though the thick air yet hides the operations.]

O, there you are, blind boozy Buxhovden!

Achieve your worst. Davout will hold you firm.

[The head of an aide-de-camp rises through the fog on that side, and he hastens up to NAPOLEON and his companions, to whom the officer announces what has happened. DAVOUT rides off, disappearing legs first into the white stratum that covers the attack.]

Lannes and Murat, you have concern enough

Here on the left, with Prince Bagration

And all the Austro-Russian cavalry.

Haste off. The victory promising to-day

Will, like a thunder-clap, conclude the war!

[The Marshals with their aides gallop away towards their respective divisions. Soon the two divisions under SOULT are seen ascending in close column the inclines of the Pratzen height. Thereupon the

heads of the Russian centre columns disclose themselves, breaking the sky-line of the summit from the other side, in a desperate attempt to regain the position vacated by the Russian left. A fierce struggle develops there between SOULT'S divisions and these, who, despite their tardy attempt to recover the lost post of dominance, are pressed by the French off the slopes into the lowland.]

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

O Great Necessitator, heed us now!

If it indeed must be

That this day Austria smoke with slaughter,

Quicken the issue as Thou knowest how;

And dull their lodgment in a flesh that galls!

SEMICHORUS II

If it be in the future human story

To lift this man to yet intenser glory,

Let the exploit be done

With the least sting, or none,

To those, his kind, at whose expense such pitch is won!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Again ye deprecate the World-Soul's way

That I so long have told? Then note anew

[Since ye forget] the ordered potencies,

Nerves, sinews, trajects, eddies, ducts of It

The Eternal Urger, pressing change on change.

[At once, as earlier, a preternatural clearness possesses the atmosphere of the battle-field, in which the scene becomes anatomized and the living masses of humanity transparent. The controlling Immanent Will appears therein, as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.]

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

O Innocents, can ye forget

That things to be were shaped and set

Ere mortals and this planet met?

SEMICHORUS II

Stand ye apostrophizing That

Which, working all, works but thereat

Like some sublime fermenting-vat.

SEMICHORUS I

Heaving throughout its vast content

With strenuously transmutive bent

Though of its aim insentient?—

SEMICHORUS II

Could ye have seen Its early deeds  
Ye would not cry, as one who pleads  
For quarter, when a Europe bleeds!

SEMICHORUS I

Ere ye, young Pities, had upgrown  
From out the deeps where mortals moan  
Against a ruling not their own,

SEMICHORUS II

He of the Years beheld, and we,  
Creation's prentice artistry  
Express in forms that now unbe

SEMICHORUS I

Tentative dreams from day to day;  
Mangle its types, re-knead the clay  
In some more palpitating way;

SEMICHORUS II

Beheld the rarest wrecked amain,  
Whole nigh-perfected species slain  
By those that scarce could boast a brain;

SEMICHORUS I

Saw ravage, growth, diminish, add,  
Here peoples sane, there peoples mad,  
In choiceless throws of good and bad;

SEMICHORUS II

Heard laughter at the ruthless dooms  
Which tortured to the eternal glooms  
Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs.

CHORUS

Us Ancients, then, it ill befits  
To quake when Slaughter's spectre flits  
Athwart this field of Austerlitz!

SHADE OF THE EARTH

Pain not their young compassions by such lore,  
But hold you mute, and read the battle yonder:  
The moment marks the day's catastrophe.

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION

[It is about noon, and the vital spectacle is now near the village of Tilnitz. The fog has dispersed, and the sun shines clearly, though without warmth, the ice on the pools gleaming under its radiance.]

GENERAL BUXHOVDEN and his aides-de-camp have reined up, and remain at pause on a hillock. The General watches through a glass his battalions, which are still disputing the village. Suddenly approach down the track from the upland of Pratzen large companies of Russian infantry helter-skelter. COUNT LANGERON is beheld to be retreating with them; and soon, pale and agitated, he hastens up to GENERAL BUXHOVDEN, whose face is flushed.]

LANGERON

While they are upon us you stay idle here!  
Prschebiszewsky's column is distraught and rent,  
And more than half my own made captive! Yea,  
Kreznowitz carried, and Sokolnitz hemmed:  
The enemy's whole strength will stound you soon!

BUXHOVDEN

You seem to see the enemy everywhere.

LANGERON

You cannot see them, be they here or no!

BUXHOVDEN

I only wait Prschebiszewsky's nearing corps  
To join Dokhtorof's to them. Here they come.

[SOULT, supported by BERNADOTTE and OUDINOT, having cleared and secured the Pratzen height, his battalions are perceived descending from it on this side, behind DOKHTOROF'S division, so placing the latter between themselves and the pools.]

LANGERON

You cannot tell the Frenchmen from ourselves!  
These are the victors.—Ah—Dokhtorof—lost!

[DOKHTOROF'S troops are seen to be retreating towards the water.  
The watchers stand in painful tenseness.]

BUXHOVDEN

Dokhtorof tell to save him as he may!

We, Count, must gather up our shaken flesh  
And hurry them by the road through Austerlitz.

[BUXHOVDEN'S regiments and the remains of LANGERON'S are rallied and collected, and they retreat by way of the hamlet of Aujezd.

As they go over the summit of a hill BUXHOVDEN looks back.

LANGERON'S columns, which were behind his own, have been cut off by VANDAMME'S division coming down from the Pratzen plateau.



This and some detachments from DOKHTOROF'S column rush towards the Satschan lake and endeavour to cross it on the ice. It cracks beneath their weight. At the same moment NAPOLEON and his brilliant staff appear on the top of the Pratzen.

The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile; and directs a battery near at hand to fire down upon the ice on which the Russians are crossing. A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror, which fly in all directions. Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and their groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas.

A general flight of the Russian army from wing to wing is now disclosed, involving in its current the EMPEROR ALEXANDER and the EMPEROR FRANCIS, with the reserve, who are seen towards Austerlitz endeavouring to rally their troops in vain. They are swept along by the disordered soldiery.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. NEAR THE WINDMILL OF PALENY

[The mill is about seven miles to the southward, between French advanced posts and the Austrians.

A bivouac fire is burning. NAPOLEON, in grey overcoat and beaver hat turned up front to back, rides to the spot with BERTHIER, SAVARY, and his aides, and alights. He walks to and fro complacently, meditating or talking to BERTHIER. Two groups of officers, one from each army, stand in the background on their respective sides.]

NAPOLEON

What's this of Alexander? Weep, did he,  
Like his old namesake, but for meaner cause?  
Ha, ha!

BERTHIER

Word goes, you Majesty, that Colonel Toll,  
One of Field-Marshal Price Kutuzof's staff,  
In the retreating swirl of overthrow,  
Found Alexander seated on a stone,  
Beneath a leafless roadside apple-tree,  
Out here by Goding on the Holitsch way;  
His coal-black uniform and snowy plume  
Unmarked, his face disconsolate, his grey eyes

Mourning in tears the fate of his brave array—  
All flying southward, save the steadfast slain.

NAPOLEON

Poor devil!—But he'll soon get over it—

Sooner than his employers oversea!—

Ha!—this well make friend Pitt and England writhe,

And cloud somewhat their lustrous Trafalgar.

[An open carriage approaches from the direction of Holitsch, accompanied by a small escort of Hungarian guards. NAPOLEON walks forward to meet it as it draws up, and welcomes the Austrian Emperor, who alights. He is wearing a grey cloak over a white uniform, carries a light walking-cane, and is attended by PRINCE JOHN OF LICHTENSTEIN, SWARZENBERG, and others. His fresh-coloured face contrasts strangely with the bluish pallor of NAPOLEON'S; but it is now thin and anxious. They formally embrace. BERTHIER, PRINCE JOHN, and the rest retire, and the two Emperors are left by themselves before the fire.]

NAPOLEON

Here on the roofless ground do I receive you—

My only mansion for these two months past!

FRANCIS

Your tenancy thereof has brought such fame

That it must needs be one which charms you, Sire.

NAPOLEON

Good! Now this war. It has been forced on me

Just at a crisis most inopportune,

When all my energies and arms were bent

On teaching England that her watery walls

Are no defence against the wrath of France

Aroused by breach of solemn covenants.

FRANCIS

I had no zeal for violating peace

Till ominous events in Italy

Revealed the gloomy truth that France aspires

To conquest there, and undue sovereignty.

Since when mine eyes have seen no sign outheld

To signify a change of purposings.

NAPOLEON

Yet there were terms distinctly specified

To General Giulay in November past,

Whereon I'd gladly fling the sword aside.

To wit: that hot armigerent jealousy  
Stir us no further on transalpine rule,  
I'd take the Isonzo River as our bounds.

FRANCIS

Roundly, that I cede all!—And how may stand  
Your views as to the Russian forces here?

NAPOLEON

You have all to lose by that alliance, Sire.  
Leave Russia. Let the Emperor Alexander  
Make his own terms; whereof the first must be  
That he retire from Austrian territory.  
I'll grant an armistice therefor. Anon  
I'll treat with him to weld a lasting peace,  
Based on some simple undertakings; chief,  
That Russian armies keep to the ports of his domain.  
Meanwhile to you I'll tender this good word:  
Keep Austria to herself. To Russia bound,  
You pay your own costs with your provinces,  
Alexander's likewise therewithal.

FRANCIS

I see as much, and long have seen it, Sire;  
And standing here the vanquished, let me own  
What happier issues might have left unsaid:  
Long, long I have lost the wish to bind myself  
To Russia's purposings and Russia's risks;  
Little do I count these alliances  
With Powers that have no substance seizable!  
[As they converse they walk away.]

AN AUSTRIAN OFFICER

O strangest scene of an eventful life,  
This junction that I witness here to-day!  
An Emperor—in whose majestic veins  
Aeneas and the proud Caesarian line  
Claim yet to live; and, those scarce less renowned,  
The dauntless Hawks'-Hold Counts, of gallantry  
So great in fame one thousand years ago—  
To bend with deference and manners mild  
In talk with this adventuring campaigner,  
Raised but by pikes above the common herd!

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN OFFICER

Ay! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen heights  
In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz.

[The Emperors again draw near.]

FRANCIS

Then, to this armistice, which shall be called  
Immediately at all points, I agree;  
And pledge my word that my august ally  
Accept it likewise, and withdraw his force  
By daily measured march to his own realm.

NAPOLEON

For him I take your word. And pray believe  
That rank ambitions are your own, not mine;  
That though I have postured as your enemy,  
And likewise Alexander's, we are one  
In interests, have in all things common cause.  
One country sows these mischiefs Europe through  
By her insidious chink of luring ore—  
False-featured England, who, to aggrandize  
Her name, her influence, and her revenues,  
Schemes to impropriate the whole world's trade,  
And starves and bleeds the folk of other lands.  
Her rock-rimmed situation walls her off  
Like a slim selfish mollusk in its shell  
From the wide views and fair fraternities  
Which on the mainland we reciprocate,  
And quicks her quest for profit in our woes!

FRANCIS

I am not competent, your Majesty,  
To estimate that country's conscience now,  
Nor engage on my ally's behalf  
That English ships be shut from Russian trade.  
But joyful am I that in all things else  
My promise can be made; and that this day  
Our conference ends in friendship and esteem.

NAPOLEON

I will send Savary at to-morrow's blink  
And make all lucid to the Emperor.  
For us, I wholly can avow as mine  
The cordial spirit of your Majesty.

[They retire towards the carriage of FRANCIS. BERTHIER, SAVARY,  
LICHTENSTEIN, and the suite of officers advance from the background,  
and with mutual gestures of courtesy and amicable leave-takings  
the two Emperors part company.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

Each for himself, his family, his heirs;  
For the wan weltering nations who concerns, who cares?

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

A pertinent query, in truth!—

But spoil not the sport by your ruth:

Tis enough to make half

Yonder zodiac laugh

When rulers begin to allude

To their lack of ambition,

And strong opposition

To all but the general good!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Hush levities. Events press: turn ye westward.

[A nebulous curtain draws slowly across.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

SHOCKERWICK HOUSE, NEAR BATH

[The interior of the Picture Gallery. Enter WILTSHIRE, the owner,  
and Pitt, who looks emaciated and walks feebly.]

WILTSHIRE [pointing to a portrait]

Now here you have the lady we discussed:

A fine example of his manner, sir?

PITT

It is a fine example, sir, indeed,—

With that transparency amid the shades,

And those thin blue-green-grayish leafages

Behind the pillar in the background there,

Which seem the leaves themselves.—Ah, this is Quin.

[Moving to another picture.]

WILTSHIRE

Yes, Quin. A man of varied parts, though rough

And choleric at times. Yet, at his best,

As Falstaff, never matched, they say. But I

Had not the fate to see him in the flesh.

PITT

Churchill well carves him in his "Character":—

"His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,

Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul.

In fancied scenes, as in Life's real plan,

He could not for a moment sink the man:

Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in;  
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—stille 'twas Quin.”  
—He was at Bath when Gainsborough settled there  
In that house in the Circus which we know.—  
I like the portrait much.—The brilliancy  
Of Gainsborough lies in this his double sway:  
Sovereign of landscape he; of portraiture  
Joint monarch with Sir Joshua... Ah?—that's—hark!  
Is that the patter of horses's hoofs  
Along the road?

WILTSHIRE

I notice nothing, sir.

PITT

It is a gallop, growing quite distinct.  
And—can it be a messenger for me!

WILTSHIRE

I hope no ugly European news  
To stop the honour of this visit, sir!  
[They listen. The gallop of the horse grows louder, and is  
checked at the door of the house. There is a hasty knocking,  
and a courier, splashed with mud from hard riding, is shown  
into the gallery. He presents a dispatch to PITT, who sits  
down and hurriedly opens it.]

PITT [to himself]

O heavy news indeed!... Disastrous; dire!  
[He appears overcome as he sits, and covers his forehead with  
his hand.]

WILTSHIRE

I trust you are not ill, sir?

PITT [after some moments]

Could I have

A little brandy, sir, quick brought to me?

WILTSHIRE

In one brief minute.

[Brandy is brought in, and PITT takes it.]

PITT

Now leave me, please, alone. I'll call anon.

Is there a map of Europe handy here?

[WILTSHIRE fetches a map from the library, and spreads it before  
the minister. WILTSHIRE, courier, and servant go out.]

O God that I should live to see this day!

[He remains awhile in a profound reverie; then resumes the reading

of the dispatch.]  
 "Defeated—the Allies—quite overthrown  
 At Austerlitz—last week.—Where's Austerlitz?"  
 —But what avails it where the place is now;  
 What corpse is curious on the longitude  
 And situation of his cemetery!...  
 The Austrians and the Russians overcome,  
 That vast adventuring army is set free  
 To bend unhindered strength against our strand...  
 So do my plans through all these plodding years  
 Announce them built in vain!  
 His heel on Europe, monarchies in chains  
 To France, I am as though I had never been!  
 [He gloomily ponders the dispatch and the map some minutes longer.  
 At last he rises with difficulty, and rings the bell. A servant  
 enters.]  
 Call up my carriage, please you, now at once;  
 And tell your master I return to Bath  
 This moment—I may want a little help  
 In getting to the door here.  
 SERVANT  
 Sir, I will,  
 And summon you my master instantly.  
 [He goes out and re-enters with WILTSHIRE. PITT is assisted from  
 the room.]  
 PITT  
 Roll up that map. 'Twill not be needed now  
 These ten years! Realms, laws, peoples, dynasties,  
 Are churning to a pulp within the maw  
 Of empire-making Lust and personal Gain!  
 [Exeunt PITT, WILTSHIRE, and the servant; and in a few minutes the  
 carriage is heard driving off, and the scene closes.]  
 [image not archived]

## SCENE VII

PARIS. A STREET LEADING TO THE TUILERIES  
 [It is night, and the dim oil lamps reveal a vast concourse of  
 citizens of both sexes around the Palace gates and in the  
 neighbouring thoroughfares.]  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to the Spirit of Rumour]  
 Thou may'st descend and join this crowd awhile,

And speak what things shall come into they mouth.

SPIRIT SINISTER

I'll harken! I wouldn't miss it for the groans on another  
Austerlitz!

[The Spirit of Rumour enters on the scene in the disguise of a  
young foreigner.]

SPIRIT [to a street-woman]

Lady, a late hour this to be afoot!

WOMAN

Poor profit, then, to me from my true trade,  
Wherein hot competition is so rife  
Already, since these victories brought to town  
So many foreign jobbers in my line,  
That I'd best hold my tongue from praise of fame!  
However, one is caught by popular zeal,  
And though five midnights have not brought a sou,  
I, too, chant Jubilate like the rest.—

In courtesies have haughty monarchs vied  
Towards the Conqueror! who, with men-at-arms  
One quarter theirs, has vanquished by his nerve  
Vast mustering four-hundred-thousand strong,  
And given new tactics to the art of war  
Unparalleled in Europe's history!

SPIRIT

What man is this, whose might thou blazonest so—  
Who makes the earth to tremble, shakes old thrones,  
And turns the plains to wilderness?

WOMAN

Dost ask

As ignorant, yet asking can define?

What mean you, traveller?

SPIRIT

I am a stranger here,  
A wandering wight, whose life has not been spent  
This side the globe, though I can speak the tongue.

WOMAN

Your air has truth in't; but your state is strange!  
Had I a husband he should tackle thee.

SPIRIT

Dozens thou hast had—batches more than she  
Samaria knew, if now thou hast not one!

WOMAN



Wilt take the situation from this hour?

SPIRIT

Thou know'st not what thy frailty asks, good dame!

WOMAN

Well, learn in small the Emperor's chronicle,  
As gleaned from what my soldier-husbands say:—  
some five-and-forty standards of his foes  
Are brought to Paris, borne triumphantly  
In proud procession through the surging streets,  
Ever as brands of fame to shine aloft  
In dim-lit senate-halls and city aisles.

SPIRIT

Fair Munich sparkled with festivity  
As there awhile he tarried, and was met  
By the gay Josephine your Empress here.—  
There, too, Eugene—

WOMAN

Napoleon's stepson he—

SPIRIT

Received for gift the hand of fair Princess  
Augusta [daughter of Bavaria's crown,  
Forced from her plighted troth to Baden's heir],  
And, to complete his honouring, was hailed  
Successor to the throne of Italy.

WOMAN

How know you, ere this news has got abroad?

SPIRIT

Channels have I the common people lack.—  
There, on the nonce, the forenamed Baden prince  
Was joined to Stephanie Beauharnais, her  
Who stands as daughter to the man we wait,  
Some say as more.

WOMAN

They do? Then such not I.

Can revolution's dregs so soil thy soul  
That thou shouldst doubt the eldest son thereof?  
Tis dangerous to insinuate nowadays!

SPIRIT

Right! Lady many-spoused, more charity  
Upbrims in thee than in some loftier ones  
Who would not name thee with their white-washed tongues.—  
Enough. I am one whom, didst thou know my name,

Thou would'st not grudge a claim to speak his mind.

WOMAN

A thousand pardons, sir.

SPIRIT

Resume thy tale

If so thou wishest.

WOMAN

Nay, but you know best—

SPIRIT

How laurelled progress through applauding crowds  
Have marked his journey home. How Strasburg town,  
Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, acclaimed him like the rest:  
How pageantry would here have welcomed him,  
Had not his speed outstript intelligence  
—Now will a glimpse of him repay thee. Hark!

[Shouts arise and increase in the distance, announcing BONAPARTE'S  
approach.]

Well, Buonaparte has revived by land,  
But not by sea. On that thwart element  
Never will he incorporate his dream,  
And float as master!

WOMAN

What shall hinder him?

SPIRIT

That which has hereto. England, so to say.

WOMAN

But she's in straits. She lost her Nelson now,  
[A worthy man: he loved a woman well!]  
George drools and babbles in a darkened room;  
Her heaven-born Minister declines apace;  
All smooths the Emperor's sway.

SPIRIT

Tales have two sides,  
Sweet lady. Vamped-up versions reach thee here.—  
That Austerlitz was lustrous none ignores,  
But would it shock thy garrulousness to know  
That the true measure of this Trafalgar—  
Utter defeat, ay, France's naval death—  
Your Emperor bade be hid?

WOMAN

The seer's gift

Has never plenteously endowed me, sir,

As in appearance you. But to plain sense  
Things seem as stated.

SPIRIT

We'll let seemings be.—

But know, these English take to liquid life  
Right patly—nursed therefor in infancy  
By rimes and rains which creep into their blood,  
Till like seeks like. The sea is their dry land,  
And, as on cobbles you, they wayfare there.

WOMAN

Heaven prosper, then, their watery wayfarings  
If they'll leave us the land!—[The Imperial carriage appears.]  
The Emperor!—

Long live the Emperor!—He's the best by land.

[BONAPARTE'S carriage arrives, without an escort. The street  
lamps shine in, and reveal the EMPRESS JOSEPHINE seated beside  
him. The plaudits of the people grow boisterous as they hail  
him Victor of Austerlitz. The more active run after the carriage,  
which turns in from the Rue St. Honore to the Carrousel, and  
thence vanishes into the Court of the Tuileries.]

WOMAN

May all success attend his next exploit!

SPIRIT

Namely: to put the knife in England's trade,  
And teach her treaty-manners—if he can!

WOMAN

I like not your queer knowledge, creepy man.

There's weirdness in your air. I'd call you ghost

Had not the Goddess Reason laid all such

Past Mother Church's cunning to restore.

—Adieu. I'll not be yours to-night. I'd starve first!

[She withdraws. The crowd wastes away, and the Spirit vanishes.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VIII

PUTNEY. BOWLING GREEN HOUSE

[PITT'S bedchamber, from the landing without. It is afternoon.

At the back of the room as seen through the doorway is a curtained  
bed, beside which a woman sits, the LADY HESTER STANHOPE. Bending  
over a table at the front of the room is SIR WALTER FARQUHAR, the  
physician. PARSLOW the footman and another servant are near the

door. TOMLINE, the Bishop of Lincoln, enters.]

FARQUHAR [in a subdued voice]

I grieve to call your lordship up again,  
But symptoms lately have disclosed themselves  
That mean the knell to the frail life in him.  
And whatsoever thing of gravity  
It may be needful to communicate,  
Let them be spoken now. Time may not serve  
If they be much delayed.

TOMLINE

Ah, stands it this?...

The name of his disease is—Austerlitz!  
His brow's inscription has been Austerlitz  
From that dire morning in the month just past  
When tongues of rumour twanged the word across  
From its hid nook on the Moravian plains.

FARQUHAR

And yet he might have borne it, had the weight  
Of governmental shackles been unclasped,  
Even partly, from his limbs last Lammastide,  
When that despairing journey to the King  
At Gloucester Lodge by Wessex shore was made  
To beg such. But relief the King refused.  
Why want you Fox? What—Grenville and his friends?  
He harped. "You are sufficient without these—  
Rather than Fox, why, give me civil war!"  
And fibre that would rather snap than shrink  
Held out no longer. Now the upshot nears.

[LADY HESTER STANHOPE turns her head and comes forward.]

LADY HESTER

I am grateful you are here again, good friend!  
He's sleeping some light seconds; but once more  
Has asked for tidings of Lord Harrowby,  
And murmured of his mission to Berlin  
As Europe's haggard hope; if, sure, it be  
That any hope remain!

TOMLINE

There's no news yet.—

These several days while I have been sitting by him  
He has inquired the quarter of the wind,  
And where that moment beaked the stable-cock.  
When I said "East," he answered "That is well!

Those are the breezes that will speed him home!"  
So cling his heart-strings to his country's cause.

FARQUHAR

I fear that Wellesley's visit here by now  
Strung him to tensest strain. He quite broke down,  
And has fast faded since.

LADY HESTER

Ah! now he wakes.

Please come and speak to him as you would wish [to TOMLINE].

[LADY HESTER, TOMLINE, and FARQUHAR retire behind the bed, where  
in a short time voices are heard in prayer. Afterwards the  
Bishop goes to a writing-table, and LADY HESTER comes to the  
doorway. Steps are heard on the stairs, and PITT'S friend ROSE,  
the President of the Board of Trade, appears on the landing and  
makes inquiries.]

LADY HESTER [whispering]

He wills the wardenry of his affairs  
To his old friend the Bishop. But his words  
Bespeak too much anxiety for me,  
And underrate his services so far  
That he has doubts if his high deeds deserve  
Such size of recognition by the State  
As would award slim pensions to his kin.  
He had been fain to write down his intents,  
But the quill dropped from his unmuscled hand.—  
Now his friend Tomline pens what he dictates  
And gleans the lippings of his last desires.

[ROSE and LADY HESTER turn. They see the Bishop bending over  
the bed with a sheet of paper on which he has previously been  
writing. A little later he dips a quill and holds it within  
the bed-curtain, spreading the paper beneath. A thin white  
hand emerges from behind the curtain and signs the paper. The  
Bishop beckons forward the two servants, who also sign.  
FARQUHAR on one side of the bed, and TOMLINE on the other, are  
spoken to by the dying man. The Bishop afterwards withdraws  
from the bed and comes to the landing where the others are.]

TOMLINE

A list of his directions has been drawn,  
And feeling somewhat more at mental ease  
He asks Sir Walter if he has long to live.  
Farquhar just answered, in a soothing tone,  
That hope still frailly breathed recovery.

At this my dear friend smiled and shook his head,  
As if to say: "I can translate your words,  
But I reproach not friendship's lullabies."

ROSE

Rest he required; and rest was not for him.  
[FARQUHAR comes forward as they wait.]

FARQUHAR

His spell of concentration on these things,  
Determined now, that long have wasted him,  
Have left him in a numbing lethargy,  
From which I fear he may not rouse to strength  
For speech with earth again.

ROSE

But hark. He does.  
[The listen.]

PITT

My country! How I leave my country!...

TOMLINE

Ah,—

Immense the matter those poor words contain!

ROSE

Still does his soul stay wrestling with that theme,  
And still it will, even semi-consciously,  
Until the drama's done.

[They continue to converse by the doorway in whispers. PITT  
sinks slowly into a stupor, from which he never awakens.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [to Spirit of the Years]

Do you intend to speak to him ere the close?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Nay, I have spoke too often! Time and time,  
When all Earth's light has lain on the nether side,  
And yapping midnight winds have leapt on the roofs,  
And raised for him an evil harlequinade  
Of national disasters in long train,  
That tortured him with harrowing grimace,  
Now I would leave him to pass out in peace,  
And seek the silence unperturbedly.

SPIRIT SINISTER

Even ITS official Spirit can show ruth  
At man's fag end, when his destruction's sure!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

It suits us ill to cavil each with each.

I might retort. I only say to thee  
ITS slaves we are: ITS slaves must ever be!  
CHORUS [aerial music]  
Yea, from the Void we fetch, like these,  
And tarry till That please  
To null us by Whose stress we emanate.—  
Our incorporeal sense,  
Our overseeings, our supernal state,  
Our readings Why and Whence,  
Are but the flower of Man's intelligence;  
And that but an unreckoned incident  
Of the all-urging Will, raptly magnipotent.  
[A gauze of shadow overdraws.]  
[image not archived]

## PART SECOND

CHARACTERS

I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS/CHORUS OF THE YEARS.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES/CHORUS OF THE PITIES.

SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC/CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC  
SPIRITS.

THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR/CHORUS OF RUMOURS.

THE SHADE OF THE EARTH.

SPIRIT-MESSENGERS.

RECORDING ANGELS.

## II. PERSONS [The names in lower case are mute figures.]

MEN

GEORGE THE THIRD.

THE PRINCE OF WALES, afterwards PRINCE REGENT.

The Royal Dukes.

FOX.

PERCEVAL.

CASTLEREAGH.

AN UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE.

SHERIDAN.

TWO YOUNG LORDS.

Lords Yarmouth and Keith.

ANOTHER LORD.

Other Peers, Ambassadors, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Persons of Quality and Office.

.....

Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Lord Wellington.

SIR JOHN MOORE.

SIR JOHN HOPE.

Sir David Baird.

General Beresford.

COLONEL ANDERSON.

COLONEL GRAHAM.

MAJOR COLBORNE, principal Aide-de-Camp to MOORE.

CAPTAIN HARDINGE.

Paget, Fraser, Hill, Napier.

A CAPTAIN OF HUSSARS AND OTHERS.

Other English Generals, Colonels, Aides, Couriers, and Military Officers.

TWO SPIES.

TWO ARMY SURGEONS.

AN ARMY CHAPLAIN.

A SERGEANT OF THE FORTY-THIRD.

TWO SOLDIERS OF THE NINTH.

English Forces.

DESERTERS AND STRAGGLERS.

.....

DR. WILLIS.

SIR HENRY HALFORD.

DR. HEBERDEN.

DR. BAILLIE.

THE KING'S APOTHECARY.

A GENTLEMAN.

TWO ATTENDANTS ON THE KING.

.....

MEMBERS OF A LONDON CLUB.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN VIENNA.

TROTTER, SECRETARY TO FOX.

MR. BAGOT.

MR. FORTH, MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

SERVANTS.

A Beau, A Constable, etc.

.....

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

Joseph Bonaparte.



Louis and Jerome Bonaparte, and other Members of Napoleon's Family.

CAMBACERES, ARCH-CHANCELLOR.

TALLEYRAND.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

Caulaincourt.

Lebrun, Duroc, Prince of Neufchatel, Grand-Duke of Berg.

Eugene de Beauharnais.

CHAMPAGNY, FOREIGN MINISTER

DE BAUSSET, CHAMBERLAIN.

MURAT.

SOULT.

MASSENA.

BERTHIER.

JUNOT.

FOY.

LOISON.

Ney, Lannes, and other French Marshals, general and regimental  
Officers, Aides, and Couriers.

TWO FRENCH SUBALTERNS.

ANOTHER FRENCH OFFICER.

French Forces.

.....

Grand Marshal, Grand Almoners, Heralds, and other Officials at  
Napoleon's marriage.

ABBE DE PRADT, CHAPEL-MASTER.

Corvisart, First Physician to Marie Louis.

BOURDIER, SECOND PHYSICIAN to Marie Louise.

DUBOIS, ACCOUCHEUR to Marie Louise.

Maskers at a Ball.

TWO SERVANTS AT THE TUILERIES.

A PARISIAN CROWD.

GUILLET DE GEVRILLIERE, A CONSPIRATOR.

Louis XVIII. of France.

French Princes in England.

.....

THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

Prince Henry of Prussia.

Prince Royal of Bavaria.

PRINCE HOHENLOHE.

Generals Ruchel, Tauenzien, and Attendant Officers.

Prussian Forces.

PRUSSIAN STRAGGLERS.

BERLIN CITIZENS.

.....

CARLOS IV., KING OF SPAIN.

FERNANDO, PRINCE OF ASTURIAS, Son to the King.

GODOY, "PRINCE OF PEACE," Lover of the Queen.

COUNT OF MONTIJO.

VISCOUNT MATEROSA, Spanish Deputy.

DON DIEGO DE LA VEGA, Spanish Deputy.

Godoy's Guards and other Soldiery.

SPANISH CITIZENS.

A SERVANT TO GODOY.

Spanish Forces.

Camp-Followers.

.....

FRANCIS, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA.

METTERNICH.

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN MINISTER.

SCHWARZENBERG.

D'AUDENARDE, AN EQUERRY.

AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

AIDES-DE-CAMP.

Austrian Forces.

Couriers and Secretaries.

VIENNESE CITIZENS.

.....

THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER.

The Grand-Duke Constantine.

Prince Labanoff.

Count Lieven.

Generals Bennigsen, Ouwaroff, and others.

Officers in attendance on Alexander.

WOMEN

CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES.

DUCHESS OF YORK.

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND.

MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY.

MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD.

Other Peeresses.

MRS. FITZHERBERT.

Ambassadors' Wives, Wives of Minister and Members of Parliament,  
and other Ladies of Note.

.....

THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE.  
HORTENSE, QUEEN OF HOLLAND.  
The Mother of Napoleon.  
Princess Pauline, and others of Napoleon's Family.  
DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO.  
MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU.  
MADAME BLAISE, NURSE TO MARIE LOUIS.  
Wives of French Ministers, and of other Officials.  
Other Ladies of the French Court.  
DUCHESS OF ANGOULEME.

.....  
LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.  
The Countess Voss, Lady-in-Waiting.  
BERLIN LADIES.

.....  
MARIA LUISA, QUEEN OF SPAIN.  
THEREZA OF BOURBON, WIFE OF GODOY.  
DONA JOSEFA TUDO, MISTRESS OF GODOY.  
Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen.  
A Servant.

.....  
M. LOUISA BEATRIX, EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA.  
THE ARCHDUCHESS MARIE LOUISA, afterwards the EMPRESS MARIE  
LOUISE.  
MADAME METTERNICH.  
LADIES OF THE AUSTRIAN COURT.

.....  
THE EMPRESS-MOTHER OF RUSSIA.  
GRAND-DUCHESS ANNE OF RUSSIA.  
[image not archived]

## ACT FIRST

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

LONDON. FOX'S LODGINGS, ARLINGTON STREET  
[FOX, the Foreign Secretary in the new Ministry of All-the-Talents,  
sits at a table writing. He is a stout, swarthy man, with shaggy  
eyebrows, and his breathing is somewhat obstructed. His clothes  
look as though they had been slept in. TROTTER, his private

secretary, is writing at another table near. A servant enters.]

SERVANT

Another stranger presses to see you, sir.

FOX [without raising his eyes]

Oh, another. What's he like?

SERVANT

A foreigner, sir; though not so out-at-elbows as might be thought from the denomination. He says he's from Gravesend, having lately left Paris, and that you sent him a passport. He comes with a police-officer.

FOX

Ah, to be sure. I remember. Bring him in, and tell the officer to wait outside. [Servant goes out.] Trotter, will you leave us for a few minutes? But be within hail.

[The secretary retires, and the servant shows in a man who calls himself GUILLET DE GEVRILLIERE—a tall, thin figure of thirty, with restless eyes. The door being shut behind him, he is left alone with the minister. FOX points to a seat, leans back, and surveys his visitor.]

GEVRILLIERE

Thanks to you, sir, for this high privilege

Of hailing England, and of entering here.

Without a fore-extended confidence

Like this of yours, my plans would not have sped. [A Pause.]

Europe, alas! sir, has her waiting foot

Upon the sill of further slaughter-scenes!

FOX

I fear it is so!—In your lines you wrote,

I think, that you are a true Frenchman born?

GEVRILLIERE

I did, sir.

FOX

How contrived you, then, to cross?

GEVRILLIERE

It was from Embden that I shipped for Gravesend,

In a small sailer called the "Toby," sir,

Masked under Prussian colours. Embden I reached

On foot, on horseback, and by sundry shifts,

From Paris over Holland, secretly.

FOX

And you are stored with tidings of much pith,

Whose tenour would be priceless to the state?

GEVRILLIERE

I am. It is, in brief, no more nor less  
Than means to mitigate and even end  
These welfare-wasting wars; ay, usher in  
A painless spell of peace.

FOX

Prithee speak on.

No statesman can desire it more than I.

GEVRILLIERE [looking to see that the door is shut]

No nation, sir, can live its natural life,  
Or think its thoughts in these days unassailed,  
No crown-capt head enjoy tranquillity.  
The fount of such high spring-tide of disorder,  
Fevered disquietude, and forceful death,  
Is One,—a single man. He—need I name?—  
The ruler is of France.

FOX

Well, in the past  
I fear that it has liked so. But we see  
Good reason still to hope that broadening views,  
Politer wisdom now is helping him  
To saner guidance of his arrogant car.

GEVRILLIERE

The generous hope will never be fulfilled!  
Ceasing to bluff, then ceases he to be.  
None sees that written largelier than himself.

FOX

Then what may be the valued revelation  
That you can unlock in such circumstance?  
Sir, I incline to spell you as a spy,  
And not the honest help for honest men  
You gave you out to be!

GEVRILLIERE

I beg, sir,  
To spare me that suspicion. Never a thought  
Could be more groundless. Solemnly I vow  
That notwithstanding what his signals show  
The Emperor of France is as I say.—  
Yet bring I good assurance, and declare  
A medicine for all bruised Europe's sores!

FOX [impatiently]

Well, parley to the point, for I confess

No new negotiation do I note  
That you can open up to work such cure.

GEVRILLIERE

The sovereign remedy for an ill effect  
Is the extinction of its evil cause.  
Safely and surely how to compass this  
I have the weighty honour to disclose,  
Certain immunities being guaranteed  
By those your power can influence, and yourself.

FOX [astonished]

Assassination?

GEVRILLIERE

I care not for names!  
A deed's true name is as its purpose is.  
The lexicon of Liberty and Peace  
Defines not this deed as assassination;  
Though maybe it is writ so in the tongue  
Of courts and universal tyranny.

FOX

Why brought you this proposal here to me?

GEVRILLIERE

My knowledge of your love of things humane,  
Things free, things fair, of truth, of tolerance,  
Right, justice, national felicity,  
Prompted belief and hope in such a man!—  
The matter is by now well forwarded,  
A house at Plassy hired as pivot-point  
From which the sanct intention can be worked,  
And soon made certain. To our good allies  
No risk attaches; merely to ourselves.

FOX [touching a private bell]

Sir, your unconscenced hardihood confounds me.

And your mind's measure of my character  
Insults it sorely. By your late-sent lines  
Of specious import, by your bland address,  
I have been led to prattle hopefully  
With a cut-throat confessed!

[The head constable and the secretary enter at the same moment.]

Ere worse befall,

Sir, up and get you gone most dexterously!

Conduct this man: lose never sight of him [to the officer]

Till haled aboard some anchor-weighing craft

Bound to remotest coasts from us and France.  
GEVRILLIERE [unmoved]  
How you may handle me concerns me little.  
The project will as roundly ripe itself  
Without as with me. Trusty souls remain,  
Though my far bones bleach white on austral shores!—  
I thank you for the audience. Long ere this  
I might have reft your life! Ay, notice here—  
[He produces a dagger; which is snatched from him.]  
They need not have done that! Even had you risen  
To wrestle with, insult, strike, pinion me,  
It would have lain unused. In hands like mine  
And my allies', the man of peace is safe,  
Treat as he may our corporal tenement  
In his misreading of a moral code.  
[Exeunt GEVRILLIERE and the constable.]  
FOX

Trotter, indeed you well may stare at me!  
I look warm, eh?—and I am windless, too;  
I have sufficient reason to be so.  
That dignified and pensive gentleman  
Was a bold bravo, waiting for his chance.  
He sketched a scheme for murdering Bonaparte,  
Either—as in my haste I understood—  
By shooting from a window as he passed,  
Or by some other wry and stealthy means  
That haunt sad brains which brood on despotism,  
But lack the tools to justly cope therewith!...  
On later thoughts I feel not fully sure  
If, in my ferment, I did right in this.  
No; hail at once the man in charge of him,  
And give the word that he is to be detained.  
[The secretary goes out. FOX walks to the window in deep  
reflection till the secretary returns.]

SECRETARY

I was in time, sir. He has been detained.

FOX

Now what does strict state-honour ask of me?—  
No less than that I bare this poppling plot  
To the French ruler and our fiercest foe!—  
Maybe 'twas but a hoax to pocket pay;  
And yet it can mean more...

The man's indifference to his own vague doom  
Beamed out as one exalted trait in him,  
And showed the altitude of his rash dream!—  
Well, now I'll get me on to Downing Street,  
There to draw up a note to Talleyrand  
Retailing him the facts.—What signature  
Subscribed this desperate fellow when he wrote?

SECRETARY

Guillet de la Gevriilliere. Here it stands.

FOX

Doubtless it was a false one. Come along. [Looking out the window.]

Ah—here's Sir Francis Vincent: he'll go with us.

Ugh, what a twinge! Time signals that he draws

Towards the twelfth stroke of my working-day!

I fear old England soon must voice her speech

With Europe through another mouth than mine!

SECRETARY

I trust not, sir. Though you should rest awhile.

The very servants half are invalid

From the unceasing labours of your post,

And these cloaked visitors of every clime

That market on your magnanimity

To gain an audience morning, night, and noon,

Leaving you no respite.

FOX

Tis true; 'tis true.—

How I shall love my summer holiday

At pleasant Saint-Ann's Hill!

[He leans on the secretary's arm, and they go out.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE ROUTE BETWEEN LONDON AND PARIS

[A view now nocturnal, now diurnal, from on high over the Straits  
of Dover, and stretching from city to city. By night Paris and  
London seem each as a little swarm of lights surrounded by a halo;  
by day as a confused glitter of white and grey. The Channel  
between them is as a mirror reflecting the sky, brightly or  
faintly, as the hour may be.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What mean these couriers shooting shuttlewise



To Paris and to London, turn and turn?  
RUMOURS [chanting in antiphons]

**I**

The aforesaid tidings fro the minister, spokesman in England's  
cause to states afar,

**II**

Traverse the waters borne by one of such; and thereto Bonaparte's  
responses are:

**I**

"The principles of honour and of truth which ever actuate the  
sender's mind

**II**

Herein are written largely! Take our thanks: we read that"  
this conjuncture undesigned

**I**

"Unfolds felicitous means of showing you that still our eyes  
are set, as yours, on peace,

**II**

To which great end the Treaty of Amiens must be the ground-"  
work of our amities."

**I**

From London then: "The path to amity the King of England  
studies to pursue;

**II**

"With Russia hand in hand he is yours to close the long  
convulsions thrilling Europe through."

## I

Still fare the shadowy missioners across, by Dover-road and  
Calais Channel-track,

## II

From Thames-side towers to Paris palace-gates; from Paris  
leisurely to London back.

## I

Till thus speaks France: "Much grief it gives us that, being  
pledged to treat, one Emperor with one King,

## II

"You yet have struck a jarring counternote and tone that keys  
not with such promising.

## I

In these last word, then, of this pregnant parle; I trust I"  
may persuade your Excellency

## II

"That in no circumstance, on no pretence, a party to our pact can  
Russia be."

SPIRIT SINISTER

Fortunately for the manufacture of corpses by machinery Napoleon  
sticks to this veto, and so wards off the awkward catastrophe of  
a general peace descending upon Europe. Now England.

RUMOURS [continuing]

## I

Thereon speeds down through Kent and Picardy, evenly as some  
southing sky-bird's shade:

## II

"We gather not from your Imperial lines a reason why our words  
should be reweighed.

I

We hold Russia not as our ally that is to be: she stands fully-"  
plighted so;

II

"Thus trembles peace upon this balance-point: will you that  
Russia be let in or no?"

I

Then France rolls out rough words across the strait: "To treat  
with you confederate with the Tsar,

II

"Presumes us sunk in sloughs of shamefulness from which we yet  
stand gloriously afar!

I

The English army must be Flanders-fed, and entering Picardy with"  
pompous prance,

II

"To warrant such! Enough. Our comfort is, the crime of further  
strife lies not with France."

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Alas! what prayer will save the struggling lands,  
Whose lives are ninepins to these bowling hands?

CHORUS OF RUMOURS

France secretly with—Russia plights her troth!  
Britain, that lonely isle, is slurred by both.

SPIRIT SINISTER

It is as neat as an uncovered check at chess! You may now mark  
Fox's blank countenance at finding himself thus rewarded for the  
good turn done to Bonaparte, and at the extraordinary conduct of  
his chilly friend the Muscovite.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

His hand so trembles it can scarce retain  
The quill wherewith he lets Lord Yarmouth know  
Reserve is no more needed!

SPIRIT IRONIC

Now enters another character of this remarkable little piece—Lord Lauderdale—and again the messengers fly!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But what strange figure, pale and noiseless, comes,  
By us perceived, unrecognized by those,  
Into the very closet and retreat  
Of England's Minister?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

The Tipstaff he  
Of the Will, the Many-masked, my good friend Death.—  
The statesman's feeble form you may perceive  
Now hustled into the Invisible,  
And the unfinished game of Dynasties  
Left to proceed without him!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Here, then, ends  
My hope for Europe's reason-wrought repose!  
He was the friend of peace—did his great best  
To shed her balms upon humanity;  
And now he's gone! No substitute remains.

SPIRIT IRONIC

Ay; the remainder of the episode is frankly farcical. Negotiations are again affected; but finally you discern Lauderdale applying for passports; and the English Parliament declares to the nation that peace with France cannot be made.

RUMOURS [concluding]

I

The smouldering dudgeon of the Prussian king, meanwhile, upon the horizon's rim afar

II

Bursts into running flame, that all his signs of friendliness were met by moves for war.

I

Attend and hear, for hear ye faintly may, his manifesto made at Erfurt town,

## II

That to arms only dares he now confide the safety and the honour  
of his crown!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Draw down the curtain, then, and overscreen

This too-protracted verbal fencing-scene;

And let us turn to clanging foot and horse,

Ordnance, and all the enginry of Force!

[Clouds close over the perspective.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE III

THE STREETS OF BERLIN

[It is afternoon, and the thoroughfares are crowded with citizens  
in an excited and anxious mood. A central path is left open for  
some expected arrival.

There enters on horseback a fair woman, whose rich brown curls  
stream flutteringly in the breeze, and whose long blue habit  
flaps against the flank of her curvetting white mare. She is  
the renowned LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA, riding at the head of a  
regiment of hussars and wearing their uniform. As she prances  
along the thronging citizens acclaim her enthusiastically.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Who is this fragile fair, in fighting trim?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

She is the pride of Prussia, whose resolve

Gives ballast to the purpose of her spouse,

And holds him to what men call governing.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Queens have engaged in war; but war's loud trade

Rings with a roar unnatural, fitful, forced,

Practised by woman's hands!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Of her view

The enterprise is that of scores of men,

The strength but half-a-ones.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Would fate had ruled

The valour had been his, hers but the charm!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

But he has nothing on't, and she has all.  
 The shameless satires of the bulletins  
 dispatched to Paris, thence the wide world through,  
 Disturb the dreams of her by those who love her,  
 And thus her brave adventurers for the realm  
 Have blurred her picture, soiled her gentleness,  
 And wrought her credit harm.  
 FIRST CITIZEN [vociferously]  
 Yes, by God: send and ultimatum to Paris, by God; that's what we'll  
 do, by God. The Confederation of the Rhine was the evil thought of  
 an evil man bent on ruining us!  
 SECOND CITIZEN  
 This country double-faced and double-tongued,  
 This France, or rather say, indeed, this Man—  
 [Peoples are honest dealers in the mass]—  
 This man, to sign a stealthy scroll with Russia  
 That shuts us off from all indemnities,  
 While swearing faithful friendship with our King,  
 And, still professing our safe wardenry,  
 To fatten other kingdoms at our cost,  
 Insults us grossly, and makes Europe clang  
 With echoes of our wrongs. The little states  
 Of this antique and homely German land  
 Are severed from their blood-allies and kin—  
 Hereto of one tradition, interest, hope—  
 In calling lord this rank adventurer,  
 Who'll thrust them as a sword against ourselves.—  
 Surely Great Frederick sweats within his tomb!  
 THIRD CITIZEN  
 Well, we awake, though we have slumbered long,  
 And She is sent by Heaven to kindle us.  
 [The QUEEN approaches to pass back again with her suite. The  
 vociferous applause is repeated. They regard her as she nears.]  
 To cry her Amazon, a blusterer,  
 A brazen comrade of the bold dragoons  
 Whose uniform she dons! Her, whose each act  
 Shows but a mettled modest woman's zeal,  
 Without a hazard of her dignity  
 Or moment's sacrifice of seemliness,  
 To fend off ill from home!  
 FOURTH CITIZEN [entering]  
 The tidings fly that Russian Alexander

Declines with emphasis to ratify  
The pact of his ambassador with France,  
And that the offer made the English King  
To compensate the latter at our cost  
Has not been taken.

THIRD CITIZEN

And it never will be!  
Thus evil does not always flourish, faith.  
Throw down the gage while god is fair to us;  
He may be foul anon!  
[A pause.]

FIFTH CITIZEN [entering]

Our ambassador Lucchesini is already leaving Paris. He could stand  
the Emperor no longer, so the Emperor takes his place, has decided  
to order his snuff by the ounce and his candles by the pound, lest  
he should not be there long enough to use more.

[The QUEEN goes by, and they gaze at here and at the escort of  
soldiers.]

Haven't we soldiers? Haven't we the Duke of Brunswick to command  
em? Haven't we provisions, hey? Haven't we fortresses and an  
Elbe, to bar the bounce of an invader?

[The cavalcade passes out of sight and the crowd draws off.]

FIRST CITIZEN

By God, I must to beer and 'bacco, to soften my rage!  
[Exeunt citizens.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

So doth the Will objectify Itself  
In likeness of a sturdy people's wrath,  
Which takes no count of the new trends of time,  
Trusting ebb'd glory in a present need.—  
What if their strength should equal not their fire,  
And their devotion dull their vigilance?—  
Uncertainly, by fits, the Will doth work  
In Brunswick's blood, their chief, as in themselves;  
It ramifies in streams that intermit  
And make their movement vague, old-fashioned, slow  
To foil the modern methods counterposed!  
[Evening descends on the city, and it grows dusk. The soldiers  
being dismissed from duty, some young officers in a frolic of  
defiance halt, draw their swords and whet them on the steps of  
the FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S residence as they pass. The noise of  
whetting is audible through the street.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

The soul of a nation distrest

Is aflame,

And heaving with eager unrest

In its aim

To assert its old prowess, and stouten its chronicled fame!

SEMICHORUS I

It boils in a boisterous thrill

Through the mart,

Unconscious well-nigh as the Will

Of its part:

Would it wholly might be so, and feel not the forthcoming smart!

SEMICHORUS II

In conclaves no voice of reflection

Is heard,

King, Councillors, grudge circumspection

A word,

And victory is visioned, and seemings as facts are averred.

CHORUS

Yea, the soul of a nation distrest

Is aflame,

And heaving with eager unrest

In its aim

At supreme desperations to blazon the national name!

[Midnight strikes, lights are extinguished one by one, and the scene disappears.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF JENA

[Day has just dawned through a grey October haze. The French, with their backs to the nebulous light, loom out and show themselves to be already under arms; LANNES holding the centre, NEY the right, SOULT the extreme right, and AUGEREAU the left. The Imperial Guard and MURAT'S cavalry are drawn up on the Landgrafenberg, behind the centre of the French position. In a valley stretching along to the rear of this height flows northward towards the Elbe the little river Saale, on which the town of Jena stands.

On the irregular plateaux in front of the French lines, and almost close to the latter, are the Prussians un TAUENZIEN; and away on



their right rear towards Weimar the bulk of the army under PRINCE HOHENLOHE. The DUKE OF BRUNSWICK [father of the Princess of Wales] is twelve miles off with his force at Auerstadt, in the valley of the Ilm.

Enter NAPOLEON, and men bearing torches who escort him. He moves along the front of his troops, and is lost to view behind the mist and surrounding objects. But his voice is audible.]

NAPOLEON

Keep you good guard against their cavalry,  
In past repute the formidablest known,  
And such it may be now; so asks our heed.  
Receive it, then, in square, unflinchingly.—  
Remember, men, last year you captured Ulm,  
So make no doubt that you will vanquish these!

SOLDIERS

Long live the Emperor! Advance, advance!

DUMB SHOW

Almost immediately glimpses reveal that LANNES' corps is moving forward, and amid an unbroken clatter of firelocks spreads out further and wider upon the stretch of country in front of the Landgrafenberg. The Prussians, surprised at discerning in the fog such masses of the enemy close at hand, recede towards the Ilm.

From PRINCE HOHENLOHE, who is with the body of the Prussians on the Weimar road to the south, comes perspiring the bulk of the infantry to rally the retreating regiments of TAUENZIEN, and he hastens up himself with the cavalry and artillery. The action is renewed between him and NEY as the clocks of Jena strike ten. But AUGEREAU is seen coming to Ney's assistance on one flank of the Prussians, SOULT bearing down on the other, while NAPOLEON on the Landgrafenberg orders the Imperial Guard to advance. The doomed Prussians are driven back, this time more decisively, falling in great numbers and losing many as prisoners as they reel down the sloping land towards the banks of the Ilm behind them. GENERAL RUCHEL, in a last despairing effort to rally, faces the French onset in person and alone. He receives a bullet through the chest and falls dead.

The crisis of the struggle is reached, though the battle is not over. NAPOLEON, discerning from the Landgrafenberg that the decisive moment has come, directs MURAT to sweep forward with all his cavalry. It engages the shattered Prussians, surrounds them, and cuts them down by thousands.

From behind the horizon, a dozen miles off, between the din of guns in the visible battle, there can be heard an ominous roar, as of a second invisible battle in progress there. Generals and other officers look at each other and hazard conjectures between whiles, the French with exultation, the Prussians gloomily.

HOHENLOHE

That means the Duke of Brunswick, I conceive,  
Impacting on the enemy's further force  
Led by, they say, Davout and Bernadotte.  
God grant his star less lurid rays than ours,  
Or this too pregnant, hoarsely-groaning day  
Shall, ere its loud delivery be done,  
Have twinned disasters to the fatherland  
That fifty years will fail to sepulchre!  
Enter a straggler on horseback.

STRAGGLER

Prince, I have circuited by Auerstadt,  
And bring ye dazzling tidings of the fight,  
Which, if report by those who saw't be true,  
Has raged thereat from clammy day-dawn on,  
And left us victors!

HOHENLOHE

Thitherward go I,  
And patch the mischief wrought upon us here!  
Enter a second and then a third straggler.  
Well, wet-faced men, whence come ye? What d'ye bring?

STRAGGLER II

Your Highness, I rode straight from Hassenhausen,  
Across the stream of battle as it boiled  
Betwixt that village and the banks of Saale,  
And such the turmoil that no man could speak  
On what the issue was!

HOHENLOHE [To Straggler III]

Can you add aught?

STRAGGLER III

Nothing that's clear, your Highness.

HOHENLOHE

Man, your mien  
Is that of one who knows, but will not say.  
Detain him here.

STRAGGLER III

The blackness of my news,

Your Highness, darks my sense!... I saw this much:

His charging grenadiers, received in the face  
A grape-shot stroke that gouged out half of it,  
Proclaiming then and there his life fordone.

HOHENLOHE

Fallen? Brunswick! Reed in council, rock in fire...

Ah, this he looked for. Many a time of late  
Has he, by some strange gift of foreknowing,  
Declared his fate was hovering in such wise!

STRAGGLER III

His aged form being borne beyond the strife,  
The gallant Moellendorf, in flushed despair,  
Swore he would not survive; and, pressing on,  
He, too, was slaughtered. Patriotic rage  
Brimmed marshals' breasts and men's. The King himself  
Fought like the commonest. But nothing served.  
His horse is slain; his own doom yet unknown.  
Prince William, too, is wounded. Brave Schmettau  
Is broke; himself disabled. All give way,  
And regiments crash like trees at felling-time!

HOHENLOHE

No more. We match it here. The yielding lines  
Still sweep us backward. Backward we must go!

[Exeunt HOHENLOHE, Staff, stragglers, etc.]

The Prussian retreat from Jena quickens to a rout, many thousands  
taken prisoners by MURAT, who pursues them to Weimar, where the  
inhabitants fly shrieking through the streets.

The October day closes in to evening. By this time the troops  
retiring with the King of Prussia from the second battlefield  
of Auerstadt have intersected RUCHEL'S and HOHENLOHE'S flying  
battalions from Jena. The crossing streams of fugitives strike  
panic into each other, and the tumult increases with the  
thickening darkness till night renders the scene invisible,  
and nothing remains but a confused diminishing noise, and fitful  
lights here and there.

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

BERLIN. A ROOM OVERLOOKING A PUBLIC PLACE

[A fluttering group of ladies is gathered at the window, gazing  
out and conversing anxiously. The time draws towards noon, when

the clatter of a galloping horse's hoofs is heard echoing up the long Potsdamer-Strasse, and presently turning into the Leipziger-Strasse reaches the open space commanded by the ladies' outlook. It ceases before a Government building opposite them, and the rider disappears into the courtyard.]

FIRST LADY

Yes: surely he is a courier from the field!

SECOND LADY

Shall we not hasten down, and take from him  
The doom his tongue may deal us?

THIRD LADY

We shall catch

As soon by watching here as hastening hence  
The tenour of his new. [They wait.] Ah, yes: see—see  
The bulletin is straightway to be nailed!  
He was, then, from the field...

[They wait on while the bulletin is affixed.]

SECOND LADY

I cannot scan the words the scroll proclaims;  
Peer as I will, these too quick-thronging dreads  
Bring water to the eyes. Grant us, good Heaven,  
That victory be where she is needed most  
To prove Thy goodness!... What do you make of it?

THIRD LADY [reading, through a glass]

"The battle strains us sorely; but resolve

May save us even now. Our last attack

Has failed, with fearful loss. Once more we strive."

[A long silence in the room. Another rider is heard approaching, above the murmur of the gathering citizens. The second lady looks out.]

SECOND LADY

A straggler merely he... But they decide,  
At last, to post his news, wild-winged or no.

THIRD LADY [reading again through her glass]

"The Duke of Brunswick, leading on a charge,

Has met his death-doom. Schmettau, too, is slain;

Prince William wounded. But we stand as yet,

Engaging with the last of our reserves."

[The agitation in the street communicates itself to the room.

Some of the ladies weep silently as they wait, much longer this time. Another horseman is at length heard clattering into the Platz, and they lean out again with painful eagerness.]

SECOND LADY

An adjutant of Marshal Moellendorf's  
If I define him rightly. Read—O read!—  
Though reading draw them from their socket-holes  
Use your eyes now!

THIRD LADY [glass up]

As soon as 'tis affixed...

Ah—this means much! The people's air and gait  
Too well betray disaster. [Reading.] "Berliners,  
The King has lost the battle! Bear it well.

The foremost duty of a citizen

Is to maintain a brave tranquillity.

This is what I, the Governor, demand

Of men and women now... The King lives still."

[They turn from the window and sit in a silence broken only by  
monosyllabic words, hearing abstractedly the dismay without  
that has followed the previous excitement and hope.

The stagnation is ended by a cheering outside, of subdued  
emotional quality, mixed with sounds of grief. They again  
look forth. QUEEN LOUISA is leaving the city with a very  
small escort, and the populace seem overcome. They strain  
their eyes after her as she disappears. Enter fourth lady.]

FIRST LADY

How does she bear it? Whither does she go?

FOURTH LADY

She goes to join the King at Custrin, there  
To abide events—as we. Her heroism  
So schools her sense of her calamities  
As out of grief to carve new queenliness,  
And turn a mobile mien to statuesque,  
Save for a sliding tear.

[The ladies leave the window severally.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

So the Will plays at flux and reflux still.  
This monarchy, one-half whose pedestal  
Is built of Polish bones, has bones home-made!  
Let the fair woman bear it. Poland did.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Meanwhile the mighty Emperor nears apace,  
And soon will glitter at the city gates  
With palpitating drums, and breathing brass,  
And rampant joyful-jingling retinue.

[An evening mist cloaks the scene.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

THE SAME

[It is a brilliant morning, with a fresh breeze, and not a cloud. The open Platz and the adjoining streets are filled with dense crowds of citizens, in whose upturned faces curiosity has mastered consternation and grief. Martial music is heard, at first faint, then louder, followed by a trampling of innumerable horses and a clanking of arms and accoutrements. Through a street on the right hand of the view from the windows come troops of French dragoons heralding the arrival of BONAPARTE.]

Re-enter the room hurriedly and cross to the windows several ladies as before, some in tears.]

FIRST LADY

The kingdom late of Prussia, can it be  
That thus it disappears?—a patriot-cry,  
A battle, bravery, ruin; and no more?

SECOND LADY

Thank God the Queen's gone!

THIRD LADY

To what sanctuary?  
From earthquake shocks there is no sheltering cell!  
—Is this what men call conquest? Must it close  
As historied conquests do, or be annulled  
By modern reason and the urbaner sense?—  
Such issue none would venture to predict,  
Yet folly 'twere to nourish foreshaped fears  
And suffer in conjecture and in deed.—  
If verily our country be dislimbed,  
Then at the mercy of his domination  
The face of earth will lie, and vassal kings  
Stand waiting on himself the Overking,  
Who ruling rules all; till desperateness  
Sting and excite a bonded last resistance,  
And work its own release.

SECOND LADY

He comes even now  
From sacrilege. I learn that, since the fight,

In marching here by Potsdam yesterday,  
Sans-Souci Palace drew his curious feet,  
Where even great Frederick's tomb was bared to him.

FOURTH LADY

All objects on the Palace—cared for, kept  
Even as they were when our arch-monarch died—  
The books, the chair, the inkhorn, and the pen  
He quizzed with flippant curiosity;  
And entering where our hero's bones are urned  
He seized the sword and standards treasured there,  
And with a mixed effrontery and regard  
Declared they should be all dispatched to Paris  
As gifts to the Hotel des Invalides.

THIRD LADY

Such rodomontade is cheap: what matters it!  
[A galaxy of marshals, forming Napoleon's staff, now enters the  
Platz immediately before the windows. In the midst rides the  
EMPEROR himself. The ladies are silent. The procession passes  
along the front until it reaches the entrance to the Royal Palace.  
At the door NAPOLEON descends from his horse and goes into the  
building amid the resonant trumpetings of his soldiers and the  
silence of the crowd.]

SECOND LADY [impressed]

O why does such a man debase himself  
By countenancing loud scurrility  
Against a queen who cannot make reprise!  
A power so ponderous needs no littleness—  
The last resort of feeble desperates!

[Enter fifth lady.]

FIFTH LADY [breathlessly]

Humiliation grows acuter still.  
He placards rhetoric to his soldiery  
On their distress of us and our allies,  
Declaring he'll not stack away his arms  
Till he has choked the remaining foes of France  
In their own gainful glut.—Whom means he, think you?

FIRST LADY

Us?

THIRD LADY

Russia? Austria?

FIFTH LADY

Neither: England.—Yea,

Her he still holds the master mischief-mind,  
And marrer of the countries' quietude,  
By exercising untold tyranny  
Over all the ports and seas.

SECOND LADY

Then England's doomed!  
When he has overturned the Russian rule,  
England comes next for wrack. They say that know!...  
Look—he has entered by the Royal doors  
And makes the Palace his.—Now let us go!—  
Our course, alas! is—whither?

[Exeunt ladies. The curtain drops temporarily.]

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

Deeming himself omnipotent  
With the Kings of the Christian continent,  
To warden the waves was his further bent.

SEMICHORUS II

But the weaving Will from eternity,  
[Hemming them in by a circling sea]  
Evolved the fleet of the Englishry.

SEMICHORUS I

The wane of his armaments ill-advised,  
At Trafalgar, to a force despised,  
Was a wound which never has cicatrized.

SEMICHORUS II

This, O this is the cramp that grips!  
And freezes the Emperor's finger-tips  
From signing a peace with the Land of Ships.

CHORUS

The Universal-empire plot  
Demands the rule of that wave-walled spot;  
And peace with England cometh not!

THE SCENE REOPENS

[A lurid gloom now envelops the Platz and city; and Bonaparte  
is heard as from the Palace:

VOICE OF NAPOLEON

These monstrous violations being in train  
Of law and national integrities  
By English arrogance in things marine,  
[Which dares to capture simple merchant-craft,  
In honest quest of harmless merchandize,  
For crime of kinship to a hostile power]



Our vast, effectual, and majestic strokes  
In this unmatched campaign, enable me  
To bar from commerce with the Continent  
All keels of English frame. Hence I decree:—

**SPIRIT OF RUMOUR**

This outlines his renowned "Berlin Decree."  
Maybe he meditates its scheme in sleep,  
Or hints it to his suite, or syllables it  
While shaping, to his scribes.

**VOICE OF NAPOLEON**

All England's ports to suffer strict blockade;  
All traffic with that land to cease forthwith;  
All natives of her isles, wherever met,  
To be detained as windfalls of the war.  
All chattels of her make, material, mould,  
To be good prize wherever pounced upon:  
And never a bottom hailing from her shores  
But shall be barred from every haven here.  
This for her monstrous harms to human rights,  
And shameless sauciness to neighbour powers!

**SPIRIT SINISTER**

I spell herein that our excellently high-coloured drama is not  
played out yet!

**SPIRIT OF THE YEARS**

Nor will it be for many a month of moans,  
And summer shocks, and winter-whitened bones.  
[The night gets darker, and the Palace outlines are lost.]  
[image not archived]

## **SCENE VII**

**TILSIT AND THE RIVER NIEMEN**

[The scene is viewed from the windows of BONAPARTE'S temporary  
quarters. Some sub-officers of his suite are looking out upon  
it.

It is the day after midsummer, about one o'clock. A multitude  
of soldiery and spectators lines each bank of the broad river  
which, stealing slowly north-west, bears almost exactly in its  
midst a moored raft of bonded timber. On this as a floor stands  
a gorgeous pavilion of draped woodwork, having at each side,  
facing the respective banks of the stream, a round-headed doorway  
richly festooned. The cumbersome erection acquires from the

current a rhythmical movement, as if it were breathing, and the breeze now and then produces a shiver on the face of the stream.]

#### DUMB SHOW

On the south-west or Prussian side rides the EMPEROR NAPOLEON in uniform, attended by the GRAND DUKE OF BERG, the PRINCE OF NEUFCHATEL, MARSHAL BESSIERES, DUROC Marshal of the Palace, and CAULAINCOURT Master of the Horse. The EMPEROR looks well, but is growing fat. They embark on an ornamental barge in front of them, which immediately puts off. It is now apparent to the watchers that a precisely similar enactment has simultaneously taken place on the opposite or Russian bank, the chief figure being the EMPEROR ALEXANDER—a graceful, flexible man of thirty, with a courteous manner and good-natured face. He has come out from an inn on that side accompanied by the GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE, GENERAL BENNIGSEN, GENERAL OUWAROFF, PRINCE LABANOFF, and

#### ADJUTANT-

GENERAL COUNT LIEVEN.

The two barges draw towards the raft, reaching the opposite sides of it about the same time, amidst discharges of cannon. Each Emperor enters the door that faces him, and meeting in the centre of the pavilion they formally embrace each other. They retire together to the screened interior, the suite of each remaining in the outer half of the pavilion.

More than an hour passes while they are thus invisible. The French officers who have observed the scene from the lodging of NAPOLEON walk about idly, and ever and anon go curiously to the windows, again to watch the raft.

#### CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music]

The prelude to this smooth scene—mark well!—were the shocks whereof the times gave token

Vaguely to us ere last year's snows shut over Lithuanian pine and pool,

Which we told at the fall of the faded leaf, when the pride of Prussia was bruised and broken,

And the Man of Adventure sat in the seat of the Man of Method and rigid Rule.

#### SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES

Snows incarnadined were thine, O Eylau, field of the wide white spaces,

And frozen lakes, and frozen limbs, and blood iced hard as it left the veins:

Steel-cased squadrons swathed in cloud-drift, plunging to doom

through pathless places,  
And forty thousand dead and near dead, strewing the early-lighted  
plains.

Friedland to these adds its tale of victims, its midnight marches  
and hot collisions,

Its plunge, at his word, on the enemy hooped by the bended river  
and famed Mill stream,

As he shatters the moves of the loose-knit nations to curb his  
exploitful soul's ambitions,

And their great Confederacy dissolves like the diorama of a dream.

DUMB SHOW [continues]

NAPOLEON and ALEXANDER emerge from their seclusion, and each is  
beheld talking to the suite of his companion apparently in  
flattering compliment. An effusive parting, which signifies  
itself to be but temporary, is followed by their return to the  
river shores amid the cheers of the spectators.

NAPOLEON and his marshals arrive at the door of his quarters and  
enter, and pass out of sight to other rooms than that of the  
foreground in which the observers are loitering. Dumb show ends.

[A murmured conversation grows audible, carried on by two persons  
in the crowd beneath the open windows. Their dress being the  
native one, and their tongue unfamiliar, they seem to the officers  
to be merely inhabitants gossiping; and their voices continue  
unheeded.]

FIRST ENGLISH SPY [below]

Did you get much for me to send on?

SECOND ENGLISH SPY

Much; and startling, too. "Why are we at war?" says Napoleon when  
they met.—"Ah—why!" said t'other.—"Well," said Boney, "I am  
fighting you only as an ally of the English, and you are simply  
serving them, and not yourself, in fighting me."—"In that case,"  
says Alexander, "we shall soon be friends, for I owe her as great  
a grudge as you."

FIRST SPY

Dammy, go that length, did they!

SECOND SPY

Then they plunged into the old story about English selfishness,  
and greed, and duplicity. But the climax related to Spain, and  
it amounted to this: they agreed that the Bourbons of the Spanish  
throne should be made to abdicate, and Bonaparte's relations set  
up as sovereigns instead of them.

FIRST SPY

Somebody must ride like hell to let our Cabinet know!

SECOND SPY

I have written it down in cipher, not to trust to memory, and to guard against accidents.—They also agree that France should have the Pope's dominions, Malta, and Egypt; that Napoleon's brother Joseph should have Sicily as well as Naples, and that they would partition the Ottoman Empire between them.

FIRST SPY

Cutting up Europe like a plum-pudding. *Par nobile fratrum!*

SECOND SPY

Then they worthy pair came to poor Prussia, whom Alexander, they say, was anxious about, as he is under engagements to her. It seems that Napoleon agrees to restore to the King as many of his states as will cover Alexander's promise, so that the Tsar may feel free to strike out in this new line with his new friend.

FIRST SPY

Surely this is but surmise?

SECOND SPY

Not at all. One of the suite overheard, and I got round him. There was much more, which I did not learn. But they are going to soothe and flatter the unfortunate King and Queen by asking them to a banquet here.

FIRST SPY

Such a spirited woman will never come!

SECOND SPY

We shall see. Whom necessity compels needs must: and she has gone through an Iliad of woes!

FIRST SPY

It is this Spanish business that will stagger England, by God! And now to let her know it.

FRENCH SUBALTERN [looking out above]

What are those townspeople talking about so earnestly, I wonder? The lingo of this place has an accent akin to English.

SECOND SUBALTERN

No doubt because the races are both Teutonic.

[The spies observe that they are noticed, and disappear in the crowd. The curtain drops.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VIII

THE SAME

[The midsummer sun is low, and a long table in the aforeshown apartment is laid out for a dinner, among the decorations being bunches of the season's roses.

At the vacant end of the room [divided from the dining end by folding-doors, now open] there are discovered the EMPEROR NAPOLEON, the GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE, PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA, the

PRINCE

ROYAL OF BAVARIA, the GRAND DUKE OF BERG, and attendant officers. Enter the TSAR ALEXANDER. NAPOLEON welcomes him, and the twain move apart from the rest. BONAPARTE placing a chair for his visitor and flinging himself down on another.]

NAPOLEON

The comforts I can offer are not great,  
Nor is the accommodation more than scant  
That falls to me for hospitality;  
But, as it is, accept.

ALEXANDER

It serves well.  
And to unbrace the bandages of state  
Is as clear air to incense-stifled souls.  
What of the Queen?

NAPOLEON

She's coming with the King.  
We have some quarter-hour to spare or more  
Before their Majesties are timed for us.

ALEXANDER

Good. I would speak of them. That she should show here  
After the late events, betokens much!  
Abasement in so proud a woman's heart [His voice grows tremulous.]  
Is not without a dash of painfulness.  
And I beseech you, sire, that you hold out  
Some soothing hope for her?

NAPOLEON

I have, already!—  
Now, sire, to those affairs we entered on:  
Strong friendship, grown secure, bids me repeat  
That you have been much duped by your allies.  
[ALEXANDER shows mortification.]  
Prussia's a shuffler, England a self-seeker,  
Nobility has shone in you alone.  
Your error grew of over-generous dreams,  
And misbeliefs by dullard ministers.

By treating personally we speed affairs  
More in an hour than they in blundering months.  
Between us two, henceforth, must stand no third.  
There's peril in it, while England's mean ambition  
Still works to get us skewered by the ears;  
And in this view your chiefs-of-staff concur.

ALEXANDER

The judgment of my officers I share.

NAPOLEON

To recapitulate. Nothing can greater you  
Like this alliance. Providence has flung  
My good friend Sultan Selim from his throne,  
Leaving me free in dealings with the Porte;  
And I discern the hour as one to end  
A rule that Time no longer lets cohere.  
If I abstain, its spoils will go to swell  
The power of this same England, our annoy;  
That country which enchains the trade of towns  
With such bold reach as to monopolize,  
Among the rest, the whole of Petersburg's—  
Ay!—through her purse, friend, as the lender there!—  
Shutting that purse, she may incite to—what?  
Muscovy's fall, its ruler's murdering.  
Her fleet at any minute can encoop  
Yours in the Baltic; in the Black Sea, too;  
And keep you snug as minnows in a glass!  
Hence we, fast-fellowed by our mutual foes,  
Seaward the British, Germany by land,  
And having compassed, for our common good,  
The Turkish Empire's due partitioning,  
As comrades can conjunctly rule the world  
To its own gain and our eternal fame!

ALEXANDER [stirred and flushed]

I see vast prospects opened!—yet, in truth,  
Ere you, sire, broached these themes, their outlines loomed  
Not seldom in my own imaginings;  
But with less clear a vision than endows  
So great a captain, statesman, philosoph,  
As centre in yourself; whom had I known  
Sooner by some few years, months, even weeks,  
I had been spared full many a fault of rule.  
—Now as to Austria. Should we call her in?

NAPOLEON

Two in a bed I have slept, but never three.

ALEXANDER

Ha-ha! Delightful. And, then nextly, Spain?

NAPOLEON

I lighted on some letters at Berlin,

Wherein King Carlos offered to attack me.

A Bourbon, minded thus, so near as Spain,  
Is dangerous stuff. He must be seen to soon!...

A draft, then, of our treaty being penned,  
We will peruse it later. If King George  
Will not, upon the terms there offered him,  
Conclude a ready peace, he can be forced.  
Trumpet yourself as France's firm ally,  
And Austria will fain to do the same:  
England, left nude to such joint harassment,  
Must shiver—fall.

ALEXANDER [with naive enthusiasm]

It is a great alliance!

NAPOLEON

Would it were one in blood as well as brain—  
Of family hopes, and sweet domestic bliss!

ALEXANDER

Ah—is it to my sister you refer?

NAPOLEON

The launching of a lineal progeny  
Has been much pressed upon me, much, of late,  
For reasons which I will not dwell on now.  
Staid counsellors, my brother Joseph, too,  
Urge that I loose the Empress by divorce,  
And re-wive promptly for the country's good.  
Princesses even have been named for me!—  
However this, to-day, is premature,  
And 'twixt ourselves alone...

The Queen of Prussia must ere long be here:  
Berthier escorts her. And the King, too, comes.  
She's one whom you admire?

ALEXANDER [reddening ingenuously]

Yes... Formerly

I had—did feel that some faint fascination  
Vaguely adorned her form. And, to be plain,  
Certain reports have been calumnious,

And wronged an honest woman.

NAPOLEON

As I knew!

But she is wearing thready: why, her years

Must be full one-and-thirty, if she's one.

ALEXANDER [quickly]

No, sire. She's twenty-nine. If traits teach more

It means that cruel memory gnaws at her

As fair inciter to that fatal war

Which broke her to the dust!... I do confess

[Since now we speak on't] that this sacrifice

Prussia is doomed to, still disquiets me.

Unhappy King! When I recall the oaths

Sworn him upon great Frederick's sepulchre,

And—and my promises to his sad Queen,

It pricks me that his realm and revenues

Should be stript down to the mere half they were!

NAPOLEON [cooly]

Believe me, 'tis but my regard for you

Which lets me leave him that! Far easier 'twere

To leave him none at all.

[He rises and goes to the window.]

But here they are.

No; it's the Queen alone, with Berthier

As I directed. Then the King will follow.

ALEXANDER

Let me, sire, urge your courtesy to bestow

Some gentle words on her?

NAPOLEON

Ay, ay; I will.

[Enter QUEEN LOUISA OF PRUSSIA on the arm of BERTHIER. She

appears in majestic garments and with a smile on her lips, so

that her still great beauty is impressive. But her eyes bear

traces of tears. She accepts NAPOLEON'S attentions with the

stormily sad air of a wounded beauty. Whilst she is being

received the KING arrives. He is a plain, shy, honest-faced,

awkward man, with a wrecked and solitary look. His manner to

NAPOLEON is, nevertheless, dignified, and even stiff.

The company move into the inner half of the room, where the

tables are, and the folding-doors being shut, they seat themselves

at dinner, the QUEEN taking a place between NAPOLEON and ALEXANDER.]

NAPOLEON



Madame, I love magnificent attire;  
But in the present instance can but note  
That each bright knot and jewel less adorns  
The brighter wearer than the wearer it!

QUEEN [with a sigh]

You praise one, sire, whom now the wanton world  
Has learnt to cease from praising! But such words  
From such a quarter are of worth no less.

NAPOLEON

Of worth as candour, madame; not as gauge.  
Your reach in rarity outsoars my scope.  
Yet, do you know, a troop of my hussars,  
That last October day, nigh captured you?

QUEEN

Nay! Never a single Frenchman did I see.

NAPOLEON

Not less it was that you exposed yourself,  
And should have been protected. But at Weimar,  
Had you but sought me, 'twould have bettered you.

QUEEN

I had no zeal to meet you, sire, alas!

NAPOLEON [after a silence]

And how at Memel do you sport with time?

QUEEN

Sport? I!—I pore on musty chronicles,  
And muse on usurpations long forgot,  
And other historied dramas of high wrong!

NAPOLEON

Why con not annals of your own rich age?  
They treasure acts well fit for pondering.

QUEEN

I am reminded too much of my age  
By having had to live in it. May Heaven  
Defend me now, and my wan ghost anon,  
From conning it again!

NAPOLEON

Alas, alas!

Too grievous, this, for one who is yet a queen!

QUEEN

No; I have cause for vials more of grief.—  
Prussia was blind in blazoning her power  
Against the Mage of Earth!...

The embers of great Frederick's deeds inflamed her:  
 His glories swelled her to her ruining.  
 Too well has she been punished! [Emotion stops her.]  
 ALEXANDER [in a low voice, looking anxiously at her]  
 Say not so.  
 You speak as all were lost. Things are not thus!  
 Such desperation has unreason in it,  
 And bleeds the hearts that crave to comfort you.  
 NAPOLEON [to the King]  
 I trust the treaty, further pondered, sire,  
 Has consolations?  
 KING [curtly]  
 I am a luckless man;  
 And muster strength to bear my lucklessness  
 Without vain hope of consolations now.  
 One thing, at least, I trust I have shown you, sire  
 That I provoked not this calamity!  
 At Anspach first my feud with you began—  
 Anspach, my Eden, violated and shamed  
 By blushless tramlings of your legions there!  
 NAPOLEON  
 It's rather late, methinks, to talk thus now.  
 KING [with more choler]  
 Never too late for truth and plainspeaking!  
 NAPOLEON [blandly]  
 To your ally, the Tsar, I must refer you.  
 He was it, and not I, who tempted you  
 To push for war, when Eylau must have shown  
 Your every profit to have lain in peace.—  
 He can indemn; yes, much or small; and may.  
 KING [with a head-shake]  
 I would make up, would well make up, my mind  
 To half my kingdom's loss, could in such limb  
 But Magdeburg not lie. Dear Magdeburg,  
 Place of my heart-hold; THAT I would retain!  
 NAPOLEON  
 Our words take not such pattern as is wont  
 To grace occasions of festivity.  
 [He turns brusquely from the King. The banquet proceeds with a  
 more general conversation. When finished a toast is proposed:  
 The Freedom of the Seas, and drunk with enthusiasm.]  
 SPIRIT SINISTER

Another hit at England and her tubs!  
I hear harsh echoes from her chalky chines.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

O heed not England now! Still read the Queen.  
One grieves to see her spend her pretty spells  
Upon the man who has so injured her.

[They rise from table, and the folding-doors being opened they pass  
into the adjoining room.

Here are now assembled MURAT, TALLEYRAND, KOURAKIN, KALKREUTH,  
BERTHIER, BESSIERES, CAULAINCOURT, LABANOFF, BENNIGSEN, and  
others.

NAPOLEON having spoken a few words here and there resumes his  
conversation with QUEEN LOUISA, and parenthetically offers snuff  
to the COUNTESS VOSS, her lady-in-waiting. TALLEYRAND, who has  
observed NAPOLEON'S growing interest in the QUEEN, contrives to  
get near him.]

TALLEYRAND [in a whisper]

Sire, is it possible that you can bend  
To let one woman's fairness filch from you  
All the resplendent fortune that attends  
The grandest victory of your grand career?

[The QUEEN'S quick eye observes and flashes at the whisper, and  
she obtains a word with the minister.]

QUEEN [sarcastically]

I should infer, dear Monsieur Talleyrand,  
Only two persons in the world regret  
My having come to Tilsit.

TALLEYRAND

Madame, two?

Can any!—who may such sad rascals be?

QUEEN

You, and myself, Prince. [Gravely.] Yes! myself and you.

[TALLEYRAND'S face becomes impassive, and he does not reply.

Soon the QUEEN prepares to leave, and NAPOLEON rejoins her.]

NAPOLEON [taking a rose from a vase]

Dear Queen, do pray accept this little token  
As souvenir of me before you go?

[He offers her the rose, with his hand on his heart. She  
hesitates, but accepts it.]

QUEEN [impulsively, with waiting tears]

Let Magdeburg come with it, sire! O yes!

NAPOLEON [with sudden frigidity]

It is for you to take what I can give.  
 And I give this—no more.  
 [She turns her head to hide her emotion, and withdraws. NAPOLEON steps up to her, and offers his arm. She takes it silently, and he perceives the tears on her cheeks. They cross towards the ante-room, away from the other guests.]  
 NAPOLEON [softly]  
 Still weeping, dearest lady! Why is this?  
 QUEEN [seizing his hand and pressing it]  
 Your speeches darn the tearings of your sword!—  
 Between us two, as man and woman now,  
 Is't even possible you question why!  
 O why did not the Greatest of the Age—  
 Of future ages—of the ages past,  
 This one time win a woman's worship—yea,  
 For all her little life!  
 NAPOLEON [gravely]  
 Know you, my Fair  
 That I—ay, I—in this deserve your pity.—  
 Some force within me, baffling mine intent,  
 Harries me onward, whether I will or no.  
 My star, my star is what's to blame—not I.  
 It is unswervable!  
 QUEEN  
 Then now, alas!  
 My duty's done as mother, wife, and queen.—  
 I'll say no more—but that my heart is broken!  
 [Exeunt NAPOLEON, QUEEN, and LADY-IN-WAITING.]  
 SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
 He spoke thus at the Bridge of Lodi. Strange,  
 He's of the few in Europe who discern  
 The working of the Will.  
 SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
 If that be so,  
 Better for Europe lacked he such discerning!  
 [NAPOLEON returns to the room and joins TALLEYRAND.]  
 NAPOLEON [aside to his minister]  
 My God, it was touch-and-go that time, Talleyrand! She was within  
 an ace of getting over me. As she stepped into the carriage she  
 said in her pretty way, "O I have been cruelly deceived by you!"  
 And when she sank down inside, not knowing I heard, she burst into  
 sobs fit to move a statue. The Devil take me if I hadn't a good

mind to stop the horses, jump in, give her a good kissing, and agree to all she wanted. Ha-ha, well; a miss is as good as a mile. Had she come sooner with those sweet, beseeching blue eyes of hers, who knows what might not have happened! But she didn't come sooner, and I have kept in my right mind.

[The RUSSIAN EMPEROR, the KING OF PRUSSIA, and other guests advance to bid adieu. They depart severally. When they are gone NAPOLEON turns to TALLEYRAND.]

Adhere, then, to the treaty as it stands:  
 Change not therein a single article,  
 But write it fair forthwith.

[Exeunt NAPOLEON, TALLEYRAND, and other ministers and officers in waiting.]

SHADE OF THE EARTH  
 Some surly voice afar I heard now  
 Of an enisled Britannic quality;  
 Wots any of the cause?

SPIRIT IRONIC  
 Perchance I do!

Britain is roused, in her slow, stolid style,  
 By Bonaparte's pronouncement at Berlin  
 Against her cargoes, commerce, life itself;  
 And now from out her water citadel  
 Blows counterblasting "Orders." Rumours tell.

RUMOUR I  
 "From havens of fierce France and her allies,  
 With poor or precious freight of merchandize  
 Whoso adventures, England pounds as prize!"

RUMOUR II  
 Thereat Napoleon names her, furiously,  
 Curst Oligarch, Arch-pirate of the sea,  
 Who shall lack room to live while liveth he!

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music]  
 And peoples are enmeshed in new calamity!  
 [Curtain of Evening Shades.]

The Ted K Archive

Thomas Hardy  
The Dynasts - Part One

**[www.thetedkarchive.com](http://www.thetedkarchive.com)**