

# The Dynasts - Part Three

Thomas Hardy

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# ACT SECOND

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

THE PLAIN OF VITORIA

[It is the eve of the longest day of the year; also the eve of the battle of Vitoria. The English army in the Peninsula, and their Spanish and Portuguese allies, are bivouacking on the western side of the Plain, about six miles from the town.

On some high ground in the left mid-distance may be discerned the MARQUIS OF WELLINGTON'S tent, with GENERALS HILL, PICTON, PONSOMBY,

GRAHAM, and others of his staff, going in and out in consultation on the momentous event impending. Near the foreground are some hussars sitting round a fire, the evening being damp; their horses are picketed behind. In the immediate front of the scene are some troop-officers talking.]

FIRST OFFICER

This grateful rest of four-and-twenty hours  
Is priceless for our jaded soldiery;  
And we have reconnoitred largely, too;  
So the slow day will not have slipped in vain.

SECOND OFFICER [looking towards the headquarter tent]

By this time they must nearly have dotted down  
The methods of our master-stroke to-morrow:  
I have no clear conception of its plan,  
Even in its leading lines. What is decided?

FIRST OFFICER

There are outshaping three supreme attacks,  
As I decipher. Graham's on the left,  
To compass which he crosses the Zadorra,  
And turns the enemy's right. On our right, Hill  
Will start at once to storm the Puebla crests.  
The Chief himself, with us here in the centre,

Will lead on by the bridges Tres-Puentes  
Over the ridge there, and the Mendoza bridge  
A little further up.—That's roughly it;  
But much and wide discretionary power  
Is left the generals all.

[The officers walk away, and the stillness increases, so the  
conversation at the hussars' bivouac, a few yards further back,  
becomes noticeable.]

SERGEANT YOUNG

I wonder, I wonder how Stourcastle is looking this summer night, and  
all the old folks there!

SECOND HUSSAR

You was born there, I think I've heard ye say, Sergeant?

SERGEANT YOUNG

I was. And though I ought not to say it, as father and mother are  
living there still, 'tis a dull place at times. Now Budmouth-Regis  
was exactly to my taste when we were there with the Court that  
summer, and the King and Queen a-wambling about among us like the  
most everyday old man and woman you ever see. Yes, there was plenty  
going on, and only a pretty step from home. Altogether we had a  
fine time!

THIRD HUSSAR

You walked with a girl there for some weeks, Sergeant, if my memory  
serves?

SERGEANT YOUNG

I did. And a pretty girl 'a was. But nothing came on't. A month  
afore we struck camp she married a tallow-chandler's dipper of Little  
Nicholas Lane. I was a good deal upset about it at the time. But  
one gets over things!

SECOND HUSSAR

'Twas a low taste in the hussy, come to that.—Howsomever, I agree  
about Budmouth. I never had pleasanter times than when we lay there.  
You had a song on it, Sergeant, in them days, if I don't mistake?

SERGEANT YOUNG

I had; and have still. 'Twas made up when we left by our bandmaster  
that used to conduct in front of Gloucester Lodge at the King's Mess  
every afternoon.

[The Sergeant is silent for a minute, then suddenly bursts into  
melody.]

SONG "BUDMOUTH DEARS"

## I

When we lay where Budmouth Beach is,  
O, the girls were fresh as peaches,  
With their tall and tossing figures and their eyes of blue  
and brown!  
And our hearts would ache with longing  
As we paced from our sing-singing,  
With a smart CLINK! CLINK! up the Esplanade and down

## II

They distracted and delayed us  
By the pleasant pranks they played us,  
And what marvel, then, if troopers, even of regiments of renown,  
On whom flashed those eyes divine, O,  
Should forget the countersign, O,  
As we tore CLINK! CLINK! back to camp above the town.

## III

Do they miss us much, I wonder,  
Now that war has swept us sunder,  
And we roam from where the faces smile to where the faces frown?  
And no more behold the features  
Of the fair fantastic creatures,  
And no more CLINK! CLINK! past the parlours of the town?

## IV

Shall we once again there meet them?  
Falter fond attempts to greet them?  
Will the gay sling-jacket glow again beside the muslin gown?—  
Will they archly quiz and con us  
With a sideways glance upon us,  
While our spurs CLINK! CLINK! up the Esplanade and down?  
[Applause from the other hussars. More songs are sung, the night  
gets darker, the fires go out, and the camp sleeps.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE SAME, FROM THE PUEBLA HEIGHTS

[It is now day; but a summer fog pervades the prospect. Behind the fog is heard the roll of bass and tenor drums and the clash of cymbals, with notes of the popular march "The Downfall of Paris." By degrees the fog lifts, and the Plain is disclosed. From this elevation, gazing north, the expanse looks like the palm of a monstrous right hand, a little hollowed, some half-dozen miles across, wherein the ball of the thumb is roughly represented by heights to the east, on which the French centre has gathered; the Mount of Mars and the "Moon" [the opposite side of the palm] by the position of the English on the left or west of the plain; and the "Line of Life" by the Zadorra, an unfordable river running from the town down the plain, and dropping out of it through a pass in the Puebla Heights to the south, just beneath our point of observation—that is to say, toward the wrist of the supposed hand. The left of the English army under GRAHAM would occupy the mounts at the base of the fingers; while the bent finger-tips might represent the Cantabrian Hills beyond the plain to the north or back of the scene.

From the aforesaid stony crests of Puebla the white town and church towers of Vitoria can be descried on a slope to the right-rear of the field of battle. A warm rain succeeds the fog for a short while, bringing up the fragrant scents from fields, vineyards, and gardens, now in the full leafage of June.]

DUMB SHOW

All the English forces converge forward—that is, eastwardly—the centre over the ridges, the right through the Pass to the south, the left down the Bilbao road on the north-west, the bands of the divers regiments striking up the same quick march, "The Downfall of Paris."

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

You see the scene. And yet you see it not.

What do you notice now?

There immediately is shown visually the electric state of mind that animates WELLINGTON, GRAHAM, HILL, KEMPT, PICTON, COLVILLE, and other

responsible ones on the British side; and on the French KING JOSEPH stationary on the hill overlooking his own centre, and surrounded by a numerous staff that includes his adviser MARSHAL JOURDAN, with, far away in the field, GAZAN, D'ERLON, REILLE, and other marshals. This vision, resembling as a whole the interior of a beating brain



lit by phosphorescence, in an instant fades back to normal.

Anon we see the English hussars with their flying pelisses galloping across the Zadorra on one of the Tres-Puentes in the midst of the field, as had been planned, the English lines in the foreground under HILL pushing the enemy up the slopes; and far in the distance, to the left of Vitoria, whiffs of grey smoke followed by low rumbles show that the left of the English army under GRAHAM is pushing on there. Bridge after bridge of the half-dozen over the Zadorra is crossed by the British; and WELLINGTON, in the centre with PICTON, seeing the hill and village of Arinez in front of him [eastward] to be weakly held, carries the regiments of the seventh and third divisions in a quick run towards it. Supported by the hussars, they ultimately fight their way to the top, in a chaos of smoke, flame, and booming echoes, loud-voiced PICTON, in an old blue coat and round hat, swearing as he goes.

Meanwhile the French who are opposed to the English right, in the foreground, have been turned by HILL; the heights are all abandoned, and the columns fall back in a confused throng by the road to Vitoria, hard pressed by the British, who capture abandoned guns amid indescribable tumult, till the French make a stand in front of the town.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What's toward in the distance?—say!

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS [aerial music]

Fitfully flash strange sights there; yea,  
Unwonted spectacles of sweat and scare  
Behind the French, that make a stand  
With eighty cannon, match in hand.—  
Upon the highway from the town to rear  
An eddy of distraction reigns,  
Where lumbering treasure, baggage-trains,  
Padding pedestrians, haze the atmosphere.

#### SEMICHORUS II

Men, women, and their children fly,  
And when the English over-high  
Direct their death-bolts, on this billowy throng  
Alight the too far-ranging balls,  
Wringing out piteous shrieks and calls  
From the pale mob, in monotonous loud and long.

#### SEMICHORUS I

To leftward of the distant din  
Reille meantime has been driven in

By Graham's measure overmastering might.—  
Henceforward, masses of the foe  
Withdraw, and, firing as they go,  
Pass rightwise from the cockpit out of sight.

#### CHORUS

The sunset slants an ochreous shine  
Upon the English knapsacked line,  
Whose glistening bayonets incline  
As bends the hot pursuit across the plain;  
And tardily behind them goes  
Too many a mournful load of those  
Found wound-weak; while with stealthy crawl,  
As silence wraps the rear of all,  
Cloaked creatures of the starlight strip the slain.  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

#### THE SAME. THE ROAD FROM THE TOWN

[With the going down of the sun the English army finds itself in complete possession of the mass of waggons and carriages distantly beheld from the rear—laden with pictures, treasure, flour, vegetables, furniture, finery, parrots, monkeys, and women—most of the male sojourners in the town having taken to their heels and disappeared across the fields.

The road is choked with these vehicles, the women they carry including wives, mistresses, actresses, dancers, nuns, and prostitutes, which struggle through droves of oxen, sheep, goats, horses, asses, and mules— a Noah's-ark of living creatures in one vast procession.

There enters rapidly in front of this throng a carriage containing KING JOSEPH BONAPARTE and an attendant, followed by another vehicle with luggage.]

JOSEPH [inside carriage]

The bare unblinking truth hereon is this:

The Englishry are a pursuing army,  
And we a flying brothel! See our men—  
They leave their guns to save their mistresses!

[The carriage is fired upon from outside the scene. The KING leaps from the vehicle and mounts a horse.

Enter at full gallop from the left CAPTAIN WYNDHAM and a detachment of the Tenth Hussars in chase of the King's carriage; and from the

right a troop of French dragoons, who engage with the hussars and hinder pursuit. Exit KING JOSEPH on horseback; afterwards the hussars and dragoons go out fighting.

The British infantry enter irregularly, led by a sergeant of the Eighty-seventh, mockingly carrying MARSHAL JOURDAN'S baton. The crowd recedes. The soldiers ransack the King's carriages, cut from their frames canvases by Murillo, Velasquez, and Zurbaran, and use them as package-wrappers, throwing the papers and archives into the road.

They next go to a waggon in the background, which contains a large chest. Some of the soldiers burst it with a crash. It is full of money, which rolls into the road. The soldiers begin scrambling, but are restored to order; and they march on.

Enter more companies of infantry, out of control of their officers, who are running behind. They see the dollars, and take up the scramble for them; next ransacking other waggons and abstracting therefrom uniforms, ladies raiment, jewels, plate, wines, and spirits.

Some array them in the finery, and one soldier puts on a diamond necklace; others load themselves with the money still lying about the road. It begins to rain, and a private who has lost his kit cuts a hole in the middle of a deframed old master, and, putting it over his head, wears it as a poncho.

Enter WELLINGTON and others, grimy and perspiring.]

FIRST OFFICER

The men are plundering in all directions!

WELLINGTON

Let 'em. They've striven long and gallantly.

—What documents do I see lying there?

SECOND OFFICER [examining]

The archives of King Joseph's court, my lord;

His correspondence, too, with Bonaparte.

WELLINGTON

We must examine it. It may have use.

[Another company of soldiers enters, dragging some equipages that have lost their horses by the traces being cut. The carriages contain ladies, who shriek and weep at finding themselves captives.]

What women bring they there?

THIRD OFFICER

Mixed sorts, my lord.

The wives of many young French officers,

The mistresses of more—in male attire.

Yon elegant hussar is one, to wit;  
She so disguised is of a Spanish house,—  
One of the general's loves.

WELLINGTON

Well, pack them off  
To-morrow to Pamplona, as you can;  
We've neither list nor leisure for their charms.  
By God, I never saw so many wh—s  
In all my life before!

[Exeunt WELLINGTON, officers, and infantry. A soldier enters with his arm round a lady in rich costume.]

SOLDIER

We must be married, my dear.

LADY [not knowing his language]  
Anything, sir, if you'll spare my life!

SOLDIER

There's neither parson nor clerk here. But that don't matter—hey?

LADY

Anything, sir, if you'll spare my life!

SOLDIER

And if we've got to unmarry at cockcrow, why, so be it—hey?

LADY

Anything, sir, if you'll spare my life!

SOLDIER

A sensible 'ooman, whatever it is she says; that I can see by her pretty face. Come along then, my dear. There'll be no bones broke, and we'll take our lot with Christian resignation.

[Exeunt soldier and lady. The crowd thins away as darkness closes in, and the growling of artillery ceases, though the wheels of the flying enemy are still heard in the distance. The fires kindled by the soldiers as they make their bivouacs blaze up in the gloom, and throw their glares a long way, revealing on the slopes of the hills many suffering ones who have not yet been carried in.

The last victorious regiment comes up from the rear, fifing and drumming ere it reaches its resting-place the last bars of "The Downfall of Paris":—

Transcriber's Note: There follows in musical notation four bars from that song in 2/4 time, key of C—

\\E EF G F\\E EF G F\\E EC D DB\\C \\  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

### A FETE AT VAUXHALL

[It is the Vitoria festival at Vauxhall. The orchestra of the renowned gardens exhibits a blaze of lamps and candles arranged in the shape of a temple, a great artificial sun glowing at the top, and under it in illuminated characters the words "Vitoria" and "Wellington." The band is playing the new air "The Plains of Vitoria."

All round the colonnade of the rotunda are to be read in the illumination the names of Peninsular victories, underneath them figuring the names of British and Spanish generals who led at those battles, surmounted by wreaths of laurel. The avenues stretching away from the rotunda into the gardens charm the eyes with their mild multitudinous lights, while festoons of lamps hang from the trees elsewhere, and transparencies representing scenes from the war.

The gardens and saloons are crowded, among those present being the KING'S sons—the DUKES OF YORK, CLARENCE, KENT, and CAMBRIDGE—Ambassadors, peers, and peeresses, and other persons of quality, English and foreign.

In the immediate foreground on the left hand is an alcove, the interior of which is in comparative obscurity. Two foreign attaches enter it and sit down.]

#### FIRST ATTACHE

Ah—now for the fireworks. They are under the direction of Colonel Congreve.

[At the end of an alley, purposely kept dark, fireworks are discharged.]

#### SECOND ATTACHE

Very good: very good.—This looks like the Duke of Sussex coming in, I think. Who the lady is with him I don't know.

[Enter the DUKE OF SUSSEX in a Highland dress, attended by several officers in like attire. He walks about the gardens with LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL.]

#### FIRST ATTACHE

People have been paying a mighty price for tickets—as much as fifteen guineas has been offered, I hear. I had to walk up to the gates; the number of coaches struggling outside prevented my driving near. It was as bad as the battle of Vitoria itself.

#### SECOND ATTACHE

So Wellington is made Field-Marshal for his achievement.

FIRST ATTACHE

Yes. By the by, you have heard of the effect of the battle upon the Conference at Reichenbach?—that Austria is to join Russia and Prussia against France? So much for Napoleon's marriage! I wonder what he thinks of his respected father-in-law now.

SECOND ATTACHE

Of course, an enormous subsidy is paid to Francis by Great Britain for this face-about?

FIRST ATTACHE

Yes. As Bonaparte says, English guineas are at the bottom of everything!—Ah, here comes Caroline.

[The PRINCESS OF WALES arrives, attended by LADY ANNE HAMILTON and LADY GLENBERVIE. She is conducted forward by the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER and COLONEL ST. LEDGER, and wears a white satin train with a dark embroidered bodice, and a green wreath with diamonds. Repeated hurrahs greet her from the crowd. She bows courteously.]

SECOND ATTACHE

The people are staunch for her still!... You heard, sir, what Austrian Francis said when he learnt of Vitoria?—"A warm climate seems to agree with my son-in-law no better than a cold one."

FIRST ATTACHE

Ha-ha-ha!

Marvellous it is how this loud victory  
Has couched the late blind Europe's Cabinets.  
Would I could spell precisely what was phrased  
Twixt Bonaparte and Metternich at Dresden—  
Their final word, I ween, till God knows when!—

SECOND ATTACHE

I own to feeling it a sorry thing  
That Francis should take English money down  
To throw off Bonaparte. 'Tis sordid, mean!  
He is his daughter's husband after all.

FIRST ATTACHE

Ay; yes!... They say she knows not of it yet.

SECOND ATTACHE

Poor thing, I daresay it will harry her  
When all's revealed. But the inside o't is,  
Since Castlereagh's return to power last year  
Vienna, like Berlin and Petersburg,  
Has harboured England's secret emissaries,  
Primed, purse in hand, with the most lavish sums  
To knit the league to drag Napoleon down...

[More fireworks.] That's grand.—Here comes one Royal item more.  
[The DUCHESS OF YORK enters, attended by her ladies and by the  
HON. B. CRAVEN and COLONEL BARCLAY. She is received with signals  
of respect.]

FIRST ATTACHE

She calls not favour forth as Caroline can!

SECOND ATTACHE

To end my words:—Though happy for this realm,  
Austria's desertion frankly is, by God,  
Rank treachery!

FIRST ATTACHE

Whatever it is, it means

Two hundred thousand swords for the Allies,  
And enemies in batches for Napoleon  
Leaping from unknown lairs.—Yes, something tells me  
That this is the beginning of the end  
For Emperor Bonaparte!

[The PRINCESS OF WALES prepares to leave. An English diplomatist  
joins the attaches in the alcove. The PRINCESS and her ladies go  
out.]

DIPLOMATIST

I saw you over here, and I came round. Cursed hot and crowded, isn't  
it?

SECOND ATTACHE

What is the Princess leaving so soon for?

DIPLOMATIST

Oh, she has not been received in the Royal box by the other members  
of the Royal Family, and it has offended her, though she was told  
beforehand that she could not be. Poor devil! Nobody invited her  
here. She came unasked, and she has gone unserved.

FIRST ATTACHE

We shall have to go unserved likewise, I fancy. The scramble at the  
buffets is terrible.

DIPLOMATIST

And the road from here to Marsh Gate is impassable. Some ladies have  
been sitting in their coaches for hours outside the hedge there. We  
shall not get home till noon to-morrow.

A VOICE [from the back]

Take care of your watches! Pickpockets!

FIRST ATTACHE

Good. That relieves the monotony a little.

[Excitement in the throng. When it has subsided the band strikes

up a country dance, and stewards with white ribbons and laurel leaves are seen bustling about.]

SECOND ATTACHE

Let us go and look at the dancing. It is "Voulez-vous danser"—no, it is not,—it is "Enrico"—two ladies between two gentlemen.

[They go from the alcove.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

From this phantasmagoria let us roam  
To the chief wheel and capstan of the show,  
Distant afar. I pray you closely read  
What I reveal—wherein each feature bulks  
In measure with its value humanly.

[The beholder finds himself, as it were, caught up on high, and while the Vauxhall scene still dimly twinkles below, he gazes southward towards Central Europe—the contorted and attenuated ecorche of the Continent appearing as in an earlier scene, but now obscure under the summer stars.]

Three cities loom out large: Vienna there,  
Dresden, which holds Napoleon, over here,  
And Leipzig, whither we shall shortly wing,  
Out yonderwards. 'Twixt Dresden and Vienna  
What thing do you discern?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Something broad-faced,  
Flat-folded, parchment-pale, and in its shape  
Rectangular; but moving like a cloud  
The Dresden way.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Yet gaze more closely on it.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

The object takes a letter's lineaments  
Though swollen to mainsail measure,—magically,  
I gather from your words; and on its face  
Are three vast seals, red—signifying blood  
Must I suppose? It moves on Dresden town,  
And dwarfs the city as it passes by.—  
You say Napoleon's there?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

The document,  
Sized to its big importance, as I told,  
Bears in it formal declaration, signed,  
Of war by Francis with his late-linked son,



The Emperor of France. Now let us go  
To Leipzig city, and await the blow.  
[A chaotic gloom ensues, accompanied by a rushing like that of a  
mighty wind.]  
[image not archived]

## ACT THIRD

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

LEIPZIG. NAPOLEON'S QUARTERS IN THE REUDNITZ SUBURB

[The sitting-room of a private mansion. Evening. A large stove-  
fire and candles burning. The October wind is heard without, and  
the leaded panes of the old windows shake mournfully.]

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

We come; and learn as Time's disordered dear sands run  
That Castlereagh's diplomacy has wiled, waxed, won.  
The beacons flash the fevered news to eyes keen bent  
That Austria's formal words of war are shaped, sealed, sent.

SEMICHORUS II

So; Poland's three despoilers primed by Bull's gross pay  
To stem Napoleon's might, he waits the weird dark day;  
His proffered peace declined with scorn, in fell force then  
They front him, with yet ten-score thousand more massed men.  
[At the back of the room CAULAINCOURT, DUKE OF VICENZA, and  
JOUANNE, one of Napoleon's confidential secretaries, are unpacking  
and laying out the Emperor's maps and papers. In the foreground  
BERTHIER, MURAT, LAURISTON, and several officers of Napoleon's  
suite, are holding a desultory conversation while they await his  
entry. Their countenances are overcast.]

MURAT

At least, the scheme of marching on Berlin  
Is now abandoned.

LAURISTON

Not without high words:  
He yielded and gave order prompt for Leipzig  
But coldness and reserve have marked his mood  
Towards us ever since.

BERTHIER

The march hereto

He has looked on as a retrogressive one,  
 And that, he ever holds, is courting woe.  
 To counsel it was doubtless full of risk,  
 And heaped us with responsibilities;  
 —Yet 'twas your missive, sire, that settled it [to MURAT].  
 How stirred he was! "To Leipzig, or Berlin?"  
 He kept repeating, as he drew and drew  
 Fantastic figures on the foolscap sheet,—  
 "The one spells ruin—t'other spells success,  
 And which is which?"  
 MURAT [stiffly]  
 What better could I do?  
 So far were the Allies from sheering off  
 As he supposed, that they had moved in march  
 Full fanfare hither! I was duty-bound  
 To let him know.  
 LAURISTON  
 Assuming victory here,  
 If he should let the advantage slip him by  
 As on the Dresden day, he wrecks us all!  
 'Twas damnable—to ride back from the fight  
 Inside a coach, as though we had not won!  
 CAULAINCOURT [from the back]  
 The Emperor was ill: I have ground for knowing.  
 [NAPOLEON enters.]  
 NAPOLEON [buoyantly]  
 Comrades, the outlook promises us well!  
 MURAT [dryly]  
 Right glad are we you tongue such tidings, sire.  
 To us the stars have visaged differently;  
 To wit: we muster outside Leipzig here  
 Levies one hundred and ninety thousand strong.  
 The enemy has mustered, OUTSIDE US,  
 Three hundred and fifty thousand—if not more.  
 NAPOLEON  
 All that is needful is to conquer them!  
 We are centred here: they lie a-spread,  
 Which shrinks them to two-hundred-thousand power:—  
 Though that the urgency of victory  
 Is absolute, I admit.  
 MURAT  
 Yea; otherwise

The issue will be worse than Moscow, sire!  
[MARMONT, DUKE OF RAGUSA [Wellington's adversary in Spain], is announced, and enters.]

NAPOLEON

Ah, Marmont; bring you in particulars?

MARMONT

Some sappers I have taken captive, sire,  
Say the Allies will be at stroke with us  
The morning next to to-morrow's.—I am come,  
Now, from the steeple-top of Liebenthal,  
Where I beheld the enemy's fires bespot  
The horizon round with raging eyes of flame:—  
My vanward posts, too, have been driven in,  
And I need succours—thrice ten thousand, say.

NAPOLEON [coldly]

The enemy vexes not your vanward posts;  
You are mistaken.—Now, however, go;  
Cross Leipzig, and remain as the reserve.—  
Well, gentlemen, my hope herein is this:  
The first day to annihilate Schwarzenberg,  
The second Blucher. So shall we slip the toils  
They are all madding to enmesh us in.

BERTHIER

Few are our infantry to fence with theirs!

NAPOLEON [cheerfully]

We'll range them in two lines instead of three,  
And so we shall look stronger by one-third.

BERTHIER [incredulously]

Can they be thus deceived, sire?

NAPOLEON

Can they? Yes!

With all my practice I can err in numbers  
At least one-quarter; why not they one-third?  
Anyhow, 'tis worth trying at a pinch...

[AUGEREAU is suddenly announced.]

Good! I've not seen him yet since he arrived.

[Enter AUGEREAU.]

Here you are then at last, old Augereau!

You have been looked for long.—But you are no more  
The Augereau of Castiglione days!

AUGEREAU

Nay, sire! I still should be the Augereau

Of glorious Castiglione, could you give  
The boys of Italy back again to me!

NAPOLEON

Well, let it drop... Only I notice round me  
An atmosphere of scopeless apathy  
Wherein I do not share.

AUGEREAU

There are reasons, sire,  
Good reasons for despondence! As I came  
I learnt, past question, that Bavaria  
Swerves on the very pivot of desertion.  
This adds some threescore thousand to our foes.

NAPOLEON [irritated]

That consummation long has threatened us!...  
Would that you showed the steeled fidelity  
You used to show! Except me, all are slack!  
[To Murat] Why, even you yourself, my brother-in-law,  
Have been inclining to abandon me!

MURAT [vehemently]

I, sire? It is not so. I stand and swear  
The grievous imputation is untrue.  
You should know better than believe these things,  
And well remember I have enemies  
Who ever wait to slander me to you!

NAPOLEON [more calmly]

Ah yes, yes. That is so.—And yet—and yet  
You have deigned to weigh the feasibility  
Of treating me as Austria has done!...  
But I forgive you. You are a worthy man;  
You feel real friendship for me. You are brave.  
Yet I was wrong to make a king of you.  
If I had been content to draw the line  
At vice-king, as with young Eugene, no more,  
As he has laboured you'd have laboured, too!  
But as full monarch, you have foraged rather  
For your own pot than mine!

[MURAT and the marshal are silent, and look at each other with  
troubled countenances. NAPOLEON goes to the table at the back, and  
bends over the charts with CAULAINCOURT, dictating desultory notes  
to the secretaries.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

A seer might say

This savours of a sad Last-Supper talk  
Twixt his disciples and this Christ of war!  
[Enter an attendant.]

ATTENDANT

The Saxon King and Queen and the Princess  
Enter the city gates, your Majesty.  
They seek the shelter of the civic walls  
Against the risk of capture by Allies.

NAPOLEON

Ah, so? My friend Augustus, is he near?  
I will be prompt to meet him when he comes,  
And safely quarter him. [He returns to the map.]  
[An interval. The clock strikes midnight. The EMPEROR rises  
abruptly, sighs, and comes forward.]

I now retire,  
Comrades. Good-night, good-night. Remember well  
All must prepare to grip with gory death  
In the now voidless battle. It will be  
A great one and a critical; one, in brief,  
That will seal France's fate, and yours, and mine!

ALL [fervidly]

We'll do our utmost, by the Holy Heaven!

NAPOLEON

Ah—what was that? [He pulls back the window-curtain.]

SEVERAL

It is our enemies,  
Whose southern hosts are signalling to their north.  
[A white rocket is beheld high in the air. It is followed by a  
second, and a third. There is a pause, during which NAPOLEON and  
the rest wait motionless. In a minute or two, from the opposite  
side of the city, three coloured rockets are sent up, in evident  
answer to the three white ones. NAPOLEON muses, and lets the  
curtain drop.]

NAPOLEON

Yes, Schwarzenberg to Blucher... It must be  
To show that they are ready. So are we!  
[He goes out without saying more. The marshals and other officers  
withdraw. The room darkens and ends the scene.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

THE SAME. THE CITY AND THE BATTLEFIELD

[Leipzig is viewed in aerial perspective from a position above the south suburbs, and reveals itself as standing in a plain, with rivers and marshes on the west, north, and south of it, and higher ground to the east and south-east.

At this date it is somewhat in the shape of the letter D, the straight part of which is the river Pleisse. Except as to this side it is surrounded by armies—the inner horseshoe of them being the French defending the city; the outer horseshoe being the Allies about to attack it.

Far over the city—as it were at the top of the D—at Lindenthal, we see MARMONT stationed to meet BLUCHER when he arrives on that side. To the right of him is NEY, and further off to the right, on heights eastward, MACDONALD. Then round the curve towards the south in order, AUGEREAU, LAURISTON [behind whom is NAPOLEON himself and the reserve of Guards], VICTOR [at Wachau], and PONIATOWSKI, near the Pleisse River at the bottom of the D. Near him are the cavalry of KELLERMANN and MILHAUD, and in the same direction MURAT with his, covering the great avenues of approach on the south.

Outside all these stands SCHWARZENBERG'S army, of which, opposed to MACDONALD and LAURISTON, are KLEINAU'S Austrians and ZIETEN'S Prussians, covered on the flank by Cossacks under PLATOFF.

Opposed to VICTOR and PONIATOWSKI are MEERFELDT and Hesse-Homburg's

Austrians, WITTGENSTEIN'S Russians, KLEIST'S Prussians, GUILAY'S Austrians, with LICHTENSTEIN'S and THIELMANN'S light troops: thus reaching round across the Elster into the morass on our near left—the lower point of the D.]

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS [aerial music]

This is the combat of Napoleon's hope,  
But not of his assurance! Shrunk in power  
He broods beneath October's clammy cope,  
While hemming hordes wax denser every hour.

SEMICHORUS II

He knows, he knows that though in equal fight  
He stands heretofore the matched of none,  
A feeble skill is propped by numbers' might,  
And now three hosts close round to crush out one!

DUMB SHOW

The Leipzig clocks imperturbably strike nine, and the battle which is to decide the fate of Europe, and perhaps the world, begins with three booms from the line of the allies. They are the signal for a general cannonade of devastating intensity.

So massive is the contest that we soon fail to individualize the combatants as beings, and can only observe them as amorphous drifts, clouds, and waves of conscious atoms, surging and rolling together; can only particularize them by race, tribe, and language.

Nationalities from the uttermost parts of Asia here meet those from the Atlantic edge of Europe for the first and last time. By noon the sound becomes a loud droning, uninterrupted and breve-like, as from the pedal of an organ kept continuously down.

#### CHORUS OF RUMOURS

Now triple battle beats about the town,  
And now contracts the huge elastic ring  
Of fighting flesh, as those within go down,  
Or spreads, as those without show faltering!

It becomes apparent that the French have a particular intention, the Allies only a general one. That of the French is to break through the enemy's centre and surround his right. To this end NAPOLEON launches fresh columns, and simultaneously OUDINOT supports VICTOR against EUGENE OF WURTEMBERG'S right, while on the other side of him the cavalry of MILHAUD and KELLERMAN prepares to charge. NAPOLEON'S combination is successful, and drives back EUGENE. Meanwhile SCHWARZENBERG is stuck fast, useless in the marshes between the Pleisse and the Elster.

By three o'clock the Allied centre, which has held out against the assaults of the French right and left, is broken through by cavalry under MURAT, LATOUR-MAUBOURG, and KELLERMANN.

The bells of Leipzig ring.

#### CHORUS OF THE PITIES

Those chimings, ill-advised and premature!  
Who knows if such vast valour will endure?

The Austro-Russians are withdrawn from the marshes by SCHWARZENBERG. But the French cavalry also get entangled in the swamps, and simultaneously MARMONT is beaten at Mockern.

Meanwhile NEY, to the north of Leipzig, having heard the battle raging southward, leaves his position to assist it. He has nearly arrived when he hears BLUCHER attacking at the point he came from, and sends back some of his divisions.

BERTRAND has kept open the west road to Lindenau and the Rhine, the only French line of retreat.

Evening finds the battle a drawn one. With the nightfall three blank shots reverberate hollowly.

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS

They sound to say that, for this moaning night,  
As Nature sleeps, so too shall sleep the fight;  
Neither the victor.

SEMICHORUS II

But, for France and him,  
Half-won is losing!

CHORUS

Yea, his hopes drop dim,  
Since nothing less than victory to-day  
Had saved a cause whose ruin is delay!  
The night gets thicker and no more is seen.  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

THE SAME, FROM THE TOWER OF THE PLEISSENBURG

[The tower commands a view of a great part of the battlefield.  
Day has just dawned, and citizens, saucer-eyed from anxiety and sleeplessness, are discover watching.]

FIRST CITIZEN

The wind increased at midnight while I watched,  
With flapping showers, and clouds that combed the moon,  
Till dawn began outreaving this huge day,  
Pallidly—as if scared by its own issue;  
This day that the Allies with bonded might  
Have vowed to deal their felling finite blow.

SECOND CITIZEN

So must it be! They have welded close the coop  
Wherein our luckless Frenchmen are enjailed  
With such compression that their front has shrunk  
From five miles' farness to but half as far.—  
Men say Napoleon made resolve last night  
To marshal a retreat. If so, his way  
Is by the Bridge of Lindenau.

[They look across in the cold east light at the long straight  
causeway from the Ranstadt Gate at the north-west corner of the  
town, and the Lindenau bridge over the Elster beyond.]

FIRST CITIZEN

Last night I saw, like wolf-packs, hosts appear



Upon the Dresden road; and then, anon,  
The already stout arrays of Schwarzenberg  
Grew stoutened more. I witnessed clearly, too,  
Just before dark, the bands of Bernadotte  
Come, hemming in the north more thoroughly.  
The horizon glowered with a thousand fires  
As the unyielding circle shut around.  
[As it grows light they scan and define the armies.]

THIRD CITIZEN

Those lying there, 'twixt Connewitz and Dolitz,  
Are the right wing of horse Murat commands.  
Next, Poniatowski, Victor, and the rest.  
Out here, Napoleon's centre at Probstheida,  
Where he has bivouacked. Those round this way  
Are his left wing with Ney, that face the north  
Between Paunsdorf and Gohlis.—Thus, you see  
They are skilfully sconced within the villages,  
With cannon ranged in front. And every copse,  
Dingle, and grove is packed with riflemen.

[The heavy sky begins to clear with the full arrival of the  
morning. The sun bursts out, and the previously dark and gloomy  
masses glitter in the rays. It is now seven o'clock, and with the  
shining of the sun, the battle is resumed.

The army of Bohemia to the south and east, in three great columns,  
marches concentrically upon NAPOLEON'S new and much-contracted line  
—the first column of thirty-five thousand under BENNIGSEN; the  
second, the central, forty-five thousand under BARCLAY DE TOLLY;  
the third, twenty-five thousand under the PRINCE OF HESSE-HOMBURG.  
An interval of suspense.]

FIRST CITIZEN

Ah, see! The French bend, falter, and fall back.

[Another interval. Then a huge rumble of artillery resounds from  
the north.]

SEMICHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music]

Now Blucher has arrived; and now falls to!  
Marmont withdraws before him. Bernadotte  
Touching Bennigsen, joins attack with him,  
And Ney must needs recede. This serves as sign  
To Schwarzenberg to bear upon Probstheida—  
Napoleon's keystone and dependence here.  
But for long whiles he fails to win his will,  
The chief being nigh—outmatching might with skill.

SEMICHORUS II

Ney meanwhile, stung still sharper, still withdraws  
Nearer the town, and met by new mischance,  
Finds him forsaken by his Saxon wing—  
Fair files of thrice twelve thousand footmanry.  
But rallying those still true with signs and calls,  
He warily closes up his remnant to the walls.

SEMICHORUS I

Around Probstheida still the conflict rolls  
Under Napoleon's eye surpassingly.  
Like sedge before the scythe the sections fall  
And bayonets slant and reek. Each cannon-blaze  
Makes the air thick with human limbs; while keen  
Contests rage hand to hand. Throats shout "advance,"  
And forms walm, wallow, and slack suddenly.  
Hot ordnance split and shiver and rebound,  
And firelocks fouled and flintless overstrew the ground.

SEMICHORUS II

At length the Allies, daring tumultuously,  
Find them inside Probstheida. There is fixed  
Napoleon's cardinal and centre hold.  
But need to loose it grows his gloomy fear  
As night begins to brown and treacherous mists appear.

CHORUS

Then, on the three fronts of this reaching field,  
A furious, far, and final cannonade  
Burns from two thousand mouths and shakes the plain,  
And hastens the sure end! Towards the west  
Bertrand keeps open the retreating-way,  
Along which wambling waggons since the noon  
Have crept in closing file. Dusk draws around;  
The marching remnants drowse amid their talk,  
And worn and harrowed horses slumber as the walk.  
[In the darkness of the distance spread cries from the maimed  
animals and the wounded men. Multitudes of the latter contrive to  
crawl into the city, until the streets are full of them. Their  
voices are heard calling.]

SECOND CITIZEN

They cry for water! Let us go down,  
And do what mercy may.  
[Exeunt citizens from the tower.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

A fire is lit  
Near to the Thonberg wind-wheel. Can it be  
Napoleon tarries yet? Let us go see.  
[The distant firelight becomes clearer and closer.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. AT THE THONBERG WINDMILL

[By the newly lighted fire NAPOLEON is seen walking up and down, much agitated and worn. With him are MURAT, BERTHIER, AUGEREAU, VICTOR, and other marshals of corps that have been engaged in this part of the field—all perspiring, muddy, and fatigued.]

NAPOLEON

Baseness so gross I had not guessed of them!—  
The thirty thousand false Bavarians  
I looked on losing not un placidly;  
But these troth-swearing sober Saxonry  
I reckoned staunch by virtue of their king!  
Thirty-five thousand and gone! It magnifies  
A failure into a catastrophe...  
Murat, we must retreat precipitately,  
And not as hope had dreamed! Begin it then  
This very hour.—Berthier, write out the orders.—  
Let me sit down.

[A chair is brought out from the mill. NAPOLEON sinks into it, and BERTHIER, stooping over the fire, begins writing to the Emperor's dictation, the marshals looking with gloomy faces at the flaming logs.

NAPOLEON has hardly dictated a line when he stops short. BERTHIER turns round and finds that he has dropt asleep.]

MURAT [sullenly]

Far better not disturb him;  
He'll soon enough awake!

[They wait, muttering to one another in tones expressing weary indifference to issues. NAPOLEON sleeps heavily for a quarter of an hour, during which the moon rises over the field. At the end he starts up stares around him with astonishment.]

NAPOLEON

Am I awake?  
Or is this all a dream?—Ah, no. Too real!...  
And yet I have seen ere now a time like this.

[The dictation is resumed. While it is in progress there can be heard between the words of NAPOLEON the persistent cries from the plain, rising and falling like those of a vast rookery far away, intermingled with the trampling of hoofs and the rumble of wheels. The bivouac fires of the engirdling enemy glow all around except for a small segment to the west—the track of retreat, still kept open by BERTRAND, and already taken by the baggage-waggons. The orders for its adoption by the entire army being completed, NAPOLEON bids adieu to his marshals, and rides with BERTHIER and CAULAINCOURT into Leipzig. Exeunt also the others.]

#### SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES

Now, as in the dream of one sick to death,  
There comes a narrowing room  
That pens him, body and limbs and breath,  
To wait a hideous doom,

#### SEMICHORUS II

So to Napoleon in the hush  
That holds the town and towers  
Through this dire night, a creeping crush  
Seems inborne with the hours.

[The scene closes under a rimy mist, which makes a lurid cloud of the firelights.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. A STREET NEAR THE RANSTADT GATE

[High old-fashioned houses form the street, along which, from the east of the city, is streaming a confusion of waggons, in hurried exit through the gate westward upon the highroad to Lindenau, Lutzen, and the Rhine.

In front of an inn called the "Prussian Arms" are some attendants of NAPOLEON waiting with horses.]

FIRST OFFICER

He has just come from bidding the king and queen  
A long good-bye... Is it that they will pay  
For his indulgence of their past ambition  
By sharing now his ruin? Much the king  
Did beg him to leave them to their lot,  
And shun the shame of capture needlessly.

[He looks anxiously towards the door.]

I would he'd haste! Each minute is of price.

SECOND OFFICER

The king will come to terms with the Allies.  
They will not hurt him. Though he has lost his all,  
His case is not like ours!

[The cheers of the approaching enemy grow louder. NAPOLEON comes out from the "Prussian Arms," haggard and in disordered attire. He is about to mount, but, perceiving the blocked state of the street, he hesitates.]

NAPOLEON

God, what a crowd!  
I shall more quickly gain the gate afoot.  
There is a byway somewhere, I suppose?  
[A citizen approaches out of the inn.]

CITIZEN

This alley, sire, will speed you to the gate;  
I shall be honoured much to point the way.

NAPOLEON

Then do, good friend. [To attendants] Bring on the horses there;  
I if arrive soonest I will wait for you.

[The citizen shows NAPOLEON the way into the alley.]

CITIZEN

A garden's at the end, your Majesty,  
Through which you pass. Beyond there is a door  
That opens to the Elster bank unbalked.  
[NAPOLEON disappears into the alley. His attendants plunge amid the traffic with the horses, and thread their way down the street. Another citizen comes from the door of the inn and greets the first.]

FIRST CITIZEN

He's gone!

SECOND CITIZEN

I'll see if he succeed.

[He re-enters the inn and soon appears at an upper window.]

FIRST CITIZEN [from below]

You see him?

SECOND CITIZEN [gazing]

He is already at the garden-end;  
Now he has passed out to the river-brim,  
And plods along it toward the Ranstadt Gate...  
He finds no horses for him!... And the crowd  
Thrusts him about, none recognizing him.  
Ah—now the horses do arrive. He mounts,

And hurries through the arch... Again I see him—  
Now he's upon the causeway in the marsh;  
Now rides across the bridge of Lindenau...  
And now, among the troops that choke the road  
I lose all sight of him.

[A third citizen enters from the direction NAPOLEON has taken.]

THIRD CITIZEN [breathlessly]

I have seen him go!

And while he passed the gate I stood i' the crowd  
So close I could have touched him! Few discerned  
In one so soiled the erst Arch-Emperor!—  
In the lax mood of him who has lost all  
He stood inert there, idly singing thin:  
Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre!—until his suite  
Came up with horses.

SECOND CITIZEN [still gazing afar]

Poniatowski's Poles

Wearily walk the level causeway now;  
Also, meseems, Macdonald's corps and Reynier's.  
The frail-framed, new-built bridge has broken down:  
They've but the old to cross by.

FIRST CITIZEN

Feeble foresight!

They should have had a dozen.

SECOND CITIZEN

All the corps—

Macdonald's, Poniatowski's, Reynier's—all—

Confusedly block the entrance to the bridge.

And—verily Blucher's troops are through the town,

And are debouching from the Ranstadt Gate

Upon the Frenchmen's rear!

[A thunderous report stops his words, echoing through the city from  
the direction in which he is gazing, and rattling all the windows.

A hoarse chorus of cries becomes audible immediately after.]

FIRST, THIRD, ETC., CITIZENS

Ach, Heaven!—what's that?

SECOND CITIZEN

The bridge of Lindenau has been upblown!

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

There leaps to the sky and earthen wave,

And stones, and men, as though

Some rebel churchyard crew updrave

Their sepulchres from below.

SEMICHORUS II

To Heaven is blown Bridge Lindenau;  
Wrecked regiments reel therefrom;  
And rank and file in masses plough  
The sullen Elster-Strom.

SEMICHORUS I

A gulf is Lindenau; and dead  
Are fifties, hundreds, tens;  
And every current ripples red  
With marshals' blood and men's.

SEMICHORUS II

The smart Macdonald swims therein,  
And barely wins the verge;  
Bold Poniatowski plunges in  
Never to re-emerge!

FIRST CITIZEN

Are not the French across as yet, God save them?

SECOND CITIZEN [still gazing above]

Nor Reynier's corps, Macdonald's, Lauriston's,  
Nor yet the Poles... And Blucher's troops approach,  
And all the French this side are prisoners.  
—Now for our handling by the Prussian host;  
Scant courtesy for our king!

[Other citizens appear beside him at the window, and further  
conversation continues entirely above.]

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS

The Battle of the Nations now is closing,  
And all is lost to One, to many gained;  
The old dynastic routine reimposing,  
The new dynastic structure unsustainable.  
Now every neighbouring realm is France's warder,  
And smirking satisfaction will be feigned:  
The which is seemlier?—so-called ancient order,  
Or that the hot-breath'd war-horse ramp unreined?  
[The October night thickens and curtains the scene.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

THE PYRENEES. NEAR THE RIVER NIVELLE

[Evening. The dining-room of WELLINGTON'S quarters. The table is

laid for dinner. The battle of the Nivelles has just been fought.  
Enter WELLINGTON, HILL, BERESFORD, STEWART, HOPE, CLINTON,  
COLBORNE,

COLE, KEMPT [with a bound-up wound], and other officers.

WELLINGTON

It is strange that they did not hold their grand position more tenaciously against us to-day. By God, I don't quite see why we should have beaten them!

COLBORNE

My impression is that they had the stiffness taken out of them by something they had just heard of. Anyhow, startling news of some kind was received by those of the Eighty-eighth we took in the signal-redoubt after I summoned the Commandant.

WELLINGTON

Oh, what news?

COLBORNE

I cannot say, my lord, I only know that the latest number of the Imperial Gazette was seen in the hands of some of them before the capture. They had been reading the contents, and were cast down.

WELLINGTON

That's interesting. I wonder what the news could have been?

HILL

Something about Boney's army in Saxony would be most probable. Though I question if there's time yet for much to have been decided there.

BERESFORD

Well, I wouldn't say that. A hell of a lot of things may have happened there by this time.

COLBORNE

It was tantalizing, but they were just able to destroy the paper before we could prevent them.

WELLINGTON

Did you question them?

COLBORNE

Oh yes. But they stayed sulking at being taken, and would tell us nothing, pretending that they knew nothing. Whether much were going on, they said, or little, between the army of the Emperor and the army of the Allies, it was none of their business to relate it; so they kept a gloomy silence for the most part.

WELLINGTON

They will cheer up a bit and be more communicative when they have had some dinner.



COLE

They are dining here, my lord?

WELLINGTON

I sent them an invitation an hour ago, which they have accepted. I could do no less, poor devils. They'll be here in a few minutes. See that they have plenty of Madeira to whet their whistles with. It will screw them up into a better key, and they'll not be so reserved.

[The conversation on the day's battle becomes general. Enter as guests French officers of the Eighty-eighth regiment now prisoners on parole. They are welcomed by WELLINGTON and the staff, and all sit down to dinner.

For some time the meal proceeds almost in silence; but wine is passed freely, and both French and English officers become talkative and merry.

WELLINGTON [to the French Commandant]

More cozy this, sir, than—I'll warrant me—  
You found it in that damned redoubt to-day?

COMMANDANT

The devil if 'tis not, monseigneur, sure!

WELLINGTON

So 'tis for us who were outside, by God!

COMMANDANT [gloomily]

No; we were not at ease! Alas, my lord,  
Twas more than flesh and blood could do, to fight  
After such paralyzing tidings came.  
More life may trickle out of men through thought  
Than through a gaping wound.

WELLINGTON

Your reference

Bears on the news from Saxony, I infer?

SECOND FRENCH OFFICER

Yes: on the Emperor's ruinous defeat  
At Leipzig city—brought to our startled heed  
By one of the Gazettes just now arrived.  
[All the English officers stop speaking, and listen eagerly.]

WELLINGTON

Where are the Emperor's headquarters now?

COMMANDANT

My lord, there are no headquarters.

WELLINGTON

No headquarters?

COMMANDANT

There are no French headquarters now, my lord,  
For there is no French army! France's fame  
Is fouled. And how, then, could we fight to-day  
With our hearts in our shoes!

WELLINGTON

Why, that bears out  
What I but lately said; it was not like  
The brave men who have faced and foiled me here  
So many a long year past, to give away  
A stubborn station quite so readily.

BERESFORD

And what, messieurs, ensued at Leipzig then?

SEVERAL FRENCH OFFICERS

Why, sirs, should we conceal it? Thereupon  
Part of our army took the Lutzen road;  
Behind a blown-up bridge. Those in advance  
Arrived at Lutzen with the Emperor—  
The scene of our once famous victory!  
In such sad sort retreat was hurried on,  
Erfurt was gained with Blucher hot at heel.  
To cross the Rhine seemed then our only hope;  
Alas, the Austrians and the Bavarians  
Faced us in Hanau Forest, led by Wrede,  
And dead-blocked our escape.

WELLINGTON

Ha. Did they though?

SECOND FRENCH OFFICER

But if brave hearts were ever desperate,  
Sir, we were desperate then! We pierced them through,  
Our loss unrecking. So by Frankfurt's walls  
We fared to Mainz, and there recrossed the Rhine.  
A funeral procession, so we seemed,  
Upon the long bridge that had rung so oft  
To our victorious feet!... What since has coursed  
We know not, gentlemen. But this we know,  
That Germany echoes no French footfall!

AN ENGLISH OFFICER

One sees not why it should.

SECOND FRENCH OFFICER

We'll leave it so.

[Conversation on the Leipzig disaster continues till the dinner

ends The French prisoners courteously take their leave and go out.]

WELLINGTON

Very good set of fellows. I could wish  
They all were mine!...Well, well; there was no crime  
In trying to ascertain these fat events:  
They would have sounded soon from other tongues.

HILL

It looks like the first scene of act the last  
For our and all men's foe!

WELLINGTON

I count to meet  
The Allies upon the cobble-stones of Paris  
Before another half-year's suns have shone.  
—But there's some work for us to do here yet:  
The dawn must find us fording the Nivelles!  
[Exeunt WELLINGTON and officers. The room darkens.]  
[image not archived]

## ACT FOURTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

THE UPPER RHINE

[The view is from a vague altitude over the beautiful country traversed by the Upper Rhine, which stretches through it in birds-eye perspective. At this date in Europe's history the stream forms the frontier between France and Germany. It is the morning of New Year's Day, and the shine of the tardy sun reaches the fronts of the beetling castles, but scarcely descends far enough to touch the wavelets of the river winding leftwards across the many-leagued picture from Schaffhausen to Coblenz.]

DUMB SHOW

At first nothing—not even the river itself—seems to move in the panorama. But anon certain strange dark patches in the landscape, flexuous and riband-shaped, are discerned to be moving slowly. Only one movable object on earth is large enough to be conspicuous herefrom, and that is an army. The moving shapes are armies. The nearest, almost beneath us, is defiling across the river by a

bridge of boats, near the junction of the Rhine and the Neckar, where the oval town of Mannheim, standing in the fork between the two rivers, has from here the look of a human head in a cleft stick. Martial music from many bands strikes up as the crossing is effected, and the undulating columns twinkle as if they were scaly serpents.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

It is the Russian host, invading France!  
Many miles to the left, down-stream, near the little town of Caube, another army is seen to be simultaneously crossing the pale current, its arms and accoutrements twinkling in like manner.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

Thither the Prussian levies, too, advance!  
Turning now to the right, far away by Basel [beyond which the Swiss mountains close the scene], a still larger train of war-gear'd humanity, two hundred thousand strong, is discernible. It has already crossed the water, which is much narrower here, and has advanced several miles westward, where its ductile mass of greyness and glitter is beheld parting into six columns, that march on in flexuous courses of varying direction.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

There glides carked Austria's invading force!—  
Panting, too, Paris-wards with foot and horse,  
Of one intention with the other twain,  
And Wellington, from the south, in upper Spain.  
All these dark and grey columns, converging westward by sure degrees, advance without opposition. They glide on as if by gravitation, in fluid figures, dictated by the conformation of the country, like water from a burst reservoir; mostly snake-shaped, but occasionally with batrachian and saurian outlines. In spite of the immensity of this human mechanism on its surface, the winter landscape wears an impassive look, as if nothing were happening.  
Evening closes in, and the Dumb Show is obscured.  
[image not archived]

## SCENE II

PARIS. THE TUILERIES

[It is Sunday just after mass, and the principal officers of the National Guard are assembled in the Salle des Marechaux. They stand in an attitude of suspense, some with the print of sadness

on their faces, some with that of perplexity.

The door leading from the Hall to the adjoining chapel is thrown open. There enter from the chapel with the last notes of the service the EMPEROR NAPOLEON and the EMPRESS; and simultaneously from a door opposite MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU, the governess, who carries in her arms the KING OF ROME, now a fair child between two and three. He is clothed in a miniature uniform of the Guards themselves.

MADAM DE MONTESQUIOU brings forward the child and sets him on his feet near his mother. NAPOLEON, with a mournful smile, giving one hand to the boy and the other to MARIE LOUISE, en famille, leads them forward. The Guard bursts into cheers.]

NAPOLEON

Gentlemen of the National Guard and friends,  
I have to leave you; and before I fare  
To Heaven know what of personal destiny,  
I give into your loyal guardianship  
Those dearest in the world to me; my wife,  
The Empress, and my son the King of Rome.—  
I go to shield your roofs and kin from foes  
Who have dared to pierce the fences of our land;  
And knowing that you house those dears of mine,  
I start afar in all tranquillity,  
Stayed by my trust in your proved faithfulness.

[Enthusiastic cheers for the Guard.]

OFFICERS [with emotion]

We proudly swear to justify the trust!  
And never will we see another sit  
Than you, or yours, on the great throne of France.

NAPOLEON

I ratify the Empress' regency,  
And re-confirm it on last year's lines,  
My bother Joseph stoutening her rule  
As the Lieutenant-General of the State.—  
Vex her with no divisions; let regard  
For property, for order, and for France  
Be chief with all. Know, gentlemen, the Allies  
Are drunken with success. Their late advantage  
They have handled wholly for their own gross gain,  
And made a pastime of my agony.  
That I go clogged with cares I sadly own;  
Yet I go primed with hope; ay, in despite

Of a last sorrow that has sunk upon me,—  
The grief of hearing, good and constant friends,  
That my own sister's consort, Naples' king,  
Blazons himself a backer of the Allies,  
And marches with a Neapolitan force  
Against our puissance under Prince Eugene.  
The varied operations to ensue  
May bring the enemy largely Paris-wards;  
But suffer no alarm; before long days  
I will annihilate by flank and rear  
Those who have risen to trample on our soil;  
And as I have done so many and proud a time,  
Come back to you with ringing victory!—  
Now, see: I personally present to you  
My son and my successor ere I go.  
[He takes the child in his arms and carries him round to the  
officers severally. They are much affected and raise loud  
cheers.]

You stand by him and her? You swear as much?

OFFICERS

We do!

NAPOLEON

This you repeat—you promise it?

OFFICERS

We promise. May the dynasty live for ever!

[Their shouts, which spread to the Carrousel without, are echoed  
by the soldiers of the Guard assembled there. The EMPRESS is now  
in tears, and the EMPEROR supports her.]

MARIE LOUISE

Such whole enthusiasm I have never known!—

Not even from the Landwehr of Vienna.

[Amid repeated protestations and farewells NAPOLEON, the EMPRESS,  
the KING OF ROME, MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU, etc. go out in one  
direction, and the officers of the National Guard in another.

The curtain falls for an interval.

When it rises again the apartment is in darkness, and its atmosphere  
chilly. The January night-wind howls without. Two servants enter  
hastily, and light candles and a fire. The hands of the clock are  
pointing to three.

The room is hardly in order when the EMPEROR enters, equipped for  
the intended journey; and with him, his left arm being round her  
waist, walks MARIE LOUISE in a dressing-gown. On his right arm

he carries the KING OF ROME, and in his hand a bundle of papers. COUNT BERTRAND and a few members of the household follow. Reaching the middle of the room, he kisses the child and embraces the EMPRESS, who is tearful, the child weeping likewise. NAPOLEON takes the papers to the fire, thrusts them in, and watches them consume; then burns other bundles brought by his attendants.]

NAPOLEON [gloomily]

Better to treat them thus; since no one knows  
What comes, or into whose hands he may fall!

MARIE LOUISE

I have an apprehension-unexplained—  
That I shall never see you any more!

NAPOLEON

Dismiss such fears. You may as well as not.  
As things are doomed to be they will be, dear.  
If shadows must come, let them come as though  
The sun were due and you were trusting to it:  
Twill teach the world it wrongs in bringing them.

[They embrace finally. Exeunt NAPOLEON, etc. Afterwards MARIE LOUISE and the child.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Her instinct forwardly is keen in cast,  
And yet how limited. True it may be  
They never more will meet; although—to use  
The bounded prophecy I am dowered with—  
The screen that will maintain their severance  
Would pass her own believing; proving it  
No gaol-grille, no scath of scorching war,  
But this persuasion, pressing on her pulse  
To breed aloofness and a mind averse;  
Until his image in her soul will shape  
Dwarfed as a far Colossus on a plain,  
Or figure-head that smalls upon the main.  
[The lights are extinguished and the hall is left in darkness.]  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

THE SAME. THE APARTMENTS OF THE EMPRESS

[A March morning, verging on seven o'clock, throws its cheerless stare into the private drawing-room of MARIE LOUISE, animating the gilt furniture to only a feeble shine. Two chamberlains of

the palace are there in waiting. They look from the windows and yawn.]

FIRST CHAMBERLAIN

Here's a watering for spring hopes! Who would have supposed when the Emperor left, and appointed her Regent, that she and the Regency too would have to scurry after in so short a time!

SECOND CHAMBERLAIN

Was a course decided on last night?

FIRST CHAMBERLAIN

Yes. The Privy Council sat till long past midnight, debating the burning question whether she and the child should remain or not. Some were one way, some the other. She settled the matter by saying she would go.

SECOND CHAMBERLAIN

I thought it might come to that. I heard the alarm beating all night to assemble the National Guard; and I am told that some volunteers have marched out to support Marmot. But they are a mere handful: what can they do?

[A clatter of wheels and a champing and prancing of horses is heard outside the palace. MENEVAL enters, and divers officers of the household; then from her bedroom at the other end MARIE LOUISE, in a travelling dress and hat, leading the KING OF ROME, attired for travel likewise. She looks distracted and pale.

Next come the DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO, lady of honour, the COUNTESS DE MONTESQUIOU, ladies of the palace, and others, all in travelling trim.]

KING OF ROME [plaintively]

Why are we doing these strange things, mamma,  
And what did we get up so early for?

MARIE LOUISE

I cannot, dear, explain. So many events  
Enlarge and make so many hours of one,  
That it would be too hard to tell them now.

KING OF ROME

But you know why we a setting out like this?  
Is it because we fear our enemies?

MARIE LOUISE

We are not sure that we are going yet.  
I may be needful; but don't ask me here.  
Some time I will tell you.

[She sits down irresolutely, and bestows recognitions on the assembled officials with a preoccupied air.]



KING OF ROME [in a murmur]

I like being here best;

And I don't want to go I know not where!

MARIE LOUISE

Run, dear to Mamma 'Quiou and talk to her

[He goes across to MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU.]

I hear that women of the Royalist hope

[To the DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO]

Have bent them busy in their private rooms

With working white cockades these several days.—

Yes—I must go!

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO

But why yet, Empress dear?

We may soon gain good news; some messenger

Hie from the Emperor or King Joseph hither?

MARIE LOUISE

King Joseph I await. He's gone to eye

The outposts, with the Ministers of War,

To learn the scope and nearness of the Allies;

He should almost be back.

[A silence, till approaching feet are suddenly heard outside the door.]

Ah, here he comes;

Now we shall know!

[Enter precipitately not Joseph but officers of the National Guard and others.]

OFFICERS

Long live the Empress-regent!

Do not quit Paris, pray, your Majesty.

Remain, remain. We plight us to defend you!

MARIE LOUISE [agitated]

Gallant messieurs, I thank you heartily.

But by the Emperor's biddance I am bound.

He has vowed he'd liefer see me and my son

Blanched at the bottom of the smothering Seine

Than in the talons of the foes of France.—

To keep us sure from such, then, he ordained

Our swift withdrawal with the Ministers

Towards the Loire, if enemies advanced

In overmastering might. They do advance;

Marshal Marmont and Mortier are repulsed,

And that has come whose hazard he foresaw.

All is arranged; the treasure is awheel,  
And papers, seals, and cyphers packed therewith.

OFFICERS [dubiously]

Yet to leave Paris is to court disaster!

MARIE LOUISE [with petulance]

I shall do what I say!... I don't know what—

What SHALL I do!

[She bursts into tears and rushes into her bedroom, followed by the young KING and some of her ladies. There is a painful silence, broken by sobbings and expostulations within. Re-enter one of the ladies.]

LADY

She's sorely overthrown;

She flings herself upon the bed distraught.

She says, "My God, let them make up their minds

To one or other of these harrowing ills,

And force to't, and end my agony!"

[An official enters at the main door.]

OFFICIAL

I am sent here by the Minister of War

To her Imperial Majesty the Empress.

[Re-enter MARIE LOUISE and the KING OF ROME.]

Your Majesty, my mission is to say

Imperious need dictates your instant flight.

A vanward regiment of the Prussian packs

Has gained the shadow of the city walls.

MENEVAL

They are armed Europe's scouts!

[Enter CAMBACERES the Arch-Chancellor, COUNT BEAUHARNAIS, CORVIS-ART

the physician, DE BAUSSET, DE CANISY the equerry, and others.]

CAMBACERES

Your Majesty,

There's not a trice to lose. The force well-nigh

Of all compacted Europe crowds on us,

And clamours at the walls!

BEAUHARNAIS

If you stay longer,

You stay to fall into the Cossacks hands.

The people, too, are waxing masterful:

They think the lingering of your Majesty

Makes Paris more a peril for themselves

Than a defence for you. To fight is fruitless,  
And wanton waste of life. You have nought to do  
But go; and I, and all the Councillors,  
Will follow you.

MARIE LOUISE

Then I was right to say  
That I would go! Now go I surely will,  
And let none try to hinder me again!

[She prepares to leave.]

KING OF ROME [crying]

I will not go! I like to live here best!  
Don't go to Rambouillet, mamma; please don't.  
It is a nasty place! Let us stay here.  
O Mamma 'Quiou, stay with me here; pray stay!

MARIE LOUISE [to the Equerry]

Bring him down.

[Exit MARIE LOUISE in tears, followed by ladies-in-waiting and others.]

DE CANISY

Come now, Monseigneur, come.

[He catches up the boy in his arms and prepares to follow the Empress.]

KING OF ROME [kicking]

No, no, no! I don't want to go away from my house—I don't want to!  
Now papa is away I am the master! [He clings to the door as the equerry is bearing him through it.]

DE CANISY

But you must go.

[The child's fingers are pulled away. Exit DE CANISY with the King OF ROME, who is heard screaming as he is carried down the staircase.]

MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU

I feel the child is right!

A premonition has enlightened him.

She ought to stay. But, ah, the die is cast!

[MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU and the remainder of the party follow, and the room is left empty. Enter servants hastily.]

FIRST SERVANT

Sacred God, where are we to go to for grub and good lying to-night?  
What are ill-used men to do?

SECOND SERVANT

I trudge like the rest. All the true philosophers are gone, and the middling true are going. I made up my mind like the truest that ever

was as soon as I heard the general alarm beat.

THIRD SERVANT

I stay here. No Allies are going to tickle our skins. The storm which roots—Dost know what a metaphor is, comrade? I brim with them at this historic time!

SECOND SERVANT

A weapon of war used by the Cossacks?

THIRD SERVANT

Your imagination will be your ruin some day, my man! It happens to be a weapon of wisdom used by me. My metaphor is one may'st have met with on the rare times when th'hast been in good society. Here it is: The storm which roots the pine spares the p—s—b—d. Now do you see?

FIRST AND SECOND SERVANTS

Good! Your teaching, friend, is as sound as true religion! We'll not go. Harken to what's doing outside. [Carriages are heard moving. Servants go to the window and look down.] Lord, there's the Duchess getting in. Now the Mistress of the Wardrobe; now the Ladies of the Palace; now the Prefects; now the Doctors. What a time it takes! There are near a dozen berlines, as I am a patriot! Those other carriages bear treasure. How quiet the people are! It is like a funeral procession. Not a tongue cheers her!

THIRD SERVANT

Now there will be a nice convenient time for a little good victuals and drink, and likewise pickings, before the Allies arrive, thank Mother Molly!

[From a distant part of the city bands are heard playing military marches. Guns next resound. Another servant rushes in.]

FOURTH SERVANT

Montmartre is being stormed, and bombs are falling in the Chaussee d'Antin!

[Exit fourth servant.]

THIRD SERVANT [pulling something from his hat]

Then it is time for me to gird my armour on.

SECOND SERVANT

What hast there?

[Third servant holds up a crumpled white cockade and sticks it in his hair. The firing gets louder.]

FIRST AND SECOND SERVANTS

Hast got another?

THIRD SERVANT [pulling out more]

Ay—here they are; at a price.

[The others purchase cockades of third servant. A military march is again heard. Re-enter fourth servant.]

FOURTH SERVANT

The city has capitulated! The Allied sovereigns, so it is said, will enter in grand procession to-morrow: the Prussian cavalry first, then the Austrian foot, then the Russian and Prussian foot, then the Russian horse and artillery. And to cap all, the people of Paris are glad of the change. They have put a rope round the neck of the statue of Napoleon on the column of the Grand Army, and are amusing themselves with twitching it and crying "Strangle the Tyrant!"

SECOND SERVANT

Well, well! There's rich colours in this kaleidoscopic world!

THIRD SERVANT

And there's comedy in all things—when they don't concern you. Another glorious time among the many we've had since eighty-nine. We have put our armour on none too soon. The Bourbons for ever! [He leaves, followed by first and second servants.]

FOURTH SERVANT

My faith, I think I'll turn Englishman in my older years, where there's not these trying changes in the Constitution!

[Follows the others. The Allies military march waxes louder as the scene shuts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

FONTAINEBLEAU. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

[NAPOLEON is discovered walking impatiently up and down, and glancing at the clock every few minutes. Enter NEY.]

NAPOLEON [without a greeting]

Well—the result? Ah, but your looks display  
A leaden dawning to the light you bring!  
What—not a regency? What—not the Empress  
To hold it in trusteeship for my son?

NEY

Sire, things like revolutions turn back,  
But go straight on. Imperial governance  
Is confined for your family and yourself!  
It is declared that military repose,  
And France's well-doing, demand of you  
Your abdication—unconditioned, sheer.

This verdict of the sovereigns cannot change,  
And I have pushed on hot to let you know.  
NAPOLEON [with repression]  
I am obliged to you. You have told me promptly!—  
This was to be expected. I had learnt  
Of Marmont's late defection, and the Sixth's;  
The consequence I easily inferred.

NEY

The Paris folk are flaked with white cockades;  
Tricolors choke the kennels. Rapturously  
They clamour for the Bourbons and for peace.

NAPOLEON [tartly]

I can draw inferences without assistance!

NEY [persisting]

They see the brooks of blood that have flowed forth;  
They feel their own bereavements; so their mood  
Asked no deep reasoning for its geniture.

NAPOLEON

I have no remarks to make on that just now.  
I'll think the matter over. You shall know  
By noon to-morrow my definitive.

NEY [turning to go]

I trust my saying what had to be said  
Has not affronted you?

NAPOLEON [bitterly]

No; but your haste

In doing it has galled me, and has shown me  
A heart that heaves no longer in my cause!  
The skilled coquetting of the Government  
Has nearly won you from old fellowship!...  
Well; till to-morrow, marshal, then Adieu.

[Ney goes. Enter CAULAINCOURT and MACDONALD.]

Ney has got here before you; and, I deem,  
Has truly told me all?

CAULAINCOURT

We thought at first

We should have had success. But fate said No;  
And abdication, making no reserves,  
Is, sire, we are convinced, with all respect,  
The only road, if you care not to risk  
The Empress; loss of every dignity,  
And magnified misfortunes thrown on France.

NAPOLEON

I have heard it all; and don't agree with you.  
My assets are not quite so beggarly  
That I must close in such a shameful bond!  
What—do you rate as naught that I am yet  
Full fifty thousand strong, with Augereau,  
And Soult, and Suchet true, and many more?  
I still may know to play the Imperial game  
As well as Alexander and his friends!  
So—you will see. Where are my maps?—eh, where?  
I'll trace campaigns to come! Where's my paper, ink,  
To schedule all my generals and my means!

CAULAINCOURT

Sire, you have not the generals you suppose.

MACDONALD

And if you had, the mere anatomy  
Of a real army, sire, that's left to you,  
Must yield the war. A bad example tells.

NAPOLEON

Ah—from your manner it is worse, I see,  
Than I cognize!... O Marmont, Marmont,—yours,  
Yours was the bad sad lead!—I treated him  
As if he were a son!—defended him,  
Made him a marshal out of sheer affection,  
Built, as 'twere rock, on his fidelity!  
Forsake who may, I said, "I still have him."  
Child that I was, I looked for faith in friends!...  
Then be it as you will. Ney's manner shows  
That even he inclines to Bourbonry.—  
I faint to leave France thus—curtailed, pared down  
From her late spacious borders. Of the whole  
This is the keenest sword that pierces me...  
But all's too late: my course is closed, I see.  
I'll do it—now. Call in Bertrand and Ney;  
Let them be witness to my finishing!

[In much agitation he goes to the writing-table and begins drawing up a paper. BERTRAND and NEY enter; and behind them are seen through the doorway the faces of CONSTANT the valet, ROUSTAN the Mameluke, and other servants. All wait in silence till the EMPEROR has done writing. He turns in his seat without looking up.]

NAPOLEON [reading]

"It having been declared by the Allies

That the prime obstacle to Europe's peace  
 Is France's empery by Napoleon,  
 This ruler, faithful to his oath of old,  
 Renounces for himself and for his heirs  
 The throne of France and that of Italy;  
 Because no sacrifice, even of his life,  
 Is he averse to make for France's gain."  
 —And hereto do I sign. [He turns to the table and signs.]  
 [The marshals, moved, rush forward and seize his hand.]  
 Mark, marshals, here;  
 It is a conquering foe I covenant with,  
 And not the traitors at the Tuileries  
 Who call themselves the Government of France!  
 Caulaincourt, go to Paris as before,  
 Ney and Macdonald too, and hand in this  
 To Alexander, and to him alone.  
 [He gives the document, and bids them adieu almost without speech.  
 The marshals and others go out. NAPOLEON continues sitting with  
 his chin on his chest.  
 An interval of silence. There is then heard in the corridor a  
 sound of whetting. Enter ROUSTAN the Mameluke, with a whetstone  
 in his belt and a sword in his hand.]  
 ROUSTAN  
 After this fall, your Majesty, 'tis plain  
 You will not choose to live; and knowing this  
 I bring to you my sword.  
 NAPOLEON [with a nod]  
 I see you do, Roustan.  
 ROUSTAN  
 Will you, sire, use it on yourself,  
 Or shall I pass it through you?  
 NAPOLEON [coldly]  
 Neither plan  
 Is quite expedient for the moment, man.  
 ROUSTAN  
 Neither?  
 NAPOLEON  
 There may be, in some suited time,  
 Some cleaner means of carrying out such work.  
 ROUSTAN  
 Sire, you refuse? Can you support vile life  
 A moment on such terms? Why then, I pray,



Dispatch me with the weapon, or dismiss me.

[He holds the sword to NAPOLEON, who shakes his head.]

I live no longer under such disgrace!

[Exit ROUSTAN haughtily. NAPOLEON vents a sardonic laugh, and throws himself on a sofa, where he by and by falls asleep. The door is softly opened. ROUSTAN and CONSTANT peep in.]

CONSTANT

To-night would be as good a time to go as any. He will sleep there for hours. I have my few francs safe, and I deserve them; for I have stuck to him honourably through fourteen trying years.

ROUSTAN

How many francs have you secured?

CONSTANT

Well—more than you can count in one breath, or even two.

ROUSTAN

Where?

CONSTANT

In a hollow tree in the Forest. And as for YOUR reward, you can easily get the keys of that cabinet, where there are more than enough francs to equal mine. He will not have them, and you may as well take them as strangers.

ROUSTAN

It is not money that I want, but honour. I leave, because I can no longer stay with self-respect.

CONSTANT

And I because there is no other such valet in the temperate zone, and it is for the good of society that I should not be wasted here.

ROUSTAN

Well, as you propose going this evening I will go with you, to lend a symmetry to the drama of our departure. Would that I had served a more sensitive master! He sleeps there quite indifferent to the dishonour of remaining alive!

[NAPOLEON shows signs of waking. CONSTANT and ROUSTAN disappear.

NAPOLEON slowly sits up.]

NAPOLEON

Here the scene lingers still! Here linger I!...

Things could not have gone on as they were going;

I am amazed they kept their course so long.

But long or short they have ended now—at last!

[Footsteps are heard passing through the court without.]

Hark at them leaving me! So politic rats

Desert the ship that's doomed. By morrow-dawn

I shall not have a man to shake my bed  
Or say good-morning to!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Herein behold

How heavily grinds the Will upon his brain,  
His halting hand, and his unlighted eye.

SPIRIT IRONIC

A picture this for kings and subjects too!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Yet is it but Napoleon who has failed.

The pale pathetic peoples still plod on

Through hoodwinkings to light!

NAPOLEON [rousing himself]

This now must close.

Roustan misunderstood me, though his hint

Serves as a fillip to a flaccid brain...

—How gild the sunset sky of majesty

Better than by the act esteemed of yore?

Plutarchian heroes outstayed not their fame,

And what nor Brutus nor Themistocles

Nor Cato nor Mark Antony survived,

Why, why should I? Sage Canabis, you primed me!

[He unlocks a case, takes out a little bag containing a phial, pours from it a liquid into a glass, and drinks. He then lies down and falls asleep again.]

Re-enter CONSTANT softly with a bunch of keys in his hand. On his way to the cabinet he turns and looks at NAPOLEON. Seeing the glass and a strangeness in the EMPEROR, he abandons his object, rushes out, and is heard calling.

Enter MARET and BERTRAND.]

BERTRAND [shaking the Emperor]

What is the matter, sire? What's this you've done?

NAPOLEON [with difficulty]

Why did you interfere!—But it is well;

Call Caulaincourt. I'd speak with him a trice

Before I pass.

[MARET hurries out. Enter IVAN the physician, and presently CAULAINCOURT.]

Ivan, renew this dose;

Tis a slow workman, and requires a fellow;

Age has impaired its early promptitude.

[Ivan shakes his head and rushes away distracted. CAULAINCOURT

seizes NAPOLEON'S hand.]

CAULAINCOURT

Why should you bring this cloud upon us now!

NAPOLEON

Restrain your feelings. Let me die in peace.—

My wife and son I recommend to you;

Give her this letter, and the packet there.

Defend my memory, and protect their lives.

[They shake him. He vomits.]

CAULAINCOURT

He's saved—for good or ill—as may betide!

NAPOLEON

God—here how difficult it is to die:

How easy on the passionate battle-plain!

[They open a window and carry him to it. He mends.]

Fate has resolved what man could not resolve.

I must live on, and wait what Heaven may send!

[MACDONALD and other marshals re-enter. A letter is brought from MARIE LOUISE. NAPOLEON reads it, and becomes more animated.

They are well; and they will join me in my exile.

Yes: I will live! The future who shall spell?

My wife, my son, will be enough for me.—

And I will give my hours to chronicling

In stately words that stir futurity

The might of our unmatched accomplishments;

And in the tale immortalize your names

By linking them with mine.

[He soon falls into a convalescent sleep. The marshals, etc. go out. The room is left in darkness.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

BAYONNE. THE BRITISH CAMP

[The foreground is an elevated stretch of land, dotted over in rows

with the tents of the peninsular army. On a parade immediately

beyond the tents the infantry are drawn up, awaiting something.

Still farther back, behind a brook, are the French soldiery, also

ranked in the same manner of reposeful expectation. In the middle-

distance we see the town of Bayonne, standing within its zigzag

fortifications at the junction of the river Adour with the Nive.

On the other side of the Adour rises the citadel, a fortified

angular structure standing detached. A large and brilliant tricolor flag is waving indolently from a staff on the summit. The Bay of Biscay, into which the Adour flows, is seen on the left horizon as a level line.

The stillness observed by the soldiery of both armies, and by everything else in the scene except the flag, is at last broken by the firing of a signal-gun from a battery in the town-wall. The eyes of the thousands present rivet themselves on the citadel. Its waving tricolor moves down the flagstaff and disappears.]

THE REGIMENTS [unconsciously]

Ha-a-a-a!

[In a few seconds there shoots up the same staff another flag—one intended to be white; but having apparently been folded away a long time, it is mildewed and dingy.

From all the guns on the city fortifications a salute peals out.

This is responded to by the English infantry and artillery with a feu-de-joie.]

THE REGIMENTS

Hurrah-h-h-h!

[The various battalions are then marched away in their respective directions and dismissed to their tents. The Bourbon standard is hoisted everywhere beside those of England, Spain, and Portugal. The scene shuts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

A HIGHWAY IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF AVIGNON

[The Rhone, the old city walls, the Rocher des Doms and its edifices, appear at the back plane of the scene under the grey light of dawn. In the foreground several postillions and ostlers with relays of horses are waiting by the roadside, gazing northward and listening for sounds. A few loungers have assembled.]

FIRST POSTILLION

He ought to be nigh by this time. I should say he'd be very glad to get this here Isle of Elba, wherever it may be, if words be true that he's treated to such ghastly compliments on's way!

SECOND POSTILLION

Blast-me-blue, I don't care what happens to him! Look at Joachim Murat, him that's made King of Naples; a man who was only in the same line of life as ourselves, born and bred in Cahors, out in

Perigord, a poor little whindling place not half as good as our own. Why should he have been lifted up to king's anointment, and we not even have had a rise in wages? That's what I say.

FIRST POSTILLION

But now, I don't find fault with that dispensation in particular. It was one of our calling that the Emperor so honoured, after all, when he might have anointed a tinker, or a ragman, or a street woman's pensioner even. Who knows but that we should have been king's too, but for my crooked legs and your running pole-wound?

SECOND POSTILLION

We kings? Kings of the underground country, then, by this time, if we hadn't been too rotten-fleshed to follow the drum. However, I'll think over your defence, and I don't mind riding a stage with him, for that matter, to save him from them that mean mischief here. I've lost no sons by his battles, like some others we know.

[Enter a TRAVELLER on horseback.]

Any tidings along the road, sir of the Emperor Napoleon that was?

TRAVELLER

Tidings verily! He and his escort are threatened by the mob at every place they come to. A returning courier I have met tells me that at an inn a little way beyond here they have strung up his effigy to the sign-post, smeared it with blood, and placarded it The Doom that awaits Thee! He is much delayed by such humorous insults. I have hastened ahead to escape the uproar.

SECOND POSTILLION

I don't know that you have escaped it. The mob has been waiting up all night for him here.

MARKET-WOMAN [coming up]

I hope by the Virgin, as 'a called herself, that there'll be no riots here! Though I have not much pity for a man who could treat his wife as he did, and that's my real feeling. He might at least have kept them both on, for half a husband is better than none for poor women. But I'd show mercy to him, that's true, rather than have my stall upset, and messes in the streets wi' folks' brains, and stabbings, and I don't know what all!

FIRST POSTILLION

If we can do the horsing quietly out here, there will be none of that. He'll dash past the town without stopping at the inn where they expect to waylay him.—Hark, what's this coming?

[An approaching cortege is heard. Two couriers enter; then a carriage with NAPOLEON and BERTRAND; then others with the Commissioners of the Powers,—all on the way to Elba.]

The carriages halt, and the change of horses is set about instantly. But before it is half completed BONAPARTE'S arrival gets known, and throngs of men and women armed with sticks and hammers rush out of Avignon and surround the carriages.]

POPULACE

Ogre of Corsica! Odious tyrant! Down with Nicholas!

BERTRAND [looking out of carriage]

Silence, and doff your hats, you ill-mannered devils!

POPULACE [scornfully]

Listen to him! Is that the Corsican? No; where is he? Give him up; give him up! We'll pitch him into the Rhone!

[Some cling to the wheels of NAPOLEON'S carriage, while others, more distant, throw stones at it. A stone breaks the carriage window.]

OLD WOMAN [shaking her fist]

Give me back my two sons, murderer! Give me back my children, whose flesh is rotting on the Russian plains!

POPULACE

Ay; give us back our kin—our fathers, our brothers, our sons—victims to your curst ambition!

[One of the mob seizes the carriage door-handle and tries to unfasten it. A valet of BONAPARTE'S seated on the box draws his sword and threatens to cut the man's arm off. The doors of the Commissioners' coaches open, and SIR NEIL CAMPBELL, GENERAL KOLLER, and COUNT SCHUVALOFF—The English, Austrian, and Russian Commissioners—jump out and come forward.]

CAMPBELL

Keep order, citizens! Do you not know  
That the ex-Emperor is wayfaring  
To a lone isle, in the Allies' sworn care,  
Who have given a pledge to Europe for his safety?  
His fangs being drawn, he is left powerless now  
To do you further harm.

SCHUVALOFF

People of France  
Can you insult so miserable a being?  
He who gave laws to a cowed world stands now  
At that world's beck, and asks its charity.  
Cannot you see that merely to ignore him  
Is the worst ignominy to tar him with,  
By showing him he's no longer dangerous?

OLD WOMAN

How do we know the villain mayn't come back?  
While there is life, my faith, there's mischief in him!

[Enter an officer with the Town-guard.]

OFFICER

Citizens, I am a zealot for the Bourbons,  
As you well know. But wanton breach of faith  
I will not brook. Retire!

[The soldiers drive back the mob and open a passage forward. The Commissioners re-enter their carriages. NAPOLEON puts his head out of his window for a moment. He is haggard, shabbily dressed, yellow-faced, and wild-eyed.]

NAPOLEON

I thank you, captain;  
Also your soldiery: a thousand thanks!  
[To Bertrand within] My God, these people of Avignon here  
Are headstrong fools, like all the Provencal fold,  
—I won't go through the town!

BERTRAND

We'll round it, sire;  
And then, as soon as we get past the place,  
You must disguise for the remainder miles.

NAPOLEON

I'll mount the white cockade if they invite me!  
What does it matter if I do or don't?  
In Europe all is past and over with me...  
Yes—all is lost in Europe for me now!

BERTRAND

I fear so, sire.

NAPOLEON [after some moments]

But Asia waits a man,  
And—who can tell?

OFFICER OF GUARD [to postillions]

Ahead now at full speed,  
And slacken not till you have slipped the town.  
[The postillions urge the horses to a gallop, and the carriages  
are out of sight in a few seconds. The scene shuts.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE VII

MALMAISON. THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE'S BEDCHAMBER

[The walls are in white panels, with gilt mouldings, and the

furniture is upholstered in white silk with needle-worked flowers. The long windows and the bed are similarly draped, and the toilet service is of gold. Through the panes appears a broad flat lawn adorned with vases and figures on pedestals, and entirely surrounded by trees—just now in their first fresh green under the morning rays of Whitsunday. The notes of an organ are audible from a chapel below, where the Pentecostal Mass is proceeding. JOSEPHINE lies in the bed in an advanced stage of illness, the ABBE BERTRAND standing beside her. Two ladies-in-waiting are seated near. By the door into the ante-room, which is ajar, HOREAU the physician-in-ordinary and BOURDOIS the consulting physician are engaged in a low conversation.]

HOREAU

Lamoureux says that leeches would have saved her  
Had they been used in time, before I came.  
In that case, then, why did he wait for me?

BOURDOIS

Such whys are now too late! She is past all hope.  
I doubt if aught had helped her. Not disease,  
But heart-break and repinings are the blasts  
That wither her long bloom. Soon we must tell  
The Queen Hortense the worst, and the Viceroy.

HOREAU

Her death was made the easier task for grief  
[As I regarded more than probable]  
By her rash rising from a sore-sick bed  
And donning thin and dainty May attire  
To hail King Frederick-William and the Tsar  
As banquet-guests, in the old regnant style.  
A woman's innocent vanity!—but how dire.  
She argued that amenities of State  
Compelled the effort, since they had honoured her  
By offering to come. I stood against it,  
Pleaded and reasoned, but to no account.  
Poor woman, what she did or did not do  
Was of small moment to the State by then!  
The Emperor Alexander has been kind  
Throughout his stay in Paris. He came down  
But yester-eve, of purpose to inquire.

BOURDOIS

Wellington is in Paris, too, I learn,  
After his wasted battle at Toulouse.



HOREAU

Has his Peninsular army come with him?

BOURDOIS

I hear they have shipped it to America,  
Where England has another war on hand.  
We have armies quite sufficient here already—  
Plenty of cooks for Paris broth just now!  
—Come, call we Queen Hortense and Prince Eugene.

[Exeunt physicians. The ABBE BERTRAND also goes out. JOSEPHINE murmurs faintly.]

FIRST LADY [going to the bedside]

I think I heard you speak, your Majesty?

JOSEPHINE

I asked what hour it was—if dawn or eve?

FIRST LADY

Ten in the morning, Madame. You forget  
You asked the same but a brief while ago.

JOSEPHINE

Did I? I thought it was so long ago!...  
I wish to go to Elba with him so much,  
But the Allies prevented me. And why?  
I would not have disgraced him, or themselves!  
I would have gone to him at Fontainebleau,  
With my eight horses and my household train  
In dignity, and quitted him no more...  
Although I am his wife no longer now,  
I think I should have gone in spite of them,  
Had I not feared perversions might be sown  
Between him and the woman of his choice  
For whom he sacrificed me.

SECOND LADY

It is more  
Than she thought fit to do, your Majesty.

JOSEPHINE

Perhaps she was influenced by her father's ire,  
Or diplomatic reasons told against her.  
And yet I was surprised she should allow  
Aught secondary on earth to hold her from  
A husband she has outwardly, at least,  
Declared attachment to.

FIRST LADY

Especially,

With ever one at hand—his son and hers—  
Reminding her of him.

JOSEPHINE

Yes... Glad am I

I saw that child of theirs, though only once.

But—there was not full truth—not quite, I fear—

In what I told the Emperor that day

He led him to me at Bagatelle,

That 'twas the happiest moment of my life.

I ought not to have said it. No! Forsooth

My feeling had too, too much gall in it

To let truth shape like that!—I also said

That when my arms were round him I forgot

That I was not his mother. So spoke I,

But oh me,—I remembered it too well!—

He was a lovely child; in his fond prate

His father's voice was eloquent. One might say

I am well punished for my sins against him!

SECOND LADY

You have harmed no creature, madame; much less him!

JOSEPHINE

O but you don't quite know!... My coquetries

In our first married years nigh raked him through.

I cannot think how I could wax so wicked!...

He begged me come to him in Italy,

But I liked flirting in fair Paris best,

And would not go. The independent spouse

At that time was myself; but afterwards

I grew to be the captive, he the free.

Always 'tis so: the man wins finally!

My faults I've ransomed to the bottom sou

If ever a woman did!... I'll write to him—

I must—again, so that he understands.

Yes, I'll write now. Get me a pen and paper.

FIRST LADY [to Second Lady]

Tis futile! She is too far gone to write;

But we must humour her.

[They fetch writing materials. On returning to the bed they find her motionless. Enter EUGENE and QUEEN HORTENSE. Seeing the state their mother is in, they fall down on their knees by her bed.

JOSEPHINE recognizes them and smiles. Anon she is able to speak again.]

JOSEPHINE [faintly]

I am dying, dears;

And do not mind it—notwithstanding that

I feel I die regretted. You both love me!—

And as for France, I ever have desired

Her welfare, as you know—have wrought all things

A woman's scope could reach to forward it...

And to you now who watch my ebbing here,

Declare I that Napoleon's first-chose wife

Has never caused her land a needless tear.

Tell him—these things I have said—bear him my love—

Tell him—I could not write!

[An interval. She spasmodically flings her arms over her son and daughter, lets them fall, and becomes unconscious. They fetch a looking-glass, and find that her breathing has ceased. The clock of the Chateau strikes noon. The scene is veiled.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VIII

LONDON. THE OPERA HOUSE

[The house is lighted up with a blaze of wax candles, and a State performance is about to begin in honour of the Allied sovereigns now on a visit to England to celebrate the Peace. Peace-devices adorn the theatre. A band can be heard in the street playing The White Cockade.

An extended Royal box has been formed by removing the partitions of adjoining boxes. It is empty as yet, but the other parts of the house are crowded to excess, and somewhat disorderly, the interior doors having been broken down by besiegers, and many people having obtained admission without payment. The prevalent costume of the ladies is white satin and diamonds, with a few in lilac.

The curtain rises on the first act of the opera of "Aristodemo,"

MADAME GRASSINI and SIGNOR TRAMEZZINI being the leading voices.

Scarcely a note of the performance can be heard amid the exclamations of persons half suffocated by the pressure.

At the end of the first act there follows a divertissement. The curtain having fallen, a silence of expectation succeeds. It is a little past ten o'clock.

Enter the Royal box the PRINCE REGENT, accompanied by the EMPEROR OF RUSSIA, demonstrative in manner now as always, the KING OF

PRUSSIA, with his mien of reserve, and many minor ROYAL PERSONAGES of Europe. There are moderate acclamations. At their back and in neighbouring boxes LORD LIVERPOOL, LORD CASTLEREAGH, officers in the suite of the sovereigns, interpreters, and others take their places.

The curtain rises again, and the performers are discovered drawn up in line on the stage. They sing "God save the King." The sovereigns stand up, bow, and resume their seats amid more applause.]

A VOICE [from the gallery]

Prinny, where's your wife? [Confusion.]

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA [to Regent]

To which of us is the inquiry addressed, Prince?

PRINCE REGENT

To you, sire, depend upon't—by way of compliment.

[The second act of the Opera proceeds.]

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

Any later news from Elba, sir?

PRINCE REGENT

Nothing more than rumours, which, 'pon my honour, I can hardly credit. One is that Bonaparte's valet has written to say the ex-Emperor is becoming imbecile, and is an object of ridicule to the inhabitants of the island.

KING OF PRUSSIA

A blessed result, sir, if true. If he is not imbecile he is worse—planning how to involve Europe in another way. It was a short-sighted policy to offer him a home so near as to ensure its becoming a hot-bed of intrigue and conspiracy in no long time!

PRINCE REGENT

The ex-Empress, Marie-Louise, hasn't joined him after all, I learn.

Has she remained at Schonbrunn since leaving France, sires?

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

Yes, sir; with her son. She must never go back to France. Metternich and her father will know better than let her do that. Poor young thing, I am sorry for her all the same. She would have joined Napoleon if she had been left to herself.—And I was sorry for the other wife, too. I called at Malmaison a few days before she died. A charming woman! SHE would have gone to Elba or to the devil with him. Twenty thousand people crowded down from Paris to see her lying in state last week.

PRINCE REGENT

Pity she didn't have a child by him, by God.

KING OF PRUSSIA

I don't think the other one's child is going to trouble us much.  
But I wish Bonaparte himself had been sent farther away.

PRINCE REGENT

Some of our Government wanted to pack him off to St. Helena—an island somewhere in the Atlantic, or Pacific, or Great South Sea.  
But they were over-ruled. 'Twould have been a surer game.

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

One hears strange stories of his saying and doings. Some of my people were telling me to-day that he says it is to Austria that he really owes his fall, and that he ought to have destroyed her when he had her in his power.

PRINCE REGENT

Dammy, sire, don't ye think he owes his fall to his ambition to humble England by rupture of the Peace of Amiens, and trying to invade us, and wasting his strength against us in the Peninsula?

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

I incline to think, with the greatest deference, that it was Moscow that broke him.

KING OF PRUSSIA

The rejection of my conditions in the terms of peace at Prague, sires, was the turning-point towards his downfall.

[Enter a box on the opposite side of the house the PRINCESS OF WALES, attended by LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL, SIR W. GELL, and others. Louder applause now rings through the theatre, drowning the sweet voice of the GRASSINI in "Aristodemo."]

LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL

It is meant for your Royal Highness!

PRINCESS OF WALES

I don't think so, my dear. Punch's wife is nobody when Punch himself is present.

LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL

I feel convinced that it is by their looking this way.

SIR W. GELL

Surely ma'am you will acknowledge their affection? Otherwise we may be hissed.

PRINCESS OF WALES

I know my business better than to take that morsel out of my husband's mouth. There—you see he enjoys it! I cannot assume that it is meant for me unless they call my name.

[The PRINCE REGENT rises and bows, the TSAR and the KING OF PRUSSIA doing the same.]

LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL

He and the others are bowing for you, ma'am!

PRINCESS OF WALES

Mine God, then; I will bow too! [She rises and bends to them.]

PRINCE REGENT

She thinks we rose on her account.—A damn fool. [Aside.]

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

What—didn't we? I certainly rose in homage to her.

PRINCE REGENT

No, sire. We were supposed to rise to the repeated applause of the people.

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA

H'm. Your customs sir, are a little puzzling... [To the King of Prussia.] A fine-looking woman! I must call upon the Princess of Wales to-morrow.

KING OF PRUSSIA

I shall, at any rate, send her my respects by my chamberlain.

PRINCE REGENT [stepping back to Lord Liverpool]

By God, Liverpool, we must do something to stop 'em! They don't know what a laughing-stock they'll make of me if they go to her.

Tell 'em they had better not.

LIVERPOOL

I can hardly tell them now, sir, while we are celebrating the Peace and Wellington's victories.

PRINCE REGENT

Oh, damn the peace, and damn the war, and damn Boney, and damn Wellington's victories!—the question is, how am I to get over this infernal woman!—Well, well,—I must write, or send Tyrwhitt to-morrow morning, begging them to abandon the idea of visiting her for politic reasons.

[The Opera proceeds to the end, and is followed by a hymn and chorus laudatory to peace. Next a new ballet by MONSIEUR VESTRIS, in which M. ROZIER and MADAME ANGIOLINI dance a pas-de-deux. Then the Sovereigns leave the theatre amid more applause.

The pit and gallery now call for the PRINCESS OF WALES unmistakably. She stand up and is warmly acclaimed, returning three stately curtseys.]

A VOICE

Shall we burn down Carlton House, my dear, and him in it?

PRINCESS OF WALES

No, my good folks! Be quiet. Go home to your beds, and let me do the same.

[After some difficulty she gets out of the house. The people thin away. As the candle-snuffers extinguish the lights a shouting is heard without.]

VOICES OF CROWD

Long life to the Princess of Wales! Three cheers for a woman wronged!

[The Opera-house becomes lost in darkness.]

[image not archived]

## ACT FIFTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

ELBA. THE QUAY, PORTO FERRAJO

[Night descends upon a beautiful blue cove, enclosed on three sides by mountains. The port lies towards the western [right-hand] horn of the concave, behind it being the buildings of the town; their long white walls and rows of windows rise tier above tier on the steep incline at the back, and are intersected by narrow alleys and flights of steps that lead up to forts on the summit.

Upon a rock between two of these forts stands the Palace of the Mulini, NAPOLEONS'S residence in Ferrajo. Its windows command the whole town and the port.]

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

The Congress of Vienna sits,

And war becomes a war of wits,

Where every Power perpend withal

Its dues as large, its friends' as small;

Till Priests of Peace prepare once more

To fight as they have fought before!

In Paris there is discontent;

Medals are wrought that represent

One now unnamed. Men whisper, "He

Who once has been, again will be!"

DUMB SHOW

Under cover of the dusk there assembles in the bay a small flotilla comprising a brig called l'Inconstant and several lesser vessels.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

The guardian on behalf of the Allies

Absents himself from Elba. Slow surmise

Too vague to pen, too actual to ignore,

Have strained him hour by hour, and more and more.  
He takes the sea to Florence, to declare  
His doubts to Austria's ministrator there.

SPIRIT IRONIC

When he returns, Napoleon will be—where?  
Boats put off from these ships to the quay, where are now discovered  
to have silently gathered a body of grenadiers of the Old Guard. The  
faces of DROUOT and CAMBRONNE are revealed by the occasional fleck of  
a lantern to be in command of them. They are quietly taken aboard  
the brig, and a number of men of different arms to the other vessels.  
CHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music]

Napoleon is going,  
And nought will prevent him;  
He snatches the moment  
Occasion has lent him!  
And what is he going for,  
Worn with war's labours?  
—To reconquer Europe  
With seven hundred sabres.

About eight o'clock we observe that the windows of the Palace of  
the Mulini are lighted and open, and that two women sit at them:  
the EMPEROR'S mother and the PRINCESS PAULINE. They wave adieu  
to some one below, and in a short time a little open low-wheeled  
carriage, drawn by the PRINCESS PAULINE'S two ponies, descends  
from the house to the port. The crowd exclaims "The Emperor!"  
NAPOLEON appears in his grey great-coat, and is much fatter than  
when he left France. BERTRAND sits beside him.

He quickly alights and enters the waiting boat. It is a tense  
moment. As the boat rows off the sailors sing the Marseillaise,  
and the gathered inhabitants join in. When the boat reaches the  
brig its sailors join in also, and shout "Paris or death!" Yet  
the singing has a melancholy cadence. A gun fires as a signal  
of departure. The night is warm and balmy for the season. Not  
a breeze is there to stir a sail, and the ships are motionless.

CHORUS OF RUMOURS

Haste is salvation;  
And still he stays waiting:  
The calm plays the tyrant,  
His venture belating!  
Should the corvette return  
With the anxious Scotch colonel,  
Escape would be frustrate,



Retention eternal.

Four aching hours are spent thus. NAPOLEON remains silent on the deck, looking at the town lights, whose reflections bore like augers into the water of the bay. The sails hang flaccidly. Then a feeble breeze, then a strong south wind, begins to belly the sails; and the vessels move.

#### CHORUS OF RUMOURS

The south wind, the south wind,  
The south wind will save him,  
Embaying the frigate  
Whose speed would enslave him;  
Restoring the Empire  
That fortune once gave him!

The moon rises and the ships silently disappear over the horizon as it mounts higher into the sky.

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

#### VIENNA. THE IMPERIAL PALACE

[The fore-part of the scene is the interior of a dimly lit gallery with an openwork screen or grille on one side of it that commands a bird's-eye view of the grand saloon below. At present the screen is curtained. Sounds of music and applause in the saloon ascend into the gallery, and an irradiation from the same quarter shines up through chinks in the curtains of the grille.]

Enter the gallery MARIE LOUISE and the COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE, followed by the COUNT NEIPPERG, a handsome man of forty two with a bandage over one eye.]

#### COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE

Listen, your Majesty. You gather all  
As well as if you moved amid them there,  
And are advantaged with free scope to flit  
The moment the scene palls.

#### MARIE LOUISE

Ah, my dear friend,  
To put it so is flower-sweet of you;  
But a fallen Empress, doomed to furtive peeps  
At scenes her open presence would unhinge,  
Reads not much interest in them! Yet, in truth,  
Twas gracious of my father to arrange  
This glimpse-hole for my curiosity.

—But I must write a letter ere I look;  
You can amuse yourself with watching them.—  
Count, bring me pen and paper. I am told  
Madame de Montesquiou has been distressed  
By some alarm; I write to ask its shape.

[NEIPPERG spreads writing materials on a table, and MARIE LOUISE  
sits. While she writes he stays near her. MADAME DE BRIGNOLE  
goes to the screen and parts the curtains.

The light of a thousand candles blazes up into her eyes from  
below. The great hall is decorated in white and silver, enriched  
by evergreens and flowers. At the end a stage is arranged, and  
Tableaux Vivants are in progress thereon, representing the history  
of the House of Austria, in which figure the most charming women  
of the Court.

There are present as spectators nearly all the notables who have  
assembled for the Congress, including the EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA  
himself, his gay wife, who quite eclipses him, the EMPEROR  
ALEXANDER, the KING OF PRUSSIA—still in the mourning he has  
never abandoned since the death of QUEEN LUISA,—the KING  
OF BAVARIA and his son, METTERNICH, TALLEYRAND, WELLINGTON,  
NESSELRODE, HARDENBERG; and minor princes, ministers, and  
officials of all nations.]

COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE [suddenly from the grille]

Something has happened—so it seems, madame!

The Tableau gains no heed from them, and all

Turn murmuring together.

MARIE LOUISE

What may be?

[She rises with languid curiosity, and COUNT NEIPPERG adroitly  
takes her hand and leads her forward. All three look down through  
the grille.]

NEIPPERG

some strange news, certainly, your Majesty,  
is being discussed.—I'll run down and inquire.

MARIE LOUISE [playfully]

Nay—stay here. We shall learn soon enough.

NEIPPERG

Look at their faces now. Count Metternich  
Stares at Prince Talleyrand—no muscle moving.

The King of Prussia blinks bewilderedly

Upon Lord Wellington.

MARIE LOUISE [concerned]

Yes; so it seems...

They are thunderstruck. See, though the music beats,  
The ladies of the Tableau leave their place,  
And mingle with the rest, and quite forget  
That they are in masquerade. The sovereigns show  
By far the gravest mien... I wonder, now,  
If it has aught to do with me or mine?

Disasters mostly have to do with me!

COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE

Those rude diplomists from England there,  
At your Imperial father's consternation,  
And Russia's, and the King of Prussia's gloom,  
Shake shoulders with hid laughter! That they call  
The English sense of humour, I infer,—  
To see a jest in other people's troubles!

MARIE LOUISE [hiding her presages]

They ever take things thus phlegmatically:  
The safe sea minimizes Continental scare  
In their regard. I wish it did in mine!

But Wellington laughs not, as I discern.

NEIPPERG

Perhaps, though fun for the other English here,  
It means new work for him. Ah—notice now  
The music makes no more pretence to play!  
Sovereigns and ministers have moved apart,  
And talk, and leave the ladies quite aloof—  
Even the Grand Duchesses and Empress, all—  
Such mighty cogitations trance their minds!

MARIE LOUISE [with more anxiety]

Poor ladies; yea, they draw into the rear,  
And whisper ominous words among themselves!  
Count Neipperg—I must ask you now—go glean  
What evil lowers. I am riddled through  
With strange surmises and more strange alarms!

[The COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU enters.]

Ah—we shall learn it now. Well—what, madame?

COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU [breathlessly]

Your Majesty, the Emperor Napoleon  
Has vanished from Elba! Wither flown,  
And how, and why, nobody says or knows.

MARIE LOUISE [sinking into a chair]

My divination pencilled on my brain

Something not unlike that! The rigid mien  
That mastered Wellington suggested it...  
Complicity will be ascribed to me,  
Unwitting though I stand!... [A pause.]  
He'll not succeed!  
And my fair plans for Parma will be marred,  
And my son's future fouled!—I must go hence,  
And instantly declare to Metternich  
That I know nought of this; and in his hands  
Place me unquestioningly, with dumb assent  
To serve the Allies... Methinks that I was born  
Under an evil-coloured star, whose ray  
Darts death at joys!—Take me away, Count.—You [to the ladies]  
Can stay and see the end.

[Exeunt MARIE LOUISE and NEIPPERG. MESDAMES DE MONTESQUIOU  
and

DE BRIGNOLE go to the grille and watch and listen.]

VOICE OF ALEXANDER [below]

I told you, Prince, that it would never last!

VOICE OF TALLEYRAND

Well, sire, you should have sent him to the Azores,  
Or the Antilles, or best, Saint-Helena.

VOICE OF THE KING OF PRUSSIA

Instead, we send him but two days from France,  
Give him an island as his own domain,  
A military guard of large resource,  
And millions for his purse!

ANOTHER VOICE

The immediate cause  
Must be a negligence in watching him.  
The British Colonel Campbell should have seen  
That apertures for flight were wired and barred  
To such a cunning bird!

ANOTHER VOICE

By all report  
He took the course direct to Naples Bay.

VOICES [of new arrivals]

He has made his way to France—so all tongues tell—  
And landed there, at Cannes! [Excitement.]

COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE

Do now but note  
How cordial intercourse resolves itself

To sparks of sharp debate! The lesser guests  
Are fain to steal unnoticed from a scene  
Wherein they feel themselves as surplusage  
Beside the official minds.—I catch a sign  
The King of Prussia makes the English Duke;  
They leave the room together.

COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU

Yes; wit wanes,  
And all are going—Prince Talleyrand,  
The Emperor Alexander, Metternich,  
The Emperor Francis... So much for the Congress!  
Only a few blank nobodies remain,  
And they seem terror-stricken... Blackly ends  
Such fair festivities. The red god War  
Stalks Europe's plains anew!  
[The curtain of the grille is dropped. MESDAMES DE MONTESQUIOU  
and DE BRIGNOLE leave the gallery. The light is extinguished  
there and the scene disappears.]  
[image not archived]

### SCENE III

LA MURE, NEAR GRENOBLE

[A lonely road between a lake and some hills, two or three miles  
outside the village of la Mure, is discovered. A battalion of  
the Fifth French royalist regiment of the line under COMMANDANT  
LESSARD, is drawn up in the middle of the road with a company of  
sappers and miners, comprising altogether about eight hundred men.  
Enter to them from the south a small detachment of lancers with  
an aide-de-camp at their head. They ride up to within speaking  
distance.]

LESSARD

They are from Bonaparte. Present your arms!

AIDE [calling]

We'd parley on Napoleon's behalf,  
And fain would ask you join him.

LESSARD

Al parole  
With rebel bands the Government forbids.  
Come five steps further and we fire!

AIDE

To France,

And to posterity through fineless time,  
Must you then answer for so foul a blow  
Against the common weal!

[NAPOLEON'S aide-de-camp and the lancers turn about and ride back out of sight. The royalist troops wait. Presently there reappears from the same direction a small column of soldiery, representing the whole of NAPOLEON'S little army shipped from Elba. It is divided into an advance-guard under COLONEL MALLET, and two bodies behind, a troop of Polish lancers under COLONEL JERMANWSKI on the right side of the road, and some officers without troops on the left, under MAJOR PACCONI.

NAPOLEON rides in the midst of the advance-guard, in the old familiar "redingote grise," cocked hat, and tricolor cockade, his well-known profile keen against the hills. He is attended by GENERALS BERTRAND, DROUOT, and CAMBRONNE. When they get within

gun-shot of the royalists the men are halted. NAPOLEON dismounts and steps forward.]

NAPOLEON

Direct the men

To lodge their weapons underneath the arm,  
Points downward. I shall not require them here.

COLONEL MALLET

Sire, is it not a needless jeopardy  
To meet them thus? The sentiments of these  
We do not know, and the first trigger pressed  
May end you.

NAPOLEON

I have thought it out, my friend,  
And value not my life as in itself,  
But as to France, severed from whose embrace]  
I am dead already.

[He repeats the order, which is carried out. There is a breathless silence, and people from the village gather round with tragic expectations. NAPOLEON walks on alone towards the Fifth battalion, Throwing open his great-coat and revealing his uniform and the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Raising his hand to his hat he salutes.]

LESSARD

Present arms!

[The firelocks of the royalist battalion are levelled at NAPOLEON.]

NAPOLEON [still advancing]

Men of the Fifth,  
 See—here I am!... Old friends, do you not know me?  
 If there be one among you who would slay  
 His Chief of proud past years, let him come on  
 And do it now! [A pause.]  
 LESSARD [to his next officer]  
 They are death-white at his words!  
 They'll fire not on this man. And I am helpless.  
 SOLDIERS [suddenly]  
 Why yes! We know you, father. Glad to see ye!  
 The Emperor for ever! Ha! Huzza!  
 [They throw their arms upon the ground, and, rushing forward,  
 sink down and seize NAPOLEON'S knees and kiss his hands. Those  
 who cannot get near him wave their shakos and acclaim him  
 passionately. BERTRAND, DROUOT, and CAMBRONNE come up.]  
 NAPOLEON [privately]  
 All is accomplished, Bertrand! Ten days more,  
 And we are snug within the Tuileries.  
 [The soldiers tear out their white cockades and trample on them,  
 and disinter from the bottom of their knapsacks tricolors, which  
 they set up.  
 NAPOLEON'S own men now arrive, and fraternize with and embrace  
 the soldiers of the Fifth. When the emotion has subsided,  
 NAPOLEON forms the whole body into a square and addresses them.]  
 Soldiers, I came with these few faithful ones  
 To save you from the Bourbons,—treasons, tricks,  
 Ancient abuses, feudal tyranny—  
 From which I once of old delivered you.  
 The Bourbon throne is illegitimate  
 Because not founded on the nation's will,  
 But propped up for the profit of a few.  
 Comrades, is this not so?  
 A GRENADIER  
 Yes, verily, sire.  
 You are the Angel of the Lord to us;  
 We'll march with you to death or victory! [Shouts.]  
 [At this moment a howling dog crosses in front of them with a  
 cockade tied to its tail. The soldiery of both sides laugh  
 loudly.  
 NAPOLEON forms both bodies of troops into one column. Peasantry  
 run up with buckets of sour wine and a single glass; NAPOLEON  
 takes his turn with the rank and file in drinking from it. He

bids the whole column follow him to Grenoble and Paris. Exeunt soldiers headed by NAPOLEON. The scene shuts.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

SCHONBRUNN

[The gardens of the Palace. Fountains and statuary are seen around, and the Gloriette colonnade rising against the sky on a hill behind.]

The ex-EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE is discovered walking up and down. Accompanying her is the KING OF ROME—now a blue-eye, fair-haired child—in the charge of the COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU. Close by is COUNT NEIPPERG, and at a little distance MENEVAL, her attendant and Napoleon's adherent.

The EMPEROR FRANCIS and METTERNICH enter at the other end of the parterre.]

MARIE LOUISE [with a start]

Here are the Emperor and Prince Metternich.

Wrote you as I directed?

NEIPPERG

Promptly so.

I said your Majesty had not part  
In this mad move of your Imperial spouse,  
And made yourself a ward of the Allies;  
Adding, that you had vowed irrevocably  
To enter France no more.

MARIE LOUISE

Your worthy zeal

Has been a trifle swift. My meaning stretched  
Not quite so far as that... And yet—and yet  
It matters little. Nothing matters much!

[The EMPEROR and METTERNICH come forward. NEIPPERG retires.]

FRANCIS

My daughter, you did not a whit too soon  
Voice your repudiation. Have you seen  
What the allies have papered Europe with?

MARIE LOUISE

I have seen nothing.

FRANCIS

Please you read it, Prince.

METTERNICH [taking out a paper]



"The Powers assembled at the Congress here  
Owe it to their own troths and dignities,  
And to the furtherance of social order,  
To make a solemn Declaration, thus:  
By breaking the convention as to Elba,  
Napoleon Bonaparte forthwith destroys  
His only legal title to exist,  
And as a consequence has hurled himself  
Beyond the pale of civil intercourse.  
Disturber of the tranquillity of the world,  
There can be neither peace nor truce with him,  
And public vengeance is his self-sought doom.—  
Signed by the Plenipotentiaries."

MARIE LOUISE [pale]

O God,

How terrible!... What shall—[she begins weeping.]

KING OF ROME

Is it papa

They want to hurt like that, dear Mamma 'Quiou?

Then 'twas no good my praying for him so;

And I can see that I am not going to be

A King much longer!

COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU [retiring with the child]

Pray for him, Monseigneur,

Morning and evening just the same! They plan

To take you off from me. But don't forget—

Do as I say!

KING OF ROME

Yes, Mamma 'Quiou, I will!—

But why have I no pages now? And why

Does my mamma the Empress weep so much?

COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU

We'll talk elsewhere.

[MONTESQUIOU and the KING OF ROME withdraw to back.]

FRANCIS

At least, then, you agree

Not to attempt to follow Paris-ward

Your conscience-lacking husband, and create

More troubles in the State?—Remember this,

I sacrifice my every man and horse

Ere he Rule France again.

MARIE LOUISE

I am pledged already  
To hold by the Allies; let that suffice!

METTERNICH

For the clear good of all, your Majesty,  
And for your safety and the King of Rome's,  
It most befits that your Imperial father  
Should have sole charge of the young king henceforth,  
While these convulsions rage. That this is so  
You will see, I think, in view of being installed  
As Parma's Duchess, and take steps therefor.

MARIE LOUISE [coldly]

I understand the terms to be as follows:  
Parma is mine—my very own possession,—  
And as a counterquit, the guardianship  
Is ceded to my father of my son,  
And I keep out of France.

METTERNICH

And likewise this:  
All missives that your Majesty receives  
Under Napoleon's hand, you tender straight  
The Austrian Cabinet, the seals unbroke;  
With those received already.

FRANCIS

You discern  
How vastly to the welfare of your son  
This course must tend? Duchess of Parma throned  
You shine a wealthy woman, to endow  
Your son with fortune and large landed fee.

MARIE LOUISE [bitterly]

I must have Parma: and those being the terms  
Perforce accept! I weary of the strain  
Of statecraft and political embroil:  
I long for private quiet!... And now wish  
To say no more at all.

[MENEVAL, who has heard her latter remarks, turns sadly away.]

FRANCIS

There's nought to say;  
All is in train to work straightforwardly.

[FRANCIS and METTERNICH depart. MARIE LOUISE retires towards the  
child and the COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU at the back of the parterre,  
where they are joined by NEIPPERG.

Enter in front DE MONTROND, a secret emissary of NAPOLEON, disguised

as a florist examining the gardens. MENEVAL recognizes him and comes forward.]

MENEVAL

Why are you here, de Montrond? All is hopeless!

DE MONTROND

Wherefore? The offer of the Regency

I come empowered to make, and will conduct her

Safely to Strassburg with her little son,

If she shrink not to breach her as a man,

And tiptoe from a postern unperceived?

MENEVAL

Though such quaint gear would mould her to a youth

Fair as Adonis on a hunting morn,

Yet she'll refuse! A German prudery

Sits on her still; more, kneaded by her arts

There's no will left to her. I conjured her

To hold aloof, sign nothing. But in vain.

DE MONTROND [looking towards Marie Louise]

I fain would put it to her privately!

MENEVAL

A thing impossible. No word to her

Without a word to him you see with her,

Neipperg to wit. She grows indifferent

To dreams as Regent; visioning a future

Wherein her son and self are two of three

But where the third is not Napoleon.

DE MONTROND [In sad surprise]

I may as well go hence then as I came,

And kneel to Heaven for one thing—that success

Attend Napoleon in the coming throes!

MENEVAL

I'll walk with you for safety to the gate,

Though I am as the Emperor's man suspect,

And any day may be dismissed. If so

I go to Paris.

[Exeunt MENEVAL and DE MONTROND.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

Had he but persevered, and biassed her

To slip the breeches on, and hie away,

Who knows but that the map of France had shaped

And it will never now!

[There enters from the other side of the gardens MARIA CAROLINA,

ex-Queen of Naples, and grandmother of Marie Louise. The latter, dismissing MONTESQUIOU and the child, comes forward.]

MARIA CAROLINA

I have crossed from Hetzendorf to kill an hour;  
Why art so pensive, dear?

MARIE LOUISE

Ah, why! My lines  
Rule ruggedly. You doubtless have perused  
This vicious cry against the Emperor?  
He's outlawed—to be caught alive or dead,  
Like any noisome beast!

MARIA CAROLINA

Nought have I heard,  
My child. But these vile tricks, to pluck you from  
Your nuptial plightage and your rightful glory  
Make me belch oaths!—You shall not join your husband  
Do they assert? My God, I know one thing,  
Outlawed or no, I'd knot my sheets forthwith,  
Were I but you, and steal to him in disguise,  
Let come what would come! Marriage is for life.

MARIE LOUISE

Mostly; not always: not with Josephine;  
And, maybe, not with me. But, that apart,  
I could do nothing so outrageous.  
Too many things, dear grand-dame, you forget.  
A puppet I, by force inflexible,  
Was bid to wed Napoleon at a nod,—  
The man acclaimed to me from cradle-days  
As the incarnate of all evil things,  
The Antichrist himself.—I kissed the cup,  
Gulped down the inevitable, and married him;  
But none the less I saw myself therein  
The lamb whose innocent flesh was dressed to grace  
The altar of dynastic ritual!—  
Hence Elba flung no duty-call to me,  
Neither does Paris now.

MARIA CAROLINA

I do perceive  
They have worked on you to much effect already!  
Go, join your Count; he waits you, dear.—Well, well;  
The way the wind blows needs no cock to tell!

[Exeunt severally QUEEN MARIA CAROLINA and MARIE LOUISE with

NEIPPERG. The sun sets over the gardens and the scene fades.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE V

LONDON. THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS

[The interior of the Chamber appears as in Scene III., Act I., Part I., except that the windows are not open and the trees without are not yet green.

Among the Members discovered in their places are, of ministers and their supporters, LORD CASTLEREAGH the Foreign Secretary, VANSITTART Chancellor of the Exchequer, BATHURST, PALMERSTON the War Secretary, ROSE, PONSONBY, ARBUTHNOT, LUSHINGTON, GARROW

the Attorney General, SHEPHERD, LONG, PLUNKETT, BANKES; and among those of the Opposition SIR FRANCIS BURDETT, WHITBREAD, TIERNEY, ABERCROMBY, DUNDAS, BRAND, DUNCANNON, LAMBTON, HEATHCOTE, SIR

SAMUEL ROMILLY, G. WALPOLE, RIDLEY, OSBORNE, and HORNER.

Much interest in the debate is apparent, and the galleries are full. LORD CASTLEREAGH rises.]

CASTLEREAGH

At never a moment in my stressed career,  
Amid no memory-moving urgencies,  
Have I, sir, felt so gravely set on me  
The sudden, vast responsibility  
That I feel now. Few things conceivable  
Could more momentous to the future be  
Than what may spring from counsel here to-night  
On means to meet the plot unparalleled  
In full fierce play elsewhere. Sir, this being so,  
And seeing how the events of these last days  
Menace the toil of twenty anxious years,  
And peril all that period's patient aim,  
No auguring mind can doubt that deeds which root  
In steadiest purpose only, will effect  
Deliverance from a world-calamity  
As dark as any in the vaults of Time.  
Now, what we notice front and foremost is  
That this convulsion speaks not, pictures not  
The heart of France. It comes of artifice—  
From the unique and sinister influence

Of a smart army-gamester—upon men  
Who have shared his own excitements, spoils, and crimes.—  
This man, who calls himself most impiously  
The Emperor of France by Grace of God,  
Has, in the scale of human character,  
Dropt down so low, that he has set at nought  
All pledges, stipulations, guarantees,  
And stepped upon the only pedestal  
On which he cares to stand—his lawless will.  
Indeed, it is a fact scarce credible  
That so mysteriously in his own breast  
Did this adventurer lock the scheme he planned,  
That his companion Bertrand, chief in trust,  
Was unapprised thereof until the hour  
In which the order to embark was given!  
I think the House will readily discern  
That the wise, wary trackway to be trod  
By our own country in the crisis reached,  
Must lie 'twixt two alternatives,—of war  
In concert with the Continental Powers,  
Or of an armed and cautionary course  
Sufficing for the present phase of things.  
Whatever differences of view prevail  
On the so serious and impending question—  
Whether in point of prudent reckoning  
Twere better let the power set up exist,  
Or promptly at the outset deal with it—  
Still, to all eyes it is imperative  
That some mode of safeguardance be devised;  
And if I cannot range before the House,  
At this stage, all the reachings of the case,  
I will, if needful, on some future day  
Poise these nice matters on their merits here.  
Meanwhile I have to move:  
That an address unto His Royal Highness  
Be humbly offered for his gracious message,  
And to assure him that his faithful Commons  
Are fully roused to the dark hazardries  
To which the life and equanimity  
Of Europe are exposed by deeds in France,  
In contravention of the plighted pacts  
At Paris in the course of yester-year.

That, in a cause of such wide-waked concern,  
It doth afford us real relief to know  
That concert with His Majesty's Allies  
Is being effected with no loss of time—  
Such concert as will thoroughly provide  
For Europe's full and long security. [Cheers.]  
That we, with zeal, will speed such help to him  
So to augment his force by sea and land  
As shall empower him to set afoot  
Swift measures meet for its accomplishing. [Cheers.]  
BURDETT

It seems to me almost impossible,  
Weighing the language of the noble lord,  
To catch its counsel,—whether peace of war. [Hear, hear.]  
If I translate his words to signify  
The high expediency of watch and ward,  
That we may not be taken unawares,  
I own concurrence; but if he propose  
Too plunge this realm into a sea of blood  
To reinstate the Bourbon line in France,  
I should but poorly do my duty here  
Did I not lift my voice protestingly  
Against so ruinous an enterprise!  
Sir, I am old enough to call to mind  
The first fierce frenzies for the selfsame end,  
The fruit of which was to endow this man,  
The object of your apprehension now,  
With such a might as could not be withstood  
By all of banded Europe, till he roamed  
And wrecked it wantonly on Russian plains.  
Shall, then, another score of scourging years  
Distract this land to make a Bourbon king?  
Wrongly has Bonaparte's late course been called  
A rude incursion on the soil of France.—  
Who ever knew a sole and single man  
Invade a nation thirty million strong,  
And gain in some few days full sovereignty  
Against the nation's will!—The truth is this:  
The nation longed for him, and has obtained him...  
I have beheld the agonies of war  
Through many a weary season; seen enough  
To make me hold that scarcely any goal

Is worth the reaching by so red a road.  
No man can doubt that this Napoleon stands  
As Emperor of France by Frenchmen's wills.  
Let the French settle, then, their own affairs;  
I say we shall have nought to apprehend!—  
Much as I might advance in proof of this,  
I'll dwell not thereon now. I am satisfied  
To give the general reasons which, in brief,  
Balk my concurrence in the Address proposed. [Cheers.]

PONSONBY

My words will be but few, for the Address  
Constrains me to support it as it stands.  
So far from being the primary step to war,  
Its sense and substance is, in my regard,  
To leave the House to guidance by events  
On the grave question of hostilities.  
The statements of the noble lord, I hold,  
Have not been candidly interpreted  
By grafting on to them a headstrong will,  
As does the honourable baronet,  
To rob the French of Buonaparte's rule,  
And force them back to Bourbon monarchism.  
That our free land, at this abnormal time,  
Should put her in a pose of wariness,  
No unwarped mind can doubt. Must war revive,  
Let it be quickly waged; and quickly, too,  
Reach its effective end: though 'tis my hope,  
My ardent hope, that peace may be preserved.

WHITBREAD

Were it that I could think, as does my friend,  
That ambiguity of sentiment  
Informed the utterance of the noble lord  
[As oft does ambiguity of word],  
I might with satisfied and sure resolve  
Vote straight for the Address. But eyeing well  
The flimsy web there woven to entrap  
The credence of my honourable friends,  
I must with all my energy contest  
The wisdom of a new and hot crusade  
For fixing who shall fill the throne of France.  
Already are the seeds of mischief sown:  
The Declaration at Vienna, signed



Against Napoleon, is, in my regard,  
Abhorrent, and our country's character  
Defaced by our subscription to its terms!  
If words have any meaning it incites  
To sheer assassination; it proclaims  
That any meeting Bonaparte may slay him;  
And, whatso language the Allies now hold,  
In that outburst, at least, was war declared.  
The noble lord to-night would second it,  
Would seem to urge that we full arm, then wait  
For just as long, no longer, than would serve  
The preparations of the other Powers,  
And then—pounce down on France!

CASTLEREAGH

No, no! Not so.

WHITBREAD

Good God, then, what are we to understand?—  
However, this denial is a gain,  
And my misapprehension owes its birth  
Entirely to that mystery of phrase  
Which taints all rhetoric of the noble lord,  
Well, what is urged for new aggression now,  
To vamp up and replace the Bourbon line?  
The wittiest man who ever sat here said  
That half our nation's debt had been incurred  
In efforts to suppress the Bourbon power,  
The other half in efforts to restore it, [laughter]  
And I must deprecate a further plunge  
For ends so futile! Why, since Ministers  
Craved peace with Bonaparte at Chatillon,  
Should they refuse him peace and quiet now?  
This brief amendment therefore I submit  
To limit Ministers' aggressiveness  
And make self-safety all their chartering:  
"We at the same time earnestly implore  
That the Prince Regent graciously induce  
Strenuous endeavours in the cause of peace,  
So long as it be done consistently  
With the due honour of the English crown. [Cheers.]"

CASTLEREAGH

The arguments of Members opposite  
Posit conditions which experience proves

But figments of a dream;—that honesty,  
Truth, and good faith in this same Bonaparte  
May be assumed and can be acted on:  
This of one who is loud to violate  
Bonds the most sacred, treaties the most grave!...  
It follows not that since this realm was won  
To treat with Bonaparte at Chatillon,  
It can treat now. And as for assassination,  
The sentiments outspoken here to-night  
Are much more like to urge to desperate deeds  
Against the persons of our good Allies,  
Than are, against Napoleon, statements signed  
By the Vienna plenipotentiaries!  
We are, in fine, too fully warranted  
On moral grounds to strike at Bonaparte,  
If we at any crisis reckon it  
Expedient so to do. The Government  
Will act throughout in concert with the Allies,  
And Ministers are well within their rights  
To claim that their responsibility  
Be not disturbed by hackneyed forms of speech [”Oh, oh”]  
Upon war’s horrors, and the bliss of peace,—  
Which none denies! [Cheers.]

PONSONBY

I ask the noble lord,  
If that his meaning and pronouncement be  
Immediate war?

CASTLEREAGH

I have not phrased it so.

OPPOSITION CRIES

The question is unanswered!

[There are excited calls, and the House divides. The result is announced as thirty-seven for WHITBREAD’S amendment, and against it two hundred and twenty. The clock strikes twelve as the House adjourns.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

WESSEX. DURNOVER GREEN, CASTERBRIDGE

[On a patch of green grass on Durnover Hill, in the purlieu of Casterbridge, a rough gallows has been erected, and an effigy of

Napoleon hung upon it. Under the effigy are faggots of brushwood. It is the dusk of a spring evening, and a great crowd has gathered, comprising male and female inhabitants of the Durnover suburb and villagers from distances of many miles. Also are present some of the county yeomanry in white leather breeches and scarlet, volunteers in scarlet with green facings, and the REVEREND MR. PALMER, vicar of the parish, leaning against the post of his garden door, and smoking a clay pipe of preternatural length. Also PRIVATE CANTLE from Egdon Heath, and SOLOMON LONGWAYS of Casterbridge. The Durnover band, which includes a clarionet, {serpent,} oboe, tambourine, cymbals, and drum, is playing "Lord Wellington's Hornpipe."]

RUSTIC [wiping his face]

Says I, please God I'll lose a quarter to zee he burned! And I left Stourcastle at dree o'clock to a minute. And if I'd known that I should be too late to zee the beginning on't, I'd have lost a half to be a bit sooner.

YEOMAN

Oh, you be soon enough good-now. He's just going to be lighted.

RUSTIC

But shall I zee en die? I wanted to zee if he'd die hard,

YEOMAN

Why, you don't suppose that Boney himself is to be burned here?

RUSTIC

What—not Boney that's to be burned?

A WOMAN

Why, bless the poor man, no! This is only a mommet they've made of him, that's got neither chine nor chitlings. His innerds be only a lock of straw from Bridle's barton.

LONGWAYS

He's made, neighbour, of a' old cast jacket and breeches from our barracks here. Likeways Grammer Pawle gave us Cap'n Meggs's old Zunday shirt that she'd saved for tinder-box linnit; and Keeper Tricksey of Mellstock emptied his powder-horn into a barm-bladder, to make his heart wi'.

RUSTIC [vehemently]

Then there's no honesty left in Wessex folk nowadays at all! "Boney's going to be burned on Durnover Green to-night,"—that was what I thought, to be sure I did, that he'd been caught sailing from his islant and landed at Budmouth and brought to Casterbridge Jail, the natural retreat of malefactors!—False deceivers—making me lose a quarter who can ill afford it; and all for nothing!

LONGWAYS

Tisn't a mo'sel o' good for thee to cry out against Wessex folk, when twas all thy own stunpoll ignorance.

[The VICAR OF DURNOVER removes his pipe and spits perpendicularly.]

VICAR

My dear misguided man, you don't imagine that we should be so inhuman in this Christian country as to burn a fellow creature alive?

RUSTIC

Faith, I won't say I didn't! Durnover folk have never had the highest of Christian character, come to that. And I didn't know but that even a pa'son might backslide to such things in these gory times—I won't say on a Zunday, but on a week-night like this—when we think what a blasphemious rascal he is, and that there's not a more charnel-minded villain towards womenfolk in the whole world.

[The effigy has by this time been kindled, and they watch it burn, the flames making the faces of the crowd brass-bright, and lighting the grey tower of Durnover Church hard by.]

WOMAN [singing]

Bayonets and firelocks!

I wouldn't my mammy should know't

But I've been kissed in a sentry-box,

Wrapped up in a soldier's coat!

PRIVATE CANTLE

Talk of backsliding to burn Boney, I can backslide to anything when my blood is up, or rise to anything, thank God for't! Why, I shouldn't mind fighting Boney single-handed, if so be I had the choice o' weapons, and fresh Rainbarrow flints in my flint-box, and could get at him downhill. Yes, I'm a dangerous hand with a pistol now and then!... Hark, what's that? [A horn is heard eastward on the London Road.] Ah, here comes the mail. Now we may learn something. Nothing boldens my nerves like news of slaughter! [Enter mail-coach and steaming horses. It halts for a minute while the wheel is skidded and the horses stale.]

SEVERAL

What was the latest news from abroad, guard, when you left Piccadilly White-Horse-Cellar!

GUARD

You have heard, I suppose, that he's given up to public vengeance, by Gover'ment orders? Anybody may take his life in any way, fair or foul, and no questions asked. But Marshal Ney, who was sent to fight him, flung his arms round his neck and joined him with all his men. Next, the telegraph from Plymouth sends news landed there

by The Sparrow, that he has reached Paris, and King Louis has fled. But the air got hazy before the telegraph had finished, and the name of the place he had fled to couldn't be made out. [The VICAR OF DURNOVER blows a cloud of smoke, and again spits perpendicularly.]

VICAR

Well, I'm d— Dear me—dear me! The Lord's will be done.

GUARD

And there are to be four armies sent against him—English, Proosian, Austrian, and Roosian: the first two under Wellington and Blucher. And just as we left London a show was opened of Boney on horseback as large as life, hung up with his head downwards. Admission one shilling; children half-price. A truly patriot spectacle!—Not that yours here is bad for a simple country-place.

[The coach drives on down the hill, and the crowd reflectively watches the burning.]

WOMAN [singing]

## I

My Love's gone a-fighting  
Where war-trumpets call,  
The wrongs o' men righting  
Wi' carbine and ball,  
And sabre for smiting,  
And charger, and all

## II

Of whom does he think there  
Where war-trumpets call?  
To whom does he drink there,  
Wi' carbine and ball  
On battle's red brink there,  
And charger, and all?

## III

Her, whose voice he hears humming  
Where war-trumpets call,  
"I wait, Love, thy coming  
Wi' carbine and ball,

And bandsmen a-drumming  
Thee, charger and all!"

[The flames reach the powder in the effigy, which is blown to rags. The band marches off playing "When War's Alarms," the crowd disperses, the vicar stands musing and smoking at his garden door till the fire goes out and darkness curtains the scene.]

[image not archived]

## ACT SIXTH

[image not archived]

### SCENE I

#### THE BELGIAN FRONTIER

[The village of Beaumont stands in the centre foreground of a birds'-eye prospect across the Belgian frontier from the French side, being close to the Sambre further back in the scene, which pursues a crinkled course between high banks from Maubeuge on the left to Charleroi on the right.

In the shadows that muffle all objects, innumerable bodies of infantry and cavalry are discerned bivouacking in and around the village. This mass of men forms the central column of NAPOLEONS'S army.

The right column is seen at a distance on that hand, also near the frontier, on the road leading towards Charleroi; and the left column by Solre-sur-Sambre, where the frontier and the river nearly coincide

The obscurity thins and the June dawn appears.]

#### DUMB SHOW

The bivouacs of the central column become broken up, and a movement ensues rightwards on Charleroi. The twelve regiments of cavalry which are in advance move off first; in half an hour more bodies move, and more in the next half-hour, till by eight o'clock the whole central army is gliding on. It defiles in strands by narrow tracks through the forest. Riding impatiently on the outskirts of the columns is MARSHAL NEY, who has as yet received no command. As the day develops, sight and sounds to the left and right reveal that the two outside columns have also started, and are creeping towards the frontier abreast with the centre. That the whole forms one great movement, co-ordinated by one mind, now becomes apparent.

Preceded by scouts the three columns converge.

The advance through dense woods by narrow paths takes time. The head of the middle and main column forces back some outposts, and reaches Charleroi, driving out the Prussian general ZIETEN. It seizes the bridge over the Sambre and blows up the gates of the town.

The point of observation now descends close to the scene.

In the midst comes the EMPEROR with the Sappers of the Guard, the Marines, and the Young Guard. The clatter brings the scared inhabitants to their doors and windows. Cheers arise from some of them as NAPOLEON passes up the steep street. Just beyond the town, in front of the Bellevue Inn, he dismounts. A chair is brought out, in which he sits and surveys the whole valley of the Sambre. The troops march past cheering him, and drums roll and bugles blow. Soon the EMPEROR is found to be asleep.

When the rattle of their passing ceases the silence wakes him. His listless eye falls upon a half-defaced poster on a wall opposite—the Declaration of the Allies.

NAPOLEON [reading]

"... Bonaparte destroys the only legal title on which his existence depended... He has deprived himself of the protection of the law, and has manifested to the Universe that there can be neither peace nor truce with him. The Powers consequently declare that Napoleon Bonaparte has placed himself without the pale of civil and social relations, and that as an enemy and disturber of the tranquillity of the world he has rendered himself liable to public vengeance." His flesh quivers, and he turns with a start, as if fancying that some one may be about to stab him in the back. Then he rises, mounts, and rides on.

Meanwhile the right column crosses the Sambre without difficulty at Chatelet, a little lower down; the left column at Marchienne a little higher up; and the three limbs combine into one vast army. As the curtain of the mist is falling, the point of vision soars again, and there is afforded a brief glimpse of what is doing far away on the other side. From all parts of Europe long and sinister black files are crawling hitherward in serpentine lines, like slowworms through grass. They are the advancing armies of the Allies. The Dumb Show ends.

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

### A BALLROOM IN BRUSSELS

[It is a June midnight at the DUKE AND DUCHESS OF RICHMOND'S. A band of stringed instruments shows in the background. The room is crowded with a brilliant assemblage of more than two hundred of the distinguished people sojourning in the city on account of the war and other reasons, and of local personages of State and fashion. The ball has opened with "The White Cockade."

Among those discovered present either dancing or looking on are the DUKE and DUCHESS as host and hostess, their son and eldest daughter, the Duchess's brother, the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, the PRINCE OF ORANGE, the DUKE OF BRUNSWICK, BARON VAN CAPELLEN

the

Belgian Secretary of State, the DUKE OF ARENBERG, the MAYOR OF BRUSSELS, the DUKE AND DUCHESS OF BEAUFORT, GENERAL ALAVA, GENERAL

OUDENARDE, LORD HILL, LORD AND LADY CONYNGHAM, SIR HENRY AND LADY

SUSAN CLINTON, SIR H. AND LADY HAMILTON DALRYMPLE, SIR WILLIAM AND

LADY DE LANCEY, LORD UXBRIDGE, SIR JOHN BYNG, LORD PORTARLINGTON,

LORD EDWARD SOMERSET, LORD HAY, COLONEL ABERCROMBY, SIR HUSSEY

VIVIAN, SIR A. GORDON, SIR W. PONSONBY, SIR DENIS PACK, SIR JAMES KEMPT, SIR THOMAS PICTON, GENERAL MAITLAND, COLONEL CAMERON, many

other officers, English, Hanoverian, Dutch and Belgian ladies English and foreign, and Scotch reel-dancers from Highland regiments.

The "Hungarian Waltz" having also been danced, the hostess calls up the Highland soldiers to show the foreign guests what a Scotch reel is like. The men put their hands on their hips and tread it out briskly. While they stand aside and rest "The Hanoverian Dance" is called.

Enter LIEUTENANT WEBSTER, A.D.C. to the PRINCE OF ORANGE. The Prince goes apart with him and receives a dispatch. After reading it he speaks to WELLINGTON, and the two, accompanied by the DUKE OF RICHMOND, retire into an alcove with serious faces. WEBSTER, in passing back across the ballroom, exchanges a hasty word with two of three of the guests known to him, a young officer among



them, and goes out.

YOUNG OFFICER [to partner]

The French have passed the Sambre at Charleroi!

PARTNER

What—does it mean the Bonaparte indeed

Is bearing down upon us?

YOUNG OFFICER

That is so.

The one who spoke to me in passing out

Is Aide to the Prince of Orange, bringing him

Dispatches from Rebecque, his chief of Staff,

Now at the front, not far from Braine le Comte;

He says that Ney, leading the French van-guard,

Has burst on Quatre-Bras.

PARTNER

O horrid time!

Will you, then, have to go and face him there?

YOUNG OFFICER

I shall, of course, sweet. Promptly too, no doubt.

[He gazes about the room.]

See—the news spreads; the dance is paralyzed.

They are all whispering round. [The band stops.] Here comes one more,

He's the attache from the Prussian force

At our headquarters.

[Enter GENERAL MUFFLING. He looks prepossessed, and goes straight to WELLINGTON and RICHMOND in the alcove, who by this time have been joined by the DUKE OF BRUNSWICK.]

SEVERAL GUESTS [at back of room]

Yes, you see, it's true!

The army will prepare to march at once.

PICTON [to another general]

I am damn glad we are to be off. Pottering about her pinned to petticoat tails—it does one no good, but blasted harm!

ANOTHER GUEST

The ball cannot go on, can it? Didn't the Duke know the French were so near? If he did, how could he let us run risks so coolly?

LADY HAMILTON DALRYMPLE [to partner]

A deep concern weights those responsible

Who gather in the alcove. Wellington

Affects a cheerfulness in outward port,

But cannot rout his real anxiety!

[The DUCHESS OF RICHMOND goes to her husband.]

DUCHESS

Ought I to stop the ball? It hardly seems right to let it continue if all be true.

RICHMOND

I have put that very question to Wellington, my dear. He says that we need not hurry off the guests. The men have to assemble some time before the officers, who can stay on here a little longer without inconvenience; and he would prefer that they should, not to create a panic in the city, where the friends and spies of Napoleon are all agog for some such thing, which they would instantly communicate to him to take advantage of.

DUCHESS

Is it safe to stay on? Should we not be thinking about getting the children away?

RICHMOND

There's no hurry at all, even if Bonaparte were really sure to enter. But he's never going to set foot in Brussels—don't you imagine it for a moment.

DUCHESS [anxiously]

I hope not. But I wish we had never brought them here!

RICHMOND

It is too late, my dear, to wish that now. Don't be flurried; make the people go on dancing.

[The DUCHESS returns to her guests. The DUKE rejoins WELLINGTON, BRUNSWICK, MUFFLING, and the PRINCE OF ORANGE in the alcove.]

WELLINGTON

We need not be astride till five o'clock  
If all the men are marshalled well ahead.  
The Brussels citizens must not suppose  
They stand in serious peril... He, I think,  
Directs his main attack mistakenly;  
It should have been through Mons, not Charleroi.

MUFFLING

The Austrian armies, and the Russian too,  
Will show nowhere in this. The thing that's done,  
Be it a historied feat or nine days' fizz,  
Will be done long before they join us here.

WELLINGTON

Yes, faith; and 'tis pity. But, by God,  
Blucher, I think, and I can make a shift  
To do the business without troubling 'em!

Though I've an infamous army, that's the truth,—  
Weak, and but ill-equipped,—and what's as bad,  
A damned unpractised staff!

MUFFLING

We'll hope for luck.

Blucher concentrates certainly by now

Near Ligny, as he says in his dispatch.

Your Grace, I glean, will mass at Quatre-Bras?

WELLINGTON

Ay, now we are sure this move on Charleroi

Is no mere feint. Though I had meant Nivelles.

Have ye a good map, Richmond, near at hand?

RICHMOND

In the next room there's one. [Exit RICHMOND.]

[WELLINGTON calls up various general officers and aides from other parts of the room. PICTON, UXBRIDGE, HILL, CLINTON, VIVIAN, MAITLAND, PONSONBY, SOMERSET, and others join him in succession, receive orders, and go out severally.]

PRINCE OF ORANGE

As my divisions seem to lie around

The probable point of impact, it behoves me

To start at once, Duke, for Genappe, I deem?

Being in Brussels, all for this damned ball,

The dispositions out there have, so far,

Been made by young Saxe Weimar and Perponcher,

On their own judgment quite. I go, your Grace?

WELLINGTON

Yes, certainly. 'Tis now desirable.

Farewell! Good luck, until we meet again,

The battle won!

[Exit PRINCE OF ORANGE, and shortly after, MUFFLING. RICHMOND returns with a map, which he spreads out on the table. WELLINGTON scans it closely.]

Napoleon has befooled me,

By God he has,—gained four-and-twenty hours'

Good march upon me!

RICHMOND

What do you mean to do?

WELLINGTON

I have bidden the army concentrate in strength

At Quatre-Bras. But we shan't stop him there;

So I must fight him HERE. [He marks Waterloo with his thumbnail.]

Well, now I have sped,  
All necessary orders I may sup,  
And then must say good-bye. [To Brunswick.] This very day  
There will be fighting, Duke. You are fit to start?

BRUNSWICK [coming forward]

I leave almost this moment.—Yes, your Grace—  
And I sheath not my sword till I have avenged  
My father's death. I have sworn it!

WELLINGTON

My good friend,  
Something too solemn knells beneath your words.  
Take cheerful views of the affair in hand,  
And fall to't with sang froid!

BRUNSWICK

But I have sworn!  
Adieu. The rendezvous is Quatre-Bras?

WELLINGTON

Just so. The order is unchanged. Adieu;  
But only till a later hour to-day;  
I see it is one o'clock.

[WELLINGTON and RICHMOND go out of the alcove and join the  
hostess, BRUNSWICK'S black figure being left there alone. He  
bends over the map for a few seconds.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

O Brunswick, Duke of Deathwounds! Even as he  
For whom thou wear'st that filial weedery  
Was waylaid by my tipstaff nine years since,  
So thou this day shalt feel his fendless tap,  
And join thy sire!

BRUNSWICK [starting up]

I am stirred by inner words,  
As 'twere my father's angel calling me,—  
That prelude to our death my lineage know!

[He stands in a reverie for a moment; then, bidding adieu to the  
DUCHESS OF RICHMOND and her daughter, goes slowly out of the  
ballroom by a side-door.]

DUCHESS

The Duke of Brunswick bore him gravely here.  
His sable shape has stuck me all the eve  
As one of those romantic presences  
We hear of—seldom see.

WELLINGTON [phlegmatically]

Romantic,—well,  
It may be so. Times often, ever since  
The Late Duke's death, his mood has tinged him thus.  
He is of those brave men who danger see,  
And seeing front it,—not of those, less brave  
But counted more, who face it sightlessly.

YOUNG OFFICER [to partner]  
The Generals slip away! I, Love, must take  
The cobbled highway soon. Some hours ago  
The French seized Charleroi; so they loom nigh.

PARTNER [uneasily]  
Which tells me that the hour you draw your sword  
Looms nigh us likewise!

YOUNG OFFICER  
Some are saying here  
We fight this very day. Rumours all-shaped  
Fly round like cockchafers!  
[Suddenly there echoes in the ballroom a long-drawn metallic purr  
of sound, making all the company start.]

Transcriber's Note: There follows in musical notation five measures  
for side-drum.

Ah—there it is,  
Just as I thought! They are beating the Generale.  
[The loud roll of side-drums is taken up by other drums further  
and further away, till the hollow noise spreads all over the city.  
Dismay is written on the faces of the women. The Highland non-  
commissioned officers and privates march smartly down the ballroom  
and disappear.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
Discerned you stepping out in front of them  
That figure—of a pale drum-major kind,  
Or fugleman—who wore a cold grimace?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
He was my old fiend Death, in rarest trim,  
The occasion favouring his husbandry!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES  
Are those who marched behind him, then, to fall?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS  
Ay, all well-nigh, ere Time have houred three-score.

PARTNER  
Surely this cruel call to instant war  
Spares space for one dance more, that memory

May store when you are gone, while I—sad me!—  
Wait, wait and weep... Yes—one there is to be!

SPIRIT IRONIC

Methinks flirtation grows too tender here!

[Country Dance, "The Prime of Life," a favourite figure at this period. The sense of looming tragedy carries emotion to its climax. All the younger officers stand up with their partners, forming several figures of fifteen or twenty couples each. The air is ecstasizing, and both sexes abandon themselves to the movement.

Nearly half an hour passes before the figure is danced down. Smothered kisses follow the conclusion. The silence is broken from without by more long hollow rolling notes, so near that they thrill the window-panes.]

SEVERAL

Tis the Assemble. Now, then, we must go!

[The officers bid farewell to their partners and begin leaving in twos and threes. When they are gone the women mope and murmur to each other by the wall, and listen to the tramp of men and slamming of doors in the streets without.]

LADY HAMILTON DALRYMPLE

The Duke has borne him gaily here to-night.  
The youngest spirits scarcely capped his own.

DALRYMPLE

Maybe that, finding himself blade to blade  
With Bonaparte at last, his blood gets quick.  
French lancers of the Guard were seen at Frasnes  
Last midnight; so the clash is not far off.

[They leave.]

DE LANCEY [to his wife]

I take you to our door, and say good-bye,  
And go thence to the Duke's and wait for him.  
In a few hours we shall be all in motion  
Towards the scene of—what we cannot tell!  
You, dear, will haste to Antwerp till it's past,  
As we have arranged.

[They leave.]

WELLINGTON [to Richmond]

Now I must also go,  
And snatch a little snooze ere harnessing.  
The Prince and Brunswick have been gone some while.

[RICHMOND walks to the door with him. Exit WELLINGTON, RICHMOND

returns.]

DUCHESS [to Richmond]

Some of these left renew the dance, you see.

I cannot stop them; but with memory hot

Of those late gone, of where they are gone, and why,

It smacks of heartlessness!

RICHMOND

Let be; let be;

Youth comes not twice to fleet mortality!

[The dancing, however, is fitful and spiritless, few but civilian partners being left for the ladies. Many of the latter prefer to sit in reverie while waiting for their carriages.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

When those stout men-at-arms drew forward there,

I saw a like grimacing shadow march

And pirouette before no few of them.

Some of themselves beheld it; some did not.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Which were so ushered?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Brunswick, who saw and knew;

One also moved before Sir Thomas Picton,

Who coolly conned and drily spoke to it;

Another danced in front of Ponsonby,

Who failed of heeding his.—De Lancey, Hay,

Gordon, and Cameron, and many more

Were footmanned by like phantoms from the ball.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Multiplied shimmerings of my Protean friend,

Who means to couch them shortly. Thou wilt eye

Many fantastic moulds of him ere long,

Such as, bethink thee, oft hast eyed before.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I have—too often!

[The attenuated dance dies out, the remaining guests depart, the musicians leave the gallery and depart also. RICHMOND goes to a window and pulls back one of the curtains. Dawn is barely visible in the sky, and the lamps indistinctly reveal that long lines of British infantry have assembled in the street. In the irksomeness of waiting for their officers with marching-orders, they have lain down on the pavements, where many are soundly sleeping, their heads on their knapsacks and their arms by their

side.]

DUCHESS

Poor men. Sleep waylays them. How tired they seem!

RICHMOND

They'll be more tired before the day is done.

A march of eighteen miles beneath the heat,

And then to fight a battle ere they rest,

Is what foreshades.—Well, it is more than bed-time;

But little sleep for us or any one

To-night in Brussels!

[He draws the window-curtain and goes out with the DUCHESS.

Servants enter and extinguish candles. The scene closes in darkness.]

[image not archived]

### SCENE III

CHARLEROI. NAPOLEON'S QUARTERS

[The same midnight. NAPOLEON is lying on a bed in his clothes.

In consultation with SOULT, his Chief of Staff, who is sitting

near, he dictates to his Secretary orders for the morrow. They

are addressed to KELLERMANN, DROUOT, LOBAU, GERARD, and other  
of his marshals. SOULT goes out to dispatch them.

The Secretary resumes the reading of reports. Presently MARSHAL  
NEY is announced He is heard stumbling up the stairs, and enters.]

NAPOLEON

Ah, Ney; why come you back? Have you secured

The all-important Crossways?—safely sconced

Yourself at Quatre-Bras?

NEY

Not, sire, as yet.

For, marching forwards, I heard gunnery boom,

And, fearing that the Prussians had engaged you,

I stood at pause. Just then—

NAPOLEON

My charge was this:

Make it impossible at any cost

That Wellington and Blucher should unite.

As it's from Brussels that the English come,

And from Namur the Prussians, Quatre-Bras

Lends it alone for their forgathering:

So, why exists it not in your hands/



NEY

My reason, sire, was rolling from my tongue.—  
Hard on the boom of guns, dim files of foot  
Which read to me like massing Englishry—  
The vanguard of all Wellington's array—  
I half-discerned. So, in pure wariness,  
I left the Bachelu columns there at Frasnes,  
And hastened back to tell you.

NAPOLEON

Ney; O Ney!

I fear you are not the man that once you were;  
Of your so daring, such a faint-heart now!  
I have ground to know the foot that flustered you  
Were but a few stray groups of Netherlanders;  
For my good spies in Brussels send me cue  
That up to now the English have not stirred,  
But cloy themselves with nightly revel there.

NEY [bitterly]

Give me another opportunity  
Before you speak like that!

NAPOLEON

You soon will have one!...  
But now—no more of this. I have other glooms  
Upon my soul—the much-disquieting news  
That Bourmont has deserted to our foes  
With his whole staff.

NEY

We can afford to let him.

NAPOLEON

It is what such betokens, not their worth,  
That whets it!... Love, respect for me, have waned;  
But I will right that. We've good chances still.  
You must return foot-hot to Quatre-Bras;  
There Kellermann's cuirassiers will promptly join you  
To bear the English backward Brussels way.  
I go on towards Fleurus and Ligny now.—  
If Blucher's force retreat, and Wellington's  
Lie somnolent in Brussels one day more,  
I gain that city sans a single shot!...  
Now, friend, downstairs you'll find some supper ready,  
Which you must tuck in sharply, and then off.  
The past day has not ill-advantaged us;

We have stolen upon the two chiefs unawares,  
And in such sites that they must fight apart.  
Now for a two hours' rest.—Comrade, adieu  
Until to-morrow!

NEY

Till to-morrow, sire!

[Exit NEY. NAPOLEON falls asleep, and the Secretary waits till  
dictation shall be resumed. BUSSY, the orderly officer, comes  
to the door.]

BUSSY

Letters—arrived from Paris. [Hands letters.]

SECRETARY

He shall have them

The moment he awakes. These eighteen hours  
He's been astride; and is not what he was.—  
Much news from Paris?

BUSSY

I can only say

What's not the news. The courier has just told me  
He'd nothing from the Empress at Vienna  
To bring his Majesty. She writes no more.

SECRETARY

And never will again! In my regard  
That bird's forsook the nest for good and all.

BUSSY

All that they hear in Paris from her court  
Is through our spies there. One of them reports  
This rumour of her: that the Archduke John,  
In taking leave to join our enemies here,  
Said, "Oh, my poor Louise; I am grieved for you  
And what I hope is, that he'll be run through,  
Or shot, or break his neck, for your own good  
No less than ours.

NAPOLEON [waking]

By "he" denoting me?

BUSSY [starting]

Just so, your Majesty.

NAPOLEON [peremptorily]

What said the Empress?

BUSSY

She gave no answer, sire, that rumour bears.

NAPOLEON

Count Neipperg, whom they have made her chamberlain,  
Interred his wife last spring—is it not so?

BUSSY

He did, your Majesty.

NAPOLEON

H'm...You may go.

[Exit BUSSY. The Secretary reads letters aloud in succession.  
He comes to the last; begins it; reaches a phrase, and stops  
abruptly.]

Mind not! Read on. No doubt the usual threat,  
Or prophecy, from some mad scribe? Who signs it?

SECRETARY

The subscript is "The Duke of Enghien!"

NAPOLEON [starting up]

Bah, man! A treacherous trick! A hoax—no more!

Is that the last?

SECRETARY

The last, your Majesty.

NAPOLEON

Then now I'll sleep. In two hours have me called.

SECRETARY

I'll give the order, sire.

[The Secretary goes. The candles are removed, except one, and  
NAPOLEON endeavours to compose himself.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

A little moral panorama would do him no harm, after that reminder of  
the Duke of Enghien. Shall it be, young Compassion?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What good—if that old Years tells us be true?

But I say naught. To ordain is not for me!

[Thereupon a vision passes before NAPOLEON as he lies, comprising  
hundreds of thousands of skeletons and corpses in various stages  
of decay. They rise from his various battlefields, the flesh  
dropping from them, and gaze reproachfully at him. His intimate  
officers who have been slain he recognizes among the crowd. In  
front is the DUKE OF ENGHIEEN as showman.]

NAPOLEON [in his sleep]

Why, why should this reproach be dealt me now?

Why hold me my own master, if I be

Ruled by the pitiless Planet of Destiny?

[He jumps up in a sweat and puts out the last candle; and the  
scene is curtained by darkness.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

A CHAMBER OVERLOOKING A MAIN STREET IN BRUSSELS

[A June sunrise; the beams struggling through the window-curtains. A canopied bed in a recess on the left. The quick notes of Brighton Camp, or the Girl I've left behind me," strike sharply into the room from fifes and drums without. A young lady in a dressing-gown, who has evidently been awaiting the sound, springs from the bed like a hare from its form, undraws window-curtains and opens the window.

Columns of British soldiery are marching past from the Parc southward out of the city by the Namur Gate. The windows of other houses in the street rattle open, and become full of gazers.

A tap at the door. An older lady enters, and comes up to the first.]

YOUNGER LADY [turning]

O mamma—I didn't hear you!

ELDER LADY

I was sound asleep till the thumping of the drums set me fantastically dreaming, and when I awoke I found they were real. Did they wake you too, my dear?

Younger Lady [reluctantly]

I didn't require waking. I hadn't slept since we came home.

ELDER LADY

That was from the excitement of the ball. There are dark rings round your eye. [The fifes and drums are now opposite, and thrill the air in the room.] Ah—that "Girl I've left behind me!"—which so many thousands of women have throbbled an accompaniment to, and will again to-day if ever they did!

YOUNGER LADY [her voice faltering]

It is rather cruel to say that just now, mamma. There, I can't look at them after it! [She turns and wipes her eyes.]

ELDER LADY

I wasn't thinking of ourselves—certainly not of you.—How they press on—with those great knapsacks and firelocks and, I am told, fifty-six rounds of ball-cartridge, and four days' provisions in those haversacks. How can they carry it all near twenty miles and fight with it on their shoulders!... Don't cry, dear. I thought you would get sentimental last night over somebody. I ought to

have brought you home sooner. How many dances did you have? It was impossible for me to look after you in the excitement of the war-tidings.

YOUNGER LADY

Only three—four.

ELDER LADY

Which were they?

YOUNGER LADY

Enrico, the "Copenhagen Waltz" and the "Hanoverian," and the Prime of Life.

ELDER LADY

It was very foolish to fall in love on the strength of four dances.

YOUNGER LADY [evasively]

Fall in love? Who said I had fallen in love? What a funny idea!

ELDER LADY

Is it?... Now here come the Highland Brigade with their pipes and their "Hieland Laddie." How the sweethearts cling to the men's arms. [Reaching forward.] There are more regiments following. But look, that gentleman opposite knows us. I cannot remember his name. [She bows and calls across.] Sir, which are these?

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE

The Ninety-second. Next come the Forty-ninth, and next the Forty-second—Sir Denis Pack's brigade.

ELDER LADY

Thank you.—I think it is that gentleman we talked to at the Duchess's, but I am not sure. [A pause: another band.]

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE

That's the Twenty-eighth. [They pass, with their band and colours.]

Now the Thirty-second are coming up—part of Kempt's brigade. Endless, are they not?

ELDER LADY

Yes, Sir. Has the Duke passed out yet?

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE

Not yet. Some cavalry will go by first, I think. The foot coming up now are the Seventy-ninth. [They pass.]... These next are the Ninety-fifth. [They pass.]... These are the First Foot-guards now. [They pass, playing "British Grenadiers."]... The Fusileer-guards now. [They pass.] Now the Coldstreamers. [They pass. He looks up towards the Parc.] Several Hanoverian regiments under Colonel Best are coming next. [They pass, with their bands and colours. An interval.]

ELDER LADY [to daughter]

Here are the hussars. How much more they carry to battle than at reviews. The hay in those great nets must encumber them. [She turns and sees that her daughter has become pale.] Ah, now I know! HE has just gone by. You exchanged signals with him, you wicked girl! How do you know what his character is, or if he'll ever come back?

[The younger lady goes and flings herself on her face upon the bed, sobbing silently. Her mother glances at her, but leaves her alone. An interval. The prancing of a group of horsemen is heard on the cobble-stones without.]

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE [calling]

Here comes the Duke!

ELDER LADY [to younger]

You have left the window at the most important time! The Duke of Wellington and his staff-officers are passing out.

YOUNGER LADY

I don't want to see him. I don't want to see anything any more!

[Riding down the street comes WELLINGTON in a grey frock-coat and small cocked hat, frigid and undemonstrative; accompanied by four or five Generals of his suite, the Deputy Quartermaster-general De LANCEY, LORD FITZROY SOMERSET, Aide-de-camp, and GENERAL MUFFLING.]

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE

He is the Prussian officer attached to our headquarters, through whom Wellington communicates with Blucher, who, they say, is threatened by the French at Ligny at this moment.

[The elder lady turns to her daughter, and going to the bed bends over her, while the horses' tramp of WELLINGTON and his staff clatters more faintly in the street, and the music of the last retreating band dies away towards the Forest of Soignes.

Finding her daughter is hysterical with grief she quickly draws the window-curtains to screen the room from the houses opposite.

Scene ends.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

THE FIELD OF LIGNY

[The same day later. A prospect of the battlefield of Ligny southward from the roof of the windmill of Bussy, which stands at the centre and highest point of the Prussian position, about six miles south-east of Quatre-Bras.]

The ground slopes downward along the whole front of the scene to a valley through which wanders the Ligne, a muddy stream bordered by tallows. On both sides of the stream, in the middle plane of the picture, stands the village of Ligny, composed of thatched cottages, gardens, and farm-houses with stone walls; the main features, such as the church, church-yard, and village-green being on the further side of the Ligne.

On that side the land reascends in green wheatfields to an elevation somewhat greater than that of the foreground, reaching away to Fleurus in the right-hand distance.

In front, on the slopes between the spectator and the village, is the First Corps of the Prussian army commanded by Zieten, its First Brigade under STEINMETZ occupying the most salient point. The Corps under THIELMANN is ranged to the left, and that of PIRCH to the rear, in reserve to ZIETEN. In the centre-front, just under the mill, BUCHER on a fine grey charger is intently watching, with his staff.

Something dark is seen to be advancing over the horizon by Fleurus, about three miles off. It is the van of NAPOLEON'S army, approaching to give battle.

At this moment hoofs are heard clattering along a road that passes behind the mill; and there come round to the front the DUKE OF WELLINGTON, his staff-officers, and a small escort of cavalry.

WELLINGTON and BUCHER greet each other at the foot of the windmill. They disappear inside, and can be heard ascending the ladders.

Enter on the roof WELLINGTON and BUCHER, followed by FITZROY SOMERSET, GNEISENAU, MUFFLING, and others. Before renewing their conversation they peer through their glasses at the dark movements on the horizon. WELLINGTON'S manner is deliberate, judicial, almost indifferent; BUCHER'S eager and impetuous.

WELLINGTON

They muster not as yet in near such strength  
At Quatre-Bras as here.

BUCHER

Tis from Fleurus  
They come debouching. I, perforce, withdrew  
My forward posts of cavalry at dawn  
In face of their light cannon... They'll be here  
I reckon, soon!

WELLINGTON [still with glass]

I clearly see his staff,  
And if my eyes don't lie, the Arch-one too...  
It is the whole Imperial army, Prince,  
That we've before us. [A silence.] Well, we'll cope with them!  
What would you have me do?  
[BLUCHER is so absorbed in what he sees that he does not heed.]  
GNEISENAU  
Duke, this I'd say:  
Events suggest to us that you come up  
With all your force, behind the village here,  
And act as our reserve.  
MUFFLING  
But Bonaparte,  
Pray note, has redistributed his strength  
In fashion that you fail to recognize.  
I am against your scheme.  
BLUCHER [lowering his glass]  
Signs notify  
Napoleon's plans as changed! He purports now  
To strike our left—between Sombrefte and Brye...  
If so, I have to readjust my ward.  
WELLINGTON  
One of his two divisions that we scan  
Outspreading from Fleurus, seems bent on Ligny,  
The other on Saint-Amand.  
BLUCHER  
Well, I shall see  
In half an hour, your Grace. If what I deem  
Be what he means, Von Zieten's corps forthwith  
Must stand to their positions: Pirch out here,  
Henckel at Ligny, Steinmetz at La Haye.  
WELLINGTON  
So that, your Excellency, as I opine,  
I go and sling my strength on their left wing—  
Manoeuvring to outflank 'em on that side.  
BLUCHER  
True, true. Our plan uncovers of itself;  
You bear down everything from Quatre-Bras  
Along the road to Frasnes.  
WELLINGTON  
I will, by God.  
I'll bear straight on to Gosselies, if needs!



GNEISENAU

Your Excellencies, if I may be a judge,  
Such movement will not tend to unity;  
It leans too largely on a peradventure  
Most speculative in its contingencies!  
[A silence; till the officers of the staff remark to each other  
that concentration is best in any circumstances. A general  
discussion ensues.]

BLUCHER [concludingly]

We will expect you, Duke, to our support.

WELLINGTON

I must agree that, in the sum, it's best.  
So be it then. If not attacked myself  
I'll come to you.—Now I return with speed  
To Quatre-Bras.

BLUCHER

And I descend from here  
To give close eye and thought to things below;  
No more can well be studied where we stand.

[Exeunt from roof WELLINGTON, BLUCHER and the rest. They reappear  
below, and WELLINGTON and his suite gallop furiously away in the  
direction of Quatre-Bras. An interval.]

DUMB SHOW [below]

Three reports of a cannon give the signal for the French attack.  
NAPOLEON'S army advances down the slopes of green corn opposite,  
bands and voices joining in songs of victory. The French come  
in three grand columns; VANDAMME'S on the left [the spectator's  
right] against Saint-Amand, the most forward angle of the Prussian  
position. GERARD'S in the centre bear down upon Ligny. GROUCHY'S  
on the French right is further back. Far to the rear can be  
discerned NAPOLEON, the Imperial Guard, and MILHAUD'S cuirassiers  
halted in reserve.

This formidable advance is preceded by swarms of tirailleurs, who  
tread down the high wheat, exposing their own men in the rear.  
Amid cannonading from both sides they draw nearer to the Prussians,  
though lanes are cut through them by the latter's guns. They drive  
the Prussians out of Ligny; who, however, rally in the houses,  
churchyard, and village green.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

I see unnatural an Monster, loosely jointed,  
With an Apocalyptic Being's shape,  
And limbs and eyes a hundred thousand strong,

And fifty thousand heads; which coils itself  
About the buildings there.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Thou dost indeed.

It is the Monster Devastation. Watch.

Round the church they fight without quarter, shooting face to face,  
stabbing with unfixed bayonets, and braining with the butts of  
muskets. The village catches fire, and soon becomes a furnace.  
The crash of splitting timbers as doors are broken through, the  
curses of the fighters, rise into the air, with shouts of "En  
avant!" from the further side of the stream, and "Vorwärts!" from  
the nearer.

The battle extends to the west by Le Hameau and Saint-Amand la Haye;  
and Ligny becomes invisible under a shroud of smoke.

VOICES [at the base of the mill]

This sun will go down bloodily for us!

The English, sharply sighed for by Prince Blucher,

Cannot appear. Wellington words across

That hosts have set on him at Quatre-Bras,

And leave him not one bayonet to spare!

The truth of this intelligence is apparent. A low dull sound heard  
lately from the direction of Quatre-Bras has increased to a roaring  
cannonade. The scene abruptly closes.

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

### THE FIELD AT QUATRE-BRAS

[The same day. The view is southward, and the straight gaunt  
highway from Brussels [behind the spectator] to Charleroi over  
the hills in front, bisects the picture from foreground to  
distance. Near at hand, where it is elevated and open, there  
crosses it obliquely, at a point called Les Quatre-Bras, another  
road which comes from Nivelles, five miles to the gazer's right  
rear, and goes to Namur, twenty miles ahead to the left. At a  
distance of five or six miles in this latter direction it passes  
near the previous scene, Ligny, whence the booming of guns can  
be continuously heard.

Between the cross-roads in the centre of the scene and the far  
horizon the ground dips into a hollow, on the other side of which  
the same straight road to Charleroi is seen climbing the crest,  
and over it till out of sight. From a hill on the right hand of

the mid-distance a large wood, the wood of Bossu, reaches up nearly to the crossways, which give their name to the buildings thereat, consisting of a few farm-houses and an inn.

About three-quarters of a mile off, nearly hidden by the horizon towards Charleroi, there is also a farmstead, Gemioncourt; another, Piraumont, stands on an eminence a mile to the left of it, and somewhat in front of the Namur road.]

#### DUMB SHOW

As this scene uncovers the battle is beheld to be raging at its height, and to have reached a keenly tragic phase. WELLINGTON has returned from Ligny, and the main British and Hanoverian position, held by the men who marched out of Brussels in the morning, under officers who danced the previous night at the Duchess's, is along the Namur road to the left of the perspective, and round the cross-road itself. That of the French, under Ney, is on the crests further back, from which they are descending in imposing numbers. Some advanced columns are assailing the English left, while through the smoke-hazes of the middle of the field two lines of skirmishers are seen firing at each other—the southernmost dark blue, the northernmost dull red. Time lapses till it is past four o'clock.

#### SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

The cannonade of the French ordnance-lines  
Has now redoubled. Columns new and dense  
Of foot, supported by fleet cavalry,  
Straightly impinge upon the Brunswick bands  
That border the plantation of Bossu.  
Above some regiments of the assaulting French  
A flag like midnight swims upon the air,  
To say no quarter may be looked for there!  
The Brunswick soldiery, much notched and torn by the French grape-shot, now lie in heaps. The DUKE OF BRUNSWICK himself, desperate to keep them steady, lights his pipe, and rides slowly up and down in front of his lines previous to the charge which follows.

#### SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

The French have heaved them on the Brunswickers,  
And borne them back. Now comes the Duke's told time.  
He gallops at the head of his hussars—  
Those men of solemn and appalling guise,  
Full-clothed in black, with nodding hearsy plumes,  
A shining silver skull and cross of bones  
Set upon each, to byspeak his slain sire...  
Concordantly, the expected bullet starts

And finds the living son.

BRUNSWICK reels to the ground. His troops, disheartened, lose their courage and give way.

The French front columns, and the cavalry supporting them, shout as they advance. The Allies are forced back upon the English main position. WELLINGTON is in personal peril for a time, but he escapes it by a leap of his horse.

A curtain of smoke drops. An interval. The curtain reascends.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Behold again the Dynasts' gory gear!

Since we regarded, what has progressed here?

RECORDING ANGEL [in recitative]

Musters of English foot and their allies

Came palely panting by the Brussels way,

And, swiftly stationed, checked their counter-braves.

Ney, vexed by lack of like auxiliaries,

Bade then the columned cuirassiers to charge

In all their edged array of weaponcraft.

Yea; thrust replied to thrust, and fire to fire;

The English broke, till Picton prompt to prop them

Sprang with fresh foot-folk from the covering rye.

Next, Pire's cavalry took up the charge...

And so the action sways. The English left

Is turned at Piraumont; whilst on their right

Perils infest the greenwood of Bossu;

Wellington gazes round with dubious view;

England's long fame in fight seems sepulchered,

And ominous roars swell loudlier Ligny-ward.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

New rage has wrenched the battle since thou'st writ;

Hot-hasting succours of light cannonry

Lately come up, relieve the English stress;

Kellermann's cuirassiers, both man and horse

All plated over with the brass of war,

Are rolling on the highway. More brigades

Of British, soiled and sweltering, now are nigh,

Who plunge within the boscaige of Bossu;

Where in the hidden shades and sinuous creeps

Life-struggles can be heard, seen but in peeps.

Therewith the foe's accessions harass Ney,

Racked that no needful d'Erlon darks the way!

Inch by inch NEY has to draw off: WELLINGTON promptly advances. At

dusk NEY'S army finds itself back at Frasnes, where he meets D'ERLON coming up to his assistance, too late.

The weary English and their allies, who have been on foot ever since one o'clock the previous morning, prepare to bivouac in front of the cross-roads. Their fires flash up for a while; and by and by the dead silence of heavy sleep hangs over them. WELLINGTON goes into his tent, and the night darkens.

A Prussian courier from Ligny enters, who is conducted into the tent to WELLINGTON.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

What tidings can a courier bring that count

Here, where such mighty things are native born?

RECORDING ANGEL [in recitative]

The fury of the tumult there begun

Scourged quivering Ligny through the afternoon:

Napoleon's great intent grew substantive,

And on the Prussian pith and pulse he bent

His foretimed blow. Blucher, to butt the shock,

Called up his last reserves, and heading on,

With blade high brandished by his aged arm,

Spurred forward his white steed. But they, outspent,

Failed far to follow. Darkness coped the sky,

And storm, and rain with thunder. Yet once more

He cheered them on to charge. His horse, the while,

Pierced by a bullet, fell on him it bore.

He, trampled, bruised, faint, and in disarray

Dragged to another mount, was led away.

His ragged lines withdraw from sight and sound,

And their assailants camp upon the ground.

The scene shuts with midnight.

[image not archived]

## SCENE VII

### BRUSSELS. THE PLACE ROYALE

[The same night, dark and sultry. A crowd of citizens throng the broad Place. They gaze continually down the Rue de Namur, along which arrive minute by minute carts and waggons laden with wounded men. Other wounded limp into the city on foot. At much greater speed enter fugitive soldiers from the miscellaneous contingents of WELLINGTON'S army at Quatre-Bras, who gesticulate and explain to the crowd that all is lost and that the French will soon be in

Brussels.

Baggage-carts and carriages, with and without horses, stand before an hotel, surrounded by a medley of English and other foreign nobility and gentry with their valets and maids. Bulletins from the battlefield are affixed on the corner of the Place, and people peer at them by the dim oil lights.

A rattle of hoofs reaches the ears, entering the town by the same Namur gate. The riders disclose themselves to be Belgian hussars, also from the field.]

SEVERAL HUSSARS

The French approach! Wellington is beaten. Bonaparte is at our heels.

[Consternation reaches a climax. Horses are hastily put-to at the hotel: people crowd into the carriages and try to drive off. They get jammed together and hemmed in by the throng. Unable to move they quarrel and curse despairingly in sundry tongues.]

BARON CAPELLEN

Affix the new bulletin. It is a more assuring one, and may quiet them a little.

[A new bulletin is nailed over the old one.]

MAYOR

Good people, calm yourselves. No victory has been won by Bonaparte. The noise of guns heard all the afternoon became fainter towards the end, showing beyond doubt that the retreat was away from the city.

A CITIZEN

The French are said to be forty thousand strong at Les Quatre-Bras, and no forty thousand British marched out against them this morning!

ANOTHER CITIZEN

And it is whispered that the city archives and the treasure-chest have been sent to Antwerp!

MAYOR

Only as a precaution. No good can be gained by panic. Sixty or seventy thousand of the Allies, all told, face Napoleon at this hour. Meanwhile who is to attend to the wounded that are being brought in faster and faster? Fellow-citizens, do your duty by these unfortunates, and believe me that when engaged in such an act of mercy no enemy will hurt you.

CITIZENS

What can we do?

MAYOR

I invite all those who have such, to bring mattresses, sheets, and coverlets to the Hotel de Ville, also old linen and lint from the houses of the cures.

[Many set out on this errand. An interval. Enter a courier, who speaks to the MAYOR and the BARON CAPELLEN.]

BARON CAPELLEN [to Mayor]

Better inform them immediately, to prevent a panic.

MAYOR [to Citizens]

I grieve to tell you that the Duke of Brunswick, whom you saw ride out this morning, was killed this afternoon at Les Quatre-Bras. A musket-ball passed through his bridle-hand and entered his belly. His body is now arriving. Carry yourselves gravely.

[A lane is formed in the crowd in the direction of the Rue de Namur; they wait. Presently an extemporized funeral procession, with the body of the DUKE on a gun-carriage, and a small escort of Brunswickers with carbines reversed, comes slowly up the street, their silver death's-heads shining in the lamplight. The agitation of the citizens settles into a silent gloom as the mournful train passes.]

MAYOR [to Baron Capellen]

I noticed the strange look of prepossession on his face at the ball last night, as if he knew what was going to be.

BARON CAPELLEN

The Duchess mentioned it to me... He hated the French, if any man ever did, and so did his father before him! Here comes the English Colonel Hamilton, straight from the field. He will give us trustworthy particulars.

[Enter COLONEL HAMILTON by the Rue de Namur. He converses with the MAYOR and the BARON on the issue of the struggle.]

MAYOR

Now I will go the Hotel de Ville, and get it ready for those wounded who can find no room in private houses.

[Exeunt MAYOR, CAPELLEN, D'URSEL, HAMILTON, etc. severally. Many citizens descend in the direction of the Hotel de Ville to assist.

Those who remain silently watch the carts bringing in the wounded till a late hour. The doors of houses in the Place and elsewhere are kept open, and the rooms within lighted, in expectation of more arrivals from the field. A courier gallops up, who is accosted by idlers.]

COURIER [hastily]

The Prussians are defeated at Ligny by Napoleon in person. He will be here to-morrow.

[Exit courier.]

FIRST IDLER

The devil! Then I am for welcoming him. No Antwerp for me!

OTHER IDLERS [sotto voce]

Vive l'Empereur!

[A warm summer fog from the Lower Town covers the Parc and the Place Royale.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VIII

### THE ROAD TO WATERLOO

[The view is now from Quatre-Bras backward along the road by which the English arrived. Diminishing in a straight line from the foreground to the centre of the distance it passes over Mont Saint-Jean and through Waterloo to Brussels.

It is now tinged by a moving mass of English and Allied infantry, in retreat to a new position at Mont Saint-Jean. The sun shines brilliantly upon the foreground as yet, but towards Waterloo and the Forest of Soignes on the north horizon it is overcast with black clouds which are steadily advancing up the sky.

To mask the retreat the English outposts retain their position on the battlefield in the face of NEY'S troops, and keep up a desultory firing: the cavalry for the same reason remain, being drawn up in lines beside the intersecting Namur road.

Enter WELLINGTON, UXBRIDGE [who is in charge of the cavalry], MUFFLING, VIVIAN, and others. They look through their field-glasses towards Frasnes, NEY'S position since his retreat yesternight, and also towards NAPOLEON'S at Ligny.]

WELLINGTON

The noonday sun, striking so strongly there,  
Makes mirrors of their arms. That they advance  
Their glowing radiance shows. Those gleams by Marbais  
Suggest fixed bayonets.

UXBRIDGE

Vivian's glass reveals  
That they are cuirassiers. Ney's troops, too, near  
At last, methinks, along this other road.

WELLINGTON

One thing is sure: that here the whole French force  
Schemes to unite and sharply follow us.  
It formulates our fence. The cavalry  
Must linger here no longer; but recede  
To Mont Saint-Jean, as rearguard of the foot.  
From the intelligence that Gordon brings



Tis pretty clear old Blucher had to take  
 A damned good drubbing yesterday at Ligny,  
 And has been bent hard back! So that, for us,  
 Bound to the plighted plan, there is no choice  
 But do like... No doubt they'll say at home  
 That we've been well thrashed too. It can't be helped,  
 They must!... [He looks round at the sky.] A heavy rainfall  
 threatens us,  
 To make it all the worse!  
 [The speaker and his staff ride off along the Brussels road in  
 the rear of the infantry, and UXBRIDGE begins the retreat of the  
 cavalry. CAPTAIN MERCER enters with a light battery.]  
 MERCER [excitedly]  
 Look back, my lord;  
 Is it not Bonaparte himself we see  
 Upon the road I have come by?  
 UXBRIDGE [looking through glass]  
 Yes, by God;  
 His face as clear-cut as the edge of a cloud  
 The sun behind shows up! His suite and all!  
 Fire—fire! And aim you well.  
 [The battery makes ready and fires.]  
 No! It won't do.  
 He brings on mounted ordnance of his Guard,  
 So we're in danger here. Then limber up,  
 And off as soon as may be.  
 [The English artillery and cavalry retreat at full speed, just as  
 the weather bursts, with flashes of lightning and drops of rain.  
 They all clatter off along the Brussels road, UXBRIDGE and his  
 aides galloping beside the column; till no British are left at  
 Quatre-Bras except the slain.  
 The focus of the scene follows the retreating English army, the  
 highway and its margins panoramically gliding past the vision  
 of the spectator. The phantoms chant monotonously while the retreat  
 goes on.]  
 CHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music]  
 Day's nether hours advance; storm supervenes  
 In heaviness unparalleled, that screens  
 With water-woven gauzes, vapour-bred,  
 The creeping clumps of half-obliterate red—  
 Severely harassed past each round and ridge  
 By the inimical lance. They gain the bridge

And village of Genappe, in equal fence  
 With weather and the enemy's violence.  
 —Cannon upon the foul and flooded road,  
 Cavalry in the cornfields mire-bestrowed,  
 With frothy horses floundering to their knees,  
 Make wayfaring a moil of miseries!  
 Till Britishry and Bonapartists lose  
 Their clashing colours for the tawny hues  
 That twilight sets on all its stealing tinct imbues.  
 [The rising ground of Mont Saint-Jean, in front of Waterloo,  
 is gained by the English vanguard and main masses of foot, and  
 by degrees they are joined by the cavalry and artillery. The  
 French are but little later in taking up their position amid  
 the cornfields around La Belle Alliance.  
 Fires begin to shine up from the English bivouacs. Camp kettles  
 are slung, and the men pile arms and stand round the blaze to dry  
 themselves. The French opposite lie down like dead men in the  
 dripping green wheat and rye, without supper and without fire.  
 By and by the English army also lies down, the men huddling  
 together on the ploughed mud in their wet blankets, while some  
 sleep sitting round the dying fires.]  
 CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music]  
 The eyelids of eve fall together at last,  
 And the forms so foreign to field and tree  
 Lie down as though native, and slumber fast!  
 CHORUS OF THE PITIES  
 Sore are the thrills of misgiving we see  
 In the artless champaign at this harlequinade,  
 Distracting a vigil where calm should be!  
 The green seems opprest, and the Plain afraid  
 Of a Something to come, whereof these are the proofs,—  
 Neither earthquake, nor storm, nor eclipses's shade!  
 CHORUS OF THE YEARS  
 Yea, the coney's are scared by the thud of hoofs,  
 And their white scuts flash at their vanishing heels,  
 And swallows abandon the hamlet-roofs.  
 The mole's tunnelled chambers are crushed by wheels,  
 The lark's eggs scattered, their owners fled;  
 And the hedgehog's household the sapper unseals.  
 The snail draws in at the terrible tread,  
 But in vain; he is crushed by the felloe-rim  
 The worm asks what can be overhead,

And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,  
And guesses him safe; for he does not know  
What a foul red flood will be soaking him!  
Beaten about by the heel and toe  
Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum,  
To die of a worse than the weather-foe.  
Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb  
Are ears that have greened but will never be gold,  
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom.

#### CHORUS OF THE PITIES

So the season's intent, ere its fruit unfold,  
Is frustrate, and mangled, and made succumb,  
Like a youth of promise struck stark and cold!...  
And what of these who to-night have come?

#### CHORUS OF THE YEARS

The young sleep sound; but the weather awakes  
In the veterans, pains from the past that numb;  
Old stabs of Ind, old Peninsular aches,  
Old Friedland chills, haunt their moist mud bed,  
Cramps from Austerlitz; till their slumber breaks.

#### CHORUS OF SINISTER SPIRITS

And each soul shivers as sinks his head  
On the loam he's to lease with the other dead  
From to-morrow's mist-fall till Time be sped!  
[The fires of the English go out, and silence prevails, save  
for the soft hiss of the rain that falls impartially on both  
the sleeping armies.]  
[image not archived]

## ACT SEVENTH

[image not archived]

## SCENE I

### THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

[An aerial view of the battlefield at the time of sunrise is disclosed.

The sky is still overcast, and rain still falls. A green expanse, almost unbroken, of rye, wheat, and clover, in oblong and irregular patches undivided by fences, covers the undulating ground, which sinks into a shallow valley between the French and

English positions. The road from Brussels to Charleroi runs like a spit through both positions, passing at the back of the English into the leafy forest of Soignes.

The latter are turning out from their bivouacs. They move stiffly from their wet rest, and hurry to and fro like ants in an ant-hill. The tens of thousands of moving specks are largely of a brick-red colour, but the foreign contingent is darker.

Breakfasts are cooked over smoky fires of green wood. Innumerable groups, many in their shirt-sleeves, clean their rusty firelocks, drawing or exploding the charges, scrape the mud from themselves, and pipeclay from their cross-belts the red dye washed off their jackets by the rain.

At six o'clock, they parade, spread out, and take up their positions in the line of battle, the front of which extends in a wavy riband three miles long, with three projecting bunches at Hougomont, La Haye Sainte, and La Haye.

Looking across to the French positions we observe that after advancing in dark streams from where they have passed the night they, too, deploy and wheel into their fighting places—figures with red epaulettes and hairy knapsacks, their arms glittering like a display of cutlery at a hill-side fair.

They assume three concentric lines of crescent shape, that converge on the English midst, with great blocks of the Imperial Guard at the back of them. The rattle of their drums, their fanfarades, and their bands playing "Veillons au salut de l'Empire" contrast with the quiet reigning on the English side.

A knot of figures, comprising WELLINGTON with a suite of general and other staff-officers, ride backwards and forwards in front of the English lines, where each regimental colour floats in the hands of the junior ensign. The DUKE himself, now a man of forty-six, is on his bay charger Copenhagen, in light pantaloons, a small plumeless hat, and a blue cloak, which shows its white lining when blown back.

On the French side, too, a detached group creeps along the front in preliminary survey. BONAPARTE—also forty-six—in a grey overcoat, is mounted on his white arab Marengo, and accompanied by SOULT, NEY, JEROME, DROUOT, and other marshals. The figures of aides move to and fro like shuttle-cocks between the group and distant points in the field. The sun has begun to gleam.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Discriminate these, and what they are,  
Who stand so stalwartly to war.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Report, ye Rumourers of things near and far.

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS [chanting]

Sweep first the Frenchmen's leftward lines along,

And eye the peaceful panes of Hougomont—

That seemed to hold prescriptive right of peace

In fee from Time till Time itself should cease!—

Jarred now by Reille's fierce foot-divisions three,

Flanked on their left by Pire's cavalry.—

The fourfold corps of d'Erlon, spread at length,

Compose the right, east of the famed chaussee—

The shelterless Charleroi-and-Brussels way,—

And Jacquinot's alert light-steeded strength

Still further right, their sharpened swords display.

Thus stands the first line.

SEMICHORUS II

Next behind its back

Comes Count Lobau, left of the Brussels track;

Then Domon's horse, the horse of Subervie;

Kellermann's cuirassed troopers twinkle-tipt,

And, backing d'Erlon, Milhaud's horse, equipt

Likewise in burnished steelwork sunshine-dipt:

So ranks the second line refulgently.

SEMICHORUS I

The third and last embattlement reveals

D'Erlon's, Lobau's, and Reille's foot-cannoniers,

And horse-drawn ordnance too, on massy wheels,

To strike with cavalry where space appears.

SEMICHORUS II

The English front, to left, as flanking force,

Has Vandeleur's hussars, and Vivian's horse;

Next them pace Picton's rows along the crest;

The Hanoverian foot-folk; Wincke; Best;

Bylandt's brigade, set forward fencelessly,

Pack's northern clansmen, Kempt's tough infantry,

With gaiter, epaulet, spat, and {philibeg};

While Halkett, Ompteda, and Kielmansegge

Prolong the musters, near whose forward edge

Baring invests the Farm of Holy Hedge.

SEMICHORUS I

Maitland and Byng in Cooke's division range,

And round dun Hougomont's old lichened sides

A dense array of watching Guardsmen hides  
Amid the peaceful produce of the grange,  
Whose new-kerned apples, hairy gooseberries green,  
And mint, and thyme, the ranks intrude between.—  
Last, westward of the road that finds Nivelles,  
Duplat draws up, and Adam parallel.

#### SEMICHORUS II

The second British line—embattled horse—  
Holds the reverse slopes, screened, in ordered course;  
Dornberg's, and Arentsschildt's, and Colquhoun-Grant's,  
And left of them, behind where Alten plants  
His regiments, come the "Household" Cavalry;  
And nigh, in Picton's rear, the trumpets call  
The "Union" brigade of Ponsonby.

Behind these the reserves. In front of all,  
Or interspaced, with slow-matched gunners manned,  
Upthroated rows of threatful ordnance stand.

[The clock of Nivelles convent church strikes eleven in the distance. Shortly after, coils of starch-blue smoke burst into being along the French lines, and the English batteries respond promptly, in an ominous roar that can be heard at Antwerp. A column from the French left, six thousand strong, advances on the plantation in front of the chateau of Hougomont. They are played upon by the English ordnance; but they enter the wood, and dislodge some battalions there. The French approach the buildings, but are stopped by a loop-holed wall with a mass of English guards behind it. A deadly fire bursts from these through the loops and over the summit.

NAPOLEON orders a battery of howitzers to play upon the building. Flames soon burst from it; but the foot-guards still hold the courtyard.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE II

### THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION

[On a hillock near the farm of Rossomme a small table from the farmhouse has been placed; maps are spread thereon, and a chair is beside it. NAPOLEON, SOULT, and other marshals are standing round, their horses waiting at the base of the slope.

NAPOLEON looks through his glass at Hougomont. His elevated face makes itself distinct in the morning light as a gloomy resentful

countenance, blue-black where shaven, and stained with snuff, with powderings of the same on the breast of his uniform. His stumpy figure, being just now thrown back, accentuates his stoutness.]

NAPOLEON

Let Reille be warned that these his surly sets  
On Hougomont chateau, can scarce defray  
Their mounting bill of blood. They do not touch  
The core of my intent—to pierce and roll  
The centre upon the right of those opposed.  
Thereon will turn the outcome of the day,  
In which our odds are ninety to their ten!

SOULT

Yes—prove there time and promptitude enough  
To call back Grouchy here. Of his approach  
I see no sign.

NAPOLEON [roughly]

Hours past he was bid come.  
—But naught imports it! We are enough without him.  
You have been beaten by this Wellington,  
And so you think him great. But let me teach you  
Wellington is no foe to reckon with.  
His army, too, is poor. This clash to-day  
Is more serious for our seasoned files  
Than breakfasting.

SOULT

Such is my earnest hope.

NAPOLEON

Observe that Wellington still labours on,  
Stoutening his right behind Gomont chateau,  
But leaves his left and centre as before—  
Weaker, if anything. He plays our game!  
[WELLINGTON can, in fact, be seen detaching from his main line  
several companies of Guards to check the aims of the French on  
Hougomont.]

Let me re-word my tactics. Ney leads off  
By seizing Mont Saint-Jean. Then d'Erlon stirs,  
And heaves up his division from the left.  
The second corps will move abreast of him  
The sappers nearing to entrench themselves  
Within the aforesaid farm.

[Enter an aide-de-camp.]

AIDE

From Marshal Ney,  
Sire, I bring hasty word that all is poised  
To strike the vital stroke, and only waits  
Your Majesty's command,

NAPOLEON

Which he shall have

When I have scanned the hills for Grouchy's helms.

[NAPOLEON turns his glass to an upland four or five miles off on the right, known as St. Lambert's Chapel Hill. Gazing more and more intently, he takes rapid pinches of snuff in excitement.

NEY'S columns meanwhile standing for the word to advance, eighty guns being ranged in front of La Belle Alliance in support of them.]

I see a darkly crawling, slug-like shape

Embodying far out there,—troops seemingly—

Grouchy's van-guard. What think you?

SOULT [also examining closely]

Verily troops;

And, maybe, Grouchy's. But the air is hazed.

NAPOLEON

If troops at all, they are Grouchy's. Why misgive,

And force on ills you fear!

ANOTHER MARSHAL

It seems a wood.

Trees don bold outlines in their new-leafed pride.

ANOTHER MARSHAL

It is the creeping shadow from a cloud.

ANOTHER MARSHAL

It is a mass of stationary foot;

I can descry piled arms.

[NAPOLEON sends off the order for NEY'S attack—the grand assault on the English midst, including the farm of La Haye Sainte. It opens with a half-hour's thunderous discharge of artillery, which ceases at length to let d'Erlon's infantry pass.

Four huge columns of these, shouting defiantly, push forwards in face of the reciprocal fire from the cannon of the English. Their effrontery carries them so near the Anglo-Allied lines that the latter waver. But PICTON brings up PACK'S brigade, before which the French in turn recede, though they make an attempt in La Haye Sainte, whence BARING'S Germans pour a resolute fire.

WELLINGTON, who is seen afar as one of a group standing by a great elm, orders OMPTEDA to send assistance to BARING, as may be gathered from the darting of aides to and fro between the



points, like house-flies dancing their quadrilles.  
East of the great highway the right columns of D'ERLON'S corps  
have climbed the slopes. BYLANDT'S sorely exposed Dutch are  
broken, and in their flight disorder the ranks of the English  
Twenty-eighth, the Carabineers of the Ninety-fifth being also  
dislodged from the sand-pit they occupied.]

NAPOLEON

All prospers marvellously! Gomont is hemmed;  
La Haye Sainte too; their centre jeopardized;  
Travers and d'Erlon dominate the crest,  
And further strength of foot is following close.  
Their troops are raw; the flower of England's force  
That fought in Spain, America now holds.—

[SIR TOMAS PICTON, seeing what is happening orders KEMPT'S  
brigade forward. It volleys murderously DONZELOT'S columns  
of D'ERLON'S corps, and repulses them. As they recede PICTON  
is beheld shouting an order to charge.]

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

I catch a voice that cautions Picton now  
Against his rashness. "What the hell care I,—  
Is my curst carcase worth a moment's mind?—  
Come on!" he answers. Onwardly he goes!

[His tall, stern, saturnine figure with its bronzed complexion is  
on nearer approach discerned heading the charge. As he advances  
to the slope between the cross-roads and the sand-pit, riding very  
conspicuously, he falls dead, a bullet in his forehead. His aide,  
assisted by a soldier, drags the body beneath a tree and hastens  
on. KEMPT takes his command.

Next MARCOGNET is repulsed by PACK'S brigade. D'ERLON'S infantry  
and TRAVERS'S cuirassiers are charged by the Union Brigade of  
Scotch Greys, Royal Dragoons, and Inniskillens, and cut down  
everywhere, the brigade following them so furiously the LORD  
UXBRIDGE tries in vain to recall it. On its coming near the  
French it is overwhelmed by MILHAUD'S cuirassiers, scarcely a  
fifth of the brigade returning.

An aide enters to NAPOLEON from GENERAL DOMON.]

AIDE

The General, on a far reconnaissance,  
Says, sire, there is no room for longer doubt  
That those debouching on St. Lambert's Hill  
Are Prussian files.

NAPOLEON

Then where is General Grouchy?

[Enter COLONEL MARBOT with a prisoner.]

Aha—a Prussian, too! How comes he here?

MARBOT

Sire, my hussars have captured him near Lasnes—

A subaltern of the Silesian Horse.

A note from Bulow to Lord Wellington,

Announcing that a Prussian corps is close,

Was found on him. He speaks our language, sire.

NAPOLEON [to prisoner]

What force looms yonder on St. Lambert's Hill?

PRISONER

General Count Bulow's van, your Majesty.

[A thoughtful scowl crosses NAPOLEON'S Sallow face.]

NAPOLEON

Where, then, did your main army lie last night?

PRISONER

At Wavre.

NAPOLEON

But clashed it with no Frenchmen there?

PRISONER

With none. We deemed they had marched on Plancenoit.

NAPOLEON [shortly]

Take him away. [The prisoner is removed.] Has Grouchy's whereabouts

Been sought, to apprise him of this Prussian trend?

SOULT

Certainly, sire. I sent a messenger.

NAPOLEON [bitterly]

A messenger! Had my poor Berthier been here

Six would have sufficed! Now then: seek Ney;

Bid him to sling the valour of his braves

Fiercely on England ere Count Bulow come;

And advertize the succours on the hill

As Grouchy's. [Aside] This is my one battle-chance;

The Allies have many such! [To SOULT] If Bulow nears,

He cannot join in time to share the fight.

And if he could, 'tis but a corps the more...

This morning we had ninety chances ours,

We have threescore still. If Grouchy but retrieve

His fault of absence, conquest comes with eve!

[The scene shifts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE III

### SAINT LAMBERT'S CHAPEL HILL

[A hill half-way between Wavre and the fields of Waterloo, five miles to the north-east of the scene preceding. The hill is wooded, with some open land around. To the left of the scene, towards Waterloo, is a valley.]

### DUMB SHOW

Marching columns in Prussian uniforms, coming from the direction of Wavre, debouch upon the hill from the road through the wood.

They are the advance-guard and two brigades of Bulow's corps, that have been joined there by BUCHER. The latter has just risen from the bed to which he has been confined since the battle of Ligny, two days back. He still looks pale and shaken by the severe fall and trampling he endured near the end of the action.

On the summit the troops halt, and a discussion between BUCHER and his staff ensues.

The cannonade in the direction of Waterloo is growing more and more violent. BUCHER, after looking this way and that, decides to fall upon the French right at Plancenoit as soon as he can get there, which will not be yet.

Between this point and that the ground descends steeply to the valley on the spectator's left, where there is a mud-bottomed stream, the Lasne; the slope ascends no less abruptly on the other side towards Plancenoit. It is across this defile alone that the Prussian army can proceed thither— a route of unusual difficulty for artillery; where, moreover, the enemy is suspected of having placed a strong outpost during the night to intercept such an approach.

A figure goes forward—that of MAJOR FALKENHAUSEN, who is sent to reconnoitre, and they wait a tedious time, the firing at Waterloo growing more tremendous. FALKENHAUSEN comes back with the welcome news that no outpost is there.

There now remains only the difficulty of the defile itself; and the attempt is made. BUCHER is descried riding hither and thither as the guns drag heavily down the slope into the muddy bottom of the valley. Here the wheels get stuck, and the men already tired by marching since five in the morning, seem inclined to leave the guns where they are. But the thunder from Waterloo still goes on, BUCHER exhorts his men by words and eager gestures, and they do at length get the guns across, though with much loss of time.

The advance-guard now reaches some thick trees called the Wood of

Paris. It is followed by the LOSTHIN and HILLER divisions of foot, and in due course by the remainder of the two brigades. Here they halt, and await the arrival of the main body of BULOW'S corps, and the third corps under THIELEMANN.

The scene shifts.

[image not archived]

## SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO. THE ENGLISH POSITION

[WELLINGTON, on Copenhagen, is again under the elm-tree behind La Haye Sainte. Both horse and rider are covered with mud-splashes, but the weather having grown finer the DUKE has taken off his cloak.

UXBRIDGE, FITZROY SOMERSET, CLINTON, ALTEN, COLVILLE, DE LANCEY,

HERVEY, GORDON, and other of his staff officers and aides are near him; there being also present GENERALS MUFFLING, HUGEL, and ALAVA; also TYLER, PICTON'S aide. The roar of battle continues.]

WELLINGTON

I am grieved at losing Picton; more than grieved.

He was as grim a devil as ever lived,

And roughish-mouthed withal. But never a man

More stout in fight, more stoical in blame!

TYLER

Before he left for this campaign he said,

"When you shall hear of MY death, mark my words,

You'll hear of a bloody day! and, on my soul,"

Tis true.

[Enter another aide-de-camp.]

AIDE

Sir William Ponsonby, my lords, has fallen.

His horse got mud-stuck in a new-plowed plot,

Lancers surrounded him and bore him down,

And six then ran him through. The occasion sprung

Mainly from the Brigade's too reckless rush,

Sheer to the French front line.

WELLINGTON [gravely]

Ah—so it comes!

The Greys were bound to pay—'tis always so—

Full dearly for their dash so far afield.

Valour unballasted but lands its freight

On the enemy's shore.—What has become of Hill?

AIDE

We have not seen him latterly, your Grace.

WELLINGTON

By God, I hope I haven't lost him, too?

BRIDGMAN [just come up]

Lord Hill's bay charger, being shot dead, your Grace,

Rolled over him in falling. He is bruised,

But hopes to be in place again betimes.

WELLINGTON

Praise Fate for thinking better of that frown!

[It is now nearing four o'clock. La Haye Sainte is devastated by the second attack of NEY. The farm has been enveloped by DONZELOT'S division, its garrison, the King's German Legion, having fought till all ammunition was exhausted. The gates are forced open, and in the retreat of the late defenders to the main Allied line they are nearly all cut or shot down.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

O Farm of sad vicissitudes and strange!

Farm of the Holy Hedge, yet fool of change!

Whence lit so sanct a name on thy now violate grange?

WELLINGTON [to Muffling, resolutely]

Despite their fierce advantage here, I swear

By every God that war can call upon

To hold our present place at any cost,

Until your force cooperate with our lines!

To that I stand; although 'tis bruited now

That Bulow's corps has only reached Ohain.

I've sent Freemantle hence to seek them there,

And give them inkling we shall need them soon.

MUFFLING [looking at his watch]

I had hoped that Blucher would be here ere this.

[The staff turn their glasses on the French position.]

UXBRIDGE

What movement can it be they contemplate?

WELLINGTON

A shock of cavalry on the hottest scale,

It seems to me... [To aide] Bid him to reinforce

The front line with some second-line brigades;

Some, too, from the reserve.

[The Brunswickers advance to support MAITLAND'S Guards, and the MITCHELL and ADAM Brigades establish themselves above Hougomont, which is still in flames.]

NEY, in continuation of the plan of throwing his whole force on the British centre before the advent of the Prussians, now intensifies his onslaught with the cavalry. Terrific discharges of artillery initiate it to clear the ground. A heavy round-shot dashes through the tree over the heads of WELLINGTON and his generals, and boughs and leaves come flying down on them.]

WELLINGTON

Good practice that! I vow they did not fire  
So dexterously in Spain. [He calls up an aide.] Bid Ompteda  
Direct the infantry to lie tight down  
On the reverse ridge-slope, to screen themselves  
While these close shots and shells are teasing us;  
When the charge comes they'll cease.

[The order is carried out. NEY'S cavalry attack now matures. MILHAUD'S cuirassiers in twenty-four squadrons advance down the opposite decline, followed and supported by seven squadrons of chasseurs under DESNOETTES. They disappear for a minute in the hollow between the armies.]

UXBRIDGE

Ah—now we have got their long-brewed plot explained!

WELLINGTON [nodding]

That this was rigged for some picked time to-day  
I had inferred. But that it would be risked  
Sheer on our lines, while still they stand unswayed,  
In conscious battle-trim, I reckoned not.  
It looks a madman's cruel enterprise!

FITZROY SOMERSET

We have just heard that Ney embarked on it  
Without an order, ere its aptness riped.

WELLINGTON

It may be so: he's rash. And yet I doubt.  
I know Napoleon. If the onset fail  
It will be Ney's; if it succeed he'll claim it!  
[A dull reverberation of the tread of innumerable hoofs comes from behind the hill, and the foremost troops rise into view.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Behold the gorgeous coming of those horse,  
Accoutered in kaleidoscopic hues  
That would persuade us war has beauty in it!—  
Discern the troopers' mien; each with the air  
Of one who is himself a tragedy:  
The cuirassiers, steeled, mirroring the day;

Red lancers, green chasseurs: behind the blue  
The red; the red before the green:  
A lingering-on till late in Christendom,  
Of the barbaric trick to terrorize  
The foe by aspect!

[WELLINGTON directs his glass to an officer in a rich uniform  
with many decorations on his breast, who rides near the front  
of the approaching squadrons. The DUKE'S face expresses  
admiration.]

WELLINGTON

It's Marshal Ney himself who heads the charge.  
The finest cavalry commander, he,  
That wears a foreign plume; ay, probably  
The whole world through!

SPIRIT IRONIC

And when that matchless chief  
Sentenced shall lie to ignominious death  
But technically deserved, no finger he  
Who speaks will lift to save him.!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

To his shame.

We must discount war's generous impulses  
I sadly see.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Be mute, and let spin on  
This whirlwind of the Will!

[As NEY'S cavalry ascends the English position the swish of the  
horses' breasts through the standing corn can be heard, and the  
reverberation of hoofs increases in strength. The English gunners  
stand with their portfires ready, which are seen glowing luridly  
in the daylight. There is comparative silence.]

A VOICE

Now, captains, are you loaded?

CAPTAINS

Yes, my lord.

VOICE

Point carefully, and wait till their whole height  
Shows above the ridge.

[When the squadrons rise in full view, within sixty yards of the  
cannon-mouths, the batteries fire, with a concussion that shakes  
the hill itself. Their shot punch holes through the front ranks  
of the cuirassiers, and horse and riders fall in heaps. But they

are not stopped, hardly checked, galloping up to the mouths of the guns, passing between the pieces, and plunging among the Allied infantry behind the ridge, who, with the advance of the horsemen, have sprung up from their prone position and formed into squares.]

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

Ney guides the fore-front of the carabineers  
Through charge and charge, with rapid recklessness.  
Horses, cuirasses, sabres, helmets, men,  
Impinge confusedly on the pointed prongs  
Of the English kneeling there, whose dim red shapes  
Behind their slanted steel seem trampled flat  
And sworded to the sward. The charge recedes,  
And lo, the tough lines rank there as before,  
Save that they are shrunken.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Hero of heroes, too,  
Ney, [not forgetting those who gird against him].—  
Simple and single-souled lieutenant he;  
Why should men's many-valued motions take  
So barbarous a groove!  
[The cuirassiers and lancers surge round the English and Allied squares like waves, striking furiously on them and well-nigh breaking them. They stand in dogged silence amid the French cheers.]

WELLINGTON [to the nearest square]  
Hard pounding this, my men! I truly trust  
You'll pound the longest!

SQUARE

Hip-hip-hip-hurrah!  
MUFFLING [again referring to his watch]  
However firmly they may stand, in faith,  
Their firmness must have bounds to it, because  
There are bounds to human strength!... Your, Grace,  
To leftward now, to spirit Zieten on.

WELLINGTON

Good. It is time! I think he well be late,  
However, in the field.  
[MUFFLING goes. Enter an aide, breathless.]

AIDE

Your Grace, the Ninety-fifth are patience-spent  
With standing under fire so passing long.  
They writhe to charge—or anything but stand!



## WELLINGTON

Not yet. They shall have at 'em later on.

At present keep them firm.

[Exit aide. The Allied squares stand like little red-brick castles, independent of each other, and motionless except at the dry hurried command "Close up!" repeated every now and then as they are slowly thinned. On the other hand, under their firing and bayonets a disorder becomes apparent among the charging horse, on whose cuirasses the bullets snap like stones on window-panes. At this the Allied cavalry waiting in the rear advance; and by degrees they deliver the squares from their enemies, who are withdrawn to their own position to prepare for a still more strenuous assault. The point of view shifts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE V

### THE SAME. THE WOMEN'S CAMP NEAR MONT SAINT-JEAN

[On the sheltered side of a clump of trees at the back of the English position camp-fires are smouldering. Soldiers' wives, mistresses, and children from a few months to five or six years of age, sit on the ground round the fires or on armfuls of straw from the adjoining farm. Wounded soldiers lie near the women. The wind occasionally brings the smoke and smell of battle into the encampment, the noise being continuous. Two waggons stand near; also a surgeon's horse in charge of a batman, laden with bone-saws, knives, probes, tweezers, and other surgical instruments. Behind lies a woman who has just given birth to a child, which a second woman is holding.

Many of the other women are shredding lint, the elder children assisting. Some are dressing the slighter wounds of the soldiers who have come in here instead of going further. Along the road near is a continual procession of bearers of wounded men to the rear. The occupants of the camp take hardly any notice of the thundering of the cannon. A camp-follower is playing a fiddle near. Another woman enters.]

### WOMAN

There's no sign of my husband any longer. His battalion is half-a-mile from where it was. He looked back as they wheeled off towards the fighting-line, as much as to say, "Nancy, if I don't see 'ee again, this is good-bye, my dear." Yes, poor man!... Not but what 'a had a temper at times!

SECOND WOMAN

I'm out of all that. My husband—as I used to call him for form's sake—is quiet enough. He was wounded at Quarter-Brass the day before yesterday, and died the same night. But I didn't know it till I got here, and then says I, "Widder or no widder, I mean to see this out."

[A sergeant staggers in with blood dropping from his face.]

SERGEANT

Damned if I think you will see it out, mis'ess, for if I don't mistake there'll be a retreat of the whole army on Brussels soon. We can't stand much longer!—For the love of God, have ye got a cup of water, if nothing stronger? [They hand a cup.]

THIRD WOMAN [entering and sinking down]

The Lord send that I may never see again what I've been seeing while looking for my poor galliant Joe! The surgeon asked me to lend a hand; and 'twas worse than opening innerds at a pig-killing! [She faints.]

FOURTH WOMAN [to a little girl]

Never mind her, my dear; come and help me with this one. [She goes with the girl to a soldier in red with buff facings who lies some distance off.] Ah—'tis no good. He's gone.

GIRL

No, mother. His eyes are wide open, a-staring to get a sight of the battle!

FOURTH WOMAN

That's nothing. Lots of dead ones stare in that silly way. It depends upon where they were hit. I was all through the Peninsula; that's how I know. [She covers the horny gaze of the man. Shouts and louder discharges are heard.]—Heaven's high tower, what's that? [Enter an officer's servant.[24]]

SERVANT

Waiting with the major's spare hoss—up to my knees in mud from the rain that had come down like baccy-pipe stems all the night and morning—I have just seen a charge never beheld since the days of the Amalekites! The squares still stand, but Ney's cavalry have made another attack. Their swords are streaming with blood, and their horses' hoofs squash out our poor fellow's bowels as they lie. A ball has sunk in Sir Thomas Picton's forehead and killed him like Goliath the Philistine. I don't see what's to stop the French. Well, it's the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes. Hullo, who's he? [They look towards the road.] A fine hale old gentleman, isn't he? What business has a man of that sort here?

[Enter, on the highway near, the DUKE OF RICHMOND in plain clothes, on horseback, accompanied by two youths, his sons. They draw rein on an eminence, and gaze towards the battlefields.]

RICHMOND [to son]

Everything looks as bad as possible just now. I wonder where your brother is? However, we can't go any nearer... Yes, the bat-horses are already being moved off, and there are more and more fugitives. A ghastly finish to your mother's ball, by Gad if it isn't!

[They turn their horses towards Brussels. Enter, meeting them, MR. LEGH, a Wessex gentleman, also come out to view the battle.]

LEGH

Can you tell me, sir, how the battle is going?

RICHMOND

Badly, badly, I fear, sir. There will be a retreat soon, seemingly.

LEGH

Indeed! Yes, a crowd of fugitives are coming over the hill even now. What will these poor women do?

RICHMOND

God knows! They will be ridden over, I suppose. Though it is extraordinary how they do contrive to escape destruction while hanging so close to the rear of an action! They are moving, however. Well, we will move too.

[Exeunt DUKE OF RICHMOND, sons, and MR. LEGH. The point of view shifts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VI

THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION

[NEY'S charge of cavalry against the opposite upland has been three times renewed without success. He collects the scattered squadrons to renew it a fourth time. The glittering host again ascends the confronting slopes over the bodies of those previously left there, and amid horses wandering about without riders, or crying as they lie with entrails trailing or limbs broken.]

NAPOLEON [starting up]

A horrible dream has gripped me—horrible!

I saw before me Lannes—just as he looked

That day at Aspern: mutilated, bleeding!

What—blood again? he said to me. "Still blood?"

[He further arouses himself, takes snuff vehemently, and looks

through his glass.]  
What time is it?—Ah, these assaults of Ney's!  
They are a blunder; they've been enterprised  
An hour too early!... There Lheritier goes  
Onward with his division next Milhaud;  
Now Kellermann must follow up with his.  
So one mistake makes many. Yes; ay; yes!

SOULT

I fear that Ney has compromised us here  
Just as at Jena; even worse!

NAPOLEON

No less

Must we support him now he is launched on it...  
The miracle is that he is still alive!

[NEY and his mass of cavalry again pass the English batteries  
and disappear amid the squares beyond.]

Their cannon are abandoned; and their squares  
Again environed—see! I would to God  
Murat could be here! Yet I disdained

His proffered service... All my star asks now  
Is to break some half-dozen of those blocks  
Of English yonder. He was the man to do it.

[NEY and D'ERLON'S squadrons are seen emerging from the English  
squares in a disorganized state, the attack having failed like  
the previous ones. An aide-de-camp enters to NAPOLEON.]

AIDE

The Prussians have debouched on our right rear  
From Paris-wood; and Losthin's infantry  
Appear by Plancenot; Hiller's to leftwards.  
Two regiments of their horse protect their front,  
And three light batteries.

[A haggard shade crosses NAPOLEON'S face.]

NAPOLEON

What then! That's not a startling force as yet.  
A counter-stroke by Domon's cavalry  
Must shatter them. Lobau must bring his foot  
Up forward, heading for the Prussian front,  
Unrecking losses by their cannonade.

[Exit aide. The din of battle continues. DOMON'S horse are soon  
seen advancing towards and attacking the Prussian hussars in front  
of the infantry; and he next attempts to silence the Prussian  
batteries playing on him by leading up his troops and cutting

down the gunners. But he has to fall back upon the infantry of LOBAU. Enter another aide-de-camp.]

AIDE

These tidings I report, your Majesty:—  
Von Ryssel's and von Hacke's Prussian foot  
Have lately sallied from the Wood of Paris,  
Bearing on us; no vast array as yet;  
But twenty thousand loom not far behind  
These vanward marchers!

NAPOLEON

Ah! They swarm thus thickly?  
But be they hell's own legions we'll defy them!—  
Lobau's men will stand firm.

[He looks in the direction of the English lines, where NEY'S cavalry-assaults still linger furiously on.]

But who rides hither,  
Spotting the sky with clods in his high haste?

SOULT

It looks like Colonel Heymes—come from Ney.

NAPOLEON [sullenly]

And his face shows what clef his music's in!  
[Enter COLONEL HEYMES, blood-stained, muddy, and breathless.]

HEYMES

The Prince of Moscow, sire, the Marshal Ney,  
Bids me implore that infantry be sent  
Immediately, to further his attack.  
They cannot be dispensed with, save we fail!

NAPOLEON [furiously]

Infantry! Where the sacred God thinks he  
I can find infantry for him! Forsooth,  
Does he expect me to create them—eh?  
Why sends he such a message, seeing well  
How we are straitened here!

HEYMES

Such was the prayer  
Of my commission, sire. And I say  
That I myself have seen his strokes must waste  
Without such backing.

NAPOLEON

Why?

HEYMES

Our cavalry

Lie stretched in swathes, fronting the furnace-throats  
Of the English cannon as a breastwork built  
Of reeking corses. Marshal Ney's third horse  
Is shot. Besides the slain, Donop, Guyot,  
Lheritier, Piquet, Travers, Delort, more,  
Are vilely wounded. On the other hand  
Wellington has sought refuge in a square,  
Few of his generals are not killed or hit,  
And all is tickle with him. But I see,  
Likewise, that I can claim no reinforcement,  
And will return and say so.

[Exit HEYMES]

NAPOLEON [to Soult, sadly]

Ney does win me!

I fain would strengthen him.—Within an ace  
Of breaking down the English as he is,  
Twould write upon the sunset "Victory!"—  
But whom may spare we from the right here now?  
So single man!

[An interval.]

Life's curse begins, I see,  
With helplessness!... All I can compass is  
To send Durutte to fall on Papelotte,  
And yet more strongly occupy La Haye,  
To cut off Bulow's right from bearing up  
And checking Ney's attack. Further than this  
None but the Gods can scheme!

[SOULT hastily begins writing orders to that effect. The point  
of view shifts.]

[image not archived]

## SCENE VII

THE SAME. THE ENGLISH POSITION

[The din of battle continues. WELLINGTON, UXBRIDGE, HILL, DE  
LANCEY, GORDON, and others discovered near the middle of the line.]

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

It is a moment when the steadiest pulse  
Thuds pit-a-pat. The crisis shapes and nears  
For Wellington as for his counter-chief.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

The hour is shaking him, unshakeable

As he may seem!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Know'st not at this stale time

That shaken and unshaken are alike

But demonstrations from the Back of Things?

Must I again reveal It as It hauls

The halyards of the world?

[A transparency as in earlier scenes again pervades the spectacle, and the ubiquitous urging of the Immanent Will becomes visualized.

The web connecting all the apparently separate shapes includes WELLINGTON in its tissue with the rest, and shows him, like them, as acting while discovering his intention to act. By the lurid light the faces of every row, square, group, and column of men, French and English, wear the expression of that of people in a dream.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [tremulously]

Yea, sire; I see.

Disquiet me, pray, no more!

[The strange light passes, and the embattled hosts on the field seem to move independently as usual.]

WELLINGTON [to Uxbridge]

Manoeuvring does not seem to animate

Napoleon's methods now. Forward he comes,

And pounds away on us in the ancient style,

Till he is beaten back in the ancient style;

And so the see-saw sways!

[The din increases. WELLINGTON'S aide-de-camp, Sir A. GORDON, a little in his rear, falls mortally wounded. The DUKE turns quickly.]

But where is Gordon?

Ah—hit is he! That's bad, that's bad, by God.

[GORDON is removed. An aide enters.]

AIDE

Your Grace, the Colonel Ompteda has fallen,

And La Haye Sainte is now a bath of blood.

Nothing more can be done there, save with help.

The Rifles suffer sharply!

[An aide is seen coming from KEMPT.]

WELLINGTON

What says he?

DE LANCEY

He says that Kempt, being riddled through and thinned,

Sends him for reinforcements.

WELLINGTON [with heat]

Reinforcements?

And where am I to get him reinforcements  
In Heaven's name! I've no reinforcements here,  
As he should know.

AIDE [hesitating]

What's to be done, your Grace?

WELLINGTON

Done? Those he has left him, be they many or few,  
Fight till they fall, like others in the field!

[Exit aide. The Quartermaster-General DE LANCEY, riding by  
WELLINGTON, is struck by a lobbing shot that hurls him over  
the head of his horse. WELLINGTON and others go to him.]

DE LANCEY [faintly]

I may as well be left to die in peace!

WELLINGTON

He may recover. Take him to the rear,  
And call the best attention up to him.

[DE LANCEY is carried off. The next moment a shell bursts close  
to WELLINGTON.]

HILL [approaching]

I strongly feel you stand too much exposed!

WELLINGTON

I know, I know. It matters not one damn!

I may as well be shot as not perceive

What ills are raging here.

HILL

Conceding such,  
And as you may be ended momentarily,  
A truth there is no blinking, what commands  
Have you to leave me, should fate shape it so?

WELLINGTON

These simply: to hold out unto the last,  
As long as one man stands on one lame leg  
With one ball in his pouch!—then end as I.

[He rides on slowly with the others. NEY'S charges, though  
fruitless so far, are still fierce. His troops are now reduced  
to one-half. Regiments of the BACHELU division, and the JAMIN  
brigade, are at last moved up to his assistance. They are partly  
swept down by the Allied batteries, and partly notched away by  
the infantry, the smoke being now so thick that the position of



the battalions is revealed only by the flashing of the priming-pans and muzzles, and by the furious oaths heard behind the cloud. WELLINGTON comes back. Enter another aide-de-camp.]

AIDE

We bow to the necessity of saying  
That our brigade is lessened to one-third,  
Your Grace. And those who are left alive of it  
Are so unmuscl'd by fatigue and thirst  
That some relief, however temporary,  
Becomes sore need.

WELLINGTON

Inform your general  
That his proposal asks the impossible!  
That he, I, every Englishman afield,  
Must fall upon the spot we occupy,  
Our wounds in front.

AIDE

It is enough, your Grace.

I answer for't that he, those under him,  
And I withal, will bear us as you say.

[Exit aide. The din of battle goes on. WELLINGTON is grave but calm. Like those around him, he is splashed to the top of his hat with partly dried mire, mingled with red spots; his face is grimed in the same way, little courses showing themselves where the sweat has trickled down from his brow and temples.]

CLINTON [to Hill]

A rest would do our chieftain no less good,  
In faith, than that unfortunate brigade!  
He is tried damnably; and much more strained  
Than I have ever seen him.

HILL

Endless risks  
He's running likewise. What the hell would happen  
If he were shot, is more than I can say!

WELLINGTON [calling to some near]

At Talavera, Salamanca, boys,  
And at Vitoria, we saw smoke together;  
And though the day seems wearing doubtfully,  
Beaten we must not be! What would they say  
Of us at home, if so?

A CRY [from the French]

Their centre breaks!

Vive l'Empereur!

[It comes from the FOY and BACHELU divisions, which are rushing forward. HALKETT'S and DUPLAT'S brigades intercept. DUPLAT falls, shot dead; but the venturesome French regiments, pierced with converging fires, and cleft with shells, have to retreat.]

HILL [joining Wellington]

The French artillery-fire

To the right still renders regiments restive there

That have to stand. The long exposure galls them.

WELLINGTON

They must be stayed as our poor means afford.

I have to bend attention steadfastly

Upon the centre here. The game just now

Goes all against us; and if staunchness fail

But for one moment with these thinning foot,

Defeat succeeds!

[The battle continues to sway hither and thither with concussions, wounds, smoke, the fumes of gunpowder, and the steam from the hot viscera of grape-torn horses and men. One side of a Hanoverian square is blown away; the three remaining sides form themselves into a triangle. So many of his aides are cut down that it is difficult for WELLINGTON to get reports of what is happening afar. It begins to be discovered at the front that a regiment of hussars, and others without ammunition, have deserted, and that some officers in the rear, honestly concluding the battle to be lost, are riding quietly off to Brussels. Those who are left unwounded of WELLINGTON'S staff show gloomy misgivings at such signs, despite their own firmness.]

SPIRIT SINISTER

One needs must be a ghost

To move here in the midst 'twixt host and host!

Their balls scream brisk and breezy tunes through me

As I were an organ-stop. It's merry so;

What damage mortal flesh must undergo!

[A Prussian officer enters to MUFFLING, who has again rejoined the DUKE'S suite. MUFFLING hastens forward to WELLINGTON.]

MUFFLING

Blucher has just begun to operate;

But owing to Gneisenau's stolid stagnancy

The body of our army looms not yet!

As Zieten's corps still plod behind Smohain

Their coming must be late. Blucher's attack

Strikes the remote right rear of the enemy,  
Somewhere by Plancenoit.  
WELLINGTON  
A timely blow;  
But would that Zieten sped! Well, better late  
Than never. We'll still stand.  
[The point of observation shifts.]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE VIII

THE SAME. LATER

[NEY'S long attacks on the centre with cavalry having failed, those left of the squadrons and their infantry-supports fall back pell-mell in broken groups across the depression between the armies.

Meanwhile BULOW, having engaged LOBAU'S Sixth Corps, carries Plancenoit.

The artillery-fire between the French and the English continues. An officer of the Third Foot-guards comes up to WELLINGTON and those of his suite that survive.]

OFFICER

Our Colonel Canning—coming I know not whence—

WELLINGTON

I lately sent him with important words  
To the remoter lines.

OFFICER

As he returned

A grape-shot struck him in the breast; he fell,  
At once a dead man. General Halkett, too,  
Has had his cheek shot through, but still keeps going.

WELLINGTON

And how proceeds De Lancey?

OFFICER

I am told

That he forbids the surgeons waste their time  
On him, who well can wait till worse are eased.

WELLINGTON

A noble fellow.

[NAPOLEON can now be seen, across the valley, pushing forward a new scheme of some sort, urged to it obviously by the visible nearing of further Prussian corps. The EMPEROR is as critically

situated as WELLINGTON, and his army is now formed in a right angle [’en potence’], the main front to the English, the lesser to as many of the Prussians as have yet arrived. His gestures show him to be giving instructions of desperate import to a general whom he has called up.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

He bids La Bedoyere to speed away  
Along the whole sweep of the surging line,  
And there announce to the breath-shotten bands  
Who toil for a chimaera trustfully,  
With seventy pounds of luggage on their loins,  
That the dim Prussian masses seen afar  
Are Grouchy’s three-and-thirty thousand, come  
To clinch a victory.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

But Ney demurs!

SPIRIT IRONIC

Ney holds indignantly that such a feint  
Is not war-worthy. Says Napoleon then,  
Snuffing anew, with sour sardonic scowl,  
That he is choiceless.

SPIRIT SINISTER

Excellent Emperor!

He tops all human greatness; in that he  
To lesser grounds of greatness adds the prime,  
Of being without a conscience.

[LA BEDOYERE and orderlies start on their mission. The false intelligence is seen to spread, by the excited motion of the columns, and the soldiers can be heard shouting as their spirits revive.

WELLINGTON is beginning to discern the features of the coming onset, when COLONEL FRASER rides up.]

FRASER

We have just learnt from a deserting captain,  
One of the carabineers who charged of late,  
That an assault which dwarfs all instances—  
The whole Imperial Guard in welded weight—  
Is shortly to be made.

WELLINGTON

For your smart speed

My thanks. My observation is confirmed.

We’ll hasten now along the battle-line [to Staff],

As swiftest means for giving orders out  
Whereby to combat this.

[The speaker, accompanied by HILL, UXBRIDGE, and others—all now looking as worn and besmirched as the men in the ranks—proceed along the lines, and dispose the brigades to meet the threatened shock. The infantry are brought out of the shelter they have recently sought, the cavalry stationed in the rear, and the batteries of artillery hitherto kept in reserve are moved to the front.

The last Act of the battle begins.

There is a preliminary attack by DONZELOT'S columns, combined with swarms of sharpshooters, to the disadvantage of the English and their Allies. WELLINGTON has scanned it closely. FITZROY SOMERSET, his military secretary, comes up.]

WELLINGTON

What casualty has thrown its shade among  
The regiments of Nassau, to shake them so?

SOMERSET

The Prince of Orange has been badly struck—  
A bullet through his shoulder—so they tell;  
And Kielmansegge has shown some signs of stress.  
Kincaird's tried line wanes leaner and more lean—  
Whittled to a weak skein of skirmishers;  
The Twenty-seventh lie dead.

WELLINGTON

Ah yes—I know!

[While they watch developments a cannon-shot passes and knocks SOMERSET'S right arm to a mash. He is assisted to the rear. NEY and FRIANT now lead forward the last and most desperate assault of the day, in charges of the Old and Middle Guard, the attack by DONZELOT and ALLIX further east still continuing as a support. It is about a quarter-past eight, and the midsummer evening is fine after the wet night and morning, the sun approaching its setting in a sky of gorgeous colours.

The picked and toughened Guard, many of whom stood in the ranks at Austerlitz and Wagram, have been drawn up in three or four echelons, the foremost of which now advances up the slopes to the Allies' position. The others follow at intervals, the drummers beating the "pas de charge."]

CHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music]

Twice thirty throats of couchant cannonry—  
Ranked in a hollow curve, to close their blaze

Upon the advancing files—wait silently  
 Like to black bulls at gaze.  
 The Guard approaches nearer and more near:  
 To touch-hole moves each match of smoky sheen:  
 The ordnance roars: the van-ranks disappear  
 As if wiped off the scene.  
 The aged Friant falls as it resounds;  
 Ney's charger drops—his fifth on this sore day—  
 Its rider from the quivering body bounds  
 And forward foots his way.  
 The cloven columns tread the English height,  
 Seize guns, repulse battalions rank by rank,  
 While horse and foot artillery heavily bite  
 Into their front and flank.  
 It nulls the power of a flesh-built frame  
 To live within that zone of missiles. Back  
 The Old Guard, staggering, climbs to whence it came.  
 The fallen define its track.  
 [The second echelon of the Imperial Guard has come up to the  
 assault. Its columns have borne upon HALKETT'S right. HALKETT,  
 desperate to keep his wavering men firm, himself seizes and  
 waves the flag of the Thirty-third, in which act he falls wounded.  
 But the men rally. Meanwhile the Fifty-second, covered by the  
 Seventy-first, has advanced across the front, and charges the  
 Imperial Guard on the flank.  
 The third echelon next arrives at the English lines and squares;  
 rushes through the very focus of their fire, and seeing nothing  
 more in front, raises a shout.  
 IMPERIAL GUARD  
 The Emperor! It's victory!  
 WELLINGTON  
 Stand up, Guards!  
 Form line upon the front face of the square!  
 [Two thousand of MAITLAND'S Guards, hidden in the hollow roadway,  
 thereupon spring up, form as ordered, and reveal themselves as a  
 fence of leveled firelocks four deep. The flints click in a  
 multitude, the pans flash, and volley after volley is poured into  
 the bear-skinned figures of the massed French, who kill COLONEL  
 D'OYLEY in returning fire.]  
 WELLINGTON  
 Now drive the fellows in! Go on; go on!  
 You'll do it now!

[COLBORNE converges on the French guard with the Fifty-second, and The former splits into two as the climax comes. ADAM, MAITLAND, and COLBORNE pursue their advantage. The Imperial columns are broken, and their confusion is increased by grape-shot from BOLTON'S battery.]

Campbell, this order next:

Vivian's hussars are to support, and bear  
Against the cavalry towards Belle Alliance.  
Go—let him know.

[Sir C. CAMPBELL departs with the order. Soon VIVIAN'S and VANDELEUR'S light horse are seen advancing, and in due time the French cavalry are rolled back.

WELLINGTON goes in the direction of the hussars with UXBRIDGE. A cannon-shot hisses past.]

UXBRIDGE [starting]

I have lost my leg, by God!

WELLINGTON

By God, and have you! Ay—the wind o' the shot  
Blew past the withers of my Copenhagen  
Like the foul sweeping of a witch's broom.—  
Aha—they are giving way!

[While UXBRIDGE is being helped to the rear, WELLINGTON makes a sign to SALTOUN, Colonel of the First Footguards.]

SALTOUN [shouting]

Boys, now's your time;

Forward and win!

FRENCH VOICES

The Guard gives way—we are beaten!

[They recede down the hill, carrying confusion into NAPOLEON'S centre just as the Prussians press forward at a right angle from the other side of the field. NAPOLEON is seen standing in the hollow beyond La Haye Sainte, alone, except for the presence of COUNT FLAHAULT, his aide-de-camp. His lips move with sudden exclamation.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

He says "Now all is lost! The clocks of the world  
Strike my last empery-hour."

[Towards La Haye Sainte the French of DONZELOT and ALLIX, who are fighting KEMPT, PACK, KRUSE, and LAMBERT, seeing what has happened to the Old and Middle Guard, lose heart and recede likewise; so that the whole French line rolls back like a tide. Simultaneously the Prussians are pressing forward at Papelotte

and La Haye. The retreat of the French grows into a panic.]

FRENCH VOICES [despairingly]

We are betrayed!

[WELLINGTON rides at a gallop to the most salient point of the English position, halts, and waves his hat as a signal to all the army. The sign is answered by a cheer along the length of the line.]

WELLINGTON

No cheering yet, my lads; but bear ahead,

Before the inflamed face of the west out there

Dons blackness. So you'll round your victory!

[The few aides that are left unhurt dart hither and thither with this message, and the whole English host and its allies advance in an ordered mass down the hill except some of the artillery, who cannot get their wheels over the bank of corpses in front.

Trumpets, drums, and bugles resound with the advance.

The streams of French fugitives as they run are cut down and shot by their pursuers, whose clothes and contracted features are blackened by smoke and cartridge-biting, and soiled with loam and blood. Some French blow out their own brains as they fly.

The sun drops below the horizon while the slaughter goes on.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Is this the last Esdraelon of a moil

For mortal man's effacement?

SPIRIT IRONIC

Warfare, mere,

Plied by the Managed for the Managers;

To wit: by frenzied folks who profit nought

For those who profit all!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Between the jars

Of these who live, I hear uplift and move

The bones of those who placidly have lain

Within the sacred garths of yon grey fanes—

Nivelles, and Plancenoit, and Braine l'Alleud—

Beneath the unmemoried mounds through deedless years

Their dry jaws quake: "What Sabaoath is this,

That shakes us in our unobtrusive shrouds,

As though our tissues did not yet abhor

The fevered feats of life?"

SPIRIT IRONIC

Mere fancy's feints!



How know the confined what comes after them,  
Even though it whirl them to the Pleiades?—  
Turn to the real.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

That hatless, smoke-smirched shape  
There in the vale, is still the living Ney,  
His sabre broken in his hand, his clothes  
Slitten with ploughing ball and bayonet,  
One epaulette shorn away. He calls out "Follow!"  
And a devoted handful follow him  
Once more into the carnage. Hear his voice.

NEY [calling afar]

My friends, see how a Marshal of France can die!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Alas, not here in battle, something hints,  
But elsewhere!... Who's the sworded brother-chief  
Swept past him in the tumult?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

D'Erlon he.

Ney cries to him:

NEY

Be sure of this, my friend,  
If we don't perish here at English hands,  
Nothing is left us but the halter-noose  
The Bourbons will provide!

SPIRIT IRONIC

A caustic wit,

And apt, to those who deal in adumbrations!

[The brave remnant of the Imperial Guard repulses for a time the English cavalry under Vivian, in which MAJOR HOWARD and LIEUTENANT GUNNING of the Tenth Hussars are shot. But the war-weary French cannot cope with the pursuing infantry, helped by grape-shot from the batteries.

NAPOLEON endeavours to rally them. It is his last effort as a warrior; and the rally ends feebly.]

NAPOLEON

They are crushed! So it has ever been since Crecy!

[He is thrown violently off his horse, and bids his page bring another, which he mounts, and is lost to sight.]

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR

He loses his last chance of dying well!

[The three or four heroic battalions of the Old and Middle Guard

fall back step by step, halting to reform in square when they get badly broken and shrunk. At last they are surrounded by the English Guards and other foot, who keep firing on them and smiting them to smaller and smaller numbers. GENERAL CAMBRONNE is inside the square.]

COLONEL HUGH HALKETT [shouting]

Surrender! And preserve those heroes' lives!

CAMBRONNE [with exasperation]

Mer-r-rde!... You've to deal with desperates, man, today:

Life is a byword here!

[Hollow laughter, as from people in hell, comes approvingly from the remains of the Old Guard. The English proceed with their massacre, the devoted band thins and thins, and a ball strikes CAMBRONNE, who falls, and is trampled over.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Observe that all wide sight and self-command  
Desert these throngs now driven to demonry  
By the Immanent Unrecking. Nought remains  
But vindictiveness here amid the strong,  
And there amid the weak an impotent rage.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Why prompts the Will so senseless-shaped a doing?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

I have told thee that It works unwittingly,  
As one possessed, not judging.

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music]

Of Its doings if It knew,

What It does It would not do!

SEMICHORUS II

Since It knows not, what far sense  
Speeds Its spinnings in the Immense?

SEMICHORUS I

None; a fixed foresightless dream  
Is Its whole philosopheme.

SEMICHORUS II

Just so; an unconscious planning,  
Like a potter raptly panning!

CHORUS

Are then, Love and Light Its aim—  
Good Its glory, Bad Its blame?

Nay; to alter evermore

Things from what they were before.

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Your knowings of the Unknowable declared,  
Let the last pictures of the play be bared.

[Enter, fighting, more English and Prussians against the French.  
NEY is caught by the throng and borne ahead. RULLIERE hides an eagle beneath his coat and follows Ney. NAPOLEON is involved none knows where in the crowd of fugitives.

WELLINGTON and BLUCHER come severally to the view. They meet in the dusk and salute warmly. The Prussian bands strike up "God save the King" as the two shake hands. From his gestures of assent it can be seen that WELLINGTON accepts BLUCHER'S offer to pursue. The reds disappear from the sky, and the dusk grows deeper. The action of the battle degenerates to a hunt, and recedes further and further into the distance southward. When the trappings and shouts of the combatants have dwindled, the lower sounds are noticeable that come from the wounded: hopeless appeals, cries for water, elaborate blasphemies, and impotent execrations of Heaven and hell. In the vast and dusky shambles black slouching shapes begin to move, the plunderers of the dead and dying. The night grows clear and beautiful, and the moon shines musingly down. But instead of the sweet smell of green herbs and dewy rye as at her last beaming upon these fields, there is now the stench of gunpowder and a muddy stew of crushed crops and gore.]

## SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

So hath the Urging Immanence used to-day  
Its inadvertent might to field this fray:  
And Europe's wormy dynasties rerobe  
Themselves in their old gilt, to dazzle anew the globe!  
[The scene us curtained by a night-mist.[25]]  
[image not archived]

## SCENE IX

### THE WOOD OF BOSSU

[It is midnight. NAPOLEON enters a glade of the wood, a solitary figure on a faded horse. The shadows of the boughs travel over his listless form as he moves along. The horse chooses its own path, comes to a standstill, and feeds. The tramp of BERTRAND, SOULT, DROUOT, and LOBAU'S horses, gone forward in hope to find a way of retreat, is heard receding over the hill.]  
NAPOLEON [to himself, languidly]  
Here should have been some troops of Gerard's corps,

Left to protect the passage of the convoys,  
Yet they, too, fail... I have nothing more to lose,  
But life!

[Flocks of fugitive soldiers pass along the adjoining road without seeing him. NAPOLEON'S head droops lower and lower as he sits listless in the saddle, and he falls into a fitful sleep. The moon shines upon his face, which is drawn and waxen.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Sic diis immortalibus placet,—

Thus is it pleasing to the immortal gods,  
As earthlings used to say. Thus, to this last,  
The Will in thee has moved thee, Bonaparte,  
As we say now.

NAPOLEON [starting]

Whose frigid tones are those,  
Breaking upon my lurid loneliness  
So brusquely?... Yet, 'tis true, I have ever known  
That such a Will I passively obeyed!

[He drowns again.]

SPIRIT IRONIC

Nothing care I for these high-doctrined dreams,  
And shape the case in quite a common way,  
So I would ask, Ajaccian Bonaparte,  
Has all this been worth while?

NAPOLEON

O hideous hour,  
Why am I stung by spectral questionings?  
Did not my clouded soul incline to match  
Those of the corpses yonder, thou should'st rue  
Thy saying, Fiend, whoever those may'st be!...  
Why did the death-drops fail to bite me close  
I took at Fontainebleau? Had I then ceased,  
This deep had been unplumbed; had they but worked,  
I had thrown threefold the glow of Hannibal  
Down History's dusky lanes!—Is it too late?...  
Yes. Self-sought death would smoke but damply here!  
If but a Kremlin cannon-shot had met me  
My greatness would have stood: I should have scored  
A vast repute, scarce paralleled in time.  
As it did not, the fates had served me best  
If in the thick and thunder of to-day,  
Like Nelson, Harold, Hector, Cyrus, Saul,

I had been shifted from this jail of flesh,  
To wander as a greatened ghost elsewhere.  
—Yes, a good death, to have died on yonder field;  
But never a ball came padding down my way!  
So, as it is, a miss-mark they will dub me;  
And yet—I found the crown of France in the mire,  
And with the point of my prevailing sword  
I picked it up! But for all this and this  
I shall be nothing...

To shoulder Christ from out the topmost niche  
In human fame, as once I fondly felt,  
Was not for me. I came too late in time  
To assume the prophet or the demi-god,  
A part past playing now. My only course  
To make good showance to posterity  
Was to implant my line upon the throne.  
And how shape that, if now extinction nears?  
Great men are meteors that consume themselves  
To light the earth. This is my burnt-out hour.

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Thou sayest well. Thy full meridian-shine  
Was in the glory of the Dresden days,  
When well-nigh every monarch throned in Europe  
Bent at thy footstool.

#### NAPOLEON

Saving always England's—  
Rightly dost say "well-nigh."—Not England's,—she  
Whose tough, enisled, self-centred, kindless craft  
Has tracked me, springed me, thumbed me by the throat,  
And made herself the means of mangling me!

#### SPIRIT IRONIC

Yea, the dull peoples and the Dynasts both,  
Those counter-castes not oft adjustable,  
Interests antagonistic, proud and poor,  
Have for the nonce been bonded by a wish  
To overthrow thee.

#### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Peace. His loaded heart  
Bears weight enough for one bruised, blistered while!

#### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Worthless these kneadings of thy narrow thought,  
Napoleon; gone thy opportunity!

Such men as thou, who wade across the world  
To make an epoch, bless, confuse, appal,  
Are in the elemental ages' chart  
Like meanest insects on obscurest leaves,  
But incidents and grooves of Earth's unfolding;  
Or as the brazen rod that stirs the fire  
Because it must.  
[The moon sinks, and darkness blots out NAPOLEON and the scene.]

## AFTER SCENE

### THE OVERWORLD

[Enter the Spirit and Chorus of the Years, the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities, the Shade of the Earth, the Spirits Sinister and Ironic with their Choruses, Rumours, Spirit-messengers and Recording Angels.

Europe has now sunk netherward to its far-off position as in the Fore Scene, and it is beheld again as a prone and emaciated figure of which the Alps form the vertebrae, and the branching mountain-chains the ribs, the Spanish Peninsula shaping the head of the ecorche. The lowlands look like a grey-green garment half-thrown off, and the sea around like a disturbed bed on which the figure lies.]

### SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Thus doth the Great Foresightless mechanize  
In blank entrancement now as evermore  
Its ceaseless artistries in Circumstance  
Of curious stuff and braid, as just forthshown.  
Yet but one flimsy riband of Its web  
Have we here watched in weaving—web Enorm,  
Whose furthest hem and selvage may extend  
To where the roars and plashings of the flames  
Of earth-invisible suns swell noisily,  
And onwards into ghastly gulfs of sky,  
Where hideous presences churn through the dark—  
Monsters of magnitude without a shape,  
Hanging amid deep wells of nothingness.  
Yet seems this vast and singular confection  
Wherein our scenery glints of scantest size,  
Inutile all—so far as reasonings tell.

### SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

Thou arguest still the Inadvertent Mind.—

But, even so, shall blankness be for aye?  
Men gained cognition with the flux of time,  
And wherefore not the Force informing them,  
When far-ranged aions past all fathoming  
Shall have swung by, and stand as backward years?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

What wouldst have hoped and had the Will to be?—  
How wouldst have paeaned It, if what hadst dreamed  
Thereof were truth, and all my showings dream?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

The Will that fed my hope was far from thine,  
One I would thus have hymned eternally:—  
SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music]

To Thee whose eye all Nature owns,  
Who hurlest Dynasts from their thrones,  
And liftest those of low estate  
We sing, with Her men consecrate!

SEMICHORUS II

Yea, Great and Good, Thee, Thee we hail,  
Who shak'st the strong, Who shield'st the frail,  
Who hadst not shaped such souls as we  
If tendermercy lacked in Thee!

SEMICHORUS I

Though times be when the mortal moan  
Seems unascending to Thy throne,  
Though seers do not as yet explain  
Why Suffering sobs to Thee in vain;

SEMICHORUS II

We hold that Thy unscanted scope  
Affords a food for final Hope,  
That mild-eyed Prescience ponders nigh  
Life's loom, to lull it by-and-by.

SEMICHORUS I

Therefore we quire to highest height  
The Wellwiller, the kindly Might  
That balances the Vast for weal,  
That purges as by wounds to heal.

SEMICHORUS II

The systemed suns the skies enscroll  
Obey Thee in their rhythmic roll,  
Ride radiantly at Thy command,  
Are darkened by Thy Masterhand!

SEMICHORUS I

And these pale panting multitudes  
Seen surging here, their moils, their moods,  
All shall "fulfil their joy" in Thee  
In Thee abide eternally!

SEMICHORUS II

Exultant adoration give  
The Alone, through Whom all living live,  
The Alone, in Whom all dying die,  
Whose means the End shall justify! Amen.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES

So did we evermore, sublimely sing;  
So would we now, despise thy forthshowing!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS

Something of difference animates your quiring,  
O half-convinced Compassionates and fond,  
From chords consistent with our spectacle!  
You almost charm my long philosophy  
Out of my strong-built thought, and bear me back  
To when I thanksgave thus... Ay, start not, Shades;  
In the Foregone I knew what dreaming was,  
And could let raptures rule! But not so now.  
Yea, I psalmed thus and thus... But not so now.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music]

O Immanence, That reasonest not  
In putting forth all things begot,  
Thou build'st Thy house in space—for what?

SEMICHORUS II

O loveless, Hateless!—past the sense  
Of kindly eyed benevolence,  
To what tune danceth this Immense?

SPIRIT IRONIC

For one I cannot answer. But I know  
Tis handsome of our Pities so to sing  
The praises of the dreaming, dark, dumb Thing  
That turns the handle of this idle show!  
As once a Greek asked I would fain ask too,  
Who knows if all the Spectacle be true,  
Or an illusion of the gods [the Will,  
To wit] some hocus-pocus to fulfil?

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music]

Last as first the question rings



Of the Will's long travailings;  
Why the All-mover,  
Why the All-prover  
Ever urges on and measure out the chordless chime of Things.

SEMICHORUS II

Heaving dumbly  
As we deem,  
Moulding numbly  
As in dream  
Apprehending not how fare the sentient subjects of Its scheme.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES

Nay;—shall not Its blindness break?  
Yea, must not Its heart awake,  
Promptly tending  
To Its mending  
In a genial germinating purpose, and for loving-kindness sake?

SEMICHORUS II

Should it never  
Curb or care  
Aught whatever  
Those endure  
Whom It quickens, let them darkle to extinction swift and sure.

CHORUS

But—a stirring thrills the air  
Like to sounds of joyance there  
That the rages  
Of the ages  
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from the darts that were,  
Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all things fair!

September 25, 1907

THE DYNASTS

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# TRAGEDY OF THE QUEEN OF CORNWALL

This one-act play was published in 1923 and first performed by the Hardy Players, a local, talented amateur group in Dorchester, for whom Hardy had written the drama. The entire play is set in Tintagel during a single day, with a true time frame.

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## **CHARACTERS**

MARK, KING OF CORNWALL.

SIR TRISTRAM.

SIR ANDRET.

OTHER KNIGHTS.

SQUIRES.

MESSENGER.

HERALD.

WATCHMAN.

RETAINERS, MUSICIANS, ETC.

ISEULT THE FAIR, QUEEN OF CORNWALL.

ISEULT THE WHITEHANDED.

DAME BRANGWAIN.

DAMSEL.

THE QUEEN'S ATTENDANTS, BOWERWOMEN, ETC.

SHADES OF DEAD OLD CORNISH MEN

SHADES OF DEAD CORNISH WOMEN

MERLIN.

The Time covered by the events is about the Time of representation.

## **THE TRAGEDY OF THE QUEEN OF CORNWALL**

The Stage can be any large room; round or at the end of which the audience sits. It is portrayed as the interior of the Great Hall of Tintagel Castle. The floor is strewn with rushes : that there is an arch in the back-centre (a doorway or other opening may counterfeit this) through which the Atlantic is visible across an outer ward and over the ramparts of the stronghold : that a door is on the left, and one on the right (curtains, screens or chairs may denote these) : that a settle spread with skins is among the moveables : that above at the back is a gallery {which may be represented by any elevated piece of furniture on which two actors can stand, in a corner of the room screened off). The costumes of the cast are the conventional ones of linen fabrics, made gay with knots and rosettes of ribbon, as in the old mumming shows ; though on an actual stage they may be more realistic.

## **PROLOGUE**

Enter Merlin, a -phantasmal figure with a white wand. The room is darkened: a blue light may be thrown on Merlin.

Merlin

I come, at your persuasive call, To raise up in this modern hall A tragedy of dire  
duresse That vexed the Land of Lyonesse: — Scenes, with their passions, hopes, and  
fears Sunk into shade these thousand years; To set, in ghostly grave array,

Their blitheness, blood, and tears, Feats, ardours, as if rife to-day Before men's eyes  
and ears.

The tale has travelled far and wide: — Yea, that King Mark, to fetch his bride,  
Sent Tristram; then that he and she Quaffed a love-potion witlessly While homeward  
bound. Hence that the King

Wedded one heart-aflame For Tristram! He, in dark despair, Roved recklessly, and  
wived elsewhere One of his mistress' name.

I saw these times I represent, Watched, gauged them as they came and went,  
Being ageless, deathless! And those two Fair women — namesakes — well I knew!  
Judge them not harshly in a love

Whose hold on them was strong; Sorrow therein they tasted of, And deeply, and  
too long!

Exit.

## SCENE I

ENTER Shades of Dead Old Cornish Men AND Shades OF Cornish Women FROM  
LEFT AND RIGHT

Chanters: Men (in recitative)

Tristram a captive of King Mark, Racked was the Queen with qualm and cark, Till  
reached her hand a written line, That quickened her to deft design.

Chanters: Women

Then, Tristram out, and Mark shut in, The Queen and Tristram winged to win  
Card Castle, where, without annoy, Monthswile they lodged in matchless joy!

Chanters: Men

Anon, when Queen Iseult had homed, Brittany-wards Sir Tristram roamed To greet  
his waiting wife,

White-handed Iseult, whom the Queen Had recked not of. But soon, in teen

And troublous inner strife, She Tristram of her soul besought By wringing letters  
rapid-wrought (The King gone hunting, knowing nought)

To come again to her Even at the cost — such was her whim — Of bringing  
Whitehands back with him In wifely character.

Chanters: Women

There was no answer. Rest she could not; Then we missed her, days. We would not  
Think where she might have been. And, having sailed, maybe, twice ten Long  
leagues, here came she back again, And sad and listless — -just as when She went  
— abides her mien!

Chanters: M. and W.



Hist! . . . Lo; there by the nether gate New comers hail! O who should wait The postern door to enter by,

The bridge being clearly seen? The King returned? — But that way; why? Would he try trap his Queen?

Watchman (crossing without the archway) The King's arriving! Ho!

Enter Herald. Sounds a trumpet. Enter Brangwain.

## SCENE II

ENTER Herald, Brangwain, and Chanters.

Herald

The King's at hand!

Brangwain

God's grace, she's home, either from far or near!

Herald

Whither plied she? Many would like to hear!

Chanters: M. and W.

We do not know. We will not know.

She took a ship from the shore below, And was gone many days.

By friending winds she's back before him:

Extol God should she and adore Him For covering up her ways!

Enter King Mark with Sir Andret and other Knights, retinue, and rude music of ram's - horns, crouds, and humstrums, Brangwain standing aside.

## SCENE III

King Mark, Knights, Retinue, etc., Brangwain, and Chanters.

K. Mark Where is the Queen?

Drinks from silver flagon which has been standing on the hearth on a brandise. Retinue drink after him from the same.

Brangwain (advancing)

Sir King, the Queen attires To meet your Majesty, and now comes down. {Aside.) Haply he will not know!

Enter Queen Iseult the Fair attended, and followed by the hound Houdain.

## SCENE IV

Queen Iseult, King Mark, Knights, Brangwain, etc., and Chanters.

(Q. Iseult has dark hair, and wears a crimson robe, and tiara or circlet.)

Mark smacks the Queen on her shoulders in rough greeting.

K. Mark Why is this brachet in the hall again?

Q. Iseult I know not how she came here.

K. Mark  
Nay, my wife,  
Thou dost know well — as I know women well! —  
And know her owner more than well, I reckon, And that he left the beast to your regard.

He kicks the dog away.

Sir Andret [aside to K. Mark)

Aye, aye, great King, thou speakest wisely on't  
This time as ever. Wives dost thrid all through!

Exeunt severally Knights, Retinue, etc., and Brangwain.

## SCENE V

King Mark, Queen Iseult, and Chanters.

Q. Iseult

I've not beheld of late the man you mean; Maybe, my lord, you have shut him in the

dungeon, As you did formerly!

K. Mark

You spell me better! And know he has felt full liberty for long, And that you would have seen him, and much more,

Had not debarred you one o' those crosses which,

Happily, scotch unlawful lovers' schemes No less than sanct intents. If that good knight

Dallies in Brittany with his good wife — So finger-white — to cheer her as he ought,  
'Tis clear he can't be here.

Q. Iseult (with slight sarcasm)

'Tis clear. You plead

Somewhat in waste to prove as much. But, faith, (-petulantly)

'Twas she, times tiresome, quirked and called to him

Or he would not have gone!

K. Mark

Ah, know'st thou that!

Leave her alone, a woman let's all out!

Well, I may know things too. I slipped in sly

When I came home by now, and lit on this:

That while I've sued the chase you followed him,

Vanishing on a voyage of some days,

Which you'd fain cloak from me, and have confessed

To no one, either, of my people here.

Q. Iseult (evasively)

I went to take the air, being qualmed to death.

Surely a queen is dowered with such degree  
Of queenship, or what is't to be a queen?  
No foot, I swear, set I in Brittany, Or upon soil of any neighbour shore, 'Twixt  
putting from the cove below these walls  
And my return hereto.  
K. Mark  
Protests — no more!  
You sailed off somewhere, — (so a sea-nath \* hints me  
That heeds the tidings every troubled billow  
Wails to the Beeny-Sisters from Pen-Tyre) —  
At risk, too, of your life, the ship being small,  
And trickful tempests lurking in the skies.  
A woman does not raise a mast for nought  
On a cockle-shell, even be the sea-signs fair.  
But I have scorned to ask the mariners  
The course you bore — or north, or south, or what —  
It might have been to Brittany, it might not!  
Q. Iseult I have not seen him.

**nath, a puffin (Cornish).**

K. Mark

Well, you might have done't  
Each sunrise, noon, or eve, for all the joy  
You show in my return, or gladness wont  
To a queen shore-reached in safety — so they tell me —  
Since you crept cat-like home.

Q. Iseult (indignantly)

I saw him not!  
You stifle speech in me, or I'd have launched,  
Ere this, the tidings rife. See him no more  
Shall I, or you. He's gone. Death darkens him!

K. Mark (starting)

So much the better, if true — for us and him!

{She weeps.}

But no. He has died too many many times  
For that report to hold! In tilts, in frays,  
Through slits and loops, louvres and battlements,  
Has he been pierced and arrowed to the heart,  
Then risen up again to trouble me!

Sir Andret told, ere Tristram shunned Tintagel,  
How he espied you dallying — you and he —  
Near the shot-window southward. And I went  
With glaive in hand to smite him. Would I had!

Yea, and I should have, had I been sustained.

But not one knight was nigh. — Where are they now?

Whence comes this quietude? — I'll call a council:

What's best to do with him I'll learn thereat,

And then we'll keep a feast. A council! Ho!

Exit King Mark.

## SCENE VI

Queen Iseult and Chanters. The Queen sits in dejection.

Chanters: Men

Why did Heaven warrant, in its whim, A twain mismated should bedim  
The courts of their encompassment With bleeding loves and discontent!  
Who would not feel God favoured them, Past wish, in throne and diadem?  
And that for all His plaisance they would praise

Him upon earth throughout their deeds and days!

Chanters: Women

Instead, see King and Queen more curst Than beggars upon hoit or hurst: — A queen! One who each night and morn Sighs for Sir Tristram; him, gloom-born In his mother's death, and reared mid vows Of poison by a later spouse:

In love Fate-haunted, doomed to drink Charmed philtres, melting every link Of purposed faith! Why wedded he King Howel's lass of Brittany? Why should the wave have washed him to

her shore — Him, prone to love our Queen here more and more ?

Chanters: M. and W.

In last misfortune did he well-nigh slay Unknowingly in battle Arthur! Ay, Our stainless Over-king of Counties — he Made Dux Bellorum for his valiancy! — If now, indeed, Tristram be chilled in death, Will she, the Queen, care aught for further breath?

Q. Iseult (musing)

How little he knows, does Mark! And yet, how much? Can there be any groundage for his thought That Tristram's not a ghost? O, no such hope!

My Tristram, yet not mine! Could it be deemed Thou shouldst have loved me less in many years Hadst thou enjoyed them? If in Christland now Do you look down on her most, or on me? Why should the King have grudged so fleet a life Its pleasure, grinned with gall at its renown, Yapped you away for too great love of me, Spied on thee through his myrmidons — aye, encloaked And peeped to frustrate thee, and sent the word To kill thee who should meet thee? O sweet Lord, Thou hast made him hated; yet he still has life; While Tristram. . . . Why said Mark he doubtless lived? — But he was ever a mocker, was King Mark, And not far from a coward.

Enter Brangwain.

## SCENE VII

Queen Iseult, Brangwain, and Chanters.

Q. Iseult (distractedly)

Brangwain, he hard denies I did not see him!  
But he is dead! . . . Perhaps not. . . . Can it be?

Brangwain

Who doth deny, my Queen? Who is not dead?  
Your words are blank to me; your manner strange.

Q. Iseult

One bleeds no more on earth for a full- fledged sin

Than for a callow! The King has found out now  
My sailing the south water in his absence,  
And weens the worst. Forsooth, it's always so!  
He will not credit I'd no cause to land For the black reason — it is no excuse —  
That Tristram, knight, had died! — Landed had I,  
Aye, fifty times, could he have still been there, Even there with her. — My Love,  
my own lost Love! {She bends down.}

Brangwain You did not land in Brittany, O Queen?

Q. Iseult

I did not land, Brangwain, although so near.

{She pauses.}

— He had been long with his White-handed one,

And had fallen sick of fever nigh to death; Till she grew fearful for him; sent for me,  
Yea, choicelessly, at his light-headed calls And midnight repetitions of my name. Yes,  
sent for me in a despairing hope To save him at all cost.

Brangwain

She must, methinks,

Have loved him much!

Q. Iseult [impatiently]

Don't speak, Brangwain, but hear me.

Yes: women are so. . . . For me, I could not bear

To lose him thus. Love, others' somehow dainty,

Is my starved, all-day meal! And favouring chance,

That of the King's apt absence, tempted me;

And hence I sailed, despite the storm-strid air.

What did I care about myself, or aught?

— She'd told the mariner her messenger

To hoist his canvas white if he bore me

On the backward journey, black if he did not,

That, so, heart-ease should reach the knight full quick —

Even ere I landed — quick as I hove in sight.

Yes, in his peril so profound, she sent

The message, though against her. Women are so!

Brangwain

Some are, my lady Queen: some may not be.

Q. Iseult

While we were yet a two-hours' toss from port

I bade them show the sheet, as had been asked,

The which they did. But when we touched the quay

She ran down thither, beating both her hands,

And saying Tristram died an hour before.

Brangwain

But O, dear Queen, didst fully credit her?

Q. Iseult

Aye! Sudden - shaken souls guess not at guile. —

I fell into a faint at the very words. —

Thereon they lifted me into the cabin,

Saying: “ She shall not foot this deadly land! “

When I again knew life I was distraught,

And sick with the rough writhing of the bark. —

They had determined they would steer me home,

Had turned the prow, and toiled a long league back;

Strange that, no sooner had they put about,

The weather worsed, as if they'd angered God

By doing what they had done to sever me

Even from my Love's dead limbs! No gleam glowed more,

And the seas sloped like houseroofs all the way.

We were blown north along the shore to Wales,

Where they made port and nursed me, till, next day,

The blinding gale abated: we returned,

And reached by shifts at last the cove below.

The King, whose queries I had feared so much,

Had not come back; came only at my heels;

Yet he has learnt, somewise, that I've been missed,

And doubtless I shall suffer — he's begun it!

Much I lament I put about so soon.

I should have landed, and have gained his corpse.

Brangwain

She is his wife, and you could not have claimed it.

Q. Iseult

But could I not have seen him? How know you?

Brangwain

Nay: she might not have let you even see him:

He is her own, dear Queen, and in her land You had no sway to make her cede him up. I doubt his death. You took her word for it, And she was desperate at the sight of you. Sick unto death he may have been. But — dead? (Shakes her head.)

Corpses are many: man lives half-amort; But rumour makes them more when they run short!

Q. Iseult

If he be not! O I would even condone His bringing her, would he not come without; I've said it ever since I've known of her. Could he but live: yes, could he live for me!

Q. Iseult sings sadly to herself, Brangwain having gone to the back of the hall'.  
Could he but live for me A day, yea, even an hour, Its petty span would be Steeped in felicity Passing the price of Heaven's held-dearest dower:



Could he but live, could he But live for me!

Exit Q. Iseult, followed by Brangwain.

Chanters: Women

Maybe, indeed, he did not die! Our sex, shame on't, is over prone To ill conceits that amplify. Maybe he did not die — that one, The Whitepalmed, may in strategy Have but avowed it! Weak are we, And foil and fence have oft to seek, Aye, even by guile, if fear so speak!

Chanters: Men

Wounded in Ireland, life he fetched, In charge of the King's daughter there, Who healed him, loved him, primed him fair For the great tournament, when he stretched Sir Palomides low.

Chanters: Women Yet slight

Was King Mark's love for him, despite! Mark sent him thither as to gain Iseult, but, truly, to be slain!

Chanters: Men

Quite else her father, who on sight Was fain for Tristram as his son,  
Not Mark. But woe, his word was won!

Alas, should wrong vow stand as right?

Chanters: Women

And what Dame Brangwain did to mend,  
Enlarged the mischief! Best have penned  
That love-drink close, since 'twas to be  
Iseult should wed where promised: wretched she!

Chanters: M. and W.

Yet, haply, Tristram lives. Quick heals are his!

He rose revived from that: why not from this?

Watchman (without)

One comes with tidings! — (to the comer) Bear them to the hall.

Enter a Messenger (at back), -pausing and looking round. Queen Iseult, attended, re-enters (at front) and seats herself.

## SCENE VIII

Queen Iseult, Attendant-Ladies, Messenger, and Chanters.

Messenger (coming forward) Where is Iseult the Queen?

Q. Iseult

Here, churl. I'm she.

Messenger

I'm sent here to deliver tidings, Queen, To your high ear alone.

Exeunt Attendants.

Q. Iseult (in strung-up tones)

Then voice them forth. A halter for thee if I find them false!

Messenger

Knight Tristram of the sorry birth is yet  
Enrolled among the living, having crept  
Out of the very vaults of death and doom!

— His heavy ails bedimmed him numb as night,  
And men conceived him wrapt in wakeless rest;  
But he strove back. Hither, on swifter keel  
Lie has followed you; and even now is nigh.  
(Queen Iseult leans back and covers her eyes.)

Iseult the Pale-palmed, in her jealousy,  
With false deliverance feigned your sail was black,  
And made him pray for death in his extreme,  
Till sank he to a drowse: grey death they thought it,  
And bells were bidden toll the churches through,  
And thereupon you came. Scared at her crime  
She deemed that it had dealt him death indeed,  
And knew her not at fault till you had gone.

— When he aroused, and learnt she had sent you back,  
It angered him to hot extremity, And brings him here upon my very stern, If he,  
forsooth, have haleness for the adventure.

Exit Messenger.

Q. Iseult

O it o'erturns! . . . "Black" told she! Cheat unmatchable!

Enter Brangwain.

## SCENE IX

Queen Iseult, Brangwain, and Chanters. Then King Mark and Sir Andret.  
Brangwain

There stands a strange old harper down below,  
Who does not look Sir Tristram, yet recalls him.

King Mark crosses the ward outside the arch.

King Mark (speaking off, and shading his eyes)

What traveller's that, slow mounting to the wall,  
Scanning its strength, with curious halting crawl,  
As knowing not Tintagel's Towers at all?

Watchman (crossing without)

'Tis but a minstrel from afar, Sir King, Harping around for alms, or anything.

Q. Iseult (starting up)

It must be he!

Sir Tristram's steps heard approaching. He enters, disguised as a harper.

King Mark (glancing back casually at Sir Tristram in going off)

Dole him his alms in Christ's name, if ye must,  
And irk me not while setting to bowse with these.

Exit King Mark from the outside to the banqueting-hall, followed across the back  
of the arch by Knights, etc., including Sir Andret.

Sir Andret (to himself as he goes)

That harper struck me oddly! . . . In his gait-  
Well: till the beakers have gone round I'll wait.  
Exit behind the others.

## SCENE X

Queen Iseult, Tristram, Brangwain, and Chanters.

Tristram

My Queen and best belov'd! At last again!

(He throws off the cloak that disguises him.)

— Know I was duped by her who dons your name;

She swore the bellied sheeting of your ship

Blotted the wind-wafts like a sable swan;

And being so weak from my long lying there

I sank to senselessness at the wisht words —

So contrary to hope! Whilst I was thus

She sallied out, and sent you home forthwith!

Anon I poured my anger on her head,

Till, in high fear of me, she quivered white.

— I mended swiftly, stung by circumstance,

And rose and left her there, and followed you.

Sir Kay lent aidance, and has come with me.

Brangwain

I'll out and watch the while Sir Tristram's here.

Exit Brangwain.

## SCENE XI

Queen Iseult, Tristram, and Chanters.

Q. Iseult

You've come again, you've come again, dear Love!

Tristram

To be once more with my Iseult the Fair,

(He embraces the Queen) Though not yet what I was in strength and stay.

Yet told have I been by Sir Launcelot To ware me of King Mark! King Fox he  
calls him — Whom I'd have pitied, though he would not yield thee,

Nor let you loose on learning our dire need Of freedom for our bliss, which came to us  
Not of fore-aim or falseness, but by spell Of love-drink, ministered by hand unseen!

Q. Iseult

Knowing as much, he swore he would not slay thee,  
But Launcelot told him no man could believe him,  
Whereat he answered: "Anyhow she's mine! "

Tristram

It's true, I fear. He cannot be believed.

Q. Iseult

Yet, Tristram, would my husband were but all!  
Had you not wedded her my namesake, Oh,  
We could have steered around this other rock —  
Trust me we could! Why did you do it, why!  
Triumph did he when first I learnt of that,  
And lewdly laughed to see me shaken so.

Tristram

You have heard the tale of my so mating her  
Twice told, and yet anew! Must I again?  
It was her sire King Howel brought it round  
In brunt of battle, when I saved his lands.  
He said to me: "Thou hast done generously:  
I crave to make thee recompense! My daughter.  
The last best bloom of Western Monarchy —  
Iseult of the White Hand the people call her —  
Is thine. I give thee her. O take her then,  
The chief of all things priceless unto me!"  
Overcome was I by the fiery fray,  
Arrested by her name — so kin to yours —  
His ardour, zeal. I thought: "Maybe her spouse,  
By now, has haled my Iseult's heart from me,"  
And took the other blindly. That is all.

Q. Iseult

A woman's heart has room for one alone;  
A man's for two or three!

Tristram Sweet; 'twas but chance!

Q. Iseult (more softly)

Yet there may lie our doom! ... I had nerved myself  
To bid you come, and bring your wife with you.  
But that I did not mean. It was too  
much; And yet I said it! . . .

Tristram

Lean ye down, my Love: I'll touch to thee my very own old tune. I came in harper-guise, unweeting what The hazardry of our divided days Might have brought forth for us!

He takes the harp. Queen Iseult reclines.

Tristram (singing)

Let's meet again to-night, my Fair, Let's meet unseen of all;

The day-god labours to his lair, And then the evenfall!

O living lute, O lily-rose, O form of fantasie,

When torches waste and warders doze Steal to the stars will we!

While nodding knights carouse at meat And shepherds shamble home,

We'll cleave in close embracements — sweet As honey in the comb!

Till crawls the dawn from Condol's crown,

And over Neitan's Kieve, As grimly ghosts we conjure down And hopes still weave and weave!

Watchman (crossing without)

A ship sheers round, and brings up in the bay!

Re-enter Brangwain.

## SCENE XII

Queen Iseult, Tristram, Brangwain, and Chanters.

Brangwain

My Queen, the shingle shaves another keel, And who the comer is we fail to guess. Its build bespeaks it from the Breton coasts, And those upon it shape of the Breton sort,

And the figure near the prow is white-attired. Q. Iseult

What manner of farer does the figure show?

Brangwain

My Lady, when I cast eye waterwards From the arrow-loop, just as the keel ground in

Against the popplestones, it seemed a woman's;

But she was wimpled close.

Q. Iseult

I'll out and see.

Queen Iseult opens the door to the banqueting-hall, and stands in the doorway still visible to the audience. Through the door comes the noise of trenchers, platters, cups, drunken voices, songs, etc., from the adjoining apartment, where King Mark is dining with Knights and retainers.

Voice of K. Mark (in liquor)

Queen, whither goest thou? Pray plague me not

While keeping table. Hath the old knave left,

He with his balladry we heard by now Strum up to thee?

Q. Iseult

I go to the pleasance only, Across your feasting-hall for shortness' sake, Returning hither swift.

Voice of K. Mark

Yea, have thy way,  
As women will!

Voice of Sir Andret

Aye, hence the need to spy them!

Exeunt Queen Iseult and Brangwain through banqueting-hall to the outside of the Castle. Noise of cups, trenchers, drunken voices, songs, etc., resumed, till the door shuts, when it is heard in subdued tones.

### SCENE XIII

Tristram and Chanters. Then Iseult  
the whitehanded.

Tristram (going and looking seaward through arch)

A woman's shape in white. . . . Can it be she?

Would she in sooth, then, risk to follow me?

Chanters: Men

O Tristram, thou art not to find Such solace for a shaken mind As seemed to wait thee here!

Chanters: Women

One seised of right to trace thy track Hath crossed the sea to win thee back In love and faith and fear!

Chanters: M. and W.

From this newcomer wis we pain Ere thou canst know sweet spells again, O knight of little cheer!

Enter Iseult the Whitehanded. She has corn-brown hair, and wears a white robe.

Iseult the White H.

I could not help it, O my husband! Yea I have dogged you close; I could not bear your rage;

And Heaven has favoured me! The sea

smiled smooth The whole way over, and the sun shone kind. Your sail was eyesome fair in front of me, And I steered just behind, all stealthfully! — Forgive me that I spoke untruly to you, And then to her, in my bruised brain's turmoil.

But, in a way of saying, you were dead; You seemed so — in a dead drowse when she came.

And I did send for her at your entreaty; But flesh is frail. Centred is woman's love, And knows no breadth. I could not let her land,

I could not let her come!

Tristram

Your speech is nought,  
evil woman, who didst nearly witch  
The death of this Queen, saying such of me!  
Iseult the White H.  
Forgive me, do forgive, my lord, my husband!  
O love, have loved you so imperishably; Not with fleet flame at times, as some do  
use! Had I once been unfaithful, even perverse,  
I would have held some coldness fitly won; But I have ever met your wryest whim  
With ready-wrought acceptance, matched  
your moods, Clasped hands, touched lips, and smiled devotedly;  
So how should this have grown up unaware?  
Enter Queen Iseult and Brangwain in the Gallery above, unperceived.

## SCENE XIV

Queen Iseult, Brangwain, Iseult the Whitehanded, Tristram, and Chanters.

Q. Iseult

What do they say? And who is she,  
Brangwain? Not my suspicion hardened into mould Of flesh and blood indeed?  
Brangwain

I cannot hear.

Tristram

I have no more to say or do with thee; I'd fade your face to strangeness in my eyes!  
Your father dealt me llest turn in this; Your name, too, being the match of hers!

Yea, thus I was coerced. I never more can be Your bed-mate — never again.

Iseult the White H.

How, Tristram mine? What meaning mete you out by that to me?

You only say it, do you? You are not, Cannot be, in true earnest — that I know! I  
hope you are not in earnest? — Surely I This time as always, do belong to you, And  
you are going to keep me always yours?

I thought you loved my name for me myself,

Not for another; or at the very least

For sake of some dear sister or mother

dead, And not, not —

(She breaks down.)

Tristram

I spoke too rawly, maybe; mouthed what I Ought only to have mused. But do you  
dream

I for a leastness longer could abide Such dire disastrous lying? — Back to your ship;  
Get into it; return by the aptest wind And mate with another man when thou canst  
find him,

Never uncovering how you cozened me: His temper might be tried thereby, as mine!

Iseult the White H.

No, no! I won't be any other's wife! How can a thing so monstrous ever be?

Tristram

If I had batted in Brittany with thee —

Iseult the White H.

But you don't mean you'll live away from me,

Leave me, and henceforth be unknown to me,

O you don't surely? I could not help

coming;

Don't send me away — do not, do not, do so!

(Q. Iseult above moves restlessly.) Forgive your Iseult for appearing here, Untoward seem it! For I love you so Your sudden setting out was death to me When I discerned the cause. Your sail smalled down:

O I should have died had I not followed you. Only, my Tristram, let me be with thee, And see thy face. I do not sue for more!

Q. Iseult {above}

She has no claim to importune like that, And gloss her hardihood in tracking him!

Tristram

Thou canst not haunt another woman's house!

Iseult the White H.

O yes I can, if there's no other way!

I have heard she does not mind. I'd

rather be

Her bondwench, if I am not good enough To be your wife, than not stay here at all-

Aye, I, the child of kings and governors, As luminous in ancestral line as she, Say this, so utter my abasement now! — Something will happen if I go away Of import dark to you (no matter what To me); and we two should not greet again!

— Could you but be the woman, I the man, I would not fly from you or banish you For fault so small as mine. O do not think It was so vile a thing. I wish — how much!

You could have told me twenty such untruths,  
That I might then have shown you / would not  
Rate them as faults, but be much joyed to have you  
In spite of all. If you but through and through  
Could spell me, know how staunch I have stood, and am,  
You'd love me just the same. Come, say you do,  
And let us not be severed so again.

Q. Iseult {above}

I can't bear this!

Iseult the White H.

All the long hours and days

And heavy gnawing nights, and you not there,



But gone because you hate me! 'Tis past what

A woman can endure!

Tristram (more gently)

Not hate you, Iseult.

But, hate or love, lodge here you cannot now:

It's out of thinking.

(Drunken revellers heard.)

Know you, that in that room Just joining this, King Mark is holding feast, And may burst in with all his wassailers, And that the Queen —

Q. Iseult {above}

He's softening to her. Come! Let us go down, and face this agony!

Queen Iseult and Brangwain descend from the Gallery.

Iseult the White H.

O, I suppose I must not! And I am tired, Tired, tired! And now my once-dear Brittany home Is but a desert to me. (Q. Iseult and Brangwain come forward.)

— Oh, the Queen! Can I — so weak — encounter —

Q. Iseult

Ah — as I thought, Quite as I thought. It is my namesake, sure!

(Iseult the White h.faints. Indecision. Brangwain goes to her.) Take her away. The blow that bruises her

Is her own dealing. Better she had known The self-sown pangs of prying ere she sailed!

Brangwain carries her out, Tristram suddenly assisting at the last moment as far as the door.

Chanters : Men (as she is carried)

Fluttering with fear, Out-tasked her strength has she! Loss of her Dear Threatening too clear, Gone to this length has she! Strain too severe!

## SCENE XV

Queen Iseult, Tristram, and Chanters.

Q. Iseult (after restlessly watching Tristram render aid and return)

So, after all, am I to share you, then, With another, Tristram? who, as I count, comes here To take the Castle as it were her own!

Tristram

Sweet Queen, you said you'd let her come one day!

However, back she's going to Brittany, Which she should not have left. Think kindly of her, A weaker one than you!

Q. Iseult

What, Tristram; what! O this from you to me, who have sacrificed

Honour and name for you so long, so long! Why, she and I are oil and water here: Other than disunite we cannot be. She weaker? Nay, I stand in jeopardy This very hour —

(‘Noise of Mark and revellers.) Listen to him within! His peer will pierce your cloak ere long — or would

Were he but sober — and then where am I? Better for us that I do yield you to her, And you depart! Hardly can I do else: In the eyes of men she has all claim to thee

And I have none, yes, she possesses you! — (Turning and speaking in a murmur.) — Th’other Iseult possesses him, indeed; And it was I who set it in his soul To seek her out! — my namesake, whom I felt

A kindness for — alas, I know not why!

(Sobs silently.)

Chanters: Women

White-Hands did this, Desperate to win again Back to her kiss One she would miss! — Yea, from the Queen again Win, for her bliss!

### **Chanters: M. and W.**

Dreams of the Queen Always possessing him Racked her yestreen Cruelly and keen — Him, once professing him Hers through Life’s scene! Re-enter Brangwain.

### **SCENE XVI**

Tristram, Queen Iseult, Brangwain, and Chanters.

Brangwain stands silent a few moments, till Q. Iseult turns and looks demandingly at her.

Brangwain The lady from the other coast now mends.

Q. Iseult (haughtily)

Give her good rest. (Bitterly) Yes, yes, in sooth I said That she might come. Put her in mine own bed: I’ll sleep upon the floor!

Exit Brangwain.

Tristram

‘Tis in your bitterness, My own sweet Queen, that you speak thus and thus!

Enter King Mark with Sir Andret to the Gallery, unperceived.

### **SCENE XVII**

King Mark and Sir Andret (above): Queen Iseult, Tristram, and Chanters.

Sir Andret (to K. Mark)

See, here they are. God's 'ounds, sure, then was he  
That harper I misdoubted once or twice; Or must have come while we were clinking  
cups,

No mischief dreaming!

Tristram

But, my best-beloved, Forgo these frets, and think of Joyous Gard!

(Approaches her.)

Q. Iseult (drawing back)

Nay, no more claspings! And if it should be That these new meetings operate on  
me

(You well know what I am touching on in this)

Mayhap by year's-end I'll not be alive, The which I almost pray for —

K. Mark (above)

Then 'tis so! Their dalliances are in full gush again, Though I had deemed them  
hindered by his stay,

And vastly talked of ties, in Brittany.

Sir Andret

Such is betokened, certes, by their words, If we but wit them straight.

Tristram

O Queen my Love, Pray sun away this cloud, and shine again; Throw into your ripe  
voice and burning soul The music that they held in our aforesaid: We shall outweather  
this!

(Enter Damsel with a letter.)

Who jars us now?

## SCENE XVIII

Queen Iseult, Tristram, Damsel, King Mark., Sir Andret. and Chanters.

Damsel ('humbly)

This letter, brought at peril, noble Knight,  
King Mark has writ to our great Over- King —

Aye, Arthur — I the bearer. And I said,

“All that I can do for the brave Sir Tristram

That do will I! “ So I unscree this scroll

(A power that chances through a friendly clerk).

In it he pens that as his baneful foe

He holds Sir Tristram, and will wreak revenge

Thrice through his loins as soon as hap may serve.

King Mark descends from Gallery and stands in the background, Sir Andret remain-  
ing above.

Q. Iseult {aside to Tristram with misgivings)

These threats of Mark against you quail my heart,

And daunt my sore resentment at your wounds  
And slights of late! O Tristram, save thyself,  
And think no more of me!  
Tristram  
Forget you — never!  
(Softly) Rather the sunflower may forget the sun!  
(To Damsel) Wimple your face anew, wench: go unseen;  
Re-seal the sheet, which I care not to con,  
And send it on as bid.  
Exit Damsel.

## SCENE XIX

Queen Iseult, Tristram, King Mark, Sir Andret, and Chanters.

Tristram

Sure, Mark was drunk When writing such! Late he fed heavily And has, I judge,  
roved out with his boon knightage

Till evenfall shall bring him in to roost. Q. Iseult

I wonder! . . . [nestling closer) I've forebodings, Tristram dear; But, your death's  
mine, Love!

Tristram

And yours mine, Sweet Heart!... — Now that the hall is lulled, and none seems near,  
I'll keep up my old minstrel character And sing to you, ere I by stealth depart To  
wait an hour more opportune for love. —

I could, an if I would, sing jeeringly Of the King; I mean the song Sir Dinadan Made  
up about him. He was mighty  
wroth To hear it.

Q. Iseult

Nay, Love; sadness suits you best . . . Sad, sad are we: we will not jeer at him:

Such darkness overdraws us, it may whelm Us even with him my master! Sing of  
love.

(Tristram harps a prelude.) I hope he may not heel back home and hear!

Tristram (singing and playing)

Yea, Love, true is it sadness suits me best!

Sad, sad we are; sad, sad shall ever be. What shall deliver us from Love's unrest,  
And bonds we did not forecast, did not see!

Q. Iseult

Yea, who will dole us, in these chains that chafe,  
Bare pity! — O were ye my King — not he!

(She weeps, and he embraces her awhile.)

Tristram (thoughtfully)

Where is King Mark? I must be soon away!

King Mark, having drawn his dagger, creeps up behind Tristram.

K. Mark (in a thick voice)

He's in his own house, where he ought to be,  
Aye, here! where thou'lt be not much longer, man!

He runs Tristram through the back with his dagger. Queen Iseult shrieks. Tristram falls, Queen Iseult sinking down by him with clasped hands. Sir Andret descends quickly from the gallery.

Tristram (weakly)

From you! — against whom never have I sinned

But under sorcery unwittingly,

By draining deep the love-compelling vial

In my sick thirst, as innocently did she! . . .

This, when of late you sent for me, before

I went to Brittany, to come and help you!

“ Fair nephew,” said you, “ here upswarm our foes;

They are stark at hand, and must be strongly met

Sans tarriance, or they'll uproot my realm.”

“ My power,” said I, “ is all at your command.”

I came. I neared in night-time to the gate,

Where the hot host of Sesoines clung encamped;

Killed them at th'entrance, and got in to you,

Who welcomed me with joy. I forth'd again,

Again slew more, and saved the stronghold's fame!

Yet you (weaker) requite me thus! You might — have fought me!

(K. Mark droops his head in silence.)

Sir Andret

O fie upon thee, traitor, pleading thus! It profits naught. To-day here sees thee die!

Tristram

O Andret, Andret; this from thee to me — Thee, whom I onetime held my fastest friend;

Wert thou as I, I would not treat thee so!

(Sir Andret turns aside and looks down) [Weaker] Fair Knights, bethink ye what I've done for Cornwall, — Its fate was on my shoulder — and I saved it! —

Yea, thick in jeopardies I've thrust myself To fame your knighthood! — daily stretched

my arm For — the weal — of you — all!

Tristram dies.

Q. Iseult

[springing up, the King standing dazed)

O murderer, husband called! — possess of me Against my nature and my pleading tears, When all my heart was Tristram's — his past wording,

To your own knowledge. Now this mute red mouth

You've gored in my Beloved, bids me act: Act do I then. So out you — follow him!  
She snatches King Mark's dagger from his belt and stabs him with it. King Mark falls and dies. Queen Iseult rushes out. Sir Andret, stooping and finding the King dead, follows after the Queen. A few moments' pause during which the sea and sky darken, and the wind rises, distant thunder murmuring. Enter Watchman; next Brangwain.

## SCENE XX

Watchman and Chanters, with the dead King and Tristram; then Brangwain.

Watchman

She's glode off like a ghost, with deathly mien;  
It seems toward the ledge — yes, she — the Queen.

Brangwain (entering hurriedly)

She's over the cliff, and Tristram's brachet with her! . . .

What have we here? ... Sir Tristram's body? O!

Chanters: Men. (Brangwain standing and gradually drooping during their chant)

Alas, for this wroth day! She's leapt the ledge and fallen

Into the loud black bay, Whose waters, loosed and swollen, Are spirting into spray!

She's vanished from the world, Over the blind rock hurled; And the little hound her friend  
Has made with hers its end!

Chanters: Women

Alas, for this wroth day! Our Tristram, noble knight, A match for Arthur's might,  
Lies here as quaking clay. This is no falsehood fell, But very truth indeed That we too  
surely read! Would that we had to tell But pleasant truth away!

Brangwain (arousing and gazing round)

Here's more of this same stuff of death.

Look down — What see I lying there? King Mark, too, slain?

The sea's dark noise last night, the sky's vast yawn

Of hollow bloodshot cloud, meant murder,

then, As I divined!

Enter Iseult the Whitehanded, Queen's Ladies, Retainers, Bower-women., and others.

## SCENE XXI

Iseult the Whitehanded, Brangwain, Queen's Ladies, etc., and Chanters.

Iseult the White H.

I heard her cry. I saw her leap! How fair She was! What wonder that my brother

Kay

Should pine for love of her. . . . O she should not

Have done it to herself! Nor life nor death Is worth a special quest.

(She sees Tristram's body.) What's this — my husband? My Tristram dead likewise?  
He one with her?

(She sinks and clasps Tristram.)

Chanters: M. and W.

Slain by King Mark unseen, in evil vow, Who never loved him! Pierced in the back  
— aye, now, By sleight no codes of chivalry allow!

Iseult the White H.

And she beholding! That the cause where- for

She went and took her life? He was not

hers. . . . Yet did she love him true, if wickedly!

Re-enter Sir Andret, with other Knights, Squires, Herald, etc.

## SCENE XXII

Iseult the Whitehanded, Brangwain, Sir Andret, etc., and Chanters.

Sir Andret (saturninely)

Nor sight nor sound of her! A Queen.

'Od's blood, Her flaws in life get mended by her death,

And she and Tristram sport re-burnished fames!

Iseult the White H. (seeing Mark's body)

And the King also dead? My Tristram's slayer?

Yet strange to me. Then even had I not come

Across the southern water recklessly

This would have shaped the same — the very- same.

(Turning again to Tristram.)

Tristram, dear husband! O! . . .

(She rocks herself over him)

What a rare beauteous knight has perished here

By this most cruel craft! Could not King Mark

If wronged, have chid him — minded him of me,

And not done this, done this! Well, well; she's lost him,

Even as have I. — This stronghold moans with woes,

And jibbering voices join with winds and waves

To make a dolorous din! . . .

(They lift her) Aye, I will rise —

Betake me to my own dear Brittany —

Dearer in that our days there were so sweet,

Before I knew what pended me elsewhere !

These halls are hateful to me! May my

eyes

Meet them no more!

(She turns to go)

Brangwain

I will attend you, Madam.

Exit Iseult the Whitehanded assisted by Brangwain and Bowerwomen. Knights, retainers, etc., lift the bodies and carry them out. A Dirge by the Chanters.

## EPILOGUE

Re-enter Merlin

Thus from the past, the throes and themes Whereof I spake — now dead as dreams

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Have been re-shaped and drawn In feinted deed and word, as though Our shadowy and phantasmal show Were very movements to and fro Of forms so far-off gone.

These warriors and dear women, whom I've called, as bidden, from the tomb,

May not have failed to raise An antique spell at moments here? — They were, in their long-faded sphere, As you are now who muse thereat; Their mirth, crimes, fear and love begat Your own, though thwart their ways; And may some pleasant thoughts outshape From this my conjuring to undrape Such ghosts of distant days!



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