# The Dynasts

by Thomas Hardy

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## THE DYNASTS

## By Thomas Hardy

AN EPIC-DRAMA OF THE WAR WITH NAPOLEON, IN THREE PARTS, NINETEEN ACTS, AND ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY SCENES

The Time covered by the Action being about ten Years

“And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong, And trumpets blown for wars.”

# PREFACE

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

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

When, as the first published result of these accidents, The Trumpet Major was printed, more than twenty years ago, I found myself in the tantalizing position of having touched the fringe of a vast international tragedy without being able, through limits of plan, knowledge, and opportunity, to enter further into its events; a restriction that prevailed for many years. But the slight regard paid to English influence and action throughout the struggle by those Continental writers who had dealt imaginatively with Napoléon’s career, seemed always to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re-embody the features of this influence in their

true proportion; and accordingly, on a belated day about six years back, the following drama was outlined, to be taken up now and then at wide intervals ever since.

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

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

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only, that of the Pities, approximates to “the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator

idealized”1 of the Greek Chorus; it is impressionable and inconsistent in its views, which sway hither and thither as wrought on by events. Another group approximates to the passionless Insight of the Ages. The remainder are eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned. In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted Choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern expression of a modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes.

It may hardly be necessary to inform readers that in devising this chronicle-piece no attempt has been made to create that completely organic structure of action, and closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama strictly self- contained. A panoramic show like the present is a series of historical “ordinates” [to use a term in geometry]: the subject is familiar to all; and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the junctions required to combine the scenes into an artistic unity. Should the mental spectator be unwilling or unable to do this, a historical presentment on an intermittent plan, in which the dramatis personae number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable.

In this assumption of a completion of the action by those to whom the drama is addressed, it is interesting, if unnecessary, to name an exemplar as old as Aeschylus, whose plays are, as Dr. Verrall reminds us,2 scenes from stories taken as known, and would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination.

Readers will readily discern, too, that The Dynasts is intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage. Some critics have averred that to declare a drama3 as being not for the stage is to make an announcement whose subject and predicate cancel each other. The question seems to be an unimportant matter of terminology. Compositions cast in this shape were, without doubt, originally written

for the stage only, and as a consequence their nomenclature of “Act,” “Scene,” and the like, was drawn directly from the vehicle of representation. But in the course of time such a shape would reveal itself to be an eminently readable one; moreover, by dispensing with the theatre altogether, a freedom of treatment was attainable in this form that was denied where the material possibilities of stagery had to be rigorously remembered. With the careless mechanicism of human speech, the technicalities of practical mumming were retained in these productions when they had ceased to be concerned with the stage at all.

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

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

Riddles of Death Thebes never knew,

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

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

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

T.H.

September 1903.

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# PART FIRST

CHARACTERS

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THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS/CHORUS OF THE YEARS. THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES/CHORUS OF THE PITIES. SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC/CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS. THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR/CHORUS OF RUMOURS. THE SHADE OF THE EARTH. SPIRIT-MESSENGERS. RECORDING ANGELS.

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

MEN GEORGE THE THIRD. The Duke of Cumberland PITT. FOX. SHERIDAN. WINDHAM. WHITBREAD. TIERNEY. BATHURST AND FULLER. Lord Chancellor Eldon. EARL OF MALMESBURY. LORD MULGRAVE. ANOTHER CABINET MINISTER. Lord Grenville. Viscount Castlereagh. Viscount Sidmouth. ANOTHER NOBLE LORD. ROSE. Canning. Perceval. Grey. Speaker Abbot. TOMLINE, BISHOP OF LINCOLN. SIR WALTER FARQUHAR. Count Munster. Other Peers, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Persons of Quality. ..... NELSON. COLLINGWOOD. HARDY. SECRETARY SCOTT. DR. BEATTY. DR. MAGRATH. DR. ALEXANDER SCOTT. BURKE, PURSER. Lieutenant Pasco. ANOTHER LIEUTENANT. POLLARD, A MIDSHIPMAN. Captain Adair. Lieutenants Ram and Whipple. Other English Naval Officers. Sergeant-Major Secker and Marines. Staff and other Officers of the English Army. A COMPANY OF SOLDIERS. Regiments of the English Army and Hanoverian. SAILORS AND BOATMEN. A MILITIAMAN. Naval Crews. ..... The Lord Mayor and Corporation of London. A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION. WILTSHIRE, A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN A HORSEMAN. TWO BEACON-WATCHERS. ENGLISH CITIZENS AND BURGESSES. COACH AND OTHER HIGHWAY PASSENGERS. MESSENGERS, SERVANTS, AND RUSTICS. ..... NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE. DARU, NAPOLÉON'S WAR SECRETARY. LAURISTON, AIDE-DE-CAMP. MONGE, A PHILOSOPHER. BERTHIER. MURAT, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF NAPOLÉON. SOULT. NEY. LANNES. Bernadotte. Marmont. Dupont. Oudinot. Davout. Vandamme. Other French Marshals. A SUB-OFFICER.

.....

VILLENEUVE, NAPOLÉON'S ADMIRAL. DECRÈS, MINISTER OF MARINE. FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE. LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON. LIEUTENANT

FOURNIER. Captain Lucas. OTHER FRENCH NAVAL OFFICERS AND PETTY OFFICERS. Seamen of the French and Spanish Navies. Regiments of the French Army. COURIERS. HERALDS. Aides, Officials, Pages, etc. ATTENDANTS. French Citizens.

.....

CARDINAL CAPRARA. Priests, Acolytes, and Choristers. Italian Doctors and Presidents of Institutions. Milanese Citizens.

.....

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS. THE ARCHDUKE FERDINAND. Prince John of Lichtenstien. PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG. MACK, AUSTRIAN GENERAL. JELLACHICH. RIESC. WEIROTHER. ANOTHER AUSTRIAN GENERAL. TWO AUSTRIAN OFFICERS.

.....

The Emperor Alexander. PRINCE KUTÚZOF, RUSSIAN FIELD-MARSHAL. COUNT LANGERON. COUNT BUXHÖVDEN. COUNT MILORADOVICH. DOKHTÓROF.

.....

Giulay, Gottesheim, Klenau, and Prschebiszewsky. Regiments of the Austrian Army. Regiments of the Russian Army.

WOMEN Queen Charlotte. English Princesses. Ladies of the English Court. LADY HESTER STANHOPE. A LADY. Lady Caroline Lamb, Mrs. Damer, and other English Ladies.

.....

THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE. Princesses and Ladies of Joséphine’s Court. Seven Milanese Young Ladies.

.....

City- and Towns-women. Country-women. A MILITIAMAN'S WIFE. A STREET-WOMAN. Ship-women. Servants.

## FORE SCENE

THE OVERWORLD

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

SHADE OF THE EARTH What of the Immanent Will and Its designs?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS It works unconsciously, as heretofore, Eternal artistries in Circumstance, Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic rote, Seem in themselves Its single listless aim, And not their consequence.

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] Still thus? Still thus? Ever unconscious! An automatic sense Unweeting why or whence? Be, then, the inevitable, as of old, Although that SO it be we dare not hold!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Hold what ye list, fond believing Sprites, You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss, Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought, Unchecks Its clock-like laws.

SPIRIT SINISTER [aside] Good, as before. My little engines, then, will still have play.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Why doth It so and so, and ever so, This viewless, voiceless Turner of the Wheel?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS As one sad story runs, It lends Its heed To other worlds, being wearied out with this; Wherefore Its mindlessness of earthly woes. Some, too, have told at whiles that rightfully Its warefulness, Its care, this planet lost When in her early growth and crudity By bad mad acts of severance men contrived, Working

such nescience by their own device.— Yea, so it stands in certain chronicles, Though not in mine.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Meet is it, none the less, To bear in thought that though Its consciousness May be estranged, engrossed afar, or sealed, Sublunar shocks may wake Its watch anon?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Nay. In the Foretime, even to the germ of Being, Nothing appears of shape to indicate That cognizance has marshalled things terrene, Or will [such is my thinking] in my span. Rather they show that, like a knitter drowsed, Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness, The Will has woven with an absent heed Since life first was; and ever will so weave.

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

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

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

SHADE OF THE EARTH And who, then, Cordial One, Wouldst substitute for this Intractable?

CHORUS OF THE EARTH We would establish those of kindlier build, In fair Compassions skilled, Men of deep art in life-development; Watchers and warders of thy varied lands, Men surfeited of laying heavy hands, Upon the innocent, The mild,

the fragile, the obscure content Among the myriads of thy family. Those, too, who love the true, the excellent, And make their daily moves a melody.

SHADE OF THE EARTH They may come, will they. I am not averse. Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade Of her the Travailler, herself a thrall To It; in all her labourings curbed and kinged!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Shall such be mooted now? Already change Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded here. But old Laws operate yet; and phase and phase Of men's dynastic and imperial moils Shape on accustomed lines. Though, as for me, I care not thy shape, or what they be.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES You seem to have small sense of mercy, Sire?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Mercy I view, not urge;—nor more than mark What designate your titles Good and Ill. 'Tis not in me to feel with, or against, These flesh-hinged mannikins Its hand upwinds To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws; But only through my centuries to behold Their aspects, and their movements, and their mould.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES They are shapes that bleed, mere mannikins or no, And each has parcel in the total Will.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Which overrides them as a whole its parts In other entities.

SPIRIT SINISTER [aside] Limbs of Itself: Each one a jot of It in quaint disguise? I'll fear all men henceforward!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Go to. Let this terrestrial tragedy—

SPIRIT IRONIC Nay, Comedy—

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Let this earth-tragedy Whereof we spake, afford a spectacle Forthwith conned closelier than your custom is.—

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS How does it stand? [To a Recording Angel] Open and

chant the page Thou'st lately writ, that sums these happenings, In brief reminder of their instant points Slighted by us amid our converse here.

RECORDING ANGEL [from a book, in recitative] Now mellow-eyed Peace is made captive, And Vengeance is chartered To deal forth its dooms on the Peoples With sword and with spear. Men's musings are busy with forecasts Of muster and battle, And visions of shock and disaster Rise red on the year. The easternmost ruler sits wistful, And tense he to midward; The King to the west mans his borders In front and in rear. While one they eye, flushed from his crowning, Ranks legions around him To shake the enisled neighbour nation And close her career!

SEMICHORUS I OF RUMOURS [aerial music] O woven-winged squadrons of Toulon And fellows of Rochefort, Wait, wait for a wind, and draw westward Ere Nelson be near! For he reads not your force, or your freightage Of warriors fell-handed, Or when they will join for the onset, Or whither they steer!

SEMICHORUS II O Nelson, so zealous a watcher Through months-long of cruizing, Thy foes may elide thee a moment, Put forth, and get clear; And rendezvous westerly straightway With Spain's aiding navies, And hasten to head violation Of Albion's frontier!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Methinks too much assurance thrills your note On secrets in my locker, gentle sprites; But it may serve.—Our thought being now reflexed To forces operant on this English isle, Behoves it us to enter scene by scene, And watch the spectacle of Europe's moves In her embroil, as they were self-ordained According to the naive and liberal creed Of our great-hearted young Compassionates, Forgetting the Prime Mover of the gear, As puppet-watchers him who pulls the strings.— You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte As he with other figures foots his reel, Until he twitch him into his lonely grave: Also regard the frail ones that his flings Have made gyrate like animalcula In tepid pools.—Hence to the precinct, then, And count as framework to the stagery Yon architraves of

sunbeam-smitten cloud.— So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be No fugled by one Will, but function-free. [The nether sky opens, and Europe is disclosed as a prone and emaciated figure, the Alps shaping like a backbone, and the branching mountain-chains like ribs, the peninsular plateau of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like a grey-green garment hemmed by the Ural mountains and the glistening Arctic Ocean. The point of view then sinks downwards through space, and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples, distressed by events which they did not cause, are seen writhing, crawling, heaving, and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to the Spirit of the Pities] As key-scene to the whole, I first lay bare The Will-webs of thy fearful questioning; For know that of my antique privileges This gift to visualize the Mode is one [Though by exhaustive strain and effort only]. See, then, and learn, ere my power pass again. [A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduring men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Amid this scene of bodies substantive Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible, Which bear men's forms on their innumerous coils, Twining and serpenting round and through. Also retracting threads like gossamers— Except in being irresistible— Which complicate with some, and balance all.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins, Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause, That heave throughout the Earth's composture. Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain Evolving always that it wots not of; A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere, And whose procedure may but be discerned By phantom eyes like ours; the while unguessed Of those it stirs, who [even as ye do] dream Their motions free, their orderings supreme; Each life apart

from each, with power to mete Its own day's measures; balanced, self complete; Though they subsist but atoms of the One Labouring through all, divisible from none; But this no further now. Deem yet man's deeds self-done.

GENERAL CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES [aerial music] We'll close up Time, as a bird its van, We'll traverse Space, as spirits can, Link pulses severed by leagues and years, Bring cradles into touch with biers; So that the far-off Consequence appear Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause.— The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was, Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought its laws, Which we as threads and streams discern, We may but muse on, never learn.

END OF THE FORE SCENE

# ACT FIRST

## SCENE I

ENGLAND. A RIDGE IN WESSEX [The time is a fine day in March 1805. A highway crosses the ridge, which is near the sea, and the south coast is seen bounding the landscape below, the open Channel extending beyond.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECOND PASSENGER May we be ready!

FIRST PASSENGER Well, we ought to be. We’ve had alarms enough, God knows. [Some companies of infantry are seen ahead, and the coach presently overtakes them.]

SOLDIERS [singing as they walk] We be the King’s men, hale and hearty, Marching to meet one Buonaparty; If he won’t sail, lest the wind should blow, We shall have marched for nothing, O! Right fol-lol! We be the King’s men, hale and hearty, Marching to meet one Buonaparty; If he be sea-sick, says “No, no!” We shall have marched for nothing, O! Right fol-lol! [The soldiers draw aside, and the coach passes on.]

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

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

SOLDIERS [continuing, as they are left behind] We be the King's men, hale and hearty, Marching to meet one Buonaparty; Never mind, mates; we'll be merry, though We may have marched for nothing, O! Right fol-lol!

THIRD PASSENGER And was Boney's letter friendly?

FIRST PASSENGER Certainly, sir. He requested peace with the King.

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

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

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

FIRST PASSENGER Whether or no, the King, rightly enough, did not reply in person, but through Lord Mulgrave our Foreign Minister, to the effect that his Britannic Majesty cannot give a specific answer till he has communicated with the Continental powers.

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

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

THIRD PASSENGER Damn my wig, sir, if I'll be called a traitor by you or any Court sycophant at all at all! [He unpacks a case of pistols.]

SECOND PASSENGER Gentlemen forbear, forbear! Should such differences be suffered to arise on a spot where we may, in less than three months, be fighting for our very existence? This is foolish, I say. Heaven alone, who reads the secrets of this

man’s heart, can tell what his meaning and intent may be, and if his letter has been answered wisely or no. [The coach is stopped to skid the wheel for the descent of the hill, and before it starts again a dusty horseman overtakes it.]

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

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

THIRD PASSENGER Sir, I apologize. He’s not to be trusted! War is his name, and aggression is with him! [He repacks the pistols. A silence follows. The coach and passengers move downwards and disappear towards the coast.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Ill chanced it that the English monarch George Did not respond to the said Emperor!

SPIRIT SINISTER I saw good sport therein, and paean’d the Will To unimpel so stultifying a move! Which would have marred the European broil, And sheathed all swords, and silenced every gun That riddles human flesh.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES O say no more; If aught could gratify the Absolute ’Twould verily be thy censure, not thy praise!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS The ruling was that we should witness things And not dispute them. To the drama, then. Emprizes over-Channel are the key To this land’s stir and ferment.—Thither we. [Clouds gather over the scene, and slowly open elsewhere.]

## SCENE II

PARIS. OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF MARINE [ADMIRAL DECRÈS seated at a table. A knock without.]

DECRÈS Come in! Good news, I hope! [An attendant enters.]

ATTENDANT A courier, sir.

DECRÈS Show him in straightway. [The attendant goes out.] From the Emperor As I expected!

COURIER Sir, for your own hand And yours alone.

DECRÈS Thanks. Be in waiting near. [The courier withdraws.]

DECRÈS reads: “I am resolved that no wild dream of Ind, And what we there might win; or of the West, And bold re-conquest there of Surinam And other Dutch retreats along those coasts, Or British islands nigh, shall draw me now From piercing into England through Boulogne As lined in my first plan. If I do strike, I strike effectively; to forge which feat There’s but one way—planting a mortal wound In England’s heart—the very English land— Whose insolent and cynical reply To my well-based complaint on breach of faith Concerning Malta, as at Amiens pledged, Has lighted up anew such flames of ire As may involve the world.—Now to the case: Our naval forces can be all assembled Without the foe’s foreknowledge or surmise, By these rules following; to whose text I ask Your gravest application; and, when conned, That steadfastly you stand by word and word, Making no question of one jot therein. “First, then, let Villeneuve wait a favouring wind For process westward swift to Martinique, Coaxing the English after. Join him there Gravina, Missiessy, and Ganteaume; Which junction once effected all our keels— While the pursuers linger in the West At hopeless fault.—Having hoodwinked them thus, Our boats skim over, disembark the army, And in the twinkling of a patriot’s eye All London will be ours. “In strictest secrecy carve this to shape— Let never an admiral or captain scent Save Villeneuve and Ganteaume; and pen each charge With your own quill. The surelier to outwit them I start for Italy; and there, as ’twere Engrossed in fetes and Coronation rites, Abide till, at the need, I reach Boulogne, And head the enterprize.—NAPOLÉON.” [DECRÈS reflects, and turns to write.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS He buckles to the work. First to Villeneuve, His onetime companion and his boyhood's friend, Now lingering at Toulon, he jots swift lines, The duly to Ganteaume.—They are sealed forthwith, And superscribed: "Break not till on the main." [Boisterous singing is heard in the street.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I hear confused and simmering sounds without, Like those which thrill the hives at evenfall When swarming pends.

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

RECORDING ANGEL And is this prophecy true?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Occasion will reveal.

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES But why any?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Sprite of Compassions, ask the Immanent! I am but an accessory of Its works, Whom the Ages render conscious; and at most Figure as bounden witness of Its laws.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES How ask the aim of unrelaxing Will? Tranced in Its purpose to unknowingness? [If thy words, Ancient Phantom, token true.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Thou answerest well. But cease to ask of me. Meanwhile the mime proceeds.—We turn herefrom, Change our homuncules, and observe forthwith How the High Influence sways the English realm, And how the jacks lip out their reasonings there. [The Cloud-curtain draws.]

**SCENE III**

LONDON. THE OLD HOUSE OF COMMONS [A long chamber with a gallery on each side supported by thin columns having gilt Ionic capitals. Three round-headed windows are at the further end, above the Speaker's chair, which is backed by a huge pedimented structure in white and gilt, surmounted by the lion and the unicorn. The windows are uncurtained, one being open, through which some boughs are seen waving in the midnight gloom without. Wax candles, burnt low, wave and gutter in a brass chandelier which hangs from the middle of the ceiling, and in branches projecting from the galleries. The House is sitting, the benches, which extend round to the Speaker's elbows, being closely packed, and the galleries likewise full. Among the members present on the Government side are PITT and other ministers with their supporters, including CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, LORD C. SOMERSET, ERSKINE, W. DUNDAS, HUSKISSON, ROSE, BEST, ELLIOT, DALLAS, and the general body of the party. On the opposite side are noticeable FOX, SHERIDAN, WINDHAM, WHITBREAD, GREY, T. GRENVILLE, TIERNEY, EARL TEMPLE, PONSONBY, G. AND H. WALPOLE, DUDLEY NORTH, and TIMOTHY SHELLEY. Speaker ABBOT occupies the Chair.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS As prelude to the scene, as means to aid Our younger comrades in its construing, Pray spread your scripture, and rehearse in brief The reasonings here of late—to whose effects Words of to-night form sequence. [The Recording Angels chant from their books, antiphonally, in a minor recitative.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS I'll humour thee, Though my unpassioned essence could not change Did I incarn in moulds of all mankind!

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

SPIRIT SINISTER And I the fourth. There's sure to be something in my line toward, where politicians gathered together! [The four Phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise of ordinary strangers.]

SHERIDAN [rising] The Bill I would have leave to introduce Is framed, sir, to repeal last Session's Act, By party-scribes intituled a Provision For England's Proper Guard; but elsewhere known As Mr. Pitt's new Patent Parish Pill. [Laughter.] The ministerial countenances, I mark, Congeal to dazed surprise at my straight motion— Why, passes sane conjecture. It may be That, with a haughty and unwavering faith In their own battering-rams of argument, They deemed our buoyance whelmed, and sapped, and sunk To our hope's sheer bottom, whence a miracle Was all could friend and float us; or, maybe, They are amazed at our rude disrespect In making mockery of an English Law Sprung sacred from the King's own Premier's brain! —I hear them snort; but let them wince at will, My duty must be done; shall be done quickly By citing some few facts. An Act for our defence! It weakens, not defends; and oversea Swoln France's despot and his myrmidons This moment know it, and can scoff thereat. Our people know it too—those who can peer Behind the scenes of this poor painted show Called soldiering!—The Act has failed, must fail, As my right honourable friend well proved When speaking t'other night, whose silencing By his right honourable vis a vis Was of the genuine Governmental sort, And like the catamarans their sapience shaped All fizzle and no harm. [Laughter.] The Act, in brief, Effects this much: that the whole force of England Is strengthened by—eleven thousand men! So sorted that the British infantry Are now eight hundred less than heretofore! In Ireland, where the glamouring influence Of the right honourable gentleman Prevails with magic might, ELEVEN men Have been amassed. And in the Cinque-Port towns, Where he is held in absolute veneration, His method has so quickened martial fire As to bring in—one man. O would that man Might meet my sight! [Laughter.] A Hercules, no doubt, A god-like emanation from this Act, Who with his single arm will overthrow All Buonaparte's

legions ere their keels Have scraped one pebble of our fortless shore!... Such is my motion, sir, and such my mind. [He sits down amid cheers. The candle-snuffers go round, and Pitt rises. During the momentary pause before he speaks the House assumes an attentive stillness, in which can be heard the rustling of the trees without, a horn from an early coach, and the voice of the watch crying the hour.]

PITT Not one on this side but appreciates Those mental gems and airy pleasantries Flashed by the honourable gentleman, Who shines in them by birthright. Each device Of drollery he has laboured to outshape, [Or treasured up from others who have shaped it,] Displays that are the conjurings of the moment, [Or mellowed and matured by sleeping on]— Dry hoardings in his book of commonplace, Stored without stint of toil through days and months— He heaps into one mass, and light and fans As fuel for his flaming eloquence, Mouthed and maintained without a thought or care If germane to the theme, or not at all. Now vain indeed it were should I assay To match him in such sort. For, sir, alas, To use imagination as the ground Of chronicle, take myth and merry tale As texts for prophecy, is not my gift Being but a person primed with simple fact, Unprinked by jewelled art.—But to the thing. The preparations of the enemy, Doggedly bent to desolate our land, Advance with a sustained activity. They are seen, they are known, by you and by us all. But they evince no clear-eyed tentative In furtherance of the threat, whose coming off, Ay, years may yet postpone; whereby the Act Will far outstrip him, and the thousands called Duly to join the ranks by its provisions, In process sure, if slow, will ratch the lines Of English regiments—seasoned, cool, resolved— To glorious length and firm prepotency. And why, then, should we dream of its repeal Ere profiting by its advantages? Must the House listen to such wilding words As this proposal, at the very hour When the Act’s gearing finds its ordered grooves And circles into full utility? The motion of the honourable gentleman Reminds me aptly of a publican Who should, when malting, mixing, mashing’s past, Fermenting, barrelling, and spigoting, Quick taste the brew, and shake his sapient head, And cry

in acid voice: The ale is new! Brew old, you varlets; cast this slop away! [Cheers.] But gravely, sir, I would conclude to-night, And, as a serious man on serious things, I now speak here.... I pledge myself to this: Unprecedented and magnificent As were our strivings in the previous war, Our efforts in the present shall transcend them, As men will learn. Such efforts are not sized By this light measuring-rule my critic here Whips from his pocket like a clerk-o'-works!... Tasking and toilsome war's details must be, And toilsome, too, must be their criticism,— Not in a moment's stroke extemporized. The strange fatality that haunts the times Wherein our lot is cast, has no example. Times are they fraught with peril, trouble, gloom; We have to mark their lourings, and to face them. Sir, reading thus the full significance Of these big days, large though my lackings be, Can any hold of those who know my past That I, of all men, slight our safeguarding? No: by all honour no!—Were I convinced That such could be the mind of members here, My sorrowing thereat would doubly shade The shade on England now! So I do trust All in the House will take my tendered word, And credit my deliverance here to-night, That in this vital point of watch and ward Against the threatenings from yonder coast We stand prepared; and under Providence Shall fend whatever hid or open stroke A foe may deal. [He sits down amid loud ministerial cheers, with symptoms of great exhaustion.]

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

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

WHITBREAD I rise but to subjoin a phrase or two To those of my right honourable friend. I, too, am one who reads the present pinch As passing all our risks heretofore. For why? Our bold and reckless enemy, Relaxing not his plans, has treasured time To mass his monstrous force on all the coigns From which our coast is close assailable. Ay, even afloat his concentrations work: Two vast united squadrons of his sail Move at this moment viewless on the seas.— Their whereabouts, untraced, unguessable, Will not be known to us till some black blow Be dealt by them in some undreamt-of quarter To knell our rule. That we are reasonably enfenced therefrom By such an Act is but a madman's dream.... A commonwealth so situate cries aloud For more, far mightier, measures! End an Act In Heaven's name, then, which only can obstruct The fabrication of more trusty tackle For building up an army! [Cheers.]

BATHURST Sir, the point To any sober mind is bright as noon; Whether the Act should have befitting trial Or be blasphemed at sight. I firmly hold The latter loud iniquity.—One task Is theirs who would inter this corpse-cold Act— [So said]—to bring to birth a substitute! Sir, they have none; they have given no thought to one, And this their deeds incautiously disclose Their cloaked intention and most secret aim! With them the question is not how to frame A finer trick to trounce intrusive foes, But who shall be the future ministers To whom such trick against intrusive foes, Whatever it may prove, shall be entrusted! They even ask the country gentlemen To join them in this job. But, God be praised, Those gentlemen are sound, and of repute; Their names, their attainments, and their blood, [Ironical Opposition cheers.] Safeguard them from an onslaught on an Act For ends so sinister and palpable! [Cheers and jeerings.]

FULLER I disapprove of censures of the Act.— All who would entertain such hostile thought Would swear that black is white, that night is day. No honest man will join a reckless crew Who'd overthrow their country for their gain! [Laughter.]

TIERNEY It is incumbent on me to declare In the last speaker's face my censure, based On grounds most clear and constitutional.— An Act it is that studies to create A standing army, large and permanent; Which kind of force has ever been beheld With jealous-eyed disfavour in this House. It makes for sure oppression, binding men To serve for less than service proves it worth Conditioned by no hampering penalty. For these and late-spoke reasons, then, I say, Let not the Act deface the statute-book, But blot it out forthwith. [Hear, hear.]

FOX [rising amid cheers] At this late hour, After the riddling fire the Act has drawn on't, My words shall hold the House the briefest while. Too obvious to the most unwilling mind It grows that the existence of this law Experience and reflection have condemned. Professing to do much, it makes for nothing; Not only so; while feeble in effect It shows it vicious in its principle. Engaging to raise men for the common weal It sets a harmful and unequal tax Capriciously on our communities.— The annals of a century fail to show More flagrant cases of oppressiveness Than those this statute works to perpetrate, Which [like all Bills this favoured statesman frames, And clothes with tapestries of rhetoric Disguising their real web of commonplace] Though held as shaped for English bulwarking, Breathes in its heart perversities of party, And instincts toward oligarchic power, Galling the many to relieve the few! [Cheers.] Whatever breadth and sense of equity Inform the methods of this minister, Those mitigants nearly always trace their root To measures that his predecessors wrought. And ere his Government can dare assert Superior claim to England's confidence, They owe it to their honour and good name To furnish better proof of such a claim Than is revealed by the abortiveness Of this thing called an Act for our Defence. To the great gifts of its artificer No member of this House is more disposed To yield full recognition than am I. No man has found more reason

so to do Through the long roll of disputatious years Wherein we have stood opposed.... But if one single fact could counsel me To entertain a doubt of those great gifts, And cancel faith in his capacity, That fact would be the vast imprudence shown In staking recklessly repute like his On such an Act as he has offered us— So false in principle, so poor in fruit. Sir, the achievements and effects thereof Have furnished not one fragile argument Which all the partiality of friendship Can kindle to consider as the mark Of a clear, vigorous, freedom-fostering mind! [He sits down amid lengthy cheering from the Opposition.]

SHERIDAN My summary shall be brief, and to the point.— The said right honourable Prime Minister Has thought it proper to declare my speech The jesting of an irresponsible;— Words from a person who has never read The Act he claims him urgent to repeal. Such quips and qizzings [as he reckons them] He implicates as gathered from long hoards Stored up with cruel care, to be discharged With sudden blaze of pyrotechnic art On the devoted, gentle, shrinking head O' the right incomparable gentleman! [Laughter.] But were my humble, solemn, sad oration [Laughter.] Indeed such rattle as he rated it, Is it not strange, and passing precedent, That the illustrious chief of Government Should have uprisen with such indecent speed And strenuously replied? He, sir, knows well That vast and luminous talents like his own Could not have been demanded to choke off A witcraft marked by nothing more of weight Than ignorant irregularity! Nec Deus intersit—and so-and-so— Is a well-worn citation whose close fit None will perceive more clearly in the Fane Than its presiding Deity opposite. [Laughter.] His thunderous answer thus perforce condemns him! Moreover, to top all, the while replying, He still thought best to leave intact the reasons On which my blame was founded! Thus, them, stands My motion unimpaired, convicting clearly Of dire perversion that capacity We formerly admired.— [Cries of "Oh, oh."] This minister Whose circumventions never circumvent, Whose coalitions fail to coalesce; This dab at secret treaties known to all, This darling of the aristocracy— [Laughter, "Oh, oh,"

cheers, and cries of “Divide.”] Has brought the millions to the verge of ruin, By pledging them to Continental quarrels Of which we see no end! [Cheers.] [The members rise to divide.]

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

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Meanwhile what of the Foeman’s vast array That wakes these tones?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Abide the event, young Shade: Soon stars will shut and show a spring-eyed dawn, And sunbeams fountain forth, that will arouse Those forming bands to full activity. [An honourable member reports that he spies strangers.] A timely token that we dally here! We now cast off these mortal manacles, And speed us seaward. [The Phantoms vanish from the Gallery. The members file out to the lobbies. The House and Westminster recede into the films of night, and the point of observation shifts rapidly across the Channel.]

**SCENE IV**

THE HARBOUR OF BOULOGNE [The morning breaks, radiant with early sunlight. The French Army of Invasion is disclosed. On the hills on either side of the town and behind appear large military camps formed of timber huts. Lower down are other camps of more or less permanent kind, the whole affording accommodation for one hundred and fifty thousand men. South of the town is an extensive basin surrounded by quays, the heaps of fresh soil around showing it to be a recent excavation from the banks of the Liane. The basin is crowded with the flotilla, consisting of hundreds of vessels of sundry kinds: flat-bottomed brigs with guns and two masts; boats of one mast, carrying each an artillery waggon, two guns, and a two-stalled horse-box; transports with three low masts; and long narrow pinnaces arranged for many oars. Timber, saw-mills, and new-cut planks spread in profusion around, and many of the town residences are seen to be adapted for warehouses and infirmaries.]

DUMB SHOW Moving in this scene are countless companies of soldiery, engaged in a drill practice of embarking and disembarking, and of hoisting horses into the vessels and landing them again. Vehicles bearing provisions of many sorts load and unload before the temporary warehouses. Further off, on the open land, bodies of troops are at field-drill. Other bodies of soldiers, half stripped and encrusted with mud, are labouring as navvies in repairing the excavations. An English squadron of about twenty sail, comprising a ship or two of the line, frigates, brigs, and luggers, confronts the busy spectacle from the sea. The Show presently dims and becomes broken, till only its flashes and gleams are visible. Anon a curtain of cloud closes over it.

**SCENE V**

LONDON. THE HOUSE OF A LADY OF QUALITY [A fashionable crowd is present at an evening party, which includes the DUKES of BEAUFORT and

RUTLAND, LORDS MALMESBURY, HARROWBY, ELDON, GRENVILLE, CASTLEREAGH, SIDMOUTH, and MULGRAVE, with their ladies; also CANNING, PERCEVAL, TOWNSHEND, LADY ANNE HAMILTON, MRS. DAMER, LADY CAROLINE LAMB, and many other notables.]

A GENTLEMAN [offering his snuff-box] So, then, the Treaty anxiously concerted Between ourselves and frosty Muscovy Is duly signed?

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

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

LADY What the news?— The chequerboard of diplomatic moves Is London, all the world knows: here are born All inspirations of the Continent— So tell! GENTLEMAN Ay. Inspirations now abound!

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

GENTLEMAN The treaty’s signed!

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

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

MINISTER Well; by the terms. There are among them these: Five hundred thousand active men in arms Shall strike [supported by the Britannic aid In vessels, men, and

money subsidies] To free North Germany and Hanover From trampling foes; deliver Switzerland, Unbind the galled republic of the Dutch, Rethrone in Piedmont the Sardinian King, Make Naples sword-proof, un-French Italy From shore to shore; and thoroughly guarantee A settled order to the divers states; Thus rearing breachless barriers in each realm Against the thrust of his usurping hand.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS They trow not what is shaping otherwhere The while they talk this stoutly!

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

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

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

GENTLEMAN What on land and sea? You look, old friend, full primed with latest thence.

SPIRIT Yea, this. The Italy our mighty pact Delivers from the French and Bonaparte Makes haste to crown him!—Turning from Boulogne He speeds toward Milan, there to glory him In second coronation by the Pope, And set upon his irrepressible brow Lombardy's iron crown. [The Spirit of Rumour mingles with the throng, moves away, and disappears.]

LADY Fair Italy, Alas, alas!

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

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

GENTLEMAN Why, Norton. You know Norton well enough?

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

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

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

GENTLEMAN But let me call him! Monstrous silly this, That don’t know my friends! [They look around. The gentleman goes among the surging and babbling guests, makes inquiries, and returns with a perplexed look.]

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

MINISTER I can well swear It was not Norton.—’Twas some lively buck, Who chose to put himself in masquerade And enter for a whim. I’ll tell our host. —Meantime the absurdity of his report Is more than manifested. How knows he The plans of Bonaparte by lightning-flight, Before another man in England knows?

LADY Something uncanny’s in it all, if true. Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden sweat, That fairly makes my linen stick to me!

MINISTER Ha-ha! ’Tis excellent. But we’ll find out Who this impostor was. [They disperse, look furtively for the stranger, and speak of the incident to others of the crowded company.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Now let us vision onward, till we sight Famed Milan’s aisles of marble, sun-alight, And there behold, unbid, the Coronation-rite. [The confused tongues of the assembly waste away into distance, till they are heard but as the babblings of the sea from a high cliff, the scene becoming small and indistinct therewith. This passes into silence, and the whole disappears.]

## SCENE VI

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

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

DUMB SHOW From a private corridor leading to a door in the aisle the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE enters, in a shining costume, and diamonds that collect rainbow-colours from the sunlight piercing the clerestory windows. She is preceded by PRINCESS ELIZA, and surrounded by her ladies. A pause follows, and then comes the procession of the EMPEROR, consisting of hussars, heralds, pages, aides-de-camp, presidents of institutions, officers of the state bearing the insignia of the Empire and of Italy, and seven ladies with offerings. The Emperor himself in royal robes, wearing the Imperial crown, and carrying the sceptre. He is followed my ministers and officials of the household. His gait is rather defiant than dignified, and a bluish pallor overspreads his face. He is met by the Cardinal Archbishop of CAPRARA and the clergy, who burn incense before him as he proceeds towards the throne. Rolling notes of music burn forth, and loud applause from the congregation.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES What is the creed that these rich rites disclose?

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I did not recognize it here, forsooth; Though in its early, lovingkindly days Of gracious purpose it was much to me.

ARCHBISHOP [addressing Bonaparte] Sire, with that clemency and right goodwill Which beautify Imperial Majesty, You deigned acceptance of the homages That we the clergy and the Milanese Were proud to offer when your entrance here Streamed radiance on our ancient capital. Please, then, to consummate the boon to-day

Beneath this holy roof, so soon to thrill With solemn strains and lifting harmonies Befitting such a coronation hour; And bend a tender fatherly regard On this assembly, now at one with me To supplicate the Author of All Good That He endow your most Imperial person With every Heavenly gift.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPIRIT SINISTER The lady's remark is apposite, and reminds me that I may as

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Would thou couldst! But move That scoped above percipience, Sire, It cannot be!

SHADE OF THE EARTH The spectacle proceeds.

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

NAPOLÉON ’Tis God has given it to me. So be it. Let any who shall touch it now beware! [Reverberations of applause.] [The Sacrament of the Mass. NAPOLÉON reads the Coronation Oath in a loud voice.]

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

CONGREGATION Long live the Emperor and King. Huzza! [Music. The Te Deum.]

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

splendours?—helmet thee For her thou swar’st-to first, fair Liberty?

NAPOLÉON Who spoke to me?

ARCHBISHOP Not I, Sire. Not a soul.

NAPOLÉON Dear Joséphine, my queen, didst call my name?

JOSÉPHINE I spoke not, Sire.

NAPOLÉON Thou didst not, tender spouse; I know it. Such harsh utterance was not thine. It was aggressive Fancy, working spells Upon a mind o’erwrought! [The service closes. The clergy advance with the canopy to the foot of the throne, and the procession forms to return to the Palace.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Officious sprite, Thou art young, and dost not heed the Cause of things Which some of us have inkled to thee here; Else wouldst thou not have hailed the Emperor, Whose acts do but outshape Its governing.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I feel, Sire, as I must! This tale of Will And Life’s impulsion by Incognizance I cannot take!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Let me then once again Show to thy sceptic eye the very streams And currents of this all-inhering Power, And bring conclusion to thy unbelief. [The scene assumes the preternatural transparency before mentioned, and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of a Universal Will, of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Enough. And yet for very sorriness I cannot own the weird phantasma real!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Affection ever was illogical.

SPIRIT IRONIC [aside] How should the Sprite own to such logic—a mere juvenile— who only came into being in what the earthlings call their Tertiary Age! [The scene changes. The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place of the interior, and

the point of view recedes, the whole fabric smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved alabaster ornament. The city itself sinks to miniature, the Alps show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Genoa appear on this and on that hand, with Italy between them, till clouds cover the panorama.]

# ACT SECOND

## SCENE I

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

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS I'll call in Nelson, who has stepped ashore For the first time these thrice twelvemonths and more, And with him one whose insight has alone Pierced the real project of Napoléon. [Enter NELSON and COLLINGWOOD, who

pace up and down.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Note Nelson's worn-out features. Much has he Suffered from ghoulish ghast anxiety!

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

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

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

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

NELSON Good Collingwood, I know you trust in me; But ships are ships, and do not kindly come Out of the slow docks of the Admiralty Like wharfside pigeons when they are whistled for:— And there's a damned disparity of force, Which means tough work awhile for you and me! [The Spirit of the Years whispers to

NELSON.] And I have warnings, warnings, Collingwood, That my effective hours are shortening here; Strange warnings now and then, as ’twere within me, Which, though I fear them not, I recognize!... However, by God’s help, I’ll live to meet These foreign boasters; yea, I’ll finish them; And then—well, Gunner Death may finish me! COLLINGWOOD View not your life so gloomily, my lord: One charmed, a needed purpose to fulfil!

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

## SCENE II

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS He indites To his long friend the minister Decrès Words that go heavily!...

VILLENEUVE [writing] “I am made the arbiter in vast designs Whereof I see black outcomes. Do I this Or do I that, success, that loves to jilt Her anxious wooer for some careless blade, Will not reward me. For, if I must pen it, Demoralized past

prayer in the marine— Bad masts, bad sails, bad officers, bad men; We cling to naval technics long outworn, And time and opportunity do not avail me To take up new. I have long suspected such, But till I saw my helps, the Spanish ships, I hoped somewhat.—Brest is my nominal port; Yet if so, Calder will again attack— Now reinforced by Nelson or Cornwallis— And shatter my whole fleet.... Shall I admit That my true inclination and desire Is to make Cadiz straightway, and not Brest? Alas! thereby I fail the Emperor; But shame the navy less.— "Your friend, VILLENEUVE" [GENERAL LAURISTON enters.]

LAURISTON Admiral, my missive to the Emperor, Which I shall speed by special courier From Ferrol this near eve, runs thus and thus:— "Gravina's ships, in Ferrol here at hand, Embayed but by a temporary wind, Are all we now await. Combined with these We sail herefrom to Brest; there promptly give Cornwallis battle, and release Ganteaume; Thence, all united, bearing Channelwards: A step that sets in motion the first wheel In the proud project of your Majesty Now to be engined to the very close, To wit: that a French fleet shall enter in And hold the Channel four-and-twenty hours."— Such clear assurance to the Emperor That our intent is modelled on his will I hasten to dispatch to him forthwith.4

VILLENEUVE Yes, Lauriston. I sign to every word. [Lauriston goes out. VILLENEUVE remains at his table in reverie.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS We may impress him under visible shapes That seem to shed a silent circling doom; He's such an one as can be so impressed, And this much is among our privileges, Well bounded as they be.—Let us draw near him. [The Spirits of Years and of the Pities take the form of sea-birds, which alight on the stern-balcony of VILLENEUVE's ship, immediately outside his cabin window. VILLENEUVE after a while looks up and sees the birds watching him with large piercing eyes.]

VILLENEUVE My apprehensions even outstep their cause, As though some

influence smote through yonder pane. [He gazes listlessly, and resumes his broodings.] —-Why dared I not disclose to him my thought, As nightly worded by the whistling shrouds, That Brest will never see our battled hulls Helming to north in pomp of cannonry To take the front in this red pilgrimage! —-If so it were, now, that I'd screen my skin From risks of bloody business in the brunt, My acts could scarcely wear a difference. Yet I would die to-morrow—not ungladly— So far removed is carcase-care from me. For no self do these apprehensions spring, But for the cause.—Yes, rotten is our marine, Which, while I know, the Emperor knows not, And the pale secret chills! Though some there be Would beard contingencies and buffet all, I'll not command a course so conscienceless. Rather I'll stand, and face Napoléon's rage When he shall learn what mean the ambiguous lines That facts have forced from me.

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

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

**SCENE III**

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

DUMB SHOW A courier arrives with dispatches, and enters the Emperor's quarters, whence he emerges and goes on with other dispatches to the hut of DECRÈS, lower

down. Immediately after, NAPOLÉON comes out from his hut with a paper in his hand, and musingly proceeds towards an eminence commanding the Channel. Along the shore below are forming in a far-reaching line more than a hundred thousand infantry. On the downs in the rear of the camps fifteen thousand cavalry are manoeuvring, their accoutrements flashing in the sun like a school of mackerel. The flotilla lies in and around the port, alive with moving figures. With his head forward and his hands behind him the Emperor surveys these animated proceedings in detail, but more frequently turns his face toward the telegraph on the cliff to the southwest, erected to signal when VILLENEUVE and the combined squadrons shall be visible on the west horizon. He summons one of the aides, who descends to the hut of DECRÈS. DECRÈS comes out from his hut, and hastens to join the Emperor. Dumb show ends. [NAPOLÉON and DECRÈS advance to the foreground of the scene.]

NAPOLÉON Decrès, this action with Sir Robert Calder Three weeks ago, whereof we dimly heard, And clear details of which I have just unsealed, Is on the whole auspicious for our plan. It seems that twenty of our ships and Spain's— None over eighty-gunned, and some far less— Engaged the English off Cape Finisterre With fifteen vessels of a hundred each. We coolly fought and orderly as they, And, but for mist, we had closed with victory. Two English were much mauled, some Spanish damaged, And Calder then drew off with his two wrecks And Spain's in tow, we giving chase forthwith. Not overtaking him our admiral, Having the coast clear for his purposes, Entered Coruna, and found order there To open the port of Brest and come on hither. Thus hastes the moment when the double fleet Of Villeneuve and of Ganteaume should appear. [He looks again towards the telegraph.]

DECRÈS [with hesitation] And should they not appear, your Majesty?

NAPOLÉON Not? But they will; and do it early, too! There's nothing hinders them. My God, they must, For I have much before me when this stroke At England's dealt. I learn from Talleyrand That Austrian preparations threaten hot, While Russia's

hostile schemes are ripening, And shortly must be met.—My plan is fixed: I am prepared for each alternative. If Villeneuve come, I brave the British coast, Convulse the land with fear ['tis even now So far distraught, that generals cast about To find new modes of warfare; yea, design Carriages to transport their infantry!].—Once on the English soil I hold it firm, Descend on London, and the while my men Salute the dome of Paul's I cut the knot Of all Pitt's coalitions; setting free From bondage to a cold manorial caste A people who await it. [They stand and regard the chalky cliffs of England, till NAPOLÉON resumes]: Should it be Even that my admirals fail to keep the tryst— A thing scarce thinkable, when all's reviewed— I strike this seaside camp, cross Germany, With these two hundred thousand seasoned men, And pause not till within Vienna's walls I cry checkmate. Next, Venice, too, being taken, And Austria's other holdings down that way, The Bourbons also driven from Italy, I strike at Russia—each in turn, you note, Ere they can act conjoined. Report to me What has been scanned to-day upon the main, And on your passage down request them there To send Daru this way.

DECRÈS [as he withdraws] The Emperor can be sanguine. Scarce can I. His letters are more promising than mine. Alas, alas, Villeneuve, my dear old friend, Why do you pen me this at such a time! [He retires reading VILLENEUVE'S letter. The Emperor walks up and down till DARU, his private secretary, joins him.]

NAPOLÉON Come quick, Daru; sit down upon the grass, And write whilst I am in mind. First to Villeneuve:— "I trust, Vice-Admiral, that before this date Your fleet has opened Brest, and gone. If not, These lines will greet you there. But pause not, pray: Waste not a moment dallying. Sail away: Once bring my coupled squadrons Channelwards And England's soil is ours. All's ready here, The troops alert, and every store embarked. Hold the nigh sea but four-and-twenty hours And our vast end is gained." Now to Ganteaume:— "My telegraphs will have made known to you My object and desire to be but this, That you forbid Villeneuve to lose an hour In getting fit and putting forth to sea, To profit by the fifty first-rate craft Wherewith I now am

bettered. Quickly weigh, And steer you for the Channel with all your strength. I count upon your well-known character, Your enterprize, your vigour, to do this. Sail hither, then; and we will be avenged For centuries of despite and contumely.”

DARU Shall a fair transcript, Sire, be made forthwith?

NAPOLÉON This moment. And the courier will depart And travel without pause. [DARU goes to his office a little lower down, and the Emperor lingers on the cliffs looking through his glass. The point of view shifts across the Channel, the Boulogne cliffs sinking behind the water-line.]

**SCENE IV**

SOUTH WESSEX. A RIDGE-LIKE DOWN NEAR THE COAST [The down commands a wide view over the English Channel in front of it, including the popular Royal watering-place, with the Isle of Slingers and its roadstead, where men-of-war and frigates are anchored. The hour is ten in the morning, and the July sun glows upon a large military encampment round about the foreground, and warms the stone field-walls that take the place of hedges here. Artillery, cavalry, and infantry, English and Hanoverian, are drawn up for review under the DUKE OF CUMBERLAND and officers of the staff, forming a vast military array, which extends three miles, and as far as the downs are visible. In the centre by the Royal Standard appears KING GEORGE on horseback, and his suite. In a coach drawn by six cream- coloured Hanoverian horses, QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits with three Princesses; in another carriage with four horses are two more Princesses. There are also present with the Royal Party the LORD CHANCELLOR, LORD MULGRAVE, COUNT MUNSTER, and many other luminaries of fashion and influence. The Review proceeds in dumb show; and the din of many bands mingles with the cheers. The turf behind the saluting-point is crowded with carriages and spectators on foot.]

A SPECTATOR And you’ve come to the sight, like the King and myself? Well, one

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIRST SPECTATOR Step up on this barrow; you can see better. The troopers now

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

SECOND SPECTATOR Or another soon to follow it! [He gazes over the Channel.] There's not a speck of an enemy upon that shiny water yet; but the Brest fleet is zaid to have put to sea, to act in concert with the army crossing from Boulogne; and if so the French will soon be here; when God save us all! I've took to drinking neat, for, say I, one may as well have innerds burnt out as shot out, and 'tis a good deal pleasanter for the man that owns 'em. They say that a cannon-ball knocked poor Jim Popple's maw right up into the futtock-shrouds at the Nile, where 'a hung like a nightcap out to dry. Much good to him his obeying his old mother's wish and refusing his allowance o' rum! [The bands play and the Review continues till past eleven o'clock. Then follows a sham fight. At noon precisely the royal carriages draw off the ground into the highway that leads down to the town and Gloucester Lodge, followed by other equipages in such numbers that the road is blocked. A multitude comes after on foot. Presently the vehicles manage to proceed to the watering-place, and the troops march away to the various camps as a sea-mist cloaks the perspective.]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. RAINBARROW'S BEACON, EGDON HEATH [Night in mid-August of the same summer. A lofty ridge of heathland reveals itself dimly, terminating in an abrupt slope, at the summit of which are three tumuli. On the sheltered side of the most prominent of these stands a hut of turves with a brick chimney. In front are two ricks of fuel, one of heather and furze for quick ignition, the other of wood, for slow burning. Something in the feel of the darkness and in the personality of the spot imparts a sense of uninterrupted space around, the view by

day extending from the cliffs of the Isle of Wight eastward to Blackdon Hill by Deadman's Bay westward, and south across the Valley of the Froom to the ridge that screens the Channel. Two men with pikes loom up, on duty as beacon-keepers beside the ricks.]

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

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

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

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

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

YOUNG MAN No. Nor no other corrupt practices.

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

YOUNG MAN I warrant I do!

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

YOUNG MAN I larned it at church, thank God.

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

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

OLD MAN Canst be sharp enough in the wrong place as usual—I warrant canst! However, I'll have patience with 'en and say on!—Suppose, now, my hat is the world; and there, as might be, stands the Camp of Belong, where Boney is. The world goes round, so, and Belong goes round too. Twelve hours pass; round goes the world still—so. Where's Belong now? [A pause. Two other figures, a man's and a woman's, rise against the sky out of the gloom.]

OLD MAN [shouldering his pike] Who goes there? Friend or foe, in the King's name!

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

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

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

OLD MAN Not a sign or sound—all's as still as a churchyard. And how is your

good man?

PRIVATE [advancing] Clk. I be all right! I was in the ranks, helping to keep the ground at the review by the King this week. We was a wonderful sight— wonderful! The King said so again and again.—Yes, there was he, and there was I, though not daring to move a' eyebrow in the presence of Majesty. I have come home on a night's leave—off there again to- morrow. Boney's expected every day, the Lord be praised! Yes, our hopes are to be fulfilled soon, as we say in the army.

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

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

OLD MAN To be sure we have.

PRIVATE Ghastly, isn't it!

OLD MAN Ghastly! Frightful!

YOUNG MAN [to Private] He don't know what it is! That's his pride and puffery. What is it that' so ghastly—hey?

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

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

YOUNG MAN Ye can't believe all ye hear.

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

WOMAN Whether or no, I sometimes—God forgive me!—laugh wi' horror at the queerness o't, till I am that weak I can hardly go round the house. He should have the washing of 'em a few times; I warrant 'a wouldn't want to eat babies any more! [A silence, during which they gaze around at the dark dome of the starless sky.]

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

OLD MAN Well, come in and taste a drop o' sommat we've got here, that will warm the cockles of your heart as ye wamble homealong. We housed eighty tuns last night for them that shan't be named—landed at Lullwind Cove the night afore, though they had a narrow shave with the riding-officers this run. [They make toward the hut, when a light on the west horizon becomes visible, and quickly enlarges.]

YOUNG MAN He's come!

OLD MAN Come he is, though you do say it! This, then, is the beginning of what England's waited for! [They stand and watch the light awhile.]

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

PRIVATE My meaning was—-

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

OLD MAN [shouldering his pike] We can't heed your innocent pratings any longer, good neighbours, being in the King's service, and a hot invasion on. Fall in, fall in, mate. Straight to the tinder-box. Quick march! [The two men hasten to the hut, and

are heard striking a flint and steel. Returning with a lit lantern they ignite a blaze. The private of the Locals and his wife hastily retreat by the light of the flaming beacon, under which the purple rotundities of the heath show like bronze, and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull.]

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

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music] We carry out? Nay, but should we Ordain what bloodshed is to be it!

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

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

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Gross hypocrite!

CHORUS OF THE YEARS We comprehend him not. [The day breaks over the heathery upland, on which the beacon is still burning. The morning reveals the white surface of a highway which, coming from the royal watering-place beyond the hills, stretched towards the outskirts of the heath and passes away eastward.]

DUMB SHOW Moving figures and vehicles dot the surface of the road, all progressing in one direction, away from the coast. In the foreground the shapes appear as those of civilians, mostly on foot, but many in gigs and tradesmen’s carts and on horseback. When they reach an intermediate hill some pause and look back;

others enter on the next decline landwards without turning their heads. From the opposite horizon numerous companies of volunteers, in the local uniform of red with green facings,5 are moving coastwards in companies; as are also irregular bodies of pikemen without uniform; while on the upper slopes of the downs towards the shore regiments of the line are visible, with cavalry and artillery; all passing over to the coast. At a signal from the Chief Intelligences two Phantoms of Rumour enter on the highway in the garb of country-men.

FIRST PHANTOM [to Pedestrians] Wither so fast, good neighbours, and before breakfast, too? Empty bellies be bad to vamp on.

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

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

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

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

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

FIRST PEDESTRIAN Hey? And d'ye know it?—Now I look back to the top o' Rudgeway the folk seem as come to a pause there.—Be this true, never again do I stir my stumps for any alarm short of the Day of Judgment! Nine times has my

rheumatical rest been broke in these last three years by hues and cries of Boney upon us. ’Od rot the feller; now he’s made a fool of me once more, till my inside is like a wash-tub, what wi’ being so gallied, and running so leery!—But how if you be one of the enemy, sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings, and coax us into a fancied safety? Hey, neighbours? I don’t, after all, care for this story!

SECOND PEDESTRIAN Onwards again! If Boney’s come, ’tis best to be away; And if he’s not, why, we’ve a holiday! [Exeunt Pedestrians. The Spirits of Rumour vanish, while the scene seems to become involved in the smoke from the beacon, and slowly disappears.6]

# ACT THIRD

## SCENE I

BOULOGNE. THE CHATEAU AT PONT-DE-BRIQUES [A room in the Chateau, which is used as the Imperial quarters. The EMPEROR NAPOLÉON, and M. GASPARD MONGE, the mathematician and philosopher, are seated at breakfast.]

OFFICER Monsieur the Admiral Decrès awaits A moment’s audience with your Majesty, Or now, or later.

NAPOLÉON Bid him in at once— At last Villeneuve has raised the Brest blockade! [Enter DECRÈS.] What of the squadron’s movements, good Decrès? Brest opened, and all sailing Channelwards, Like swans into a creek at feeding-time?

DECRÈS Such news was what I’d hoped, your Majesty, To send across this daybreak. But events Have proved intractable, it seems, of late; And hence I haste in person to report The featless facts that just have dashed my—-

NAPOLÉON [darkening] Well?

DECRÈS Sire, at the very juncture when the fleets Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard “LL’Achille” and “l’Algeciras”: later on, Mischief assailed our

Spanish comrades' ships; Several ran foul of neighbours; whose new hurts, Being added to their innate clumsiness, Gave hap the upper hand; and in quick course Demoralized the whole; until Villeneuve, Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode, And prescient of unparalleled disaster If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim, Bowed to the inevitable; and thus, perforce, Leaving to other opportunity Brest and the Channel scheme, with vast regret Steered southward into Cadiz.

NAPOLÉON [having risen from the table] What!—Is, then, My scheme of years to be disdained and dashed By this man's like, a wretched moral coward, Whom you must needs foist on me as one fit For full command in pregnant enterprise!

MONGE [aside] I'm one too many here! Let me step out Till this black squall blows over. Poor Decrès. Would that this precious project, disinterred From naval archives of King Louis' reign, Had ever lingered fusting where 'twas found.7 [Exit Monge.]

NAPOLÉON To help a friend you foul a country's fame!— Decrès, not only chose you this Villeneuve, But you have nourished secret sour opinions Akin to his, and thereby helped to scathe As stably based a project as this age Has sunned to ripeness. Ever the French Marine Have you decried, ever contrived to bring Despair into the fleet! Why, this Villeneuve, Your man, this rank incompetent, this traitor— Of whom I asked no more than fight and lose, Provided he detain the enemy— A frigate is too great for his command! what shall be said of one who, at a breath, When a few casual sailors find them sick, When falls a broken boom or slitten sail, When rumour hints that Calder's tubs and Nelson's May join, and bob about in company, Is straightway paralyzed, and doubles back On all his ripened plans!— Bring him, ay, bodily; hale him out from Cadiz, Compel him up the Channel by main force, And, having doffed him his supreme command, Give the united squadrons to Ganteaume!

DECRÈS Your Majesty, while umbraged, righteously, By an event my tongue dragged dry to tell, Makes my hard situation over-hard By your ascription to the

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

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

DECRÈS My voice wanes weaker with you, Sire; is nought! Yet these few words, as Minister of Marine, I'll venture now.—My process would be thus:— Our projects for a junction of the fleets Being well-discerned and read by every eye Through long postponement, England is prepared. I would recast them. Later in the year Form sundry squadrons of this massive one, Harass the English till the winter time, Then rendezvous at Cadiz; where leave half To catch the enemy's eye and call their cruizers, While rounding Scotland with the other half, You make the Channel by the eastern strait, Cover the passage of our army-boats, And plant the blow.

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

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

NAPOLÉON Do so forthwith; and send me in Daru. [Exit DECRÈS. Re-enter

MONGE.] Our breakfast, Monge, to-day has been cut short, And these discussions on the ancient tongues Wherein you shine, must yield to modern moils. Nay, hasten not away; though feeble wills, Incompetence, ay, imbecility, In some who feign to serve the cause of France, Do make me other than myself just now!— Ah—here's Daru. [DARU enters. MONGE takes his leave.] Daru, sit down and write. Yes, here, at once, This room will serve me now. What think you, eh? Villeneuve has just turned tail and run to Cadiz. So quite postponed—perhaps even overthrown— My long-conned project against yonder shore As 'twere a juvenile's snow-built device But made for melting! Think of it, Daru,— My God, my God, how can I talk thereon! A plan well judged, well charted, well upreared, To end in nothing!... Sit you down and write. [NAPOLÉON walks up and down, and resumes after a silence.] Write this.—A volte-face 'tis indeed!—Write, write!

DARU [holding pen to paper] I wait, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON First Bernadotte— Yes; "Bernadotte moves out from Hanover Through Hesse upon Wurzburg and the Danube.— Marmont from Holland bears along the Rhine, And joins at Mainz and Wurzburg Bernadotte... While these prepare their routes the army here Will turn its back on Britain's tedious shore, And, closing up with Augereau at Brest, Set out full force due eastward.... By the Black forest feign a straight attack, The while our purpose is to skirt its left, Meet in Franconia Bernadotte and Marmont; Traverse the Danube somewhat down from Ulm; Entrap the Austrian column by their rear; Surround them, cleave them; roll upon Vienna, Where, Austria settled, I engage the Tsar, While Masséna detains in Italy The Archduke Charles. Foreseeing such might shape, Each high-and by-way to the Danube hence I have of late had measured, mapped, and judged; Such spots as suit for depots chosen and marked; Each regiment's daily pace and bivouac Writ tablewise for ready reference; All which itineraries are sent herewith." So shall I crush the two gigantic sets Upon the Empire, now grown imminent. —Let me reflect.—First Bernadotte—-but nay, The courier to Marmont must go first. Well,

well.—The order of our march from hence I will advise.... My knock at George's door With bland inquiries why his royal hand Withheld due answer to my friendly lines, And tossed the irksome business to his clerks, Is thus perforce delayed. But not for long. Instead of crossing, thitherward I tour By roundabout contrivance not less sure!

DARU I'll bring the writing to your Majesty. [NAPOLÉON and DARU go out severally.]

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

## SCENE II

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

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

A RECORDING ANGEL [in recitative] This movement as of molluscs on a leaf, Which from our vantage here we scan afar, Is one manoeuvred by the famous Mack

To countercheck Napoléon, still believed To be intent on England from Boulogne, And heedless of such rallies in his rear. Mack's enterprise is now to cross Bavaria— Beneath us stretched in ripening summer peace As field unwonted for these ugly jars— Outraged Bavaria, simmering in disquiet At Munich down behind us, Isar-fringed, And torn between his fair wife's hate of France And his own itch to gird at Austrian bluff For riding roughshod through his territory, Wavers from this to that. The while Time hastes The eastward streaming of Napoléon's host, As soon we see. The silent insect-creep of the Austrian columns towards the banks of the Inn continues to be seen till the view fades to nebulousness and dissolves.

### SCENE III

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

NAPOLÉON Anon to England!

CHORUS OF INTELLIGENCES [aerial music] If Time's weird threads so weave! [The scene as it lingers exhibits the gradual diminishing of the troops along the roads through the undulating August landscape, till each column is seen but as a train of dust; and the disappearance of each marching mass over the eastern horizon.]

## ACT FOURTH

**SCENE I**

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX [A sunny day in autumn. A room in the red-brick royal residence know as Gloucester Lodge.8 At a front triple-lighted window stands a telescope on a tripod. Through the open middle sash is visible the crescent-curved expanse of the Bay as a sheet of brilliant translucent green, on which ride vessels of war at anchor. On the left hand white cliffs stretch away till they terminate in St. Aldhelm's Head, and form a background to the level water-line on that side. In the centre are the open sea and blue sky. A near headland rises on the right, surmounted by a battery, over which appears the remoter bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingers. In the foreground yellow sands spread smoothly, whereon there are sundry temporary erections for athletic sports; and closer at hand runs an esplanade on which a fashionable crowd is promenading. Immediately outside the Lodge are companies of soldiers, groups of officers, and sentries. Within the room the KING and PITT are discovered. The KING'S eyes show traces of recent inflammation, and the Minister has a wasted look.]

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

PITT The thoughts I have laid before your Majesty Would make for this, in sum:— That Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, and their friends, Be straightway asked to join. With Melville gone, With Sidmouth, and with Buckinghamshire too, The steerage of affairs has stood of late Somewhat provisional, as you, sir, know, With stop-gap functions thrust on offices Which common weal can tolerate but awhile. So, for the

weighty reasons I have urged, I do repeat my most respectful hope To win your Majesty's ungrudged assent To what I have proposed.

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

PITT Such rumours come as regularly as harvest.

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

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

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

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

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

PITT Amen, amen!

KING I read it as a thing Of signal augury, and one which bodes Heaven's

confidence in me and in my line, That I should rule as King in such an age!... Well, well.—So this new march of Bonaparte's Was unexpected, forced perchance on him?

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

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

PITT I say besides, sir,... nothing! [A silence.]

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

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

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

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

KING Now, Mr. Pitt, you must require repose; Consult your own convenience then, I beg, On when you leave. PITT I thank your Majesty. [He departs as one whose purpose has failed, and the scene shuts.]

## SCENE II

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

the most prominent of the heights at the back—the Michaelsberg —to the upper-right of the view, is encamped the mass of the Austrian army, amid half-finished entrenchments. Advanced posts of the same are seen south-east of the city, not far from the advanced corps of the French Grand-Army under SOULT, MARMONT, LANNES, NEY, and DUPONT, which occupy in a semicircle the whole breadth of the flat landscape in front, and extend across the river to higher ground on the right hand of the panorama. Heavy mixed drifts of rain and snow are descending impartially on the French and on the Austrians, the downfall nearly blotting out the latter on the hills. A chill October wind wails across the country, and the poplars yield slantingly to the gusts.]

DUMB SHOW Drenched peasants are busily at work, fortifying the heights of the Austrian position in the face of the enemy. Vague companies of Austrians above, and of the French below, hazy and indistinct in the thick atmosphere, come and go without apparent purpose near their respective lines. Closer at hand NAPOLÉON, in his familiar blue-grey overcoat, rides hither and thither with his marshals, haranguing familiarly the bodies of soldiery as he passes them, and observing and pointing out the disposition of the Austrians to his companions. Thicker sheets of rain fly across as the murk of evening increases, which at length entirely obscures the prospect, and cloaks its bleared lights and fires.

## SCENE III

ULM. WITHIN THE CITY [The interior of the Austrian headquarters on the following morning. A tempest raging without. GENERAL MACK, haggard and anxious, the ARCHDUKE FERDINAND, PRINCE SCHWARZENBERG, GENERAL JELLACHICH, GENERALS RIESC, BIBERBACH, and other field officers discovered, seated at a table with a map spread out before them. A wood fire blazes between tall andirons in a yawning fireplace. At every more than usually boisterous gust of wind the smoke flaps into the room.]

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

ARCHDUKE But who shall say if these bright tales be true?

MACK Even then, small matter, your Imperial Highness; The Russians near us daily, and must soon— Ay, far within the eight days I have named— Be operating to untie this knot, If we hold on.

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

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

SCHWARZENBERG There's truth in urging we should not divide, But weld more closely.—Yet why stay at all? Methinks there's but one sure salvation left, To wit, that we conjunctly march herefrom, And with much circumspection, towards the Tyrol. The subtle often rack their wits in vain— Assay whole magazines of strategy— To shun ill loomings deemed insuperable, When simple souls by stumbling up to them Find the grim shapes but air. But let use grant That the

investing French so ring us in As to leave not a span for such exploit; Then go we—throw ourselves upon their steel, And batter through, or die!— What say you, Generals? Speak your minds, I pray.

JELLACHICH I favour marching out—the Tyrol way.

RIESC Bohemia best! The route thereto is open.

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

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

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

SCHWARZENBERG The Archduke bears him shrewdly in this course. We may as well look matters in the face, And that we are cooped and cornered is most clear;

Clear it is, too, that but a miracle Can work to loose us! I have stoutly held That this man's three years' ostentatious scheme To fling his army on the tempting shores Of our Allies the English was a—well— Scarce other than a trick of thimble-rig To still us into false security.

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

SPIRIT SINISTER The Will throws Mack again into agitation: Ho-ho—what he'll do now!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Nay, hard one, nay; The clouds weep for him!

SPIRIT SINISTER If he must; And it's good antic at a vacant time! [MACK goes restlessly to the door, and is heard pacing about the vestibule, and questioning the aides and other officers gathered there.]

A GENERAL He wavers like this smoke-wreath that inclines Or north, or south, as the storm-currents rule!

MACK [returning] Bring that deserter hither once again. [A French soldier is brought in, blindfolded and guarded. The bandage is removed.] Well, tell us what he says.

AN OFFICER [after speaking to the prisoner in French] He still repeats That the whole body of the British strength Is even now descending on Boulogne, And that self-preservation must, if need, Clear us from Bonaparte ere many days, Who momently is moving.

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

JELLACHICH [bending over the map in argument with RIESC] I much prefer our self-won information; And if we have Marshal Soult at Landsberg here, [Which seems to be truth, despite this man,] And Dupont hard upon us at Albeck, With Ney

not far from Gunzburg; somewhere here, Or further down the river, lurking Lannes, Our game's to draw off southward—if we can!

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

A GENERAL [in a low voice] Disjunction seems of all expedients worst: If any stay, then stay should every man, Gather, inlace, and close up hip to hip, And perk and bristle hedgehog-like with spines!

MACK The conference is ended, friends, I say, And orders will be issued here forthwith. [Guns heard.]

AN OFFICER Surely that's from the Michaelsberg above us?

MACK Never care. Here we stay. In five more days The Russians hail, and we regain our bays. [Exeunt severally.]

## SCENE IV

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

DUMB SHOW From the terrace BONAPARTE surveys and dictates operations against the entrenched heights of the Michaelsberg that rise in the middle distance on the right above the city. Through the gauze of descending waters the French soldiery can be discerned climbing to the attack under NEY. They slowly advance, recede, re-advance, halt. A time of suspense follows. Then they are seen in a state of irregular movement, even confusion; but in the end they carry the heights with the bayonet. Below the spot whereon NAPOLÉON and his staff are gathered, glistening wet and plastered with mud, obtrudes on the left the village of Elchingen, now in the

hands of the French. Its white- walled monastery, its bridge over the Danube, recently broken by the irresistible NEY, wear a desolated look, and the stream, which is swollen by the rainfall and rasped by the storm, seems wanly to sympathize. Anon shells are dropped by the French from the summits they have gained into the city below. A bomb from an Austrian battery falls near NAPOLÉON, and in bursting raises a fountain of mud. The Emperor retreats with his officers to a less conspicuous station. Meanwhile LANNES advances from a position near NAPOLÉON till his columns reach the top of the Frauenberg hard by. The united corps of LANNES and NEY descend on the inner slope of the heights towards the city walls, in the rear of the retreating Austrians. One of the French columns scales a bastion, but NAPOLÉON orders the assault to be discontinued, and with the wane of day the spectacle disappears.

**SCENE V**

THE SAME. THE MICHAELSBERG [A chilly but rainless noon three days later. At the back of the scene, northward, rise the Michaelsberg heights; below stretches the panorama of the city and the Danube. On a secondary eminence forming a spur of the upper hill, a fire of logs is burning, the foremost group beside it being NAPOLÉON and his staff, the former in his shabby greatcoat and plain turned-up hat, walking to and fro with his hands behind him, and occasionally stopping to warm himself. The French infantry are drawn up in a dense array at the back of these. The whole Austrian garrison of Ulm marches out of the city gate opposite NAPOLÉON. GENERAL MACK is at the head, followed by GIULAY, GOTTESHEIM, KLINAU, LICHTENSTEIN, and many other officers, who advance to BONAPARTE and deliver their swords.]

MACK Behold me, Sire. Mack the unfortunate!

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

here. A glowing fire Is life on the depressing, mired, moist days Of smitten leaves down-dropping clammily, And toadstools like the putrid lungs of men. [To his Lieutenants.] Cause them so stand to right and left of me. [The Austrian officers arrange themselves as directed, and the body of the Austrians now file past their Conqueror, laying down their arms as they approach; some with angry gestures and words, others in moody silence.] Listen, I pray you, Generals gathered her. I tell you frankly that I know not why Your master wages this wild war with me. I know not what he seeks by such injustice, Unless to give me practice in my trade— That of a soldier—whereto I was bred: Deemed he my craft might slip from me, unplied? Let him now own me still a dab therein!

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

NAPOLÉON If that be, You are no more a European power.— I would point out to him that my resources Are not confined to these my musters here; My prisoners of war, in route for France, Will see some marks of my resources there! Two hundred thousand volunteers, right fit, Will join my standards at a single nod, And in six weeks prove soldiers to the bone, Whilst you recruits, compulsion's scavengings, Scarce weld to warriors after toilsome years. But I want nothing on this Continent: The English only are my enemies. Ships, colonies, and commerce I desire, Yea, therewith to advantage you as me. Let me then charge your Emperor, my brother, To turn his feet the shortest way to peace.— All states must have an end, the weak, the strong; Ay; even may fall the dynasty of Lorraine! [The filing past and laying down of arms by the Austrian army continues with monotonous regularity, as if it would never end.]

NAPOLÉON [in a murmur, after a while] Well, what cares England! She has won her game; I have unlearnt to threaten her from Boulogne.... Her gold it is that forms the weft of this Fair tapestry of armies marshalled here! Likewise of Russia's

drawing steadily nigh. But they may see what these see, by and by.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS So let him speak, the while we clearly sight him Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide. Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes, The all-compelling crystal pane but drags Wither the showman wills.

SPIRIT IRONIC And yet, my friend, The Will itself might smile at this collapse Of Austria's men-at-arms, so drolly done; Even as, in your phantasmagoric show, The deft manipulator of the slide Might smile at his own art.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music] Ah, no: ah, no! It is impassible as glacial snow.— Within the Great Unshaken These painted shapes awaken A lesser thrill than doth the gentle lave Of yonder bank by Danube's wandering wave Within the Schwarzwald heights that give it flow!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES But O, the intolerable antilogy Of making figments feel!

SPIRIT IRONIC Logic's in that. It does not, I must own, quite play the game.

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] And this day wins for Ulm a dingy fame, Which centuries shall not bleach from her name! [The procession of Austrians continues till the scene is hidden by haze.]

**SCENE VI**

LONDON. SPRING GARDENS [Before LORD MALMESBURY'S house, on a Sunday morning in the same autumn. Idlers pause and gather in the background. PITT enters, and meets LORD MULGRAVE.]

MULGRAVE Good day, Pitt. Ay, these leaves that skim the ground With withered voices, hint that sunshine-time Is well-nigh past.—And so the game's begun Between him and the Austro-Russian force, As second movement in the faceabout From Boulogne shore, with which he has hocussed us?— What has been heard on't? Have they clashed as yet?

PITT The Emperor Francis, partly at my instance, Has thrown the chief command

on General Mack, A man most capable and far of sight. He centres by the Danube-bank at Ulm, A town well-walled, and firm for leaning on To intercept the French in their advance From the Black Forest toward the Russian troops Approaching from the east. If Bonaparte Sustain his marches at the break-neck speed That all report, they must have met ere now. —There is a rumour... quite impossible!...

MULGRAVE You still have faith in Mack as strategist? There have been doubts of his far-sightedness.

PITT [hastily] I know, I know.—I am calling here at Malmesbury's At somewhat an unceremonious time To ask his help to translate this Dutch print The post has brought. Malmesbury is great at Dutch, Learning it long at Leyden, years ago. [He draws a newspaper from his pocket, unfolds it, and glances it down.] There's news here unintelligible to me Upon the very matter! You'll come in? [They call at LORD MAMESBURY'S. He meets them in the hall, and welcomes them with an apprehensive look of foreknowledge.]

PITT Pardon this early call. The packet's in, And wings me this unreadable Dutch paper, So, as the offices are closed to-day, I have brought it round to you. [Handling the paper.] What does it say? For God's sake, read it out. You know the tongue.

MALMESBURY [with hesitation] I have glanced it through already—more than once— A copy having reached me, too, by now... We are in the presence of a great disaster! See here. It says that Mack, enjailed in Ulm By Bonaparte—from four side shutting round— Capitulated, and with all his force Laid down his arms before his conqueror! [PITT's face changes. A silence.]

MULGRAVE Outrageous! Ignominy unparalleled!

PITT By God, my lord, these statement must be false! These foreign prints are trustless as Cheap Jack Dumfounding yokels at a country fair. I heed no word of it.—Impossible. What! Eighty thousand Austrians, nigh in touch With Russia's

levies that Kutúzof leads, To lay down arms before the war's begun? 'Tis too much!

MALMESBURY But I fear it is too true! Note the assevered source of the report— One beyond thought of minters of mock tales. The writer adds that military wits Cry that the little Corporal now makes war In a new way, using his soldiers' legs And not their arms, to bring him victory. Ha-ha! The quip must sting the Corporal's foes.
PITT [after a pause] O vacillating Prussia! Had she moved, Had she but planted one foot firmly down, All this had been averted.—I must go. 'Tis sure, 'tis sure, I labour but in vain! [MALMESBURY accompanies him to the door, and PITT walks away disquietedly towards Whitehall, the other two regarding him as he goes.]

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

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

MULGRAVE He alters fast, indeed,—as do events.

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

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

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

MULGRAVE Nelson to our defence!

MALMESBURY Ay; where is Nelson? Faith, by this time He may be sodden; churned in Biscay swirls; Or blown to polar bears by boreal gales; Or sleeping

amorously in some calm cave On the Canaries' or Atlantis' shore Upon the bosom of his Dido dear, For all that we know! Never a sound of him Since passing Portland one September day— To make for Cadiz; so 'twas then believed.

MULGRAVE He's staunch. He's watching, or I am much deceived. [MULGRAVE departs. MALMESBURY goes within. The scene shuts.]

# ACT FIFTH

## SCENE I

OFF CAPE TRAFALGAR [A bird's eye view of the sea discloses itself. It is daybreak, and the broad face of the ocean is fringed on its eastern edge by the Cape and the Spanish shore. On the rolling surface immediately beneath the eye, ranged more or less in two parallel lines running north and south, one group from the twain standing off somewhat, are the vessels of the combined French and Spanish navies, whose canvases, as the sun edges upward, shine in its rays like satin. On the western horizon two columns of ships appear in full sail, small as moths to the aerial vision. They are bearing down towards the combined squadrons.]

RECORDING ANGEL I [intoning from his book] At last Villeneuve accepts the sea and fate, Despite the Cadiz council called of late, Whereat his stoutest captains—men the first To do all mortals durst— Willing to sail, and bleed, and bear the worst, Short of cold suicide, did yet opine That plunging mid those teeth of treble line In jaws of oaken wood Held open by the English navarchy With suasive breadth and artful modesty, Would smack of purposeless foolhardihood.

RECORDING ANGEL II But word came, writ in mandatory mood, To put from Cadiz, gain Toulon, and straight At a said sign on Italy operate. Moreover that Villeneuve, arrived as planned, Would find Rosily in supreme command.— Gloomy Villeneuve grows rash, and, darkly brave, Leaps to meet war, storm, Nelson—even

the grave.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music] Ere the concussion hurtle, draw abreast Of the sea.

SEMICHORUS II Where Nelson’s hulls are rising from the west, Silently.

SEMICHORUS I

Each linen wing outspread, each man and lad Sworn to be

SEMICHORUS II Amid the vanmost, or for Death, or glad Victory! [The point of sight descends till it is near the deck of the “Bucentaure,” the flag-ship of VILLENEUVE. Present thereupon are the ADMIRAL, his FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON, other naval officers and seamen.]

MAGENDIE All night we have read their signals in the air, Whereby the peering frigates of their van Have told them of our trend.

VILLENEUVE The enemy Makes threat as though to throw him on our stern: Signal the fleet to wear; bid Gravina To come in from manoeuvring with his twelve, And range himself in line. [Officers murmur.] I say again Bid Gravina draw hither with his twelve, And signal all to wear!—and come upon The larboard tack with every bow anorth!— So we make Cadiz in the worst event. And patch our rags up there. As we head now Our only practicable thoroughfare Is through Gibraltar Strait—a fatal door! Signal to close the line and leave no gaps. Remember, too, what I have already told: Remind them of it now. They must not pause For signallings from me amid a strife Whose chaos may prevent my clear discernment, Or may forbid my signalling at all. The voice of honour then becomes the chief’s; Listen they thereto, and set every stitch To heave them on into the fiercest fight. Now I will sum up all: heed well the charge; EACH CAPTAIN, PETTY OFFICER, AND MAN IS ONLY AT HIS POST WHEN UNDER FIRE. [The ships of the whole fleet turn their bows from south to north as directed, and close up in two parallel curved columns, the concave side of each column being towards the enemy, and the

interspaces of the first column being, in general, opposite the hulls of the second.]

AN OFFICER [straining his eyes towards the English fleet] How they skip on! Their overcrowded sail Bulge like blown bladders in a tripeman's shop The market-morning after slaughterday!

PETTY OFFICER It's morning before slaughterday with us, I make so bold to bode! [The English Admiral is seen to be signalling to his fleet. The signal is: "ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY." A loud cheering from all the English ships comes undulating on the wind when the signal is read.]

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

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

VILLENEUVE Be it so— There's time enough.—Our ships will be in place, And ready to speak back in iron words When theirs cry Hail! in the same sort of voice. [They prepare to receive the northernmost column of the enemy's ships headed by the "Victory," trying the distance by an occasional single shot. During their suspense a discharge is heard southward, and turning they behold COLLINGWOOD at the head of his column in the "Royal Sovereign," just engaging with the Spanish "Santa Ana." Meanwhile the "Victory's" mizzen-topmast, with spars and a quantity of rigging, is seen to have fallen, her wheel to be shot away, and her deck encumbered with dead and wounded men.]

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

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

destined for his Admiral! [During this the French ship “Redoubtable” is moving forward to interpose itself between the approaching “Victory” and the “Bucentaure.”]

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

CREW Ay! We swear. Huzza Long live the Emperor! [But the “Victory” suddenly swerves to the rear of the “Bucentaure,” and crossing her stern-waters, discharges a broadside into her and the “Redoubtable” endwise, wrapping the scene in folds of smoke. The point of view changes.]

**SCENE II**

THE SAME. THE QUARTER-DECK OF THE “VICTORY” [The van of each division of the English fleet has drawn to the windward side of the combined fleets of the enemy, and broken their order, the “Victory” being now parallel to and alongside the “Redoubtable,” the “Temeraire” taking up a station on the other side of that ship. The “Bucentaure” and the “Santisima Trinidad” become jammed together a little way ahead. A smoke and din of cannonading prevail, amid which the studding-sail booms are shot away. NELSON, HARDY, BLACKWOOD, SECRETARY SCOTT, LIEUTENANT PASCO, BURKE the Purser, CAPTAIN ADAIR of the Marines, and other officers are on or near the quarter-deck.]

NELSON See, there, that noble fellow Collingwood, How straight he helms his ship into the fire!— Now you’ll haste back to yours [to BLACKWOOD]. —We must henceforth Trust to the Great Disposer of events, And justice of our cause!... [BLACKWOOD leaves. The battle grows hotter. A double-headed shot cuts down seven or eight marines on the “Victory’s” poop.] Captain Adair, part those marines of yours, And hasten to disperse them round the ship.— Your place is down below,

Burke, not up here; Ah, yes; like David you would see the battle! [A heavy discharge of musket-shot comes from the tops of the "Santisima Trinidad. ADAIR and PASCO fall. Another swathe of Marines is mowed down by chain-shot.]

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

NELSON They were awarded to me as an honour, And shall I do despite to those who prize me, And slight their gifts? No, I will die with them, If die I must. [He walks up and down with HARDY.]

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

NELSON Thank 'ee, good friend. But no,—I haven't time, I do assure you—not a trice to spare, As you well will see. [A few minutes later SCOTT falls dead, a bullet having pierced his skull. Immediately after a shot passes between the Admiral and the Captain, tearing the instep of Hardy's shoe, and striking away the buckle. They shake off the dust and splinters it has scattered over them. NELSON glances round, and perceives what has happened to his secretary.]

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

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

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

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

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

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

NELSON Bid still the firemen bring more bucketfuls, And dash the water into each new hole Our guns have gouged in the “Redoubtable,” Or we shall all be set ablaze together.

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

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

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

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

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

OFFICER [to seaman] Swab down these stairs. The mess of blood about Makes ’em so slippery that one’s like to fall In carrying the wounded men below. [While CAPTAIN HARDY is still a little way off, LORD NELSON turns to walk aft, when a ball from one of the muskets in the mizzen- top of the “Redoubtable” enters his left shoulder. He falls upon his face on the deck. HARDY looks round, and sees what has happened.]

HARDY [hastily] Ah—what I feared, and strove to hide I feared!... [He goes towards NELSON, who in the meantime has been lifted by SERGEANT-MAJOR SECKER and two seamen.]

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

HARDY I hope not!

NELSON Yes. My backbone is shot through. I have not long to live. [The men proceed to carry him below.] Those tiller ropes They’ve torn away, get instantly repaired! [At sight of him borne along wounded there is great agitation among the crew.] Cover my face. There will be no good be done By drawing their attention off to me. Bear me along, good fellows; I am but one Among the many darkened here to-day! [He is carried on to the cockpit over the crowd of dead and wounded.] Doctor, I’m gone. I am waste o’ time to you.

HARDY [remaining behind] Hills, go to Collingwood and let him know That we’ve no Admiral here. [He passes on.]

A LIEUTENANT Now quick and pick him off who did the deed— That white-bloused man there in the mizzen-top.

POLLARD, a midshipman [shooting] No sooner said than done. A pretty aim! [The Frenchman falls dead upon the poop. The spectacle seems now to become enveloped in smoke, and the point of view changes.]

**SCENE III**

THE SAME. ON BOARD THE "BUCENTAURE" [The bowsprit of the French Admiral's ship is stuck fast in the stern-gallery of the "Santisima Trinidad," the starboard side of the "Bucentaure" being shattered by shots from two English three-deckers which are pounding her on that hand. The poop is also reduced to ruin by two other English ships that are attacking her from behind. On the quarter-deck are ADMIRAL VILLENEUVE, the FLAG-CAPTAIN MAGENDIE, LIEUTENANTS DAUDIGNON, FOURNIER, and others, anxiously occupied. The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling among the dead and dying, who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.]

VILLENEUVE We shall be crushed if matters go on thus.— Direct the "Trinidad" to let her drive, That this foul tangle may be loosened clear!

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

VILLENEUVE Then signal to the "Hero" that she strive Once more to drop this way. MAGENDIE We may make signs, But in the thickened air what signal's marked?— 'Tis done, however.

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

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

MAGENDIE Then Fortune shows her face! We have scotched England in dispatching him. [He watches.] Yes! He commands no more; and Lucas, joying, Has taken steps to board. Look, spars are laid, And his best men are mounting at his heels.

VILLENEUVE Ah, God—he is too late! Whence came the hurl Of heavy grape? The smoke prevents my seeing But at brief whiles.—The boarding band has fallen,

Fallen almost to a man.—’Twas well assayed!

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

VILLENEUVE And Lucas, too. I see him no more there. His red planks show Three hundred dead if one. Now for ourselves! [Four of the English three-deckers have gradually closed round the “Bucentaure,” whose bowsprit still sticks fast in the gallery of the “Santisima Trinidad.” A broadside comes from one of the English, resulting in worse havoc on the “Bucentaure.” The main and mizzen masts of the latter fall, and the boats are beaten to pieces. A raking fire of musketry follows from the attacking ships, to which the “Bucentaure” heroically continues still to keep up a reply. CAPTAIN MAGENDIE falls wounded. His place is taken by LIEUTENANT DAUDIGNON.]

VILLENEUVE Now that the fume has lessened, code my biddance Upon our only mast, and tell the van At once to wear, and come into the fire. [Aside] If it be true that, as HE sneers, success Demands of me but cool audacity, To-day shall leave him nothing to desire! [Musketry continues. DAUDIGNON falls. He is removed, his post being taken by LIEUTENANT FOURNIER. Another crash comes, and the deck is suddenly encumbered with rigging.]

FOURNIER There goes our foremast! How for signalling now?

VILLENEUVE To try that longer, Fournier, is in vain Upon this haggard, scorched, and ravaged hulk, Her decks all reeking with such gory shows, Her starboard side in rents, her stern nigh gone! How does she keep afloat?— “Bucentaure,” O lucky good old ship! My part in you is played. Ay—I must go; I must tempt Fate elsewhere,—if but a boat Can bear me through this wreckage to the van.

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

to ship of his fleet.]

VILLENEUVE How hideous are the waves, so pure this dawn!— Red-frothed; and friends and foes all mixed therein.— Can we in some way hail the “Trinidad” And get a boat from her? [They attempt to distract the attention of the “Santisima Trinidad” by shouting.] Impossible; Amid the loud combustion of this strife As well try holloing to the antipodes!... So here I am. The bliss of Nelson’s end Will not be mine; his full refulgent eve Becomes my midnight! Well; the fleets shall see That I can yield my cause with dignity. [The “Bucentaure” strikes her flag. A boat then puts off from the English ship “Conqueror,” and VILLENEUVE, having surrendered his sword, is taken out from the “Bucentaure.” But being unable to regain her own ship, the boat is picked up by the “Mars,” and the French admiral is received aboard her. Point of view changes.]

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. THE COCKPIT OF THE “VICTORY” [A din of trampling and dragging overhead, which is accompanied by a continuos ground-bass roar from the guns of the warring fleets, culminating at times in loud concussions. The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low- beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood, and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds. NELSON, his face now pinched and wan with suffering, is lying undressed in a midshipman’s berth, dimly lit by a lantern. DR. BEATTY, DR. MAGRATH, the Rev. DR. SCOTT the Chaplain, BURKE the Purser, the Steward, and a few others stand around.]

MAGRATH [in a low voice] Poor Ram, and poor Tom Whipple, have just gone..

BEATTY There was no hope for them. NELSON [brokenly] Who have just died?

BEATTY Two who were badly hit by now, my lord; Lieutenant Ram and Mr. Whipple.

NELSON Ah! So many lives—in such a glorious cause.... I join them soon, soon, soon!—O where is Hardy? Will nobody bring Hardy to me—none? He must be killed, too. Surely Hardy's dead?

A MIDSHIPMAN He's coming soon, my lord. The constant call On his full heed of this most mortal fight Keeps him from hastening hither as he would.

NELSON I'll wait, I'll wait. I should have thought of it. [Presently HARDY comes down. NELSON and he grasp hands.] Hardy, how goes the day with us and England?

HARDY Well; very well, thank God for't, my dear lord. Villeneuve their Admiral has this moment struck, And put himself aboard the "Conqueror." Some fourteen of their first-rates, or about, Thus far we've got. The said "Bucentaure" chief: The "Santa Ana," the "Redoubtable," The "Fougueux," the "Santisima Trinidad," "San Augustino, "San Francisco," "Aigle"; And our old "Swiftsure," too, we've grappled back, To every seaman's joy. But now their van Has tacked to bear round on the "Victory" And crush her by sheer weight of wood and brass: Three of our best I am therefore calling up, And make no doubt of worsting theirs, and France.

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

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

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

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

NELSON No; it is not that dust; 'tis dust of death That darkens me. [A shock overhead. HARDY goes up. On or two other officers go up, and by and by return.] What was that extra noise?

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

NELSON And we, ourselves— Who have we lost on board here? Nay, but tell me!

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

NELSON Poor youngsters! Scarred old Nelson joins you soon.

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

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

NELSON 'Twas not worth while!—He was, no doubt, a man Who in simplicity and sheer good faith Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to him! And may his wife, his friends, his little ones, If such be had, be tided through their loss, And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me. [HARDY re-enters.] Who's that? Ah—here you come! How, Hardy, now?

HARDY The Spanish Admiral's rumoured to be wounded, We know not with what

truth. But, be as ’twill, He sheers away with all he could call round, And some few frigates, straight to Cadiz port. [A violent explosion is heard above the confused noises on deck. A midshipman goes above and returns.]

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

BURKE Such unbid sights obtrude On death’s dyed stage!

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

NELSON [rousing] Our course will be to anchor. Let me know.

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

NELSON [trying to raise himself] Not while I live, I hope! No, Hardy; no. Give Collingwood my order. Anchor all!

HARDY [hesitating] You mean the signal’s to be made forthwith?

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

BEATTY [returning from the other wounded] My lord, I must implore you to lie

calm! You shorten what at best may not be long.

NELSON [exhausted] I know, I know, good Beatty! Thank you well Hardy, I was impatient. Now I am still. Sit here a moment, if you have time to spare? [BEATTY and others retire, and the two abide in silence, except for the trampling overhead and the moans from adjoining berths. NELSON is apparently in less pain, seeming to doze.]

NELSON [suddenly] What are you thinking, that you speak no word?

HARDY [waking from a short reverie] Thoughts all confused, my lord:—their needs on deck, Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past; Mixed up with flashes of old things afar— Old childish things at home, down Wessex way. In the snug village under Blackdon Hill Where I was born. The tumbling stream, the garden, The placid look of the grey dial there, Marking unconsciously this bloody hour, And the red apples on my father's trees, Just now full ripe.

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

NELSON [resuming in a murmur] Does love die with our frame's decease, I wonder, Or does it live on ever?... [A silence. BEATTY approaches.]

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

NELSON [symptoms of death beginning to change his face] Yes, Hardy; yes; I know it. You must go.— Here we shall meet no more; since Heaven forfend That care for me should keep you idle now, When all the ship demands you. Beatty, too. Go to the others who lie bleeding there; Them can you aid. Me you can render none!

My time here is the briefest.—If I live But long enough I'll anchor.... But—too late— My anchoring's elsewhere ordered!... Kiss me, Hardy: [HARDY bends over him.] I'm satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty! [HARDY brushes his eyes with his hand, and withdraws to go above, pausing to look back before he finally disappears.]

BEATTY [watching Nelson] Ah!—Hush around!... He's sinking. It is but a trifle now Of minutes with him. Stand you, please, aside, And give him air. [BEATTY, the Chaplain, MAGRATH, the Steward, and attendants continue to regard NELSON. BEATTY looks at his watch.]

BEATTY Two hours and fifty minutes since he fell, And now he's going. [They wait. NELSON dies.]

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

BEATTY We'll let the Captain know, Who will confer with Collingwood at once. I must now turn to these. [He goes to another part of the cockpit, a midshipman ascends to the deck, and the scene overclouds.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] His thread was cut too slowly! When he fell. And bade his fame farewell, He might have passed, and shunned his long-drawn pain, Endured in vain, in vain!

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

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES But out of tune the Mode and meritless That quickens sense in shapes whom, thou hast said, Necessitation sways! A life there was Among these self-same frail ones—Sophocles— Who visioned it too clearly, even while He dubbed the Will "the gods." Truly said he, "Such gross injustice to their own creation Burdens the time with mournfulness for us, And for themselves with shame."9—Things mechanized By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule, And governance of sweet consistency, Be

cessed no pain, whose burnings would abide With That Which holds responsibility, Or inexist.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Yea, yea, yea! Thus would the Mover pay The score each puppet owes, The Reaper reap what his contrivance sows! Why make Life debtor when it did not buy? Why wound so keenly Right that it would die?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Nay, blame not! For what judgment can ye blame?— In that immense unweeting Mind is shown One far above forethinking; processive, Yet superconscious; a Clairvoyancy That knows not what It knows, yet works therewith.— The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel, If I report it meetly, came unmeant, Emerging with blind gropes from impercipience By listless sequence—luckless, tragic Chance, In your more human tongue.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES And hence unneeded In the economy of Vitality, Which might have ever kept a sealed cognition As doth the Will Itself.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music] Nay, nay, nay; Your hasty judgments stay, Until the topmost cyme Have crowned the last entablature of Time. O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will; O pause, till all things all their days fulfil!

**SCENE V**

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

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

SECOND CITIZEN Will they bring his poor splintered body home?

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

for a fine day.

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

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

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

FIRST CITIZEN Don't ye ask awkward questions.

SECOND CITIZEN Here's another coming!

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

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

SECOND CITIZEN How may ye make that out, youngster?

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

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

FIRST CITIZEN He's coming, he's coming! Here, let me lift you up, my boy.—

Why, they have taken out the horses, as I am man alive!

SECOND CITIZEN Pitt for ever!—Why, here's a blade opening and shutting his mouth like the rest, but never a sound does he raise! THIRD CITIZEN I've not too much breath to carry me through my day's work, so I can't afford to waste it in such luxuries as crying Hurrah to aristocrats. If ye was ten yards off y'd think I was shouting as loud as any.

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

THIRD CITIZEN No, sir; it's economy; a very necessary instinct in these days of ghastly taxations to pay half the armies in Europe! In short, in the word of the Ancients, it is scarcely compass-mentas to do otherwise! Somebody must save something, or the country will be as bankrupt as Mr. Pitt himself is, by all account; though he don't look it just now. [PITT's coach passes, drawn by a troop of running men and boy. The Prime Minister is seen within, a thin, erect, up-nosed figure, with a flush of excitement on his usually pale face. The vehicle reached the doorway to the Guildhall and halts with a jolt. PITT gets out shakily, and amid cheers enters the building.]

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

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

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

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

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

FIRST CITIZEN

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

PITT [standing up after repeated calls] My lords and gentlemen:—You have toasted me As one who has saved England and her cause. I thank you, gentlemen, unfeignedly. But—no man has saved England, let me say: England has saved herself, by her exertions: She will, I trust, save Europe by her example! [Loud applause, during which he sits down, rises, and sits down again. The scene then shuts, and the night without has place.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Those words of this man Pitt—his last large words, As I may prophesy—that ring to-night In their first mintage to the feasters here, Will spread with ageing, lodge, and crystallize, And stand embedded in the English tongue Till it grow thin, outworn, and cease to be.— So is't ordained by That Which all ordains; For words were never winged with apter grace. Or blent with happier choice of time and place, To hold the imagination of this strenuous race.

## SCENE VI10

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

VILLENEUVE These hauntings have at last nigh proved to me That this thing must be done. Illustrious foe And teacher, Nelson: blest and over blest In thy outgoing at the noon of strife When glory clasped thee round; while wayward Death Refused my coaxings for the like-timed call! Yet I did press where thickest missiles fell, And both by precept and example showed Where lay the line of duty, patriotism, And honour, in that combat of despair. [He see himself in the glass as he passes.] Unfortunate Villeneuve!—whom fate has marked To suffer for too firm a faithfulness.— An Emperor's chide is a command to die.— By him accursed, forsaken by my friend, Awhile stern England's prisoner, then unloosed Like some poor dolt unworth captivity, Time serves me now for ceasing. Why not cease?... When, as Shades whisper in the chasmal night, "Better, far better, no percipience here."— O happy lack, that I should have no child To come into my hideous heritage, And groan beneath the burden of my name!11

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

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

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

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

VILLENEUVE From skies above me and the air around Those callings which so long have circled me At last do whisper "Now." Now it shall be! [He seals a letter, and addresses it to his wife; then takes a dagger from his accoutrements that are hanging alongside, and, lying down upon his back on the bed, stabs himself determinedly in many places, leaving the weapon in the last wound.] Ungrateful master; generous foes; Farewell! [VILLENEUVE dies; and the scene darkens.]

**SCENE VII**

KING GEORGE'S WATERING-PLACE, SOUTH WESSEX [The interior of the "Old Rooms" Inn. Boatmen and burghers are sitting on settles round the fire, smoking and drinking.

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

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

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

FIRST BURGHER Where's the Captain now?

SECOND BOATMAN [nodding in the direction of Captain Hardy's house] Down at home here biding with his own folk a bit. I zid en walking with them on the Esplanade yesterday. He looks ten years older than he did when he went. Ay—he brought the galliant hero home!

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

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

SECOND BURGHER Really, now!

FIRST BOATMAN [lowering his voice] But what happened was this. They were a long time coming, owing to contrary winds, and the "Victory" being little more than a wreck. And grog ran short, because they'd used near all they had to peckle his body in. So—they broached the Adm'l!

SECOND BURGHER How?

FIRST BOATMAN Well; the plain calendar of it is, that when he came to be

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

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

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

SONG THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGAR

I In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round the land, And the Back-sea12 met the Front-sea, and our doors were blocked with sand, And we heard the drub of Dead-man’s Bay, where bones of thousands are, We knew not what the day had done for us at Trafalgar. [All] Had done, Had done, For us at Trafalgar!

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

III The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and tore, As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly shore; Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and far, Were rolled together on the deep that night at Trafalgar! The deep, The deep, That night at Trafalgar! [The Cloud-curtain draws.]

CHORUS OF THE YEARS Meanwhile the month moves on to counter-deeds Vast as the vainest needs, And fiercely the predestined plot proceeds.

# ACT SIXTH

## SCENE I

THE FIELD OF AUSTERLITZ. THE FRENCH POSITION [The night is the 1st of December following, and the eve of the battle. The view is from the elevated position of the Emperor's bivouac. The air cuts keen and the sky glistens with stars, but the lower levels are covered with a white fog stretching like a sea, from which the heights protrude as dusky rocks. To the left are discernible high and wooded hills. In the front mid-distance the plateau of Pratzen outstands, declining suddenly on the right to a low flat country covered with marshes and pools now mostly obscured. On the plateau itself are seen innumerable and varying lights, marking the bivouac of the centre divisions of the Austro-Russian army. Close to the foreground the fires of the French are burning, surrounded by soldiery. The invisible presence of the countless thousand of massed humanity that compose the two armies makes itself felt indefinably. The tent of NAPOLÉON rises nearest at hand, with sentinel and other military figures looming around, and saddled horses held by attendants. The accents of the Emperor are audible, through the canvas from inside, dictating a proclamation.]

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

VOICE OF A MARSHAL Shows it, your Majesty, the wariness That marks your usual far-eye policy, To openly announce your tactics thus Some twelve hours ere

their form can actualize?

THE VOICE OF NAPOLÉON The zest such knowledge will impart to all Is worth the risk of leakages. [To Secretary] Write on. [Dictation resumed] “Soldiers, your sections I myself shall lead; But ease your minds who would expostulate Against my undue rashness. If your zeal Sow hot confusion in the hostile files As your old manner is, and in our rush We mingle with our foes, I’ll use fit care. Nevertheless, should issues stand at pause But for a wink-while, that time you will eye Your Emperor the foremost in the shock, Taking his risk with every ranksman here. For victory, men, must be no thing surmised, As that which may or may not beam on us, Like noontide sunshine on a dubious morn; It must be sure!—The honour and the fame Of France’s gay and gallant infantry— So dear, so cherished all the Empire through— Binds us to compass it! Maintain the ranks; Let none be thinned by impulse or excuse Of bearing back the wounded: and, in fine, Be every one in this conviction firm:— That ’tis our sacred bond to overthrow These hirelings of a country not their own: Yea, England’s hirelings, they!—a realm stiff-steeled In deathless hatred of our land and lives. “The campaign closes with this victory; And we return to find our standards joined By vast young armies forming now in France. Forthwith resistless, Peace establish we, Worthy of you, the nation, and of me!” “NAPOLÉON.” [To his Marshals] So shall we prostrate these paid slaves of hers—England’s, I mean—the root of all the war.

VOICE OF MURAT The further details sent of Trafalgar Are not assuring.

VOICE OF LANNES What may the details be?

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON [moodily] We learn that six-and-twenty ships of war, During the fight and after, struck their flags, And that the tigerish gale throughout the night Gave fearful finish to the English rage. By luck their Nelson’s gone, but gone withal Are twenty thousand prisoners, taken off To gnaw their finger-nails in British hulks. Of our vast squadrons of the summer-time But rags and splintered

remnants now remain.— Thuswise Villeneuve, poor craven, quitted him! And England puffed to yet more bombastry. —Well, well; I can't be everywhere. No matter; A victory's brewing here as counterpoise! These water-rats may paddle in their salt slush, And welcome. 'Tis not long they'll have the lead. Ships can be wrecked by land!

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

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

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

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

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

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON Now let us up and ride the bivouacs round, And note positions ere the soldiers sleep. —Omit not from to-morrow's home dispatch

Direction that this blow of Trafalgar Be hushed in all the news-sheets sold in France, Or, if reported, let it be portrayed As a rash fight whereout we came not worst, But were so broken by the boisterous eve That England claims to be the conqueror. [There emerge from the tent NAPOLÉON and the marshals, who all mount the horses that are led up, and proceed through the frost and time towards the bivouacs. At the Emperor's approach to the nearest soldiery they spring up.]

SOLDIERS The Emperor! He's here! The Emperor's here!

AN OLD GRENADIER [approaching Napoléon familiarly] We'll bring thee Russian guns and flags galore. To celebrate thy coronation-day! [They gather into wisps the straw, hay, and other litter on which they have been lying, and kindling these at the dying fires, wave them as torches. This is repeated as each fire is reached, till the whole French position is one wide illumination. The most enthusiastic of the soldiers follow the Emperor in a throng as he progresses, and his whereabouts in the vast field is denoted by their cries.]

CHORUS OF PITIES [aerial music] Strange suasive pull of personality!

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS His projects they unknow, his grin unsee!

CHORUS OF THE PITIES Their luckless hearts say blindly—He! [The night-shades close over.]

## SCENE II

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION [Midnight at the quarters of FIELD-MARSHAL PRINCE KUTÚZOF at Kresnowitz. An inner apartment is discovered, roughly adapted as a council-room. On a table with candles is unfolded a large map of Austerlitz and its environs. The Generals are assembled in consultation round the table, WEIROTHER pointing to the map, LANGERON, BUXHÖVDEN, and MILORADOVICH standing by, DOKHTÓROF bending over the map, PRSCHEBISZEWSKY13 indifferently walking up and down. KUTÚZOF,

old and weary, with a scarred face and only one eye, is seated in a chair at the head of the table, nodding, waking, and nodding again. Some officers of lower grade are in the background, and horses in waiting are heard hoofing and champing outside. WEIROTHER speaks, referring to memoranda, snuffing the nearest candle, and moving it from place to place on the map as he proceeds importantly.]

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

LANGERON [taking a pinch of snuff] Good, General; very good!—if Bonaparte Will kindly stand and let you have your way. But what if he do not!—if he forestall These sound slow movements, mount the Pratzen hills When we descend, fall on OUR rear forthwith, While we go crying for HIS rear in vain?

KUTÚZOF [waking up] Ay, ay, Weirother; that’s the question—eh?

WEIROTHER [impatiently] If Bonaparte had meant to climb up there, Being one so spry and so determinate, He would have set about it ere this eve! He has not troops to do so, sirs, I say: His utmost strength is forty thousand men.

LANGERON Then if so weak, how can so wise a brain Court ruin by abiding calmly here The impact of a force so large as ours? He may be mounting up this very hour! What think you, General Miloradovich?

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

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

KUTÚZOF [rising] Well, well. Now this being ordered, set it going. One here shall make fair copies of the notes, And send them round. Colonel van Toll I ask To translate part.—Generals, it grows full late, And half-a-dozen hours of needed sleep Will aid us more than maps. We now disperse, And luck attend us all. Good-night. Good-night. [The Generals and other officers go out severally.] Such plans are—paper! Only to-morrow's light Reveals the true manoeuvre to my sight! [He flaps out with his hand all the candles but one or two, slowly walks outside the house, and listens. On the high ground in the direction of the French lines are heard shouts, and a wide illumination grows and strengthens; but the hollows are still mantled in fog.] Are these the signs of regiments out of heart, And beating backward from an enemy!

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

## SCENE III

THE SAME. THE FRENCH POSITION [Shortly before dawn on the morning of the 2nd of December. A white frost and fog still prevail in the low-lying areas; but overhead the sky is clear. A dead silence reigns. NAPOLÉON, on a grey horse, closely attended by BERTHIER, and surrounded by MARSHALS SOULT, LANNES, MURAT, and their aides-de camp, all cloaked, is discernible in the gloom riding down from the high ground before Bellowitz, on which they have bivouacked, to the village of Puntowitz on the Goldbach stream, quite near the front of the Russian position of the day before on the Pratzen crest. The Emperor and his

companions come to a pause, look around and upward to the hills, and listen.]

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

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

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

MURAT Yes! They already move upon Tilnitz.

NAPOLÉON Leave them alone! Nor stick nor stone we'll stir To interrupt them. Nought that we can scheme Will help us like their own stark sightlessness!— Let them get down to those white lowlands there, And so far plunge in the level that no skill, When sudden vision flashes on their fault, Can help them, though despair-stung, to regain The key to mastery held at yestereve! Meantime move onward these divisions here Under the fog's kind shroud; descend the slope, And cross the stream below the Russian lines: There halt concealed, till I send down the word. [NAPOLÉON and his staff retire to the hill south-east of Bellowitz and the day dawns pallidly.] 'Tis good to get above that rimy cloak And into cleaner air. It chilled me through. [When they reach the summit they are over the fog: and suddenly the sun breaks forth to the left of Pratzen, illuminating the ash-hued face of NAPOLÉON and the faces of those around him. All eyes are turned first to the sun, and thence to look for the dense masses of men that had occupied the upland the night before.] MURAT I see them not. The plateau seems deserted!

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

broadest hat-brims' shade.... Soult, how long hence to win the Pratzen top?

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

NAPOLÉON Good! Set forthwith Vandamme and Saint Hilaire to mount the slopes—- [Firing begins in the marsh to the right by Tilnitz and the pools, though the thick air yet hides the operations.] O, there you are, blind boozy Buxhövden! Achieve your worst. Davout will hold you firm. [The head of and aide-de-camp rises through the fog on that side, and he hastens up to NAPOLÉON and his companions, to whom the officer announces what has happened. DAVOUT rides off, disappearing legs first into the white stratum that covers the attack.] Lannes and Murat, you have concern enough Here on the left, with Prince Bagration And all the Austro-Russian cavalry. Haste off. The victory promising to-day Will, like a thunder-clap, conclude the war! [The Marshals with their aides gallop away towards their respective divisions. Soon the two divisions under SOULT are seen ascending in close column the inclines of the Pratzen height. Thereupon the heads of the Russian centre columns disclose themselves, breaking the sky-line of the summit from the other side, in a desperate attempt to regain the position vacated by the Russian left. A fierce struggle develops there between SOULT'S divisions and these, who, despite their tardy attempt to recover the lost post of dominance, are pressed by the French off the slopes into the lowland.]

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music] O Great Necessitator, heed us now! If it indeed must be That this day Austria smoke with slaughtery, Quicken the issue as Thou knowest how; And dull their lodgment in a flesh that galls!

SEMICHORUS II If it be in the future human story To lift this man to yet intenser glory, Let the exploit be done With the least sting, or none, To those, his kind, at whose expense such pitch is won!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Again ye deprecate the World-Soul's way That I so long

have told? Then note anew [Since ye forget] the ordered potencies, Nerves, sinews, trajects, eddies, ducts of It The Eternal Urger, pressing change on change. [At once, as earlier, a preternatural clearness possesses the atmosphere of the battle-field, in which the scene becomes anatomized and the living masses of humanity transparent. The controlling Immanent Will appears therein, as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.]

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] O Innocents, can ye forget That things to be were shaped and set Ere mortals and this planet met?

SEMICHORUS II Stand ye apostrophizing That Which, working all, works but thereat Like some sublime fermenting-vat.

SEMICHORUS I Heaving throughout its vast content With strenuously transmutive bent Though of its aim insentient?—

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

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

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

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

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

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

SEMICHORUS II Heard laughters at the ruthless dooms Which tortured to the

eternal glooms Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs.

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

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

**SCENE IV**

THE SAME. THE RUSSIAN POSITION [It is about noon, and the vital spectacle is now near the village of Tilnitz. The fog has dispersed, and the sun shines clearly, though without warmth, the ice on the pools gleaming under its radiance. GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN and his aides-de-camp have reined up, and remain at pause on a hillock. The General watches through a glass his battalions, which are still disputing the village. Suddenly approach down the track from the upland of Pratzen large companies of Russian infantry helter-skelter. COUNT LANGERON is beheld to be retreating with them; and soon, pale and agitated, he hastens up to GENERAL BUXHÖVDEN, whose face is flushed.]

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

BUXHÖVDEN You seem to see the enemy everywhere.

LANGERON You cannot see them, be they here or no!

BUXHÖVDEN I only wait Prschebiszewsky's nearing corps To join Dokhtórof's to them. Here they come. [SOULT, supported by BERNADOTTE and OUDINOT, having cleared and secured the Pratzen height, his battalions are perceived descending from it on this side, behind DOKHTÓROF'S division, so placing the latter between themselves and the pools.]

LANGERON You cannot tell the Frenchmen from ourselves! These are the

victors.—Ah—Dokhtórof—lost! [DOKHTÓROF'S troops are seen to be retreating towards the water. The watchers stand in painful tenseness.]

BUXHÖVDEN Dokhtórof tell to save him as he may! We, Count, must gather up our shaken flesh And hurry them by the road through Austerlitz. [BUXHÖVDEN'S regiments and the remains of LANGERON'S are rallied and collected, and they retreat by way of the hamlet of Aujezd. As they go over the summit of a hill BUXHÖVDEN looks back. LANGERON'S columns, which were behind his own, have been cut off by VANDAMME'S division coming down from the Pratzen plateau. This and some detachments from DOKHTÓROF'S column rush towards the Satschan lake and endeavour to cross it on the ice. It cracks beneath their weight. At the same moment NAPOLÉON and his brilliant staff appear on the top of the Pratzen. The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile; and directs a battery near at hand to fire down upon the ice on which the Russians are crossing. A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror, which fly in all directions. Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and their groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas. A general flight of the Russian army from wing to wing is now disclosed, involving in its current the EMPEROR ALEXANDER and the EMPEROR FRANCIS, with the reserve, who are seen towards Austerlitz endeavouring to rally their troops in vain. They are swept along by the disordered soldiery.]

## SCENE V

THE SAME. NEAR THE WINDMILL OF PALENY [The mill is about seven miles to the southward, between French advanced posts and the Austrians. A bivouac fire is burning. NAPOLÉON, in grey overcoat and beaver hat turned up front to back, rides to the spot with BERTHIER, SAVARY, and his aides, and alights. He walks to and fro complacently, meditating or talking to BERTHIER. Two groups of officers, one from each army, stand in the background on their respective sides.]

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

BERTHIER Word goes, you Majesty, that Colonel Toll, One of Field-Marshal Price Kutúzof's staff, In the retreating swirl of overthrow, Found Alexander seated on a stone, Beneath a leafless roadside apple-tree, Out here by Goding on the Holitsch way; His coal-black uniform and snowy plume Unmarked, his face disconsolate, his grey eyes Mourning in tears the fate of his brave array— All flying southward, save the steadfast slain.

NAPOLÉON Poor devil!—But he'll soon get over it— Sooner than his employers oversea!— Ha!—this well make friend Pitt and England writhe, And cloud somewhat their lustrous Trafalgar. [An open carriage approaches from the direction of Holitsch, accompanied by a small escort of Hungarian guards. NAPOLÉON walks forward to meet it as it draws up, and welcomes the Austrian Emperor, who alights. He is wearing a grey cloak over a white uniform, carries a light walking-cane, and is attended by PRINCE JOHN OF LICHTENSTEIN, SWARZENBERG, and others. His fresh-coloured face contrasts strangely with the bluish pallor of NAPOLÉON'S; but it is now thin and anxious. They formally embrace. BERTHIER, PRINCE JOHN, and the rest retire, and the two Emperors are left by themselves before the fire.]

NAPOLÉON Here on the roofless ground do I receive you— My only mansion for these two months past!

FRANCIS Your tenancy thereof has brought such fame That it must needs be one which charms you, Sire.

NAPOLÉON Good! Now this war. It has been forced on me Just at a crisis most inopportune, When all my energies and arms were bent On teaching England that her watery walls Are no defence against the wrath of France Aroused by breach of solemn covenants.

FRANCIS I had no zeal for violating peace Till ominous events in Italy Revealed the gloomy truth that France aspires To conquest there, and undue sovereignty. Since when mine eyes have seen no sign outheld To signify a change of purposings.

NAPOLÉON Yet there were terms distinctly specified To General Giulay in November past, Whereon I'd gladly fling the sword aside. To wit: that hot armigerent jealousy Stir us no further on transalpine rule, I'd take the Isonzo River as our bounds.

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

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

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

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

ANOTHER AUSTRIAN OFFICER Ay! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen heights In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz. [The Emperors again draw near.]

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

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

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

NAPOLÉON I will send Savary at to-morrow's blink And make all lucid to the Emperor. For us, I wholly can avow as mine The cordial spirit of your Majesty. [They retire towards the carriage of FRANCIS. BERTHIER, SAVARY, LICHTENSTEIN, and the suite of officers advance from the background, and with mutual gestures of courtesy and amicable leave-takings the two Emperors part company.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] Each for himself, his family, his heirs; For the wan weltering nations who concerns, who cares?

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS A pertinent query, in truth!— But spoil not the

sport by your ruth: ’Tis enough to make half Yonder zodiac laugh When rulers begin to allude To their lack of ambition, And strong opposition To all but the general good!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Hush levities. Events press: turn ye westward. [A nebulous curtain draws slowly across.]

**SCENE VI**

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

WILTSHIRE [pointing to a portrait] Now here you have the lady we discussed: A fine example of his manner, sir?

PITT It is a fine example, sir, indeed,— With that transparency amid the shades, And those thin blue-green-grayish leafages Behind the pillar in the background there, Which seem the leaves themselves.—Ah, this is Quin. [Moving to another picture.]

WILTSHIRE Yes, Quin. A man of varied parts, though rough And choleric at times. Yet, at his best, As Falstaff, never matched, they say. But I Had not the fate to see him in the flesh.

PITT Churchill well carves him in his “Character”:— “His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll, Proclaimed the sullen habit of his soul. In fancied scenes, as in Life’s real plan, He could not for a moment sink the man: Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in; Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—stile ’twas Quin.” —He was at Bath when Gainsborough settled there In that house in the Circus which we know.— I like the portrait much.—The brilliancy Of Gainsborough lies in this his double sway: Sovereign of landscape he; of portraiture Joint monarch with Sir Joshua.... Ah?—that’s—hark! Is that the patter of horses’s hoofs Along the road?

WILTSHIRE I notice nothing, sir.

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

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

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

WILTSHIRE I trust you are not ill, sir?

PITT [after some moments] Could I have A little brandy, sir, quick brought to me?

WILTSHIRE In one brief minute. [Brandy is brought in, and PITT takes it.]

PITT Now leave me, please, alone. I'll call anon. Is there a map of Europe handy here? [WILTSHIRE fetches a map from the library, and spreads it before the minister. WILTSHIRE, courier, and servant go out.] O God that I should live to see this day! [He remains awhile in a profound reverie; then resumes the reading of the dispatch.] "Defeated—the Allies—quite overthrown At Austerlitz—last week."—Where's Austerlitz? —But what avails it where the place is now; What corpse is curious on the longitude And situation of his cemetery!... The Austrians and the Russians overcome, That vast adventuring army is set free To bend unhindered strength against our strand.... So do my plans through all these plodding years Announce them built in vain! His heel on Europe, monarchies in chains To France, I am as though I had never been! [He gloomily ponders the dispatch and the map some minutes longer. At last he rises with difficulty, and rings the bell. A servant enters.] Call up my carriage, please you, now at once; And tell your master I return to Bath This moment—I may want a little help In getting to the door here.

SERVANT Sir, I will, And summon you my master instantly. [He goes out and re-enters with WILTSHIRE. PITT is assisted from the room.]

PITT Roll up that map. ’Twill not be needed now These ten years! Realms, laws, peoples, dynasties, Are churning to a pulp within the maw Of empire-making Lust and personal Gain! [Exeunt PITT, WILTSHIRE, and the servant; and in a few minutes the carriage is heard driving off, and the scene closes.]

**SCENE VII**

PARIS. A STREET LEADING TO THE TUILERIES [It is night, and the dim oil lamps reveal a vast concourse of citizens of both sexes around the Palace gates and in the neighbouring thoroughfares.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to the Spirit of Rumour] Thou may’st descend and join this crowd awhile, And speak what things shall come into they mouth.

SPIRIT SINISTER I’ll harken! I wouldn’t miss it for the groans on another Austerlitz! [The Spirit of Rumour enters on the scene in the disguise of a young foreigner.]

SPIRIT [to a street-woman] Lady, a late hour this to be afoot!

WOMAN Poor profit, then, to me from my true trade, Wherein hot competition is so rife Already, since these victories brought to town So many foreign jobbers in my line, That I’d best hold my tongue from praise of fame! However, one is caught by popular zeal, And though five midnights have not brought a sou, I, too, chant Jubilate like the rest.— In courtesies have haughty monarchs vied Towards the Conqueror! who, with men-at-arms One quarter theirs, has vanquished by his nerve Vast mustering four-hundred-thousand strong, And given new tactics to the art of war Unparalleled in Europe’s history!

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

WOMAN Dost ask As ignorant, yet asking can define? What mean you, traveller?

SPIRIT I am a stranger here, A wandering wight, whose life has not been spent This

side the globe, though I can speak the tongue.

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

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

WOMAN Wilt take the situation from this hour?

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

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

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

WOMAN Napoléon's stepson he—-

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

WOMAN How know you, ere this news has got abroad?

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

WOMAN They do? Then such not I. Can revolution's dregs so soil thy soul That thou shouldst doubt the eldest son thereof? 'Tis dangerous to insinuate nowadays!

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

speak his mind.

WOMAN A thousand pardons, sir.

SPIRIT Resume thy tale If so thou wishest.

WOMAN Nay, but you know best—-

SPIRIT How laurelled progress through applauding crowds Have marked his journey home. How Strasburg town, Stuttgart, Carlsruhe, acclaimed him like the rest: How pageantry would here have welcomed him, Had not his speed outstript intelligence —Now will a glimpse of him repay thee. Hark! [Shouts arise and increase in the distance, announcing BONAPARTE'S approach.] Well, Buonaparte has revived by land, But not by sea. On that thwart element Never will he incorporate his dream, And float as master!

WOMAN What shall hinder him?

SPIRIT That which has hereto. England, so to say.

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

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

WOMAN The seer's gift Has never plenteously endowed me, sir, As in appearance you. But to plain sense Thing's seem as stated.

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

WOMAN Heaven prosper, then, their watery wayfarings If they'll leave us the land!—[The Imperial carriage appears.] The Emperor!— Long live the Emperor!—He's the best by land. [BONAPARTE'S carriage arrives, without an escort. The street lamps shine in, and reveal the EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE seated beside him. The plaudits of the people grow boisterous as they hail him Victor of Austerlitz. The more active run after the carriage, which turns in from the Rue St. Honore to the Carrousel, and thence vanishes into the Court of the Tuileries.]

WOMAN May all success attend his next exploit!

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

WOMAN I like not your queer knowledge, creepy man. There's weirdness in your air. I'd call you ghost Had not the Goddess Reason laid all such Past Mother Church's cunning to restore. —Adieu. I'll not be yours to-night. I'd starve first! [She withdraws. The crowd wastes away, and the Spirit vanishes.]

## SCENE VIII

PUTNEY. BOWLING GREEN HOUSE [PITT'S bedchamber, from the landing without. It is afternoon. At the back of the room as seen through the doorway is a curtained bed, beside which a woman sits, the LADY HESTER STANHOPE. Bending over a table at the front of the room is SIR WALTER FARQUHAR, the physician. PARSLOW the footman and another servant are near the door. TOMLINE, the Bishop of Lincoln, enters.]

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

TOMLINE Ah, stands it this?... The name of his disease is—Austerlitz! His brow's

inscription has been Austerlitz From that dire morning in the month just past When tongues of rumour twanged the word across From its hid nook on the Moravian plains.

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

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

TOMLINE There’s no news yet.— These several days while I have been sitting by him He has inquired the quarter of the wind, And where that moment beaked the stable-cock. When I said “East,” he answered “That is well! Those are the breezes that will speed him home!” So cling his heart-strings to his country’s cause.

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

LADY HESTER Ah! now he wakes. Please come and speak to him as you would wish [to TOMLINE]. [LADY HESTER, TOMLINE,and FARQUHAR retire behind the bed, where in a short time voices are heard in prayer. Afterwards the Bishop goes to a writing-table, and LADY HESTER comes to the doorway. Steps are heard on the stairs, and PITT’S friend ROSE, the President of the Board of Trade, appears on the landing and makes inquiries.]

LADY HESTER [whispering] He wills the wardenry of his affairs To his old friend the Bishop. But his words Bespeak too much anxiety for me, And underrate his services so far That he has doubts if his high deeds deserve Such size of recognition by the State As would award slim pensions to his kin. He had been fain to write down his intents, But the quill dropped from his unmuscled hand.— Now his friend Tomline pens what he dictates And gleans the lippings of his last desires. [ROSE and LADY HESTER turn. They see the Bishop bending over the bed with a sheet of paper on which he has previously been writing. A little later he dips a quill and holds it within the bed-curtain, spreading the paper beneath. A thin white hand emerges from behind the curtain and signs the paper. The Bishop beckons forward the two servants, who also sign. FARQUHAR on one side of the bed, and TOMLINE on the other, are spoken to by the dying man. The Bishop afterwards withdraws from the bed and comes to the landing where the others are.]

TOMLINE A list of his directions has been drawn, And feeling somewhat more at mental ease He asks Sir Walter if he has long to live. Farquhar just answered, in a soothing tone, That hope still frailly breathed recovery. At this my dear friend smiled and shook his head, As if to say: “I can translate your words, But I reproach not friendship’s lullabies.”

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

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

ROSE But hark. He does. [The listen.]

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

TOMLINE Ah,— Immense the matter those poor words contain!

ROSE Still does his soul stay wrestling with that theme, And still it will, even

semi-consciously, Until the drama's done. [They continue to converse by the doorway in whispers. PITT sinks slowly into a stupor, from which he never awakens.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [to Spirit of the Years] Do you intend to speak to him ere the close?

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

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

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS It suits us ill to cavil each with each. I might retort. I only say to thee ITS slaves we are: ITS slaves must ever be!

CHORUS [aerial music] Yea, from the Void we fetch, like these, And tarry till That please To null us by Whose stress we emanate.— Our incorporeal sense, Our overseeings, our supernal state, Our readings Why and Whence, Are but the flower of Man's intelligence; And that but an unreckoned incident Of the all-urging Will, raptly magnipotent. [A gauze of shadow overdraws.]

# PART SECOND

CHARACTERS

I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES

THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS/CHORUS OF THE YEARS. THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES/CHORUS OF THE PITIES. SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC/CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS. THE SPIRIT OF

RUMOUR/CHORUS OF RUMOURS. THE SHADE OF THE EARTH. SPIRIT-MESSENGERS. RECORDING ANGELS.

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

MEN GEORGE THE THIRD. THE PRINCE OF WALES, afterwards PRINCE REGENT. The Royal Dukes. FOX. PERCEVAL. CASTLEREAGH. AN UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE. SHERIDAN. TWO YOUNG LORDS. Lords Yarmouth and Keith. ANOTHER LORD. Other Peers, Ambassadors, Ministers, ex-Ministers, Members of Parliament, and Persons of Quality and Office. ..... Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Lord Wellington. SIR JOHN MOORE. SIR JOHN HOPE. Sir David Baird. General Beresford. COLONEL ANDERSON. COLONEL GRAHAM. MAJOR COLBORNE, principal Aide-de-Camp to MOORE. CAPTAIN HARDINGE. Paget, Fraser, Hill, Napier. A CAPTAIN OF HUSSARS AND OTHERS. Other English Generals, Colonels, Aides, Couriers, and Military Officers. TWO SPIES. TWO ARMY SURGEONS. AN ARMY CHAPLAIN. A SERGEANT OF THE FORTY-THIRD. TWO SOLDIERS OF THE NINTH. English Forces. DESERTERS AND STRAGGLERS. ..... DR. WILLIS. SIR HENRY HALFORD. DR. HEBERDEN. DR. BAILLIE. THE KING'S APOTHECARY. A GENTLEMAN. TWO ATTENDANTS ON THE KING. ..... MEMBERS OF A LONDON CLUB. AN ENGLISHMAN IN VIENNA. TROTTER, SECRETARY TO FOX. MR. BAGOT. MR. FORTH, MASTER OF CEREMONIES. SERVANTS. A Beau, A Constable, etc. ..... NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE. Joseph Bonaparte. Louis and Jérôme Bonaparte, and other Members of Napoléon's Family. CAMBACÉRÈS, ARCH-CHANCELLOR. TALLEYRAND. PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE. Caulaincourt. Lebrun, Duroc, Prince of Neufchâtel, Grand-Duke of Berg. Eugène de Beauharnais. CHAMPAGNY, FOREIGN MINISTER DE BAUSSET, CHAMBERLAIN. MURAT. SOULT. MASSÉNA. BERTHIER. JUNOT. FOY. LOISON. Ney, Lannes, and other French Marshals, general and regimental Officers, Aides, and Couriers. TWO FRENCH SUBALTERNS. ANOTHER FRENCH

OFFICER. French Forces. ..... Grand Marshal, Grand Almoners, Heralds, and other Officials at Napoléon's marriage. ABBÉ DE PRADT, CHAPEL-MASTER. Corvisart, First Physician to Marie Louis. BOURDIER, SECOND PHYSICIAN to Marie Louise. DUBOIS, ACCOUCHEUR to Marie Louise. Maskers at a Ball. TWO SERVANTS AT THE TUILERIES. A PARISIAN CROWD. GUILLET DE GEVRILLIÈRE, A CONSPIRATOR. Louis XVIII. of France. French Princes in England. ..... THE KING OF PRUSSIA. Prince Henry of Prussia. Prince Royal of Bavaria. PRINCE HOHENLOHE. Generals Ruchel, Tauenzien, and Attendant Officers. Prussian Forces. PRUSSIAN STRAGGLERS. BERLIN CITIZENS. ..... CARLOS IV., KING OF SPAIN. FERNANDO, PRINCE OF ASTURIAS, Son to the King. GODOY, "PRINCE OF PEACE," Lover of the Queen. COUNT OF MONTIJO. VISCOUNT MATEROSA, Spanish Deputy. DON DIEGO DE LA VEGA, Spanish Deputy. Godoy's Guards and other Soldiery. SPANISH CITIZENS. A SERVANT TO GODOY. Spanish Forces. Camp-Followers. ..... FRANCIS, EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA. METTERNICH. ANOTHER AUSTRIAN MINISTER. SCHWARZENBERG. D'AUDENARDE, AN EQUERRY. AUSTRIAN OFFICERS. AIDES-DE-CAMP. Austrian Forces. Couriers and Secretaries. VIENNESE CITIZENS. ..... THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER. The Grand-Duke Constantine. Prince Labanoff. Count Lieven. Generals Bennigsen, Ouwaroff, and others. Officers in attendance on Alexander.

WOMEN CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES. DUCHESS OF YORK. DUCHESS OF RUTLAND. MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY. MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD. Other Peeresses. MRS. FITZHERBERT. Ambassadors' Wives, Wives of Minister and Members of Parliament, and other Ladies of Note. ..... THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE. HORTENSE, QUEEN OF HOLLAND. The Mother of Napoléon. Princess Pauline, and others of Napoléon's Family. DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO. MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU. MADAME BLAISE, NURSE TO MARIE LOUIS. Wives of French Ministers, and of other Officials. Other Ladies

of the French Court. DUCHESS OF ANGOULEME. ..... LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA. The Countess Voss, Lady-in-Waiting. BERLIN LADIES. ..... MARÍA LUISA, QUEEN OF SPAIN. THEREZA OF BOURBON, WIFE OF GODOY. DOÑA JOSEFA TUDO, MISTRESS OF GODOY. Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen. A Servant. ..... M. LOUISA BEATRIX, EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA. THE ARCHDUCHESS MARIE LOUISA, afterwards the EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE. MADAME METTERNICH. LADIES OF THE AUSTRIAN COURT. ..... THE EMPRESS-MOTHER OF RUSSIA. GRAND-DUCHESS ANNE OF RUSSIA.

# ACT FIRST

## SCENE I

LONDON. FOX'S LODGINGS, ARLINGTON STREET [FOX, the Foreign Secretary in the new Ministry of All-the-Talents, sits at a table writing. He is a stout, swarthy man, with shaggy eyebrows, and his breathing is somewhat obstructed. His clothes look as though they had been slept in. TROTTER, his private secretary, is writing at another table near. A servant enters.]

SERVANT Another stranger presses to see you, sir.

FOX [without raising his eyes] Oh, another. What's he like?

SERVANT A foreigner, sir; though not so out-at-elbows as might be thought from the denomination. He says he's from Gravesend, having lately left Paris, and that you sent him a passport. He comes with a police-officer.

FOX Ah, to be sure. I remember. Bring him in, and tell the officer to wait outside. [Servant goes out.] Trotter, will you leave us for a few minutes? But be within hail. [The secretary retires, and the servant shows in a man who calls himself GUILLET DE GEVRILLIÈRE—a tall, thin figure of thirty, with restless eyes. The door being

shut behind him, he is left alone with the minister. FOX points to a seat, leans back, and surveys his visitor.]

GEVRILLIÈRE Thanks to you, sir, for this high privilege Of hailing England, and of entering here. Without a fore-extended confidence Like this of yours, my plans would not have sped. [A Pause.] Europe, alas! sir, has her waiting foot Upon the sill of further slaughter-scenes!

FOX I fear it is so!—In your lines you wrote, I think, that you are a true Frenchman born?

GEVRILLIÈRE I did, sir. FOX How contrived you, then, to cross?

GEVRILLIÈRE It was from Embden that I shipped for Gravesend, In a small sailer called the "Toby," sir, Masked under Prussian colours. Embden I reached On foot, on horseback, and by sundry shifts, From Paris over Holland, secretly.

FOX And you are stored with tidings of much pith, Whose tenour would be priceless to the state?

GEVRILLIÈRE I am. It is, in brief, no more nor less Than means to mitigate and even end These welfare-wasting wars; ay, usher in A painless spell of peace.

FOX Prithee speak on. No statesman can desire it more than I.

GEVRILLIÈRE [looking to see that the door is shut] No nation, sir, can live its natural life, Or think its thoughts in these days unassailed, No crown-capt head enjoy tranquillity. The fount of such high spring-tide of disorder, Fevered disquietude, and forceful death, Is One,—a single man. He—need I name?— The ruler is of France.

FOX Well, in the past I fear that it has liked so. But we see Good reason still to hope that broadening views, Politer wisdom now is helping him To saner guidance of his arrogant car.

GEVRILLIÈRE The generous hope will never be fulfilled! Ceasing to bluff, then

ceases he to be. None sees that written largelier than himself.

FOX Then what may be the valued revelation That you can unlock in such circumstance? Sir, I incline to spell you as a spy, And not the honest help for honest men You gave you out to be! GEVRILLIÈRE I beg, sir, To spare me that suspicion. Never a thought Could be more groundless. Solemnly I vow That notwithstanding what his signals show The Emperor of France is as I say.— Yet bring I good assurance, and declare A medicine for all bruised Europe's sores!

FOX [impatiently] Well, parley to the point, for I confess No new negotiation do I note That you can open up to work such cure.

GEVRILLIÈRE The sovereign remedy for an ill effect Is the extinction of its evil cause. Safely and surely how to compass this I have the weighty honour to disclose, Certain immunities being guaranteed By those your power can influence, and yourself.

FOX [astonished] Assassination?

GEVRILLIÈRE I care not for names! A deed's true name is as its purpose is. The lexicon of Liberty and Peace Defines not this deed as assassination; Though maybe it is writ so in the tongue Of courts and universal tyranny. FOX Why brought you this proposal here to me?

GEVRILLIÈRE My knowledge of your love of things humane, Things free, things fair, of truth, of tolerance, Right, justice, national felicity, Prompted belief and hope in such a man!— The matter is by now well forwarded, A house at Plassy hired as pivot-point From which the sanct intention can be worked, And soon made certain. To our good allies No risk attaches; merely to ourselves.

FOX [touching a private bell] Sir, your unconscienced hardihood confounds me. And your mind's measure of my character Insults it sorely. By your late-sent lines Of specious import, by your bland address, I have been led to prattle hopefully With a cut-throat confessed! [The head constable and the secretary enter at the same

moment.] Ere worse befall, Sir, up and get you gone most dexterously! Conduct this man: lose never sight of him [to the officer] Till haled aboard some anchor-weighing craft Bound to remotest coasts from us and France.

GEVRILLIÈRE [unmoved] How you may handle me concerns me little. The project will as roundly ripe itself Without as with me. Trusty souls remain, Though my far bones bleach white on austral shores!— I thank you for the audience. Long ere this I might have reft your life! Ay, notice here— [He produces a dagger; which is snatched from him.] They need not have done that! Even had you risen To wrestle with, insult, strike, pinion me, It would have lain unused. In hands like mine And my allies', the man of peace is safe, Treat as he may our corporal tenement In his misreading of a moral code. [Exeunt GEVRILLIÈRE and the constable.]

FOX Trotter, indeed you well may stare at me! I look warm, eh?—and I am windless, too; I have sufficient reason to be so. That dignified and pensive gentleman Was a bold bravo, waiting for his chance. He sketched a scheme for murdering Bonaparte, Either—as in my haste I understood— By shooting from a window as he passed, Or by some other wry and stealthy means That haunt sad brains which brood on despotism, But lack the tools to justly cope therewith!... On later thoughts I feel not fully sure If, in my ferment, I did right in this. No; hail at once the man in charge of him, And give the word that he is to be detained. [The secretary goes out. FOX walks to the window in deep reflection till the secretary returns.]

SECRETARY I was in time, sir. He has been detained.

FOX Now what does strict state-honour ask of me?— No less than that I bare this poppling plot To the French ruler and our fiercest foe!— Maybe 'twas but a hoax to pocket pay; And yet it can mean more... The man's indifference to his own vague doom Beamed out as one exalted trait in him, And showed the altitude of his rash dream!— Well, now I'll get me on to Downing Street, There to draw up a note to

Talleyrand Retailing him the facts.—What signature Subscribed this desperate fellow when he wrote?

SECRETARY "Guillet de la Gevrillière." Here it stands.

FOX Doubtless it was a false one. Come along. [Looking out the window.] Ah—here's Sir Francis Vincent: he'll go with us. Ugh, what a twinge! Time signals that he draws Towards the twelfth stroke of my working-day! I fear old England soon must voice her speech With Europe through another mouth than mine!

SECRETARY I trust not, sir. Though you should rest awhile. The very servants half are invalid From the unceasing labours of your post, And these cloaked visitors of every clime That market on your magnanimity To gain an audience morning, night, and noon, Leaving you no respite.

FOX 'Tis true; 'tis true.— How I shall love my summer holiday At pleasant Saint-Ann's Hill! [He leans on the secretary's arm, and they go out.]

## SCENE II

THE ROUTE BETWEEN LONDON AND PARIS [A view now nocturnal, now diurnal, from on high over the Straits of Dover, and stretching from city to city. By night Paris and London seem each as a little swarm of lights surrounded by a halo; by day as a confused glitter of white and grey. The Channel between them is as a mirror reflecting the sky, brightly or faintly, as the hour may be.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES What mean these couriers shooting shuttlewise To Paris and to London, turn and turn?

RUMOURS [chanting in antiphons] I The aforesaid tidings fro the minister, spokesman in England's cause to states afar,

II Traverse the waters borne by one of such; and thereto Bonaparte's responses are: I "The principles of honour and of truth which ever actuate the sender's mind

II "Herein are written largely! Take our thanks: we read that this conjuncture

undesigned

I “Unfolds felicitous means of showing you that still our eyes are set, as yours, on peace,

II “To which great end the Treaty of Amiens must be the ground- work of our amities.”

I From London then: “The path to amity the King of England studies to pursue;

II “With Russia hand in hand he is yours to close the long convulsions thrilling Europe through.”

I Still fare the shadowy missioners across, by Dover-road and Calais Channel-track,

II From Thames-side towers to Paris palace-gates; from Paris leisurely to London back.

I Till thus speaks France: “Much grief it gives us that, being pledged to treat, one Emperor with one King,

II “You yet have struck a jarring counternote and tone that keys not with such promising.

I “In these last word, then, of this pregnant parle; I trust I may persuade your Excellency

II “That in no circumstance, on no pretence, a party to our pact can Russia be.”

SPIRIT SINISTER Fortunately for the manufacture of corpses by machinery Napoléon sticks to this veto, and so wards off the awkward catastrophe of a general peace descending upon Europe. Now England.

RUMOURS [continuing] I Thereon speeds down through Kent and Picardy, evenly as some southing sky-bird’s shade:

II “We gather not from your Imperial lines a reason why our words should be reweighed. I “We hold Russia not as our ally that is to be: she stands fully- plighted so;

II “Thus trembles peace upon this balance-point: will you that Russia be let in or no?”

I Then France rolls out rough words across the strait: “To treat with you confederate with the Tsar,

II “Presumes us sunk in sloughs of shamefulness from which we yet stand gloriously afar!

I “The English army must be Flanders-fed, and entering Picardy with pompous prance,

II “To warrant such! Enough. Our comfort is, the crime of further strife lies not with France.”

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Alas! what prayer will save the struggling lands, Whose lives are ninepins to these bowling hands?

CHORUS OF RUMOURS France secretly with—Russia plights her troth! Britain, that lonely isle, is slurred by both.

SPIRIT SINISTER It is as neat as an uncovered check at chess! You may now mark Fox’s blank countenance at finding himself thus rewarded for the good turn done to Bonaparte, and at the extraordinary conduct of his chilly friend the Muscovite.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES His hand so trembles it can scarce retain The quill wherewith he lets Lord Yarmouth know Reserve is no more needed!

SPIRIT IRONIC Now enters another character of this remarkable little piece—Lord Lauderdale—and again the messengers fly!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES But what strange figure, pale and noiseless, comes, By us perceived, unrecognized by those, Into the very closet and retreat Of England’s Minister?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS The Tipstaff he Of the Will, the Many-masked, my good friend Death.— The statesman’s feeble form you may perceive Now hustled into the

Invisible, And the unfinished game of Dynasties Left to proceed without him!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Here, then, ends My hope for Europe's reason-wrought repose! He was the friend of peace—did his great best To shed her balms upon humanity; And now he's gone! No substitute remains.

SPIRIT IRONIC Ay; the remainder of the episode is frankly farcical. Negotiations are again affected; but finally you discern Lauderdale applying for passports; and the English Parliament declares to the nation that peace with France cannot be made.

RUMOURS [concluding] I The smouldering dudgeon of the Prussian king, meanwhile, upon the horizon's rim afar

II Bursts into running flame, that all his signs of friendliness were met by moves for war.

I Attend and hear, for hear ye faintly may, his manifesto made at Erfurt town,

II That to arms only dares he now confide the safety and the honour of his crown!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Draw down the curtain, then, and overscreen This too-protracted verbal fencing-scene; And let us turn to clanging foot and horse, Ordnance, and all the enginry of Force! [Clouds close over the perspective.]

## SCENE III

THE STREETS OF BERLIN [It is afternoon, and the thoroughfares are crowded with citizens in an excited and anxious mood. A central path is left open for some expected arrival. There enters on horseback a fair woman, whose rich brown curls stream flutteringly in the breeze, and whose long blue habit flaps against the flank of her curvetting white mare. She is the renowned LOUISA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA, riding at the head of a regiment of hussars and wearing their uniform. As she prances along the thronging citizens acclaim her enthusiastically.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Who is this fragile fair, in fighting trim?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS She is the pride of Prussia, whose resolve Gives ballast to

the purpose of her spouse, And holds him to what men call governing.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Queens have engaged in war; but war's loud trade Rings with a roar unnatural, fitful, forced, Practised by woman's hands!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Of her view The enterprise is that of scores of men, The strength but half-a-ones.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Would fate had ruled The valour had been his, hers but the charm!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR But he has nothing on't, and she has all. The shameless satires of the bulletins dispatched to Paris, thence the wide world through, Disturb the dreams of her by those who love her, And thus her brave adventurers for the realm Have blurred her picture, soiled her gentleness, And wrought her credit harm.

FIRST CITIZEN [vociferously] Yes, by God: send and ultimatum to Paris, by God; that's what we'll do, by God. The Confederation of the Rhine was the evil thought of an evil man bent on ruining us!

SECOND CITIZEN This country double-faced and double-tongued, This France, or rather say, indeed, this Man— [Peoples are honest dealers in the mass]— This man, to sign a stealthy scroll with Russia That shuts us off from all indemnities, While swearing faithful friendship with our King, And, still professing our safe wardenry, To fatten other kingdoms at our cost, Insults us grossly, and makes Europe clang With echoes of our wrongs. The little states Of this antique and homely German land Are severed from their blood-allies and kin— Hereto of one tradition, interest, hope— In calling lord this rank adventurer, Who'll thrust them as a sword against ourselves.— Surely Great Frederick sweats within his tomb!

THIRD CITIZEN Well, we awake, though we have slumbered long, And She is sent by Heaven to kindle us. [The QUEEN approaches to pass back again with her suite. The vociferous applause is repeated. They regard her as she nears.] To cry her Amazon, a blusterer, A brazen comrade of the bold dragoons Whose uniform she

dons! Her, whose each act Shows but a mettled modest woman's zeal, Without a hazard of her dignity Or moment's sacrifice of seemliness, To fend off ill from home!

FOURTH CITIZEN [entering] The tidings fly that Russian Alexander Declines with emphasis to ratify The pact of his ambassador with France, And that the offer made the English King To compensate the latter at our cost Has not been taken. THIRD CITIZEN And it never will be! Thus evil does not always flourish, faith. Throw down the gage while god is fair to us; He may be foul anon! [A pause.]

FIFTH CITIZEN [entering] Our ambassador Lucchesini is already leaving Paris. He could stand the Emperor no longer, so the Emperor takes his place, has decided to order his snuff by the ounce and his candles by the pound, lest he should not be there long enough to use more. [The QUEEN goes by, and they gaze at here and at the escort of soldiers.] Haven't we soldiers? Haven't we the Duke of Brunswick to command 'em? Haven't we provisions, hey? Haven't we fortresses and an Elbe, to bar the bounce of an invader? [The cavalcade passes out of sight and the crowd draws off.] FIRST CITIZEN By God, I must to beer and 'bacco, to soften my rage! [Exeunt citizens.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS So doth the Will objectify Itself In likeness of a sturdy people's wrath, Which takes no count of the new trends of time, Trusting ebbed glory in a present need.— What if their strength should equal not their fire, And their devotion dull their vigilance?— Uncertainly, by fits, the Will doth work In Brunswick's blood, their chief, as in themselves; It ramifies in streams that intermit And make their movement vague, old-fashioned, slow To foil the modern methods counterposed! [Evening descends on the city, and it grows dusk. The soldiers being dismissed from duty, some young officers in a frolic of defiance halt, draw their swords and whet them on the steps of the FRENCH AMBASSADOR'S residence as they pass. The noise of whetting is audible through the street.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] The soul of a nation distrest Is aflame, And heaving with eager unrest In its aim To assert its old prowess, and stouten its chronicled fame!

SEMICHORUS I It boils in a boisterous thrill Through the mart, Unconscious well-nigh as the Will Of its part: Would it wholly might be so, and feel not the forthcoming smart!

SEMICHORUS II In conclaves no voice of reflection Is heard, King, Councillors, grudge circumspection A word, And victory is visioned, and seemings as facts are averred.

CHORUS Yea, the soul of a nation distrest Is aflame, And heaving with eager unrest In its aim At supreme desperations to blazon the national name! [Midnight strikes, lights are extinguished one by one, and the scene disappears.]

## SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF JENA [Day has just dawned through a grey October haze. The French, with their backs to the nebulous light, loom out and show themselves to be already under arms; LANNES holding the centre, NEY the right, SOULT the extreme right, and AUGEREAU the left. The Imperial Guard and MURAT'S cavalry are drawn up on the Landgrafenberg, behind the centre of the French position. In a valley stretching along to the rear of this height flows northward towards the Elbe the little river Saale, on which the town of Jena stands. On the irregular plateaux in front of the French lines, and almost close to the latter, are the Prussians un TAUENZIEN; and away on their right rear towards Weimar the bulk of the army under PRINCE HOHENLOHE. The DUKE OF BRUNSWICK [father of the Princess of Wales] is twelve miles off with his force at Auerstadt, in the valley of the Ilm. Enter NAPOLÉON, and men bearing torches who escort him. He moves along the front of his troops, and is lost to view behind the mist and surrounding objects. But his voice is audible.]

NAPOLÉON Keep you good guard against their cavalry, In past repute the formidablest known, And such it may be now; so asks our heed. Receive it, then, in square, unflinchingly.— Remember, men, last year you captured Ulm, So make no doubt that you will vanquish these!

SOLDIERS Long live the Emperor! Advance, advance!

DUMB SHOW Almost immediately glimpses reveal that LANNES' corps is moving forward, and amid an unbroken clatter of firelocks spreads out further and wider upon the stretch of country in front of the Landgrafenberg. The Prussians, surprised at discerning in the fog such masses of the enemy close at hand, recede towards the Ilm. From PRINCE HOHENLOHE, who is with the body of the Prussians on the Weimar road to the south, comes perspiring the bulk of the infantry to rally the retreating regiments of TAUENZIEN, and he hastens up himself with the cavalry and artillery. The action is renewed between him and NEY as the clocks of Jena strike ten. But AUGEREAU is seen coming to Ney's assistance on one flank of the Prussians, SOULT bearing down on the other, while NAPOLÉON on the Landgrafenberg orders the Imperial Guard to advance. The doomed Prussians are driven back, this time more decisively, falling in great numbers and losing many as prisoners as they reel down the sloping land towards the banks of the Ilm behind them. GENERAL RUCHEL, in a last despairing effort to rally, faces the French onset in person and alone. He receives a bullet through the chest and falls dead. The crisis of the struggle is reached, though the battle is not over. NAPOLÉON, discerning from the Landgrafenberg that the decisive moment has come, directs MURAT to sweep forward with all his cavalry. It engages the shattered Prussians, surrounds them, and cuts them down by thousands. From behind the horizon, a dozen miles off, between the din of guns in the visible battle, there can be heard an ominous roar, as of a second invisible battle in progress there. Generals and other officers look at each other and hazard conjectures between whiles, the French with exultation, the Prussians gloomily.

HOHENLOHE That means the Duke of Brunswick, I conceive, Impacting on the enemy’s further force Led by, they say, Davout and Bernadotte. God grant his star less lurid rays then ours, Or this too pregnant, hoarsely-groaning day Shall, ere its loud delivery be done, Have twinned disasters to the fatherland That fifty years will fail to sepulchre!

Enter a straggler on horseback.

STRAGGLER Prince, I have circuited by Auerstadt, And bring ye dazzling tidings of the fight, Which, if report by those who saw’t be true, Has raged thereat from clammy day-dawn on, And left us victors!

HOHENLOHE Thitherward go I, And patch the mischief wrought upon us here!

Enter a second and then a third straggler. Well, wet-faced men, whence come ye? What d’ye bring?

STRAGGLER II Your Highness, I rode straight from Hassenhausen, Across the stream of battle as it boiled Betwixt that village and the banks of Saale, And such the turmoil that no man could speak On what the issue was!

HOHENLOHE [To Straggler III] Can you add aught?

STRAGGLER III Nothing that’s clear, your Highness.

HOHENLOHE Man, your mien Is that of one who knows, but will not say. Detain him here.

STRAGGLER III The blackness of my news, Your Highness, darks my sense!... I saw this much: His charging grenadiers, received in the face A grape-shot stroke that gouged out half of it, Proclaiming then and there his life fordone.

HOHENLOHE Fallen? Brunswick! Reed in council, rock in fire... Ah, this he looked for. Many a time of late Has he, by some strange gift of foreknowing, Declared his fate was hovering in such wise!

STRAGGLER III His aged form being borne beyond the strife, The gallant

Moellendorf, in flushed despair, Swore he would not survive; and, pressing on, He, too, was slaughtered. Patriotic rage Brimmed marshals' breasts and men's. The King himself Fought like the commonest. But nothing served. His horse is slain; his own doom yet unknown. Prince William, too, is wounded. Brave Schmettau Is broke; himself disabled. All give way, And regiments crash like trees at felling-time!

HOHENLOHE No more. We match it here. The yielding lines Still sweep us backward. Backward we must go! [Exeunt HOHENLOHE, Staff, stragglers, etc.]

The Prussian retreat from Jena quickens to a rout, many thousands taken prisoners by MURAT, who pursues them to Weimar, where the inhabitants fly shrieking through the streets. The October day closes in to evening. By this time the troops retiring with the King of Prussia from the second battlefield of Auerstadt have intersected RUCHEL'S and HOHENLOHE'S flying battalions from Jena. The crossing streams of fugitives strike panic into each other, and the tumult increases with the thickening darkness till night renders the scene invisible, and nothing remains but a confused diminishing noise, and fitful lights here and there.

**SCENE V**

BERLIN. A ROOM OVERLOOKING A PUBLIC PLACE [A fluttering group of ladies is gathered at the window, gazing out and conversing anxiously. The time draws towards noon, when the clatter of a galloping horse's hoofs is heard echoing up the long Potsdamer-Strasse, and presently turning into the Leipziger- Strasse reaches the open space commanded by the ladies' outlook. It ceases before a Government building opposite them, and the rider disappears into the courtyard.]

FIRST LADY Yes: surely he is a courier from the field!

SECOND LADY Shall we not hasten down, and take from him The doom his tongue may deal us?

THIRD LADY We shall catch As soon by watching here as hastening hence The

tenour of his new. [They wait.] Ah, yes: see—see The bulletin is straightway to be nailed! He was, then, from the field.... [They wait on while the bulletin is affixed.]

SECOND LADY I cannot scan the words the scroll proclaims; Peer as I will, these too quick-thronging dreads Bring water to the eyes. Grant us, good Heaven, That victory be where she is needed most To prove Thy goodness!... What do you make of it?

THIRD LADY [reading, through a glass] “The battle strains us sorely; but resolve May save us even now. Our last attack Has failed, with fearful loss. Once more we strive.” [A long silence in the room. Another rider is heard approaching, above the murmur of the gathering citizens. The second lady looks out.]

SECOND LADY A straggler merely he.... But they decide, At last, to post his news, wild-winged or no.

THIRD LADY [reading again through her glass] “The Duke of Brunswick, leading on a charge, Has met his death-doom. Schmettau, too, is slain; Prince William wounded. But we stand as yet, Engaging with the last of our reserves.” [The agitation in the street communicates itself to the room. Some of the ladies weep silently as they wait, much longer this time. Another horseman is at length heard clattering into the Platz, and they lean out again with painful eagerness.]

SECOND LADY An adjutant of Marshal Moellendorf’s If I define him rightly. Read—O read!— Though reading draw them from their socket-holes Use your eyes now!

THIRD LADY [glass up] As soon as ’tis affixed.... Ah—this means much! The people’s air and gait Too well betray disaster. [Reading.] “Berliners, The King has lost the battle! Bear it well. The foremost duty of a citizen Is to maintain a brave tranquillity. This is what I, the Governor, demand Of men and women now.... The King lives still.” [They turn from the window and sit in a silence broken only by monosyllabic words, hearing abstractedly the dismay without that has followed the

previous excitement and hope. The stagnation is ended by a cheering outside, of subdued emotional quality, mixed with sounds of grief. They again look forth. QUEEN LOUISA is leaving the city with a very small escort, and the populace seem overcome. They strain their eyes after her as she disappears. Enter fourth lady.] FIRST LADY How does she bear it? Whither does she go?

FOURTH LADY She goes to join the King at Custrin, there To abide events—as we. Her heroism So schools her sense of her calamities As out of grief to carve new queenliness, And turn a mobile mien to statuesque, Save for a sliding tear. [The ladies leave the window severally.]

SPIRIT IRONIC So the Will plays at flux and reflux still. This monarchy, one-half whose pedestal Is built of Polish bones, has bones home-made! Let the fair woman bear it. Poland did.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Meanwhile the mighty Emperor nears apace, And soon will glitter at the city gates With palpitating drums, and breathing brass, And rampant joyful-jingling retinue. [An evening mist cloaks the scene.]

## SCENE VI

THE SAME [It is a brilliant morning, with a fresh breeze, and not a cloud. The open Platz and the adjoining streets are filled with dense crowds of citizens, in whose upturned faces curiosity has mastered consternation and grief. Martial music is heard, at first faint, then louder, followed by a trampling of innumerable horses and a clanking of arms and accoutrements. Through a street on the right hand of the view from the windows come troops of French dragoons heralding the arrival of BONAPARTE. Re-enter the room hurriedly and cross to the windows several ladies as before, some in tears.]

FIRST LADY The kingdom late of Prussia, can it be That thus it disappears?—a patriot-cry, A battle, bravery, ruin; and no more?

SECOND LADY Thank God the Queen’s gone!

THIRD LADY To what sanctuary? From earthquake shocks there is no sheltering cell! —Is this what men call conquest? Must it close As historied conquests do, or be annulled By modern reason and the urbaner sense?— Such issue none would venture to predict, Yet folly ’twere to nourish foreshaped fears And suffer in conjecture and in deed.— If verily our country be dislimbed, Then at the mercy of his domination The face of earth will lie, and vassal kings Stand waiting on himself the Overking, Who ruling rules all; till desperateness Sting and excite a bonded last resistance, And work its own release.

SECOND LADY He comes even now From sacrilege. I learn that, since the fight, In marching here by Potsdam yesterday, Sans-Souci Palace drew his curious feet, Where even great Frederick’s tomb was bared to him.

FOURTH LADY All objects on the Palace—cared for, kept Even as they were when our arch-monarch died— The books, the chair, the inkhorn, and the pen He quizzed with flippant curiosity; And entering where our hero’s bones are urned He seized the sword and standards treasured there, And with a mixed effrontery and regard Declared they should be all dispatched to Paris As gifts to the Hotel des Invalides.

THIRD LADY Such rodomontade is cheap: what matters it! [A galaxy of marshals, forming Napoléon’s staff, now enters the Platz immediately before the windows. In the midst rides the EMPEROR himself. The ladies are silent. The procession passes along the front until it reaches the entrance to the Royal Palace. At the door NAPOLÉON descends from his horse and goes into the building amid the resonant trumpetings of his soldiers and the silence of the crowd.]

SECOND LADY [impressed] O why does such a man debase himself By countenancing loud scurrility Against a queen who cannot make reprise! A power so ponderous needs no littleness— The last resort of feeble desperates! [Enter fifth lady.]

FIFTH LADY [breathlessly] Humiliation grows acuter still. He placards rhetoric to his soldiery On their distress of us and our allies, Declaring he'll not stack away his arms Till he has choked the remaining foes of France In their own gainful glut.—Whom means he, think you?

FIRST LADY Us?

THIRD LADY Russia? Austria?

FIFTH LADY Neither: England.—Yea, Her he still holds the master mischief-mind, And marrer of the countries' quietude, By exercising untold tyranny Over all the ports and seas.

SECOND LADY Then England's doomed! When he has overturned the Russian rule, England comes next for wrack. They say that know!... Look—he has entered by the Royal doors And makes the Palace his.—Now let us go!— Our course, alas! is—whither? [Exeunt ladies. The curtain drops temporarily.]

SEMICHORUS I OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] Deeming himself omnipotent With the Kings of the Christian continent, To warden the waves was his further bent.

SEMICHORUS II But the weaving Will from eternity, [Hemming them in by a circling sea] Evolved the fleet of the Englishry.

SEMICHORUS I The wane of his armaments ill-advised, At Trafalgar, to a force despised, Was a wound which never has cicatrized.

SEMICHORUS II This, O this is the cramp that grips! And freezes the Emperor's finger-tips From signing a peace with the Land of Ships.

CHORUS The Universal-empire plot Demands the rule of that wave-walled spot; And peace with England cometh not!

THE SCENE REOPENS [A lurid gloom now envelops the Platz and city; and Bonaparte is heard as from the Palace:

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON These monstrous violations being in train Of law and

national integrities By English arrogance in things marine, [Which dares to capture simple merchant-craft, In honest quest of harmless merchandize, For crime of kinship to a hostile power] Our vast, effectual, and majestic strokes In this unmatched campaign, enable me To bar from commerce with the Continent All keels of English frame. Hence I decree:—

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR This outlines his renowned “Berlin Decree.” Maybe he meditates its scheme in sleep, Or hints it to his suite, or syllables it While shaping, to his scribes.

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON All England’s ports to suffer strict blockade; All traffic with that land to cease forthwith; All natives of her isles, wherever met, To be detained as windfalls of the war. All chattels of her make, material, mould, To be good prize wherever pounced upon: And never a bottom hailing from her shores But shall be barred from every haven here. This for her monstrous harms to human rights, And shameless sauciness to neighbour powers!

SPIRIT SINISTER I spell herein that our excellently high-coloured drama is not played out yet!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Nor will it be for many a month of moans, And summer shocks, and winter-whitened bones. [The night gets darker, and the Palace outlines are lost.]

## SCENE VII

TILSIT AND THE RIVER NIEMEN [The scene is viewed from the windows of BONAPARTE’S temporary quarters. Some sub-officers of his suite are looking out upon it. It is the day after midsummer, about one o’clock. A multitude of soldiery and spectators lines each bank of the broad river which, stealing slowly north-west, bears almost exactly in its midst a moored raft of bonded timber. On this as a floor stands a gorgeous pavilion of draped woodwork, having at each side, facing the

respective banks of the stream, a round-headed doorway richly festooned. The cumbersome erection acquires from the current a rhythmical movement, as if it were breathing, and the breeze now and then produces a shiver on the face of the stream.]

DUMB SHOW On the south-west or Prussian side rides the EMPEROR NAPOLÉON in uniform, attended by the GRAND DUKE OF BERG, the PRINCE OF NEUFCHÂTEL, MARSHAL BESSIERES, DUROC Marshal of the Palace, and CAULAINCOURT Master of the Horse. The EMPEROR looks well, but is growing fat. They embark on an ornamental barge in front of them, which immediately puts off. It is now apparent to the watchers that a precisely similar enactment has simultaneously taken place on the opposite or Russian bank, the chief figure being the EMPEROR ALEXANDER—a graceful, flexible man of thirty, with a courteous manner and good-natured face. He has come out from an inn on that side accompanied by the GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE, GENERAL BENNIGSEN, GENERAL OUWAROFF, PRINCE LABANOFF, and ADJUTANT- GENERAL COUNT LIEVEN. The two barges draw towards the raft, reaching the opposite sides of it about the same time, amidst discharges of cannon. Each Emperor enters the door that faces him, and meeting in the centre of the pavilion they formally embrace each other. They retire together to the screened interior, the suite of each remaining in the outer half of the pavilion. More than an hour passes while they are thus invisible. The French officers who have observed the scene from the lodging of NAPOLÉON walk about idly, and ever and anon go curiously to the windows, again to watch the raft.

CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music] The prelude to this smooth scene—mark well!—were the shocks whereof the times gave token Vaguely to us ere last year’s snows shut over Lithuanian pine and pool, Which we told at the fall of the faded leaf, when the pride of Prussia was bruised and broken, And the Man of Adventure sat in the seat of the Man of Method and rigid Rule.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES Snows incarnadined were thine, O Eylau, field of the wide white spaces, And frozen lakes, and frozen limbs, and blood iced hard as it left the veins: Steel-cased squadrons swathed in cloud-drift, plunging to doom through pathless places, And forty thousand dead and near dead, strewing the early-lighted plains. Friedland to these adds its tale of victims, its midnight marches and hot collisions, Its plunge, at his word, on the enemy hooped by the bended river and famed Mill stream, As he shatters the moves of the loose-knit nations to curb his exploitful soul's ambitions, And their great Confederacy dissolves like the diorama of a dream.

DUMB SHOW [continues] NAPOLÉON and ALEXANDER emerge from their seclusion, and each is beheld talking to the suite of his companion apparently in flattering compliment. An effusive parting, which signifies itself to be but temporary, is followed by their return to the river shores amid the cheers of the spectators. NAPOLÉON and his marshals arrive at the door of his quarters and enter, and pass out of sight to other rooms than that of the foreground in which the observers are loitering. Dumb show ends. [A murmured conversation grows audible, carried on by two persons in the crowd beneath the open windows. Their dress being the native one, and their tongue unfamiliar, they seem to the officers to be merely inhabitants gossiping; and their voices continue unheeded.]

FIRST ENGLISH SPY14 [below] Did you get much for me to send on?

SECOND ENGLISH SPY Much; and startling, too. "Why are we at war?" says Napoléon when they met.—"Ah—why!" said t'other.—"Well," said Boney, "I am fighting you only as an ally of the English, and you are simply serving them, and not yourself, in fighting me."—"In that case," says Alexander, "we shall soon be friends, for I owe her as great a grudge as you."

FIRST SPY Dammy, go that length, did they!

SECOND SPY Then they plunged into the old story about English selfishness, and

greed, and duplicity. But the climax related to Spain, and it amounted to this: they agreed that the Bourbons of the Spanish throne should be made to abdicate, and Bonaparte's relations set up as sovereigns instead of them.

FIRST SPY Somebody must ride like hell to let our Cabinet know!

SECOND SPY I have written it down in cipher, not to trust to memory, and to guard against accidents.—They also agree that France should have the Pope's dominions, Malta, and Egypt; that Napoléon's brother Joseph should have Sicily as well as Naples, and that they would partition the Ottoman Empire between them.

FIRST SPY Cutting up Europe like a plum-pudding. Par nobile fratrum!

SECOND SPY Then they worthy pair came to poor Prussia, whom Alexander, they say, was anxious about, as he is under engagements to her. It seems that Napoléon agrees to restore to the King as many of his states as will cover Alexander's promise, so that the Tsar may feel free to strike out in this new line with his new friend.

FIRST SPY Surely this is but surmise?

SECOND SPY Not at all. One of the suite overheard, and I got round him. There was much more, which I did not learn. But they are going to soothe and flatter the unfortunate King and Queen by asking them to a banquet here.

FIRST SPY Such a spirited woman will never come!

SECOND SPY We shall see. Whom necessity compels needs must: and she has gone through an Iliad of woes!

FIRST SPY It is this Spanish business that will stagger England, by God! And now to let her know it.

FRENCH SUBALTERN [looking out above] What are those townspeople talking about so earnestly, I wonder? The lingo of this place has an accent akin to English.

SECOND SUBALTERN No doubt because the races are both Teutonic. [The spies

observe that they are noticed, and disappear in the crowd. The curtain drops.]

## SCENE VIII

THE SAME [The midsummer sun is low, and a long table in the aforeshown apartment is laid out for a dinner, among the decorations being bunches of the season's roses. At the vacant end of the room [divided from the dining end by folding-doors, now open] there are discovered the EMPEROR NAPOLÉON, the GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE, PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA, the PRINCE ROYAL OF BAVARIA, the GRAND DUKE OF BERG, and attendant officers. Enter the TSAR ALEXANDER. NAPOLÉON welcomes him, and the twain move apart from the rest. BONAPARTE placing a chair for his visitor and flinging himself down on another.]

NAPOLÉON The comforts I can offer are not great, Nor is the accommodation more than scant That falls to me for hospitality; But, as it is, accept.

ALEXANDER It serves well. And to unbrace the bandages of state Is as clear air to incense-stifled souls. What of the Queen?

NAPOLÉON She's coming with the King. We have some quarter-hour to spare or more Before their Majesties are timed for us.

ALEXANDER Good. I would speak of them. That she should show here After the late events, betokens much! Abasement in so proud a woman's heart [His voice grows tremulous.] Is not without a dash of painfulness. And I beseech you, sire, that you hold out Some soothing hope for her?

NAPOLÉON I have, already!— Now, sire, to those affairs we entered on: Strong friendship, grown secure, bids me repeat That you have been much duped by your allies. [ALEXANDER shows mortification.] Prussia's a shuffler, England a self-seeker, Nobility has shone in you alone. Your error grew of over-generous dreams, And misbeliefs by dullard ministers. By treating personally we speed affairs

More in an hour than they in blundering months. Between us two, henceforth, must stand no third. There's peril in it, while England's mean ambition Still works to get us skewered by the ears; And in this view your chiefs-of-staff concur.

ALEXANDER The judgment of my officers I share.

NAPOLÉON To recapitulate. Nothing can greaten you Like this alliance. Providence has flung My good friend Sultan Selim from his throne, Leaving me free in dealings with the Porte; And I discern the hour as one to end A rule that Time no longer lets cohere. If I abstain, its spoils will go to swell The power of this same England, our annoy; That country which enchains the trade of towns With such bold reach as to monopolize, Among the rest, the whole of Petersburg's— Ay!—through her purse, friend, as the lender there!— Shutting that purse, she may incite to—what? Muscovy's fall, its ruler's murdering. Her fleet at any minute can encoop Yours in the Baltic; in the Black Sea, too; And keep you snug as minnows in a glass! Hence we, fast-fellowed by our mutual foes, Seaward the British, Germany by land, And having compassed, for our common good, The Turkish Empire's due partitioning, As comrades can conjunctly rule the world To its own gain and our eternal fame!

ALEXANDER [stirred and flushed] I see vast prospects opened!—yet, in truth, Ere you, sire, broached these themes, their outlines loomed Not seldom in my own imaginings; But with less clear a vision than endows So great a captain, statesman, philosoph, As centre in yourself; whom had I known Sooner by some few years, months, even weeks, I had been spared full many a fault of rule. —Now as to Austria. Should we call her in?

NAPOLÉON Two in a bed I have slept, but never three.

ALEXANDER Ha-ha! Delightful. And, then nextly, Spain?

NAPOLÉON I lighted on some letters at Berlin, Wherein King Carlos offered to attack me. A Bourbon, minded thus, so near as Spain, Is dangerous stuff. He must be

seen to soon!... A draft, then, of our treaty being penned, We will peruse it later. If King George Will not, upon the terms there offered him, Conclude a ready peace, he can be forced. Trumpet yourself as France's firm ally, And Austria will fain to do the same: England, left nude to such joint harassment, Must shiver—fall.

ALEXANDER [with naive enthusiasm] It is a great alliance!

NAPOLÉON Would it were one in blood as well as brain— Of family hopes, and sweet domestic bliss!

ALEXANDER Ah—is it to my sister you refer?

NAPOLÉON The launching of a lineal progeny Has been much pressed upon me, much, of late, For reasons which I will not dwell on now. Staid counsellors, my brother Joseph, too, Urge that I loose the Empress by divorce, And re-wive promptly for the country's good. Princesses even have been named for me!— However this, to-day, is premature, And 'twixt ourselves alone.... The Queen of Prussia must ere long be here: Berthier escorts her. And the King, too, comes. She's one whom you admire?

ALEXANDER [reddening ingenuously] Yes.... Formerly I had—did feel that some faint fascination Vaguely adorned her form. And, to be plain, Certain reports have been calumnious, And wronged an honest woman.

NAPOLÉON As I knew! But she is wearing thready: why, her years Must be full one-and-thirty, if she's one.

ALEXANDER [quickly] No, sire. She's twenty-nine. If traits teach more It means that cruel memory gnaws at her As fair inciter to that fatal war Which broke her to the dust!... I do confess [Since now we speak on't] that this sacrifice Prussia is doomed to, still disquiets me. Unhappy King! When I recall the oaths Sworn him upon great Frederick's sepulchre, And—and my promises to his sad Queen, It pricks me that his realm and revenues Should be stript down to the mere half they were!

NAPOLÉON [cooly] Believe me, 'tis but my regard for you Which lets me leave

him that! Far easier ’twere To leave him none at all. [He rises and goes to the window.] But here they are. No; it’s the Queen alone, with Berthier As I directed. Then the King will follow.

ALEXANDER Let me, sire, urge your courtesy to bestow Some gentle words on her?

NAPOLÉON Ay, ay; I will. [Enter QUEEN LOUISA OF PRUSSIA on the arm of BERTHIER. She appears in majestic garments and with a smile on her lips, so that her still great beauty is impressive. But her eyes bear traces of tears. She accepts NAPOLÉON’S attentions with the stormily sad air of a wounded beauty. Whilst she is being received the KING arrives. He is a plain, shy, honest-faced, awkward man, with a wrecked and solitary look. His manner to NAPOLÉON is, nevertheless, dignified, and even stiff. The company move into the inner half of the room, where the tables are, and the folding-doors being shut, they seat themselves at dinner, the QUEEN taking a place between NAPOLÉON and ALEXANDER.]

NAPOLÉON Madame, I love magnificent attire; But in the present instance can but note That each bright knot and jewel less adorns The brighter wearer than the wearer it!

QUEEN [with a sigh] You praise one, sire, whom now the wanton world Has learnt to cease from praising! But such words From such a quarter are of worth no less.

NAPOLÉON Of worth as candour, madame; not as gauge. Your reach in rarity outsoars my scope. Yet, do you know, a troop of my hussars, That last October day, nigh captured you?

QUEEN Nay! Never a single Frenchman did I see.

NAPOLÉON Not less it was that you exposed yourself, And should have been protected. But at Weimar, Had you but sought me, ’twould have bettered you.

QUEEN I had no zeal to meet you, sire, alas!

NAPOLÉON [after a silence] And how at Memel do you sport with time?

QUEEN Sport? I!—I pore on musty chronicles, And muse on usurpations long forgot, And other historied dramas of high wrong!

NAPOLÉON Why con not annals of your own rich age? They treasure acts well fit for pondering.

QUEEN I am reminded too much of my age By having had to live in it. May Heaven Defend me now, and my wan ghost anon, From conning it again!

NAPOLÉON Alas, alas! Too grievous, this, for one who is yet a queen!

QUEEN No; I have cause for vials more of grief.— Prussia was blind in blazoning her power Against the Mage of Earth!... The embers of great Frederick's deeds inflamed her: His glories swelled her to her ruining. Too well has she been punished! [Emotion stops her.]

ALEXANDER [in a low voice, looking anxiously at her] Say not so. You speak as all were lost. Things are not thus! Such desperation has unreason in it, And bleeds the hearts that crave to comfort you.

NAPOLÉON [to the King] I trust the treaty, further pondered, sire, Has consolations?

KING [curtly] I am a luckless man; And muster strength to bear my lucklessness Without vain hope of consolations now. One thing, at least, I trust I have shown you, sire That I provoked not this calamity! At Anspach first my feud with you began— Anspach, my Eden, violated and shamed By blushless tramplings of your legions there!

NAPOLÉON It's rather late, methinks, to talk thus now.

KING [with more choler] Never too late for truth and plainspeaking!

NAPOLÉON [blandly] To your ally, the Tsar, I must refer you. He was it, and not I, who tempted you To push for war, when Eylau must have shown Your every profit

to have lain in peace.— He can indemn; yes, much or small; and may.

KING [with a head-shake] I would make up, would well make up, my mind To half my kingdom's loss, could in such limb But Magdeburg not lie. Dear Magdeburg, Place of my heart-hold; THAT I would retain!

NAPOLÉON Our words take not such pattern as is wont To grace occasions of festivity. [He turns brusquely from the King. The banquet proceeds with a more general conversation. When finished a toast is proposed: "The Freedom of the Seas," and drunk with enthusiasm.]

SPIRIT SINISTER Another hit at England and her tubs! I hear harsh echoes from her chalky chines.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES O heed not England now! Still read the Queen. One grieves to see her spend her pretty spells Upon the man who has so injured her. [They rise from table, and the folding-doors being opened they pass into the adjoining room. Here are now assembled MURAT, TALLEYRAND, KOURAKIN, KALKREUTH, BERTHIER, BESSIERES, CAULAINCOURT, LABANOFF, BENNIGSEN, and others. NAPOLÉON having spoken a few words here and there resumes his conversation with QUEEN LOUISA, and parenthetically offers snuff to the COUNTESS VOSS, her lady-in-waiting. TALLEYRAND, who has observed NAPOLÉON'S growing interest in the QUEEN, contrives to get near him.]

TALLEYRAND [in a whisper] Sire, is it possible that you can bend To let one woman's fairness filch from you All the resplendent fortune that attends The grandest victory of your grand career? [The QUEEN'S quick eye observes and flashes at the whisper, and she obtains a word with the minister.]

QUEEN [sarcastically] I should infer, dear Monsieur Talleyrand, Only two persons in the world regret My having come to Tilsit.

TALLEYRAND Madame, two? Can any!—who may such sad rascals be?

QUEEN You, and myself, Prince. [Gravely.] Yes! myself and you.

[TALLEYRAND'S face becomes impassive, and he does not reply. Soon the QUEEN prepares to leave, and NAPOLÉON rejoins her.]

NAPOLÉON [taking a rose from a vase] Dear Queen, do pray accept this little token As souvenir of me before you go? [He offers her the rose, with his hand on his heart. She hesitates, but accepts it.]

QUEEN [impulsively, with waiting tears] Let Magdeburg come with it, sire! O yes!

NAPOLÉON [with sudden frigidity] It is for you to take what I can give. And I give this—no more.15 [She turns her head to hide her emotion, and withdraws. NAPOLÉON steps up to her, and offers his arm. She takes it silently, and he perceives the tears on her cheeks. They cross towards the ante- room, away from the other guests.]

NAPOLÉON [softly] Still weeping, dearest lady! Why is this?

QUEEN [seizing his hand and pressing it] Your speeches darn the tearings of your sword!— Between us two, as man and woman now, Is't even possible you question why! O why did not the Greatest of the Age— Of future ages—of the ages past, This one time win a woman's worship—yea, For all her little life!

NAPOLÉON [gravely] Know you, my Fair That I—ay, I—in this deserve your pity.— Some force within me, baffling mine intent, Harries me onward, whether I will or no. My star, my star is what's to blame—not I. It is unswervable!

QUEEN Then now, alas! My duty's done as mother, wife, and queen.— I'll say no more—but that my heart is broken! [Exeunt NAPOLÉON, QUEEN, and LADY-IN-WAITING.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS He spoke thus at the Bridge of Lodi. Strange, He's of the few in Europe who discern The working of the Will.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES If that be so, Better for Europe lacked he such discerning! [NAPOLÉON returns to the room and joins TALLEYRAND.]

NAPOLÉON [aside to his minister] My God, it was touch-and-go that time, Talleyrand! She was within an ace of getting over me. As she stepped into the carriage she said in her pretty way, “O I have been cruelly deceived by you!” And when she sank down inside, not knowing I heard, she burst into sobs fit to move a statue. The Devil take me if I hadn’t a good mind to stop the horses, jump in, give her a good kissing, and agree to all she wanted. Ha-ha, well; a miss is as good as a mile. Had she come sooner with those sweet, beseeching blue eyes of hers, who knows what might not have happened! But she didn’t come sooner, and I have kept in my right mind. [The RUSSIAN EMPEROR, the KING OF PRUSSIA, and other guests advance to bid adieu. They depart severally. When they are gone NAPOLÉON turns to TALLEYRAND.] Adhere, then, to the treaty as it stands: Change not therein a single article, But write it fair forthwith. [Exeunt NAPOLÉON, TALLEYRAND, and other ministers and officers in waiting.[

SHADE OF THE EARTH Some surly voice afar I heard now Of an enisled Britannic quality; Wots any of the cause?

SPIRIT IRONIC Perchance I do! Britain is roused, in her slow, stolid style, By Bonaparte’s pronouncement at Berlin Against her cargoes, commerce, life itself; And now from out her water citadel Blows counterblasting “Orders.” Rumours tell.

RUMOUR I “From havens of fierce France and her allies, With poor or precious freight of merchandize Whoso adventures, England pounds as prize!”

RUMOUR II Thereat Napoléon names her, furiously, Curst Oligarch, Arch-pirate of the sea, Who shall lack room to live while liveth he!

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] And peoples are enmeshed in new calamity! [Curtain of Evening Shades.]

# ACT SECOND

## SCENE I

THE PYRENEES AND VALLEYS ADJOINING [The view is from upper air, immediately over the region that lies between Bayonne on the north, Pampeluna on the south, and San Sebastian on the west, including a portion of the Cantabrian mountains. The month is February, and snow covers not only the peaks but the lower slopes. The roads over the passes are well beaten.]

DUMB SHOW At various elevations multitudes of NAPOLÉON'S soldiery, to the number of about thirty thousand, are discerned in a creeping progress across the frontier from the French to the Spanish side. The thin long columns serpentine along the roads, but are sometimes broken, while at others they disappear altogether behind vertical rocks and overhanging woods. The heavy guns and the whitey-brown tilts of the baggage-waggons seem the largest objects in the procession, which are dragged laboriously up the incline to the watershed, their lumbering being audible as high as the clouds. Simultaneously the river Bidassoa, in a valley to the west, is being crossed by a train of artillery and another thirty thousand men, all forming part of the same systematic advance. Along the great highway through Biscay the wondering native carters draw their sheep-skinned ox-teams aside, to let the regiments pass, and stray groups of peaceable field-workers in Navarre look inquiringly at the marching and prancing progress. Time passes, and the various northern strongholds are approached by these legions. Their governors emerge at a summons, and when seeming explanations have been given the unwelcome comers are doubtfully admitted. The chief places to which entrance is thus obtained are Pampeluna and San Sebastian at the front of the scene, and far away towards the shining horizon of the Mediterranean, Figueras, and Barcelona. Dumb Show concludes as the mountain mists close over.

## SCENE II

ARANJUEZ, NEAR MADRID. A ROOM IN THE PALACE OF GODOY, THE

“PRINCE OF PEACE” [A private chamber is disclosed, richly furnished with paintings, vases, mirrors, silk hangings, gilded lounges, and several lutes of rare workmanship. The hour is midnight, the room being lit by screened candelabra. In the centre at the back of the scene is a large window heavily curtained. GODOY and the QUEEN MARÍA LUISA are dallying on a sofa. THE PRINCE OF PEACE is a fine handsome man in middle life, with curled hair and a mien of easy good-nature. The QUEEN is older, but looks younger in the dim light, from the lavish use of beautifying arts. She has pronounced features, dark eyes, low brows, black hair bound by a jewelled bandeau, and brought forward in curls over her forehead and temples, long heavy ear-rings, an open bodice, and sleeves puffed at the shoulders. A cloak and other mufflers lie on a chair beside her.]

GODOY The life-guards still insist, Love, that the King Shall not leave Aranjuez.

QUEEN Let them insist. Whether we stay, or whether we depart, Napoléon soon draws hither with his host!

GODOY He says he comes pacifically.... But no!

QUEEN Dearest, we must away to Andalusia, Thence to America when time shall serve.

GODOY I hold seven thousand men to cover us, And ships in Cadiz port. But then—the Prince Flatly declines to go. He lauds the French As true deliverers.

QUEEN Go Fernando MUST!... O my sweet friend, that we—our sole two selves— Could but escape and leave the rest to fate, And in a western bower dream out our days!— For the King’s glass can run but briefly now, Shattered and shaken as his vigour is.— But ah—your love burns not in singleness! Why, dear, caress Josefa Tudo still? She does not solve her soul in yours as I. And why those others even more than her?... How little own I in thee!

GODOY Such must be. I cannot quite forsake them. Don’t forget The same scope has been yours in former years.

QUEEN Yes, Love; I know. I yield! You cannot leave them; But if you ever would bethink yourself How long I have been yours, how truly all Those other pleasures were my desperate shifts To soften sorrow at your absences, You would be faithful to me!

GODOY True, my dear.— Yet I do passably keep troth with you, And fond you with fair regularity;— A week beside you, and a week away. Such is not schemed without some risk and strain.— And you agreed Josefa should be mine, And, too, Thereza without jealousy! [A noise is heard without.] Ah, what means that? [He jumps up from her side and crosses the room to a window, where he lifts the curtain cautiously. The Queen follows him with a scared look.

QUEEN A riot can it be?

GODOY Let me put these out ere they notice them; They think me at the Royal Palace yonder. [He hastily extinguishes the candles except one taper, which he places in a recess, so that the room is in shade. He then draws back the curtains, and she joins him at the window, where, enclosing her with his arm, he and she look out together. In front of the house a guard of hussars is stationed, beyond them spreading the Plaza or Square. On the other side rises in the lamplight the white front of the Royal Palace. On the flank of the Palace is a wall enclosing gardens, bowered alleys, and orange groves, and in the wall a small door. A mixed multitude of soldiery and populace fills the space in front of the King’s Palace, and they shout and address each other vehemently. During a lull in their vociferations is heard the peaceful purl of the Tagus over a cascade in the Palace grounds.]

QUEEN Lingering, we’ve risked too long our chance of flight! The Paris Terror will repeat it here. Not for myself I fear. No, no; for thee! [She clings to him.] If they should hurt you, it would murder me By heart-bleedings and stabs intolerable!

GODOY [kissing her] The first thought now is how to get you back Within the Palace walls. Why would you risk To come here on a night so critical?

QUEEN [passionately] I could not help it—nay, I WOULD not help! Rather than starve my soul I venture all.— Our last love-night—last, maybe, of long years, Why do you chide me now?

GODOY Dear Queen, I do not: I shape these sharp regrets but for your sake. Hence you must go, somehow, and quickly too. They think not yet of you in threatening thus, But of me solely.... Where does your lady wait?

QUEEN Below. One servant with her. They are true, And can be let know all. But you—but you! [Uproar continues.]

GODOY I can escape. Now call them. All three cloak And veil as when you came. [They retreat into the room. QUEEN MARÍA LUISA'S lady-in-waiting and servant are summoned. Enter both. All three then muffle themselves up, and GODOY prepares to conduct the QUEEN downstairs.]

QUEEN Nay, now! I will not have it. We are safe; Think of yourself. Can you get out behind?

GODOY I judge so—when I have done what's needful here.— The mob knows not the bye-door—slip across; Thence around sideways.—All's clear there as yet. [The QUEEN, her lady-in-waiting, and the servant go out hurriedly. GODOY looks again from the window. The mob is some way off, the immediate front being for the moment nearly free of loiterers; and the three muffled figures are visible, crossing without hindrance towards the door in the wall of the Palace Gardens. The instant they reach it a sentinel springs up, challenging them.]

GODOY Ah—now they are doomed! My God, why did she come! [A parley takes place. Something, apparently a bribe, is handed to the sentinel, and the three are allowed to slip in, the QUEEN having obviously been unrecognized. He breathes his relief.] Now for the others. Then—ah, then Heaven knows! [He sounds a bell and a servant enters. Where is the Countess of Castillofiel?

SERVANT She's looking for you, Prince.

GODOY Find her at once. Ah—here she is.—That's well.—Go watch the Plaza [to servant]. [GODOY'S mistress, the DOÑA JOSEFA TUDO, enters. She is a young and beautiful woman, the vivacity of whose large dark eyes is now clouded. She is wrapped up for flight. The servant goes out.]

JOSEFA [breathlessly] I should have joined you sooner, but I knew The Queen was fondling with you. She must needs Come hampering you this night of all the rest, As if not gorged with you at other times!

GODOY Don't, pretty one! needless it is in you, Being so well aware who holds my love.— I could not check her coming, since she would. You well know how the old thing is, and how I am compelled to let her have her mind! [He kisses her repeatedly.]

JOSEFA But look, the mob is swelling! Pouring in By thousands from Madrid—and all afoot. Will they not come on hither from the King's?

GODOY Not just yet, maybe. You should have sooner fled! The coach is waiting and the baggage packed. [He again peers out.] Yes, there the coach is; and the clamourers near, Led by Montijo, if I see aright. Yes, they cry "Uncle Peter!"—that means him. There will be time yet. Now I'll take you down So far as I may venture. [They leave the room. In a few minutes GODOY, having taken her down, re-enters and again looks out. JOSEFA'S coach is moving off with a small escort of GODOY'S guards of honour. A sudden yelling begins, and the crowd rushes up and stops the vehicle. An altercation ensues.]

CROWD Uncle Peter, it is the Favourite carrying off Prince Fernando. Stop him!

JOSEFA [putting her head out of the coach] Silence their uproar, please, Senor Count of Montijo! It is a lady only, the Countess of Castillofiel.

MONTIJO Let her pass, let her pass, friends! It is only that pretty wench of his, Pepa Tudo, who calls herself a Countess. Our titles are put to comical uses these days. We shall catch the cock-bird presently! [The DOÑA JOSEFA'S carriage is

allowed to pass on, as a shout from some who have remained before the Royal Palace attracts the attention of the multitude, which surges back thither.]

CROWD [nearing the Palace] Call out the King and the Prince. Long live the King! He shall not go. Hola! He is gone! Let us see him! He shall abandon Godoy! [The clamour before the Royal Palace still increasing, a figure emerges upon a balcony, whom GODOY recognizes by the lamplight to be FERNANDO, Prince of Asturias. He can be seen waving his hand. The mob grows suddenly silent.]

FERNANDO [in a shaken voice] Citizens! the King my father is in the palace with the Queen. He has been much tried to-day.

CROWD Promise, Prince, that he shall not leave us. Promise!

FERNANDO I do. I promise in his name. He has mistaken you, thinking you wanted his head. He knows better now.

CROWD The villain Godoy misrepresented us to him! Throw out the Prince of Peace!

FERNANDO He is not here, my friends.

CROWD Then the King shall announce to us that he has dismissed him! Let us see him. The King; the King! [FERNANDO goes in. KING CARLOS comes out reluctantly, and bows to their cheering. He produces a paper with a trembling hand.

KING [reading] “As it is the wish of the people—-”

CROWD Speak up, your Majesty!

KING [more loudly] “As it is the wish of the people, I release Don Manuel Godoy, Prince of Peace, from the posts of Generalissimo of the Army and Grand Admiral of the Fleet, and give him leave to withdraw whither he pleases.”

CROWD Huzza!

KING Citizens, to-morrow the decree is to be posted in Madrid.

CROWD Huzza! Long life to the King, and death to Godoy! [KING CARLOS

disappears from the balcony, and the populace, still increasing in numbers, look towards GODOY'S mansion, as if deliberating how to attack it. GODOY retreats from the window into the room, and gazing round him starts. A pale, worn, but placid lady, in a sombre though elegant robe, stands here in the gloom. She is THEREZA OF BOURBON, the Princess of Peace.]

PRINCESS It is only your unhappy wife, Manuel. She will not hurt you!

GODOY [shrugging his shoulders] Nor with THEY hurt YOU! Why did you not stay in the Royal Palace? You would have been more comfortable there.

PRINCESS I don't recognize why you should specially value my comfort. You have saved you real wives. How can it matter what happens to your titular one?

GODOY Much, dear. I always play fair. But it being your blest privilege not to need my saving I was left free to practise it on those who did. [Mob heard approaching.] Would that I were in no more danger than you!

PRINCESS Puf! [He again peers out. His guard of hussars stands firmly in front of the mansion; but the life-guards from the adjoining barracks, who have joined the people, endeavour to break the hussars of GODOY. A shot is fired, GODOY'S guard yields, and the gate and door are battered in.

CROWD [without] Murder him! murder him! Death to Manuel Godoy! [They are heard rushing onto the court and house.]

PRINCESS Go, I beseech you! You can do nothing for me, and I pray you to save yourself! The heap of mats in the lumber-room will hide you! [GODOY hastes to a jib-door concealed by sham bookshelves, presses the spring of it, returns, kisses her, and then slips out. His wife sits down with her back against the jib-door, and fans herself. She hears the crowd trampling up the stairs, but she does not move, and in a moment people burst in. The leaders are armed with stakes, daggers, and various improvised weapons, and some guards in undress appear with halberds.]

FIRST CITIZEN [peering into the dim light] Where is he? Murder him! [Noticing

the Princess.] Come, where is he?

PRINCESS The Prince of Peace is gone. I know not wither.

SECOND CITIZEN Who is this lady?

LIFE-GUARDSMAN Manuel Godoy's Princess.

CITIZENS [uncovering] Princess, a thousand pardons grant us!—you An injured wife—an injured people we! Common misfortune makes us more than kin. No single hair of yours shall suffer harm. [The PRINCESS bows.]

FIRST CITIZEN But this, Senora, is no place for you, For we mean mischief here! Yet first will grant Safe conduct for you to the Palace gates, Or elsewhere, as you wish

PRINCESS My wish is nought. Do what you will with me. But he's not here. [Several of them form an escort, and accompany her from the room and out of the house. Those remaining, now a great throng, begin searching the room, and in bands invade other parts of the mansion.]

SOME CITIZENS [returning] It is no use searching. She said he was not here, and she's a woman of honour.

FIRST CITIZEN [drily] She's his wife. [They begin knocking the furniture to pieces, tearing down the hangings, trampling on the musical instruments, and kicking holes through the paintings they have unhung from the walls. These, with clocks, vases, carvings, and other movables, they throw out of the window, till the chamber is a scene of utter wreck and desolation. In the rout a musical box is swept off a table, and starts playing a serenade as it falls on the floor. Enter the COUNT OF MONTIJO.]

MONTIJO Stop, friends; stop this! There is no sense in it— It shows but useless spite! I have much to say: The French Ambassador, de Beauharnais, Has come, and sought the King. And next Murat, With thirty thousand men, half cavalry, Is closing

in upon our doomed Madrid! I know not what he means, this Bonaparte; He makes pretence to gain us Portugal, But what want we with her? 'Tis like as not His aim's to noose us vassals all to him! The King will abdicate, and shortly too, As those will live to see who live not long.— We have saved our nation from the Favourite, But who is going to save us from our Friend? [The mob desists dubiously and goes out; the musical box upon the floor plays on, the taper burns to its socket, and the room becomes wrapt in the shades of night.]

## SCENE III

LONDON: THE MARCHIONESS OF SALISBURY'S [A large reception-room is disclosed, arranged for a conversazione. It is an evening in summer following, and at present the chamber is empty and in gloom. At one end is an elaborate device, representing Britannia offering her assistance to Spain, and at the other a figure of Time crowning the Spanish Patriots' flag with laurel.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS O clarionists of human welterings, Relate how Europe's madding movement brings This easeful haunt into the path of palpitating things!

RUMOURS [chanting] The Spanish King has bowed unto the Fate Which bade him abdicate: The sensual Queen, whose passionate caprice Has held her chambering with "the Prince of Peace," And wrought the Bourbon's fall, Holds to her Love in all; And Bonaparte has ruled that his and he Henceforth displace the Bourbon dynasty.

II The Spanish people, handled in such sort, As chattels of a Court, Dream dreams of England. Messengers are sent In secret to the assembled Parliament, In faith that England's hand Will stouten them to stand, And crown a cause which, hold they, bond and free Must advocate enthusiastically.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS So the Will heaves through Space, and moulds the times, With mortals for Its fingers! We shall see Again men's passions, virtues, visions,

crimes, Obey resistlessly The purposive, unmotived, dominant Thing Which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring! [The reception room is lighted up, and the hostess comes in. There arrive Ambassadors and their wives, the Dukes and Duchesses of RUTLAND and SOMERSET, the Marquis and Marchioness of STAFFORD, the Earls of STAIR, WESTMORELAND, GOWER, ESSEX, Viscounts and Viscountesses CRANLEY and MORPETH, Viscount MELBOURNE, Lord and Lady KINNAIRD, Baron de ROLLE, Lady CHARLES GRENVILLE, the Ladies CAVENDISH, Mr. and Mrs. THOMAS HOPE, MR. GUNNING, MRS. FITZHERBERT, and many other notable personages. Lastly, she goes to the door to welcome severally the PRINCE OF WALES, the PRINCES OF FRANCE, and the PRINCESS CASTELCICALA.]

LADY SALISBURY [to the Prince of Wales] I am sorry to say, sir, that the Spanish Patriots are not yet arrived. I doubt not but that they have been delayed by their ignorance of the town, and will soon be here.

PRINCE OF WALES No hurry whatever, my dear hostess. Gad, we've enough to talk about! I understand that the arrangement between our ministers and these noblemen will include the liberation of Spanish prisoners in this country, and the providing 'em with arms, to go back and fight for their independence.

LADY SALISBURY It will be a blessed event if they do check the career of this infamous Corsican. I have just heard that that poor foreigner Guillet de la Gevrillière, who proposed to Mr. Fox to assassinate him, died a miserable death a few days ago the Bicetre—probably by torture, though nobody knows. Really one almost wishes Mr. Fox had—-. O here they are! [Enter the Spanish Viscount de MATEROSA, and DON DIEGO de la VEGA. They are introduced by CAPTAIN HILL and MR. BAGOT, who escort them. LADY SALISBURY presents them to the PRINCE and others.]

PRINCE OF WALES By gad, Viscount, we were just talking of 'ee. You had some

adventures in getting to this country?

MATEROSA [assisted by Bagot as interpreter] Sir, it has indeed been a trying experience for us. But here we are, impressed by a deep sense of gratitude for the signal marks of attachment your country has shown us.

PRINCE OF WALES You represent, practically, the Spanish people?

MATEROSA We are immediately deputed, sir, By the Assembly of Asturias, More sailing soon from other provinces. We bring official writings, charging us To clinch and solder Treaties with this realm That may promote our cause against the foe. Nextly a letter to your gracious King; Also a Proclamation, soon to sound And swell the pulse of the Peninsula, Declaring that the act by which King Carlos And his son Prince Fernando cede the throne To whomsoever Napoléon may appoint, Being an act of cheatery, not of choice, Unfetters us from our allegiant oath.

MRS. FITZHERBERT The usurpation began, I suppose, with the divisions in the Royal Family?

MATEROSA Yes, madam, and the protection they foolishly requested from the Emperor; and their timid intent of flying secretly helped it on. It was an opportunity he had been awaiting for years.

MRS. FITZHERBERT All brought about by this man Godoy, Prince of Peace!

PRINCE OF WALES Dash my wig, mighty much you know about it, Maria! Why, sure, Boney thought to himself, “This Spain is a pretty place; ’twill just suit me as an extra acre or two; so here goes.”

DON DIEGO [aside to Bagot] This lady is the Princess of Wales?

BAGOT Hsh! no, Senor. The Princess lives at large at Kensington and other places, and has parties of her own, and doesn’t keep house with her husband. This lady is—well, really his wife, you know, in the opinion of many; but—-

DON DIEGO Ah! Ladies a little mixed, as they were at our Court! She’s the Pepa

Tudo to THIS Prince of Peace?

BAGOT O no—not exactly that, Senor.

DON DIEGO Ya, ya. Good. I'll be careful, my friend. You are not saints in England more than we are in Spain!

BAGOT We are not. Only you sin with naked faces, and we with masks on.

DON DIEGO Virtuous country!

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND It was understood that Ferdinand, Prince of Asturias, was to marry a French princess, and so unite the countries peacefully?

MATEROSA It was. And our credulous prince was tempted to meet Napoléon at Bayonne. Also the poor simple King, and the infatuated Queen, and Manuel Godoy.

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND Then Godoy escaped from Aranjuez?

MATEROSA Yes, by hiding in the garret. Then they all threw themselves upon Napoléon's protection. In his presence the Queen swore that the King was not Fernando's father! Altogether they form a queer little menagerie. What will happen to them nobody knows.

PRINCE OF WALES And do you wish us to send an army at once?

MATEROSA What we most want, sir, are arms and ammunition. But we leave the English Ministry to co-operate in its own wise way, anyhow, so as to sustain us in resenting these insults from the Tyrant of the Earth.

DUCHESS OF RUTLAND [to the Prince of Wales] What sort of aid shall we send, sir?

PRINCE OF WALES We are going to vote fifty millions, I hear. We'll whack him, and preserve your noble country for 'ee, Senor Viscount. The debate thereon is to come off to-morrow. It will be the finest thing the Commons have had since Pitt's time. Sheridan, who is open to it, says he and Canning are to be absolutely unanimous; and, by God, like the parties in his "Critic," when Government and

Opposition do agree, their unanimity is wonderful! Viscount Materosa, you and your friends must be in the Gallery. O, dammy, you must!

MATEROSA Sir, we are already pledged to be there.

PRINCE OF WALES And hark ye, Senor Viscount. You will then learn what a mighty fine thing a debate in the English Parliament is! No Continental humbug there. Not but that the Court has a trouble to keep 'em in their places sometimes; and I would it had been one in the Lords instead. However, Sheridan says he has been learning his speech these two days, and has hunted his father's dictionary through for some stunning long words.—Now, Maria [to Mrs. Fitzherbert], I am going home.

LADY SALISBURY At last, then, England will take her place in the forefront of this mortal struggle, and in pure disinterestedness fight with all her strength for the European deliverance. God defend the right! [The Prince of Wales leaves, and the other guests begin to depart.]

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music] Leave this glib throng to its conjecturing, And let four burdened weeks uncover what they bring!

SEMICHORUS II The said Debate, to wit; its close in deed; Till England stands enlisted for the Patriots' needs.

SEMICHORUS I And transports in the docks gulp down their freight Of buckled fighting-flesh, and gale-bound, watch and wait.

SEMICHORUS II Till gracious zephyrs shoulder on their sails To where the brine of Biscay moans its tragic tales.

CHORUS Bear we, too, south, as we were swallow-vanned, And mark the game now played there by the Master-hand! [The reception-chamber is shut over by the night without, and the point of view rapidly recedes south, London and its streets and lights diminishing till they are lost in the distance, and its noises being succeeded by the babble of the Channel and Biscay waves.]

**SCENE IV**

MADRID AND ITS ENVIRONS [The view is from the housetops of the city on a dusty evening in this July, following a day of suffocating heat. The sunburnt roofs, warm ochreous walls, and blue shadows of the capital, wear their usual aspect except for a few feeble attempts at decoration.]

DUMB SHOW Gazers gather in the central streets, and particularly in the Puerta del Sol. They show curiosity, but no enthusiasm. Patrols of French soldiery move up and down in front of the people, and seem to awe them into quietude. There is a discharge of artillery in the outskirts, and the church bells begin ringing; but the peals dwindle away to a melancholy jangle, and then to silence. Simultaneously, on the northern horizon of the arid, unenclosed, and treeless plain swept by the eye around the city, a cloud of dust arises, and a Royal procession is seen nearing. It means the new king, JOSEPH BONAPARTE. He comes on, escorted by a clanking guard of four thousand Italian troops, and the brilliant royal carriage is followed by a hundred coaches bearing his suite. As the procession enters the city many houses reveal themselves to be closed, many citizens leave the route and walk elsewhere, while may of those who remain turn their backs upon the spectacle. KING JOSEPH proceeds thus through the Plaza Oriente to the granite- walled Royal Palace, where he alights and is received by some of the nobility, the French generals who are in occupation there, and some clergy. Heralds emerge from the Palace, and hasten to divers points in the city, where trumpets are blown and the Proclamation of JOSEPH as KING OF SPAIN is read in a loud voice. It is received in silence. The sunsets, and the curtain falls.

**SCENE V**

THE OPEN SEA BETWEEN THE ENGLISH COASTS AND THE SPANISH PENINSULA [From high aloft, in the same July weather, and facing east, the vision swoops over the ocean and its coast-lines, from Cork Harbour on the extreme left, to

Mondego Bay, Portugal, on the extreme right. Land's End and the Scilly Isles, Ushant and Cape Finisterre, are projecting features along the middle distance of the picture, and the English Channel recedes endwise as a tapering avenue near the centre.]

DUMB SHOW Four groups of moth-like transport ships are discovered silently skimming this wide liquid plain. The first group, to the right, is just vanishing behind Cape Mondego to enter Mondego Bay; the second, in the midst, has come out from Plymouth Sound, and is preparing to stand down Channel; the third is clearing St. Helen's point for the same course; and the fourth, much further up Channel, is obviously to follow on considerably in the rear of the two preceding. A south-east wind is blowing strong, and, according to the part of their course reached, they either sail direct with the wind on their larboard quarter, or labour forward by tacking in zigzags.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES What are these fleets that cross the sea From British ports and bays To coasts that glister southwardly Behind the dog-day haze?

RUMOURS [chanting] SEMICHORUS I

They are the shipped battalions sent To bar the bold Belligerent Who stalks the Dancers' Land. Within these hulls, like sheep a-pen, Are packed in thousands fighting-men And colonels in command.

SEMICHORUS II The fleet that leans each aery fin Far south, where Mondego mouths in, Bears Wellesley and his aides therein, And Hill, and Crauford too; With Torrens, Ferguson, and Fane, And majors, captains, clerks, in train, And those grim needs that appertain— The surgeons—not a few! To them add twelve thousand souls In linesmen that the list enrolls, Borne onward by those sheeted poles As war's red retinue!

SEMICHORUS I The fleet that clears St. Helen's shore Holds Burrard, Hope, ill-omened Moore, Clinton and Paget; while The transports that pertain to those

Count six-score sail, whose planks enclose Ten thousand rank and file.

SEMICHORUS II The third-sent ships, from Plymouth Sound, With Acland, Anstruther, impound Souls to six thousand strong. While those, the fourth fleet, that we see Far back, are lined with cavalry, And guns of girth, wheeled heavily To roll the routes along.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Enough, and more, of inventories and names! Many will fail; many earn doubtful fames. Await the fruitage of their acts and aims.

DUMB SHOW [continuing] In the spacious scene visible the far-separated groups of transports, convoyed by battleships, float on before the wind almost imperceptibly, like preened duck-feathers across a pond. The southernmost expedition, under SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, soon comes to anchor within the Bay of Mondego aforesaid, and the soldiery are indefinitely discernible landing upon the beach from boats. Simultaneously the division commanded by MOORE, as yet in the Chops of the channel, is seen to be beaten back by contrary winds. It gallantly puts to sea again, and being joined by the division under ANSTRUTHER that has set out from Plymouth, labours round Ushant, and stands to the south in the track of WELLESLEY. The rearward transports do the same. A moving stratum of summer cloud beneath the point of view covers up the spectacle like an awning.

## SCENE VI

ST. CLOUD. THE BOUDOIR OF JOSÉPHINE [It is the dusk of evening in the latter summer of this year, and from the windows at the back of the stage, which are still uncurtained, can be seen the EMPRESS with NAPOLÉON and some ladies and officers of the Court playing Catch-me-if-you-can by torchlight on the lawn. The moving torches throw bizarre lights and shadows into the apartment, where only a remote candle or two are burning. Enter JOSÉPHINE and NAPOLÉON together, somewhat out of breath. With careless suppleness she slides down on a couch and fans herself. Now that the candle-rays reach her they show her mellow complexion,

her velvety eyes with long lashes, mouth with pointed corners and excessive mobility beneath its duvet, and curls of dark hair pressed down upon the temples by a gold band. The EMPEROR drops into a seat near her, and they remain in silence till he jumps up, knocks over some nicknacks with his elbow, and begins walking about the boudoir.]

NAPOLÉON [with sudden gloom] These mindless games are very well, my friend; But ours to-night marks, not improbably, The last we play together.

JOSÉPHINE [starting] Can you say it! Why raise that ghastly nightmare on me now, When, for a moment, my poor brain had dreams Denied it all the earlier anxious day?

NAPOLÉON Things that verge nigh, my simple Joséphine, Are not shoved off by wilful winking at. Better quiz evils with too strained an eye Than have them leap from disregarded lairs.

JOSÉPHINE Maybe ’tis true, and you shall have it so!— Yet there’s no joy save sorrow waived awhile.

NAPOLÉON Ha, ha! That’s like you. Well, each day by day I get sour news. Each hour since we returned From this queer Spanish business at Bayonne, I have had nothing else; and hence by brooding.

JOSÉPHINE But all went well throughout our touring-time?

NAPOLÉON Not so—behind the scenes. Our arms a Baylen Have been smirched badly. Twenty thousand shamed All through Dupont’s ill-luck! The selfsame day My brother Joseph’s progress to Madrid Was glorious as a sodden rocket’s fizz! Since when his letters creak with querulousness. “Napoléon el chico” ’tis they call him— “Napoléon the Little,” so he says. Then notice Austria. Much looks louring there, And her sly new regard for England grows. The English, next, have shipped an army down To Mondego, under one Wellesley, A man from India, and his march is south To Lisbon, by Vimiero. On he’ll go And do the devil’s mischief ere he is

met By unaware Junot, and chevyed back To English fogs and fumes!

JOSÉPHINE My dearest one, You have mused on worse reports with better grace Full many and many a time. Ah—there is more!... I know; I know!

NAPOLÉON [kicking away a stool] There is, of course; that worm Time ever keeps in hand for gnawing me!— The question of my dynasty—which bites Closer and closer as the years wheel on.

JOSÉPHINE Of course it's that! For nothing else could hang My lord on tenterhooks through nights and days;— Or rather, not the question, but the tongues That keep the question stirring. Nought recked you Of throne-succession or dynastic lines When gloriously engaged in Italy! I was your fairy then: they labelled me Your Lady of Victories; and much I joyed, Till dangerous ones drew near and daily sowed These choking tares within your fecund brain,— Making me tremble if a panel crack, Or mouse but cheep, or silent leaf sail down, And murdering my melodious hours with dreads That my late happiness, and my late hope, Will oversoon be knelled!

NAPOLÉON [genially nearing her] But years have passed since first we talked of it, And now, with loss of dear Hortense's son Who won me as my own, it looms forth more. And selfish 'tis in my good Joséphine To blind her vision to the weal of France, And this great Empire's solidarity. The grandeur of your sacrifice would gild Your life's whole shape.

JOSÉPHINE Were I as coarse a wife As I am limned in English caricature— [Those cruel effigies they draw of me!]— You could not speak more aridly.

NAPOLÉON Nay, nay! You know, my comrade, how I love you still Were there a long-notorious dislike Betwixt us, reason might be in your dreads But all earth knows our conjugality. There's not a bourgeois couple in the land Who, should dire duty rule their severance, Could part with scanter scandal than could we.

JOSÉPHINE [pouting] Nevertheless there's one.

NAPOLÉON A scandal? What?

JOSÉPHINE Madame Walewska! How could you pretend When, after Jena, I'd have come to you, "The weather was so wild, the roads so rough, That no one of my sex and delicate nerve Could hope to face the dangers and fatigues." Yes—so you wrote me, dear. They hurt not her!

NAPOLÉON [blandly] She was a week's adventure—not worth words! I say 'tis France.—I have held out for years Against the constant pressure brought on me To null this sterile marriage.

JOSÉPHINE [bursting into sobs] Me you blame! But how know you that you are not the culprit?

NAPOLÉON I have reason so to know—if I must say. The Polish lady you have chosen to name Has proved the fault not mine. [JOSÉPHINE sobs more violently.] Don't cry, my cherished; It is not really amiable of you, Or prudent, my good little Joséphine, With so much in the balance.

JOSÉPHINE How—know you— What may not happen! Wait a—little longer!

NAPOLÉON [playfully pinching her arm] O come, now, my adored! Haven't I already! Nature's a dial whose shade no hand puts back, Trick as we may! My friend, you are forty-three This very year in the world— [JOSÉPHINE breaks out sobbing again.] And in vain it is To think of waiting longer; pitiful To dream of coaxing shy fecundity To an unlikely freak by physicking With superstitious drugs and quackeries That work you harm, not good. The fact being so, I have looked it squarely down—against my heart! Solicitations voiced repeatedly At length have shown the soundness of their shape, And left me no denial. You, at times, My dear one, have been used to handle it. My brother Joseph, years back, frankly gave His honest view that something should be done; And he, you well know, shows no ill tinct In his regard of you.

JOSÉPHINE And what princess?

NAPOLÉON For wiving with? No thought was given to that, She shapes as vaguely as the Veiled—

JOSÉPHINE No, no; It's Alexander's sister, I'm full sure!— But why this craze for home-made manikins And lineage mere of flesh? You have said yourself It mattered not. Great Caesar, you declared, Sank sonless to his rest; was greater deemed Even for the isolation. Frederick Saw, too, no heir. It is the fate of such, Often, to be denied the common hope As fine for fulness in the rarer gifts That Nature yields them. O my husband long, Will you not purge your soul to value best That high heredity from brain to brain Which supersedes mere sequence of blood, That often vary more from sire to son Than between furthest strangers!... Napoléon's offspring in his like must lie; The second of his line be he who shows Napoléon's soul in later bodiment, The household father happening as he may!

NAPOLÉON [smilingly wiping her eyes] Little guessed I my dear would prove her rammed With such a charge of apt philosophy When tutoring me gay arts in earlier times! She who at home coquetted through the years In which I vainly penned her wishful words To come and comfort me in Italy, Might, faith, have urged it then effectually! But never would you stir from Paris joys, [With some bitterness.] And so, when arguments like this could move me, I heard them not; and get them only now When their weight dully falls. But I have said 'Tis not for me, but France—Good-bye an hour. [Kissing her.] I must dictate some letters. This new move Of England on Madrid may mean some trouble. Come, dwell not gloomily on this cold need Of waiving private joy for policy. We are but thistle-globes on Heaven's high gales, And whither blown, or when, or how, or why, Can choose us not at all!... I'll come to you anon, dear: staunch Roustan Will light me in. [Exit NAPOLÉON. The scene shuts in shadow.]

## SCENE VII

VIMIERO [A village among the hills of Portugal, about fifty miles north of Lisbon.

Around it are disclosed, as ten on Sunday morning strikes, a blue army of fourteen thousand men in isolated columns, and red army of eighteen thousand in line formation, drawn up in order of battle. The blue army is a French one under JUNOT; the other an English one under SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY—portion of that recently landed. The August sun glares on the shaven faces, white gaiters, and white cross-belts of the English, who are to fight for their lives while sweating under a quarter-hundredweight in knapsack and pouches, and with firelocks heavy as putlogs. They occupy a group of heights, but their position is one of great danger, the land abruptly terminating two miles behind their backs in lofty cliffs overhanging the Atlantic. The French occupy the valleys in the English front, and this distinction between the two forces strikes the eye—the red army is accompanied by scarce any cavalry, while the blue is strong in that area.]

DUMB SHOW The battle is begun with alternate moves that match each other like those of a chess opening. JUNOT makes an oblique attack by moving a division to his right; WELLESLEY moves several brigades to his left to balance it. A column of six thousand French then climbs the hill against the English centre, and drives in those who are planted there. The English artillery checks its adversaries, and the infantry recover and charge the baffled French down the slopes. Meanwhile the latter’s cavalry and artillery are attacking the village itself, and, rushing on a few squadrons of English dragoons stationed there, cut them to pieces. A dust is raised by this ado, and moans of men and shrieks of horses are heard. Close by the carnage the little Maceira stream continues to trickle unconcernedly to the sea. On the English left five thousand French infantry, having ascended to the ridge and maintained a stinging musket-fire as sharply returned, are driven down by the bayonets of six English regiments. Thereafter a brigade of the French, the northernmost, finding that the others have pursued to the bottom and are resting after the effort, surprise them and bayonet them back to their original summit. The see-saw is continued by the recovery of the English, who again drive their assailants

down. The French army pauses stultified, till, the columns uniting, they fall back toward the opposite hills. The English, seeing that their chance has come, are about to pursue and settle the fortunes of the day. But a messenger dispatched from a distant group is marked riding up to the large-nosed man with a telescope and an Indian sword who, his staff around him, has been directing the English movements. He seems astonished at the message, appears to resent it, and pauses with a gloomy look. But he sends countermands to his generals, and the pursuit ends abortively. The French retreat without further molestation by a circuitous march into the great road to Torres Vedras by which they came, leaving nearly two thousand dead and wounded on the slopes they have quitted. Dumb Show ends and the curtain draws.

# ACT THIRD

## SCENE I

SPAIN. A ROAD NEAR ASTORGA [The eye of the spectator rakes the road from the interior of a cellar which opens upon it, and forms the basement of a deserted house, the roof doors, and shutters of which have been pulled down and burnt for bivouac fires. The season is the beginning of January, and the country is covered with a sticky snow. The road itself is intermittently encumbered with heavy traffic, the surface being churned to a yellow mud that lies half knee-deep, and at the numerous holes in the track forming still deeper quagmires. In the gloom of the cellar are heaps of damp straw, in which ragged figures are lying half-buried, many of the men in the uniform of English regiments, and the women and children in clouts of all descriptions, some being nearly naked. At the back of the cellar is revealed, through a burst door, an inner vault, where are discernible some wooden-hooped wine-casks; in one sticks a gimlet, and the broaching-cork of another has been driven in. The wine runs into pitchers, washing-basins, shards, chamber- vessels, and other extemporized receptacles. Most of the inmates are

drunk; some to insensibility. So far as the characters are doing anything they are contemplating almost incessant traffic outside, passing in one direction. It includes a medley of stragglers from the Marquis of ROMANA'S Spanish forces and the retreating English army under SIR JOHN MOORE—to which the concealed deserters belong.]

FIRST DESERTER Now he's one of the Eighty-first, and I'd gladly let that poor blade know that we've all that man can wish for here—good wine and buxom women. But if I do, we shan't have room for ourselves—hey? [He signifies a man limping past with neither fire-lock nor knapsack. Where the discarded knapsack has rubbed for weeks against his shoulder-blades the jacket and shirt are fretted away, leaving his skin exposed.]

SECOND DESERTER He may be the Eighty-firsht, or th' Eighty-second; but what I say is, without fear of contradiction, I wish to the Lord I was back in old Bristol again. I'd sooner have a nipperkin of our own real "Bristol milk" than a mash-tub full of this barbarian wine!

THIRD DESERTER 'Tis like thee to be ungrateful, after putting away such a skinful on't. I am as much Bristol as thee, but would as soon be here as there. There ain't near such willing women, that are strict respectable too, there as hereabout, and no open cellars.— As there's many a slip in this country I'll have the rest of my allowance now. [He crawls on his elbows to one of the barrels, and turning on his back lets the wine run down his throat.]

FORTH DESERTER [to a fifth, who is snoring] Don't treat us to such a snoaching there, mate. Here's some more coming, and they'll sight us if we don't mind! [Enter without a straggling flock of military objects, some with fragments of shoes on, others bare-footed, many of the latter's feet bleeding. The arms and waists of some are clutched by women as tattered and bare-footed as themselves. They pass on. The Retreat continues. More of ROMANA'S Spanish limp along in disorder; then enters

a miscellaneous group of English cavalry soldiers, some on foot, some mounted, the rearmost of the latter bestriding a shoeless foundered creature whose neck is vertebrae and mane only. While passing it falls from exhaustion; the trooper extricates himself and pistols the animal through the head. He and the rest pass on.]

FIRST DESERTER [a new plashing of feet being heard] Here's something more in order, or I am much mistaken. He cranes out.] Yes, a sergeant of the Forty-third, and what's left of their second battalion. And, by God, not far behind I see shining helmets. 'Tis a whole squadron of French dragoons! [Enter the sergeant. He has a racking cough, but endeavours, by stiffening himself up, to hide how it is wasting away his life. He halts, and looks back, till the remains of the Forty-third are abreast, to the number of some three hundred, about half of whom are crippled invalids, the other half being presentable and armed soldiery.'

SERGEANT Now show yer nerve, and be men. If you die to-day you won't have to die to-morrow. Fall in! [The miscellany falls in.] All invalids and men without arms march ahead as well as they can. Quick—maw-w-w-ch! [Exeunt invalids, etc.] Now! Tention! Shoulder-r-r—fawlocks! [Order obeyed.] [The sergeant hastily forms these into platoons, who prime and load, and seem preternaturally changed from what they were into alert soldiers. Enter French dragoons at the left-back of the scene. The rear platoon of the Forty-third turns, fires, and proceeds. The next platoon covering them does the same. This is repeated several times, staggering the pursuers. Exeunt French dragoons, giving up the pursuit. The coughing sergeant and the remnant of the Forty-third march on.]

FOURTH DESERTER [to a woman lying beside him] What d'ye think o' that, my honey? It fairly makes me a man again. Come, wake up! We must be getting along somehow. [He regards the woman more closely.] Why—my little chick? Look here, friends. [They look, and the woman is found to be dead.] If I didn't think that her poor knees felt cold!... And only an hour ago I swore to marry her! [They remain

silent. The Retreat continues in the snow without, now in the form of a file of ox-carts, followed by a mixed rabble of English and Spanish, and mules and muleteers hired by English officers to carry their baggage. The muleteers, looking about and seeing that the French dragoons gave been there, cut the bands which hold on the heavy packs, and scamper off with their mules.]

A VOICE [behind] The Commander-in-Chief is determined to maintain discipline, and they must suffer. No more pillaging here. It is the worst case of brutality and plunder that we have had in this wretched time! [Enter an English captain of hussars, a lieutenant, a guard of about a dozen, and three men as prisoner.]

CAPTAIN If they choose to draw lots, only one need be made an example of. But they must be quick about it. The advance-guard of the enemy is not far behind. [The three prisoners appear to draw lots, and the one on whom the lot falls is blindfolded. Exeunt the hussars behind a wall, with carbines. A volley is heard and something falls. The wretched in the cellar shudder.]

FOURTH DESERTER ’Tis the same for us but for this heap of straw. Ah—my doxy is the only one of us who is safe and sound! [He kisses the dead woman.] [Retreat continues. A train of six-horse baggage-waggons lumbers past, a mounted sergeant alongside. Among the baggage lie wounded soldiers and sick women.]

SERGEANT OF THE WAGGON-TRAIN If so be they are dead, ye may as well drop ’em over the tail-board. ’Tis no use straining the horses unnecessary. [Waggons halt. Two of the wounded who have just died are taken out, laid down by the roadside, and some muddy snow scraped over them. Exeunt waggons and sergeant. An interval. More English troops pass on horses, mostly shoeless and foundered. Enter SIR JOHN MOORE and officers. MOORE appears on the pale evening light as a handsome man, far on in the forties, the orbits of his dark eyes showing marks of deep anxiety. He is talking to some of his staff with vehement emphasis and gesture. They cross the scene and go on out of sight, and the squashing of their

horses' hoofs in the snowy mud dies away.]

FIFTH DESERTER [incoherently in his sleep] Poise fawlocks—open pans—right hands to pouch—handle ca'tridge— bring it—quick motion-bite top well off—prime—shut pans—cast about—load—-

FIRST DESERTER [throwing a shoe at the sleeper] Shut up that! D'ye think you are a 'cruity in the awkward squad still?

SECOND DESERTER I don't know what he thinks, but I know what I feel! Would that I were at home in England again, where there's old-fashioned tipple, and a proper God A'mighty instead of this eternal 'Ooman and baby; —ay, at home a-leaning against old Bristol Bridge, and no questions asked, and the winter sun slanting friendly over Baldwin Street as 'a used to do! 'Tis my very belief, though I have lost all sure reckoning, that if I were there, and in good health, 'twould be New Year's day about now. What it is over here I don't know. Ay, to- night we should be a-setting in the tap of the "Adam and Eve"— lifting up the tune of "The Light o' the Moon." 'Twer a romantical thing enough. 'A used to go som'at like this [he sings in a nasal tone]:— "O I thought it had been day, And I stole from here away; But it proved to be the light o' the moon!" [Retreat continues, with infantry in good order. Hearing the singing, one of the officers looks around, and detaching a patrol enters the ruined house with the file of men, the body of soldiers marching on. The inmates of the cellar bury themselves in the straw. The officer peers about, and seeing no one prods the straw with his sword.

VOICES [under the straw] Oh! Hell! Stop it! We'll come out! Mercy! Quarter! [The lurkers are uncovered.]

OFFICER If you are well enough to sing bawdy songs, you are well enough to march. So out of it—or you'll be shot, here and now!

SEVERAL You may shoot us, captain, or the French may shoot us, or the devil may take us; we don't care which! Only we can't stir. Pity the women, captain, but do

what you will with us! [The searchers pass over the wounded, and stir out those capable of marching, both men and women, so far as they discover them. They are pricked on by the patrol. Exeunt patrol and deserters in its charge. Those who remain look stolidly at the highway. The English Rear- guard of cavalry crosses the scene and passes out. An interval. It grows dusk.]

SPIRIT IRONIC Quaint poesy, and real romance of war!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Mock on, Shade, if thou wilt! But others find Poesy ever lurk where pit-pats poor mankind! [The scene is cloaked in darkness.]

**SCENE II**

THE SAME [It is nearly midnight. The fugitives who remain in the cellar having slept off the effects of the wine, are awakened by a new tramping of cavalry, which becomes more and more persistent. It is the French, who now fill the road. The advance-guard having passed by, DELABORDE'S division, LORGE'S division, MERLE'S division, and others, successively cross the gloom. Presently come the outlines of the Imperial Guard, and then, with a start, those in hiding realize their situation, and are wide awake. NAPOLÉON enters with his staff. He has just been overtaken by a courier, and orders those round him to halt.]

NAPOLÉON Let there a fire be lit: Ay, here and now. The lines within these letters brook no pause In mastering their purport. [Some of the French approach the ruined house and, appropriating what wood is still left there, heap it by the roadside and set it alight. A mixed rain and snow falls, and the sputtering flames throw a glare all round.]

SECOND DESERTER [under his voice] We be shot corpses! Ay, faith, we be! Why didn't I stick to England, and true doxology, and leave foreign doxies and their wine alone!... Mate, can ye squeeze another shardful from the cask there, for I feel my time is come!... O that I had but the barrel of that firelock I throwed away, and that

wasted powder to prime and load! This bullet I chaw to squench my hunger would do the rest!... Yes, I could pick him off now!

FIRST DESERTER You lie low with your picking off, or he may pick off you! Thank God the babies are gone. Maybe we shan't be noticed, if we've but the courage to do nothing, and keep hid. [NAPOLÉON dismounts, approaches the fire, and looks around.]

NAPOLÉON Another of their dead horses here, I see.

OFFICER Yes, sire. We have counted eighteen hundred odd From Benavente hither, pistoled thus. Some we'd to finish for them: headlong haste Spared them no time for mercy to their brutes. One-half their cavalry now tramps afoot.

NAPOLÉON And what's the tale of waggons we've picked up?

OFFICER Spanish and all abandoned, some four hundred; Of magazines and firelocks, full ten load; And stragglers and their girls a numerous crew.

NAPOLÉON Ay, devil—plenty those! Licentious ones These English, as all canting peoples are.— And prisoners?

OFFICER Seven hundred English, sire; Spaniards five thousand more.

NAPOLÉON 'Tis not amiss. To keep the new year up they run away! [He soliloquizes as he begins tearing open the dispatches.] Nor Pitt nor Fox displayed such blundering As glares in this campaign! It is, indeed, Enlarging Folly to Foolhardiness To combat France by land! But how expect Aught that can claim the name of government From Canning, Castlereagh, and Perceval, Caballers all—poor sorry politicians— To whom has fallen the luck of reaping in The harvestings of Pitt's bold husbandry. [He unfolds a dispatch, and looks for something to sit on. A cloak is thrown over a log, and he settles to reading by the firelight. The others stand round. The light, crossed by the snow-flakes, flickers on his unhealthy face and stoutening figure. He sinks into the rigidity of profound thought, till his features lour.] So this is their reply! They have done with me! Britain declines negotiating

further— Flouts France and Russia indiscriminately. “Since one dethrones and keeps as prisoners The most legitimate kings”—that means myself— “The other suffers their unworthy treatment For sordid interests”—that’s for Alexander!... And what is Georgy made to say besides?— “Pacific overtures to us are wiles Woven to unnerve the generous nations round Lately escaped the galling yoke of France, Or waiting so to do. Such, then, being seen, These tentatives must be regarded now As finally forgone; and crimson war Be faced to its fell worst, unflinchingly.” —The devil take their lecture! What am I, That England should return such insolence? [He jumps up, furious, and walks to and fro beside the fire. By and by cooling he sits down again.] Now as to hostile signs in Austria.... [He breaks another seal and reads.] Ah,—swords to cross with her some day in spring! Thinking me cornered over here in Spain She speaks without disguise, the covert pact ’Twixt her and England owning now quite frankly, Careless how works its knowledge upon me. She, England, Germany: well—I can front them! That there is no sufficient force of French Between the Elbe and Rhine to prostrate her, Let new and terrible experience Soon disillude her of! Yea; she may arm: The opportunity she late let slip Will not subserve her now!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Has he no heart-hints that this Austrian court, Whereon his mood takes mould so masterful, Is rearing naively in its nursery-room A future wife for him?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Thou dost but guess it, And how should his heart know?

NAPOLÉON [opening and reading another dispatch] Now eastward. Ohe!— The Orient likewise looms full somberly.... The Turk declines pacifically to yield What I have promised Alexander. Ah!... As for Constantinople being his prize I’ll see him frozen first. His flight’s too high! And showing that I think so makes him cool. [Rises.] Is Soult the Duke Dalmatia yet at hand?

OFFICER He has arrived along the Leon road Just now, your Majesty; and only

waits The close of your perusals. [Enter SOULT, who is greeted by NAPOLÉON.]

FIRST DESERTER Good Lord deliver us from all great men, and take me back again to humble life! That's Marshal Soult the Duke of Dalmatia!

SECOND DESERTER The Duke of Damnation for our poor rear, by the look on't!

FIRST DESERTER Yes—he'll make 'em rub their poor rears before he has done with 'em! But we must overtake 'em to-morrow by a cross-cut, please God!

NAPOLÉON [pointing to the dispatches] Here's matter enough for me, Duke, and to spare. The ominous contents are like the threats The ancient prophets dealt rebellious Judah! Austria we soon shall have upon our hands, And England still is fierce for fighting on,— Strange humour in a concord-loving land! So now I must to Paris straight away— At least, to Valladolid; so as to stand More apt for couriers than I do out here In this far western corner, and to mark The veerings of these new developments, And blow a counter-breeze.... Then, too, there's Lannes, still sweating at the siege Of sullen Zaragoza as 'twere hell. Him I must further counsel how to close His twice too tedious battery.—You, then, Soult— Ney is not yet, I gather, quite come up?

SOULT He's near, sire, on the Benavente road; But some hours to the rear I reckon, still.

NAPOLÉON [pointing to the dispatches] Him I'll direct to come to your support In this pursuit and harassment of Moore Wherein you take my place. You'll follow up And chase the flying English to the sea. Bear hard on them, the bayonet at their loins. With Merle's and Mermet's corps just gone ahead, And Delaborde's, and Heudelet's here at hand. While Lorge's and Lahoussaye's picked dragoons Will follow, and Franceschi's cavalry. To Ney I am writing, in case of need, He will support with Marchand and Mathieu.— Your total thus of seventy thousand odd, Ten thousand horse, and cannon to five score, Should near annihilate this British force, And carve a triumph large in history. [He bends over the fire and makes some

notes rapidly.] I move into Astorga; then turn back, [Though only in my person do I turn] And leave to you the destinies of Spain.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS More turning may be here than he design. In this small, sudden, swift turn backward, he Suggests one turning from his apogee! [The characters disperse, the fire sinks, and snowflakes and darkness blot out all.]

## SCENE III

BEFORE CORUNA [The town, harbour, and hills at the back are viewed from an aerial point to the north, over the lighthouse known as the Tower of Hercules, rising at the extremity of the tongue of land on which La Coruna stands, the open ocean being in the spectator's rear. In the foreground the most prominent feature is the walled old town, with its white towers and houses, shaping itself aloft over the harbour. The new town, and its painted fronts, show bright below, even on this cloudy winter afternoon. Further off, behind the harbour—now crowded with British transports of all sizes—is a series of low broken hills, intersected by hedges and stone walls. A mile behind these low inner hills is beheld a rocky chain of outer and loftier heights that completely command the former. Nothing behind them is seen but grey sky.

DUMB SHOW On the inner hills aforesaid the little English army—a pathetic fourteen thousand of foot only—is just deploying into line: HOPE'S division is on the left, BAIRD'S to the right. PAGET with the reserve is in the hollow to the left behind them; and FRASER'S division still further back shapes out on a slight rise to the right. This harassed force now appears as if composed of quite other than the men observed in the Retreat insubordinately straggling along like vagabonds. Yet they are the same men, suddenly stiffened and grown amenable to discipline by the satisfaction of standing to the enemy at last. They resemble a double palisade of red stakes, the only gaps being those that the melancholy necessity of scant numbers entails here and there. Over the heads of these red men is beheld on the outer hills

the twenty thousand French that have been pushed along the road at the heels of the English by SOULT. They have an ominous superiority, both in position and in their abundance of cavalry and artillery, over the slender lines of English foot. The left of this background, facing HOPE, is made up of DELABORDE'S and MERLE'S divisions, while in a deadly arc round BAIRD, from whom they are divided only by the village of Elvina, are placed MERMET'S division, LAHOUSSAYE'S and LORGE'S dragoons, FRANCESCHI'S cavalry, and, highest up of all, a formidable battery of eleven great guns that rake the whole British line. It is now getting on for two o'clock, and a stir of activity has lately been noticed along the French front. Three columns are discerned descending from their position, the first towards the division of SIR DAVID BAIRD, the weakest point in the English line, the next towards the centre, the third towards the left. A heavy cannonade from the battery supports this advance. The clash ensues, the English being swept down in swathes by the enemy's artillery. The opponents meet face to face at the village in the valley between them, and the fight there grows furious. SIR JOHN MOORE is seen galloping to the front under the gloomy sky.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I seem to vision in San Carlos' garden, That rises salient in the upper town, His name, and date, and doing, set within A filmy outline like a monument, Which yet is but the insubstantial air.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Read visions as conjectures; not as more.

When MOORE arrives at the front, FRASER and PAGET move to the right, where the English are most sorely pressed. A grape-shot strikes off BAIRD'S arm. There is a little confusion, and he is borne to the rear; while MAJOR NAPIER disappears, a prisoner. Intelligence of these misfortunes is brought to SIR JOHN MOORE. He goes further forward, and precedes in person the Forty-second regiment and a battalion of the Guards who, with fixed bayonets, bear the enemy back, MOORE'S gestures in cheering them being notably energetic. Pursuers, pursued, and SIR

JOHN himself pass out of sight behind the hill. Dumb Show ends. [The point of vision descends to the immediate rear of the English position. The early January evening has begun to spread its shades, and shouts of dismay are heard from behind the hill over which MOORE and the advancing lines have vanished. Straggling soldiers cross in the gloom.]

FIRST STRAGGLER He's struck by a cannon-ball, that I know; but he's not killed, that I pray God A'mighty.

SECOND STRAGGLER Better he were. His shoulder is knocked to a bag of splinters. As Sir David was wownded, Sir John was anxious that the right should not give way, and went forward to keep it firm.

FIRST STRAGGLER He didn't keep YOU firm, howsomever.

SECOND STRAGGLER Nor you, for that matter.

FIRST STRAGGLER Well, 'twas a serious place for a man with no priming-horn, and a character to lose, so I judged it best to fall to the rear by lying down. A man can't fight by the regulations without his priming-horn, and I am none of your slovenly anyhow fighters.

SECOND STRAGGLER 'Nation, having dropped my flit-pouch, I was the same. If you'd had your priming-horn, and I my flints, mind ye, we should have been there now? Then, forty-whory, that we are not is the fault o' Government for not supplying new ones from the reserve!

FIRST STRAGGLER What did he say as he led us on?

SECOND STRAGGLER "Forty-second, remember Egypt!" I heard it with my own ears. Yes, that was his strict testament.

FIRST STRAGGLER "Remember Egypt." Ay, and I do, for I was there!... Upon my salvation, here's for back again, whether or no!

SECOND STRAGGLER But here. "Forty-second, remember Egypt," he said in the

very eye of that French battery playing through us. And the next omen was that he was struck off his horse, and fell on his back to the ground. I remembered Egypt, and what had just happened too, so thorough well that I remembered the way over this wall!—Captain Hardinge, who was close to him, jumped off his horse, and he and one in the ranks lifted him, and are now bringing him along.

FIRST STRAGGLER Nevertheless, here's for back again, come what will. Remember Egypt! Hurrah! [Exit First straggler. Second straggler ponders, then suddenly follows First. Enter COLONEL ANDERSON and others hastily.]

AN OFFICER Now fetch a blanker. He must be carried in. [Shouts heard.]

COLONEL ANDERSON That means we are gaining ground! Had fate but left This last blow undecreed, the hour had shone A star amid these girdling days of gloom! [Exit. Enter in the obscurity six soldiers of the Forty-second bearing MOORE on their joined hands. CAPTAIN HARDINGE walks beside and steadies him. He is temporarily laid down in the shelter of a wall, his left shoulder being pounded away, the arm dangling by a shred of flesh. Enter COLONEL GRAHAM and CAPTAIN WOODFORD.]

GRAHAM The wound is more than serious, Woodford, far. Ride for a surgeon—one of those, perhaps, Who tend Sir David Baird? [Exit Captain Woodford.] His blood throbs forth so fast, that I have dark fears He'll drain to death ere anything can be done!

HARDINGE I'll try to staunch it—since no skill's in call. [He takes off his sash and endeavours to bind the wound with it. MOORE smiles and shakes his head.] There's not much checking it! Then rent's too gross. A dozen lives could pass that thoroughfare! [Enter a soldier with a blanket. They lift MOORE into it. During the operation the pommel of his sword, which he still wears, is accidentally thrust into the wound.] I'll loose the sword—it bruises you, Sir John. [He begins to unbuckle it.]

MOORE No. Let it be! One hurt more matters not. I wish it to go off the field with me.

HARDINGE I like the sound of that. It augurs well For your much-hoped recovery.

MOORE [looking sadly at his wound] Hardinge, no: Nature is nonplussed there! My shoulder's gone, And this left side laid open to my lungs. There's but a brief breath now for me, at most.... Could you—move me along—that I may glimpse Still how the battle's going?

HARDINGE Ay, Sir John— A few yard higher up, where we can see. [He is borne in the blanket a little way onward, and lifted so that he can view the valley and the action.]

MOORE [brightly] They seem to be advancing. Yes, it is so! [Enter SIR JOHN HOPE.] Ah, Hope!—I am doing badly here enough; But they are doing rarely well out there. [Presses HOPE'S hand.] Don't leave! my speech may flag with this fierce pain, But you can talk to me.—Are the French checked?

HOPE My dear friend, they are borne back steadily.

MOORE [his voice weakening] I hope England—will be satisfied— I hope my native land—will do me justice!... I shall be blamed for sending Craufurd off Along the Orense road. But had I not, Bonaparte would have headed us that way....

HOPE O would that Soult had but accepted battle By Lugo town! We should have crushed him there.

MOORE Yes... yes.—But it has never been my lot To owe much to good luck; nor was it then. Good fortune has been mine, but [bitterly] mostly so By the exhaustion of all shapes of bad!... Well, this does not become a dying man; And others have been chastened more than I By Him who holds us in His hollowed hand!... I grieve for Zaragoza, if, as said, The siege goes sorely with her, which it must. I heard when at Dahagun that late day That she was holding out heroically. But I must leave such now.—You'll see my friends As early as you can? Tell them the whole; Say to my

mother.... [His voice fails.] Hope, Hope, I have so much to charge you with, But weakness clams my tongue!... If I must die Without a word with Stanhope, ask him, Hope, To—name me to his sister. You may know Of what there was between us?... Is Colonel Graham well, and all my aides? My will I have made—it is in Colborne's charge With other papers.

HOPE He's now coming up. [Enter MAJOR COLBORNE, principal aide-de-camp.]

MOORE Are the French beaten, Colborne, or repulsed? Alas! you see what they have done too me!

COLBORNE I do, Sir John: I am more than sad thereat! In brief time now the surgeon will be here. The French retreat—pushed from Elvina far.

MOORE That's good! Is Paget anywhere about?

COLBORNE He's at the front, Sir John.

MOORE Remembrance to him! [Enter two surgeons.] Ah, doctors,—you can scarcely mend up me.— And yet I feel so tough—I have feverish fears My dying will waste a long and tedious while; But not too long, I hope!

SURGEONS [after a hasty examination] You must be borne In to your lodgings instantly, Sir John. Please strive to stand the motion—if you can; They will keep step, and bear you steadily.

MOORE Anything.... Surely fainter ebbs that fire?

COLBORNE Yes: we must be advancing everywhere: Colbert their General, too, they have lost, I learn. [They lift him by stretching their sashes under the blanket, and begin moving off. A light waggon enters.]

MOORE Who's in that waggon?

HARDINGE Colonel Wynch, Sir John. He's wounded, but he urges you to take it.

MOORE No. I will not. This suits.... Don't come with me; There's more for you to do out here as yet. [Cheerful shouts.] A-ha! 'Tis THIS way I have wished to die!

[Exeunt slowly in the twilight MOORE, bearers, surgeons, etc., towards Coruna. The scene darkens.]

## SCENE IV

CORUNA. NEAR THE RAMPARTS [It is just before dawn on the following morning, objects being still indistinct. The features of the elevated enclosure of San Carlos can be recognized in dim outline, and also those of the Old Town of Coruna around, though scarcely a lamp is shining. The numerous transports in the harbour beneath have still their riding-lights burning. In a nook of the town walls a lantern glimmers. Some English soldiers of the Ninth regiment are hastily digging a grave there with extemporized tools.]

A VOICE [from the gloom some distance off] “I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” [The soldiers look up, and see entering at the further end of the patch of ground a slow procession. It advances by the light of lanterns in the hands of some members of it. At moments the fitful rays fall upon bearers carrying a coffinless body rolled in a blanket, with a military cloak roughly thrown over by way of pall. It is brought towards the incomplete grave, and followed by HOPE, GRAHAM, ANDERSON, COLBORNE, HARDINGE, and several aides-de-camp, a chaplain preceding.]

FIRST SOLDIER They are here, almost as quickly as ourselves. There is no time to dig much deeper now: Level a bottom just as far’s we’ve got. He’ll couch as calmly in this scrabbled hole As in a royal vault!

SECOND SOLDIER Would it had been a foot deeper, here among foreigners, with strange manures manufactured out of no one knows what! Surely we can give him another six inches?

FIRST SOLDIER There is no time. Just make the bottom true. [The meagre procession approaches the spot, and waits while the half-dug grave is roughly

finished by the men of the Ninth. They step out of it, and another of them holds a lantern to the chaplain's book. The winter day slowly dawns.]

CHAPLAIN "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." [A gun is fired from the French battery not far off; then another. The ships in the harbour take in their riding lights.]

COLBORNE [in a low voice] I knew that dawn would see them open fire.

HOPE We must perforce make swift use of out time. Would we had closed our too sad office sooner! [As the body is lowered another discharge echoes. They glance gloomily at the heights where the French are ranged, and then into the grave.]

CHAPLAIN "We therefore commit his body to the ground. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." [Another gun.] [A spent ball falls not far off. They put out their lanterns. Continued firing, some shot splashing into the harbour below them.]

HOPE In mercy to the living, who are thrust Upon our care for their deliverance, And run much hazard till they are embarked, We must abridge these duties to the dead, Who will not mind be they abridged or no.

HARDINGE And could he mind, would be the man to bid it....

HOPE We shall do well, then, curtly to conclude These mutilated prayers—our hurried best!— And what's left unsaid, feel.

CHAPLAIN [his words broken by the cannonade] ".... We give Thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased Thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world.... Who also hath taught us not to be sorry, as men without hope, for them that sleep in Him.... Grant this, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer."

OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS Amen! [The diggers of the Ninth hastily fill in the grave, and the scene shuts as the mournful figures retire.]

**SCENE V**

VIENNA. A CAFE IN THE STEPHANS-PLATZ [An evening between light and dark is disclosed, some lamps being lit. The huge body and tower of St. Stephen's rise into the sky some way off, the western gleam still touching the upper stonework. Groups of people are seated at the tables, drinking and reading the newspapers. One very animated group, which includes an Englishman, is talking loudly. A citizen near looks up from his newspaper.]

CITIZEN [to the Englishman] I read, sir, here, the troubles you discuss Of your so gallant army under Moore. His was a spirit baffled but not quelled, And in his death there shone a stoicism That lent retreat the rays of victory.

ENGLISHMAN It was so. While men chide they will admire him, And frowning, praise. I could nigh prophesy That the unwonted crosses he has borne In his career of sharp vicissitude Will tinct his story with a tender charm, And grant the memory of his strenuous feats As long a lease within the minds of men As conquerors hold there.—Does the sheet give news Of how the troops reached home?

CITIZEN [looking up again at the paper] Yes; from your press It quotes that they arrived at Plymouth Sound Mid dreadful weather and much suffering. It states they looked the very ghosts of men, So heavily had hunger told on them, And the fatigues and toils of the retreat. Several were landed dead, and many died As they were borne along. At Portsmouth, too, Sir David Baird, still helpless from his wound, Was carried in a cot, sheet-pale and thin, And Sir John Hope, lank as a skeleton.—Thereto is added, with authority, That a new expedition soon will fit, And start again for Spain.

ENGLISHMAN I have heard as much.

CITIZEN You'll do it next time, sir. And so shall we!

SECOND CITIZEN [regarding the church tower opposite] You witnessed the High Service over there They held this morning? [To the Englishman.]

ENGLISHMAN Ay; I did get in; Though not without hard striving, such the throng; But travellers roam to waste who shyly roam And I pushed like the rest.

SECOND CITIZEN Our young Archduchess Maria Louisa was, they tell me, present?

ENGLISHMAN O yes: the whole Imperial family, And when the Bishop called all blessings down Upon the Landwehr colours there displayed, Enthusiasm touched the sky—she sharing it.

SECOND CITIZEN Commendable in her, and spirited, After the graceless insults to the Court The Paris journals flaunt—not voluntarily, But by his ordering. Magician-like He holds them in his fist, and at his squeeze They bubble what he wills!... Yes, she's a girl Of patriotic build, and hates the French. Quite lately she was overheard to say She had met with most convincing auguries That this year Bonaparte was starred to die.

ENGLISHMAN Your arms must render its fulfilment sure.

SECOND CITIZEN Right! And we have the opportunity, By upping to the war in suddenness, And catching him unaware. The pink and flower Of all his veteran troops are now in Spain Fully engaged with yours; while those he holds In Germany are scattered far and wide.

FIRST CITIZEN [looking up again from his newspaper] I see here that he vows and guarantees Inviolate bounds to all our territories If we but pledge to carry out forthwith A prompt disarmament. Since that's his price Hell burn his guarantees! Too long he has fooled us. [To the Englishman] I drink, sir, to your land's consistency. While we and all the kindred Europe States Alternately have wooed and warred him, You have not bent to blowing hot and cold, But held you sturdily inimical!

ENGLISHMAN [laughing] Less Christian-like forgiveness mellows us Than Continental souls! [They drink.] [A band is heard in a distant street, with shouting.

Enter third and fourth citizens, followed by others.]

FIRST CITIZEN More news afloat?

THIRD AND FOURTH CITIZENS Yea; an announcement that the Archduke Charles Is given the chief command.

FIRST, SECOND, ETC., CITIZENS Huzza! Right so! [A clinking of glasses, rising from seats, and general enthusiasm.]

SECOND CITIZEN If war had not so patly been declared, Our howitzers and firelocks of themselves Would have gone off to shame us! This forenoon Some of the Landwehr met me; they are hot For setting out, though but few months enrolled.

ENGLISHMAN That moves reflection somewhat. They are young For measuring with the veteran file of France!

FIRST CITIZEN Napoléon's army swarms with tender youth, His last conscription besomed into it Thousands of merest boys. But he contrives To mix them in the field with seasoned frames.

SECOND CITIZEN The sadly-seen mistake this country made Was that of grounding hostile arms at all. We should have fought irreconcilably— Have been consistent as the English are. The French are our hereditary foes, And this adventurer of the saucy sword, This sacrilegious slighter of our shrines, Stands author of all our ills... Our harvest fields and fruits he trample on, Accumulating ruin in our land. Think of what mournings in the last sad war 'Twas his to instigate and answer for! Time never can efface the glint of tears In palaces, in shops, in fields, in cots, From women widowed, sonless, fatherless, That then oppressed our eyes. There is no salve For such deep harrowings but to fight again; The enfranchisement of Europe hangs thereon, And long she has lingered for the sign to crush him: That signal we have given; the time is come! [Thumping on the table.]

FIFTH CITIZEN [at another table, looking up from his paper and speaking across] I see that Russia has declined to aid us, And says she knows that Prussia likewise

must; So that the mission of Prince Schwarzenberg To Alexander's Court has closed in failure.

THIRD CITIZEN Ay—through his being honest—fatal sin!— Probing too plainly for the Emperor's ears His ominous friendship with Napoléon.

ENGLISHMAN Some say he was more than honest with the Tsar; Hinting that his becoming an ally Makes him accomplice of the Corsican In the unprincipled dark overthrow Of his poor trusting childish Spanish friends— Which gave the Tsar offence.

THIRD CITIZEN And our best bid— The last, most delicate dish—a tastelessness.

FIRST CITIZEN What was Prince Schwarzenberg's best bid, I pray?

THIRD CITIZEN The offer of the heir of Austria's hand For Alexander's sister the Grand-Duchess.

ENGLISHMAN He could not have accepted, if or no: She is inscribed as wife for Bonaparte.

FIRST CITIZEN I doubt that text!

ENGLISHMAN Time's context soon will show.

SECOND CITIZEN The Russian Cabinet can not for long Resist the ardour of the Russian ranks To march with us the moment we achieve Our first loud victory! [A band is heard playing afar, and shouting. People are seen hurrying past in the direction of the sounds. Enter sixth citizen.]

SIXTH CITIZEN The Archduke Charles Is passing the Ringstrasse just by now, His regiment at his heels! [The younger sitters jump up with animation, and go out, the elder mostly remaining.]

SECOND CITIZEN Realm never faced The grin of a more fierce necessity For horrid war, than ours at this tense time! [The sounds of band-playing and huzzaing wane away. Citizens return.]

FIRST CITIZEN More news, my friends, of swiftly swelling zeal?

RE-ENTERED CITIZENS Ere passing down the Ring, the Archduke paused And gave the soldiers speech, enkindling them As sunrise a confronting throng of panes That glaze a many-windowed east facade: Hot volunteers vamp in from vill and plain— More than we need in the furthest sacrifice!

FIRST, SECOND, ETC., CITIZENS Huzza! Right so! Good! Forwards! God be praised! [They stand up, and a clinking of glasses follows, till they subside to quietude and a reperusal of newspapers. Nightfall succeeds. Dancing-rooms are lit up in an opposite street, and dancing begins. The figures are seen gracefully moving round to the throbbing strains of a string-band, which plays a new waltzing movement with a warlike name, soon to spread over Europe. The dancers sing patriotic words as they whirl. The night closes over.]

# ACT FOURTH

## SCENE I

A ROAD OUT OF VIENNA [It is morning in early May. Rain descends in torrents, accompanied by peals of thunder. The tepid downpour has caused the trees to assume as by magic a clothing of limp green leafage, and has turned the ruts of the uneven highway into little canals. A drenched travelling-chariot is passing, with a meagre escort. In the interior are seated four women: the ARCHDUCHESS MARIA LOUISA, in age about eighteen; her stepmother the EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA, third wife of FRANCIS, only four years older than the ARCHDUCHESS; and two ladies of the Austrian Court. Behind come attendant carriages bearing servants and luggage. The inmates remain for the most part silent, and appear to be in a gloomy frame of mind. From time to time they glance at the moist spring scenes which pass without in a perspective distorted by the rain-drops that slide down the panes, and by

the blurring effect of the travellers' breathings. Of the four the one who keeps in the best spirits is the ARCHDUCHESS, a fair, blue-eyed, full- figured, round-lipped maiden.]

MARIA LOUISA Whether the rain comes in or not I must open the window. Please allow me. [She straightway opens it.]

EMPRESS [groaning] Yes—open or shut it—I don't care. I am too ill to care for anything! [The carriage jolts into a hole.] O woe! To think that I am driven away from my husband's home in such a miserable conveyance, along such a road, and in such weather as this. [Peal of thunder.] There are his guns!

MARIA LOUISA No, my dear one. It cannot be his guns. They told us when we started that he was only half-way from Ratisbon hither, so that he must be nearly a hundred miles off as yet; and a large army cannot move fast.

EMPRESS He should never have been let come nearer than Ratisbon! The victory at Echmuhl was fatal for us. O Echmuhl, Echmuhl! I believe he will overtake us before we get to Buda.

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING If so, your Majesty, shall we be claimed as prisoners and marched to Paris?

EMPRESS Undoubtedly. But I shouldn't much care. It would not be worse than this.... I feel sodden all through me, and frowzy, and broken! [She closes her eyes as if to doze.]

MARIA LOUISA It is dreadful to see her suffer so! [Shutting the window.] If the roads were not so bad I should not mind. I almost wish we had stayed; though when he arrives the cannonade will be terrible.

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING I wonder if he will get into Vienna. Will his men knock down all the houses, madam?

MARIA LOUISA If he do get in, I am sure his triumph will not be for long. My

uncle the Archduke Charles is at his heels! I have been told many important prophecies about Bonaparte's end, which is fast nearing, it is asserted. It is he, they say, who is referred to in the Apocalypse. He is doomed to die this year at Cologne, in an inn called "The Red Crab." I don't attach too much importance to all these predictions, but O, how glad I should be to see them come true!

SECOND LADY-IN-WAITING So should we all, madam. What would become of his divorce-scheme then?

MARIA LOUISA Perhaps there is nothing in that report. One can hardly believe such gossip.

SECOND LADY-IN-WAITING But they say, your Imperial Highness, that he certainly has decided to sacrifice the Empress Joséphine, and that at the meeting last October with the Emperor Alexander at Erfurt, it was even settled that he should marry as his second wife the Grand-Duchess Anne.

MARIA LOUISA I am sure that the Empress her mother will never allow one of the house of Romanoff to marry with a bourgeois Corsican. I wouldn't if I were she!

FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING Perhaps, your Highness, they are not so particular in Russia, where they are rather new themselves, as we in Austria, with your ancient dynasty, are in such matters.

MARIA LOUISA Perhaps not. Though the Empress-mother is a pompous old thing, as I have been told by Prince Schwarzenberg, who was negotiating there last winter. My father says it would be a dreadful misfortune for our country if they were to marry. Though if we are to be exiled I don't see how anything of that sort can matter much.... I hope my father is safe! [An officer of the escort rides up to the carriage window, which is opened.]

EMPRESS [unclosing her eyes] Any more misfortunes?

OFFICER A rumour is a-wind, your Majesty, That the French host, the Emperor in its midst, Lannes, Masséna, and Bessieres in its van, Advancing hither along the

Ratisbon road, Has seized the castle and town of Ebersberg, And burnt all down, with frightful massacre, Vast heaps of dead and wounded being consumed, So that the streets stink strong with frizzled flesh.— The enemy, ere this, has crossed the Traun, Hurling brave Hiller's army back on us, And marches on Amstetten—thirty miles Less distant from Vienna from before!

EMPRESS The Lord show mercy to us! But O why Did not the Archdukes intercept the foe?

OFFICER His Highness Archduke Charles, your Majesty, After his sore repulse Bohemia-wards, Could not proceed with strength and speed enough To close in junction with the Archduke John And Archduke Louis, as was their intent. So Marshall Lannes swings swiftly on Vienna, With Oudinot's and Demont's might of foot; Then Masséna and all his mounted men, And then Napoléon, Guards, Cuirassiers, And the main body of the Imperial Force.

EMPRESS Alas for poor Vienna!

OFFICER Even so! Your Majesty has fled it none too soon. [The window is shut, and the procession disappears behind the sheets of rain.]

## SCENE II

THE ISLAND OF LOBAU, WITH WAGRAM BEYOND [The northern horizon at the back of the bird's-eye prospect is the high ground stretching from the Bisamberg on the left to the plateau of Wagram on the right. In front of these elevations spreads the wide plain of the Marchfeld, open, treeless, and with scarcely a house upon it.16 In the foreground the Danube crosses the scene with a graceful slowness, looping itself round the numerous wooded islands therein. The largest of these, immediately under the eye, is the Lobau, which stands like a knot in the gnarled grain represented by the running river. On this island can be discerned, closely packed, an enormous dark multitude of foot, horse, and artillery in French uniforms, the numbers reaching

to a hundred and seventy thousand. Lifting our eyes to discover what may be opposed to them we perceive on the Wagram plateau aforesaid, and right and left in front of it, extended lines of Austrians, whitish and glittering, to the number of a hundred and forty thousand. The July afternoon turns to evening, the evening to twilight. A species of simmer which pervades the living spectacle raises expectation till the very air itself seems strained with suspense. A huge event of some kind is awaiting birth.]

DUMB SHOW The first change under the cloak of night is that the tightly packed regiments on the island are got under arms. The soldiery are like a thicket of reeds in which every reed should be a man. A large bridge connects the island with the further shore, as well as some smaller bridges. Opposite are high redoubts and ravelins that the Austrians have constructed for opposing the passage across, which the French ostentatiously set themselves to attempt by the large bridge, amid heavy cannonading. But the movement is a feint, though this is not perceived by the Austrians as yet. The real movement is on the right hand of the foreground, behind a spur of the isle, and out of sight of the enemy; where several large rafts and flat boats, each capable of carrying three hundred men, are floated out from a screened creek. Chosen battalions enter upon these, which immediately begin to cross with their burden. Simultaneously from other screened nooks secretly prepared floating bridges, in sections, are moved forth, joined together, and defended by those who crossed on the rafts. At two o’clock in the morning the thousands of cooped soldiers begin to cross the bridges, producing a scene which, on such a scale, was never before witnessed in the history of war. A great discharge from the batteries accompanies this manoeuvre, arousing the Austrians to a like cannonade. The night has been obscure for summer-time, and there is no moon. The storm now breaks in a tempestuous downpour, with lightning and thunder. The tumult of nature mingles so fantastically with the tumult of projectiles that flaming bombs and forked flashes cut the air in company, and the noise from the mortars alternates with the noise from the

clouds. From bridge to bridge and back again a gloomy-eyed figure stalks, as it has stalked the whole night long, with the restlessness of a wild animal. Plastered with mud, and dribbling with rain-water, it bears no resemblance to anything dignified or official. The figure is that of NAPOLÉON, urging his multitudes over. By daylight the great mass of the men is across the water. At six the rain ceases, the mist uncovers the face of the sun, which bristles on the helmets and bayonets of the French. A hum of amazement rises from the Austrian hosts, who turn staring faces southward and perceive what has happened, and the columns of their enemies standing to arms on the same side of the stream with themselves, and preparing to turn their left wing. NAPOLÉON rides along the front of his forces, which now spread out upon the plain, and are ranged in order of battle. Dumb Show ends, and the point of view changes.

**SCENE III**

THE FIELD OF WAGRAM [The battlefield is now viewed reversely, from the windows of a mansion at Wolkersdorf, to the rear of the Austrian position. The aspect of the windows is nearly south, and the prospect includes the plain of the Marchfeld, with the isled Danube and Lobau in the extreme distance. Ten miles to the south-west, rightwards, the faint summit of the tower of St. Stephen’s, Vienna, appears. On the middle-left stands the compact plateau of Wagram, so regularly shaped as to seem as if constructed by art. On the extreme left the July sun has lately risen. Inside the room are discovered the EMPEROR FRANCIS and some household officers in attendance; with the War-Minister and Secretaries at a table at the back. Through open doors can be seen in an outer apartment adjutants, equerries, aides, and other military men. An officer in waiting enters.]

OFFICER During the night the French have shifted, sire, And much revised their stations of the eve By thwart and wheeling moves upon our left, And on our centre—projects unforeseen Till near accomplished.

FRANCIS But I am advised By oral message that the Archduke Charles, Since the sharp strife last night, has mended, too, His earlier dispositions, and has sped Strong orders to the Archduke John, to bring In swiftest marches all the force he holds, And fall with heavy impact on the French From nigh their rear?

OFFICER ’Tis good, sire; such a swoop Will raise an obstacle to their retreat And refuge in the fastness of the isle; And show this victory-gorged adventurer That striking with a river in his rear Is not the safest tactic to be played Against an Austrian front equipt like ours! [The EMPEROR FRANCIS and others scrutinize through their glasses the positions and movements of the Austrian divisions, which appear on the plain as pale masses, emitting flashes from arms and helmets under the July rays, and reaching from the Tower of Neusiedel on the left, past Wagram, into the village of Stammersdorf on the right. Beyond their lines are spread out the darker-hued French, almost parallel to the Austrians.]

FRANCIS Those moving masses toward the right I deem The forces of Klenau and Kollowrath, Sent to support Prince John of Lichtenstein I his attack that way? [An interval.] Now that they’ve gained The right there, why is not the attack begun?

OFFICER They are beginning on the left wing, sire. [The EMPEROR resumes his glass and beholds bodies of men descending from the hills by Neusiedel, and crossing the Russbach river towards the French—a movement which has been going on for some time.]

FRANCIS [turning thither] Where we are weakest! It surpasses me To understand why was our centre thinned To pillar up our right already strong, Where nought is doing, while our left assault Stands ill-supported? [Time passes in silence.] Yes, it is so. See, The enemy strikes Rossenberg in flank, Compelling him to fall behind the Russbach! [The EMPEROR gets excited, and his face perspires. At length he cannot watch through his glass, and walks up and down.] Penned useless here my nerves annoy my sight! Inform me what you note.—I should opine The Wagram height

behind impregnable? [Another silence, broken by the distant roar of the guns.]

OFFICER Klenau and Kollowrath are pounding on! To turn the enemy's left with our strong right Is, after all, a plan that works out well. Hiller and Lichtenstein conjoin therein.

FRANCIS I hear from thence appalling cannonades.

OFFICER 'Tis their, your Majesty. Now we shall see If the French read that there the danger lies.

FRANCIS I only pray that Bonaparte refrain From spying danger there till all too late!

OFFICER [involuntarily, after a pause] Ah, Heaven!

FRANCIS [turning sharply] Well, well? What changes figure now?

OFFICER They pierce our centre, sire! We are, despite, Not centrally so weak as I supposed. Well done, Bellegarde!

FRANCIS [glancing to the centre] And what has he well done?

OFFICER The French in fierce fume broke through Aderklaa; But Bellegarde, pricking along the plain behind, Has charged and driven them back disorderly. The Archduke Charles bounds thither, as I shape, In person to support him! [The EMPEROR returns to his spyglass; and they and others watch in silence, sometimes the right of their front, sometimes the centre.]

FRANCIS It is so! That the right attack of ours spells victory, And Austria's grand salvation!... [Times passes.] Turn your glass, And closely scan Napoléon and his aides Hand-galloping towards his centre-left To strengthen it against the brave Bellegarde. Does your eye reach him?—That white horse, alone In front of those that move so rapidly.

OFFICER It does, sire; though my glass can conjure not So cunningly as yours.... that horse must be The famed Euphrates—him the Persian king Sent Bonaparte as

gift. [A silence. NAPOLÉON reaches a carriage that is moving across. It bears MASSÉNA, who, having received a recent wound, in unable to ride.]

FRANCIS See, the white horse and horseman pause beside A coach for some strange reason rolling there.... That white-horsed rider—yes!—is Bonaparte, By the aides hovering round.... New war-wiles have been worded; we shall spell Their purport soon enough! [An interval.] The French take heart To stand to our battalions steadfastly, And hold their ground, having the Emperor near! [Time passes. An aide-de-camp enters.]

AIDE The Archduke Charles is pierced in the shoulder, sire; He strove too far in beating back the French At Aderklaa, and was nearly ta'en. The wound's not serious.—On our right we win, And deem the battle ours. [Enter another aide-de-camp.]

SECOND AIDE Your Majesty, We have borne them back through Aspern village-street And Essling is recovered. What counts more, Their bridges to the rear we have nearly grasped, And panic-struck they crowd the few left free, Choking the track, with cries of "All is lost!"

FRANCIS Then is the land delivered. God be praised! [Exeunt aides. An interval, during which the EMPEROR and his companions again remain anxiously at their glasses.] There is a curious feature I discern To have come upon the battle. On our right We gain ground rapidly; towards the left We lose it; and the unjudged consequence Is that the armies; whole commingling mass Moves like a monstrous wheel. I like it not! [Enter another aide-de-camp.]

THIRD AIDE Our left wing, sire, recedes before Davout, Whom nothing can withstand! Two corps he threw Across the Russbach up to Neusiedel, While he himself assailed the place in front. Of the divisions one pressed on and on, Till lodged atop. They would have been hurled back—-

FRANCIS But how goes it with us in sum? pray say!

THIRD AIDE We have been battered off the eastern side Of Wagram plateau.

FRANCIS Where's the Archduke John? Why comes he not? One man of his here now Were worth a host anon. And yet he tarries! [Exit third aide. Time passes, while they reconnoitre the field with strained eyes.] Our centre-right, it seems, round Neusiedel, Is being repulsed! May the kind Heaven forbid That Hesse Homberg should be yielding there! [The Minister in attendance comes forward, and the EMPEROR consults him; then walking up and down in silence. Another aide-de-camp enters.]

FOURTH AIDE Sire, Neusiedel has just been wrenched from us, And the French right is on the Wagram crest; Nordmann has fallen, and Veczay: Hesse Homberg, Warteachben, Muger—almost all our best— Bleed more or less profusely! [A gloomy silence. Exit fourth side. Ten minutes pass. Enter an officer in waiting.]

FRANCIS What guns are those that groan from Wagram height?

OFFICER Alas, Davout's! I have climbed the roof-top, sire, And there discerned the truth. [Cannonade continues. A long interval of suspense. The EMPEROR returns to his glass.]

FRANCIS A part of it! There seems to be a grim, concerted lunge By the whole strength of France upon our right, Centre, and left wing simultaneously!

OFFICER Most viciously upon the centre, sire, If I mistook not, hard by Sussenbrunn; The assault is led by Bonaparte in person, Who shows himself with marvellous recklessness, Yet like a phantom-fiend receives no hurt.

FRANCIS [still gazing] Ha! Now the Archduke Charles has seen the intent, And taken steps against it. Sussenbrunn Must be the threatened thing. [Silence.] What an advance!— Straight hitherward. Our centre girdles them.— Surely they'll not persist? Who heads that charge?

OFFICER They say Macdonald, sire.

FRANCIS Meagrest remains Will there be soon of those in that advance! We are burning them to bones by our hot fire. They are almost circumscribed: if fully so The battle's ours! What's that behind them, eh?

OFFICER Their last reserves, that they may feed the front, And sterilize our hope!

FRANCIS Yes, their reserve— Dragoons and cuirassiers—charge in support. You see their metal gleaming as they come. Well, it is neck or nothing for them now!

OFFICER It's nothing, sire. Their charge of cavalry Has desperately failed.

FRANCIS Their foot press on, However, with a battery in front Which deals the foulest damage done us yet. [Time passes.] They ARE effecting lodgment, after all. Who would have reckoned on't—our men so firm! [Re-enter first aide-de-camp.]

FIRST AIDE The Archduke Charles retreats, your majesty; And the issue wears a dirty look just now.

FRANCIS [gloomily] Yes: I have seen the signs for some good while. But he retreats with blows, and orderly. [Time passes, till the sun has rounded far towards the west. The features of the battle now materially change. The French have regained Aspern and Essling; the Austrian army is doubled back from the Danube and from the heights of Wagram, which, as viewed from Wolkersdorf, face the afternoon shine, the French established thereon glittering in the rays.

FRANCIS [choking a sigh] The turn has passed. We are worsted, but not overwhelmed!... The French advance is laboured, and but slow. —This might have been another-coloured day If but the Archduke John had joined up promptly; Yet still he lags!

ANOTHER OFFICER [lately entered] He's just now coming, sire. His columns glimmer in the Frenchmen's rear. Past Siebenbrunn's and Loebensdorf's smoked hills.

FRANCIS [impatiently] Ay—coming NOW! Why could he not be COME! [They

watch intently.] We can see nothing of that side from here. [Enter a general officer, who speaks to the Minister at the back of the room.]

MINISTER [coming forward] Your Majesty, I now have to suggest, Pursuant to conclusions reached this morn, That since the front and flower of all our force Is seen receding to the Bisamberg, These walls no longer yield safe shade for you, Or facile outlook. Scouts returning say Either Davout, or Bonaparte himself, With the mid-columns of his forward corps, Will bear up hitherward in fierce pursuit, And may intrude beneath this very roof. Not yet, I think; it may not be to-night; But we should stand prepared.

FRANCIS If we must go We'll go with a good grace, unfeignedly! Who knows to-morrow may not see regained What we have lost to-day? [Re-enter fourth aide-de-camp.]

FOURTH AIDE [breathlessly] The Archduke John, Discerning our main musters in retreat, Abandons an advance that throws on him The enemy's whole brunt if he bear on.

FRANCIS Alas for his devotion! Let us go. Such weight of sadness as we shoulder now Will wring us down to sleep in stall or stye, If even that be found!... Think! Bonaparte, By reckless riskings of his life and limb, Has turned the steelyard of our strength to-day Whilst I have idled here!... May brighter times Attend the cause of Europe far in Spain, And British blood flow not, as ours, in vain! [Exeunt the EMPEROR FRANCIS, minister, officers, and attendants. The night comes, and the scene is obscured.]

## SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF TALAVERA [It is the same month and weather as in the preceding scene. Talavera town, on the river Tagus, is at the extreme right of the foreground; a mountain range on the extreme left. The allied army under SIR ARTHUR

WELLESLEY stretches between—the English on the left, the Spanish on the right—part holding a hill to the left-centre of the scene, divided from the mountains by a valley, and part holding a redoubt to the right-centre. This army of more than fifty thousand all told, of which twenty-two thousand only are English, has its back to the spectator. Beyond, in a wood of olive, oak, and cork, are the fifty to sixty thousand French, facing the spectator and the allies. Their right includes a strong battery upon a hill which fronts the one on the English left. Behind all, the heights of Salinas close the prospect, the small river Alberche flowing at their foot from left to right into the Tagus, which advances in foreshortened perspective to the town at the right front corner of the scene as aforesaid.]

DUMB SHOW The hot and dusty July afternoon having turned to twilight, shady masses of men start into motion from the French position, come towards the foreground, silently ascend the hill on the left of the English, and assail the latter in a violent outburst of fire and lead. They nearly gain possession of the hill ascended.

CHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music] Talavera tongues it as ten o’ the night-time: Now come Ruffin’s slaughterers surging upward, Backed by bold Vilatte’s! From the vale Lapisse, too, Darkly outswells there! Down the vague veiled incline the English fling them, Bended bayonets prodding opponents backward: So the first fierce charge of the ardent Frenchmen England repels there!

Having fallen back into the darkness the French presently reascend in yet larger masses. The high square knapsack which every English foot-soldier carries, and his shako, and its tuft, outline themselves against the dim light as the ranks stand awaiting the shock.

CHORUS OF RUMOURS Pushing spread they!—shout as they reach the summit!— Strength and stir new-primed in their plump battalions: Puffs of barbed flame blown on the lines opposing Higher and higher. There those hold them mute, though at speaking distance— Mute, while clicking flints, and the crash of volleys

Whelm the weighted gloom with immense distraction Pending their fire. Fronting heads, helms, brows can each ranksman read there, Epaulettes, hot cheeks, and the shining eyeball, [Called a trice from gloom by the fleeting pan-flash] Pressing them nigher!

The French again fall back in disorder into the hollow, and LAPISSE draws off on the right. As the sinking sound of the muskets tells what has happened the English raise a shout.

CHORUS OF PITIES Thus the dim nocturnal embroil of conflict Closes with the roar of receding gun-fire. Harness loosened then, and their day-long strenuous Temper unbending, Worn-out lines lie down where they late stood staunchly— Cloaks around them rolled—by the bivouac embers: There at dawn to stake in the dynasts' death-game All, till the ending!

## SCENE V

THE SAME

DUMB SHOW [continued] The morning breaks. There is another murderous attempt to dislodge the English from the hill, the assault being pressed with a determination that excites the admiration of the English themselves. The French are seen descending into the valley, crossing it, and climbing it on the English side under the fire of HILL'S whole division, all to no purpose. In their retreat they leave behind them on the slopes nearly two thousand lying. The day advances to noon, and the air trembles in the intense heat. The combat flags, and is suspended.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES What do I see but thirsty, throbbing bands From these inimic hosts defiling down In homely need towards the little stream That parts their enmities, and drinking there! They get to grasping hands across the rill, Sealing their sameness as earth's sojourners.— What more could plead the wryness of the time Than such unstudied piteous pantomimes!

SPIRIT IRONIC It is only that Life's queer mechanics chance to work out in this grotesque shape just now. The groping tentativeness of an Immanent Will [as grey old Years describes it] cannot be asked to learn logic at this time of day! The spectacle of Its instruments, set to riddle one another through, and then to drink together in peace and concord, is where the humour comes in, and makes the play worth seeing!

SPIRIT SINISTER Come, Sprite, don't carry your ironies too far, or you may wake up the Unconscious Itself, and tempt It to let all the gory clock-work of the show run down to spite me!

DUMB SHOW [continuing] The drums roll, and the men of the two nations part from their comradeship at the Alberche brook, the dark masses of the French army assembling anew. SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY has seated himself on a mound that commands a full view of the contested hill, and remains there motionless a long time. When the French form for battle he is seen to have come to a conclusion. He mounts, gives his orders, and the aides ride off. The French advance steadily through the sultry atmosphere, the skirmishers in front, and the columns after, moving, yet seemingly motionless. Their eighty cannon peal out and their shots mow every space in the line of them. Up the great valley and the terraces of the hill whose fame is at that moment being woven, comes VILLATE, boring his way with foot and horse, and RUFFIN'S men following behind. According to the order given, the Twenty-third Light Dragoons and the German Hussars advance at a chosen moment against the head of these columns. On the way they disappear.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Why this bedevilment? What can have chanced?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR It so befalls that as their chargers near The inimical wall of flesh with its iron frise, A treacherous chasm uptrips them: zealous men And docile horses roll to dismal death And horrid mutilation.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Those who live Even now advance! I'll see no more.

Relate.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Yes, those pant on. Then further Frenchmen cross, And Polish Lancers, and Westphalian Horse, Who ring around these luckless Islanders, And sweep them down like reeds by the river-bank In scouring floods; till scarce a man remains.

Meanwhile on the British right SEBASTIANI'S corps has precipitated itself in column against GENERAL CAMPBELL'S division, the division of LAPISSE against the centre, and at the same time the hill on the English left is again assaulted. The English and their allies are pressed sorely here, the bellowing battery tearing lanes through their masses.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR [continuing] The French reserves of foot and horse now on, Smiting the Islanders in breast and brain Till their mid-lines are shattered.... Now there ticks The moment of the crisis; now the next, Which brings the turning stroke.

SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY sends down the Forty-eighth regiment under COLONEL DONELLAN to support the wasting troops. It advances amid those retreating, opening to let them pass.

SPIRIT OF THE RUMOUR [continuing] The pales, enerved, The hitherto unflinching enemy! Lapisse is pierced to death; the flagging French Decline into the hollows whence they came. The too exhausted English and reduced Lack strength to follow.—Now the western sun, Conning with unmoved visage quick and dead, Gilds horsemen slackening, and footmen stilled, Till all around breathes drowsed hostility. Last, the swealed herbage lifts a leering light, And flames traverse the field; and hurt and slain Opposed, opposers, in a common plight Are scorched together on the dusk champaign.

The fire dies down, and darkness enwraps the scene.

## SCENE VI

BRIGHTON. THE ROYAL PAVILION [It is the birthday dinner-party of the PRINCE OF WALES. In the floridly decorated banqueting-room stretch tables spread with gold and silver plate, and having artificial fountains in their midst. Seated at the tables are the PRINCE himself as host—rosy, well curled, and affable—the DUKES OF YORK, CLARENCE, KENT, SUSSEX, CUMBERLAND, and CAMBRIDGE, with many noblemen, including LORDS HEADFORT, BERKELEY, EGREMONT, CHICHESTER, DUDLEY, SAY AND SELE, SOUTHAMPTON, HEATHFIELD, ERSKINE, KEITH, C. SOMERSET, G. CAVENDISH, R. SEYMOUR, and others; SIR C. POLE, SIR E.G. DE CRESPIGNY, MR. SHERIDAN; Generals, Colonels, and Admirals, and the REV. MR. SCOTT. The PRINCE'S band plays in the adjoining room. The banquet is drawing to its close, and a boisterous conversation is in progress. Enter COLONEL BLOOMFIELD with a dispatch for the PRINCE, who looks it over amid great excitement in the company. In a few moments silence is called.]

PRINCE OF WALES I have the joy, my lords and gentlemen, To rouse you with the just imported tidings From General Wellesley through Lord Castlereagh Of a vast victory [noisy cheers] over the French in Spain. The place—called Talavera de la Reyna [If I pronounce it rightly]—long unknown, Wears not the crest and blazonry of fame! [Cheers.] The heads and chief contents of the dispatch I read you as succinctly as I can. [Cheers.]

SHERIDAN [singing sotto voce] "Now foreign foemen die and fly, Dammy, we'll drink little England dry!" [The PRINCE reads the parts of the dispatch that describe the battle, amid intermittent cheers.]

PRINCE OF WALES [continuing] Such is the substance of the news received, Which, after Wagram, strikes us genially As sudden sunrise through befogged night shades!

SHERIDAN [privately] By God, that's good, sir! You are a poet born, while the rest

of us are but made, and bad at that. [The health of the army in Spain is drunk with acclamations.]

PRINCE OF WALES [continuing] In this achievement we, alas! have lost Too many! Yet suck blanks must ever be.— Mackenzie, Langworth, Beckett of the Guards, Have fallen of ours; while of the enemy Generals Lapisse and Morlot are laid low.— Drink to their memories! [They drink in silence.] Other news, my friends, Received to-day is of like hopeful kind. The Great War-Expedition to the Scheldt [Cheers.] Which lately sailed, has found a favouring wind, And by this hour has touched its destined shores. The enterprise will soon be hot aglow, The invaders making first the Cadsand coast, And then descending on Walcheren Isle. But items of the next step are withheld Till later days, from obvious policy. [Cheers.] [Faint throbbing sounds, like the notes of violincellos and contrabassos, reach the ear from some building without as the speaker pauses. In worthy emulation of us here The county holds to-night a birthday ball, Which flames with all the fashion of the town. I have been asked to patronize their revel, And sup with them, and likewise you, my guests. We have good reason, with such news to bear! Thither we haste and join our loyal friends, And stir them with this live intelligence Of our staunch regiments on the Spanish plains. [Applause.] With them we'll now knit hands and beat the ground, And bring in dawn as we whirl round and round! There are some fair ones in their set to-night, And such we need here in our bachelor-plight. [Applause.] [The PRINCE, his brothers, and a large proportion of the other Pavilion guests, swagger out in the direction of the Castle assembly-rooms adjoining, and the deserted banqueting-hall grows dark. In a few moments the back of the scene opens, revealing the assembly-rooms behind.]

## SCENE VII

THE SAME. THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS [The rooms are lighted with candles in brass chandeliers, and a dance is in full movement to the strains of a string-band. A

signal is given, shortly after the clock has struck eleven, by MR. FORTH, Master of Ceremonies.]

FORTH His Royal Highness comes, though somewhat late, But never too late for welcome! [Applause.] Dancers, stand, That we may do fit homage to the Prince Who soon may shine our country's gracious king.

[After a brief stillness a commotion is heard at the door, the band strikes up the National air, and the PRINCE enters, accompanied by the rest of the visitors from the Pavilion. The guests who have been temporarily absent now crowd in, till there is hardly space to stand.]

PRINCE OF WALES [wiping his face and whispering to Sheridan] What shall I say to fit their feeling here? Damn me, that other speech has stumped me quite!

SHERIDAN [whispering] If heat be evidence of loy—-

PRINCE OF WALES If what?

SHERIDAN If heat be evidence of loyalty, Et caetera—something quaint like that might please 'em.

PRINCE OF WALES [to the company] If heat be evidence of loyalty, This room affords it truly without question; If heat be not, then its accompaniment Most surely 'tis to-night. The news I bring, Good ladies, friends, and gentlemen, perchance You have divined already? That our arms— Engaged to thwart Napoléon's tyranny Over the jaunty, jocund land of Spain Even to the highest apex of our strength— Are rayed with victory! [Cheers.] Lengthy was the strife And fierce, and hot; and sore the suffering; But proudly we endured it; and shall hear, No doubt, of its far consequence Ere many days. I'll read the details sent. [Cheers.] [He reads again from the dispatch amid more cheering, the ball- room guests crowding round. When he has done he answers questions; then continuing: Meanwhile our interest is, if possible, As keenly waked elsewhere. Into the Scheldt Some forty thousand bayonets and swords, And twoscore ships o' the line, with frigates, sloops, And

gunboats sixty more, make headway now, Bleaching the waters with their bellying sails; Or maybe they already anchor there, And that level ooze of Walcheren shore Ring with the voices of that landing host In every twang of British dialect, Clamorous to loosen fettered Europe's chain! [Cheers.]

A NOBLE LORD [aside to Sheridan] Prinny's outpouring tastes suspiciously like your brew, Sheridan. I'll be damned if it is his own concoction. How d'ye sell it a gallon?

SHERIDAN I don't deal that way nowadays. I give the recipe, and charge a duty on the gauging. It is more artistic, and saves trouble. [The company proceed to the supper-rooms, and the ball-room sinks into solitude.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES So they pass on. Let be!—But what is this— A moan?—all frailly floating from the east To usward, even from the forenamed isle?... Would I had not broke nescience, to inspect A world so ill-contrived!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS But since thou hast We'll hasten to the isle; and thou'lt behold— Such as it is—the scene its coasts enfold.

## SCENE VIII

WALCHEREN [A marshy island at the mouth of the Scheldt, lit by the low sunshine of an evening in late summer. The horizontal rays from the west lie in yellow sheaves across the vapours that the day's heat has drawn from the sweating soil. Sour grasses grow in places, and strange fishy smells, now warm, now cold, pass along. Brass-hued and opalescent bubbles, compounded of many gases, rise where passing feet have trodden the damper spots. At night the place is the haunt of the Jack-lantern.]

DUMB SHOW A vast army is encamped here, and in the open spaces are infantry on parade—skeletoned men, some flushed, some shivering, who are kept moving because it is dangerous to stay still. Every now and then one falls down, and is

carried away to a hospital with no roof, where he is laid, bedless, on the ground. In the distance soldiers are digging graves for the funerals which are to take place after dark, delayed till then that the sight of so many may not drive the living melancholy-mad. Faint noises are heard in the air.

SHADE OF THE EARTH What storm is this of souls dissolved in sighs, And what the dingy doom it signifies?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES We catch a lamentation shaped thuswise:

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] “We who withstood the blasting blaze of war When marshalled by the gallant Moore awhile, Beheld the grazing death-bolt with a smile, Closed combat edge to edge and bore to bore, Now rot upon this Isle! “The ever wan morass, the dune, the blear Sandweed, and tepid pool, and putrid smell, Emaciate purpose to a fractious fear, Beckon the body to its last low cell— A chink no chart will tell. “O ancient Delta, where the fen-lights flit! Ignoble sediment of loftier lands, Thy humour clings about our hearts and hands And solves us to its softness, till we sit As we were part of it. “Such force as fever leaves maddened now, With tidings trickling in from day to day Of others’ differing fortunes, wording how They yield their lives to baulk a tyrant’s sway— Yield them not vainly, they! “In champaigns green and purple, far and near, In town and thorpe where quiet spire-cocks turn, Through vales, by rocks, beside the brooding burn Echoes the aggressor’s arrogant career; And we pent pithless here! “Here, where each creeping day the creeping file Draws past with shouldered comrades score on score, Bearing them to their lightless last asile, Where weary wave-wails from the clammy shore Will reach their ears no more. “We might have fought, and had we died, died well, Even if in dynasts’ discords not our own; Our death-spot some sad haunter might have shown, Some tongue have asked our sires or sons to tell The tale of how we fell; “But such be chanced not. Like the mist we fade, No lustrous lines engrave in story we, Our country’s chiefs, for their own fames afraid, Will leave our names and

fates by this pale sea, To perish silently!”

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Why must ye echo as mechanic mimes These mortal minion’s bootless cadences, Played on the stops of their anatomy As is the mewling music on the strings Of yonder ship-masts by the unweeting wind, Or the frail tune upon this withering sedge That holds its papery blades against the gale? —Men pass to dark corruption, at the best, Ere I can count five score: these why not now?— The Immanent Shaper builds Its beings so Whether ye sigh their sighs with them or no!

The night fog enwraps the isle and the dying English army.

# ACT FIFTH

## SCENE I

PARIS. A BALLROOM IN THE HOUSE OF CAMBACÉRÈS [The many-candled saloon at the ARCH-CHANCELLOR’S is visible through a draped opening, and a crowd of masked dancers in fantastic costumes revolve, sway, and intermingle to the music that proceeds from an alcove at the further end of the same apartment. The front of the scene is a withdrawing-room of smaller size, now vacant, save for the presence of one sombre figure, that of NAPOLÉON, seated and apparently watching the moving masquerade.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Napoléon even now embraces not From stress of state affairs, which hold him grave Through revels that might win the King of Spleen To toe a measure! I would speak with him.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Speak if thou wilt whose speech nor mars nor mends!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES [into Napoléon’s ear] Why thus and thus Napoléon? Can it be That Wagram with its glories, shocks, and shames, Still leaves athirst the palate of thy pride?

NAPOLÉON [answering as in soliloquy] The trustless, timorous lease of human life

Warns me to hedge in my diplomacy. The sooner, then, the safer! Ay, this eve, This very night, will I take steps to rid My morrows of the weird contingencies That vision round and make one hollow-eyed.... The unexpected, lurid death of Lannes— Rigid as iron, reaped down like a straw— Tiptoed Assassination haunting round In unthought thoroughfares, the near success Of Staps the madman, argue to forbid The riskful blood of my previsioned line And potence for dynastic empery To linger vialled in my veins alone. Perhaps within this very house and hour, Under an innocent mask of Love or Hope, Some enemy queues my ways to coffin me.... When at the first clash of the late campaign, A bold belief in Austria's star prevailed, There pulsed quick pants of expectation round Among the cowering kings, that too well told What would have fared had I been overthrown! So; I must send down shoots to future time Who'll plant my standard and my story there; And a way opens.—Better I had not Bespoke a wife from Alexander's house. Not there now lies my look. But done is done! [The dance ends and masks enter, BERTHIER among them. NAPOLÉON beckons to him, and he comes forward.] God send you find amid this motley crew Frivolities enough, friend Berthier—eh? My thoughts have worn oppressive shades despite such! What scandals of me do they bandy here? These close disguises render women bold— Their shames being of the light, not of the thing— And your sagacity has garnered much, I make no doubt, of ill and good report, That marked our absence from the capital?

BERTHIER Methinks, your Majesty, the enormous tale Of your campaign, like Aaron's serpent-rod, Has swallowed up the smaller of its kind. Some speak, 'tis true, in counterpoise thereto, Of English deeds by Talavera town, Though blurred by their exploit at Walcheren, And all its crazy, crass futilities.

NAPOLÉON Yet was the exploit well featured in design, Large in idea, and imaginative; I had not deemed the blinkered English folk So capable of view. Their fate contrived To place an idiot at the helm of it, Who marred its working, else it had been hard If things had not gone seriously for us. —But see, a lady saunters

hitherward Whose gait proclaims her Madame Metternich, One that I fain would speak with. [NAPOLÉON rises and crosses the room toward a lady-masker who has just appeared in the opening. BERTHIER draws off, and the EMPEROR, unceremoniously taking the lady's arm, brings her forward to a chair, and sits down beside her as dancing is resumed.]

MADAME METTERNICH In a flash I recognized you, sire; as who would not The bearer of such deep-delved charactery?

NAPOLÉON The devil, madame, take your piercing eyes! It's hard I cannot prosper in a game That every coxcomb plays successfully. —So here you are still, though your loving lord Disports him at Vienna?

MADAME METTERNICH Paris, true, Still holds me; though in quiet, save to-night, When I have been expressly prayed come hither, Or I had not left home.

NAPOLÉON I sped that Prayer!— I have a wish to put a case to you, Wherein a woman's judgment, such as yours, May be of signal service. [He lapses into reverie.]

MADAME METTERNICH Well? The case—

NAPOLÉON Is marriage—mine.

MADAME METTERNICH It is beyond me, sire!

NAPOLÉON You glean that I have decided to dissolve [Pursuant to monitions murmured long] My union with the present Empress—formed Without the Church's due authority?

MADAME METTERNICH Vaguely. And that light tentatives have winged Betwixt your Majesty and Russia's court, To moot that one of their Grand Duchesses Should be your Empress-wife. Nought else I know.

NAPOLÉON There have been such approachings; more, worse luck. Last week Champagny wrote to Alexander Asking him for his sister—yes or no.

MADAME METTERNICH What “worse luck” lies in that, your Majesty, If severance from the Empress Joséphine Be fixed unalterably?

NAPOLÉON This worse luck lies there: If your Archduchess, Marie Louise the fair, Would straight accept my hand, I’d offer it, And throw the other over. Faith, the Tsar Has shown such backwardness in answering me, Time meanwhile trotting, that I have ample ground For such withdrawal.—Madame, now, again, Will your Archduchess marry me of no?

MADAME METTERNICH Your sudden questions quite confound my sense! It is impossible to answer them.

NAPOLÉON Well, madame, now I’ll put it to you thus: Were you in the Archduchess Marie’s place Would you accept my hand—and heart therewith?

MADAME METTERNICH I should refuse you—most assuredly!17

NAPOLÉON [laughing roughly] Ha-ha! That’s frank. And devilish cruel too! —Well, write to your husband. Ask him what he thinks, And let me know.

MADAME METTERNICH Indeed, sire, why should I? There goes the Ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg, Successor to my spouse. He’s now the groove And proper conduit of diplomacy Through whom to broach this matter to his Court.

NAPOLÉON Do you, then, broach it through him, madame, pray; Now, here, to-night.

MADAME METTERNICH I will, informally, To humour you, on this recognizance, That you leave not the business in my hands, But clothe your project in official guise Through him to-morrow; so safeguarding me From foolish seeming, as the babbler forth Of a fantastic and unheard of dream.

NAPOLÉON I’ll send Eugène to him, as you suggest. Meanwhile prepare him. Make your stand-point this: Children are needful to my dynasty, And if one woman cannot mould them for me, Why, then, another must. [Exit NAPOLÉON abruptly.

Dancing continues. MADAME METTERNICH sits on, musing. Enter SCHWARZENBERG.]

MADAME METTERNICH The Emperor has just left me. We have tapped This theme and that; his empress and—his next. Ay, so! Now, guess you anything?

SCHWARZENBERG Of her? No more than that the stock of Romanoff Will not supply the spruce commodity.

MADAME METTERNICH And that the would-be customer turns toe To our shop in Vienna.

SCHWARZENBERG Marvellous; And comprehensible but as the dream Of Delaborde, of which I have lately heard. It will not work!—What think you, madame, on't?

MADAME METTERNICH That it will work, and is as good as wrought!— I break it to you thus, at his request. In brief time Prince Eugène will wait on you, And make the formal offer in his name.

SCHWARZENBERG Which I can but receive ad referendum, And shall initially make clear as much, Disclosing not a glimpse of my own mind! Meanwhile you make good Metternich aware?

MADAME METTERNICH I write this midnight, that amaze may pitch To coolness ere your messenger arrives.

SCHWARZENBERG This radiant revelation flicks a gleam On many circling things!—the courtesies Which graced his bearing toward our officer Amid the tumults of the late campaign, His wish for peace with England, his affront At Alexander's tedious-timed reply... Well, it will thrust a thorn in Russia's side, If I err not, whatever else betide! [Exeunt. The maskers surge into the foreground of the scene, and their motions become more and more fantastic. A strange gloom begins and intensifies, until only the high lights of their grinning figures are visible. These also, with the whole ball- room, gradually darken, and the music softens to silence.]

**SCENE II**

PARIS. THE TUILERIES [The evening of the next day. A saloon of the Palace, with folding-doors communicating with a dining-room. The doors are flung open, revealing on the dining-table an untouched dinner, NAPOLÉON and JOSÉPHINE rising from it, and DE BAUSSET, chamberlain- in-waiting, pacing up and down. The EMPEROR and EMPRESS come forward into the saloon, the latter pale and distressed, and patting her eyes with her handkerchief. The doors are closed behind them; a page brings in coffee; NAPOLÉON signals to him to leave. JOSÉPHINE goes to pour out the coffee, but NAPOLÉON pushes her aside and pours it out himself, looking at her in a way which causes her to sink cowering into a chair like a frightened animal.]

JOSÉPHINE I see my doom, my friend, upon your face!

NAPOLÉON You see me bored by Cambacérès' ball.

JOSÉPHINE It means divorce!—a thing more terrible Than carrying elsewhere the dalliances That formerly were mine. I kicked at that; But now agree, as I for long have done, To any infidelities of act May I be yours in name!

NAPOLÉON My mind must bend To other things than our domestic petting: The Empire orbs above our happiness, And 'tis the Empire dictates this divorce. I reckon on your courage and calm sense To breast with me the law's formalities, And get it through before the year has flown.

JOSÉPHINE But are you REALLY going to part from me? O no, no, my dear husband; no, in truth, It cannot be my Love will serve me so!

NAPOLÉON I mean but mere divorcement, as I said, On simple grounds of sapient sovereignty.

JOSÉPHINE But nothing have I done save good to you:— Since the fond day we wedded into one I never even have THOUGHT you jot of harm! Many the happy junctures when you have said I stood as guardian-angel over you, As your Dame

Fortune, too, and endless things Of such-like pretty tenour—yes, you have! Then how can you so gird against me now? You had not pricked upon it much of late, And so I hoped and hoped the ugly spectre Had been laid dead and still.

NAPOLÉON [impatiently] I tell you, dear, The thing's decreed, and even the princess chosen.

JOSÉPHINE Ah—so—the princess chosen!... I surmise It is none else than the Grand-Duchess Anne: Gossip was right—though I would not believe. She's young; but no great beauty!—Yes, I see Her silly, soulless eyes and horrid hair; In which new gauderies you'll forget sad me!

NAPOLÉON Upon my soul you are childish, Joséphine: A woman of your years to pout it so!— I say it's not the Tsar's Grand-Duchess Anne.

JOSÉPHINE Some other Fair, then. You whose name can nod The flower of all the world's virginity Into your bed, will well take care of that! [Spitefully.] She may not have a child, friend, after all.

NAPOLÉON [drily] You hope she won't, I know!—But don't forget Madame Walewska did, and had she shown Such cleverness as yours, poor little fool, Her withered husband might have been displaced, And her boy made my heir.—Well, let that be. The severing parchments will be signed by us Upon the fifteenth, prompt.

JOSÉPHINE What—I have to sign My putting away upon the fifteenth next?

NAPOLÉON Ay—both of us.

JOSÉPHINE [falling on her knees] So far advanced—so far! Fixed?—for the fifteenth? O I do implore you, My very dear one, by our old, old love, By my devotion, don't cast me off Now, after these long years!

NAPOLÉON Heavens, how you jade me! Must I repeat that I don't cast you off; We merely formally arrange divorce— We live and love, but call ourselves divided. [A silence.]

JOSÉPHINE [with sudden calm] Very well. Let it be. I must submit! [Rises.]

NAPOLÉON And this much likewise you must promise me, To act in the formalities thereof As if you shaped them of your own free will.

JOSÉPHINE How can I—when no freewill's left in me?

NAPOLÉON You are a willing party—do you hear?

JOSÉPHINE [quivering] I hardly—can—bear this!—It is—too much For a poor weak and broken woman's strength! But—but I yield!—I am so helpless now: I give up all—ay, kill me if you will, I won't cry out!

NAPOLÉON And one thing further still, You'll help me in my marriage overtures To win the Duchess—Austrian Marie she,— Concentrating all your force to forward them.

JOSÉPHINE It is the—last humiliating blow!— I cannot—O, I will not!

NAPOLÉON [fiercely] But you SHALL! And from your past experience you may know That what I say I mean!

JOSÉPHINE [breaking into sobs] O my dear husband—do not make me—don't! If you but cared for me—the hundredth part Of how—I care for you, you could not be So cruel as to lay this torture on me. It hurts me so!—it cuts me like a sword. Don't make me, dear! Don't, will you! O,O,O! [She sinks down in a hysterical fit.]

NAPOLÉON [calling] Bausset! [Enter DE BAUSSET, Chamberlain-in-waiting.] Bausset, come in and shut the door. Assist me here. The Empress has fallen ill. Don't call for help. We two can carry her By the small private staircase to her rooms. Here—I will take her feet. [They lift JOSÉPHINE between them and carry her out. Her moans die away as they recede towards the stairs. Enter two servants, who remove coffee-service, readjust chairs, etc.]

FIRST SERVANT So, poor old girl, she's wailed her Missere Mei, as Mother Church says. I knew she was to get the sack ever since he came back.

SECOND SERVANT Well, there will be a little civil huzzaing, a little crowing and cackling among the Bonapartes at the downfall of the Beauharnais family at last, mark me there will! They've had their little hour, as the poets say, and now 'twill be somebody else's turn. O it is droll! Well, Father Time is a great philosopher, if you take him right. Who is to be the new woman?

FIRST SERVANT She that contains in her own corporation the necessary particular.

SECOND SERVANT And what may they be?

FIRST SERVANT She must be young.

SECOND SERVANT Good. She must. The country must see to that.

FIRST SERVANT And she must be strong.

SECOND SERVANT Good again. She must be strong. The doctors will see to that.
FIRST SERVANT And she must be fruitful as the vine.

SECOND SERVANT Ay, by God. She must be fruitful as the vine. That, Heaven help him, he must see to himself, like the meanest multiplying man in Paris. [Exeunt servant. Re-enter NAPOLÉON with his stepdaughter, Queen Hortense.]

NAPOLÉON Your mother is too rash and reasonless— Wailing and fainting over statesmanship Which is no personal caprice of mine, But policy most painful—forced on me By the necessities of this country's charge. Go to her; see if she be saner now; Explain it to her once and once again, And bring me word what impress you may make. [HORTENSE goes out. CHAMPAGNY is shown in.] Champagny, I have something clear to say Now, on our process after the divorce. The question of the Russian Duchess Anne Was quite inept for further toying with. The years rush on, and I grow nothing younger. So I have made up my mind—committed me To Austria and the Hapsburgs—good or ill! It was the best, most practicable plunge, And I have plunged it.

CHAMPAGNY Austria say you, sire? I reckoned that but a scurrying dream!

NAPOLÉON Well, so it was. But such a pretty dream That its own charm transfixed it to a notion, That showed itself in time a sanity, Which hardened in its turn to a resolve As firm as any built by mortal mind.— The Emperor's consent must needs be won; But I foresee no difficulty there. The young Archduchess is a bright blond thing By general story; and considering, too, That her good mother childed seventeen times, It will be hard if she can not produce The modest one or two that I require. [Enter DE BAUSSET with dispatches.]

DE BAUSSET The courier, sire, from Petersburg is here, And brings these letters for your Majesty. [Exit DE BAUSSET.]

NAPOLÉON [after silently reading] Ha-ha! It never rains unless it pours: Now I can have the other readily. The proverb hits me aptly: "Well they do Who doff the old love ere they don the new!" [He glances again over the letter.] Yes, Caulaincourt now writes he has every hope Of quick success in settling the alliance! The Tsar is willing—even anxious for it, His sister's youth the single obstacle. The Empress-mother, hitherto against me, Ambition-fired, verges on suave consent, Likewise the whole Imperial family. What irony is all this to me now! Time lately was when I had leapt thereat.

CHAMPAGNY You might, of course, sire, give th' Archduchess up, Seeing she looms uncertainly as yet, While this does so no longer.

NAPOLÉON No—not I. My sense of my own dignity forbids My watching the slow clocks of Muscovy! Why have they dallied with my tentatives In pompous silence since the Erfurt day? —And Austria, too, affords a safer hope. The young Archduchess is much less a child Than is the other, who, Caulaincourt says, Will be incapable of motherhood For six months yet or more—a grave delay.

CHAMPAGNY Your Majesty appears to have trimmed your sail For Austria; and no more is to be said!

NAPOLÉON Except that there's the house of Saxony If Austria fail.—then, very

well, Champagny, Write you to Caulaincourt accordingly.

CHAMPAGNY I will, your Majesty. [Exit CHAMPAGNY. Re-enter QUEEN HORTENSE.]

NAPOLÉON Ah, dear Hortense, How is your mother now?

HORTENSE Calm; quite calm, sire. I pledge me you need have no further fret From her entreating tears. She bids me say That now, as always, she submits herself With chastened dignity to circumstance, And will descend, at notice, from your throne— As in days earlier she ascended it— In questionless obedience to your will. It was your hand that crowned her; let it be Likewise your hand that takes her crown away. As for her children, we shall be but glad To follow and withdraw ourselves with her, The tenderest mother children ever knew, From grandeurs that have brought no happiness!

NAPOLÉON [taking her hand] But, Hortense, dear, it is not to be so! You must stay with me, as I said before. Your mother, too, must keep her royal state, Since no repudiation stains this need. Equal magnificence will orb her round In aftertime as now. A palace here, A palace in the country, wealth to match, A rank in order next my future wife's, And conference with me as my truest friend. Now we will seek her—Eugène, you, and I— And make the project clear. [Exeunt NAPOLÉON and HORTENSE. The scene darkens and shuts.]

## SCENE III

VIENNA. A PRIVATE APARTMENT IN THE IMPERIAL PALACE [The EMPEROR FRANCIS discovered, paler than usual, and somewhat flurried. Enter METTERNICH the Prime Minister—a thin-lipped, long-nosed man with inquisitive eyes.]

FRANCIS I have been expecting you some minutes here, The thing that fronts us brooking brief delay.— Well, what say you by now on this strange offer?

METTERNICH My views remain the same, your Majesty: The policy of peace that I have upheld, Both while in Paris and of late time here, Points to this step as heralding sweet balm And bandaged veins for our late crimsoned realm.

FRANCIS Agreed. As monarch I perceive therein A happy doorway for my purposings. It seems to guarantee the Hapsburg crown A quittance of distractions such as those That leave their shade on many a backward year!— There is, forsooth, a suddenness about it, And it would aid us had we clearly keyed The cryptologues of which the world has heard Between Napoléon and the Russian Court— Begun there with the selfsame motiving.

METTERNICH I would not, sire, one second ponder it. It was an obvious first crude cast-about In the important reckoning of means For his great end, a strong monarchic line. The more advanced the more it profits us; For sharper, then, the quashing of such views, And wreck of that conjunction in the aims Of France and Russia, marked so much of late As jeopardizing quiet neighbours' thrones.

FRANCIS If that be so, on the domestic side There seems no bar. Speaking as father solely, I see secured to her the proudest fate That woman can daydream. And I could hope That private bliss would not be wanting her!

METTERNICH

A hope well seated, sire. The Emperor, Imperious and determined in his rule, Is easy-natured in domestic life, As my long time in Paris amply proved. Moreover, the accessories of his glory Have been, and will be, admirably designed To fire the fancy of a young princess.

FRANCIS Thus far you satisfy me.... So, to close, Or not to close with him, is now the thing.

METTERNICH Your Majesty commands the issue quite: The father of his people can alone In such a case give answer—yes or no. Vagueness and doubt have ruined Russia's chance; Let not, then, such be ours.

FRANCIS

You mean, if I, You'd answer straight. What would that answer be?

METTERNICH In state affairs, sire, as in private life, Times will arise when even the faithfullest squire Finds him unfit to jog his chieftain's choice, On whom responsibility must lastly rest. And such times are pre-eminently, sire, Those wherein thought alone is not enough To serve the head as guide. As Emperor, As father, both, to you, to you in sole Must appertain the privilege to pronounce Which track stern duty bids you tread herein.

FRANCIS Affection is my duty, heart my guide.— Without constraint or prompting I shall leave The big decision in my daughter's hands. Before my obligations to my people Must stand her wish. Go, find her, Metternich, Take her the tidings. She is free with you, And will speak out. [Looking forth from the terrace.] She's here at hand, I see: I'll call her in. Then tell me what's her mind. [He beckons from the window, and goes out in another direction.]

METTERNICH So much for form's sake! Can the river-flower The current drags, direct its face up-stream? What she must do she will; nought else at all. [Enter through one of the windows MARIA LOUISA in garden-costume, fresh-coloured, girlish, and smiling. METTERNICH bends.]

MARIA LOUISA O how, dear Chancellor, you startled me! Please pardon my so brusquely bursting in. I saw you not.—Those five poor little birds That haunt out there beneath the pediment, Snugly defended from the north-east wind, Have lately disappeared. I sought a trace Of scattered feathers, which I dread to find!

METTERNICH They are gone, I ween, the way of tender flesh At the assaults of winter, want, and foes.

MARIA LOUISA It is too melancholy thinking, that! Don't say it.—But I saw the Emperor here? Surely he beckoned me?

METTERNICH Sure, he did, Your gracious Highness; and he has left me here To

break vast news that will make good his call.

MARIA LOUISA Then do. I'll listen. News from near or far? [She seats herself.]

METTERNICH From far—though of such distance-dwarfing might That far may read as near eventually. But, dear Archduchess, with your kindly leave I'll speak straight out. The Emperor of the French Has sent to-day to make, through Schwarzenberg, A formal offer of his heart and hand, His honours, dignities, imperial throne, To you, whom he admires above all those The world can show elsewhere.

MARIA LOUISA [frightened] My husband—he? What, an old man like him!

METTERNICH [cautiously] He's scarcely old, Dear lady. True, deeds densely crowd in him; Turn months to years calendaring his span; Yet by Time's common clockwork he's but young.

MARIA LOUISA So wicked, too!

METTERNICH [nettled] Well-that's a point of view.

MARIA LOUISA But, Chancellor, think what things I have said to him! Can women marry where they have taunted so?

METTERNICH Things? Nothing inexpungeable, I deem, By time and true good humour.

MARIA LOUISA O I have! Horrible things. Why—ay, a hundred times— I have said I wished him dead! At that strained hour When the first voicings of the late war came, Thrilling out how the French were smitten sore And Bonaparte retreating, I clapped hands And answered that I hoped he'd lose his head As well as lose the battle!

METTERNICH Words. But words! Born like the bubbles of a spring that come Of zest for springing—aimless in their shape.

MARIA LOUISA It seems indecent, mean, to wed a man Whom one has held such

fierce opinions of!

METTERNICH My much beloved Archduchess, and revered, Such things have been! In Spain and Portugal Like enmities have led to intermarriage. In England, after warring thirty years The Red and White Rose wedded.

MARIA LOUISA [after a silence] Tell me, now, What does my father wish?

METTERNICH His wish is yours. Whatever your Imperial Highness feels On this grave verdict of your destiny, Home, title, future sphere, he bids you think Not of himself, but of your own desire.

MARIA LOUISA [reflecting] My wish is what my duty bids me wish. Where a wide Empire's welfare is in poise, That welfare must be pondered, not my will. I ask of you, then, Chancellor Metternich, Straightway to beg the Emperor my father That he fulfil his duty to the realm, And quite subordinate thereto all thought Of how it personally impinge on me. [A slight noise as of something falling is heard in the room. They glance momentarily, and see that a small enamel portrait of MARIE ANTOINETTE, which was standing on a console-table, has slipped down on its face.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS What mischief's this? The Will must have its way.

SPIRIT SINISTER Perhaps Earth shivered at the lady's say?

SHADE OF THE EARTH I own hereto. When France and Austria wed My echoes are men's groans, my dews are red; So I have reason for a passing dread!

METTERNICH Right nobly phrased, Archduchess; wisely too. I will acquaint your sire the Emperor With these your views. He waits them anxiously. [Going.]

MARIA LOUISA Let me go first. It much confuses me To think—But I would fain let thinking be! [She goes out trembling. Enter FRANCIS by another door.]

METTERNICH I was about to seek your Majesty. The good Archduchess luminously holds That in this weighty question you regard The Empire. Best for it is

best for her.

FRANCIS [moved] My daughter's views thereon do not surprise me. She is too staunch to pit a private whim Against the fortunes of a commonwealth. During your speech with her I have taken thought To shape decision sagely. An assent Would yield the Empire many years of peace, And leave me scope to heal those still green sores Which linger from our late unhappy moils. Therefore, my daughter not being disinclined, I know no basis for a negative. Send, then, a courier prompt to Paris: say The offer made for the Archduchess' hand I do accept—with this defined reserve, That no condition, treaty, bond, attach To such alliance save the tie itself. There are some sacrifices whose grave rites No bargain must contaminate. This is one— This personal gift of a beloved child!

METTERNICH [leaving] I'll see to it this hour, your Majesty, And cant the words in keeping with your wish. To himself as he goes.] Decently done!... He slipped out "sacrifice," And scarce could hide his heartache for his girl. Well ached it!—But when these things have to be It is as well to breast them stoically. [Exit METTERNICH. The clouds draw over.]

**SCENE IV**

LONDON. A CLUB IN ST. JAMES'S STREET [A winter midnight. Two members are conversing by the fire, and others are seen lolling in the background, some of them snoring.]

FIRST MEMBER I learn from a private letter that it was carried out in the Emperor's Cabinet at the Tuileries—just off the throne-room, where they all assembled in the evening,—Boney and the wife of his bosom [In pure white muslin from head to foot, they say], the Kings and Queens of Holland, Whestphalia, and Naples, the Princess Pauline, and one or two more; the officials present being Cambacérès the Chancellor, and Count Regnaud. Quite a small party. It was over in minutes—short and sweet, like a donkey's gallop.

SECOND MEMBER Anything but sweet for her. How did she stand it?

FIRST MEMBER Serenely, I believe, while the Emperor was making his speech renouncing her; but when it came to her turn to say she renounced him she began sobbing mightily, and was so completely choked up that she couldn't get out a word.

SECOND MEMBER Poor old dame! I pity her, by God; though she had a rattling good spell while it lasted.

FIRST MEMBER They say he was a bit upset, too, at sight of her tears But I dare vow that was put on. Fancy Boney caring a curse what a woman feels. She had learnt her speech by heart, but that did not help her: Regnaud had to finish it for her, the ditch that overturned her being where she was made to say that she no longer preserved any hope of having children, and that she was pleased to show her attachment by enabling him to obtain them by another woman. She was led off fainting. A turning of the tables, considering how madly jealous she used to make him by her flirtations! [Enter a third member.]

SECOND MEMBER How is the debate going? Still braying the Government in a mortar?

THIRD MEMBER They are. Though one thing every body admits: young Peel has made a wonderful first speech in seconding the address. There has been nothing like it since Pitt. He spoke rousingly of Austria's misfortunes—went on about Spain, of course, showing that we must still go on supporting her, winding up with a brilliant peroration about—what were the words—"the fiery eyes of the British soldier!"—Oh, well: it was all learnt before-hand, of course.

SECOND MEMBER I wish I had gone down. But the wind soon blew the other way.

THIRD MEMBER Then Gower rapped out his amendment. That was good, too, by God.

SECOND MEMBER Well, the war must go on. And that being the general

conviction this censure and that censure are only so many blank cartridges.

THIRD MEMBER Blank? Damn me, were they! Gower's was a palpable hit when he said that Parliament had placed unheard-of resources in the hands of the Ministers last year, to make this year's results to the country worse than if they had been afforded no resources at all. Every single enterprise of theirs had been a beggarly failure.

SECOND MEMBER Anybody could have said it, come to that.

THIRD MEMBER Yes, because it is so true. However, when he began to lay on with such rhetoric as "the treasures of the nation lavished in wasteful thoughtlessness,"—"thousands of our troops sacrificed wantonly in pestilential swamps of Walcheren," and gave the details we know so well, Ministers wriggled a good one, though 'twas no news to 'em. Castlereagh kept on starting forward as if he were going to jump up and interrupt, taking the strictures entirely as a personal affront. [Enter a fourth member.]

SEVERAL MEMBERS Who's speaking now?

FOURTH MEMBER I don't know. I have heard nobody later than Ward.

SECOND MEMBER The fact is that, as Whitbread said to me to-day, the materials for condemnation are so prodigious that we can scarce marshal them into argument. We are just able to pour 'em out one upon t'other.

THIRD MEMBER Ward said, with the blandest air in the world: "Censure? Do his Majesty's Ministers expect censure? Not a bit. They are going about asking in tremulous tones if anybody has heard when their impeachment is going to begin."

SEVERAL MEMBERS Haw—haw—haw!

THIRD MEMBER Then he made another point. After enumerating our frightful failures—Spain, Walcheren, and the rest—he said: "But Ministers have not failed in everything. No; in one thing they have been strikingly successful. They have been

successful in their attack upon Copenhagen—because it was directed against an ally!" Mighty fine, wasn't it?

SECOND MEMBER How did Castlereagh stomach that?

THIRD MEMBER He replied then. Donning his air of injured innocence he proved the honesty of his intentions—no doubt truly enough. But when he came to Walcheren nothing could be done. The case was hopeless, and he knew it, and foundered. However, at the division, when he saw what a majority was going out on his side he was as frisky as a child. Canning's speech was grave, with bits of shiny ornament stuck on— like the brass nails on a coffin, Sheridan says. [Fifth and sixth members stagger in, arm-and-arm.]

FIFTH MEMBER The 'vision is—-'jority of ninety-six againsht—Gov'ment—I mean— againsht us. Which is it—hey? [To his companion.]

SIXTH MEMBER Damn majority of—damn ninety-six—against damn amendment! [They sink down on a sofa.]

SECOND MEMBER Gad, I didn't expect the figure would have been quite so high!

THIRD MEMBER The one conviction is that the war in the Peninsula is to go on, and as we are all agreed upon that, what the hell does it matter what their majority was? [Enter SHERIDAN. They all look inquiringly.]

SHERIDAN Have ye heard the latest?

SECOND MEMBER Ninety-six against us.

SHERIDAN O no-that's ancient history. I'd forgot it.

THIRD MEMBER A revolution, because Ministers are not impeached and hanged?

SHERIDAN That's in contemplation, when we've got their confessions. But what I meant was from over the water—it is a deuced sight more serious to us than a debate and division that are only like the Liturgy on a Sunday—known beforehand to all the congregation. Why, Bonaparte is going to marry Austria forthwith—the

Emperor’s daughter Maria Louisa.

THIRD MEMBER The Lord look down! Our late respected crony of Austria! Why, in this very night’s debate they have been talking about the laudable principles we have been acting upon in affording assistance to the Emperor Francis in his struggle against the violence and ambition of France!

SECOND MEMBER Boney safe on that side, what may not befall!

THIRD MEMBER We had better make it up with him, and shake hands all round.

SECOND MEMBER Shake heads seems most natural in the case. O House of Hapsburg, how hast thou fallen! [Enter WHITBREAD, LORD HUTCHINSON, LORD GEORGE CAVENDISH, GEORGE PONSONBY, WINDHAM, LORD GREY, BARING, ELLIOT, and other members, some drunk. The conversation becomes animated and noisy; several move off to the card-room, and the scene closes.]

## SCENE V

THE OLD WEST HIGHWAY OUT OF VIENNA [The spot is where the road passes under the slopes of the Wiener Wald, with its beautiful forest scenery.]

DUMB SHOW A procession of enormous length, composed of eighty carriages—many of them drawn by six horses and one by eight—and escorted by detachments of cuirassiers, yeomanry, and other cavalry, is quickening its speed along the highway from the city. The six-horse carriages contain a multitude of Court officials, ladies of the Court, and other Austrian nobility. The eight-horse coach contains a rosy, blue-eyed girl of eighteen, with full red lips, round figure, and pale auburn hair. She is MARIA LOUISA, and her eyes are red from recent weeping. The COUNTESS DE LAZANSKY, Grand Mistress of the Household, in the carriage with her, and the other ladies of the Palace behind, have a pale, proud, yet resigned look, as if conscious that upon their sex had been laid the burden of paying

for the peace with France. They have been played out of Vienna with French marches, and the trifling incident has helped on their sadness. The observer's vision being still bent on the train of vehicles and cavalry, the point of sight is withdrawn high into the air, till the huge procession on the brown road looks no more than a file of ants crawling along a strip of garden-matting. The spacious terrestrial outlook now gained shows this to be the great road across Europe from Vienna to Munich, and from Munich westerly to France. The puny concatenation of specks being exclusively watched, the surface of the earth seems to move along in an opposite direction, and in infinite variety of hill, dale, woodland, and champaign. Bridges are crossed, ascents are climbed, plains are galloped over, and towns are reached, among them Saint Polten, where night falls. Morning shines, and the royal crawl is resumed, and continued through Linz, where the Danube is reapproached, and the girl looks pleased to see her own dear Donau still. Presently the tower of Brannau appears, where the animated dots pause for formalities, this being the frontier; and MARIA LOUISA becomes MARIE LOUISE and a Frenchwoman, in the charge of French officials. After many breaks and halts, during which heavy rains spread their gauzes over the scene, the roofs and houses of Munich disclose themselves, suggesting the tesserae of an irregular mosaic. A long stop is made here. The tedious advance continues. Vine-circled Stuttgart, flat Carlsruhe, the winding Rhine, storky Strassburg, pass in panorama beneath us as the procession is followed. With Nancy and Bar-le- Duc sliding along, the scenes begin to assume a French character, and soon we perceive Chalons and ancient Rheims. The last day of the journey has dawned. Our vision flits ahead of the cortege to Courcelles, a little place which must be passed through before Soissons is reached. Here the point of sight descends to earth, and the Dumb Show ends.

**SCENE VI**

COURCELLES [It is now seen to be a quiet roadside village, with a humble church

in its midst, opposite to which stands an inn, the highway passing between them. Rain is still falling heavily. Not a soul is visible anywhere. Enter from the west a plain, lonely carriage, traveling in a direction to meet the file of coaches that we have watched. It stops near the inn, and two men muffled in cloaks alight by the door away from the hostel and towards the church, as if they wished to avoid observation. Their faces are those of NAPOLÉON and MURAT, his brother-in-law. Crossing the road through the mud and rain they stand in the church porch, and watch the descending drifts.]

NAPOLÉON [stamping an impatient tattoo] One gets more chilly in a wet March than in a dry, however cold, the devil if he don't! What time do you make it now? That clock doesn't go.

MURAT [drily, looking at his watch] Yes, it does; and it is right. If clocks were to go as fast as your wishes just now it would be awkward for the rest of the world.

NAPOLÉON [chuckling good-humouredly] How we have dished the Soissons folk, with their pavilions, and purple and gold hangings for bride and bridegroom to meet in, and stately ceremonial to match, and their thousands looking on! Here we are where there's nobody. Ha, ha!

MURAT But why should they be dished, sire? The pavilions and ceremonies were by your own orders.

NAPOLÉON Well, as the time got nearer I couldn't stand the idea of dawdling about there.

MURAT The Soissons people will be in a deuce of a taking at being made such fools of!

NAPOLÉON

So let 'em. I'll make it up with them somehow.—She can't be far off now, if we have timed her rightly. [He peers out into the rain and listens.]

MURAT I don't quite see how you are going to manage when she does come. Do we go before her toward Soissons when you have greeted her here, or follow in her rear? Or what do we do?

NAPOLÉON Heavens, I know no more than you! Trust to the moment and see what happens. [A silence.] Hark—here she comes! Good little girl; up to time! [The distant squashing in the mud of a multitude of hoofs and wheels is succeeded by the appearance of outriders and carriages, horses and horsemen, splashed with sample clays of the districts traversed. The vehicles slow down to the inn. NAPOLÉON'S face fires up, and, followed by MURAT, he rushes into the rain towards the coach that is drawn by eight horses, containing the blue-eyed girl. He holds off his hat at the carriage-window.]

MARIE LOUISE [shrinking back inside] Ah, Heaven! Two highwaymen are upon us!

THE EQUERRY D'AUDENARDE [simultaneously] The Emperor! [The steps of the coach are hastily lowered, NAPOLÉON, dripping, jumps in and embraces her. The startled ARCHDUCHESS, with much blushing and confusion recognizes him.]

MARIE LOUISE [tremulously, as she recovers herself] You are so much—better looking than your portraits—that I hardly knew you! I expected you at Soissons. We are not at Soissons yet?

NAPOLÉON No, my dearest spouse, but we are together! [Calling out to the equerry.] Drive through Soissons—pass the pavilion of reception without stopping, and don't halt till we reach Compiegne. [He sits down in the coach and is shut in, MURAT laughing silently at the scene. Exeunt carriages and riders toward Soissons.]

CHORUS OF THE IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] First 'twas a finished coquette, And now it's a raw ingenue.— Blond instead of brunette, An old wife doffed for a new. She'll bring him a baby, As quickly as maybe, And that's what he wants her to

do, Hoo-hoo! And that's what he wants her to do!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS What lewdness lip those wry-formed phantoms there!

IRONIC SPIRITS Nay, Showman Years! With holy reverent air We hymn the nuptials of the Imperial pair. [The scene thickens to mist and obscures the scene.]

**SCENE VII**

PETERSBURG. THE PALACE OF THE EMPRESS-MOTHER [One of the private apartments is disclosed, in which the Empress- mother and Alexander are seated.]

EMPRESS-MOTHER So one of Austrian blood his pomp selects To be his bride and bulwark—not our own. Thus are you coolly shelved!

ALEXANDER Me, mother dear? You, faith, if I may say it dutifully! Had all been left to me, some time ere now He would have wedded Kate.

EMPRESS-MOTHER How so, my son? Catharine was plighted, and it could not be.

ALEXANDER Rather you swiftly pledged and married her, To let Napoléon have no chance that way. But Anne remained.

EMPRESS-MOTHER How Anne?—so young a girl! Sane Nature would have cried indecency At such a troth.

ALEXANDER Time would have tinkered that, And he was well-disposed to wait awhile; But the one test he had no temper for Was the apparent slight of unresponse Accorded his impatient overtures By our suspensive poise of policy.

EMPRESS-MOTHER A backward answer is our country's card— The special style and mode of Muscovy. We have grown great upon it, my dear son, And may such practice rule our centuries through! The necks of those who rate themselves our peers Are cured of stiffness by its potency.

ALEXANDER The principle in this case, anyhow, Is shattered by the facts: since none can doubt Your policy was counted an affront, And drove my long ally to

Austria's arms, With what result to us must yet be seen!

EMPRESS-MOTHER May Austria win much joy of the alliance! Marrying Napoléon is a midnight leap For any Court in Europe, credit me, If ever such there were! What he may carve Upon the coming years, what murderous bolt Hurl at the rocking Constitutions round, On what dark planet he may land himself In his career through space, no sage can say.

ALEXANDER Well—possibly!... And maybe all is best That he engrafts his lineage not on us.— But, honestly, Napoléon none the less Has been my friend, and I regret the dream And fleeting fancy of a closer tie!

EMPRESS-MOTHER Ay; your regrets are sentimental ever. That he'll be writ no son-in-law of mine Is no regret to me! But an affront There is, no less, in his evasion on't, Wherein the bourgeois quality of him Veraciously peeps out. I would be sworn He set his minions parleying with the twain— Yourself and Francis—simultaneously, Else no betrothal could have speeded so!

ALEXANDER Despite the hazard of offence to one?

EMPRESS-MOTHER More than the hazard; the necessity.

ALEXANDER There's no offence to me.

EMPRESS-MOTHER There should be, then. I am a Romanoff by marriage merely, But I do feel a rare belittlement And loud laconic brow-beating herein!

ALEXANDER No, mother, no! I am the Tsar—not you, And I am only piqued in moderateness. Marriage with France was near my heart—I own it— What then? It has been otherwise ordained. [A silence.]

EMPRESS-MOTHER Here comes dear Anne Speak not of it before her. [Enter the GRAND-DUCHESS, a girl of sixteen.]

ANNE Alas! the news is that poor Prussia's queen, Spirited Queen Louisa, once so fair, Is slowly dying, mother! Did you know?

ALEXANDER [betraying emotion] Ah!—such I dreaded from the earlier hints. Poor soul—her heart was slain some time ago.

ANNE What do you mean by that, my brother dear?

EMPRESS-MOTHER He means, my child, that he as usual spends Much sentiment upon the foreign fair, And hence leaves little for his folk at home.

ALEXANDER I mean, Anne, that her country's overthrow Let death into her heart. The Tilsit days Taught me to know her well, and honour her. She was a lovely woman even then!... Strangely, the present English Prince of Wales Was wished to husband her. Had wishes won, They might have varied Europe's history.

ANNE Napoléon, I have heard, admired her once; How he must grieve that soon she'll be no more!

EMPRESS-MOTHER Napoléon and your brother loved her both. [Alexander shows embarrassment.] But whatsoever grief be Alexander's, His will be none who feels but for himself.

ANNE O mother, how can you mistake him so! He worships her who is to be his wife, The fair Archduchess Marie.

EMPRESS-MOTHER Simple child, As yet he has never seen her, or but barely. That is a tactic suit, with love to match!

ALEXANDER [with vainly veiled tenderness] High-souled Louisa;—when shall I forget Those Tilsit gatherings in the long-sunned June! Napoléon's gallantries deceived her quite, Who fondly felt her pleas for Magdeburg Had won him to its cause; the while, alas! His cynic sense but posed in cruel play!

EMPRESS-MOTHER Bitterly mourned she her civilities When time unlocked the truth, that she had choked Her indignation at his former slights And slanderous sayings for a baseless hope, And wrought no tittle for her country's gain. I marvel why you mourn a frustrate tie With one whose wiles could wring a woman so!

ALEXANDER [uneasily] I marvel also, when I think of it!

EMPRESS-MOTHER Don't listen to us longer, dearest Anne. [Exit Anne.] —You will uphold my judging by and by, That as a suitor we are quit of him, And that blind Austria will rue the hour Wherein she plucks for him her fairest flower! [The scene shuts.]

**SCENE VIII**

PARIS. THE GRAND GALLERY OF THE LOUVRE AND THE SALON-CARRE ADJOINING [The view is up the middle of the Gallery, which is now a spectacle of much magnificence. Backed by the large paintings on the walls are double rows on each side of brightly dressed ladies, the pick of Imperial society, to the number of four thousand, one thousand in each row; and behind these standing up are two rows on each side of men of privilege and fashion. Officers of the Imperial Guard are dotted about as marshals. Temporary barriers form a wide passage up the midst, leading to the Salon-Carre, which is seen through the opening to be fitted up as a chapel, with a gorgeous altar, tall candles, and cross. In front of the altar is a platform with a canopy over it. On the platform are two gilt chairs and a prie-dieu. The expectant assembly does not continuously remain in the seats, but promenades and talks, the voices at times rising to a din amid the strains of the orchestra, conducted by the EMPEROR'S Director of Music. Refreshments in profusion are handed round, and the extemporized cathedral resolves itself into a gigantic cafe of persons of distinction under the Empire.]

SPIRIT SINISTER All day have they been waiting for their galanty-show, and now the hour of performance is on the strike. It may be seasonable to muse on the sixteenth Louis and the bride's great-aunt, as the nearing procession is, I see, appositely crossing the track of the tumbril which was the last coach of that respected lady.... It is now passing over the site of the scaffold on which she lost her head. ... Now it will soon be here. [Suddenly the heralds enter the Gallery at the end

towards the Tuileries, the spectators ranging themselves in their places. In a moment the wedding procession of the EMPEROR and EMPRESS becomes visible. The civil marriage having already been performed, Napoléon and Marie Louise advance together along the vacant pathway towards the Salon-Carre, followed by the long suite of illustrious personages, and acclamations burst from all parts of the Grand Gallery.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Whose are those forms that pair in pompous train Behind the hand-in-hand half-wedded ones, With faces speaking sense of an adventure Which may close well, or not so?

RECORDING ANGEL [reciting] First there walks The Emperor's brother Louis, Holland's King; Then Jérôme of Westphalia with his spouse; The mother-queen, and Julie Queen of Spain, The Prince Borghese and the Princess Pauline, Beauharnais the Vice-King of Italy, And Murat King of Naples, with their Queens; Baden's Grand-Duke, Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès, Berthier, Lebrun, and, not least, Talleyrand. Then the Grand Marshal and the Chamberlain, The Lords-in-Waiting, the Grand Equerry, With waiting-ladies, women of the chamber, An others called by office, rank, or fame.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR New, many, to Imperial dignities; Which, won by character and quality In those who now enjoy them, will become The birthright of their sons in aftertime.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS It fits thee not to augur, quick-eared Shade. Ephemeral at the best all honours be, These even more ephemeral than their kind, So random-fashioned, swift, perturbable!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Napoléon looks content—nay, shines with joy.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Yet see it pass, as by a conjuror's wand. [Thereupon Napoléon's face blackens as if the shadow of a winter night had fallen upon it. Resentful and threatening, he stops the procession and looks up and down the

benches.]

SPIRIT SINISTER This is sound artistry of the Immanent Will: it relieves the monotony of so much good-humour.

NAPOLÉON [to the Chapel-master] Where are the Cardinals? And why not here? [He speaks so loud that he is heard throughout the Gallery.]

ABBÉ DE PRADT [trembling] Many are present here, your Majesty; But some are feebled by infirmities Too common to their age, and cannot come.

NAPOLÉON Tell me no nonsense! Half absent themselves Because they WILL not come. The factious fools! Well, be it so. But they shall flinch for it! [MARIE LOUISE looks frightened. The procession moves on.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I seem to see the thin and headless ghost Of the yet earlier Austrian, here, too, queen, Walking beside the bride, with frail attempts To pluck her by the arm!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Nay, think not so. No trump unseals earth's sepulchre's to-day: We are the only phantoms now abroad On this mud-moulded ball! Through sixteen years She has decayed in a back-garden yonder, Dust all the showance time retains of her, Senseless of hustlings in her former house, Lost to all count of crowns and bridalry— Even of her Austrian blood. No: what thou seest Springs of the quavering fancy, stirred to dreams By yon tart phantom's phrase.

MARIE LOUISE [sadly to Napoléon] I know not why, I love not this day's doings half so well As our quaint meeting-time at Compiegne. A clammy air creeps round me, as from vaults Peopled with looming spectres, chilling me And angering you withal!

NAPOLÉON O, it is nought To trouble you: merely, my cherished one, Those devils of Italian Cardinals!— Now I'll be bright as ever—you must, too.

MARIE LOUISE I'll try. [Reaching the entrance to the Salon-Carre amid strains of

music the EMPEROR and EMPRESS are received and incensed by the CARDINAL GRAND ALMONERS. They take their seats under the canopy, and the train of notabilities seat themselves further back, the persons- in-waiting stopping behind the Imperial chairs. The ceremony of the religious marriage now begins. The choir intones a hymn, the EMPEROR and EMPRESS go to the altar, remove their gloves, and make their vows.]

SPIRIT IRONIC The English Church should return thanks for this wedding, seeing how it will purge of coarseness the picture-sheets of that artistic nation, which will hardly be able to caricature the new wife as it did poor plebeian Joséphine. Such starched and ironed monarchists cannot sneer at a woman of such a divinely dry and crusted line like the Hapsburgs! [Mass is next celebrated, after which the TE DEUM is chanted in harmonies that whirl round the walls of the Salon-Carre and quiver down the long Gallery. The procession then re-forms and returns, amid the flutterings and applause of the dense assembly. But Napoléon’s face has not lost the sombre expression which settled on it. The pair and their train pass out by the west door, and the congregation disperses in the other direction, the cloud- curtain closing over the scene as they disappear.

# ACT SIXTH

## SCENE I

THE LINES OF TORRES VEDRAS [A bird’s-eye perspective is revealed of the peninsular tract of Portuguese territory lying between the shining pool of the Tagus on the east, and the white-frilled Atlantic lifting rhythmically on the west. As thus beheld the tract features itself somewhat like a late-Gothic shield, the upper edge from the dexter to the sinister chief being the lines of Torres Vedras, stretching across from the mouth of the Zezambre on the left to Alhandra on the right, and the south or base point being Fort S. Julian. The roofs of Lisbon appear at the sinister

base, and in a corresponding spot on the opposite side Cape Roca. It is perceived in a moment that the northern verge of this nearly coast-hemmed region is the only one through which access can be gained to it by land, and a close scrutiny of the boundary there reveals that means are being adopted to effectually prevent such access. From east to west along it runs a chain of defences, dotted at intervals by dozens of circular and square redoubts, either made or in the making, two of the latter being of enormous size. Between these stretch unclimbable escarpments, stone walls, and other breastworks, and in front of all a double row of abatis, formed of the limbs of trees. Within the outer line of defence is a second, constructed on the same shield-shaped tract of country; and is not more than a twelfth of the length of the others. It is a continuous entrenchment of ditches and ramparts, and its object—that of covering a forced embarkation—is rendered apparent by some rocking English transports off the shore hard by.]

DUMB SHOW Innumerable human figures are busying themselves like cheese-mites all along the northernmost frontage, undercutting easy slopes into steep ones, digging ditches, piling stones, felling trees, dragging them, and interlacing them along the front as required. On the second breastwork, which is completed, only a few figures move. On the third breastwork, which is fully matured and equipped, minute red sentinels creep backwards and forwards noiselessly. As time passes three reddish-grey streams of marching men loom out to the north, advancing southward along three roads towards three diverse points in the first defence. These form the English army, entering the lines for shelter. Looked down upon, their motion seems peristaltic and vermicular, like that of three caterpillars. The division on the left is under Picton, in the centre under Leith and Cole, and on the extreme right, by Alhandra, under Hill. Beside one of the roads two or three of the soldiers are dangling from a tree by the neck, probably for plundering. The Dumb Show ends, and the point of view sinks to the earth.

**SCENE II**

THE SAME. OUTSIDE THE LINES [The winter day has gloomed to a stormful evening, and the road outside the first line of defence forms the foreground of the stage. Enter in the dusk from the hills to the north of the entrenchment, near Calandrix, a group of horsemen, which includes MASSÉNA in command of the French forces, FOY, LOISON, and other officers of his staff. They ride forward in the twilight and tempest, and reconnoitre, till they see against the sky the ramparts blocking the road they pursue. They halt silently. MASSÉNA, puzzled, endeavours with his glass to make out the obstacle.]

MASSÉNA Something stands here to peril our advance, Or even prevent it!

FOY These are the English lines— Their outer horns and tusks—whereof I spoke, Constructed by Lord Wellington of late To keep his foothold firm in Portugal.

MASSÉNA Thrusts he his burly, bossed disfigurements So far to north as this? I had pictured me The lay much nearer Lisbon. Little strange Lord Wellington rode placid at Busaco With this behind his back! Well, it is hard But that we turn them somewhere, I assume? They scarce can close up every southward gap Between the Tagus and the Atlantic Sea.

FOY I hold they can, and do; although, no doubt, By searching we shall spy some raggedness Which customed skill may force.

MASSÉNA Plain ’tis, no less, We may heap corpses vainly hereabout, And crack good bones in waste. By human power This passes mounting! What say you’s behind?

LOISON Another line exactly like the first, But more matured. Behind its back a third.

MASSÉNA How long have these prim ponderosities Been rearing up their foreheads to the moon?

LOISON Some months in all. I know not quite how long. They are Lord Wellington's select device, And, like him, heavy, slow, laborious, sure.

MASSÉNA May he enjoy their sureness. He deserves to. I had no inkling of such barriers here. A good road runs along their front, it seems, Which offers us advantage.... What a night! [The tempest cries dismally about the earthworks above them, as the reconnoitrers linger in the slight shelter the lower ground affords. They are about to turn back. Enter from the cross-road to the right JUNOT and some more officers. They come up at a signal that the others are those they lately parted from.]

JUNOT We have ridden along as far as Calandrix, Favoured therein by this disordered night, Which tongues its language to the disguise of ours; And find amid the vale an open route That, well manoeuvred, may be practicable.

MASSÉNA I'll look now at it, while the weather aids. If it may serve our end when all's prepared So good. If not, some other to the west. [Exeunt MASSÉNA, JUNOT, LOISON, FOY, and the rest by the paved crossway to the right. The wind continues to prevail as the spot is left desolate, the darkness increases, rain descends more heavily, and the scene is blotted out.]

## SCENE III

PARIS. THE TUILERIES [The anteroom to the EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE'S bed-chamber, in which are discovered NAPOLÉON in his dressing-gown, the DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO, and other ladies-in-waiting. CORVISART the first physician, and the second physician BOURDIER. The time is before dawn. The EMPEROR walks up and down, throws himself on a sofa, or stands at the window. A cry of anguish comes occasionally from within. NAPOLÉON opens the door and speaks into the bed-chamber.]

NAPOLÉON How now, Dubois?

VOICE OF DUBOIS THE ACCOUCHEUR [nervously] Less well, sire, than I

hoped; I fear no skill can save them both.

NAPOLÉON [agitated] Good god! [Exit CORVISART into the bed-room. Enter DUBOIS.]

DUBOIS [with hesitation] Which life is to be saved? The Empress, sire, Lies in great jeopardy. I have not known In my long years of many-featured practice An instance in a thousand fall out so.

NAPOLÉON Then save the mother, pray! Think but of her; It is her privilege, and my command.— Don't lose you head, Dubois, at this tight time: Your furthest skill can work but what it may. Fancy that you are merely standing by A shop-wife's couch, say, in the Rue Saint Denis; Show the aplomb and phlegm that you would show Did such a bed receive your ministry. [Exit DUBOIS.]

VOICE OF MARIE LOUISE [within] O pray, pray don't! Those ugly things terrify me! Why should I be tortured even if I am but a means to an end! Let me die! It was cruel of him to bring this upon me! [Exit NAPOLÉON impatiently to the bed-room.]

VOICE OF MADAME DE MONTESQUIOU [within] Keep up your spirits, madame! I have been through it myself and I assure you there is no danger to you. It is going on all right, and I am holding you.

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON [within] Heaven above! Why did you not deep those cursed sugar-tongs out of her sight? How is she going to get through it if you frighten her like this?

VOICE OF DUBOIS [within] If you will pardon me, your Majesty, I must implore you not to interfere! I'll not be scapegoat for the consequence If, sire, you do! Better for her sake far Would you withdraw. The sight of your concern But agitates and weakens her endurance. I will inform you all, and call you back If things should worsen here. [Re-enter NAPOLÉON from the bed-chamber. He half shuts the door, and remains close to it listening, pale and nervous.]

BOURDIER I ask you, sire, To harass yourself less with this event, Which may

amend anon: I much regret The honoured mother of your Majesty, And sister too, should both have left ere now, Whose solace would have bridged these anxious hours.

NAPOLÉON [absently] As we were not expecting it so soon I begged they would sit up no longer here.... She ought to get along; she has help enough With that half-dozen of them at hand within— Skilled Madame Blaise the nurse, and two besides, Madame de Montesquiou and Madame Ballant—-

DUBOIS [speaking through the doorway] Past is the question, sire, of which to save! The child is dead; the while her Majesty Is getting through it well.

NAPOLÉON Praise Heaven for that! I'll not grieve overmuch about the child.... Never shall She go through this strain again To lay down a dynastic line for me.

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO [aside to the second lady] He only says that now. In cold blood it would be far otherwise. That's how men are.

VOICE OF MADAME BLAISE [within] Doctor, the child's alive! [The cry of an infant is heard.]

VOICE OF DUBOIS [calling from within] Sire, both are saved. [NAPOLÉON rushes into the chamber, and is heard kissing MARIE LOUISE.]

VOICE OF MADAME BLAISE [within] A vigorous boy, your Imperial Majesty. The brandy and hot napkins brought him to.

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO It is as I expected. A healthy young woman of her build had every chance of doing well, despite the doctors. [An interval.]

NAPOLÉON [re-entering radiantly] We have achieved a healthy heir, good dames, And in the feat the Empress was most brave, Although she suffered much—so much, indeed, That I would sooner father no more sons Than have so fair a fruit-tree undergo Another wrenching of such magnitude. [He walks to the window, pulls aside the curtains, and looks out. It is a joyful spring morning. The Tuileries'

gardens are thronged with an immense crowd, kept at a little distance off the Palace by a cord. The windows of the neighbouring houses are full of gazers, and the streets are thronged with halting carriages, their inmates awaiting the event.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [whispering to Napoléon] At this high hour there broods a woman nigh, Ay, here in Paris, with her child and thine, Who might have played this part with truer eye To thee and to thy contemplated line!

NAPOLÉON [soliloquizing] Strange that just now there flashes on my soul That little one I loved in Warsaw days, Marie Walewska, and my boy by her!— She was shown faithless by a foul intrigue Till fate sealed up her opportunity.... But what's one woman's fortune more or less Beside the schemes of kings!—Ah, there's the new! [A gun is heard from the Invalides.]

CROWD [excitedly] One! [Another report of the gun, and another, succeed.] Two! Three! Four! [The firing and counting proceed to twenty-one, when there is great suspense. The gun fires again, and the excitement is doubled.] Twenty-two! A boy! [The remainder of the counting up to a hundred-and-one is drowned in the huzzas. Bells begin ringing, and from the Champ de Mars a balloon ascends, from which the tidings are scattered in hand-bills as it floats away from France. Enter the PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, CAMBACÉRÈS, BERTHIER, LEBRUN, and other officers of state. NAPOLÉON turns from the window.]

CAMBACÉRÈS Unstinted gratulations and goodwill We bring to your Imperial Majesty, While still resounds the superflux of joy With which your people welcome this live star Upon the horizon of history!

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE All blessings at their goodliest will grace The advent of this New Messiah, sire, Of fairer prospects than the former one, Whose coming at so apt an hour endues The widening glory of your high exploits With permanence, and flings the dimness far That cloaked the future of our chronicle!

NAPOLÉON My thanks; though, gentlemen, upon my soul You might have drawn

the line at the Messiah. But I excuse you.—Yes, the boy has come; He took some coaxing, but he's here at last.— And what news brings the morning from without? I know of none but this the Empress now Trumps to the world from the adjoining room.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE Nothing in Europe, sire, that can compare In magnitude therewith to more effect Than with an eagle some frail finch or wren. To wit: the ban on English trade prevailing, Subjects our merchant-houses to such strain That many of the best see bankruptcy Like a grim ghost ahead. Next week, they say In secret here, six of the largest close.

NAPOLÉON It shall not be! Our burst of natal joy Must not be sullied by so mean a thing: Aid shall be rendered. Much as we may suffer, England must suffer more, and I am content. What has come in from Spain and Portugal?

BERTHIER Vaguely-voiced rumours, sire, but nothing more, Which travel countries quick as earthquake thrills, No mortal knowing how.

NAPOLÉON Of Masséna?

BERTHIER Yea. He retreats for prudence' sake, it seems, Before Lord Wellington. Dispatches soon Must reach your Majesty, explaining all.

NAPOLÉON Ever retreating! Why declines he so From all his olden prowess? Why, again, Did he give battle at Busaco lately, When Lisbon could be marched on without strain? Why has he dallied by the Tagus bank And shunned the obvious course? I gave him Ney, Soult, and Junot, and eighty thousand men, And he does nothing. Really it might seem As though we meant to let this Wellington Be even with us there!

BERTHIER His mighty forts At Torres Vedras hamper Masséna, And quite preclude advance.

NAPOLÉON O well—no matter: Why should I linger on these haps of war Now that I have a son! [Exeunt NAPOLÉON by one door and by another the

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, CAMBACÉRÈS, LEBRUN, BERTHIER, and officials.]

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] The Will Itself is slave to him, And holds it blissful to obey!— He said, “Go to; it is my whim “To bed a bride without delay, Who shall unite my dull new name With one that shone in Caesar’s day. “She must conceive—you hear my claim?— And bear a son—no daughter, mind— Who shall hand on my form and fame “To future times as I have designed; And at the birth throughout the land Must cannon roar and alp-horns wind!” The Will grew conscious at command, And ordered issue as he planned. [The interior of the Palace is veiled.]

**SCENE IV**

SPAIN. ALBUERA [The dawn of a mid-May day in the same spring shows the village of Albuera with the country around it, as viewed from the summit of a line of hills on which the English and their allies are ranged under Beresford. The landscape swept by the eye includes to the right foreground a hill loftier than any, and somewhat detached from the range. The green slopes behind and around this hill are untrodden—though in a few hours to be the sanguinary scene of the most murderous struggle of the whole war. The village itself lies to the left foreground, with its stream flowing behind it in the distance on the right. A creeping brook at the bottom of the heights held by the English joins the stream by the village. Behind the stream some of the French forces are visible. Away behind these stretches a great wood several miles in area, out of which the Albuera stream emerges, and behind the furthest verge of the wood the morning sky lightens momently. The birds in the wood, unaware that this day is to be different from every other day they have known there, are heard singing their overtures with their usual serenity.]

DUMB SHOW As objects grow more distinct it can be perceived that some strategic dispositions of the night are being completed by the French forces, which the

evening before lay in the woodland to the front of the English army. They have emerged during the darkness, and large sections of them—infantry, cuirassiers, and artillery—have crept round to BERESFORD'S right without his suspecting the movement, where they lie hidden by the great hill aforesaid, though not more than half-a-mile from his right wing.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS A hot ado goes forward here to-day, If I may read the Immanent Intent From signs and tokens blent With weird unrest along the firmament Of causal coils in passionate display. —Look narrowly, and what you witness say.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I see red smears upon the sickly dawn, And seeming drops of gore. On earth below Are men—unnatural and mechanic-drawn— Mixt nationalities in row and row, Wheeling them to and fro In moves dissociate from their souls' demand, For dynasts' ends that few even understand!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Speak more materially, and less in dream.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR I'll do it.... The stir of strife grows well defined Around the hamlet and the church thereby: Till, from the wood, the ponderous columns wind, Guided by Godinot, with Werle nigh. They bear upon the vill. But the gruff guns Of Dickson's Portuguese Punch spectral vistas through the maze of these!... More Frenchmen press, and roaring antiphons Of cannonry contuse the roofs and walls and trees.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Wrecked are the ancient bridge, the green spring plot, the blooming fruit-tree, the fair flower-knot!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Yet the true mischief to the English might Is meant to fall not there. Look to the right, And read the shaping scheme by yon hill-side, Where cannon, foot, and brisk dragoons you see, With Werle and Latour-Maubourg to guide, Waiting to breast the hill-brow bloodily.

BERESFORD now becomes aware of this project on his flank, and sends orders to throw back his right to face the attack. The order is not obeyed. Almost at the same

moment the French rush is made, the Spanish and Portuguese allies of the English are beaten beck, and the hill is won. But two English divisions bear from the centre of their front, and plod desperately up the hill to retake it.

SPIRIT SINISTER Now he among us who may wish to be A skilled practitioner in slaughtery, Should watch this hour's fruition yonder there, And he will know, if knowing ever were, How mortals may be freed their fleshly cells, And quaint red doors set ope in sweating fells, By methods swift and slow and foul and fair!

The English, who have plunged up the hill, are caught in a heavy mist, that hides from them an advance in their rear of the lancers and hussars of the enemy. The lines of the Buffs, the Sixty-sixth, and those of the Forty-eighth, who were with them, in a chaos of smoke, steel, sweat, curses, and blood, are beheld melting down like wax from an erect position to confused heaps. Their forms lie rigid, or twitch and turn, as they are trampled over by the hoofs of the enemy's horse. Those that have not fallen are taken.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES It works as you, uncanny Phantom, wist!... Whose is that towering form That tears across the mist To where the shocks are sorest?—his with arm Outstretched, and grimy face, and bloodshot eye, Like one who, having done his deeds, will die?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR He is one Beresford, who heads the fight For England here to-day.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES He calls the sight Despite itself!—parries yon lancer's thrust, And with his own sword renders dust to dust!

The ghastly climax of the strife is reached; the combatants are seen to be firing grape and canister at speaking distance, and discharging musketry in each other's faces when so close that their complexions may be recognized. Hot corpses, their mouths blackened by cartridge-biting, and surrounded by cast-away knapsacks, firelocks, hats, stocks, flint-boxes, and priming horns, together with red and blue

rags of clothing, gaiters, epaulettes, limbs and viscera accumulate on the slopes, increasing from twos and threes to half-dozens, and from half-dozens to heaps, which steam with their own warmth as the spring rain falls gently upon them. The critical instant has come, and the English break. But a comparatively fresh division, with fusileers, is brought into the turmoil by HARDINGE and COLE, and these make one last strain to save the day, and their names and lives. The fusileers mount the incline, and issuing from the smoke and mist startle the enemy by their arrival on a spot deemed won.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music] They come, beset by riddling hail; They sway like sedges is a gale; The fail, and win, and win, and fail. Albuera!

SEMICHORUS II They gain the ground there, yard by yard, Their brows and hair and lashes charred, Their blackened teeth set firm and hard.

SEMICHORUS I Their mad assailants rave and reel, And face, as men who scorn to feel, The close-lined, three-edged prongs of steel.

SEMICHORUS II Till faintness follows closing-in, When, faltering headlong down, they spin Like leaves. But those pay well who win Albuera.

SEMICHORUS I Out of six thousand souls that sware To hold the mount, or pass elsewhere, But eighteen hundred muster there.

SEMICHORUS II Pale Colonels, Captains, ranksmen lie, Facing the earth or facing sky;— They strove to live, they stretch to die.

SEMICHORUS I Friends, foemen, mingle; heap and heap.— Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep, Where harmless worms caress and creep.

CHORUS Hide their hacked bones, Earth!—deep, deep, deep, Where harmless worms caress and creep.— What man can grieve? what woman weep? Better than waking is to sleep! Albuera!

The night comes on, and darkness covers the battle-field.

**SCENE V**

WINDSOR CASTLE. A ROOM IN THE KING'S APARTMENT [The walls of the room are padded, and also the articles of furniture, the stuffing being overlaid with satin and velvet, on which are worked in gold thread monograms and crowns. The windows are guarded, and the floor covered with thick cork, carpeted. The time is shortly after the last scene. The KING is seated by a window, and two of Dr. WILLIS'S attendants are in the room. His MAJESTY is now seventy-two; his sight is very defective, but he does not look ill. He appears to be lost in melancholy thought, and talks to himself reproachfully, hurried manner on occasion being the only irregular symptom that he betrays.]

KING In my lifetime I did not look after her enough—enough—enough! And now she is lost to me, and I shall never see her more. Had I but known, had I but thought of it! Gentlemen, when did I lose the Princess Amelia?

FIRST ATTENDANT The second of last November, your Majesty.

KING And what is it now?

FIRST ATTENDANT Now, sir, it is the beginning of June.

KING Ah, June, I remember!... The June flowers are not for me. I shall never see them; nor will she. So fond of them as she was. ... Even if I were living I would never go where there are flowers any more! No: I would go to the bleak, barren places that she never would walk in, and never knew, so that nothing might remind me of her, and make my heart ache more than I can bear!... Why, the beginning of June?—that's when they are coming to examine me! [He grows excited.]

FIRST ATTENDANT [to second attendant, aside] Dr. Reynolds ought not have reminded him of their visit. It only disquiets him and makes him less fit to see them.

KING How long have I been confined here?

FIRST ATTENDANT Since November, sir; for your health's sake entirely, as your

Majesty knows.

KING What, what? So long? Ah, yes. I must bear it. This is the fourth great black gulf in my poor life, is it not? The fourth. [A signal from the door. The second attendant opens it and whispers. Enter softly SIR HENRY HALFORD, DR. WILLIAM HEBERDEN, DR. ROBERT WILLIS, DR. MATTHEW BAILLIE, the KING'S APOTHECARY, and one or two other gentlemen.]

KING [straining his eye to discern them] What! Are they come? What will they do to me? How dare they! I am Elector of Hanover! [Finding Dr. Willis is among them he shrieks.] O, they are going to bleed me—yes, to bleed me! [Piteously.] My friends, don't bleed me—pray don't! It makes me so weak to take my blood. And the leeches do, too, when you put so many. You will not be so unkind, I am sure!

WILLIS [to Baillie] It is extraordinary what a vast aversion he has to bleeding—that most salutary remedy, fearlessly practised. He submits to leeches as yet but I won't say that he will for long without being strait- jacketed.

KING [catching some of the words] You will strait-jacket me? O no, no!

WILLIS Leeches are not effective, really. Dr. Home, when I mentioned it to him yesterday, said he would bleed him till he fainted if he had charge of him!

KING O will you do it, sir, against my will, And put me, once your king, in needless pain? I do assure you truly, my good friends, That I have done no harm! In sunnier years Ere I was throneless, withered to a shade, Deprived of my divine authority— When I was hale, and ruled the English land— I ever did my utmost to promote The welfare of my people, body and soul! Right many a morn and night I have prayed and mused How I could bring them to a better way. So much of me you surely know, my friends, And will not hurt me in my weakness here! [He trembles.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES The tears that lie about this plightful scene Of heavy travail in a suffering soul, Mocked with the forms and feints of royalty While scarified by briery Circumstance, Might drive Compassion past her patiency To hold

that some mean, monstrous ironist Had built this mistimed fabric of the Spheres To watch the throbbings of its captive lives, [The which may Truth forfend], and not thy said Unmaliced, unimpassioned, nescient Will!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Mild one, be not touched with human fate. Such is the Drama: such the Mortal state: No sigh of thine can null the Plan Predestinate!

HALFORD We have come to do your Majesty no harm. Here's Dr. Heberden, whom I am sure you like, And this is Dr. Baillie. We arrive But to inquire and gather how you are, Thereon to let the Privy Council know, And give assurances for you people's good. [A brass band is heard playing in the distant part of Windsor.]

KING Ah—what does that band play for here to-day? She has been dead and I so short a time!... Her little hands are hardly cold as yet; But they can show such cruel indecency As to let trumpets play!

HALFORD They guess not, sir, That you can hear them, or their chords would cease. Their boisterous music fetches back to me That, of our errands to your Majesty, One was congratulation most sincere Upon this glorious victory you have won. The news is just in port; the band booms out To celebrate it, and to honour you.

KING A victory? I? Pray where?

HALFORD Indeed so, sir: Hard by Albuera—far in harried Spain— Yes, sir; you have achieved a victory Of dash unmatched and feats unparalleled!

KING He says I have won a battle? But I thought I was a poor afflicted captive here, In darkness lingering out my lonely days, Beset with terror of these myrmidons That suck my blood like vampires! Ay, ay, ay!— No aims left to me but to quicken death To quicklier please my son!—And yet he says That I have won a battle! O God, curse, damn! When will the speech of the world accord with truth, And men's tongues roll sincerely!

GENTLEMAN [aside] Faith, 'twould seem As if the madman were the sanest here!

[The KING'S face has flushed, and he becomes violent. The attendants rush forward to him.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Something within me aches to pray To some Great Heart, to take away This evil day, this evil day!

CHORUS IRONIC Ha-ha! That's good. Thou'lt pray to It:— But where do Its compassions sit? Yea, where abides the heart of it? Is it where sky-fires flame and flit, Or solar craters spew and spit, Or ultra-stellar night-webs knit? What is Its shape? Man's counterfeit? That turns in some far sphere unlit The Wheel which drives the Infinite?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Mock on, mock on! Yet I'll go pray To some Great Heart, who haply may Charm mortal miseries away! [The KING'S paroxysm continues. The attendants hold him.]

HALFORD This is distressing. One can never tell How he will take things now. I thought Albuera A subject that would surely solace him. These paroxysms—have they been bad this week? [To Attendants.]

FIRST ATTENDANT Sir Henry, no. He has quite often named The late Princess, as gently as a child A little bird found starved.

WILLIS [aside to apothecary] I must increase the opium to-night, and lower him by a double set of leeches since he won't stand the lancet quietly.

APOTHECARY You should take twenty ounces, doctor, if a drop—indeed, go on blooding till he's unconscious. He is too robust by half. And the watering-pot would do good again—not less than six feet above his head. See how heated he is.

WILLIS Curse that town band. It will have to be stopped.

HEBERDEN The same thing is going on all over England, no doubt, on account of this victory.

HALFORD When he is in a more domineering mood he likes such allusions to his

rank as king.... If he could resume his walks on the terrace he might improve slightly. But it is too soon yet. We must consider what we shall report to the Council. There is little hope of his being much better. What do you think, Willis?

WILLIS None. He is done for this time!

HALFORD Well, we must soften it down a little, so as not to upset the Queen too much, poor woman, and distract the Council unnecessarily. Eldon will go pumping up bucketfuls, and the Archbishops are so easily shocked that a certain conventional reserve is almost forced upon us.

WILLIS [returning from the King] He is already better. The paroxysm has nearly passed. Your opinion will be far more favourable before you leave. [The KING soon grows calm, and the expression of his face changes to one of dejection. The attendants leave his side: he bends his head, and covers his face with his hand, while his lips move as if in prayer. He then turns to them.]

KING [meekly] I am most truly sorry, gentlemen, If I have used language that would seem to show Discourtesy to you for your good help In this unhappy malady of mine! My nerves unstring, my friend; my flesh grows weak: “The good that I do I leave undone, The evil which I would not, that I do!” Shame, shame on me!

WILLIS [aside to the others] Now he will be as low as before he was in the other extreme.

KING A king should bear him kingly; I of all, One of so long a line. O shame on me!... —This battle that you speak of?—Spain, of course? Ah—Albuera! And many fall—eh? Yes?

HALFORD Many hot hearts, sir, cold, I grieve to say. There’s Major-General Houghton, Captain Bourke, And Herbert of the Third, Lieutenant Fox, And Captains Erck and Montague, and more. With Majors-General Cole and Stewart wounded, And Quartermaster-General Wallace too: A total of three generals, colonels five, Five majors, fifty captains; and to these Add ensigns and lieutenants sixscore odd,

Who went out, but returned not. Heavily tithed Were the attenuate battalions there Who stood and bearded Death by the hour that day!

KING O fearful price for victory! Add thereto All those I lost at Walchere.—A crime Lay there!... I stood on Chatham's being sent: It wears on me, till I am unfit to live!

WILLIS [aside to the others] Don't let him get on that Walcheren business. There will be another outbreak. Heberden, please ye talk to him. He fancies you most.

HEBERDEN I'll tell him some of the brilliant feats of the battle. [He goes and talks to the KING.]

WILLIS [to the rest] Well, my inside begins to cry cupboard. I had breakfast early. We have enough particulars now to face the Queen's Council with, I should say, Sir Henry?

HALFORD Yes.—I want to get back to town as soon as possible to-day. Mrs Siddons has a party at her house at Westbourne to-night, and all the world is going to be there.

BAILLIE Well, I am not. But I have promised to take some friends to Vauxhall, as it is a grand gala and fireworks night. Miss Farren is going to sing "The Canary Bird."—The Regent's fete, by the way, is postponed till the nineteenth, on account of this relapse. Pretty grumpy he was at having to do it. All the world will be THERE, sure!

WILLIS And some from the Shades, too, of the fair, sex.—Well, here comes Heberden. He has pacified his Majesty nicely. Now we can get away. [The physicians withdraw softly, and the scene is covered.]

## SCENE VI

LONDON. CARLTON HOUSE AND THE STREETS ADJOINING [It is a cloudless midsummer evening, and as the west fades the stars beam down upon the

city, the evening-star hanging like a jonquil blossom. They are dimmed by the unwonted radiance which spreads around and above Carlton House. As viewed from aloft the glare rises through the skylights, floods the forecourt towards Pall Mall, and kindles with a diaphanous glow the huge tents in the gardens that overlook the Mall. The hour has arrived of the Prince Regent's festivity. A stream of carriages and sedan-chairs, moving slowly, stretches from the building along Pall Mall into Piccadilly and Bond Street, and crowds fill the pavements watching the bejewelled and feathered occupants. In addition to the grand entrance inside the Pall Mall colonnade there is a covert little "chair-door" in Warwick Street for sedans only, by which arrivals are perceived to be slipping in almost unobserved.]

SPIRIT IRONIC What domiciles are those, of singular expression, Whence no guest comes to join the gemmed procession; That, west of Hyde, this, in the Park-side Lane, Each front beclouded like a mask of pain?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Therein the princely host's two spouses dwell; A wife in each. Let me inspect and tell. [The walls of the two houses—one in Park Lane, the other at Kensington—become transparent.] I see within the first his latter wife— That Caroline of Brunswick whose brave sire Yielded his breath on Jena's reeking plain, And of whose kindred other yet may fall Ere long, if character indeed be fate.— She idles feasting, and is full of jest As each gay chariot rumbles to the rout. "I rank like your Archbishops' wives," laughs she; "Denied my husband's honours. Funny me!" [Suddenly a Beau on his way to the Carlton House festival halts at her house, calls, and is shown in.] He brings her news that a fresh favourite rules Her husband's ready heart; likewise of those Obscure and unmissed courtiers late deceased, Who have in name been bidden to the feast By blundering scribes. [The Princess is seen to jump up from table at some words from her visitor, and clap her hands.] These tidings, juxtaposed, Have fired her hot with curiosity, And lit her quick invention with a plan.

PRINCESS OF WALES Mine God, I'll go disguised—in some dead name And enter by the leetle, sly, chair-door Designed for those not welcomed openly. There unobserved I'll note mine new supplanter! 'Tis indiscreet? Let indiscretion rule, Since caution pensions me so scurvily!

SPIRIT IRONIC Good. Now for the other sweet and slighted spouse.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR The second roof shades the Fitzherbert Fair; Reserved, perverse. As coach and coach roll by She mopes within her lattice; lampless, lone, As if she grieved at her ungracious fate, And yet were loth to kill the sting of it By frankly forfeiting the Prince and town. "Bidden," says she, "but as one low of rank, And go I will not so unworthily, To sit with common dames!"—A flippant friend Writes then that a new planet sways to-night The sense of her erratic lord; whereon The fair Fitzherbert muses hankeringly.

MRS. FITZHERBERT [soliloquizing] The guest-card which I publicly refused Might, as a fancy, privately be used!... Yes—one last look—a wordless, wan farewell To this false life which glooms me like a knell, And him, the cause; from some hid nook survey His new magnificence;—then go for aye!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR She cloaks and veils, and in her private chair Passes the Princess also stealing there— Two honest wives, and yet a differing pair!

SPIRIT IRONIC With dames of strange repute, who bear a ticket For screened admission by the private wicket.

CHORUS OF IRONIC SPIRITS [aerial music] A wife of the body, a wife of the mind, A wife somewhat frowsy, a wife too refined: Could the twain but grow one, and no other dames be, No husband in Europe more steadfast than he!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Cease fooling on weak waifs who love and wed But as the unweeting Urger may bestead!— See them withinside, douce and diamonded. [The walls of Carlton House open, and the spectator finds himself confronting the revel.]

## SCENE VII

THE SAME. THE INTERIOR OF CARLTON HOUSE [A central hall is disclosed, radiant with constellations of candles, lamps, and lanterns, and decorated with flowering shrubs. An opening on the left reveals the Grand Council-chamber prepared for dancing, the floor being chalked with arabesques having in the centre "G. III. R.," with a crown, arms, and supporters. Orange- trees and rose-bushes in bloom stand against the walls. On the right hand extends a glittering vista of the supper-rooms and tables, now crowded with guests. This display reaches as far as the conservatory westward, and branches into long tents on the lawn. On a dais at the chief table, laid with gold and silver plate, the Prince Regent sits like a lay figure, in a state chair of crimson and gold, with six servants at his back. He swelters in a gorgeous uniform of scarlet and gold lace which represents him as Field Marshal, and he is surrounded by a hundred-and-forty of his particular friends. Down the middle of this state-table runs a purling brook crossed by quaint bridges, in which gold and silver fish frisk about between banks of moss and flowers. The whole scene is lit with wax candles in chandeliers, and in countless candelabra on the tables. The people at the upper tables include the Duchess of York, looking tired from having just received as hostess most of the ladies present, except those who have come informally, Louis XVIII. of France, the Duchess of Angouleme, all the English Royal Dukes, nearly all the ordinary Dukes and Duchesses; also the Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Ministers, the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, all the more fashionable of the other Peers, Peeresses, and Members of Parliament, Generals, Admirals, and Mayors, with their wives. The ladies of position wear, almost to the extent of a uniform, a nodding head-dress of ostrich feathers with diamonds, and gowns of white satin embroidered in gold or silver, on which, owing to the heat, dribbles of wax from the chandeliers occasionally fall. The Guards' bands play, and attendants rush about in blue and gold lace.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES The Queen, the Regent's mother, sits not here; Wanting,

too, are his sisters, I perceive; And it is well. With the distempered King Immured at Windsor, sore distraught or dying, It borders nigh on indecency In their regard, that this loud feast is kept, A thought not strange to many, as I read, Even of those gathered here.

SPIRIT IRONIC My dear phantom and crony, the gloom upon their faces is due rather to their having borrowed those diamonds at eleven per cent than to their loyalty to a suffering monarch! But let us test the feeling. I'll spread a report. [He calls up the SPIRIT OF RUMOUR, who scatters whispers through the assemblage.]

A GUEST [to his neighbour] Have you heard this report—that the King is dead?

ANOTHER GUEST It has just reached me from the other side. Can it be true?

THIRD GUEST I think it probable. He has been very ill all week.

PRINCE REGENT Dead? Then my fete is spoilt, by God!

SHERIDAN Long live the King! [He holds up his glass and bows to the Regent.]

MARCHIONESS OF HERTFORD [the new favourite, to the Regent] The news is more natural than the moment of it! It is too cruel to you that it should happen now!

PRINCE REGENT Damn me, though; can it be true? [He provisionally throws a regal air into his countenance.]

DUCHESS OF YORK [on the Regent's left] I hardly can believe it. This forenoon He was reported mending.

DUCHESS OF ANGOULEME [on the Regent's right] On this side They are asserting that the news is false— That Buonaparte's child, the "King of Rome," Is dead, and not your royal father, sire.

PRINCE REGENT That's mighty fortunate! Had it been true, I should have been abused by all the world— The Queen the keenest of the chorus, too— Though I have been postponing this pledged feast Through days and weeks, in hopes the King would mend, Till expectation fusted with delay. But give a dog a bad name—or a

Prince! So, then, it is new-come King of Rome Who has passed or ever the world has welcomed him!... Call him a king—that pompous upstart's son— Beside us scions of the ancient lines!

DUKE OF BEDFORD I think that rumour untrue also, sir. I heard it as I drove up from Woburn this evening, and it was contradicted then.

PRINCE REGENT Drove up this evening, did ye, Duke. Why did you cut it so close?

DUKE OF BEDFORD Well, it so happened that my sheep-sheering dinner was fixed for this very day, and I couldn't put it off. So I dined with them there at one o'clock, discussed the sheep, rushed off, drove the two-and-forty miles, jumped into my clothes at my house here, and reached your Royal Highness's door in no very bad time.

PRINCE REGENT Capital, capital. But, 'pon my soul, 'twas a close shave! [Soon the babbling and glittering company rise from supper, and begin promenading through the rooms and tents, the REGENT setting the example, and mixing up and talking unceremoniously with his guests of every degree. He and the group round him disappear into the remoter chambers; but may concentrate in the Grecian Hall, which forms the foreground of the scene, whence a glance can be obtained into the ball-room, now filled with dancers. The band is playing the tune of the season, "The Regency Hornpipe," which is danced as a country-dance by some thirty couples; so that by the time the top couple have danced down the figure they are quite breathless. Two young lords talk desultorily as they survey the scene.]

FIRST LORD Are the rumours of the King of Rome's death confirmed?

SECOND LORD No. But they are probably true. He was a feeble brat from the first. I believe they had to baptize him on the day he was born. What can one expect after such presumption—calling him the New Messiah, and God knows what all. Ours is the only country which did not write fulsome poems about him. "Wise English!" the

Tsar Alexander said drily when he heard it.

FIRST LORD Ay! The affection between that Pompey and Caesar has begun to cool. Alexander's soreness at having his sister thrown over so cavalierly is not salved yet.

SECOND LORD There is much beside. I'd lay a guinea there will be war between Russia and France before another year has flown.

FIRST LORD Prinny looks a little worried to-night.

SECOND LORD Yes. The Queen don't like the fete being held, considering the King's condition. She and her friends say it should have been put off altogether. But the Princess of Wales is not troubled that way. Though she was not asked herself she went wildly off and bought her people new gowns to come in. Poor maladroit woman!.... [Another new dance of the year is started, and another long line of couples begin to foot it.] That's a pretty thing they are doing now. What d'ye call it?

FIRST LORD "Speed the Plough." It is just out. They are having it everywhere. The next is to be one of those foreign things in three-eight time they call Waltzes. I question if anybody is up to dancing 'em here yet. ["Speed the Plough" is danced to its conclusion, and the band strikes up "The Copenhagen Waltz."]

SPIRIT IRONIC Now for the wives. They both were tearing hither, Unless reflection sped them back again; But dignity that nothing else may bend Succumbs to woman's curiosity, So deem them here. Messengers, call them nigh! [The PRINCE REGENT, having gone the round of the other rooms, now appears at the ball-room door, and stands looking at the dancers. Suddenly he turns, and gazes about with a ruffled face. He sees a tall, red-faced man near him—LORD MOIRA, one of his friends.]

PRINCE REGENT Damned hot here, Moira. Hottest of all for me!

MOIRA Yes, it is warm, sir. Hence I do not dance.

PRINCE REGENT H'm. What I meant was of another order; I spoke figuratively.

MOIRA O indeed, sir?

PRINCE REGENT She's here. I heard her voice. I'll swear I did!

MOIRA Who, sir?

PRINCE REGENT Why, the Princess of Wales. Do you think I could mistake those beastly German Ps and Bs of hers?—She asked to come, and was denied; but she's got here, I'll wager ye, through the chair-door in Warwick Street, which I arranged for a few ladies whom I wished to come privately. [He looks about again, and moves till he is by a door which affords a peep up the grand staircase.] By God, Moira, I see TWO figures up there who shouldn't be here—leaning over the balustrade of the gallery!

MOIRA Two figures, sir. Whose are they?

PRINCE REGENT She is one. The Fitzherbert in t'other! O I am almost sure it is! I would have welcomed her, but she bridled and said she wouldn't sit down at my table as a plain "Mrs." to please anybody. As I had sworn that on this occasion people should sit strictly according to their rank, I wouldn't give way. Why the devil did she come like this? 'Pon my soul, these women will be the death o' me!

MOIRA [looking cautiously up the stairs] I can see nothing of her, sir, nor of the Princess either. There is a crowd of idlers up there leaning over the bannisters, and you may have mistaken some others for them.

PRINCE REGENT O no. They have drawn back their heads. There have been such damned mistakes made in sending out the cards that the biggest w—- in London might be here. She's watching Lady Hertford, that's what she's doing. For all their indifference, both of them are as jealous as two cats over the tom. [Somebody whispers that a lady has fainted up-stairs.] That's Maria, I'll swear! She's always doing it. Whenever I hear of some lady fainting about upon the furniture at my presence, and sending for a glass of water, I say to myself, There's Maria at it again,

by God!

SPIRIT IRONIC Now let him hear their voices once again. [The REGENT starts as he seems to hear from the stairs the tongues of the two ladies growing louder and nearer, the PRINCESS pouring reproaches into one ear, and MRS. FITZHERBERT into the other.]

PRINCE REGENT

'Od seize 'em, Moira; this will drive me mad! If men of blood must mate with only one Of those dear damned deluders called the Sex, Why has Heaven teased us with the taste for change?— God, I begin to loathe the whole curst show! How hot it is! Get me a glass of brandy, Or I shall swoon off too. Now let's go out, And find some fresher air upon the lawn. [Exit the PRINCE REGENT, with LORDS MOIRA and YARMOUTH. The band strikes up "La Belle Catarina" and a new figure is formed.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Phantoms, ye strain your powers unduly here, Making faint fancies as they were indeed The Mighty Will's firm work.

SPIRIT IRONIC Nay, Father, nay; The wives prepared to hasten hitherward Under the names of some gone down to death, Who yet were bidden. Must they not by here?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS There lie long leagues between a woman's word— "She will, indeed she will!"—and acting on't. Whether those came or no, thy antics cease, And let the revel wear it out in peace. [Enter SPENCER PERCEVAL the Prime Minister, a small, pale, grave- looking man, and an Under-Secretary of State, meeting.]

UNDER-SECRETARY Is the King of Rome really dead, and the gorgeous gold cradle wasted?

PERCEVAL O no, he is alive and waxing strong: That tale has been set travelling more than once. But touching it, booms echo to our ear Of graver import, unimpeachable.

UNDER-SECRETARY Your speech is dark.

PERCEVAL Well, a new war in Europe. Before the year is out there may arise A red campaign outscaling any seen. Russia and France the parties to the strife— Ay, to the death!

UNDER-SECRETARY By Heaven, sir, do you say so? [Enter CASTLEREAGH, a tall, handsome man with a Roman nose, who, seeing them, approaches.]

PERCEVAL Ha, Castlereagh. Till now I have missed you here. This news is startling for us all, I say!

CASTLEREAGH My mind is blank on it! Since I left office I know no more what villainy's afoot, Or virtue either, than an anchoret Who mortifies the flesh in some lone cave.

PERCEVAL Well, happily that may not last for long. But this grave pother that's just now agog May reach such radius in its consequence As to outspan our lives! Yes, Bonaparte And Alexander—late such bosom-friends— Are closing to a mutual murder-bout At which the lips of Europe will wax wan. Bonaparte says the fault is not with him, And so says Alexander. But we know The Austrian knot began their severance, And that the Polish question largens it. Nothing but time is needed for the clash. And if so be that Wellington but keep His foot in the Peninsula awhile, Between the pestle and the mortar-stone Of Russia and of Spain, Napoléon's brayed.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR [to the Spirit of the Years] Permit me now to join them and confirm, By what I bring from far, their forecasting?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS I'll go. Thou knowest not greatly more than they. [The SPIRIT OF THE YEARS enters the apartment in the shape of a pale, hollow-eye gentleman wearing an embroidered suit. At the same time re-enter the REGENT, LORDS MOIRA, YARMOUTH, KEITH, LADY HERTFORD, SHERIDAN, the DUKE OF BEDFORD, with many more notables. The band changes into the popular dance, "Down with the French," and the characters aforesaid look on at the

dancers.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to Perceval] Yes, sir; your text is true. In closest touch With European courts and cabinets, The imminence of dire and deadly war Betwixt these east and western emperies Is lipped by special pathways to mine ear. You may not see the impact: ere it come The tomb-worm may caress thee [Perceval shrinks]; but believe Before five more have joined the shotten years Whose useless films infest the foggy Past, Traced thick with teachings glimpsed unheedingly, The rawest Dynast of the group concerned Will, for the good or ill of mute mankind, Down-topple to the dust like soldier Saul, And Europe's mouldy-minded oligarchs Be propped anew; while garments roll in blood To confused noise, with burning, and fuel of fire. Nations shall lose their noblest in the strife, And tremble at the tidings of an hour! [He passes into the crowd and vanishes.]

PRINCE REGENT [who has heard with parted lips] Who the devil is he?

PERCEVAL One in the suite of the French princes, perhaps, sir?—though his tone was not monarchical. He seems to be a foreigner.

CASTLEREAGH His manner was that of an old prophet, and his features had a Jewish cast, which accounted for his Hebraic style.

PRINCE REGENT He could not have known me, to speak so freely in my presence!

SHERIDAN I expected to see him write on the wall, like the gentleman with the Hand at Belshazzar's Feast.

PRINCE REGENT [recovering] He seemed to know a damn sight more about what's going on in Europe, sir [to Perceval], than your Government does, with all its secret information.

PERCEVAL He is recently over, I conjecture, your royal Highness, and brings the latest impressions.

PRINCE REGENT By Gad, sir, I shall have a comfortable time of it in my regency,

or reign, if what he foresees be true! But I was born for war; it is my destiny! [He draws himself up inside his uniform and stalks away. The group dissolves, the band continuing stridently, “Down with the French,” as dawn glimmers in. Soon the REGENT’S guests begin severally and in groups to take leave.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Behold To-morrow riddles the curtains through, And labouring life without shoulders its cross anew!

CHORUS OF THE YEARS [aerial music] Why watch we here? Look all around Where Europe spreads her crinkled ground, From Osmanlee to Hekla’s mound, Look all around! Hark at the cloud-combed Ural pines; See how each, wailful-wise, inclines; Mark the mist’s labyrinthine lines; Behold the tumbling Biscay Bay; The Midland main in silent sway; As urged to move them, so move they. No less through regal puppet-shows The rapt Determinator throes, That neither good nor evil knows!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Yet I may wake and understand Ere Earth unshape, know all things, and With knowledge use a painless hand, A painless hand! [Solitude reigns in the chambers, and the scene shuts up.]

# PART THIRD

CHARACTERS

I. PHANTOM INTELLIGENCES THE ANCIENT SPIRIT OF THE YEARS/CHORUS OF THE YEARS. THE SPIRIT OF THE PITIES/CHORUS OF THE PITIES. SPIRITS SINISTER AND IRONIC/CHORUSES OF SINISTER AND IRONIC SPIRITS. THE SPIRIT OF RUMOUR/CHORUS OF RUMOURS. THE SHADE OF THE EARTH. SPIRIT MESSENGERS. RECORDING ANGELS.

II. PERSONS

MEN [The names in lower case are mute figures.] THE PRINCE REGENT. The Royal Dukes. THE DUKE OF RICHMOND. The Duke of Beaufort.

CASTLEREAGH, Prime Minister. Palmerston, War Secretary. PONSONBY, of the Opposition. BURDETT, of the Opposition. WHITBREAD, of the Opposition. Tierney, Romilly, of the Opposition Other Members of Parliament. TWO ATTACHÉS. A DIPLOMATIST. Ambassadors, Ministers, Peers, and other persons of Quality and Office. ..... WELLINGTON. UXBRIDGE. PICTON. HILL. CLINTON. Colville. COLE. BERESFORD. Pack and Kempt. Byng. Vivian. W. Ponsonby, Vandeleur, Colquhoun-Grant, Maitland, Adam, and C. Halkett. Graham, Le Marchant, Pakenham, and Sir Stapleton Cotton. SIR W. DE LANCEY. FITZROY SOMERSET. COLONELS FRASER, H. HALKETT, COLBORNE, Cameron, Hepburn, LORD SALTOUN, C. Campbell. SIR NEIL CAMPBELL. Sir Alexander Gordon, BRIGDEMAN, TYLER, and other AIDES. CAPTAIN MERCER. Other Generals, Colonels, and Military Officers. Couriers. A SERGEANT OF DRAGOONS. Another SERGEANT. A SERGEANT of the 15th HUSSARS. A SENTINEL. Bâtmen. AN OFFICER'S SERVANT. Other non-Commissioned Officers and Privates of the British Army. English Forces. ..... SIR W. GELL, Chamberlain to the Princess of Wales. MR. LEGH, a Wessex Gentleman. Another GENTLEMAN. THE VICAR OF DURNOVER. Signor Tramezzini and other members of the Opera Company. M. Rozier, a dancer. LONDON CITIZENS. A RUSTIC and a YEOMAN. A MAIL-GUARD. TOWNSPEOPLE, Musicians, Villagers, etc. ..... THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK. THE PRINCE OF ORANGE. Count Alten. Von Ompteda, Baring, Duplat, and other Officers of the King's- German Legion. Perponcher, Best, Kielmansegge, Wincke, and other Hanoverian Officers. Bylandt and other Officers of the Dutch-Belgian troops. SOME HUSSARS. King's-German, Hanoverian, Brunswick, and Dutch-Belgian Forces. ..... BARON VAN CAPELLEN, Belgian Secretary of State. The Dukes of Arenberg and d'Ursel. THE MAYOR OF BRUSSELS. CITIZENS AND IDLERS of Brussels. ..... NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE. JOSEPH BONAPARTE. Jérôme Bonaparte. THE KING OF ROME. Eugène de

Beauharnais. Cambacérès, Arch-Chancellor to Napoléon. TALLEYRAND. CAULAINCOURT. DE BAUSSET. ..... MURAT, King of Naples. SOULT, Napoléon's Chief of Staff. NEY. DAVOUT. MARMONT. BERTHIER. BERTRAND. BESSIERES. AUGEREAU, MACDONALD, LAURISTON, CAMBRONNE. Oudinot, Friant, Reille, d'Erlon, Drouot, Victor, Poniatowski, Jourdan, and other Marshals, and General and Regimental Officers of Napoléon's Army. RAPP, MORTIER, LARIBOISIERE. Kellermann and Milhaud. COLONELS FABVRIER, MARBOT, MALLET, HEYMÈS, and others. French AIDES and COURIERS. DE CANISY, Equerry to the King of Rome. COMMANDANT LESSARD. Another COMMANDANT. BUSSY, an Orderly Officer. SOLDIERS of the Imperial Guard and others. STRAGGLERS; A MAD SOLDIER. French Forces. ..... HOUREAU, BOURDOIS, and Ivan, physicians. MÉNEVAL, Private Secretary to Napoléon. DE MONTROND, an emissary of Napoléon's. Other Secretaries to Napoléon. CONSTANT, Napoléon's Valet. ROUSTAN, Napoléon's Mameluke. TWO POSTILLIONS. A TRAVELLER. CHAMBERLAINS and Attendants. SERVANTS at the Tuileries. FRENCH CITIZENS and Townspeople. ..... THE KING OF PRUSSIA. BLÜCHER. MÜFFLING, Wellington's Prussian Attaché. GNEISENAU. Zieten. Bülow. Kleist, Steinmetz, Thielemann, Falkenhausen. Other Prussian General and Regimental Officers. A PRUSSIAN PRISONER of the French. Prussian Forces. ..... FRANCIS, Emperor of Austria. METTERNICH, Chancellor and Foreign Minister. Hardenberg. NEIPPERG Schwarzenberg, Kleinau, Hesse-Homburg, and other Austrian Generals. Viennese Personages of rank and fashion. Austrian Forces. ..... THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER of Russia. Nesselrode. KUTÚZOF. Bennigsen. Barclay de Tolly, Dokhtórof, Bagration, Platoff, Tchichagoff, Miloradovitch, and other Russian Generals. Rostopchin, Governor of Moscow. SCHUVALOFF, a Commissioner. A RUSSIAN OFFICER under Kutúzof. Russian Forces. Moscow Citizens. ..... Alava, Wellington's Spanish Attaché. Spanish and Portuguese Officers. Spanish and

Portuguese Forces. Spanish Citizens. ..... Minor Sovereigns and Princes of Europe. LEIPZIG CITIZENS.

WOMEN CAROLINE, PRINCESS OF WALES. The Duchess of York. THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND. The Duchess of Beaufort. LADY H. DARYMPLE Lady de Lancey. LADY CHARLOTTE CAMPBELL. Lady Anne Hamilton. A YOUNG LADY AND HER MOTHER. MRS. DALBIAC, a Colonel's wife. MRS. PRESCOTT, a Captain's wife. Other English ladies of note and rank. Madame Grassini and other Ladies of the Opera. Madame Angiolini, a dancer. VILLAGE WOMEN. SOLDIERS' WIVES AND SWEETHEARTS. A SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER. ..... THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE. The Empress of Austria. MARIA CAROLINA of Naples. Queen Hortense. Laetitia, Madame Bonaparte. The Princess Pauline. THE DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO. THE COUNTESS OF MONTESQUIOU. THE COUNTESS OF BRIGNOLE. Other Ladies-in-Waiting on Marie Louise. THE EX-EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE. LADIES-IN-WAITING on Joséphine. Another French Lady. FRENCH MARKET-WOMEN. A SPANISH LADY. French and Spanish Women of pleasure. Continental Citizens' Wives. Camp-followers.

# ACT FIRST

## SCENE I

THE BANKS OF THE NIEMEN, NEAR KOWNO [The foreground is a hillock on a broken upland, seen in evening twilight. On the left, further back, are the dusky forests of Wilkowsky; on the right is the vague shine of a large river. Emerging from the wood below the eminence appears a shadowy amorphous thing in motion, the central or Imperial column of NAPOLÉON'S Grand Army for the invasion of Russia, comprising the corps of OUDINOT, NEY, and DAVOUT, with the Imperial Guard. This, with the right and left columns, makes up the host of nearly half a

million, all starting on their march to Moscow. While the rearmost regiments are arriving, NAPOLÉON rides ahead with GENERAL HAXEL and one or two others to reconnoitre the river. NAPOLÉON'S horse stumbles and throws him. He picks himself up before he can be helped.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS [to Napoléon] The portent is an ill one, Emperor; An ancient Roman would retire thereat!

NAPOLÉON Whose voice was that, jarring upon my thought So insolently?

HAXEL AND OTHERS Sire, we spoke no word.

NAPOLÉON Then, whoso spake, such portents I defy! [He remounts. When the reconnoitrers again came back to the foreground of the scene the huge array of columns is standing quite still, in circles of companies, the captain of each in the middle with a paper in his hand. He reads from it a proclamation. They quiver emotionally, like leaves stirred by the wind. NAPOLÉON and his staff reascend the hillock, and his own words as repeated to the ranks reach his ears, while he himself delivers the same address to those about him.

NAPOLÉON Soldiers, wild war is on the board again; The lifetime-long alliance Russia swore At Tilsit, for the English realm's undoing, Is violate beyond refurbishment, And she intractable and unashamed. Russia is forced on by fatality: She cries her destiny must be outwrought, Meaning at our expense. Does she then dream We are no more the men of Austerlitz, With nothing left of our old featfulness? She offers us the choice of sword or shame; We have made that choice unhesitatingly! Then let us forthwith stride the Niemen flood, Let us bear war into her great gaunt land, And spread our glory there as otherwhere, So that a stable peace shall stultify The evil seed-bearing that Russian wiles Have nourished upon Europe's choked affairs These fifty years! [The midsummer night darkens. They all make their bivouacs and sleep.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Something is tongued afar.

DISTANT VOICE IN THE WIND The hostile hatchings of Napoléon's brain Against our Empire, long have harassed us, And mangled all our mild amenities. So, since the hunger for embranglement That gnaws this man, has left us optionless, And haled us recklessly to horrid war, We have promptly mustered our well-hardened hosts, And, counting on our call to the most High, Have forthwith set our puissance face to face Against Napoléon's.—Ranksmen! officers! You fend your lives, your land, your liberty. I am with you. Heaven frowns on the aggressor.

SPIRIT IRONIC Ha! "Liberty" is quaint, and pleases me, Sounding from such a soil! [Midsummer-day breaks, and the sun rises on the right, revealing the position clearly. The eminence overlooks for miles the river Niemen, now mirroring the morning rays. Across the river three temporary bridges have been thrown, and towards them the French masses streaming out of the forest descend in three columns. They sing, shout, fling their shakos in the air and repeat words from the proclamation, their steel and brass flashing in the sun. They narrow their columns as they gain the three bridges, and begin to cross—horse, foot, and artillery. NAPOLÉON has come from the tent in which he has passed the night to the high ground in front, where he stands watching through his glass the committal of his army to the enterprise. DAVOUT, NEY, MURAT, OUDINOT, Generals HAXEL and EBLE, NARBONNE, and others surround him. It is a day of drowsing heat, and the Emperor draws a deep breath as he shifts his weight from one puffed calf to the other. The light cavalry, the foot, the artillery having passed, the heavy horse now crosses, their glitter outshining the ripples on the stream. A messenger enters. NAPOLÉON reads papers that are brought, and frowns.]

NAPOLÉON The English heads decline to recognize The government of Joseph, King of Spain, As that of "the now-ruling dynast"; But only Ferdinand's!—I'll get to Moscow, And send thence my rejoinder. France shall wage Another fifty years of wasting war Before a Bourbon shall remount the throne Of restless Spain!... [A flash lights his eyes.] But this long journey now just set a-trip Is my choice way to India;

and ’tis there That I shall next bombard the British rule. With Moscow taken, Russia prone and crushed, To attain the Ganges is simplicity— Auxiliaries from Tiflis backing me. Once ripped by a French sword, the scaffolding Of English merchant-mastership in Ind Will fall a wreck.... Vast, it is true, must bulk An Eastern scheme so planned; but I could work it.... Man has, worse fortune, but scant years for war; I am good for another five!

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Why doth he go?— I see returning in a chattering flock Bleached skeletons, instead of this array Invincibly equipped.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS I’ll show you why. [The unnatural light before seen usurps that of the sun, bringing into view, like breezes made visible, the films or brain-tissues of the Immanent Will, that pervade all things, ramifying through the whole army, NAPOLÉON included, and moving them to Its inexplicable artistries.]

NAPOLÉON [with sudden despondency] That which has worked will work!—Since Lodi Bridge The force I then felt move me moves me on Whether I will or no; and oftentimes Against my better mind.... Why am I here? —By laws imposed on me inexorably! History makes use of me to weave her web To her long while aforetime-figured mesh And contemplated charactery: no more. Well, war’s my trade; and whencesoever springs This one in hand, they’ll label it with my name! [The natural light returns and the anatomy of the Will disappears. NAPOLÉON mounts his horse and descends in the rear of his host to the banks of the Niemen. His face puts on a saturnine humour, and he hums an air.] Malbrough s’en va-t-en guerre, Mironton, mironton, mirontaine; Malbrough s’en va-t-en guerre, Ne sait quand reviendra! [Exeunt NAPOLÉON and his staff.]

SPIRIT SINISTER It is kind of his Imperial Majesty to give me a lead. [Sings.] Monsieur d’Malbrough est mort, Mironton, mironton, mirontaine; Monsieur d’Malbrough est mort, Est mort et enterre! [Anon the figure of NAPOLÉON, diminished to the aspect of a doll, reappears in front of his suite on the plain below.

He rides across the swaying bridge. Since the morning the sky has grown overcast, and its blackness seems now to envelope the retreating array on the other side of the stream. The storm bursts with thunder and lightning, the river turns leaden, and the scene is blotted out by the torrents of rain.]

**SCENE II**

THE FORD OF SANTA MARTA, SALAMANCA [We are in Spain, on a July night of the same summer, the air being hot and heavy. In the darkness the ripple of the river Tormes can be heard over the ford, which is near the foreground of the scene. Against the gloomy north sky to the left, lightnings flash revealing rugged heights in that quarter. From the heights comes to the ear the tramp of soldiery, broke and irregular, as by obstacles in their descent; as yet they are some distance off. On heights to the right hand, on the other side of the river, glimmer the bivouac fires of the French under MARMONT. The lightning quickens, with rolls of thunder, and a few large drops of rain fall. A sentinel stands close to the ford, and beyond him is the ford- house, a shed open towards the roadway and the spectator. It is lit by a single lantern, and occupied by some half-dozen English dragoons with a sergeant and corporal, who form part of a mounted patrol, their horses being picketed at the entrance. They are seated on a bench, and appear to be waiting with some deep intent, speaking in murmurs only. The thunderstorm increases till it drowns the noise of the ford and of the descending battalions, making them seem further off than before. The sentinel is about to retreat to the shed when he discerns two female figures in the gloom. Enter MRS. DALBIAC and MRS. PRESCOTT, English officers wives.]

SENTINEL Where there’s war there’s women, and where there’s women there’s trouble! [Aloud] Who goes there?

MRS. DALBIAC We must reveal who we are, I fear [to her companion]. Friends! [to sentinel].

SENTINEL Advance and give the countersign.

MRS. DALBIAC Oh, but we can't!

SENTINEL Consequent which, you must retreat. By Lord Wellington's strict regulations, women of loose character are to be excluded from the lines for moral reasons, namely, that they are often employed by the enemy as spies.

MRS. PRESCOTT Dear good soldier, we are English ladies benighted, having mistaken our way back to Salamanca, and we want shelter from the storm.

MRS. DALBIAC If it is necessary I will say who we are.—I am Mrs. Dalbiac, wife of the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fourth Light Dragoons, and this lady is the wife of Captain Prescott of the Seventh Fusileers. We went out to Christoval to look for our husbands, but found the army had moved.

SENTINEL [incredulously] "Wives!" Oh, not to-day! I have heard such titles of courtesy afore; but they never shake me. "W" begins other female words than "wives!"—You'll have trouble, good dames, to get into Salamanca to-night. You'll be challenged all the way down, and shot without clergy if you can't give the countersign.

MRS. PRESCOTT Then surely you'll tell us what it is, good kind man!

SENTINEL Well—have ye earned enough to pay for knowing? Government wage is poor pickings for watching here in the rain. How much can ye stand?

MRS. DALBIAC Half-a-dozen pesetas.

SENTINEL Very well, my dear. I was always tender-hearted. Come along. [They advance and hand the money.] The pass to-night is "Melchester Steeple." That will take you into the town when the weather clears. You won't have to cross the ford. You can get temporary shelter in the shed there. [As the ladies move towards the shed the tramp of the infantry draws near the ford, which the downfall has made to purl more boisterously. The twain enter the shed, and the dragoons look up

inquiringly.]

MRS. DALBIAC [to dragoons] The French are luckier than you are, men. You'll have a wet advance across this ford, but they have a dry retreat by the bridge at Alba.

SERGEANT OF PATROL [starting from a doze] The moustachies a dry retreat? Not they, my dear. A Spanish garrison is in the castle that commands the bridge at Alba.

MRS. DALBIAC A peasant told us, if we understood rightly, that he saw the Spanish withdraw, and the enemy place a garrison there themselves. [The sergeant hastily calls up two troopers, who mount and ride off with the intelligence.]

SERGEANT You've done us a good turn, it is true, darlin'. Not that Lord Wellington will believe it when he gets the news.... Why, if my eyes don't deceive me, ma'am, that's Colonel Dalbiac's lady!

MRS. DALBIAC Yes, sergeant. I am over here with him, as you have heard, no doubt, and lodging in Salamanca. We lost our way, and got caught in the storm, and want shelter awhile.

SERGEANT Certainly, ma'am. I'll give you an escort back as soon as the division has crossed and the weather clears.

MRS. PRESCOTT [anxiously] Have you heard, sergeant, if there's to be a battle to-morrow?

SERGEANT Yes, ma'am. Everything shows it.

MRS. DAlBIAC [to MRS. PRESCOTT] Our news would have passed us in. We have wasted six pesetas.

MRS. PRESCOTT [mournfully] I don't mind that so much as that I have brought the children from Ireland. This coming battle frightens me!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS This is her prescient pang of widowhood. Ere Salamanca

clang to-morrow's close She'll find her consort stiff among the slain! [The infantry regiments now reach the ford. The storm increases in strength, the stream flows more furiously; yet the columns of foot enter it and begin crossing. The lightning is continuous; the faint lantern in the ford-house is paled by the sheets of fire without, which flap round the bayonets of the crossing men and reflect upon the foaming torrent.]

CHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] The skies fling flame on this ancient land! And drenched and drowned is the burnt blown sand That spreads its mantle of yellow-grey Round old Salmantica to-day; While marching men come, band on band, Who read not as a reprimand To mortal moils that, as 'twere planned In mockery of their mimic fray, The skies fling flame. Since sad Coruna's desperate stand Horrors unsummed, with heavy hand, Have smitten such as these! But they Still headily pursue their way, Though flood and foe confront them, and The skies fling flame. [The whole of the English division gets across by degrees, and their invisible tramp is heard ascending the opposite heights as the lightnings dwindle and the spectacle disappears.]

## SCENE III

THE FIELD OF SALAMANCA [The battlefield—an undulating and sandy expanse—is lying under the sultry sun of a July afternoon. In the immediate left foreground rises boldly a detached dome-like hill known as the Lesser Arapeile, now held by English troops. Further back, and more to the right, rises another and larger hill of the kind—the Greater Arapeile; this is crowned with French artillery in loud action, and the French marshal, MARMONT, Duke of RAGUSA, stands there. Further to the right, in the same plane, stretch the divisions of the French army. Still further to the right, in the distance, on the Ciudad Rodrigo highway, a cloud of dust denotes the English baggage-train seeking security in that direction. The city of Salamanca itself, and the river Tormes on which it stands, are behind the back of the

spectator. On the summit of the lesser hill, close at hand, WELLINGTON, glass at eye, watches the French division under THOMIERE, which has become separated from the centre of the French army. Round and near him are aides and other officers, in animated conjecture on MARMONT'S intent, which appears to be a move on the Ciudad Rodrigo road aforesaid, under the impression that the English are about to retreat that way. The English commander descends from where he was standing to a nook under a wall, where a meal is roughly laid out. Some of his staff are already eating there. WELLINGTON takes a few mouthfuls without sitting down, walks back again, and looks through his glass at the battle as before. Balls from the French artillery fall around. Enter his aide-de-camp, FITZROY SOMERSET.]

FITZROY SOMERSET [hurriedly] The French make movements of grave consequence— Extending to the left in mass, my lord.

WELLINGTON I have just perceived as much; but not the cause. [He regards longer.] Marmont's good genius is deserting him! [Shutting up his glass with a snap, WELLINGTON calls several aides and despatches them down the hill. He goes back behind the wall and takes some more mouthfuls.] By God, Fitzroy, if we shan't do it now! [to SOMERSET]. Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu! [to his SPANISH ATTACHE].

FITZROY SOMERSET Thinking we mean to attack on him, He schemes to swoop on our retreating-line.

WELLINGTON Ay; and to cloak it by this cannonade. With that in eye he has bundled leftwardly Thomiere's division; mindless that thereby His wing and centre's mutual maintenance Has gone, and left a yawning vacancy. So be it. Good. His laxness is our luck! [As a result of the orders sent off by the aides, several British divisions advance across the French front on the Greater Arapeile and elsewhere. The French shower bullets into them; but an English brigade under PACK assails the nearer French on the Arapeile, now beginning to cannonade the English in the

hollows beneath. Light breezes blow toward the French, and they get in their faces the dust-clouds and smoke from the masses of English in motion, and a powerful sun in their eyes. MARMONT and his staff are sitting on the top of the Greater Arapeile only half a cannon-shot from WELLINGTON on the Lesser; and, like WELLINGTON, he is gazing through his glass.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Appearing to behold the full-mapped mind Of his opponent, Marmont arrows forth Aide after aide towards the forest's rim, To spirit on his troops emerging thence, And prop the lone division Thomiere, For whose recall his voice has rung in vain. Wellington mounts and seeks out Pakenham, Who pushes to the arena from the right, And, spurting to the left of Marmont's line, Shakes Thomiere with lunges leonine. When the manoeuvre's meaning hits his sense, Marmont hies hotly to the imperilled place, Where see him fall, sore smitten.—Bonnet rides And dons the burden of the chief command, Marking dismayed the Thomiere column there Shut up by Pakenham like bellows-folds Against the English Fourth and Fifth hard by; And while thus crushed, Dragoon-Guards and Dragoons, Under Le Marchant's hands [of Guernsey he], Are launched upon them by Sir Stapleton, And their scathed files are double-scathed anon. Cotton falls wounded. Pakenham's bayoneteers Shape for the charge from column into rank; And Thomiere finds death thereat point-blank!

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music] In fogs of dust the cavalries hoof the ground; Their prancing squadrons shake the hills around: Le Marchant's heavies bear with ominous bound Against their opposites! SEMICHORUS II A bullet crying along the cloven air Gouges Le Marchant's groin and rankles there; In Death's white sleep he soon joins Thomiere, And all he has fought for, quits! [In the meantime the battle has become concentrated in the middle hollow, and WELLINGTON descends thither from the English Arapeile. The fight grows fiercer. COLE and LEITH now fall wounded; then BERESFORD, who directs the Portuguese, is struck down and borne away. On the French side fall BONNET who succeeded MARMONT in

command, MANNE, CLAUSEL, and FEREY, the last hit mortally. Their disordered main body retreats into the forest and disappears; and just as darkness sets in, the English stand alone on the crest, the distant plain being lighted only by musket-flashes from the vanquishing enemy. In the close foreground vague figures on horseback are audible in the gloom.

VOICE OF WELLINGTON I thought they looked as they'd be scurrying soon!

VOICE OF AN AIDE Foy bears into the wood in middling trim; Maucune strikes out for Alba-Castle bridge.

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Speed the pursuit, then, towards the Huerta ford; Their only scantling of escape lies there; The river coops them semicircle-wise, And we shall have them like a swathe of grass Within a sickle's curve!

VOICE OF AIDE Too late, my lord. They are crossing by the aforesaid bridge at Alba.

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Impossible. The guns of Carlos rake it Sheer from the castle walls.

VOICE OF AIDE Tidings have sped Just now therefrom, to this undreamed effect: That Carlos has withdrawn the garrison: The French command the Alba bridge themselves!

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Blast him, he's disobeyed his orders, then! How happened this? How long has it been known?

VOICE OF AIDE Some ladies some few hours have rumoured it, But unbelieved.

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Well, what's done can't be undone.... By God, though, they've just saved themselves thereby From capture to a man!

VOICE OF A GENERAL We've not struck ill, Despite this slip, my lord.... And have you heard That Colonel Dalbiac's wife rode in the charge Behind her spouse to-day?

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Did she though: did she! Why that must be Susanna, whom I know— A Wessex woman, blithe, and somewhat fair.... Not but great irregularities Arise from such exploits.—And was it she I noticed wandering to and fro below here, Just as the French retired?

VOICE OF ANOTHER OFFICER Ah no, my lord. That was the wife of Prescott of the Seventh, Hoping beneath the heel of hopelessness, As these young women will!—Just about sunset She found him lying dead and bloody there, And in the dusk we bore them both away.18

VOICE OF WELLINGTON Well, I'm damned sorry for her. Though I wish The women-folk would keep them to the rear: Much awkwardness attends their pottering round! [The talking shapes disappear, and as the features of the field grow undistinguishable the comparative quiet is broken by gay notes from guitars and castanets in the direction of the city, and other sounds of popular rejoicing at Wellington's victory. People come dancing out from the town, and the merry-making continues till midnight, when it ceases, and darkness and silence prevail everywhere.]

SEMICHORUS I OF THE YEARS [aerial music] What are Space and Time? A fancy!— Lo, by Vision's necromancy Muscovy will now unroll; Where for cork and olive-tree Starveling firs and birches be.

SEMICHORUS II Though such features lie afar From events Peninsular, These, amid their dust and thunder, Form with those, as scarce asunder, Parts of one compacted whole.

CHORUS Marmont's aide, then, like a swallow Let us follow, follow, follow, Over hill and over hollow, Past the plains of Teute and Pole! [There is semblance of a sound in the darkness as of a rushing through the air.]

## SCENE IV

THE FIELD OF BORODINO [Borodino, seventy miles west of Moscow, is revealed in a bird's- eye view from a point above the position of the French Grand Army, advancing on the Russian capital. We are looking east, towards Moscow and the army of Russia, which bars the way thither. The sun of latter summer, sinking behind our backs, floods the whole prospect, which is mostly wild, uncultivated land with patches of birch-trees. NAPOLÉON'S army has just arrived on the scene, and is making its bivouac for the night, some of the later regiments not having yet come up. A dropping fire of musketry from skirmishers ahead keeps snapping through the air. The Emperor's tent stands in a ravine in the foreground amid the squares of the Old Guard. Aides and other officers are chatting outside. Enter NAPOLÉON, who dismounts, speaks to some of his suite, and disappears inside his tent. An interval follows, during which the sun dips. Enter COLONEL FABVRIER, aide-de-camp of MARMONT, just arrived from Spain. An officer-in-waiting goes into NAPOLÉON'S tent to announce FABVRIER, the Colonel meanwhile talking to those outside.]

AN AIDE Important tidings thence, I make no doubt?

FABVRIER Marmont repulsed on Salamanca field, And well-nigh slain, is the best tale I bring! [A silence. A coughing heard in NAPOLÉON'S tent.] Whose rheumy throat distracts the quiet so?

AIDE The Emperor's. He is thus the livelong day. [COLONEL FABVRIER is shown into the tent. An interval. Then the husky accents of NAPOLÉON within, growing louder and louder.]

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON If Marmont—so I gather from these lines— Had let the English and the Spanish be, They would have bent from Salamanca back, Offering no battle, to our profiting! We should have been delivered this disaster, Whose bruit will harm us more than aught besides That has befallen in Spain!

VOICE OF FABVRIER I fear so, sire.

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON He forced a conflict, to cull laurel crowns Before King Joseph should arrive to share them!

VOICE OF FABVRIER The army's ardour for your Majesty, Its courage, its devotion to your cause, Cover a myriad of the Marshal's sins.

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON Why gave he battle without biddance, pray, From the supreme commander? Here's the crime Of insubordination, root of woes!... The time well chosen, and the battle won, The English succours there had sidled off, And their annoy in the Peninsula Embarrassed us no more. Behoves it me, Some day, to face this Wellington myself! Marmont too plainly is no match for him.... Thus he goes on: "To have preserved command I would with joy have changed this early wound For foulest mortal stroke at fall of day. One baleful moment damnified the fruit Of six weeks' wise strategics, whose result Had loomed so certain!"—[Satirically] Well, we've but his word As to their wisdom! To define them thus Would not have struck me but for his good prompting!... No matter: On Moskowa's banks to-morrow I'll mend his faults upon the Arapeile. I'll see how I can treat this Russian horde Which English gold has brought together here From the four corners of the universe.... Adieu. You'd best go now and take some rest. [FABVRIER reappears from the tent and goes. Enter DE BAUSSET.]

DE BAUSSET The box that came—has it been taken in?

AN OFFICER Yes, General 'Tis laid behind a screen In the outer tent. As yet his Majesty Has not been told of it. [DE BAUSSET goes into the tent. After an interval of murmured talk an exclamation bursts from the EMPEROR. In a few minutes he appears at the tent door, a valet following him bearing a picture. The EMPEROR'S face shows traces of emotion.]

NAPOLÉON Bring out a chair for me to poise it on. [Re-enter DE BAUSSET from the tent with a chair.] They all shall see it. Yes, my soldier-sons Must gaze upon this son of mine own house In art's presentment! It will cheer their hearts. That's a good

light—just so. [He is assisted by DE BAUSSET to set up the picture in the chair. It is a portrait of the young King of Rome playing at cup-and-ball being represented as the globe. The officers standing near are attracted round, and then the officers and soldiers further back begin running up, till there is a great crowd.] Let them walk past, So that they see him all. The Old Guard first. [The Old Guard is summoned, and marches past surveying the picture; then other regiments.]

SOLDIERS The Emperor and the King of Rome for ever! [When they have marched past and withdrawn, and DE BAUSSET has taken away the picture, NAPOLÉON prepares to re-enter his tent. But his attention is attracted to the Russians. He regards them through his glass. Enter BESSIERES and RAPP.]

NAPOLÉON What slow, weird ambulation do I mark, Rippling the Russian host?

BESSIERES A progress, sire, Of all their clergy, vestmented, who bear An image, said to work strange miracles. [NAPOLÉON watches. The Russian ecclesiastics pass through the regiments, which are under arms, bearing the icon and other religious insignia. The Russian soldiers kneel before it.]

NAPOLÉON Ay! Not content to stand on their own strength, They try to hire the enginry of Heaven. I am no theologian, but I laugh That men can be so grossly logicless, When war, defensive or aggressive either, Is in its essence pagan, and opposed To the whole gist of Christianity!

BESSIERES ’Tis to fanaticize their courage, sire.

NAPOLÉON Better they’d wake up old Kutúzof.—Rapp, What think you of to-morrow?

RAPP Victory; But, sire, a bloody one!

NAPOLÉON So I foresee. [The scene darkens, and the fires of the bivouacs shine up ruddily, those of the French near at hand, those of the Russians in a long line across the mid-distance, and throwing a flapping glare into the heavens. As the night grows stiller the ballad-singing and laughter from the French mixes with a slow

singing of psalms from their adversaries. The two multitudes lie down to sleep, and all is quiet but for the sputtering of the green wood fires, which, now that the human tongues are still, seem to hold a conversation of their own.]

## SCENE V

THE SAME [The prospect lightens with dawn, and the sun rises red. The spacious field of battle is now distinct, its ruggedness being bisected by the great road from Smolensk to Moscow, which runs centrally from beneath the spectator to the furthest horizon. The field is also crossed by the stream Kalotcha, flowing from the right-centre foreground to the left-centre background, thus forming an "X" with the road aforesaid, intersecting it in mid- distance at the village of Borodino. Behind this village the Russians have taken their stand in close masses. So stand also the French, who have in their centre the Shevardino redoubt beyond the Kalotcha. Here NAPOLÉON, in his usual glue-grey uniform, white waistcoat, and white leather breeches, chooses his position with BERTHIER and other officers of his suite.]

DUMB SHOW It is six o'clock, and the firing of a single cannon on the French side proclaims that the battle is beginning. There is a roll of drums, and the right-centre masses, glittering in the level shine, advance under NEY and DAVOUT and throw themselves on the Russians, here defended by redoubts. The French enter the redoubts, whereupon a slim, small man, GENERAL BAGRATION, brings across a division from the Russian right and expels them resolutely. Semenovskoye is a commanding height opposite the right of the French, and held by the Russians. Cannon and columns, infantry and cavalry, assault it by tens of thousands, but cannot take it. Aides gallop through the screeching shot and haze of smoke and dust between NAPOLÉON and his various marshals. The Emperor walks about, looks through his glass, goes to a camp-stool, on which he sits down, and drinks glasses of spirits and hot water to relieve his still violent cold, as may be discovered from his red eyes, raw nose, rheumatic manner when he moves, and thick voice in giving

orders.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES So he fulfils the inhuman antickings He thinks imposed upon him.... What says he?

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR He says it is the sun of Austerlitz!

The Russians, so far from being driven out of their redoubts, issue from them towards the French. But they have to retreat, BAGRATION and his Chief of Staff being wounded. NAPOLÉON sips his grog hopefully, and orders a still stronger attack on the great redoubt in the centre. It is carried out. The redoubt becomes the scene of a huge massacre. In other parts of the field also the action almost ceases to be a battle, and takes the form of wholesale butchery by the thousand, now advantaging one side, now the other.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Thus do the mindless minions of the spell In mechanized enchantment sway and show A Will that wills above the will of each, Yet but the will of all conjunctively; A fabric of excitement, web of rage, That permeates as one stuff the weltering whole.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES The ugly horror grossly regnant here Wakes even the drowsed half-drunken Dictator To all its vain uncouthness!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Murat cries That on this much-anticipated day Napoléon’s genius flags inoperative.

The firing from the top of the redoubt has ceased. The French have got inside. The Russians retreat upon their rear, and fortify themselves on the heights there. PONIATOWSKI furiously attacks them. But the French are worn out, and fall back to their station before the battle. So the combat dies resultlessly away. The sun sets, and the opposed and exhausted hosts sink to lethargic repose. NAPOLÉON enters his tent in the midst of his lieutenants, and night descends.

SHADE OF THE EARTH The fumes of nitre and the reek of gore Make my airs foul and fulsome unto me!

SPIRIT IRONIC The natural nausea of a nurse, dear Dame.

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR Strange: even within that tent no notes of joy Throb as at Austerlitz! [signifying Napoléon's tent].

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES But mark that roar— A mash of men's crazed cries entreating mates To run them through and end their agony; Boys calling on their mothers, veterans Blaspheming God and man. Those shady shapes Are horses, maimed in myriads, tearing round In maddening pangs, the harnessings they wear Clanking discordant jingles as they tear!

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS It is enough. Let now the scene be closed.

The night thickens.

## SCENE VI

MOSCOW [The foreground is an open place amid the ancient irregular streets of the city, which disclose a jumble of architectural styles, the Asiatic prevailing over the European. A huge triangular white- walled fortress rises above the churches and coloured domes on a hill in the background, the central feature of which is a lofty tower with a gilded cupola, the Ivan Tower. Beneath the battlements of this fortress the Moskva River flows. An unwonted rumbling of wheels proceeds from the cobble-stoned streets, accompanied by an incessant cracking of whips.]

DUMB SHOW Travelling carriages, teams, and waggons, laden with pictures, carpets, glass, silver, china, and fashionable attire, are rolling out of the city, followed by foot-passengers in streams, who carry their most precious possessions on their shoulders. Others bear their sick relatives, caring nothing for their goods, and mothers go laden with their infants. Others drive their cows, sheep, and goats, causing much obstruction. Some of the populace, however, appear apathetic and bewildered, and stand in groups asking questions. A thin man with piercing eyes gallops about and gives stern orders.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Whose is the form seen ramping restlessly, Geared as a general, keen-eyed as a kite, Mid this mad current of close-filed confusion; High-ordering, smartening progress in the slow, And goading those by their own thoughts o'er-goaded; Whose emissaries knock at every door In rhythmal rote, and groan the great events The hour is pregnant with?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Rostopchin he, The city governor, whose name will ring Far down the forward years uncannily!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR His arts are strange, and strangely do they move him:— To store the stews with stuffs inflammable, To bid that pumps be wrecked, captives enlarged And primed with brands for burning, are the intents His warnings to the citizens outshade!

When the bulk of the populace has passed out eastwardly the Russian army retreating from Borodino also passes through the city into the country beyond without a halt. They mostly move in solemn silence, though many soldiers rush from their ranks and load themselves with spoil. When they are got together again and have marched out, there goes by on his horse a strange scarred old man with a foxy look, a swollen neck and head and a hunched figure. He is KUTÚZOF, surrounded by his lieutenants. Away in the distance by other streets and bridges with other divisions pass in like manner GENERALS BENNIGSEN, BARCLAY DE TOLLY, DOKHTÓROF, the mortally wounded BAGRATION in a carriage, and other generals, all in melancholy procession one way, like autumnal birds of passage. Then the rear-guard passes under MILORADOVITCH. Next comes a procession of another kind. A long string of carts with wounded men is seen, which trails out of the city behind the army. Their clothing is soiled with dried blood, and the bandages that enwrap them are caked with it. The greater part of this migrant multitude takes the high road to Vladimir.

## SCENE VII

THE SAME. OUTSIDE THE CITY [A hill forms the foreground, called the Hill of Salutation, near the Smolensk road. Herefrom the city appears as a splendid panorama, with its river, its gardens, and its curiously grotesque architecture of domes and spires. It is the peacock of cities to Western eyes, its roofs twinkling in the rays of the September sun, amid which the ancient citadel of the Tsars—the Kremlin—forms a centre-piece. There enter on the hill at a gallop NAPOLÉON, MURAT, EUGÈNE, NEY, DARU, and the rest of the Imperial staff. The French advance- guard is drawn up in order of battle at the foot of the hill, and the long columns of the Grand Army stretch far in the rear. The Emperor and his marshals halt, and gaze at Moscow.]

NAPOLÉON Ha! There she is at last. And it was time. [He looks round upon his army, its numbers attenuated to one-fourth of those who crossed the Niemen so joyfully.] Yes: it was time.... NOW what says Alexander!

DARU This is a foil to Salamanca, sire!

DAVOUT What scores of bulbous church-tops gild the sky! Souls must be rotten in this region, sire, To need so much repairing!

NAPOLÉON Ay—no doubt.... Prithee march briskly on, to check disorder, [to Murat]. Hold word with the authorities forthwith, [to Durasnel]. Tell them that they may swiftly swage their fears, Safe in the mercy I by rule extend To vanquished ones. I wait the city keys, And will receive the Governor’s submission With courtesy due. Eugène will guard the gate To Petersburg there leftward. You, Davout, The gate to Smolensk in the centre here Which we shall enter by.

VOICES OF ADVANCE-GUARD Moscow! Moscow! This, this is Moscow city. Rest at last! [The words are caught up in the rear by veterans who have entered every capital in Europe except London, and are echoed from rank to rank. There is a far-extended clapping of hands, like the babble of waves, and companies of foot run in disorder towards high ground to behold the spectacle, waving their shakos on

their bayonets. The army now marches on, and NAPOLÉON and his suite disappear citywards from the Hill of Salutation. The day wanes ere the host has passed and dusk begins to prevail, when tidings reach the rear-guard that cause dismay. They have been sent back lip by lip from the front.]

SPIRIT IRONIC An anticlimax to Napoléon's dream!

SPIRIT OF RUMOUR They say no governor attends with keys To offer his submission gracefully. The streets are solitudes, the houses sealed, And stagnant silence reigns, save where intrudes The rumbling of their own artillery wheels, And their own soldiers' measured tramp along. "Moscow deserted? What a monstrous thing!"— He shrugs his shoulders soon, contemptuously; "This, then is how Muscovy fights!" cries he. Meanwhile Murat has reached the Kremlin gates, And finds them closed against him. Battered these, The fort reverberates vacant as the streets But for some grinning wretches gaoled there. Enchantment seems to sway from quay to keep, And lock commotion in a century's sleep. [NAPOLÉON, reappearing in front of the city, follows MURAT, and is again lost to view. He has entered the Kremlin. An interval. Something becomes visible on the summit of the Ivan Tower.]

CHORUS OF RUMOURS [aerial music] Mark you thereon a small lone figure gazing Upon his hard-gained goal? It is He! The startled crows, their broad black pinions raising, Forsake their haunts, and wheel disquietedly. [The scene slowly darkens. Midnight hangs over the city. In blackness to the north of where the Kremlin stands appears what at first seems a lurid, malignant star. It waxes larger. Almost simultaneously a north-east wind rises, and the light glows and sinks with the gusts, proclaiming a fire, which soon grows large enough to irradiate the fronts of adjacent buildings, and to show that it is creeping on towards the Kremlin itself, the walls of that fortress which face the flames emerging from their previous shade. The fire can be seen breaking out also in numerous other quarters. All the

conflagrations increase, and become, as those at first detached group themselves together, one huge furnace, whence streamers of flame reach up to the sky, brighten the landscape far around, and show the houses as if it were day. The blaze gains the Kremlin, and licks its walls, but does not kindle it. Explosions and hissings are constantly audible, amid which can be fancied cries and yells of people caught in the combustion. Large pieces of canvas aflare sail away on the gale like balloons. Cocks crow, thinking it sunrise, ere they are burnt to death.]

## SCENE VIII

THE SAME. THE INTERIOR OF THE KREMLIN [A chamber containing a bed on which NAPOLÉON has been lying. It is not yet daybreak, and the flapping light of the conflagration without shines in at the narrow windows. NAPOLÉON is discovered dressed, but in disorder and unshaven. He is walking up and down the room in agitation. There are present CAULAINCOURT, BESSIERES, and many of the marshals of his guard, who stand in silent perplexity.]

NAPOLÉON [sitting down on the bed] No: I'll not go! It is themselves who have done it. My God, they are Scythians and barbarians still! [Enter MORTIER [just made Governor].]

MORTIER Sire, there's no means of fencing with the flames. My creed is that these scurvy Muscovites Knowing our men's repute for recklessness, Have fired the town, as if 'twere we had done it, As by our own crazed act! [GENERAL LARIBOISIERE, and aged man, enters and approaches NAPOLÉON.]

LARIBOISIERE The wind swells higher! Will you permit one so high-summed in years, One so devoted, sire, to speak his mind? It is that your long lingering here entails Much risk for you, your army, and ourselves, In the embarrassment it throws on us While taking steps to seek security, By hindering venturous means. [Enter MURAT, PRINCE EUGÈNE, and the PRINCE OF NEUFCHÂTEL.]

MURAT There is no choice But leaving, sire. Enormous bulks of powder Lie housed beneath us; and outside these panes A park of our artillery stands unscreened.

NAPOLÉON [saturninely] What have I won I disincline to cede!

VOICE OF A GUARD [without] The Kremlin is aflame! [The look at each other. Two officers of NAPOLÉON'S guard and an interpreter enter, with one of the Russian military police as a prisoner.]

FIRST OFFICER We have caught this man Firing the Kremlin: yea, in the very act! It is extinguished temporarily, We know not for how long.

NAPOLÉON Inquire of him What devil set him on. [They inquire.]

SECOND OFFICER The governor, He says; the Count Rostopchin, sire.

NAPOLÉON So! Even the ancient Kremlin is not sanct From their infernal scheme! Go, take him out; Make him a quick example to the rest. [Exeunt guard with their prisoner to the court below, whence a musket-volley resounds in a few minutes. Meanwhile the flames pop and spit more loudly, and the window-panes of the room they stand in crack and fall in fragments.] Incendiarism afoot, and we unware Of what foul tricks may follow, I will go. Outwitted here, we'll march on Petersburg, The Devil if we won't! [The marshals murmur and shake their heads.]

BESSIERES Your pardon, sire, But we are all convinced that weather, time, Provisions, roads, equipment, mettle, mood, Serve not for such a perilous enterprise. [NAPOLÉON remains in gloomy silence. Enter BERTHIER.]

NAPOLÉON [apathetically] Well, Berthier. More misfortunes?

BERTHIER News is brought, Sire, of the Russian army's whereabouts. That fox Kutúzof, after marching east As if he were conducting his whole force To Vladimir, when at the Riazan Road Down-doubled sharply south, and in a curve Has wheeled round Moscow, making for Kalouga, To strike into our base, and cut us off.

MURAT Another reason against Petersburg! Come what come may, we must defeat that army, To keep a sure retreat through Smolensk on To Lithuania.

NAPOLÉON [jumping up] I must act! We'll leave, Or we shall let this Moscow be our tomb. May Heaven curse the author of this war— Ay, him, that Russian minister, self-sold To England, who fomented it.—'Twas he Dragged Alexander into it, and me! [The marshals are silent with looks of incredulity, and Caulaincourt shrugs his shoulders.] Now no more words; but hear. Eugène and Ney With their divisions fall straight back upon The Petersburg and Zwenigarod Roads; Those of Davout upon the Smolensk route. I will retire meanwhile to Petrowskoi. Come, let us go. [NAPOLÉON and the marshals move to the door. In leaving, the Emperor pauses and looks back.] I fear that this event Marks the beginning of a train of ills.... Moscow was meant to be my rest, My refuge, and—it vanishes away! [Exeunt NAPOLÉON, marshals, etc. The smoke grows denser and obscures the scene.]

## SCENE IX

THE ROAD FROM SMOLENSKO INTO LITHUANIA [The season is far advanced towards winter. The point of observation is high amongst the clouds, which, opening and shutting fitfully to the wind, reveal the earth as a confused expanse merely.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES Where are we? And why are we where we are?

SHADE OF THE EARTH Above a wild waste garden-plot of mine Nigh bare in this late age, and now grown chill, Lithuania called by some. I gather not Why we haunt here, where I can work no charm Either upon the ground or over it.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS The wherefore will unfold. The rolling brume That parts, and joins, and parts again below us In ragged restlessness, unscreens by fits The quality of the scene.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES I notice now Primeval woods, pine, birch—the skinny

growths That can sustain life well where earth affords But sustenance elsewhere yclept starvation.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS And what see you on the far land-verge there, Labouring from eastward towards our longitude?

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES An object like a dun-piled caterpillar, Shuffling its length in painful heaves along, Hitherward.... Yea, what is this Thing we see Which, moving as a single monster might, Is yet not one but many?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Even the Army Which once was called the Grand; now in retreat From Moscow's muteness, urged by That within it; Together with its train of followers— Men, matrons, babes, in brabbling multitudes.

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES And why such flight?

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Recording Angels, say.

RECORDING ANGEL I [in minor plain-song] The host has turned from Moscow where it lay, And Israel-like, moved by some master-sway, Is made to wander on and waste away!

ANGEL II By track of Tarutino first it flits; Thence swerving, strikes at old Jaroslawitz; The which, accurst by slaughtering swords, it quits.

ANGEL I Harassed, it treads the trail by which it came, To Borodino, field of bloodshot fame, Whence stare unburied horrors beyond name!

ANGEL II And so and thus it nears Smolensko's walls, And, stayed its hunger, starts anew its crawls, Till floats down one white morsel, which appals. [What has floated down from the sky upon the Army is a flake of snow. Then come another and another, till natural features, hitherto varied with the tints of autumn, are confounded, and all is phantasmal grey and white. The caterpillar shape still creeps laboriously nearer, but instead, increasing in size by the rules of perspective, it gets more attenuated, and there are left upon the ground behind it minute parts of itself,

which are speedily flaked over, and remain as white pimples by the wayside.]

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS These atoms that drop off are snuffed-out souls Who are enghosted by the caressing snow. [Pines rise mournfully on each side of the nearing object; ravens in flocks advance with it overhead, waiting to pick out the eyes of strays who fall. The snowstorm increases, descending in tufts which can hardly be shaken off. The sky seems to join itself to the land. The marching figures drop rapidly, and almost immediately become white grave-mounds. Endowed with enlarged powers of audition as of vision, we are struck by the mournful taciturnity that prevails. Nature is mute. Save for the incessant flogging of the wind-broken and lacerated horses there are no sounds. With growing nearness more is revealed. In the glades of the forest, parallel to the French columns, columns of Russians are seen to be moving. And when the French presently reach Krasnoye they are surrounded by packs of cloaked Cossacks, bearing lances like huge needles a dozen feet long. The fore-part of the French army gets through the town; the rear is assaulted by infantry and artillery.]

SPIRIT OF THE PITIES The strange, one-eyed, white-shakoed, scarred old man, Ruthlessly heading every onset made, I seem to recognize.

SPIRIT OF THE YEARS Kutúzof he: The ceaselessly-attacked one, Michael Ney; A pair as stout as thou, Earth, ever hast twinned! Kutúzof, ten years younger, would extirp The invaders, and our drama finish here, With Bonaparte a captive or a corpse. But he is old; death even has beckoned him; And thus the so near-seeming happens not. [NAPOLÉON himself can be discerned amid the rest, marching on foot through the snowflakes, in a fur coat and with a stout staff in his hand. Further back NEY is visible with the remains of the rear. There is something behind the regular columns like an articulated tail, and as they draw on, it shows itself to be a disorderly rabble of followers of both sexes. So the whole miscellany arrives at the foreground, where it is checked by a large river across the track. The soldiers

themselves, like the rabble, are in motley raiment, some wearing rugs for warmth, some quilts and curtains, some even petticoats and other women's clothing. Many are delirious from hunger and cold. But they set about doing what is a necessity for the least hope of salvation, and throw a bridge across the stream. The point of vision descends to earth, close to the scene of action.]

**SCENE X**

THE BRIDGE OF THE BERESINA [The bridge is over the Beresina at Studzianka. On each side of the river are swampy meadows, now hard with frost, while further back are dense forests. Ice floats down the deep black stream in large cakes.]

DUMB SHOW The French sappers are working up to their shoulders in the water at the building of the bridge. Those so immersed work till, stiffened with ice to immobility, they die from the chill, when others succeed them. Cavalry meanwhile attempt to swim their horses across, and some infantry try to wade through the stream. Another bridge is begun hard by, the construction of which advances with greater speed; and it becomes fit for the passage of carriages and artillery. NAPOLÉON is seen to come across to the homeward bank, which is the foreground of the scene. A good portion of the army also, under DAVOUT, NEY, and OUDINOT, lands by degrees on this side. But VICTOR'S corps is yet on the left or Moscow side of the stream, moving toward the bridge, and PARTONNEAUX with the rear-guard, who has not yet crossed, is at Borissow, some way below, where there is an old permanent bridge partly broken. Enter with speed from the distance the Russians under TCHAPLITZ. More under TCHICHAGOFF enter the scene down the river on the left or further bank, and cross by the old bridge of Borissow. But they are too far from the new crossing to intercept the French as yet. PLATOFF with his Cossacks next appears on the stage which is to be such a tragic one. He comes from the forest and approaches the left bank likewise. So also does WITTGENSTEIN, who strikes in between the uncrossed VICTOR and

PARTONNEAUX. PLATOFF thereupon descends on the latter, who surrenders with the rear-guard; and thus seven thousand more are cut off from the already emaciated Grand Army. TCHAPLITZ, of TCHICHAGOFF'S division, has meanwhile got round by the old bridge at Borissow to the French side of the new one, and attacks OUDINOT; but he is repulsed with the strength of despair. The French lose a further five thousand in this. We now look across the river at VICTOR, and his division, not yet over, and still defending the new bridges. WITTGENSTEIN descends upon him; but he holds his ground. The determined Russians set up a battery of twelve cannon, so as to command the two new bridges, with the confused crowd of soldiers, carriages, and baggage, pressing to cross. The battery discharges into the surging multitude. More Russians come up, and, forming a semicircle round the bridges and the mass of French, fire yet more hotly on them with round shot and canister. As it gets dark the flashes light up the strained faces of the fugitives. Under the discharge and the weight of traffic, the bridge for the artillery gives way, and the throngs upon it roll shrieking into the stream and are drowned.

SEMICHORUS I OF THE PITIES [aerial music] So loudly swell their shrieks as to be heard above the roar of guns and the wailful wind, Giving in one brief cry their last wild word on that mock life through which they have harlequined!

SEMICHORUS II To the other bridge the living heap betakes itself, the weak pushed over by the strong; They loop together by their clutch like snakes; in knots they are submerged and borne along.

CHORUS Then women are seen in the waterflow—limply bearing their infants between wizened white arms stretching above; Yea, motherhood, sheerly sublime in her last despairing, and lighting her darkest declension with limitless love.

Meanwhile, TCHICHAGOFF has come up with his twenty-seven thousand men, and falls on OUDINOT, NEY, and the "Sacred Squadron." Altogether we see forty

or fifty thousand assailing eighteen thousand half-naked, badly armed wretches, emaciated with hunger and encumbered with several thousands of sick, wounded, and stragglers. VICTOR and his rear-guard, who have protected the bridges all day, come over themselves at last. No sooner have they done so than the final bridge is set on fire. Those who are upon it burn or drown; those who are on the further side have lost their last chance, and perish either in attempting to wade the stream or at the hands of the Russians.

SEMICHORUS OF THE PITIES [aerial music] What will be seen in the morning light? What will be learnt when the spring breaks bright, And the frost unlocks to the sun's soft sight?

SEMICHORUS II Death in a thousand motley forms; Charred corpses hooking each other's arms In the sleep that defies all war's alarms!

CHORUS Pale cysts of souls in every stage, Still bent to embraces of love or rage,— Souls passed to where History pens no page.

The flames of the burning bridge go out as it consumes to the water's edge, and darkness mantles all, nothing continuing but the purl of the river and the clickings of floating ice.

## SCENE XI

THE OPEN COUNTRY BETWEEN SMORGONI AND WILNA [The winter is more merciless, and snow continues to fall upon a deserted expanse of unenclosed land in Lithuania. Some scattered birch bushes merge in a forest in the background. It is growing dark, though nothing distinguishes where the sun sets. There is no sound except that of a shuffling of feet in the direction of a bivouac. Here are gathered tattered men like skeletons. Their noses and ears are frost-bitten, and pus is oozing from their eyes. These stricken shades in a limbo of gloom are among the last survivors of the French army. Few of them carry arms. One squad, ploughing

through snow above their knees, and with icicles dangling from their hair that clink like glass-lustres as they walk, go into the birch wood, and are heard chopping. They bring back boughs, with which they make a screen on the windward side, and contrive to light a fire. With their swords they cut rashers from a dead horse, and grill them in the flames, using gunpowder for salt to eat them with. Two others return from a search, with a dead rat and some candle-ends. Their meal shared, some try to repair their gaping shoes and to tie up their feet, that are chilblained to the bone. A straggler enters, who whispers to one or two soldiers of the group. A shudder runs through them at his words.]

FIRST SOLDIER [dazed] What—gone, do you say? Gone?

STRAGGLER Yes, I say gone! He left us at Smorgoni hours ago. The Sacred Squadron even he has left behind. By this time he's at Warsaw or beyond, Full pace for Paris.

SECOND SOLDIER [jumping up wildly] Gone? How did he go? No, surely! He could not desert us so!

STRAGGLER He started in a carriage, with Roustan The Mameluke on the box: Caulaincourt, too, Was inside with him. Monton and Duroc Rode on a sledge behind.—The order bade That we should not be told it for a while. [Other soldiers spring up as they realize the news, and stamp hither and thither, impotent with rage, grief, and despair, many in their physical weakness sobbing like children.]

SPIRIT SINISTER Good. It is the selfish and unconscionable characters who are so much regretted.

STRAGGLER He felt, or feigned, he ought to leave no longer A land like Prussia 'twixt himself and home. There was great need for him to go, he said, To quiet France, and raise another army That shall replace our bones.

SEVERAL [distractedly] Deserted us! Deserted us!—O, after all our pangs We shall see France no more! [Some become insane, and go dancing round. One of them

sings.]

MAD SOLDIER'S SONG I Ha, for the snow and hoar! Ho, for our fortune's made! We can shape our bed without sheets to spread, And our graves without a spade. So foolish Life adieu, And ingrate Leader too. —Ah, but we loved you true! Yet—he-he-he! and ho-ho-ho-!— We'll never return to you. II What can we wish for more? Thanks to the frost and flood We are grinning crones—thin bags of bones Who once were flesh and blood. So foolish Life adieu, And ingrate Leader too. —Ah, but we loved you true! Yet—he-he-he! and ho-ho-ho!— We'll never return to you. [Exhausted, they again crouch round the fire. Officers and privates press together for warmth. Other stragglers arrive, and sit at the backs of the first. With the progress of the night the stars come out in unusual brilliancy, Sirius and those in Orion flashing like stilettos; and the frost stiffens. The fire sinks and goes out; but the Frenchmen do not move. The day dawns, and still they sit on. In the background enter some light horse of the Russian army, followed by KUTÚZOF himself and a few of his staff. He presents a terrible appearance now—bravely serving though slowly dying, his face puffed with the intense cold, his one eye staring out as he sits in a heap in the saddle, his head sunk into his shoulders. The whole detachment pauses at the sight of the French asleep. They shout; but the bivouackers give no sign.

KUTÚZOF Go, stir them up! We slay not sleeping men. [The Russians advance and prod the French with their lances.]

RUSSIAN OFFICER Prince, here's a curious picture. They are dead.

KUTÚZOF [with indifference] Oh, naturally. After the snow was down I marked a sharpening of the air last night. We shall be stumbling on such frost-baked meat Most of the way to Wilna.

OFFICER [examining the bodies] They all sit As they were living still, but stiff as horns; And even the colour has not left their cheeks, Whereon the tears remain in

strings of ice.— It was a marvel they were not consumed: Their clothes are cindered by the fire in front, While at their back the frost has caked them hard.

KUTÚZOF 'Tis well. So perish Russia's enemies! [Exeunt KUTÚZOF, his staff, and the detachment of horse in the direction of Wilna; and with the advance of day the snow resumes its fall, slowly burying the dead bivouackers.]

**SCENE XII**

PARIS. THE TUILERIES [An antechamber to the EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE'S bedroom, at half-past eleven on a December night. The DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO and another lady-in-waiting are discovered talking to the Empress.]

MARIE LOUISE I have felt unapt for anything to-night, And I will now retire. [She goes into her child's room adjoining.]

DUCHESS OF MONTEBELLO For some long while There has come no letter from the Emperor, And Paris brims with ghastly rumourings About the far campaign. Not being beloved, The town is over dull for her alone. [Re-enter MARIE LOUISE.]

MARIE LOUISE The King of Rome is sleeping in his cot Sweetly and safe. Now, ladies, I am going. [She withdraws. Her tiring-women pass through into her chamber. They presently return and go out. A manservant enters, and bars the window-shutters with numerous bolts. Exit manservant. The Duchess retires. The other lady-in-waiting rises to go into her bedroom, which adjoins that of the Empress. Men's voices are suddenly heard in the corridor without. The lady-in-waiting pauses with parted lips. The voices grow louder. The lady-in-waiting screams. MARIE LOUISE hastily re-enters in a dressing-gown thrown over her night-clothes.]

MARIE LOUISE Great God, what altercation can that be? I had just verged on sleep when it aroused me! [A thumping is heard at the door.]

VOICE OF NAPOLÉON [without] Hola! Pray let me in! Unlock the door!

LADY-IN-WAITING Heaven's mercy on us! What man may it be At such and hour as this?

MARIE LOUISE O it is he!

[The lady-in-waiting unlocks the door. NAPOLÉON enters, scarcely recognizable, in a fur cloak and hood over his ears. He throws off the cloak and discloses himself to be in the shabbiest and muddiest attire. Marie Louise is agitated almost to fainting.]

SPIRIT IRONIC Is it with fright or joy?

MARIE LOUISE I scarce believe What my sight tells me! Home, and in such garb! [NAPOLÉON embraces her.]

NAPOLÉON I have had great work in getting in, my dear! They failed to recognize me at the gates, Being sceptical at my poor hackney-coach And poorer baggage. I had to show my face In a fierce light ere they would let me pass, And even then they doubted till I spoke.— What think you, dear, of such a tramp-like spouse? [He warms his hands at the fire.] Ha—it is much more comfortable here Than on the Russian plains!

MARIE LOUISE [timidly] You have suffered there?— Your face is thinner, and has line in it; No marvel that they did not know you!

NAPOLÉON Yes: Disasters many and swift have swooped on me!— Since crossing—ugh!—the Beresina River I have been compelled to come incognito; Ay—as a fugitive and outlaw quite.

MARIE LOUISE We'll thank Heaven, anyhow, that you are safe. I had gone to bed, and everybody almost! what, now, do require? Some food of course? [The child in the adjoining chamber begins to cry, awakened by the loud tones of NAPOLÉON.]

NAPOLÉON Ah—that's his little voice! I'll in and see him.

MARIE LOUISE I'll come with you. [NAPOLÉON and the EMPRESS pass into

the other room. The lady-in- waiting calls up yawning servants and gives orders. The servants go to execute them. Re-enter NAPOLÉON and MARIE LOUISE. The lady- in-waiting goes out.]

NAPOLÉON I have said it, dear! All the disasters summed in the bulletin Shall be repaired.

MARIE LOUISE And are they terrible?

NAPOLÉON Have you not read the last-sent bulletin, Dear friend?

MARIE LOUISE No recent bulletin has come.

NAPOLÉON Ah—I must have outstripped it on the way!

MARIE LOUISE And where is the Grand Army?

NAPOLÉON Oh—that's gone.

MARIE LOUISE Gone? But—gone where?

NAPOLÉON Gone all to nothing, dear.

MARIE LOUISE [incredulously] But some six hundred thousand I saw pass Through Dresden Russia-wards?

NAPOLÉON [flinging himself into a chair] Well, those men lie— Or most of them—in layers of bleaching bones 'Twixt here and Moscow.... I have been subdued; But by the elements; and them alone. Not Russia, but God's sky has conquered me! [With an appalled look she sits beside him.] From the sublime to the ridiculous There's but a step!—I have been saying it All through the leagues of my long journey home— And that step has been passed in this affair!... Yes, briefly, it is quite ridiculous, Whichever way you look at it.—Ha, ha!

MARIE LOUISE [simply] But those six hundred thousand throbbing throats That cheered me deaf at Dresden, marching east So full of youth and spirits—all bleached bones— Ridiculous? Can it be so, dear, to— Their mothers say?

NAPOLÉON [with a twitch of displeasure] You scarcely understand. I meant the

enterprise, and not its stuff.... I had no wish to fight, nor Alexander, But circumstance impaled us each on each; The Genius who outshapes my destinies Did all the rest! Had I but hit success, Imperial splendour would have worn a crown Unmatched in long-scrolled Time!... Well, leave that now.— What do they know about all this in Paris?

MARIE LOUSE I cannot say. Black rumours fly and croak Like ravens through the streets, but come to me Thinned to the vague!—Occurrences in Spain Breed much disquiet with these other things. Marmont's defeat at Salamanca field Ploughed deep into men's brows. The cafes say Your troops must clear from Spain.

NAPOLÉON We'll see to that! I'll find a way to do a better thing; Though I must have another army first— Three hundred thousand quite. Fishes as good Swim in the sea as have come out of it. But to begin, we must make sure of France, Disclose ourselves to the good folk of Paris In daily outing as a family group, The type and model of domestic bliss [Which, by the way, we are]. And I intend, Also, to gild the dome of the Invalides In best gold leaf, and on a novel pattern.

MARIE LOUISE To gild the dome, dear? Why?

NAPOLÉON To give them something To think about. They'll take to it like children, And argue in the cafes right and left On its artistic points.—So they'll forget The woes of Moscow. [A chamberlain-in-waiting announces supper. MARIE LOUISE and NAPOLÉON go out. The room darkens and the scene closes.]

# ACT SECOND

## 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, PONSONBY, 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 YOUNG19 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-songing, 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-jacket20 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.]

**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 monotones 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 glistering 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.

## 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 \\

**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 attachés 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 Napoléon'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 Napoléon 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 Napoléon 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 attachés 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 Napoléon, 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 Napoléon'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.]

# ACT THIRD

## SCENE I

LEIPZIG. NAPOLÉON'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 Napoléon'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 Napoléon's confidential secretaries, are unpacking and laying out the Emperor's maps and papers. In the foreground BERTHIER, MURAT, LAURISTON, and several officers of Napoléon'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. [NAPOLÉON enters.]

NAPOLÉON [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.

NAPOLÉON All that is needful is to conquer them! We are concentred 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [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 Blücher. So shall we slip the toils They are all madding to enmesh us in.

BERTHIER Few are our infantry to fence with theirs!

NAPOLÉON [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?

NAPOLÉON 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!

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [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!

NAPOLÉON [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 Eugène, 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. NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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!

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON muses, and lets the curtain drop.]

NAPOLÉON Yes, Schwarzenberg to Blücher.... 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.]

## 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 she 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 BLÜCHER 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 NAPOLÉON 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 Napoléon'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 stand s 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 NAPOLÉON launches fresh columns, and simultaneously OUDINOT supports VICTOR against EUGÈNE OF WURTEMBERG'S right, while on the other side of him the cavalry of MILHAUD and KELLERMAN

prepares to charge. NAPOLÉON'S combination is successful, and drives back EUGÈNE. 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 BLÜCHER 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.

## 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 outheaving 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 Napoléon 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, Napoléon'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 NAPOLÉON'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 Blücher 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— Napoléon'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 sharplier, 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 warely closes up his remnant to the walls.

SEMICHORUS I Around Probstheida still the conflict rolls Under Napoléon'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 Napoléon'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 closening 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 Napoléon tarries yet? Let us go see. [The distant firelight becomes clearer and closer.]

## SCENE IV

THE SAME. AT THE THONBERG WINDMILL [By the newly lighted fire NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON Baseness so gross I had not guessed of them!— The thirty thousand false Bavarians I looked on losing not unplacidly; 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. NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON sleeps heavily for a quarter of and hour, during which the moon rises over the field. At the end he starts up stares around him with astonishment.]

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON 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, NAPOLÉON 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 Napoléon 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.]

## 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 NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON Then do, good friend. [To attendants] Bring on the horses there; I if arrive soonest I will wait for you. [The citizen shows NAPOLÉON 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. [NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON 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 Blücher'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 Blücher'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 unsustained. 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.]

**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 Nivelle 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 well 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 Blücher 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 Nivelle! [Exeunt WELLINGTON and officers. The room darkens.]

# ACT FOURTH

## 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- geared 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.

## 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 NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON, 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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 Eugène. 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!

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON, 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. NAPOLÉON takes the papers to the fire, thrusts them in, and watches them consume; then burns other bundles brought by his attendants.]

NAPOLÉON [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!

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON, 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.]

## 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. MÉNEVAL 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.

MÉNEVAL They are armed Europe's scouts! [Enter CAMBACÉRÈS the Arch-Chancellor, COUNT BEAUHARNAIS, CORVISART the physician, DE BAUSSET, DE CANISY the equerry, and others.]

CAMBACÉRÈS 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. Hearken 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 Napoléon 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.]

**SCENE IV**

FONTAINEBLEAU. A ROOM IN THE PALACE [NAPOLÉON is discovered walking impatiently up and down, and glancing at the clock every few minutes. Enter NEY.]

NAPOLÉON [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 coffined 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.

NAPOLÉON [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.

NAPOLÉON [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.

NAPOLÉON 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?

NAPOLÉON [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.

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON [reading] "It having been declared by the Allies That the prime obstacle to Europe's peace Is France's empery by Napoléon, 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. NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [with a nod] I see you do, Roustan.

ROUSTAN Will you, sire, use it on yourself, Or shall I pass it through you?

NAPOLÉON [coldly] Neither plan Is quite expedient for the moment, man.

ROUSTAN Neither?

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON, who shakes his head.] I live no longer under such disgrace! [Exit ROUSTAN haughtily. NAPOLÉON 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! [NAPOLÉON shows signs of waking. CONSTANT and ROUSTAN disappear. NAPOLÉON slowly sits up.]

NAPOLÉON 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 Napoléon who has failed. The pale pathetic peoples still plod on Through hoodwinkings to light!

NAPOLÉON [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 NAPOLÉON. 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?

NAPOLÉON [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 NAPOLÉON'S hand.]

CAULAINCOURT Why should you bring this cloud upon us now!

NAPOLÉON 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!

NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON 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.]

## 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.]

## 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 Napoléon 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 NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON'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. NAPOLÉON puts his head out of his window for a moment. He is haggard, shabbily dressed, yellow-faced, and wild-eyed.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [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.]

## SCENE VII

MALMAISON. THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE'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. JOSÉPHINE lies in the bed in an advanced stage of illness, the ABBÉ 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 Eugène. [Exeunt physicians. The ABBÉ BERTRAND also goes out. JOSÉPHINE murmurs faintly.]

FIRST LADY [going to the bedside] I think I heard you speak, your Majesty?

JOSÉPHINE 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.

JOSÉPHINE 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.

JOSÉPHINE 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.

JOSÉPHINE 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!

JOSÉPHINE O but you don’t quite know!... My coquetries In our first married years nigh racked 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 EUGÈNE and QUEEN HORTENSE. Seeing the state their mother is in, they fall down on their knees by her bed. JOSÉPHINE recognizes them and smiles. Anon she is able to speak again.]

JOSÉPHINE [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 Napoléon'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.]

**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 Napoléon 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.]

# ACT FIFTH

## 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, NAPOLÉONS'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 perpends 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, Napoléon 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] Napoléon 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 adieux 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!" NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON 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.

## 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, has 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 he 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 Napoléon 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.]

## 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 Napoléon'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! [NAPOLÉON'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 NAPOLÉON'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. NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON dismounts and steps forward.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON.]

NAPOLÉON [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 NAPOLÉON'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.]

NAPOLÉON [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. NAPOLÉON'S own men now arrive, and fraternize with and embrace the soldiers of the Fifth. When the emotion has subsided, NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON forms both bodies of troops into one column. Peasantry run up with buckets of sour wine and a single glass; NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON. The scene shuts.]

## 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 MÉNEVAL, her attendant and Napoléon'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, Napoléon 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 Napoléon'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. [MÉNEVAL, 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 NAPOLÉON, disguised as a florist examining the gardens. MÉNEVAL recognizes him and comes forward.]

MÉNEVAL 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 breech her as a man, And tiptoe from a postern unperceived?

MÉNEVAL 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!

MÉNEVAL 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 Napoléon.

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 Napoléon in the coming throes!

MÉNEVAL 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 MÉNEVAL 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 Joséphine; 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 Napoléon 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.]

**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 Napoléon 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 Napoléon, 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 here21 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 Napoléon, 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.]

**SCENE VI**

WESSEX. DURNOVER GREEN, CASTERBRIDGE [On a patch of green grass on Durnover Hill, in the purlieus of Casterbridge, a rough gallows has been erected, and an effigy of Napoléon 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 catched 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 Blücher. 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.]

# ACT SIXTH

## 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 NAPOLÉONS'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 middles 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 NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [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 Napoléon 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.

**SCENE II**

A BALLROOM IN BRUSSELS22 [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 MÜFFLING. 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 Napoléon 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, MÜFFLING, 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 gave been through Mons, not Charleroi.

MÜFFLING 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, Blücher, 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!

MÜFFLING We'll hope for luck. Blücher 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, MÜFFLING. RICHMOND returns with a map, which he spreads out on the table.

WELLINGTON scans it closely.] Napoléon 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 purl 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.]

**SCENE III**

CHARLEROI. NAPOLÉON'S QUARTERS [The same midnight. NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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—-

NAPOLÉON My charge was this: Make it impossible at any cost That Wellington and Blücher 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.

NAPOLÉON 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!

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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 Blücher'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. NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [waking] By “he” denoting me?

BUSSY [starting] Just so, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON [peremptorily] What said the Empress?

BUSSY She gave no answer, sire, that rumour bears.

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

BUSSY He did, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON 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!”

NAPOLÉON [starting up] Bah, man! A treacherous trick! A hoax—no more! Is that the last?

SECRETARY The last, your Majesty.

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON 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 ENGHIEN as showman.]

NAPOLÉON [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.]

## 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 throbbed 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 MÜFFLING.]

GENTLEMAN OPPOSITE He is the Prussian officer attached to our headquarters, through whom Wellington communicates with Blücher, 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.]

**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 sallows. 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, BLÜCHER 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 NAPOLÉON'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 BLÜCHER 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 BLÜCHER, followed

by FITZROY SOMERSET, GNEISENAU, MÜFFLING, 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; BLÜCHER'S eager and impetuous.

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

BLÜCHER '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? [BLÜCHER 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.

MÜFFLING But Bonaparte, Pray note, has redistributed his strength In fashion that you fail to recognize. I am against your scheme.

BLÜCHER [lowering his glass] Signs notify Napoléon's plans as changed! He purports now To strike our left—between Sombreffe 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.

BLÜCHER 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.

BLÜCHER 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.]

BLÜCHER [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.

BLÜCHER 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, BLÜCHER 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. NAPOLÉON’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 NAPOLÉON, 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 "Vorwarts!" 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 Blücher, 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.

## 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 Nivelle, 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 boscage 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: Napoléon's great intent grew substantive, And on the Prussian pith and pulse he bent His foretimed blow. Blücher, 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.

## 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 Napoléon 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 Napoléon 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.]

## 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], MÜFFLING, VIVIAN, and others. They look through their field- glasses towards Frasnes, NEY'S position since his retreat yesternight, and also towards NAPOLÉON'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 Blücher 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 and 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 coneys 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.]

# ACT SEVENTH

## 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, JÉRÔME, 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. NAPOLÉON orders a battery of howitzers to play upon the building. Flames soon burst from it; but the foot-guards still hold the courtyard.]

## 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. NAPOLÉON, SOULT, and other marshals are standing round, their horses waiting at the base of the slope. NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON [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.

NAPOLÉON 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,

NAPOLÉON Which he shall have When I have scanned the hills for Grouchy's helms. [NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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. [NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON 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 Scotch23 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 NAPOLÉON 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.

NAPOLÉON 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 Bülow to Lord Wellington, Announcing that a Prussian corps is close, Was found on him. He speaks our language, sire.

NAPOLÉON [to prisoner] What force looms yonder on St. Lambert's Hill?

PRISONER General Count Bülow's van, your Majesty. [A thoughtful scowl crosses NAPOLÉONS'S sallow face.]

NAPOLÉON Where, then, did your main army lie last night?

PRISONER At Wavre.

NAPOLÉON But clashed it with no Frenchmen there?

PRISONER With none. We deemed they had marched on Plancenoit.

NAPOLÉON [shortly] Take him away. [The prisoner is removed.] Has Grouchy's whereabouts Been sought, to apprize him of this Prussian trend?

SOULT Certainly, sire. I sent a messenger.

NAPOLÉON [bitterly] A messenger! Had my poor Berthier been here Six would have insufficed! Now then: seek Ney; Bid him to sling the valour of his braves Fiercely on England ere Count Bülow 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 Bülow 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.]

**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 Bülow's corps, that have been joined there by BLÜCHER. 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 BLÜCHER and his staff ensues. The cannonade in the direction of Waterloo is growing more and more violent. BLÜCHER, 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. BLÜCHER 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, BLÜCHER 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 BÜLOW'S corps, and the third corps under THIELEMANN. The scene shifts.

**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 MÜFFLING, 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 Müffling, 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 Bülow's corps has only reached Ohain. I've sent Freemantle hence to seek them there, And give them inkling we shall need them soon.

MÜFFLING [looking at his watch] I had hoped that Blücher 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 Napoléon. 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!

MÜFFLING [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. [MÜFFLING 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.]

## 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 wownded 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 beholded 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.]

## 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.] NAPOLÉON [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!

NAPOLÉON 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 NAPOLÉON.]

AIDE The Prussians have debouched on our right rear From Paris-wood; and

Losthin's infantry Appear by Plancenoit; Hiller's to leftwards. Two regiments of their horse protect their front, And three light batteries. [A haggard shade crosses NAPOLÉON'S face.]

NAPOLÉON 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 tiding 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!

NAPOLÉON 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 Heymès—come from Ney.

NAPOLÉON [sullenly] And his face shows what clef his music's in! [Enter COLONEL HEYMÈS, blood-stained, muddy, and breathless.]

HEYMÈS 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!

NAPOLÉON [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!

HEYMÈS Such was the prayer Of my commission, sire. And I say That I myself have seen his strokes must waste Without such backing.

NAPOLÉON Why?

HEYMÈS Our cavalry Lie stretched in swathes, fronting the furnace-throats Of the English cannon as a breastwork built Of reeking copses. 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 HEYMÈS]

NAPOLÉON [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 Bülow'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.]

## 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 Napoléon'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 momently, 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 unmuscled 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 MÜFFLING, who has again rejoined the DUKE'S suite. MÜFFLING hastens forward to WELLINGTON.]

MÜFFLING Blücher 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. Blücher'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.]

## 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 BÜLOW, 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. [NAPOLÉON 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 Napoléon 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 NAPOLÉON'S centre just as the Prussians press forward at a right angle from the other side of the field. NAPOLÉON 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 it 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 coffined 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. NAPOLÉON endeavours to rally them. It is his last effort as a warrior; and the rally ends feebly.]

NAPOLÉON 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. NAPOLÉON is involved none knows where in the crowd of fugitives. WELLINGTON and BLÜCHER 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 BLÜCHER'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 tramplings 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]

## SCENE IX

THE WOOD OF BOSSU [It is midnight. NAPOLÉON 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.]

NAPOLÉON [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. NAPOLÉON'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.

NAPOLÉON [starting] Whose frigid tones are those, Breaking upon my lurid loneliness So brusquely?... Yet, 'tis true, I have ever know That such a Will I passively obeyed! [He drowses 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?

NAPOLÉON 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 umplumbed; 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.

NAPOLÉON 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, Napoléon; 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 NAPOLÉON 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,26 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.27

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 germing 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!

THE END OF "THE DYNASTS" September 25, 1907

## FOOTNOTES

1 (return) [ Schlegel.]

2 (return) [ Introduction to the Choephori.]

3 (return) [ It is now called an Epic-drama, Footnote 1909.]

4 (return) [ Through this tangle of intentions the writer has in the main followed Thiers, whose access to documents would seem to authenticate his details of the famous scheme for England's ruin.]

5 (return) [ These historic facings, which, I believe, won for the local [Footnote old 39th: regiment the nickname of "Green Linnets," have been changed for no apparent reason. Footnote They are now restored—1909]

6 (return) [ The remains of the lonely hut occupied by the beacon-keepers,

consisting of some half-buried brickbats, and a little mound of peat overgrown with moss, are still visible on the elevated spot referred to. The two keepers themselves, and their eccentricities and sayings are traditionary, with a slight disguise of names.]

7 (return) [ “Le projet existe encore aux archives de la marine que Napoléon consultait incessamment; il sentait que cette marine depuis Louis XIV. avait fait de grandes choses: le plan de l’Expedition d’Egypte et de la descente en Angleterre se trouvaient au ministere de la marine.”—CAPEFIGUE: L’Europe pendant le Consulat et l’Empire.]

8 (return) [ This weather-beaten old building, though now an hotel, is but little altered.]

9 (return) [ Soph. Trach. 1266-72.]

10 (return) [ This scene is a little antedated, to include it in the Act to which it essentially belongs.]

11 (return) [ “Quel bonhour que je n’aie aucun enfant pour recueillir mon horrible heritage et qui soit charge du poids de mon nom!”— [Footnote Extract from the poignant letter to his wife written on this night.—See Lanfrey iii. 374.]

12 (return) [ In those days the hind-part of the harbour adjoining this scene was so named, and at high tides the waves washed across the isthmus at a point called “The Narrows.”

13 (return) [ This General’s name should, it is said, be pronounced in three syllables, nearly PRESH-EV-SKY.]

14 (return) [ It has been conjectured of late that these adventurous spirits were Sir Robert Wilson and, possibly, Lord Hutchinson, present there at imminent risks of their lives.]

15 (return) [ The traditional present of the rose was probably on this occasion, though it is not quite matter of certainty.]

16 (return) [ At this date.]

17 (return) [ So Madame Metternich to her husband in reporting this interview. But who shall say!]

18 (return) [ The writer has been unable to discover what became of this unhappy lady and her orphaned infants.—[Footnote The foregoing note, which appeared in the first edition of this drama, was the means of bringing from a descendant of the lady referred to the information she remarried, and lived and died at Venice; and that both her children grew up and did well.—1909:

19 (return) [ Thomas Young of Sturminster-Newton; served twenty-one years in the Fifteenth [Footnote King's: Hussars; died 1853; fought at Vitoria, and Waterloo.]

20 (return) [ Hussars, it may be remembered, used to wear a pelisse, dolman, or "sling-jacket" [Footnote as the men called: , which hung loosely over the shoulder. The writer is able to recall the picturesque effect of this uniform.]

21 (return) [ Sheridan.]

22 (return) [ This famous ball has become so embedded in the history of the Hundred Days as to be an integral part of it. Yet in spite of the efforts that have been made to locate the room which saw the memorable gathering [Footnote by the present writer more than thirty years back, among other enthusiasts: , a dispassionate judgment must deny that its site has as yet been proven. Even Sir W. Fraser is not convincing. The event happened less than a century ago, but the spot is almost as phantasmal in its elusive mystery as towered Camelot, the palace of Priam, or the hill of Calvary.]

23 (return) [ The spelling of the date is used.]

24 (return) [ Samuel Clark; born 1779, died 1857. Buried at West Stafford, Dorset.]

25 (return) [ One of the many Waterloo men known to the writer in his youth, John Bentley of the Fusileer Guards, use to declare that he lay down on the ground in

such weariness that when food was brought him he could not eat it, and slept till next morning on an empty stomach. He died at Chelsea Hospital, 187-, aged eighty six.]

26 (return) [ Transcriber's note: This footnote is an excerpt in Greek from the "Magnificat" canticle, the Latin character equivalent being "katheile DYNASTAS apo THrono," or "He has put down the mighty from their thrones."—D.L.]

27 (return) [ Hor. Epis. i, 12.]

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