THE SEA-POWER OF ENGLAND · BY AMABEL STRACHEY

"As the importance of our being strong at Sea was ever very great, so in our present Circumstances it is grown to be much greater; because as formerly our Force of Shipping contributed greatly to our Trade and Safety, so now it is become indispensibly necessary to our Very Being. It may be said now to England, Martha, Martha, thou art busy about many things, but one thing is necessary. To the Question, What shall we do to be saved in this World? there is no answer but this, 'Look to your Moate."

LORD HALIFAX THE TRIMMER, 1694.

THE SEA-POWER OF ENGLAND

A PLAY FOR A VILLAGE AUDIENCE

BY AMABEL STRACHEY

WITH A CHORUS
BY MRS. ST. LOE STRACHEY

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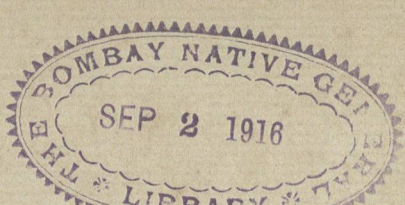

A PERSIAN TALE

OH BELOVED:

Once, when Achmed the Good was Shah in Persia, there was in a certain province a man of exceedingly great holiness and wisdom, that dwelt alone by a little stream in a grove of ilex-trees.

One day, it befell as this holy man sat at the door of his house enjoying the cool shade of the trees, there came to him a young man with an expression of oppressive sorrow stamped upon his countenance, who, after he had prostrated himself, folding his hands upon his breast, spoke thus, at the same time sighing repeatedly and casting his eyes toward heaven as if in the greatest affliction:

"O servant of the Truth—for such I believe thou art—I come to thee for counsel, being in great grief of mind.

"I was a student of the law and of the poets, and having in my studies found a means by which men might free their souls from the bonds of violent adversity, I desired, when I had completed my appointed time of study, to go out and tell the world what I had found.

"I therefore went to the principal square of the city at noon, and, standing upon the steps of the fountain, I told the people in plain words how they

might indeed be freed from the bonds of violence. This," continued the young man, "I did for many days, and though at first the people listened to my words, as soon as they heard that my talk was of instruction, straightway they left me and went back to their chaffering, and, behold ! I spoke to the empty air."

And with this the young man beat upon his breast, and his sighs mingled with the cool breeze that just then stirred among the ilex-trees.

Then the man of wisdom looked up from his beads, which all the while had travelled through his hands, and said :

" O youth, thou hast been a student of Hafiz and of Jami. Mingle with thine instructions the strangeness of their tales and their loveliness—which is the loveliness of running water and of trees stirred in the breeze—and come again in seven months."

So the young man departed. And after seven months he came again, and he still rent the air with his sighs, and, after he had prostrated himself, he spoke thus :

" O servant of the Truth, I have mingled in my instructions the wonders of the poets, and though certain of the people now hear my words, I have by my instructions, alas ! utterly spoiled the tales of Jami and of Hafiz, and have made false the narratives of the chroniclers. Also, my instructions have by this means become darkened, and

I fear that no man is now able to comprehend them."

And with that the young man beat upon his breast, saying :

"I have sinned against Jami and against Hafiz and against the writers of the chronicles."

And he watered the grass of that place with his tears.

And the man of wisdom, leaning against an ilex-tree, answered and spoke thus :

"O youth, and art thou sure that thy instructions are not indeed so old as to be very easily comprehended ? And as for Jami and for Hafiz and the writers of the chronicles, behold they are mighty enough to stand for themselves, and it is not possible for such as thou art to sin against them. Therefore, rejoice only that whereas before no man listened to thee, certain of the people now hear thy words ; and believe not either that thy instructions are so marvellous as not to be very easily understood, or that thou canst at all harm either Jami or Hafiz or the writers of the chronicles."

I

EPISODE FIRST

(A.D. 897) 6009

ALFRED (King of Wessex), ELSWITHA (Queen to Alfred), BRENWARD (a saga-man), COENRED (a Thane), EANFLED (attendant on the Queen), A "SALVAGE MAN," BISHOPS, EARLDOMEN, and ATTENDANTS.

(*The Chorus, wearing a classic robe and crown of bays, enters from between the closed curtains and stands before them while speaking her lines*).

CHORUS—

Ships and the men I sing
Who to our nation bring
Her noblest powers.
E'en from her day of birth,
Lands were of little worth,
The sea is ours.
Listen, ye Islanders!
The waves that thunder storming on our shores
Tell each the story. He who rules this land
Must rule the sea. From Britain's earliest days,
When the rude Norseman ran his narrow ships
Up every creek where anchorage would hold,
Till now, when great Leviathans afloat
Circle us round with steel;—when, not content

With resting on the surface, we must dive
Beneath the element to hold our own,—
Our nation's life has meant for us—the sea.
Ah! we have struggled, we have shed our blood;
Have been called pirates, robbers, sea-dogs, thieves.
What knows the alien of our pressing need?
What recks he of our crowded race confined
Within the limits of these little isles?
. . . . . So, to hold our lands
And to take other lands to hold our race
For both these vital needs, we hold the sea.
Here would we show you in our pictured scenes
Dim shadowings of how the story runs
Of our sea power. Carry back your minds
A thousand years—nay, more, to Saxon times.
See now where Alfred, wise King of Wessex,
Holding his kingdom, steadfast 'gainst the Dane,
Strong in his state craft, firm and far-seeing,
Calls for more surf deer, longs for sea conquest.
Hail to King Alfred!

(*Exit between the curtains*).

(*The curtains rise*). *The stage has a perfectly plain black back curtain; there are no footlights, and a flight of steps in the middle of the stage leads down into the audience.*

Alfred is discovered sitting at a small table—middle back; a diadem lies before him, the Alfred jewel by its side. A spear stands propped against the table, and there is a helmet on the ground

at his feet. He sits with his profile to the audience. He is dressed in a robe which hangs nearly to his ankles, and has a cloak fastened upon his shoulders by large gold bosses. The robe is of a dark stuff, heavily embroidered. On the table is a horn containing ink. A largish drawing of a ship lies spread out and several scrolls and illuminated books lie near him; the usual lighted candle with bands upon it stands upon the table. He has a quill pen in his hand and is writing slowly.

Alfred's stool, the table, and another stool which stands near, and two rough chairs that stand on a low dais sideways to the audience and to the extreme right of the stage, constitute the only furniture. The two chairs are obviously used as thrones and have skins thrown over them.

ALFRED (*putting down the pen*): Ten black ships more and we must drive off the Dane . . . if my nine still swim upon the fallow sea. I would give my life to have been able to follow this way, matching surf deer with surf deer and coursing beaked prow with beaked prow when I first thought upon it. It would have saved you, my people, many bitter hours and many red games at the fierce sword play . . . me, it would have given what I can never now know, quiet peace to get learning . . . I might have read Boethius as I read Saxon. . . . But you thought it was a folly new, and not tried, to build ships. I was held to

be a lad . . . one taken by any new enterprise. But the long-beaked ships were at once your saving from the red-hand Dane, the ravager that devoured you, and with ten more black bars shall you prison them into their Dane-land.

(*Enter the Queen, with an attendant, hurriedly—the attendant remains standing by the door*).

QUEEN : Sir, now, as I looked out on the river, a man shot out round the bend in a little hide and wicker boat. He seemed sick and tired and worked his paddle with panting haste, and now is landed here, and, they say, with news of a sea battle that he saw from far away.

ALFRED (*eagerly rising*) : Is he here, Lady ?—had you speech with him ?—were they my nine ships ?

QUEEN : I know nothing. Will you not question him ?

ALFRED : Let your woman call him hastily, Lady. (*The Queen signs to her attendant, who goes out*).

ALFRED : All my planning may come to nothing if my ships were driven off ; the Danes . . . sit, Lady. (*The Queen sits on one of the stools, Alfred opposite her across the table. Enter a Thane* (*Goenred*) *with a sword, ushering in a wild-looking man dressed in skins*).

ALFRED (*gently*) : Child, what saw you ? (*The man falls on his knees and kisses Alfred's robe*).

MAN : Father, I saw far in a creek long ships that fought.

ALFRED : And how did the battle go, my child ?

MAN : Many ships were sunk, much folk slain. After the sun was full-risen few ships put to sea of one side.

ALFRED : Were they the Danes or my Saxons and Friesians that were so few ?

MAN : I was so far I might not see, but the ships that were so few were very great and long. . . . I stood upon a hill . . . more I do not know, but I came in my coracle like a jay to tell what I saw.

ALFRED : "Very great and long"—my sea coursers! . . . (*Turning to the man*) My child, you did very well to come with whatever news you had. (*To the Queen*) : Lady, will you bid your people give this good "jay" some food ? (*To the man*) : You may stay here as long as you will.

MAN : I am afraid to bide in housen, Father. May I go back to my boat ?

QUEEN : Give him some food, Eanfled, and let him go back to his boat. (*Rises and gives the man a ring from her finger*).

ALFRED : Go, child. (*Exit all but the King and Queen*).

QUEEN : What bode you of this, sir ? News and no news.

ALFRED : I do not know how to think of it, Elswitha. You know that the ships are spear, sword, and buckler to us now. . . . If my sea hawks, that fly over the running seas . . . my

ships that I love . . . are sunk, all my late plans are as vain as . . . tales of Odin's might . . . and (*explanatory*) my ships are longer and greater than the Dane esks which are small. . . . Still it may be . . .

QUEEN : I wish we might indeed have news.

ALFRED : I will send a Thane that shall look out from the platform to tell if a new messenger come. (*He strikes upon the ground with his spear. Enter Coenred*).

COENRED : I am here King, what will you ?

ALFRED : Let a man go out upon the platform. I would have the news at once if another messenger come from the battle in the creek.

COENRED : I will go. (*Exit*).

(*There is a little pause. Alfred walks about and finally picks up the Alfred jewel from the table*).

ALFRED : Lady, as I sat here numbering my ships—and how many are they now ?—I mused of how this jewel was like our land ; do you see of what a shape it is ? (*He passes it to the Queen*).

QUEEN : There is a sea monster of gold that circles many cunning colours of very fair smith's work, and the image of a man that wears a king's crown is in the middle.

ALFRED : Like this cunning work of colours is the land, Elswitha ; a fleet of strong ships must —like the jewel's monster—encircle and guard it.

QUEEN (*reflectively*): Ah! ship circled.

ALFRED: Ship circled. He who would long hold this land must always guard her with a great company of ships. . . . If a time came that he must take the beams from his house to build ships he must do it. If ships grew as costly as bright gold . . . still he must build even a golden monster to hold the land in peace . . .

QUEEN: You will soon have ship for ship with the Dane, will you not?

ALFRED: I would have ship for ship again, and each ship greater than the Dane; there is no other way to keep them in their Dane-land. Their faith is nothing, and we must have peace. . . . The land cries out for peace . . . ah! that was a foot-fall.

(*Enter Eanfled*).

QUEEN: Have you got news, Eanfled?

EANFLED: None, Queen; the man is gone that came in the coracle; he was afraid. Shall I attend you, Lady?

QUEEN: No, leave us now. (*Exit Eanfled*).

ALFRED: Ah! I hoped it was a messenger (*looking at the banded candle*). We should have heard by now if the fight was at dawn. . . . If this battle went for the Dane, I must now call every grown man. . . . Yes, they must leave corn ripe in field (*he paces up and down*) . . . and helped by my ten new ships, we must strike at them at once. . . . If there were time I would build six

small ships to draw less water in the creeks . . . then with every man we could call from harvest . . . (*he breaks off*). Oh, this red war! It is a game for witless beasts, not men.

I am of blood and of burning and of fierce anger, very weary, having toiled since my youth. I have seen war ravage Wisdom. Learning was fled from our land. Now I have nursed Wisdom back with the bread of philosophy . . . she opened her eyes again. Leisure might the priests have to learn God's will from their books . . . the clerks and monks in the schools to copy the books fair out of Latin for the unlearned to hear the truth, and now it may be I must see my work, to make my land of some account in learning among the nations, as once she was—scattered . . . and, being now very weary, how shall I build it again? If the Danes won in the creek, it may be endless war again. . . . Oh, we shall grow wild like the grey homeless beast of the forest . . . (*turning again to his papers*). So we must strike quickly, for we should still have the advantage . . .

QUEEN: It may be a victory; he knew very little.

ALFRED: Yet I must plan as if I knew it a defeat. (*He sits down at the table, draws a piece of paper to him and begins to work at it. Horse hoofs heard without; they are at the gallop; a heavy door is banged*).

QUEEN: A horse tread!

ALFRED : Perhaps news.

(*Enter Coenred*).

COENRED : King ; Brenward, your own saga-man, is ridden here like the night-wind, his horse dark with sweat and the dirt of wayfaring, and he comes very swiftly to you.

(*Enter Brenward*).

BRENWARD (*striking an attitude, he really supports the combined rolls of a press representative and a professional reciter*) : Alfred, King of Wessex and of Mercia !

To-day have your black ships done heroes' battle with the Dane. Like the beak of a ship did your warriors divide the Danes that were as windy foam. One by one did we sink their ships at grey dawn in the creek—one by one, till three ships of warriors are gone to their Valhall, and two more ships will never fight again. Three ships only of all that company live.

ALFRED : My long ships that I love !

BRENWARD : Greater battles have I seen, more folks slain, but such a battle of heroes never before. Command, and I will sing you the saga of it.

ALFRED (*to Coenred*) : Call all my Councillors. Denewolf, Bishop at Winchester, and Asser of Sherborne, and Elstan, Bishop in London, and the priest Grimbold ; and Ethelm, Earldoman of Wiltshire, and Athulf, the Queen's brother, and bid them come to hear Brenward's tale. Also bid the Mass priests chant for victory. (*Exit Coenred*).

QUEEN : Sir, may my women, wives of men brave in battle, hear this too ?

ALFRED : Lady, bid them come.

(*Exit the Queen*).

BRENWARD : We ran against the foul Dane in the creek that runs by the island called Wight, and three Dane esks we found at the mouth, and more that were grounded high up by the tide ; and the fight was just before the dawn. Ever since I have ridden, and the words of my saga burn in my mouth.

(*Re-enter the Queen, wearing a cloak of ceremony carried by two attendants. Eanfled walks behind her. The King rises and stands near the Queen. The King and Queen sit upon the thrones, the Queen's women grouped behind her. Brenward pulls a stool into the middle of the stage and stands by it, unfastening his little harp from his back. Chanting heard without, as a door at the end of the hall opens. Enter, through the audience, the three Bishops, followed by the Priest, the two Earldomen, and Coenred. They mount the stage by the flight of steps in the middle. The Bishops make a sign of benediction as they pass the throne. As they do so the King and Queen rise and stand with bowed heads. The soldiers present their sword hilts with a slight obeisance. The King and Queen resume their seats, and the Bishops and Earldomen, etc., form a group at the left side of the stage. The chanting ceases*).

ALFRED (*rising*): Venerable Bishops and Earldomen; to-day, at dawn, the nine long ships that I sent out against the Dane met the ravagers in a creek near the Island of Wight. Three Dane esks they sunk, more they maimed, and the rest—three, they drove out to sea again. I hold this battle to be of some moment; more than for the ships sunk or the men slain. It is the first victory for very many weeks. It may buy us peace for a time; it may be for long enough to give us time to finish the bettering of law through the Witan which we had begun before the famine. Brenward saw the battle and will tell you the manner of it in his saga.

(*The King resumes his seat; Brenward sits on his stool and plays an occasional note on his little harp, as he speaks his saga*).

SAGA.*

(*Read across*).

Hearken, King Alfred, And thou Royal Athulf,
And to the battle news, Earldomen of Wessex,
Lend you your ears.

Why did the Dane-men Turn from their plunder,
The haughty warriors From the spoil-taking?
Why did the Wolf-men, Wallowing in waters,
Lie down war weary, Sleep on the wan sand,
Till the tide waters Rolled them together?

* The saga should be spoken in a sing-song voice, with great emphasis on the meter. The rythm should be rather like that of a horse trotting, and the poem should go fast.

Then was the battle-work
At turn of tide
There was many a man

Then fell of Danes,
The two red ravagers,
In battle mighty,
Cuthwin and Ceowald,
With the rough spear play
And of English fell, too,
Valiant in battle ;
Cunning in sea-craft,
Of honour worthy,
The Dane boasted not,
He, when the sun rose,

When the sun grew red,
Soon as the tide turned,
Spoil had they none,
They took no gold,
Back to the ships.
So fled the heathen,
Joy was in heaven,
Thanks be to God.

When the ships grounded
Sore in the dry creek.
Lulled with the swift spear.
Frene and Berewulf,
Frealaf and Beldeg ;
Frithwulf and Breaw,
Wulfhelm the terrible,

Six score slain.
Ethelfirth the King's man
Ethelere and Lucumen,
And many more
Three score warriors.
Raised not the war-cry ;
Sailed from the creek-mouth ;
Swiftly in nailed ships,
Fled to the sea ;
The bold plunderers.
Nor women sorrowful,

Offspring of Odin.
Sorrow in Valhall.

(*Brenward springs up ana stands in a melodramatic attitude. The King rises, gives his hand to the Queen, who also rises*).

ALFRED : Bishop Asser, Eldest of the Bishops, I would greatly desire that you yourself say our Te Deum of Thanksgiving, which I ask that you celebrate now, before we eat.

(*Asser heads the procession of Bishops, who go out through the audience, followed by the priest, after him the King and Queen, and after them the Earls and Thanes. As the door is opened a clanking bell is heard. The stage is left empty*).

CURTAIN.

II

EPISODE SECOND

(Sluys, 1340)

The King, The Countess of Pembroke, Lady Dorigen, Sir William d'Artois*, Mister Richard of Manny (a young exquisite), Ralf (a Fool), Emily (a young waiting-woman), Two Men-at-Arms, Two Sailors (Attendants on the King).

(Enter the Chorus from between the closed curtains).

Chorus—

How shall we show you that which follows next?
Sure a full sen'night would you tarry here
An' we displayed all we would have you see.
But your own knowledge must fill up the gulf
Which lies between the Saxon days and those
When the three Edwards filled the English throne.
We show not here the Norman Duke, whose ships,
Sailing from Dives, brought him to victory
On Senlac field. Nor shall we show the king,
Whose face was set towards Jerusalem,
Richard, the Lion-Heart. But pass at once
To the third Edward, whom the Chroniclers
"King of the Sea" have hailed.
At the beginning of the tedious war,

* "d'Artois" should be anglicised, and made to rhyme with "noise."

Which for a hundred years ravaged poor France—
Our sometime foe, to-day our trusted friend—
There fell a victory to English ships
At Sluys, a roadstead on the Flemish coast,
The King himself commanding. His fair Queen,
The gentle Philippa—she, who afterwards
Saved Calais' sad defeated citizens—
Tarried her lord in Flanders, and her household
Had claimed the escort of the King's great fleet
To bring them safe to their Liege Lady's service.
Of all the Courts of Europe in that day,
Edward and Philippa's shone brighest far.
Their Tournaments were famed — their brave knights' valour
Renowned afar, and their sweet ladies' eyes
Set half the hearts of Christendom afire.
Believe yourselves aboard the courtiers' ship,
Show we the sea fight through those same bright eyes.
But think not you will hear the cannon's roar,
For six years later Crécy's stricken field
First echoed that grim music. But to-day
Deem you are in the cabin of a ship,
The battle joined between the Frenchmen's fleet,
Gay with its painted banners and spread sails,
And our brave galleons, half-a-mile away.
Yet the slow hours are passing tediously,
For a sea fog, dropt like a veil between
The vessel and her consorts, hides the view
Of striving ships. And so with jest and song
And smitten lute strings they beguile the hours.

Yet sometimes, like a spear, the sun's rays pierce
The enveloping fog, and close-locked ships are seen
As in a picture. Froissart's Chronicle
Best tells the tale, but with your gentle help
Our art shall take you back six hundred years
And make it live again. (*Exit between the curtains.*

(*The curtains rise*). *The scene is laid on board one of the ships which carried a number of ladies and of courtiers to see Queen Philippa at Ghent, and which stood off a little, while the King's ships fought the French at the battle of Sluys.*

The setting is the same as in the last Episode, and there are doors on the right and left. Several stools covered with violently bright coloured stuffs and a sea chest constitute the only furniture.

Lady Dorigen, who, with a tight linen coif, wears a long tight gown, bright salmon pink on one side, and white with black heraldic beasts appliquéd on the other, is discovered sitting on a stool, a lute in her hands, whilst the "flower-like young man," Richard of Manny, kneels on one knee before her, holding a long scroll of music from which she is singing. The Lady faces the audience exactly. Lady Pembroke and the Fool sit on two stools at either side of the stage and quite at the back, rather formally facing the audience.

LADY DORIGEN (*sings*):

Summer is i cummen in
Loude sing Cuccu
Groweth seed and bloweth meed

And springth the woodé nu
Sing Cuccu
Ewé bleateth after lamb
Lowth after calvé cu
Bullock sterteth, bucke verteth
Murrie sing Cuccu
Cuccu Cuccu
Well singes thou Cuccu
Ne cease thou naver nu.

FOOL (*sadly*) : Thou hast but little voice, Lady.

DORIGEN : *Par Di!* and I could wish thou had'st none at all, sir, fool.

Enter SIR WILLIAM D'ARTOIS—*He wears black tights, and a black tunic with wide hanging sleeves lined with black and white striped silk. He has a very fine embossed sword-belt, and a rather long sword ; his tight capuchin is black and buttons under the chin*—(*pompously*) : What, Madame Dorigen, and do you sing whilst the King and his fleet are in jeopardy ?

DORIGEN : By St. Charity, the mist hides all ; we do but employ our time till we may see or have tidings.

(*By this time Richard of Manny has put down the music, and gone sauntering out, bored by Sir William d'Artois*).

D'ARTOIS : And the young Esquire, that is so fresh and lusty, but spenden all his time in singing and dalliance whilst his lord fights, it is . . .

LADY PEMBROKE : But what can we do ? By 'r

Lady, we are too far from the fleet for him to striken a blow.

D'ARTOIS: Still he could . . .

(*The Fool goes solemnly up to d'Artois, whom he wishes to hedge off an unpleasant subject*).

FOOL: Sir, would you hear Philosophy? And I will present you with a great truth:

"When it's dark at Dover,
It's dark all the world over."

D'ARTOIS (*annoyed*): Jackanapes! God rest you, Ladies. I go to clean my arms.

FOOL (*chants, snapping his fingers*):

"Driff, Draff, mish, mash,
Some was bread, and some was chaff." *

(*Dorigen tosses him a ball of worsted, and they all three play at ball*).

(*Enter* RICHARD OF MANNY, *hurriedly*).

MANNY: I' faith they go at it now, ladies; the mist is clear lifted by St. Anne. If you would see a gallant sight, you should both come upon deck. It's a rare sight, certain.† The King's ship lies to, with all the canvas furled, and she has grappled a great French ship to her lovingly, I warrant, *Par Di!* The arrows fly as fast as kisses, ladies, I swear. Through all the fleet they fly so.

LADY PEMBROKE: Shall we go and see this, Dorigen?

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* From a morality of about 1470.

† Pronounce cer*tain*.

DORIGEN : With all my will, sweet Elenour. I should thinken it folly to miss the sight of this sea-tournament, for I think that it is not many ladies that have seen such a sight by St. Barbara.

MANNY : Then come with me now, ladies, for I swear the sea mist, *Par Di !* comes up between us and the fleet quickly.

(*The lady who has the ball throws it aside, and they both rise and go out right, followed by Manny*).

The Fool takes up the lute, and, putting one foot on the stool, proceeds to sing in imitation of Lady Dorigen, and in the most lugubrious tones) :

FOOL (*sings*) :*

"Bring us in good Ale,
And bring us in good Ale,
For our blessed Lady's sake,
Bring us in good Ale.
Bring us in no beef,
For it hath many bones,
But bring us in good Ale,
For that goeth down at once,
Bring us in good Ale" (*ral*).

(*He notices the ball of wool on the floor, and stealthily takes it up, unfastening one end, which he ties to one end of the stool legs. He throws the ball rapidly from hand to hand in such a way that, as he sits on the floor, it winds round the legs of the stool in a tangle.*

* About 1500

When he is satisfied with the result, he goes to the door left, and calls out).

FOOL : Emily, Emily, come down from admiring the fleet, and see what work your lady has left you.

EMILY (*calls from without*) : If it's work for me, I warrant 'twas you and no other that made it, Jackdaw.

(*Enter Emily, a handsome country girl*).

FOOL : You wrong me ! you wrong me ! dazzling fair one, my queen of May. But it's no matter, sickerly, for who did it. 'Tis you that must put it in order (*twirling round inconsequently on one toe*) :

" Come wind, come rain,
Though I never come again."*

EMILY (*sulkily*) : I wot this is your work, Meddler. Why pleasen you to torment an honest girl with your foolery. St. Quintin forfend I touch it. My lady shall know it was you that did it. By 'r Lady, you should be beat for it certainly.

FOOL : Now then, pretty lambkin, bleat more sweetly, I beg. (*Re-enter d'Artois*). See, Sir Valiancy, an idle serving girl, that will not, in verity, pick up a ball of wool for her lady. Oh, fie for shame, Emily !

EMILY (*still sulkily, and a little confused*) : I think it is he that put it so, should unravel it, my Lord. It was not my Lady at all.

* From the same.

D'ARTOIS (*pompously*): No matter, it will not taken you long, good girl. Your mistress must not finden it thus, for who did it.

FOOL (*suddenly*): Which has the most legs, wisest counsellor, a hobby horse, your worship's old brown mare, or no horse?

(*By this time Emily has begun to unwind the wool*).

D'ARTOIS: Why any horse must have more legs than no horse, fool; and I suppose that my beautiful mare has the most.

FOOL: But no horse has five legs.

D'ARTOIS (*gravely explanatory*): Yes, but any horse must have more legs than a horse that exists not. Use your reason, fool.

FOOL (*mock heroic*): Sir, dare you swear upon the sacred writ of the Hundred Merry Tales that your old brown mare has more than five legs? Or deny, Sirrah, that no horse has five, aye, six legs?

D'ARTOIS (*pompously*): You mistake the question . . . I . . .

FOOL (*snapping his fingers and capering in derision, sings*):

"Bring us in good Ale,
And bring us in good Ale . . ."

(*Re-enter the two ladies and Manny*).

MANNY: Holloa! Sir William d'Artois. It is a gallant sight, God wot, Sir, to see the great fight, by St. Charity. And have you seen it, Sir?

D'ARTOIS: No, scarce at all, Sir. It is very

well, but indeed I thirst so to be as ever at the King's right hand when there is any exploit of valour forward, that I can hardly bear to see an exchange of blows in which I must no more play my part.

MANNY : Yet it is noble to see. The ships stood in two lines orderly, by 'r Lady, but now they be all for-mingled together, their yards so full of cross-bowers and they may hold. And *Par Di !* with every ship of archers is one with men-at arms, and they be so many that they may scarce stand upon the deck with their halberds and pikes.

DORIGEN : And but now, Sir, the young sun was piercen through the mist and shone dazzling upon their armour, and upon the King's royal banners. Now is the wanton vapour returned, we may see no more. We are but come back here, truly, forby we may see no more.

MANNY : I think, by St. Denis, we may haply drift into the fleet, God wot, whiles this sea mist is toward. (*With bravura*), An I thought I might see the "Christopher," ladies won back, I care not how near we come to see it.

FOOL (*he is lying on his back in the front of the stage*) : And what may the "Christopher" be, my lusty squire ? (*A second thought*) See, Emily, that is but a silly filly knows it not.

EMILY (*annoyed*) : Sooth, Sir, I know very well, the " Christopher " is the King's great ship that the

French took; it was a twelvemonth and more. It is he knows not, Sir.

FOOL: And I will ask you a question that you know not. Now, ladies, bend your brows and furrow your foreheads, and tell me, in good law Latin, the three uses of wheat.

DORIGEN (*laughing*): Faith, I know not; out with thy jape. Thou hast sought occasion for it these ten minutes.

FOOL (*solemnly*):

"Corn serveth breadibus,
Chaff horsibus,
Straw firebusque."

Which is to say to your slow understandings, as: "The corn shall serve to bread at the next baking. The chaff to horse shall serve as good produce. When a man is for-cold the straw may be brent*." (*Turning to D'Artois*): Now you may have clerkly learning from me in a nutshell.

D'ARTOIS: But said you not, good Squire, even now, before this dull fool began to prate and weary us with his folly, that we might haply chance to drift into the midst of the battle with this vile sea fog?

MANNY: Yes, Sir, by St. George, and I think this were right likely for to happen.

D'ARTOIS: But, good Squire, then were we in peril of our lives. It maken me right aghast to

* From the same.

hear you speak so. . . . For the many ladies we have here I would mean.

MANNY: Yet I think it were very like to chance so.

D'ARTOIS: But for the dames and damoiselles here, nothing were me pleasanter. Should we chance to join battle with the French, then should I eke strike a blow or two which were me liefer than a thousand pound—I will go clean my arms. (*Exit*).

LADY PEMBROKE: By St. Anne, he will clean his arms all day long, certain.

FOOL: Madam, think you that this knight is of a very noble, excellent courage?

LADY PEMBROKE: What meanen you, good fool?

FOOL: In plain speech, sithen you understand not philosophy, Lady; I think that he is afraid, now at this present.

DORIGEN (*anxiously*): He may overhear you, fool? beware how you speak so loud.

FOOL: "Beware, quod the good wife, as she smote off her husband's head, Beware*." But in sober truth, Lady, I am in mind that he is afraid.

MANNY (*delighted*): Now that weren excellent sport, *Par Di!*

DORIGEN: A jest, a jest, good fool; the time hangs till we may see the fleet.

* From the same.

FOOL : Certain, I have in my mind excellently for to jesten, for all I am "a dull fool that wearies."

MANNY : By St. Antony of Bretagne and his pig, out with it quickly.

FOOL : Then musten you all that be here swearen in a great oath—upon my bauble in name—to obey me "toteme in totus," which is totally and in all things throughoutten this aventure as your Generalissimo.

DORIGEN (*solemnly*) : Sir fool certain, and you give us a good jest to while away the time till we may see the fleet again, we will in all things obey your most worshipful folly.

FOOL (*striking an attitude*) : First, musten Emily go away. She being, as I said, a silly filly, and also a mar-all.

LADY PEMBROKE : Emily, avaunt ! (*The Fool escorts her out singing, and ends up the song with a kind of step dance, inconsequently, in the middle of the stage*).

FOOL (*sings*) :

"Driff, draff, mish, mash,
Some was straw, and some was chaff,
My dame said my name was Raff,
Unshut your lock, and take a half-penny."*
(*last line spoken*).

(*He resumes a heroic attitude*). Now swearen all-e-three upon my bauble, and by the sacred pig of St. Antony of Bretagne.

* From the same.

DORIGEN (*chants, holding her right hand aloft for the oath*) :

Upon thy bauble, and by the renowned pig of
St. Antony of Bretagne in troth,
We swearen all-e-three you in this aventure to obey
As our Generalissimo, certain as we may.

ALL THREE : Folly be our witness in this great oath (*this is chanted as a kind of Gregorian*).

FOOL : Now unfolden I you the matter. I and this freshé squire will leave you (*pointing to the ladies*) here, as it seemeth, alone, then shall you feignen to be afraid "That we draw so near to the French fleet, and mighten be in jeopardy by 'r Lady," and so you shall call upon Sir William d'Artois to leave cleaning his weapons, and to biden in your company to comfort you. (*Pointing to Lady Pembroke*) For you, my dear mistress and Lady of Pembroke, I think he will come hastily.

He being so with you presently, you shall hear a cracking noise on the deck (of a great spar that I will let fall), and, presently, as of armed men that walken hastily, and cries, and a great outcry, and, suddenly, one shall beat upon the door, and you shall cry (*falsetto*) "The French have boarded us, by 'r Lady. Now help us, good Sir William." And then shall two men, in their arms and their faces hidden, burst in upon you, crying : "Dieu et St. Denis !" and . . . I know that Sir William

hath cleaned his weapons, but if he will use them . . .

DORIGEN : By 'r Lady, in the defence of dames, be he coward or not, he cannot so fail. The test seemen to me too easy, worthy Generalissimo. He will slay you both truly, he cannot fail.

FOOL : I am minden that he will fail for all that, Lady.

MANNY (*with delight*) : Letten us him testen quickly, Lady. I am on fire for to try him, by St. Ursule.

FOOL : It shall be done at this present, the while the mist holds. (*Grandly*), Now, sithen, you have your commands, we will do on our cloaks to hide us, and our arms to protect us. (*Exit, marching pompously round the stage, flourishing a wooden sword, and followed by Richard of Manny*).

LADY PEMBROKE (*laughing*) : Now, Dorigen, putten all the woe of which you are mistress in your countenance, and taken your lute in your hand, but not playen thereon as you were afeard and were listening, the whiles I go and call Sir William as dolefully as I may. For which way it goes, or whether he run or stand firm, 'twill be most excellent sport I deem. (*Dorigen does as she is bidden, composing her countenance with some difficulty. Lady Pembroke goes to the door and calls*).

LADY PEMBROKE : Sir William d'Artois, for our Lady, leave cleaning your weapons, for the Lady Dorigen and I be sore feared, for they say now

that we drift into the fleet presently. Comforten us, quickly, we beggen of you. (*Enter Sir William d'Artois, an empty scabbard by his side. Lady Pembroke goes on in tones of mock entreaty and complaint*). Richard of Manny is gone, I know not whither, and if the French break into the ship, we shall need a knight, God wot.

D'ARTOIS: Nay, nay, gentle ladies, you needen have no fear. An I am by you, all the world will haven you in awe. Was it not I that, with half—no, I bethink me, a quarter score cross-bowers—held the hollow lane that ran down to the sea in Picardy, against a thousand French knights. Yes, by St. Michael, and I that beat the unknown knight that was so valiant and lusty, and had all his enemies y' slain in the lists at Winchelsea, before I came.

. . . (*Consolingly*): But what is this stir? who hath tolden you that we drift into the fleet? Sooth, I believen it never a word. Yet, Lady of Pembroke, for your fair eyes, for your sweet grace . . . (*A loud crash heard above*).

LADY PEMBROKE (*her fingers to her ears*): Ah, what meanen this, Sir William!

DORIGEN: Sooth, listen! (*They are all silent for a moment, the sound of heavy footfalls on the deck above, at first slow, then a cry, the footfalls become quicker. From this point the action is of whirlwind rapidity*).

D'ARTOIS: Fear not, Ladies, it is but the

sailors . . . I protesten . . . this is unmannerly . . . (*His voice trails away, as a pandemonium breaks out above of men in heavy boots running, shouts and yells, the rattle of blows on armour, groans and battle cries and more crashes, and finally the sound of armed men close outside, and a thundering blow upon the door —right*).

LADY PEMBROKE (*with mock terror*): The French have boarded us, by 'r Lady. . . . Now help us, good Sir William. (*Another thundering blow on the door*).

TWO VOICES (*without*): Dieu et St. Denis! (*D'Artois puts his hand, as he thinks, to his sword . . . with a look of horror and despair perceives that it is not there, grasps at a short dagger. Manny and the Fool burst open the door, and rush in—they are disguised in cloaks, and each has on some kind of helmet or hat, which hides his face. The two ladies escape into the corners (left), leaving D'Artois, much perturbed by the absence of his sword, in the middle of the stage*).

FOOL (*with an abominable accent*): Ong garde, Sire.

MANNY (*ditto, and in bloodthirsty tones*): Tuez, Tuez, Kill, Kill. (*The Fool makes a few passes at d'Artois. d'Artois perceives how helpless he is with only his dagger. Then both rush at him. Conscious of the uselessness of his weapon, he stands a moment paralysed, then turns suddenly, and rushes between the two ladies, and out at the door—left*).

MANNY (*raising his hat in such a way that his face is visible*) : Oh, this is excellent sport, *Par Di!*

FOOL : On Avong . . . Persuen . . . most excellent Frenchman (*sings to the original tune*) : "Porte nous de la bonne bière" . . . Dieu et St. Denis! (*Exit both with the battle cry. The Ladies come out of their corners*).

LADY PEMBROKE (*laughing*) : Truth, Dorigen, d'Artois musten turn clerk after this.

DORIGEN (*defending him*) : But saw you not, Elenour, he had no sword. Fight, he could not, truly, with a dagger against two.

LADY PEMBROKE (*much amused*) : Ho, then, it was the cleaning of his arms undid him. Truth, he must have forgot his sword when he had maden it shine to his liking. (*The door to the right is opened, and d'Artois comes quietly in, a drawn sword in his hand*).

D'ARTOIS : Ah, they be not returnen ; God wot, they pressed me hard. I had scarce time to get my sword.

LADY PEMBROKE (*mock severe*) : What meant you by this, Sir William ; you left us to their mercy, sooth.

D'ARTOIS (*hurt*) : Lady, use your reason. I went but to get my sword ; an they had me slain then haden you been at their mercy, truly. (*Laying down the principle in a tone of calm logic*), It is unreasonable to fight two men, that have swords, with one dagger, Madam.

LADY PEMBROKE: Should any more come of these enemies, it were us very lief that thou stayedst with us. . . . Leave us not again, good knight.

D'ARTOIS (*with dignity*): Madam, now I have my sword, it . . . (*Noise of feet without; cries of "Dieu et St. Denis!" another terrific blow upon the door. Manny and the Fool again rush in. Manny remains by the door, the Fool advances upon d'Artois*).

FOOL: Ha! Ha! Chevalier, Bong Ronconter, Ong garde . . . (*He makes a few passes, d'Artois, flicks his blows away. Manny sees the Fool in difficulties, and also rushes at d'Artois; the Fool slips out of range, and watches the fight.*

Seeing, however, that Manny is getting serious—d'Artois, too, proving the better fencer—he contrives to get almost under both swords as they fight absorbed, and, suddenly hitting up with his wooden sword, he strikes up both weapons, seizes Manny by the cloak, and drags him almost as far as the door, before d'Artois realizes what has happened.

FOOL (*with ill-suppressed laughter*): This is a jest, shedden no blood . . . (*D'Artois rushes at them, and they only just escape by slamming the door in his face. He opens it, and can be heard rushing in pursuit. Dorigen smiles in triumph at Lady Pembroke. In a moment he comes back again*).

D'ARTOIS: No, they be gone, and I dare not leave you again to pursue after them—cowards. (*The*

ladies are by now pretending to be recovering from their fright, and have come out of their corners).

LADY PEMBROKE : A hundred oxloads of thanks, most valiant preserver. (*d'Artois goes to the other door* (*left*), *his sword still in his hand, and cranes out to see if he can see his adversaries. Enter, unobtrusively, from the right, the Fool, followed by Manny. Both without their disguise, the Fool not in the least concerned. Manny seems self-conscious, and they are both hot and dishevelled*).

DORIGEN (*softly to the Fool*) : How will you do now, Sir Generalissimo ? He will finden you out, I think.

FOOL (*with fervour*) : Oh Lady, it was a good jest. I shall do very well, as you shall see. (*Sings aloud*), * "My Lefe is far inland" . . . Holloa ! Sir William, a drawn sword ? . . . Do you still clean your weapons ? *Par Di !* (*Manny is consumed with inward laughter*).

D'ARTOIS (*angrily*) : No, Sir Fool, but I would fain foulen them on the bodies of my enemies, by St. George. You, Sir Squire, you haven good care to be out of the way when there is fighting . . . your good father . . .

FOOL (*with an air of innocent surprise*) : Eh, Sir ; fighting, Sir ? And where, Sir ? (*The ladies suppress their laughter*).

* "My Lefe is far inland," the song which was sung "in sweet accord," by Chanticlere and Dame Partelet.

D'ARTOIS: In this ship, in this cabin, Fool. The French have boarded us.

FOOL (*soothingly*): Pray, calm yourself, gentle knight—is your head hot? are your feet cold? I doubt you are in a fever; there has been no French on board the ship.

LADY PEMBROKE: Yet this knight fought, and valiantly, with some that cried for "Dieu et St. Denis."

FOOL (*gravely*): Good Sir, then I fear that some idle persons have played a trick upon you in this aventure, by (*winking at Manny*) St. Antony of Bretagne. Mister Richard of Manny will bear me out there is come no Frenchman on board. . . . Why, we were upon deck.

D'ARTOIS (*bewildered*): A trick! . . . whose trick? . . . were they tricks? . . . or are you tricks, prating Fool?

FOOL (*sings*):

"Fair words break never a bone,
Foul words breaks many a one."

(*unctuously shaking a wise forefinger*): Sir Knight, you were best go plainen you to the captain, and then be revenged on those gross fellows who have fooled you.

DORIGEN (*holding up her hand and listening*): Stop! . . . I deemed I heard . . . (*A long, magnificent flourish heard without—from the end of the hall. Everyone suddenly becomes serious; they all stand*

perfectly still. A momentary pause, and the trumpets sound again, nearer at hand).

DORIGEN : The King ! (*They all murmur "The King!" or "The King comes!"*). I doubt not he comes, foreby his own ship is maimed.

LADY PEMBROKE (*with great feeling*) : And while we haven but played, the battle is concluded.—God save His Majesty !

(*Enter, gravely, from the end of the hall, two men-at-arms with pikes, followed immediately by the King, and after him two sailors—they pass through the audience. The King mounts upon the stage, the company fall back on either side. The King faces the audience in the middle back of the stage. Lady Pembroke goes up to him and kneels*).

LADY PEMBROKE (*with great emotion*) : Is the battle ours, Sire ?

KING (*gravely*) : God hath, in His mercy, granted us the greatest victory ever I saw upon the sea, Madam. It hath also pleasen Him to give us back that noble ship, The Christopher.

FOOL (*quietly*) : Te Deum Laudamus.

CURTAIN.

III

EPISODE THIRD

ELIZABETH, BURGHLEY, FIRST PAGE, SECOND PAGE, MUNSON.

(*Enter the Chorus from between the closed curtains*).

CHORUS—

Now the dim pageant of the Middle Age
Is ended. Now Crusades and Tournaments,
Knights, Queens of Beauty, all have passed away,
And through the world there stirs the great re-birth
Of Art and Learning. Behold Life once again.
Assume the image of a lusty youth,
Chokeful of vigour, covetous of beauty,
Making the canvas glow, the statue breathe,
And the air ring with the immortal strains
Of noblest poetry.
And in this hurrying and crowded age,
Behold a learned King turn from his books—
Henry the Seventh, of that English name—
And set his shipyards busy with the work
Which should make England great. Later, his son,
Harry the Eighth (a king too bluff and gay),
Yet left his music and his marryings to build
The "Henry, Grâce à Dieu," called "The Great Harry."
And at his death the Royal Fleet did number
Full half a hundred ships. What ailed us then

That in our desperate wrestling match with Spain
Our count of ships was scanty ? But for all
His wives, no child of England e'er
Called Harry grandsire; and the land became
A cockpit of conflicting creeds. Who should reign
After Elizabeth our Virgin Queen ?
What should be England's faith ? Aye, what her fate ?
Should she become an appanage of Spain,
Her Island Liberties all forfeited,
And her free Faith muted behind her lips
To serve the one Church Spain called Catholic ?
Oh, Gloriana ! Great Elizabeth !
Your woman's hand had set a subtle course
For the State's ship. Your woman's brain devised
Full many a turn and twist. We know you vain,
Penurious, false—but, ah ! we know you noble
In peerless love for England, wise
To offer craft where strength would not suffice—
A great king's daughter, and a greater Queen !
Now show we fortune hanging on the wind
And England's fate in balance.

(*Exit between the curtains*).

(*The curtains go up and discover an empty stage with black back curtains*). *A large oak table stands in the middle* (*left to right*) *with a piece of rose-coloured brocade thrown across one end. An oak chair with carved arms and covered with crimson brocade stands at one end of the table sideways to the audience, and a stool with a top of rose-coloured*

velvet stands by the table on the side nearest to the audience. A silver hand mirror lies on the table and a red leather box for papers. There is an oak chest in one corner of the stage.

(*Enter Queen Elizabeth, rather hurriedly. She wears a very rich gown of a light gold colour with an immense farthingale. She has a little crown on her head, is covered with jewels, and has a short cloak of thin gold tissue with high wings. She is angry, but bears herself with the most impressive dignity. In the vortex of her brocades and her sweeping dignity is an insignificant person in black, Munson*).

QUEEN (*turning upon Munson the moment they are well upon the stage*) : What a dolt to speak to me yourself, Munson, and before the French Ambassador had left me. Did your news burn your mouth, that you must come blustering, your cheeks puffed out with tidings like those of the East wind upon the corner of a chart ?

MUNSON (*quietly*) : I had waited two hours whilst it pleased your Highness to have some new steps taught you by the Ambassador, and having something of great moment . . .

QUEEN : What, two hours ? Why could you not say at first to one of my wenches, " Tell the Queen that a pedler is come with fine Yprés cloth from the Netherlands ? " I should have said to her, " Silly girl, I want none of his ware," and presently, turning my foot as I danced, should have been obliged to leave the

lesson. But you, clumsy loon, come with your clothes still telling of the salt water and pluck us by our sleeve . . .

MUNSON: Madam, I had not heared that it would have been of great moment, even had the French envoy apprehended something of my business. My tidings will, I think, be made public by your Highness within an hour.

QUEEN: No reason, meddler, for conducting an affair so cloddishly. It might have been our policy to keep the news and not publish it these ten days (*sitting down on the arm chair*). But now that we are private you tell me nothing; to the business at once.

MUNSON (*standing at the corner of the table. He speaks with emphasis, almost with solemnity*): Your Highness, I am now able to confirm to the utmost every word that was writ you by Pedro in the last cypher letter. The event, indeed, exceeds his fortelling. The Prince of Parma has gathered every soldier he had in the Netherlands, and has assembled a great array either at Dunkirk or Ostend. He must have at the smallest count seventeen thousand men, a very great train of baggage, and a flotilla of transports.

QUEEN: And the fleet? (*The Queen's manner has changed. She was at first capricious and a little conscious of her brocade and jewels. Now, she is thinking of the news*).

MUNSON: Public report in the Netherlands

would have it that the Armada set forth again in May, but that through stress of weather it put back to Ferrol.

QUEEN: We had heard it long ago. What now?

MUNSON: Now, Madam, swift rumour has it that the Armada has finally set forth, and that within five days it will join the Prince of Parma in Dunkirk harbour. . . . Your Highness, I think that this news is true.

QUEEN: We are sure of it, Munson (*nodding her head*). Now must the battle be joined. . . . Can you tell us anything further?

MUNSON: Your Highness has heard all.

QUEEN: You know nothing of the number of the Fleet?

MUNSON: Nothing more Madam, than you know already.

QUEEN: Send Lord Burghley to me here, in my lesser council room, at once, and as you pass the ante-chamber bid one of the pages attend me.

(*Exit Munson*).

QUEEN (*alone*): Now my hour is indeed come. (*She takes up the mirror and gazes doubtfully and in deadly earnest at her own reflection. She watches it intently and anxiously as she speaks*): Oh, Eliza, Eliza, where will you and your people refuge if Philip be left victor? What will you do if you have not strength? . . . and I misdoubt (*with agonized irritation*). . . . If I had built more ships . . Sharks are we against Leviathan (*she puts*

down the glass). . . . But surely God Himself must defend our liberties. . . . He will not suffer our captivity, the death of our freedom . . . reft of our liberty we must die. (*She speaks slowly*): Sharks against Leviathan . . . Sharks against Leviathan, and who can know the issue ?

(*Enter Page—the Queen resumes her composure—he comes up to her and kneels*).

QUEEN : Go at once to Rodger, to Green, and to Williams. Tell them to saddle instantly and prepare to ride all night with despatches. Tell my women that I have business and shall not come to bed until the morning.—Is Lord Burghley coming? He is immoderately slow.

PAGE : He but stays, Madam, to make his adieus to the envoy. He thinks that your Majesty would not have him hasty.

QUEEN : He is right. Do your errands quickly and attend me in the ante-chamber, or, if you are weary, Popham can relieve you. We shall need someone to attend us late.

PAGE : I will send Popham, Madam.

(*Exit Page*).

QUEEN (*alone*) : The silly boy is tired already ; he may rest. When he is a man he will never bear a burden so heavy as I bear . . . and must bear alone. Drake ! (*she is hag-ridden by her thoughts*). . . If I had taken Drake's counsel, we should have had enough ships (*with increasing irritation*). . . . And now we must stake our freedom upon the wind.

. . . Cannot prosper but by favour of the unstaple wind. . . . Oh, my poor people ! . . . Drake wrote (the words have drummed ever since in my head) : "If it please the Queen's Majesty that we fight with one hand tied behind our backs." . . . Yet how can I give him munitions without yet another tax. . . . Yet I would I had imposed . . . (*Enter Burghley*). Ha ! Burghley, sluggard, come at last ! Hast thou packed off thy capering envoy ? (*She has changed to a rather uncomfortable mirth*).

BURGHLEY : Yes, indeed, Madam ; he is gone home in his litter. . . . Your Majesty has news from the Netherlands ?

QUEEN : Yes, Burghley. I think that the Armada has started for the last time. Parma's troops are all gathered near Dunkirk to the number of seventeen thousand men. The time for action has come, and I think that the people will be glad.

BURGHLEY : You think from what your messenger has informed that this is final, Madam ?

QUEEN : I feel that it is final, Burghley. It must be final.

BURGHLEY : Is it your Majesty's will that we send word to the fleet ?

QUEEN : No, they have spies of their own . . . will be at sea before our news could reach them. Such tidings will send them burning with impatience out of port.

BURGHLEY : Your Majesty might send them

. . . words of, (*he is suggesting the phrases to her*) comfort and of extolence for the excellent valours they have shown until now. A swift cutter could pursue them with the despatch.

QUEEN: If we do it we must do it at once, good Burghley.

BURGHLEY: I could be your penman, Madam.

QUEEN: Sit down then, I will dictate. (*Burghley fetches writing materials from the chest. Elizabeth gets up and looks over his shoulder as he kneels before the chest*). Nay, nay, the old quill is still good.

Now go quickly, words come pat into my mouth. (*Burghley sits down at the table, on the stool, and arranges his pen and his paper*).

(*She stands behind her chair, her arms straight out before her as her hands grasp the back. She hesitates with every word at first till she picks up the thread*).

QUEEN (*dictates*): My loving Seamen . . . You have, it may be, by now heard that those enemies . . . those enemies of your Prince and of your country, whom you have so long and so ardently expected, are at last approaching to do you that battle for which I know your valours have been solely impatient (*walking to the side of the table away from the audience, and looking to see how Burghley has got on*): Are you so far, Burghley? (*She rests her fingers on the table*). Never had Prince loyaler or more valourous servants than I have in you. . . . And I do assure you that you can

never have a more loving or more grateful Sovereign than you have in me.

BURGHLEY (*after a little pause*) : Than you have in me.

QUEEN (*she walks back to her chair and stands by it*) : As your services to us and to your country are likely in this affair to be beyond recompense, so shall our gratitude to your virtues be beyond reckoning. . . . I know that you have already deserved princely recompense . . . and I think that you shall soon merit greater rewards than are in the power of an earthly sovereign to bestow. Be as you ever are . . . vigilant and courageous, for on your valours depend our lives and our liberties. And so I commend you to God.— Eliza Regina ! Now give it to me to sign. (*She sits down and reaches her hand out*).

BURGHLEY (*still bending over the letter which he has by no means finished*) : You promise them nothing but gratitude, Madam.

QUEEN (*annoyed*) : You know very well that without new and heavy taxing I have nothing else to give. . . . Besides, why waste money ? They will have plunder. (*Uneasily*) They must as ever be the victors, and they need no spur. They love me, and remember the Inquisition. (*She turns away from Burghley ; the words are dragged from her by her late passionate and irritated regret*) : Oh, if Spain should win, the rack and the fire in England . . .

but it is impossible; I spake in a jest. Is the letter not ready, lag-last?

BURGHLEY: I go as quickly as I may, Madam. (*He hands it*). Here it is. (*Elizabeth signs at some length, passes it back to Burghley, who folds the paper and seals it*).

QUEEN (*calls*): Popham! (*Enter Popham, another page. The Queen takes the letter and hands it to Popham, who receives it on one knee. She emphasizes her instructions by rapping her hand on the table*): Tell Green to ride quickly to the coast with these and deliver them to the Lord High Admiral, who is to publish them to the fleet. Do you understand, boy?

POPHAM: Yes, Madam. (*Exit Popham*).

BURGHLEY: And the army? Your Highness thinks of it, I trust?

QUEEN: After the fleet, I think of little else, loon. We intend to visit in person at Tilbury. And, Burghley, should the Spaniards land in force, we are determined to lead our troops ourselves. (*She rises slowly and stands upright*). Nothing can move us from this resolve.

BURGHLEY (*dampingly*): Your Majesty is no general and, knowing nothing of field strategy, will, I fear, prove a very indifferent commander. Let this whim pass, Madam.

QUEEN (*angrily, walking up and down behind the table*): Burghley, you are well nigh intolerable. Never, I swear by all the powers and dominions of

Hades, had a too indulgent Princess so vilely ill-natured, ill-tempered, grudging a knave to serve her. You care nothing for us, though we have heaped preferments upon your ill-conditioned head. Know that we will not bear it. We will not endure it a moment longer. We will find others who shall serve us less clownishly, less snarlingly. . . . We will not be so used . . .

BURGHLEY (*quietly*) : At present your Majesty's more agreeable servants are all in bed, and the message to the army remains to be written.

QUEEN : Know that it does not "remain to be to be written." (*Calming down*), We have, like you, so long expected this event, that we have already resolved, revolved, and written our speech. Even the manner of its delivering have we considered. You will find a paper in the casket tied with a crimson shoe-lace ; bring it me. (*He goes to fetch it*). We would rehearse the speech before you. (*Good-humouredly, rapping him on the shoulder as he kneels to give her the speech*) : Grumbling churl as you are, we must, with the aid of Godly patience, endure you, for you wish well to our beloved people, and may also save us some errors in our speech. Sit down and listen. (*He sits down on the stool, pushing it to the end of the table*). The speech is to be delivered in this wise :—

(*The Queen steps forward into the middle of the*

stage in front of the table, and enacts the whole pomp of a review with the most august self-satisfaction).

We ourselves, habited in a steel breastplate and a farthingale of gold-coloured satin, with a marshal's baton in our hand, will ride before the troops upon a tall war-horse of pure white. Bare-headed will we ride, and before us shall be borne a sword of state, and behind us a plumed helmet, and we will have but these two lords who shall bear the helmet and the sword. And so we will go alone before our troops.* (*A longish pause, the Queen immersed in the picture of her own magnificence*).

BURGHLEY : And what of the speech, Madam ?

QUEEN (*taking no notice, reads*) : "My loving "People. We have been persuaded by some that "are careful of our safety, to take heed how we "commit ourselves to armed multitudes for fear of "treachery ; but, I assure you, I do not desire "to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. "Let tyrants fear ! I have always so behaved "myself that, under God, I have placed my "chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts "and goodwill of my subjects, and, therefore, I am "come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not "for my recreation and disport, but, being resolved

* The speech which follows is the authentic "Speech to the troops at Tilbury." The letter to the seamen is bogus. See the accounts of the Queen at Tilbury.

"in the midst and heat of the battle, to live "or die amongst you all, to lay down for my "God and for my kingdoms, and for my "people, my honour and my blood even in the "dust . . ."

BURGHLEY: Your Majesty must keep out of actual danger of battle, I implore. This generaling will come to no good; it is not . . .

QUEEN (*angrily*): Be silent; I will do as seems good to me. Listen. (*The Queen has become very much moved by her own splendid rhetoric. She walks past Burghley to the back of the stage and turns round, her eyes glowing like a cat's, in spite of the mock humility of her words and voice. Reads*): "I know that I have "but the body of a weak and feeble woman; but "I have the heart and stomach of a king, and "of a King of England, too! (*she is by now "pacing from side to side*) and think foul scorn "that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, "should dare to invade the borders of my realm, to "which, rather than that any dishonour should "grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself "will be your general, judge, and rewarder of "every one of your virtues in the field.

"I know already for your forwardness you have "deserved rewards and crowns, and we do assure "you, on the word of a prince, they shall be duly "paid you, in . . ."

BURGHLEY: And whence will *this* money come?

QUEEN (*furiously*): And whence do your continual interruptions come but out of a . . .

PAGE (*rushing in*): Madam, the Spanish fleet has been sighted off the Lizard! Seven miles of ships!

QUEEN: Then, by Heaven! the Fleet is engaged.

CURTAIN.

IV

EPISODE FOURTH

(MILTON, DRYDEN and DEBORAH MILTON).

CHORUS (*entering immediately after the fall of the curtain*).

"He blew with His wind and they were scattered."

* * * *

As one whose night has passed in heavy dreams
Greets the returning light with ecstacy,
So England woke, and, waking, knew herself
Freed from Spain's yoke and Mistress of the Sea.
So passed the peril : Great Elizabeth
Passed also ; but, before her death, the land
She loved so dearly once again became
Her "Merry England." From the village green
Come sounds of mirth, and with all jollity
See youths and maidens foot it daintily.

(*The curtains part, and a country dance is seen. During its progress Chorus steps down into the audience. The dance ends and the curtain falls. Chorus again steps up and stands before it*).

Fain would I blind your eyes, make deaf your ears,
And hide the sorry scene which now we show—
Fain have you think England victorious still,
Whate'er betide. But so it cannot be.

Our land is subject to the common lot,
And when her people falter, when their hearts
Are turned by ease and pleasure from the path
Of duty . . . . then upon that hour
Swift falls the punishment.
Yet pause awhile
And claim a moment's respite while you lay
A wreath of laurel on the honoured grave
Of Cromwell, Lord Protector of our Realm.
He grasped the power and import of the sea,
And, while he ruled, the English flag was held
As Honour's emblem. Ah, what cruel change
Was wrought after his death ! Then all too soon
A pleasure-loving king and his gay court
Let idly fall out of their soft white hands
The sceptre of the sea. The watchful Dutch,
Seizing the instant quickly snatched it up,
And swept us trembling from the narrow sea
Which we had ruled. But, ah ! worse lies behind,
For up the pathway of our silver Thames,
Right at our very heart of life they struck,
Burning our ships while we sat . . . impotent.
Accept the lesson. For a moment know
The anguish which must greet a conquering foe !

(*Exit between the curtains*).

(*The curtains rise*).

The stage has a large table in the middle, with an armchair to the right of it and a straight chair left. Several other chairs are disposed about. Exits and entrances are on one side (*say left*) *and at the opposite*

side curtains are so draped as to suggest a window which might be set a little too deep to be visible to the audience. Dryden is discovered near the door talking to Deborah Milton, who is just going out; he is rather fashionably dressed in dark purple with a long embroidered waistcoat, and has a very large brown periwig.

DEBORAH MILTON: I am glad that thou art come, Sir. My father is sorely oppressed by these late sad events, and needs company almost more than I have ever known.

DRYDEN: I am then the more rejoiced that I am come, Madame Deborah. Shall I await him here?

DEBORAH MILTON: Pray do, Sir. I will conduct him speedily to thee. (*Exit*).

DRYDEN (*alone walking about the stage*): How bitter is loss of sight even to a mind comforted and illumined by a pure and lambent genius, and stored with all the lively and just images that nature or learning can afford. . . . Infinitely terrible must be this curse of irrevocable night. . . . Never to see pastoral scenes again, or the great Thames rolling majestic under an abundant load of shipping. . . . But how long will this last sight be visible? How much does Mr. Milton know of the news, I wonder? . . . I shall be a bearer of ill tidings, I think, a hard enough office when a man must at the same time needs defend his own rascally party against his very broad-sword attack.

MILTON (*without*): Are you there in the room, Mr. Dryden?

DRYDEN : I am coming to conduct you, Sir. (*He goes out*).

(*Re-enter leading Milton by the hand. Milton still shows much of his early beauty, and his long fine hair still hangs graciously upon his neck. He holds a stick in his left hand but does not grope with it, holding himself majestically upright. His sightless eyes are shut*).

MILTON : Lead me to the chair which you will find over against the table. Now turn it till it faces towards the window. (*Dryden does as he is bidden. Milton sits down*). Is the casement set open ?

DRYDEN (*going to the window*) : No, Sir. Shall I open it ?

MILTON : Oh, fling it wide ! Mocked at and blind, what now is left me save the untainted air ? . . . I would sit in my doorway if the sun shone. What is the news ? Do the Dutch still play at havoc upon our coasts ?

DRYDEN : Alas, they do, Sir. I can, I fear, bring you very little of comfort. They have been burning and destroying near the Nore, I hear, especially. Some in the town say that they intend a descent upon the Medway, and some confidently affirm that it is London they will attempt. People of the richer sort are even removing their goods, it is rumoured. Only the King seems untroubled. (*Sitting down upon the chair which stands at the opposite end of the table*). Even you must admit him courageous, Mr. Milton.

MILTON : Mr. Dryden, we live in an unprofitable age. I was even now musing upon the degradation of our days. Our country is become a mock. It is weak with vain and disordered pleasures. . . . It is utterly ashamed among the nations. It is a painted rottenness ! The money that should be lawfully expended upon ships and upon men is squandered in a drunken revel or rained in jewels at the feet of a dissolute woman.

DRYDEN (*sadly*) : We are fallen very low.

MILTON : We were once the mistress of the sea. Now our poor flag is trailed as a common prize up every estuary of the Rhine. My heart is moved for our honour. Truly it is stained and abased in the very dust.

DRYDEN : It's rumoured that the fleet threatens mutiny. The men's pay is in arrear, and they know that the Parliament has voted money for them ; this seems to make them sullen. One who has some great post in naval affairs, a Mr. Sam Pepys, told me this.

(*Milton shifts in his chair and sits sideways with one leg over the arm. Though blind he is not at all infirm, and moves with a certain freedom, as he is much accustomed to the relief of this change of attitude*).

MILTON : If His Highness could but return from his eternal and deserved rest to be the saviour of his country !

How trembled all thine enemies, oh Lord, at the very name of Cromwell. Cromwell who made the

majesty and integrity of England revered by all the Princes and Sovereigns of Europe. But we are fallen to a vile bondage. . . . There is none to lead us, Oh Lord, and thy servant is "Eyeless in Gaza."

DRYDEN : Be not so cast down, Sir. We make preparations. . . . We are not entirely unprepared to meet our arrogant enemies. Both the Thames and the Medway are now each stoutly defended with a strong chain and stakes.

MILTON (*pouncing upon this*) : Then how are the mighty fallen. She who was wont to issue forth as a lion, and as a young lion to rejoice in the prey, must now cower for fear behind a chain ! . . . We had the Dominion over the sea as our heritage . . . from the days of Alfred . . . he first saw our straite necessity for a fleet . . . even to the days of that "great Queen of happy memory" (so I have heard His Highness name Elizabeth), and so till the realization of our necessity blossomed with the Protector to Blake's victories. But now we are utterly humbled, oh Lord . . . surely we have altogether forgot our own history. We dare hardly let the cordage of our ships tighten to the touch of the salt water. We are afraid to put to sea . . . now can defend our honour with nothing nobler than a chain. . . . Why did I live to know this day ?

DRYDEN : Yet, Sir, even in this misfortune we may be sowing the seeds of amendment. The

country will perhaps really comprehend its necessity for a sufficient and well provided navy. Our commerce has suffered so much from the harryings of the Dutch that our considerable citizens must insist upon this safeguard.

(*Milton shakes his head*).

I beg you not to despond, Mr. Milton, but to believe that good may yet proceed from these disasters.

MILTON: Our honour is past redeeming: . . .

"Distracted and surprised with deep dismay."

Could we hope to prosper with so licentious a Court and Government? . . . None of these men remain in any influence who once made England's name terrible unto Gath. We are trodden down by a debauched Prince. "Israel still serves with all her sons." . . . Listen! . . .

(*Confused murmur heard without; the sound seems to come through the open window. Dryden leaves his chair and goes to look out*).

MILTON: What is it?

DRYDEN: I can't tell, the people run up and down.

(*A very distant explosion is heard*).

MILTON: Ah, what was that?

DRYDEN (*calling to someone under the window*): What is it?

WOMAN'S VOICE: They say the Dutch are broke through the chain.

MILTON: Find out what that ill-omened sound may be.

DRYDEN (*calls*) : What was the noise ?

A MAN's VOICE : It is said that the Dutch burn the shipping in the river. That was a ship's magazine of powder blown up if ever I heard the sound.

(*Another distant explosion*).

There goes another good ship as sure as death.

(*Sounds of an increasing crowd without*).

ANOTHER MAN's VOICE : Good God, they will soon be among the spice ships !

ANOTHER MAN's VOICE (*in a tone of complaint*) : And after we had lived through all the perils of the sea and slipped those rascally pirates. . . . Now in our own port of London . . . it's mortal hard on a man.

MILTON : Shut the window, good cousin. I can bear to hear no more.

(*Dryden shuts it and comes to sit down opposite Milton. There is a long pause*).

MILTON : Ichabod, Ichabod. The glory is departed. . . . I would be alone a little space, Mr. Dryden.

(*Dryden goes slowly towards the door*).

CURTAIN.

V

EPISODE FIFTH

(PITT, CANNING, LADY HESTER STANHOPE, VOICES).

(*Enter the Chorus from between the closed curtains*).

CHORUS—

O land dishonoured ! Wretched country led
By Monarch dissolute, to mortal shame.
How thy heart bled when the abhorèd foe
Sailed thine own waterway in boastfulness.
But not again, ah, not again, dear Lord,
Shall Alien ships in anger force our Ports.
Keep Thou inviolate our sacred shores,
Let us not sleep, drowned in security,
But, vigilantly mindful of our trust,
Keep watch and ward.
Lo, we have seen our Land
As one who wrestles, quick to try a fall
With whosoe'er would snatch the prize away.
The Danes, the French, the Spaniards. Who can tell
What name lies hidden in the mists of Time,
Challenger of the future ? Stand we firm,
Our guarding ships like hounds upon a leash,
And Britain's soul undaunted and prepared.
That your courage
Should not be dimned by the heart-shaking scene
Which last you witnessed, we will show one more

Great deed, when Britain's manhood saved,
Not us alone, but Europe from the grip
Of shackling tyranny. There rose in Heaven's arch
A century ago, a star of doom,
Blood-red and baleful. Oh, a fallen angel
Had shown no less of genius, more of mercy,
Than thou, Napoleon ! Pitiless, ambitious,
Couldst thou have seized the power of the Sea,
As of the land, all Europe had been thine,
Enslaved, held under by the force of arms,
Incapable, and dead to Liberty.
Now you shall see how to our little Isle
Came news of the first check the tyrant's power
Had suffered . . . the tidings of Trafalgar—
Oh, wingless Victory, that sacrificed
A Hero's life !—Yet for so great an end
We count no life too much. Transport yourselves
To London on an Autumn evening, see
A Statesman wearied with his country's service,
Anxious and ill, but with his mind undimned,
For his firm heart, triumphing o'er the flesh,
Drives him once more as Pilot of the Ship,
To weather the great storm.

(*Exit between the curtains*).

The curtains rise upon a stage occupied on one side by a large sofa of an elegant design with a table by its side, upon which stands several lighted wax candles in fine silver candlesticks. This side of the stage is very little illuminated except by this means, though the other side is brightly lit. An armchair stands convenient to the

table with a footstool beside it. A small table with decanters and glasses stands at the side of the stage, and there are one or two smaller chairs disposed as convenient upon the stage. A window is suggested as in the last episode.

(*Pitt and Lady Hester Stanhope are discovered, she reading in the chair, he lying on the sofa, a hand shading his eyes*).

LADY HESTER (*reads*) :

"It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
"Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
"Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought."

PITT (*to himself*) : Very true. This young man writes with a remarkable insight, Hester.

LADY HESTER : I told you that you would like the poem.

(*Enter Canning*).

PITT : Ah, good evening, my dear Canning, you find us late. We were reading a new poem upon the character of the Happy Warrior by a certain young Mr. Wordsworth. He sent it me.

CANNING : I hear that it is a very remarkable performance. What do you think of it ?

PITT : I think it a very fine piece of work. I like the extreme restraint and the pellucid language.

LADY HESTER : Yes, that seems, I think, Mr. Wordsworth's most remarkable quality—that, and absolute lucidity of thought. What a curious contrast, too, to Pope in his man of Ross, or really in any of his descriptions of virtue.

CANNING : Yes, and I believe that he goes further in the direction of an extraordinary simplicity, too, than any of this new school.

PITT : Will you not go on with the poem, Hester ?

LADY HESTER (*reads, with much expression*) :

" Who, doomed to go in company with pain,
" And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train !
" Turns his necessity to glorious gain ;
" In face of these doth exercise a power
" Which is our human nature's highest dower ;
" Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
" Of their bad influence, and the good receives."

CANNING (*interrupting*) : Very fine. The young poet had you in his eye, Mr. Pitt, I hear. It is a noble tribute.

PITT : Surely not, my dear Canning. If it mean anyone in the world, it is Lord Nelson.

LADY HESTER : Oh, no. I agree with Mr. Canning. It is intended for you, my dear uncle, without a doubt ; though, if I were the author, I should send it to Lord Nelson too, when he comes home. I think, from what one hears of him, he would appreciate it.

PITT : I know nothing of his poetic taste—he is certainly a very great Commander. I am beginning to think almost the greatest of whom even our annals can boast. But for him and his daring at the Nile we should, perhaps, before this. . . . Well, even now he will do . . .

what can be done . . . better than any other human being. The Country may thank God that he is left to them. (*He breaks off*). Is it not time for my wine, Hester?

LADY HESTER: Yes, I think it is.

PITT: Will you mix it for me to-night?

LADY HESTER: Certainly. (*She rises, crosses the stage and goes to the side-table, where she mixes the wine, measuring it before she mixes it*).

CANNING (*bringing up a chair and sitting down by Pitt*): How do you feel in health, Sir?

PITT: I am very ill to-night, my dear Canning . . . very ill indeed. Worst of all, now that I am physically weakened, I cannot help the defeat of the Austrians at Elchingen and the whole business preying upon my mind. . . . These anxieties used, as you know, not to affect my sleep.

CANNING: I am truly sorry. Perhaps we may soon have better news in which we can forget these vexations. (*Earnestly*): But I do beg of you, Sir, try not to let anxieties spoil your sleep and imperil your health. . . . You're again England's pilot, and, in re-taking the helm, you forfeited the right to die of anxiety (*Pitt smiles*). No, I am serious.

(*Lady Hester is by now re-crossing the stage; she stands behind the sofa, the wine-glass in her hand*).

PITT (*half smiling, taking the wine from Lady Hester*). Well then; but I must have some better news soon, George, or my good resolutions may

take wing. (*A knock comes at the door. He puts the wine down on the table*). Pray go and see what they want, Canning. I am disinclined to receive anyone. It is too late to-night.

(*Canning goes to the door. Lady Hester forsees a dull and tiring interview, she goes back to her chair and picks up "The Happy Warrior," which she begins to read*).

CANNING: What is it?

MESSENGER (*without*): A despatch from the Admiralty for Mr. Pitt, Sir.

CANNING (*taking the despatch*): Thanks; I'll give it to him. (*Shuts the door and brings the despatch to Pitt*): From the Admiralty, Sir. (*Pitt opens the despatch and attempts to read it, but gives it back to Canning*).

PITT (*agitated*): Read it to me, George. I am in a little pain with my eyes to-night. . . . But tell me at once, is that Lord Nelson's signature? Or did I fancy . . .

CANNING (*turning to the end of the despatch*): No, Sir, the despatch itself is signed by Admiral Collingwood.

(*Pitt turns very pale, and Lady Hester starts out of her chair to look over Canning's shoulder. They stand on the light side of the stage*).

CANNING (*reads*): "The Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty is instructed by their Lordships to inform Mr. Pitt that they have

just received the enclosed despatches from Vice-Admiral Collingwood, announcing that a decisive victory has been won over the combined French and Spanish Fleets. They deeply regret to inform him at the same time of the death of Viscount Nelson, Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet, who fell in the hour of victory.

"The action, the result of which appears to be the most complete destruction of the combined fleets, was fought on the 21st of October, off Cape Trafalgar."

(*The listeners all take the news with extreme quietness, under which is the most intense agitation*).

(*Lady Hester and Canning walk back to their seats and sit down. There is a pause*).

LADY HESTER (*not addressing anyone in particular and in a voice which she controls with difficulty*) : A great victory ! . . . And Lord Nelson dead !

(*No one says anything for a moment or two*).

PITT : We are safe ! . . . But, good God, what a price !

CANNING : This banishes all fear of invasion . . . but . . .

LADY HESTER : Died . . . in the arms of victory !

PITT : Read the account of the action now. I want to know the circumstances. You can leave out the preliminaries.

(*Canning remains sitting whilst he reads ; he is on the light side of the stage*).

CANNING (*reads*): "On Monday, the 21st of October, at daylight, when Cape Trafalgar bore east by south about seven leagues, the enemy was discovered six or seven miles to the eastward, the wind about west and very light; the Commander-in-Chief immediately made the signal for the fleet to bear up in two columns, as they are formed in order of sailing; a mode of attack his Lordship had previously directed, to avoid the inconvenience and delay in forming a line of battle in the usual manner."

PITT: Now go on to the account of the battle itself.

CANNING (*turning over the pages till he gets to the action.* He reads exceedingly well, with a good deal of emotion and as though he wanted to tear the heart out of the story as soon as possible*): "The action began at twelve o'clock, by the leading ships of the columns breaking through the enemy's line . . . the succeeding ships breaking through, in all parts, astern of their leaders, and engaging the enemy at the muzzles of their guns; the conflict was severe; the enemy's ships were fought with a gallantry highly honourable to their officers; but the attack on them was irresistible and it pleased the Almighty Disposer of Events to grant his Majesty's arms a complete and glorious victory about 3 p.m.

* Note.—Rather more than threequarters of a column of the despatch (Annual Register) is left out here.

"Many of the enemy's ships having struck their colours, their line gave way; Admiral Gravina, with fourteen ships . . . stood towards Cadiz, leaving (as prizes . . .) to his Majesty's squadron nineteen ships of the line."

(*Canning reads this with surprise, as the number is almost unprecedented*).

PITT: Oh, this is absolutely final. The Emperor is now impotent as to the invasion of these islands. We have now complete mastery of the sea.

LADY HESTER: Yes, they seem to have only fourteen ships left them.

CANNING (*who has been looking on in the despatch*): And it appears that the French Admiral is a prisoner. You may depend upon it, even these fourteen ships are quite demoralised after a defeat of that kind.

LADY HESTER (*with emotion*): But how did that invincible hero meet with his death?

CANNING (*turning over to find the place*): Here it is.* (*Reads*): "Such a battle could not be fought without sustaining a great loss of men. I have not only to lament, in common with the British navy, and the British nation, in the fall of the Commander-in-Chief, Viscount Nelson, the loss of a hero whose name will be immortal, and his memory ever dear to his country; but my heart is rent

* Note.—About half a column left out again.

with the most poignant grief for the death of a friend, to whom, by many years' intimacy and a perfect knowledge of the virtues of his mind, which inspired ideas superior to the common race of men, I was bound by the strongest ties of affection;—a grief to which even the glorious occasion on which he fell does not bring that consolation which perhaps it ought. His Lordship received a musket-ball in his left breast about the middle of the action, and sent an officer to me immediately with his last farewell, and soon afterwards expired."

PITT (*sadly*): The price of victory. . . . In what state do our own ships appear to be, Canning?

CANNING (*turns on**): "The whole fleet were now in a perilous situation, many dismasted, all shattered, in thirteen fathoms of water, off the shoals of Trafalgar; and, when I made signal to prepare to anchor, few of the ships had an anchor to let go, their cables being shot.

"But the same good Providence which aided us through such a day preserved us in the night by the wind shifting a few points and drifting the ships off the land.†

"Having thus detailed the proceedings of the fleet on this occasion, I beg to congratulate their Lordships on a victory which, I hope, will add a

* Note.—Another column left out.
† A paragraph omitted.

ray to the glory of his Majesty's crown and be attended with public benefit to our country.

"I am, etc.,

"C. COLLINGWOOD.

"The order in which the ships of the British squadron attacked the combined fleets on the 21st of October—*Van*: Victory, Teméraire, Neptune, Conqueror, Leviathan, Ajax, Orion, Agamemnon, Minotaur, Spartiate, Britannia, Africa, Euryalus, Sirius, Phoebe, Naiad, Pickle (schooner), Entreprenante (cutter).

"*Rear*: Royal Sovereign, Mars, Bellisle, Tonnant, Bellerophron, Colossus, Achille, Polyphemous, Revenge, Swiftsure, Defence, Thunderer, Defiance, Prince, Dreadnought."

LADY HESTER: How many is that?

CANNING: Let me see. With the little Entreprenante and Pickle, . . .

PITT: Listen for a moment! (*Confused murmurs and the sounds of a great crowd come in through the window. Then a cheer. The whole very distant*).

LADY HESTER: Ah, then the news has been published already.

(*Bells break out into almost delirious peals of joy, this very near at hand; they peal alone for a moment. Then a deep-toned bell is tolled very slowly, the sound of the peal growing sometimes less and leaving the tolling bell only distantly accompanied, sometimes more and concealing it. Lady Hester and Canning go to the window and look out. Pitt takes up the despatch which Canning*

has put upon the table, and re-reads it eagerly. The bells cease. The sound of many feet and the murmur of the crowd come nearer. Another burst of cheering comes through the window. The crowd stops, apparently just outside. A single voice starts the chorus of "Rule Britannia," which is taken up by the crowd. Another burst of cheering. Cries of "Pitt! Pitt!" from two or three voices).

CANNING (*turning from the window*): They want you, Mr. Pitt.

PITT: Very well. I will come.

(Renewed cries of "Pitt! Pitt!" "The Pilot! The Pilot!" Pitt walks to the window, Canning follows him with one of the branch candlesticks. Pitt stands at the window, whilst Canning holds the candles to illuminate his face. A wild burst of cheering. As the crowd sees Pitt, it is repeated again and again. The bells again peal.

After a moment or two Pitt and Canning leave the winaow, Lady Hester still looks out and listens to the crowd, Pitt returning tired to his sofa. Canning puts back the candles. Both men are moved by the infectious emotion of the crowd. Lady Hester goes back to her chair, she is almost weeping. Canning sits down very quietly in his old place. No one speaks for a moment. They are listening to the sound of feet dying away and to snatches of "Rule Britannia" and of "Hearts of Oak," which mingle with the sound of the bells as the crowd passes along down the street. The bells stop.)

LADY HESTER (*hardly able to suppress her tears*): I can hardly credit it all, still.

PITT: Yet the whole situation of Europe is altered.

LADY HESTER (*vehemently*) : If we could have had this one victory an unmixed rejoicing . . . Now it is half embittered. . . . Oh, I'd gladly forego the victory to have Lord Nelson alive again.

PITT (*gently*) : I think that you would choose very wrongly, even for him, my dear Hester. Lord Nelson could not himself have chosen a more noble end. . . . His death was, indeed, magnificent. . . . I feel nothing but satisfaction. He died in the arms of victory, he knew that he had achieved the safety of his country. . . . Perhaps of Europe. . . . England has saved herself by her exertions, and will save Europe by her example.* . . . Give me the despatches again, George.

(*The bells break out again very near at hand, the tolling bell is scarcely heard*).

CURTAIN.

---

* These words were spoken by Pitt a few weeks later at a public dinner given in his honour.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

By G. F. METCALFE

An endeavour to give in as small a space as possible some account of our experiences in the first production.

It seemed rather an ambitious idea to attempt anything of this sort on the stages of two village halls, but it had been carefully planned for this purpose, and the limitations of space and cost carefully taken into account. The crowds outside, the singing off, and also the processions through the hall gained for the performance something of the kind of effects usually only to be obtained on a large stage, each of these, moreover, having a quality of their own not often found when everything is fully seen. As regards expense, we took about £48 and cleared about half that. One extravagance we were guilty of, which accounted for about £6,—we had a perruquier from London to make us up, and, as we doubled and even trebled parts, he had no time to waste all through the performance. This expense might be avoided if, on the one hand, there was but little doubling of parts and people could be got together early enough for them to be made up beforehand, or, on the other hand, if two people were available with a

knowledge of make-up and not taking part in the performance. We felt we could allow ourselves this luxury as a good many costumes were very kindly lent to us.

Another unusual expense was the lighting. We felt that the Episodes demanded good treatment in this respect, so we had two acetylene magic lanterns. They were both placed on one table and raised as high as possible with packing cases to avoid lighting from below. The table was in the Auditorium on the side opposite to Pitt's sofa. We found this much more effective than having one each side, it also means less disturbance of the plan of the seating in the hall. To avoid the risk of any actor, whilst speaking, being covered by the shadow of another one can have a few footlights on each side of the steps up to the stage.

I most emphatically recommend the black curtain, which we kept unchanged for all the Episodes, with the exception of hanging a shield at the back in Episode I. With so many bright-coloured dresses it is a most effective background, and gives a unity to the whole rarely to be obtained by scenery. It should be dull, not shining like sateen, and, if thin, weights at the bottom will be necessary; old curtains might be dyed for the purpose. It must measure more than the three sides of the stage, to allow for a little fulness. In at least one place on each side (for entrances and for the window in Episode IV), and in the centre

of the back (for the window in Episode V), the upright breadths of which it is composed must be left unjoined, care being taken that they overlap, and the overlapping at the sides being so disposed as not to let the people waiting in the wings be seen from the front. This space outside at the wings will need some consideration. Though it seems hard, a strict rule will probably be found necessary that no performers other than those waiting to go on are to stand there ; they can only see the performance during the dress rehearsals, from the front. The amount of furniture has been reduced as much as possible, but it will have to be carefully arranged in readiness,—and that which is waiting to come on preferably on a level with the stage (not down steps). The two ladies who directed these matters did the actual work *on* the stage themselves to ensure the quietness which is essential whilst Chorus is speaking in front : they wore large thick felt slippers over their shoes for the purpose.

EPISODE I.—Costumes, etc., these can all be made at home except Alfred's helmet, and the armlets and bracelets. (N.B.—Leather can be imitated by stiffened brown cloth, and silk by sateen.)

ALFRED : Loose tunic reaching to the knees, with tapering sleeves cut rather long and confined at wrist by a bracelet so as to set in wrinkles or rolls, rings or other simple patterns may be stencilled for a

border, wide leather belt. Loose linen (or cotton) trousers (dull white or coloured) confined by bands crossing each other sandalwise from the ankle to the waist. Oblong or semi-circular cloak to knees or just below, confined by brooches or large rings at one or both shoulders. Shoes, either cloth opened in front and laced or loose linen tied at ankle with a drawstring. Simple crown of cardboard, gilt. Helmet conical shape with simple wings at sides.

EARLDOMEN AND BRENWARD: Like Alfred; short sleeves with armlets are also correct; no crowns, of course, though they may have fillets.

SAXON ATTENDANTS: Loose tunic to above knees, very simply made in one piece with slit for the neck; sleeves short, square and wide; belt; armlets. Trousers as above, or else only from knee to ankle, with bands. Shoes.

COENRED: Armour not necessary. Tunic, etc., like attendants. A leather cap, either conical or Phrygian, with metal border; and possibly a metal band to fit over the neck of the tunic; spear and shield optional.

WILD MAN: Tunic, skins. Bare legs and feet (may be painted with blue patterns).

THE QUEEN: Dress moderately loose to hips, looser below; very long full sleeves with wide opening from above wrist nearly to the ground; there may be a tapering under-sleeve. Any embroidery on the dress should be of a very severe and

formal character, such, for instance, as two parallel perpendicular lines of pattern from the neck to the feet. Girdle round hips only. No corsets should be worn in this or the next Episode. Coloured veil of thin linen or silk on head, small simple crown over it. Tails of plaited hair intertwined with ribbon hanging down in front.

Bishops: Albs,—long white linen garments girded at waist, sleeves about the width of those of a man's overcoat. Over these either a cope,—a semi-circular cloak reaching nearly to the feet and fastened by a band over the chest,—or a chasuble, —a circular garment to reach about to the knees, shaped in at the sides to leave room for the hands and with an opening for the head to go through. Simple croziers, high round cap-mitres flattened in the middle and fillets to hang over the ears may be used. Silk (sateen) should be sparingly used in this Episode except for ecclesiastics,—velvet not at all. We used unbleached calico, home-dyed for some of the dresses, but, of course, for garments that are to hang in good folds woollen or linen materials are far better.

The general scheme of colour should tend to the barbaric, which need not mean the inharmonious, but subtle hues and complex schemes should be left for the next two Episodes. Viridian green, blue, red rather tending towards brick, and golden-red brown were our foundation colours with occasionally a mass of purple: delicate colours are

out of place, as also are a lot of *extremely* deep-coloured materials, though black furs and skins are effective. The whites should be few and of the shade of "unbleached," or buff-white.

Two half cocoa-nuts are useful for the sound of horse-hoofs. The Alfred jewel, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, is about half an inch thick, and, roughly speaking, of a pear-shape, 2 inches long by $1\frac{3}{8}$ wide. The King, Nobles, and Brenward may, but need not, have long hair parted in the middle; they wear moustaches grown to the jaw line, and may also have beards in two points; the Ecclesiastics, half-long or short hair, clean-shaven faces or beards and moustaches; the Wild Man, rough hair, beard, etc.; the other men short hair and long moustaches, and may have beards.

The chant we used for the procession was Plain-song, 8 A, by men's voices in unison to Latin words,—sung behind the scenes. If accompanied it should, of course, be by a harmonium.

We were able to have the entrance of the procession from the end of the hall, and an exit through a side door near the stage, but unless there are at least eight in the procession, it is better to have the entrance also taking the shorter distance.

EPISODE II.—These dresses cannot well be described without drawings. Ours were made at home mostly, not, of course, the tights, and not the King's helmet and sword. A good coat of

mail may be fashioned out of string, this being afterwards painted with silver paint, when it is more like chain armour than the real thing! The King's surcoat with the leopards and lilies may be painted, as also may a stiff oblong banner made of millboard fastened on a pole. The procession, if consisting of only five, is better coming from a side entrance.

Here we again had male voice singing, unaccompanied, from behind, choosing the Agincourt song from "Grove's Dictionary of Music," Vol. III, p. 601,—also in Chappell's "Popular Music." It is better to have the sea chaunties before the interval to allow time after them for furnishing Episode III, as there is only a short Chorus.

The chaunties, sung in unison by men pulling a rope, were taken from Davis and Tozer's "Sailor Songs" (Boosey). The solo-singer did not pull, but walked about. Words of command as the curtain goes up are effective. We used the men's costumes from the country dance (see below), but with stockings drawn above the knee and gartered above and below the knee, which makes them Elizabethan. Some of the men wore sea boots. Munson's and the pages' doublet, ruff and trunks were home-made.

For the Country Dance we decided that for a small number of people on a stage Morris Dances were unsuitable,—we had a series of graceful figures all danced to a *chassée* and a small hop

(polka step); the piano and violin music being "Shepherd's Dance" and "Morris Dance" (German), "Morris" and "Yorkshire Morris" from the "Dictionary," and "Lady Greensleeves" from "Popular Music," ending up and going off with a serpentine figure to "Lassies and Lads" (the choir outside joining in singing this).

The Charles I dresses for this were :—Men's : unbleached calico shirts, wide collar, no tie ; loose knickerbockers, bows at knees ; sashes tied at the side ; stockings, etc. Women's : short skirts ; laced bodices ; white under bodices with very loose sleeves to below elbow ; close fitting caps with white revers ; the four couples being respectively in red, blue, green, and bright brown with old gold. These dresses were home-made. Chorus stood during the dance on a table in front of the proscenium on a level with the stage.

EPISODE IV.—Dryden's coat was borrowed ; the remainder of the costumes can be home-made. Dryden, richly dressed, as a courtier of Charles II's reign, wears a very long waistcoat, making it possible to wear his own knickerbockers, as they hardly show : he should not be in delicate colours such as pale pink or blue. Long curly wig. Milton's and Deborah's dresses simple Puritan.

The crowds in the fourth and fifth Episodes require a good deal of practice, particularly for the last. They can be most effective. We managed the effect of coming nearer by having them, when

distant, outside closed doors. One of the crowd must be a leader ; there should be a man at the wings to give signals for each detail (by a string passed over the door when it is closed), and each member should have a list of everything that has to be done, in order, and either the cue as spoken on the stage or "first signal," "second signal," etc. After trying sheets of iron for the explosion, we found nothing so good as the big drum of the village band, placed as far away as possible and struck twice quickly, the second time loudest.

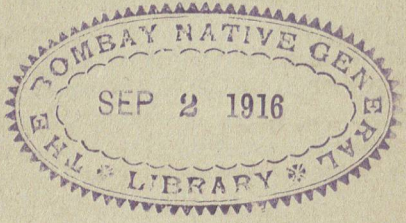
EPISODE V.—The window should be in the centre of the back ; the illusion of the crowd is complete. The black curtains when parted must not, of course, show the colour of the wall but a deeper black,—say velveteen. The bells were rung by the village hand-bell ringers ; they should only be rung straight down the scale,—or that and one change. We managed to get a low-toned bell for the tolling. Most gongs are unsuitable, though some (flat-shape) strike a distinct musical note. We found we had to have the ringers on the opposite side of the stage to the crowd, for the sake of their hearing their cues ; but the rooms at the back communicated.

The costume should be more Empire than Georgian ; Canning's coat, for instance, is not square-cut but swallow-tailed, without embroidery, and with a high turn-over collar ; the men's wigs

brown or grey, not white; Lady Hester may wear a simple white muslin with a fichu.

I conclude these notes by repeating that the entertainment was planned entirely for village halls, and with the hope that many may experience the same delightful feeling of surprise that we had, in finding of what things their small village stages are capable.

I append a reprint of the programme which we used.



PROGRAMME

THE SEA-POWER OF ENGLAND

shown in

FIVE EPISODES
by
AMABEL STRACHEY

with

EXPLANATORY CHORUS
by
MRS. ST. LOE STRACHEY

CHORUS.

1st EPISODE.
Alfred (King of Wessex)
Elswitha (Queen to Alfred)
Brenward (a Saga-Man)
Coenred (a Thane)
Eanfled (Attendant on the Queen)
A Man of the Woods
Bishops, Earldomen, Priests and Attendants

2nd EPISODE.
Edward III (King of England)
The Countess of Pembroke (a Lady of Queen Philippa's Court)
Lady Dorigen (the same)
Sir William D'Artois (a Gentleman of the Court)
Mister Richard of Manny (Esquire to Lady Pembroke)
Fool
Emily (a young Waiting Woman)
Soldiers and Sailors

3rd EPISODE.
Queen Elizabeth
Burleigh (Lord High Treasurer of England)
Munson (a Spy lately come from the Netherlands)
1st Page, 2nd Page } attendants on the Queen

4th EPISODE.
Milton (late Latin Secretary to Cromwell's Council of State)
Dryden (a rising Court Poet)
Deborah Milton (daughter to Milton)

5th EPISODE.
Mr. Pitt (Prime Minister)
Lady Hester Stanhope (niece to Mr. Pitt)
Mr. Canning (a junior Member of Mr. Pitt's Government)

GENERAL PLAN OF THE NARRATIVE

CHORUS
introduces the

1st EPISODE, which shows Alfred the Great, founder of the Fleet, receiving the news of a certain sea fight with the Danes, which took place in the year 897.

CHORUS
introduces the

2nd EPISODE, which shows a cabin on board one of the ships which carried a number of ladies across the sea to Flanders, where Philippa, Queen to Edward III, had for a time established her court. These ships sailed in company with the Royal Fleet. When off Sluys the French Fleet was encountered and the courtiers' vessels stood off whilst the King's ships fought the enemy. This battle took place in the year 1340.

INTERVAL.

Sea Chaunties follow.

CHORUS
introduces the

3rd EPISODE, which shows Queen Elizabeth called from her dancing to hear that Parma has at last massed his troops at Calais and hourly expects the advent of the Armada. She consults Burleigh and rehearses to him the speech which she later actually delivered to the troops at Tilbury. 1588.

CHORUS
introduces a *Pastoral Dance* of about the year 1628.
The dance ended,

CHORUS

introduces the

4th EPISODE, which shows the poets, Milton and Dryden, in conversation. Owing to Charles's II's neglect of the Navy, the Dutch, not the English, are now masters of the sea. The Dutch have threatened out of insolence to sail up the Thames and burn the shipping in the river. Milton and Dryden learn by the most convincing proof that they have triumphantly executed their threat. 1667.

CHORUS

laments the events shown in the last episode and

introduces the

5th EPISODE, which shows William Pitt, then for the last time Prime Minister, receiving the news of Trafalgar—a victory which made the invasion of these islands impossible to Napoleon. The news of the victory was accompanied by that of the death of Lord Nelson, and the despatches read are those sent to the Admiralty by Admiral Collingwood, the second in command.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

THE MUSIC

SEA CHAUNTIES WITH CHORUSES ... ... *Old English*

"What shall we do with a Drunken Sailor"
"Yeo, heave-ho"
"Leave her, Johnny"
"The Golden Vanitee"

MUSIC FOR PASTORAL DANCE:

Henry VIII Dances ... ... *E. German*
and the airs
"Morris Dance is a very pretty tune" } *Old English*
"Yorkshire" and "Greensleaves" }

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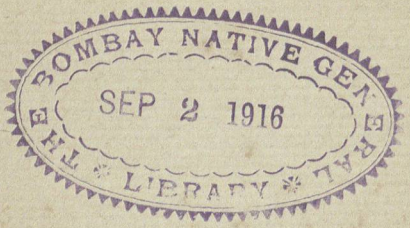

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