THE VIKINGS

AN IMMORALITY PLAY IN TWO SPASMS

 $\underline{\text{BY}}$

Ronald L. Meek.

With Music by Verdi, Sullivan, R.L. Hutchens, and others.

THO'S THO

Adolmaniacs

HIT Leader of the Vikings

BUBBLES)

BORING) Minions

Vikings

Skallawag, Badegg, Grimm, Skrimm, Glumm, Badun, Skua, Swigg,

Baldi, and Swagg.

<u>Trolls</u> A chorus of ten.

Ancient Britons

NEV THE PEACEMAKER Son of Ost

HADES

RUNNYMEDE) Diplomats

TERRY DACTYL Boss of the Dinosaur Boys

Druids A chorus of Ten Dinosaur Boys A chorus of Ten

WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS

Spasm 1

Scene The landing stage at Adolmania Time The bad old days

Spasm 11

Scene 1 The Cave of the Druids, the very ancient Britons

Scene 11 Stonehenge, the abode of So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies.

Time Still the bad old days.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The audience is requested to note the fact that the characters in this play are purely fictitious and bear no resemblance whatsoever to any live person.

ACT 1

(The curtain rises on the landing stage at Adolmania. The backcloth shows the bank of a river with a Viking longboat moored to the right, and fields beyond with luxuriant trees, and in the distance wild and snow-clad mountains. The nearer bank of the river cannot be seen by the audience, as it is presumably hidden behind a neat stone wall, about eighteen inches high and built about three feet in front of the backcloth. The backcloth itself is not right at the back of the stage: see diagram showing the different stage settings.

At the centre of the little wall, towards the footlights, is a platform about four feet square, covered with red cloth, and two steps lead from it down to the stage.

In the middle of the platform is a large notice - "Velcome to Adolmania" - but the effect of this is somewhat dampened by two other similar notices erected at either end of the wall - "Poison Laid For Dawgs" - and "Trespassers Will Be Persecuted."

The backcloth will probably have to be specially painted; the flats at the sides can be ordinary herbaceous ones; and the whole effect should be simple but striking.

The ides of the wall is that the coracles which sail in behind it should appear to be sailing on the river the other bank of which is seen on the backcloth.

When the curtain rises, ten Vikings and ten Trolls are discovered looking through telescopes, peering over one another's shoulders, etc. down the river to the left. They should be prettily grouped so that the audience may clap if it wishes.

The Vikings should wear some sort of long white robe, with tunics beneath, and silver helmets. They should carry battleaxes or similar weapons, which should not look like silvered cardboard. The dresses of the trolls may be left to the discretion of the producer, and we trust that in exercising it he will remember that the corridors of the Opera House are draughty. The trolls could with advantage have long flowing black hair.

The orchestra strikes up wildly the Drinking Song from "Traviata" and the Vikings and Trolls come down towards the footlights in order to sing the opening chorus.

The Vikings and Trolls should be chosen almost solely for their singing ability; the Vikings should be doubled with the Dinosaur Boys in Act 11.

CHORUS AND BALLET. VIKINGS AND TROLLS

(Air - Drinking Song from Verdi's "La Traviata")

Oh we are the Vikings the scourge of the sea, And we savagely ravage the rolling main; If you had once witnessed our valour you'd flee If you saw us approaching again!

We're a strong and terrible throng, he ha! For war and slaughter we long, he ha! And this is our rollicking song, he ha! And this is our rollicking song -

Oh we are the Vikings the scourge of the sea, And we savagely ravage the main!

(They execute a <u>short</u> ballet. This should be a strong virile German ballet, like the one at the beginning of "The Plutocrats." Above all, it should be short. The audience will have seen at least five ballets in the preceding shows).

But though we're the Vikings the scourge of the sea And we savagely ravage the rolling main, We're really as tender as tender can be, And slaughtering drives us insane!

We shy at killing a fly, ha ha! We're not at all anxious to die, ha ha! And that is the reason we sigh, ha ha! When singing our rollicking song -

Oh we are the Vikings the scourge of the sea - And we savagely ravage the main!

And we savagely ravage the main!

(The ballet is repeated. It ends with a bow or similar gesture to the audience, so that the latter may know when it is over).

Skallawag When does our leader expect Nev the Peacemaker to

arrive?

By noon, Skallawag - but his coracle may have met with rough sea.

Grimm Tell me, Badegg - why is Nev the Briton known as "The Peacemaker"?

That is one of the sacred mysteries of the Ancient Britons, Grimm. Nev. is a merchant by profession, a politician by inheritance, and a diplomat by the grace of God. But a peacemaker - no. How would our beloved Leader Hit be able to pursue his policy of subjugating the Universe were it not for the assistance of Nev?

Vikings & Trolls Our beloved Leader Hit!

(They perform a complicated and humourous salute in perfect time. This Adolmanian salute will be demonstrated at rehearsals).

Skua But where is our divine Leader?

Skallawag He should have been here hours ago. I think the bolt must have stuck.

Badegg We can always tell when Hit is coming - thunder always marks his approach.

Skallawag Hush, Badegg! Do you not know it is forbidden to mention Marx?

(the Vikings & Trolls give vent to a low hiss)

Badegg True, I had forgotten. But I think, Skallawag -

Skallawag

Be careful - you know it is also forbidden to think.

If our leader Hit - (he does the complicated gesture very quickly) - knew that you were actually thinking, you'd very soon find yourself in a Consternation Camp.

Swigg (looking through a telescope left)

Behold, comrades - I see three coracles nearing the

Skua It must be Nev and his friends!

(The Vikings and Trolls rush over left and gaze off stage)

Swigg Is that a sail above the foremost coracle?

Skallawag
No, my friend - that is the sacred umbrella of Nev,
which in Briton is worshipped as a symbol for
puerility in politics and denseness in diplomacy.

Swigg But why does he keep his umbrella up when the sun is shining?

Skallawag It is rumoured that Nev. is extremely afraid of becoming all wet.

But stay - we must get ready to receive our revered Leader. He may be here at any moment now. He can fly as swift as the wind - he can make himself invisible - he is clothed with the powers of darkness -

Skallawag True, Badegg - let us bring in his throne.

(Skallawag and Badegg go to the right of the stage and bring in Hit's throne. This consists of a large beer barrel, with a highly ornamented top, decorated with the mystic emblem of Adolmania - a swastika surrounded with four broad arrows, something like this:-

The Vikings all wear this emblem on the front of their tunics. Skallawag stands near the throne with his back to the audience, watching left, while Badegg and the other Vikings gaze off left. Picture).

Budegg They are nearing the landing stage.

Grimm Truly they are of formidable appearance! Look at

Nev's horrible bear-skin!

A Troll Oh, lend me a telescope, quick!

Skua Get away, woman! Has not our leader said that a

woman's only function is the recreation of the

tired warrior?

The Troll But Nev. is bound to be tired after his journey!

(A short peal of thunder is heard)

Badegg Hark! Our Leader!

Grimm He is coming!

(They crowd to the left of the stage, looking off)

Badegg Look! Is that our Leader riding on that cloud?

Hit's voice Fools! I am here!

(The Vikings turn to the throne in amazement. There, on the throne, sits Hit, Leader of the Vikings, Skallawag having mysteriously disappeared. Details of this amazing transformation scene will be disclosed at rehearsals. Hit is dressed in a silver helmet like the other Vikings; his top half is clad in a brown shirt, bandolier, and black tie; the bottom half in a dinky little skirt. His moustache and hair are normal. He bristles with Adolmanian emblems).

Vikings & Trolls Behold - the Leader!

(They do the complicated Adolmenian salute, ending with their right arms outstretched)

Hit There are my minions? (Calls) Bubbles! Boring!

(Enter Bubbles and Boring left and right respectively. They perform the Adolmanian salute in unison)

Hit Have the preparations for Nev's welcome been

completed?

Bubbles Your photo is in every room in his suite,

Excellency. There is one pure Aryan woman installed

in every room except the bedroom.

Hit Why except the bedroom?

Bubbles There are four in the bedroom, sire. And copies of

your divine autobiography are strewn in profusion

round the rooms.

<u>Hit</u> Excellent. And you, Boring?

Boring Military parades are scheduled to pass his window constantly during his residence, Excellency, to impress our armed strength on him.

Hit But have we not too few soldiers to do that?

Boring The detachment is to march round the block again and again, Sire.

Hit A splendid scheme.

(He descends from his throne; Bubbles and Boring accompany him to the front of the stage).

TRIO

HIT, BUBBLES AND BORING

(Air - "Gama's Song" from Sullivan's 'Princess Ida")

In case you do not know me, I'm the leader of the land, I rule my people with a firm but philanthropic hand:
My duties are not troublesome, for if I'm in a fix I always lay the blame on the naughty Bolsheviks!
I cheer the people up when they are feeling rather blue By mercilessly slaughtering a Marxist or a Jew:
But though I do my best for every Adolmanian, Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man, And I can't think why!

Chorus He can't think why!

Bubbles and Boring

Bubbles I'm a most important person - I disseminate the lies
With which our loving Leader fools the populace - or tries.
I burble on the radio, and censor all the news,

And effectively dispose of all the opposition views! I frighten all the people with my sabre-rattling talk,

And love to show my medals which I jingle when I walk Both But though I do my best for every Adolmanian,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man,

And I can't think why!

Chorus They can't think why!

Hit, Bubbles & Boring

We're a celebrated trio born beneath a lucky star,
We won our way to power by a little coup d'etat.

Hit I think of pretty little schemes -

Bubbles Distributed by me,

Boring And I get rid of anyone who dayes to disagree!

And if the folks are getting bored with politics and such, We hold a little pogrom and they like it very much!

Hit But though I do my best for every Adolmanian,

Bubbles

Boring

& Boring Yet everybody says he's such a disagreeable man,

All And we can't think why! They can't think why!

(They bow to the audience and to one another. Hit retires to his throne, and Bubbles and Boring stand on either side of it).

Grimm Nev is nearing the landing stage in his coracle, my leader.

Hit Good! I am ready for him. (Pause). Bubbles, do you not think it might be profitable if we performed some act of clemency in honour of Nev's coming?

Bubbles But the people would think something was wrong, oh Hit!

Hit Couldn't we let the prisoners out of the Consternation Camps?

Boring But, my leader, that would double the population of Adolmania!

Bubbles The country's resources could not stand it, oh Hit!

(The orchestra strikes up "Rule Britannia")

Hit True, Bubbles. But see, here is Nev!

(The Vikings and Trolls crowd to the extreme left of the stage to allow the audience an uninterrupted view of the extraordinary craft which are about to sail in behind the wall.

Enter from the left, behind wall, one after the other, three large coracles. These coracles are ordinary wicker clothes baskets, drawn along on wheels by a rope behind the wall. In the first coracle sits Nev the Peacemaker, cross-legs; he wears an immaculate top hat, the and morning coat; beneath the coat is a delightful bear skin, dangerously short; his legs and feet are very bare. He is holding an enormous umbrella over his head.

In the other two coracles sit Hades and Runnymede; they are dressed similarly to Nev.

All the trio are provided with child's wooden spades, with which they paddle feroclously.

With great difficulty they get out of their coracles, step on to the landing stage, and look round, beaming. They inspect Hit and Bubbles and Boring, and the Vikings, especially the Trolls; they look at the centre notice, and beam again. Business when they see the other notices.

At a signal from Hit, the Vikings and Trolls form up in a line from front left of the stage to the landing stage, and sing a chorus of welcome. No ballet is to be performed with this song.)

CHORUS

VIKINGS AND TROLLS

(Air - Original Music)

All hail, oh Nev, all hail! Behold the British oracle Arriving in his coracle, All hail, oh Nev, all hail!

We liquidate the folk who state That Britons are but fools, And welcome you the people who Make Briton waive the rules!

Nary an Aryan In this State totalitarian Doesn't welcome you - so

All hail, oh Nev, all hail! Behold the British oracle Arriving in his coracle, All hail, oh Nev, all hail!

(The Vikings and Trolls do the Adolmanian salute. New tries to reply with the same salute, but gets mixed up).

Nev (waving his umbrella) It's going to be all right this time!

Hit Welcome to Adolmania, oh visitors from over the seas! I trust that you have had a pleasant voyage?

Nev By my sacred umbrella, Hit, these coracles are somewhat confined! (Rubs bottom) But allow me to present my colleagues - Hades (presents him) - and Runnymede - (Presents him business).

Hit (Impatiently) And the new cloths - you have brought the new cloths?

New and rich cloths, oh Hit - never before seen on these shores. Fetch them, Hades.

(Hades fishes in one of the coracles, and removes a small carved trunk which he presents to Nev. If there is no room in the coracle for the trunk, it can be hidden behind the wall opposite to where Nev's coracle stops)

Hit I trust these new cloths are not too expensive, Nev?

Nev Oh, no - they are singularly cheap. And such rich texture, Hit - such finely woven and beautifully coloured material. But tell me - how have the cloths which I have already sold you worn? The Austrian cloth, for instance?

Hit The Austrian cloth is wearing very well, Nev, I thank you.

Nev And the Spanish cloth?

Hit It has a few rents in it, Nev, but they will be mended soon. No, it is not wearing so well, the Spanish cloth - not half so well as the African cloth you sold to my neighbour Muss. (Pause) But this new cloth - what is it? I trust you came by it honestly - I would never buy stolen goods, you know!

Nev Of course not! I and my colleagues are the soul of honesty, like you. My friend, we have much in common. I think we ought to set up in partnership.

Hit Ah, what a partnership that would be!

(Nev, Hit, Bubbles, Boring, Hades, and Runnymede come down to the front of the stage).

Nev Think of it! Nev and Hit and Co.!

HIT AND NEV

(Air - Original Music)

Nev and Hit

Oh listen, ye of low degree,
Oh hearken to us, bourgeoisie,
The humble and the courtly!

We want the populace to know
The firm of Nev and Hit & Co.
Is starting business shortly.

At our branch in Downing Street Our representatives will meet Conservative and Tory; In Italy our firm will see All those who can afford our fee, Signora and Signori. Bubbles, Boring Hades and Runnymede

In short, for every dirty deed You daren't yourself commit, Just call at once on Hit and Nev, And they'll accomplish it! Por dirty work you all should go At once to Nev and Hit & Co.

Whole Chorus

For dirty work we'll always go At once to Nev and Hit & Co.!

(The six men do a delightful dance, while the Vikings and Trolls repeat the whole of the chorus after "In short for." The dance should be short and consist of a parody of the usual German folk-dance - i.e., slapping hands and knees etc).

Nev & Hit

We have the sole monopoly
Of sending arms across the sea
On terms for any distance To help foment an armed revolt
And slaughter every foolish dolt
Who dares to show resistance!

The firm will do its level best To break a treaty on request, With nonchalance impressive; For sending troops to subjugate An unimportant minor state, Our fees are not excessive.

Bubbles, Boring Hades and Runnymede In short, for every dirty deed You daren't yourself commit, Just call at once on Nev and Hit, And they'll accomplish it! For dirty work you all should go At once to Nev and Hit & Co.:

Whole chorus

For dirty work we'll always go At once to Nev and Hit & Co.!

(The humourous ballet is repeated by the sextette).

Nev and Hit

And if you find our little jests
Affect your vested interests,
Or else curtail your leisure,
And you can find a larger fee
Than other clients, we'll agree
To double cross with pleasure!

We'll conquer lands beyond the seas -We'll sell you back your colonies, At special cut-rate prices; In short, my friends, you would go far To find a finer repertoire Of diplomatic vices!

Bubbles, Boring Hades and Runnymede In short, for every dirty deed You daren't yourself commit,
Just call at once on Hit and Nev,
And they'll accomplish it!
For dirty work you all should go
At once to Nev and Hit & Co.!

Whole Chorus For At o

For dirty work we'll always go At once to Nev and Hit & Co.!

(No ballet here. Hit returns to the throne, and Bubbles and Boring stand beside it. The other three stand in front of the throne).

Hit Well, my Friend - this new material of yours. Let me see it. What is the price?

(Nev opens bag and takes out a roll of cloth coloured in black and white squares like a draughtboard)

Nev (impressively) Look at this, Hut - look at it! Let your eyes feast on it and desire it, for it is beautiful! It is the latest check cloth from across the sea - brought to Briton by a band of wandering Phoenician merchants. It will be very useful, Hit - it will wear well, and will be a great step towards the completion of your collection.

Hit True, Nev. Let me feel it. (Nev allows him to feel the cloth) Ah, how superb! It is finer than gossamer and yet as strong as steel! How much is the check cloth?

Well, Hit, the sale of the check cloth is going to be a little more difficult than the sale of the other cloths. You see, the people of Briton - stupid dolts - are saying amongst themselves that I should not have sold you the other cloths.

Hit But why, Nev?

Nev Oh, they have some silly idea that we don't really own these cloths we are selling. Utterly absurd, of course, but sometimes you have to take a little notice of what the people are saying. It's an awful bore.

Hit It is, Nev. But then, what are you going to do?

I'm going to meet you half way, Hit. I anticipated that you would wish to buy the check cloth, so I told the Britons that you were about to march to seize it by force. They wouldn't like that at all, but they wouldn't mind if I sold it to you, provided you gave me a guarantee that your legions would not march.

Hit I couldn't commit Adolmania to anything.

Oh, but you needn't say anything definite. You needn't actually guarantee not to make war - just a few words about friendship between the nations and desiring peace. The Britons love that.

Hit I think I know what you want. Bubbles, fetch a copy of blurb number forty-four.

Bubbles Blurb number forty-four it is, Sir.

(Exit Bubbles, right)

Hit And if I sign this agreement, you will sell me the check cloth?

Nev I will give you the check cloth, oh Hit! The people of Briton will be so relieved when I tell them that you will not march that they will shower me with honours.

(Enter Bubbles, right)

Bubbles Blurb number forty-four, Sir.

(Gives paper to Hit)

Hit Will this suit?

Nev (Reads) "Symbolic desire"... "never to go to war against each other again"... "methods of consultation"... "assuring the peace of Europe"...- yes, that's wonderful! Here - sign it!

Hit (Taking quill pen from Bubbles! ear and signing)
There you are! And now you (Pause) This is fun,
isn't it?

Nev (Signing) Good: (Pause - then impressively -) And here is the check cloth, oh Hit! The crisis is over!

(Nev presents the roll of cloth to Hit. The orchestra strikes up suddenly and loudly - "Rule Britannia")

Hit Take this cloth, Boring, and guard it from harm. It is very precious.

Boring It will be safe in my tender care, oh Hit!

(Nev hands the signed paper to Hades and Runnymede, who examine it with interest)

Hades Another guarantee! Think what that's going to cost us for further re-armament!

Hit And have you any other cloth, Nev, in your store? Perhaps an even richer cloth?

(New whispers to Hades and Hunnymede. They giggle naughtily, and nod)

Nev (Impressively) What will you offer for this cloth, Hit?

(He opens the bag, like a magician, and displays a roll of red, white, and blue bunting. The viking gasp. Hit is staggered; the general effect is electric.)

Nev (Giggling) That gave them a turn, didn't it?

Hit You - you will really sell me that cloth?

Nev Oh well - it's very expensive, you know -

Hit (Dangerously) Perhaps it won't be necessary for you to sell it to me, Nev.

Nev What - what do you mean?

Hit Boring, seize him!

(Boring and some Vikings seize Hades, Runnymede, and Nev, who struggle)

Hades Here - I say, this is a bit thick!

Runnymede It really isn't cricket, damn it all!

Nev By my sacred umbrella, I shall order my Government to send a note of protest.

Hades No, don't do that, Nev old chap. We want to get out of this mess.

One moment, my friends. Bubbles, fetch me disguise number four. (Bubbles exits left) Nev, you are not going to return to Briton - yet.

Nev Not - not going to return to Briton?

No. I am going over in your stead - disguised as you!

(To the Vikings) Let him follow later if he wishes.

I have a little plan which I want to try out.

(Enter Bubbles with a moustache)

Nev You fool: Don't you suppose they'll see through you?

Hit (Sticking the moustache, which is exactly like Nev's, on his upper lip) Well, they didn't see through you, did they? As a matter of fact, I don't think any of them will notice the slightest difference.

(Boring puts the check cloth in the trunk, and places the trunk into a coracle. Bubbles and Boring clamber into the foremost coracle. Hit removes Nev's hat, tie, and bear skin, and morning coat, and dons them himself, leaving Nev attired in a vest and a delightful pair of pink drawers. A Viking, seeing the awful sight, covers his eyes, turns away, and hands Nev his own cloak, which he dons. Hit takes Nev's umbrella, and, waving it to the Vikings, gets into the remaining coracle. The three Britons struggle wildly, The Vikings and Trolls burst into their chorus, and the three coracles sail slowly off stage).

CHORUS

VIKINGS AND TROLLS

Oh, we are the Vikings, the scourge of the sea, And we savagely ravage the rolling main; If you had once witnessed our valour you'd flee If you saw us approaching again.

We're a strong and terrible throng, ha ha! For war and slaughter we long, ha ha! And this is our rollicking song, ha ha! This is our rollicking song -

Oh, we are the Vikings, the scourge of the sea, And we savagely ravage the main.

SLOW CURTAIN

ACT II

(The scene is the Cave of the Druids, in Ancient Britain.
Three quarters of the stage is used, and the back-cloth represents a gloomy, craggy cave interior. It is essential that the background should be almost black. The same side flats as in Act I may be used. In the centre of the stage, towards the back, is a rough stone block serving as a table, and round it, on three sides, three stone forms. It is to be hoped that these articles will really look like stone. The light is dark, flickering, and gloomy.

Sitting on the stone forms, with their feet on the stone table, are ten ancient Druids, clad in the long robes, etc., which were the fashion in those days. The Druids should have long white bears (not made of tow) and should speak in moderately ancient voices, with Oxford accents.

The orchestra strikes up brightly "That Certain Age"; the Druids rythmically remove their feet from the table, and advance to the front of the stage, where they boom out the following chorus:)

CHORUS

THE DRUIDS

(Air - "That Certain Age")

We are Briton's acolytes, Reverent and sage; Philanthropic parasites Of this ancient age!

Politics amuse us, Though they're not our bent: We have ordered fifty cruisers The safeguard what we've lent.

We've a thirst for L.S.D. Nothing can assuage Each a ruthless mortgagee Of this ancient age.

We are Britain's acolytes, Reverent and sage; Philanthropic parasites Of this ancient age!

(The Druids on the extreme left and right of the line step forward to the footlights, and speak alternately through the music. At the conclusion of each verse, the remaining eight Druids execute a little ballet, stiff, jerky and humourous, lifting their skirts high)

1st Druid (speaking through music)

For Truth and Light we daily search, And, as befits our rank, We worship Sundays at the Church, And weekdays at the Bank!

(Ballet)

2nd Druid (speaking through music)

By a strange coincidence Arranged by heavenly powers Britain's vital interests Are just the same as ours!

(Ballet)

1st and 2nd Druids (speaking through music)

War against progressive foes Relentlessly we wage, And thus maintain the status quo Of this ancient age!

(Ballet. The 1st and 2nd Druids join the others).

Chorus

We are Britain's acolytes, Reverent and sage; Philanthropic parasites Of this ancient age!

(The Druids reseat themselves round the table. A tall Druid rises and speaks).

dentlemen - we are gathered together to discuss the present political situation. The peace of Ancient Britain is endangered, her honour and prestige are at stake, her proud place among the nations is threatened -

2nd Druid In other words, our vested interests are a bit rocky.

lst Druid Exactly. And are we to fail the Britons in their hour of need? Is the sacred trust which we are here to fulfil to be abused?

3rd Druid Well, is it?

lst Druid (A little taken aback) Yes - it probably is, But are we to be afraid of this Hit, this mountebank, this outrager of the peace of the world? Are we afraid to fling our legions against his and crush him?

4th Druid Yes, we are.

You're quite right. And that, gentlemen, is the position in a nutshell. But before we decide whether it is to be peace or war, I think it is relevant to our enquiry to ascertain how many of us hold shares in armament firms. Will those who own any such shares please raise their right hands?

(The right hands of all the Druids, except the 1st, are slowly raised)

5th Druid What - you have no shares?

1st Druid I have no armament shares.

2nd Druid I always gave you credit for being one of the few of us with any brains, too.

lst Druid I have no shares in any of the firms - but I am a managing director of them all! Well, gentlemen, is it to be peace or war?

(The Druids take a breath, purse their lips, and are about to shout "War" when Hit, disguised as Nev, with Bubbles and Boring, enters left. Boring is carrying the carved trunk containing the cloths)

Hit (Idyllically) Beace!

Druids What? Nev back! Why! etc.

Hit Peace, I say! Look at this!

(He waves the agreement. Some of the Druids snatch at it).

Hit Now, naughty, naughty! Here you are - you may read it!

(He gives it to the first Druid who reads it avidly, the others peering over his shoulder)

2nd Druid Do you mean to say that Hit listened to the voice of reason?

My dear fellow, how could he? It was I who was speaking to him!

2nd Druid True, Nev., true.

Ist Druid (doubtfully) You know, we've had a lot of these before. I doubt whether the people will like it. As soon as they crawl out of the holes they have dug, they may begin to think.

But do we not pay the criers who announce the news? Can they not use sweet words about this deed - words like "honour" and "appeasement" - are they not beautiful words my friends? Let them go forth now to the people, and shout to them to come forth from their holes - Nev. the peacemaker has saved the world - Hit and the Vikings will not march! Our prestige is saved - friendship and comity among the nations - a triumph of British diplomacy! Tell them the old, old story - and they will sing in the streets, and shout "All hail, oh Nev the Peacemaker!"

Druids (Bowing and knocking their heads on the floor) All hail, oh Nev the Peacemaker!

Hit (to Bubbles & Boring) How am I doing, folks?

Boring Gee, chief - you were swell!

Bubbles Introduce us, Hit.

Hit Here - get up, please - (coyly) - really, I am not worthy of such devotion. I want to remain always just plain Mr. Nev.

(The Druids rise)

But let me introduce you to two Vikings who have come with me from Adolmania to help me in matters of State.

Mr. Bubbles - Mr. Boring.

(Bubbles, Boring, and the Druids bow ceremoniously. Bubbles and Boring do the Adolmania salute).

1st Druid Where, oh Nev, are Hades and Runnymede?

Hit Detained in Adolmania with foreign affairs.

1st Druid Are you sure it's not with fair foreigners?

Hit Indeed - that is slanderous! Surely you know Hades and Runnymede?

1st Druid Exactly - we know Hades and Runnymede!

Hit But stay - in the joy of achievement we must not wholly lose our senses. While in Adolmania I discovered a plot!

1st Druid What, only one?

Hit Through Mr. Bubbles (He bows) and Mr. Boring (also bows) I learned that Hit intends to come to Britain!

2nd Druid To come here? Why?

Hit He intends to come here disguised as me - to slaughter me and take over the Government himself.

3rd Druid He must be stopped at once!

4th Druid I say, what infernal cheek!

Hit He must be captured as soon as he arrives.

1st Druid We shall sacrifice him straight away!

2nd Druid Yes - to the Gods of Ancient Britain - So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies!

3rd Druid That's rather drastic, isn't it?

No remedy could be too drastic for such infamy - such blasphemy! We shall send him to Stonehenge, which is haunted by the dinosaurs, and the terrible Gods So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies. There he will meet the end he deserves!

Bubbles There is a coracle approaching the shore, oh Hit:

Hit It is he! Observe his villainous false moustache!

(His own almost falls off - he just saves it in time, unseen by the Druids)

How could he ever hope to deceive us with that perfectly awful disguise?

2nd Druid Observe his rage! The water turns to steam before him!

Hit Stay, friends - we must organise a plan of attack. Hit is very wily and won't easily fall into a trap.

Ist Druid That's right. He seems to be alone - so we can over-power him when he enters - but who is going to take him to Stonehenge?

2nd Druid Even the bravest of us wouldn't dare to go near there.

3rd Druid It's awfully risky. They say that when you get near the Seven Dwharfies you feel all Disney.

Hit I have an idea, By my sacred umbrella!

1st Druid But we don't want to buy your sacred umbrella.

You fool! I shall transport Hit to Stonehenge by means of the magic powers contained in my sacred umbrella.

(He opens the umbrella, and flourishes it. The Druids bow low, and knock their heads three times on the floor.)

Bubbles I wonder if they hurt themselves when they do that?

Boring (looking:off) He's landed, Hit.

Hit Up, fools; Hit is almost here!

(The Druids rise. Enter Nev, left, distraught)

Nev I am here, Druids: Seize the imposter! (Pause, the Druids laugh heartily) Well, what are you waiting for? (Pause) Do something, or (imitating Charlie McCarthy) I'll mow you down:

lst Druid Did you really think you could get away with that disguise?

Nev Disguise? That's my face:

1st Druid That shows he's lying! Come on, Druids!

(They rush over to Nev and seize him. He struggles wildly).

Nev I must keep calm - I must keep calm - in this time of crisis - ow! - don't pull my moustache, it grows there!

Hit Put him on the table.

(The Druids lay Nev. on the table. He struggles, but the Druids hold him down).

Nev I can assure you that my appendix has already been removed.

(Hit opens the trunk and brings out the bunting)

1st Druid He won't lie still, Nev.

Nev I must sincerely protest with all my heart against this outrage!

Hit I shall hypnotise him with my sacred umbrella.

(He waves the umbrella over him, finally hitting him hard on the head with it. Nev gives a convulsive shudder, and lies still)

1st Druid Are you ready, Nev?

Hit I am ready;

(Hit and the 1st Druid spread out the bunting, and cover Nev carefully with it. The Druids stand in a semicircle behind the stone table. Hit stands in front waving the umbrella mystically; the lights are lowered so that the cave is even darker and more gloomy; weird and unearthly music is heard).

SOLO AND CHORUS

Hit (half-singing, half-speaking through the intensely melodrama-

Rise from your graves
My awful slaves;
Come, shades from bogs and ditches:
Here, dreadful hosts
Of gibbering ghosts Come, horrid hags and witches!

(As the Druids sing the following chorus, Nev's body, covered with the bunting, rises, with no apparent means of support, slowly into the air, and remains suspended about three feet above the Druids, who slowly raise their arms in supplication. This is a well-known magical effect and is fairly easy of execution with the stage set in the manner described above).

Druids

Here, dreadful hosts
Of gibbering ghosts Come, horrid hags and witches!
So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies,
Take our sacrifice:

(During the next verse, Nev's body rises and falls slowly, the Druids following its movements with their upraised arms. Hit waves the umbrella above and below the floating body. Dim thunder is heard in the distance)

Hit

Assemble, crowds,
Of imps in shrouds,
Ye losthsome ghosts, protect us!
Come hither, sprites
Of gloomy nights And grim and ghastly spectres!

Chorus

Come hither, sprites
Of gloomy nights And grim and ghastly spectres:
So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies,
Take our sacrifice!

(Thunder. Hit suddenly pulls any the cloth from Nev's body. There is nothing there - Nev has literally vanished into thin air. There is a terrific peal of thunder, and after a few seconds, a complete blackout.

During the blackout, the Druids hastily remove the stone table and forms, and the blackcloth is lifted, to disclose Stonehenge, with a background showing a plain strewn with great blocks of stone. If it is found too expensive to have another blackcloth painted, an impressionistic modern background can be constructed with the aid of black curtains and stone blocks. Or perhaps two black curtains could be used, with a glimpse of the plain between them. The details of the scene can, however, be left to the discretion of the producer.

There are seven stone blocks on the stage, irregularly shaped so as to represent part of Stonehenge. Paper coloured like stone may be obtained so that the "stone" walls, tables, forms, and Stonehenge blocks may be made roughly from wood and covered with this paper.

Seated on the seven blocks of stone, in an attitude of sleep, are the Seven Dwharfies. The top half of these should be dressed in the costume of the film, and the bottom half in wharfies: pants and boots. All are extremely tall and fat. So Tight, dressed in the costume of the film, is fast asleep against the middle block. On either side of the Dwharfies lies a Dinosaur, curled up. These dinosaurs should be constructed on the lines of some prehistoric monster such as the Brontosaurus. The bodies are similar to that of Daisy the Bull in "The Plutocrats," and the necks each consisted of a long tube of white material stuffed with rags, and surmounted by a fearsome head. The necks contain a large stick, which protrudes into the body, and is worked by one of the two unfortunate people inside. The body can be hired; the head and neck can be very easily constructed.

The orchestra strikes up "The Lambeth Walk;" So Tight wakes up, yawns, stretches, then slowly rises).

So Tight Time to get up, men: Tim: for your morning exercise!

(The Dwharfies, and the Dinosaurs, uncurl sleepily. The Dwharfies slide down on to the stage one by one. To the tune of the Lambeth Walk, the Dwharfies, Dinosaurs, and So Tight execute a ballet based on "The Lambeth Walk." This should be short but very humourous).

SO TIGHT, DWHARFIES AND DINOSAURS

So Tight (speaking through the music)

Wake me up, it's ten o'clock Come on Wheezy - come on Soch'
From your little beds arise
And take your morning exercise!
Bumpy, Weepy, Soapy, too,
Scrappy, Hasful, all of you Let us take our morning stroll,
Come, Men:

Dwharfies

Every morning just at ten So Tight wakes us up and then You'll find us all Doing the Stonehenge Stroll!

Every sleepy little man
Dances lightly as he can Just watch us all
Doing the Stonehenge Stroll:

When it's a lovely morning, When you're awake and yawning, Why don't you have your fling too, Dance, too, sing, too?

Watch us happy as can be Gambol round so joyously - Just watch us all Doing the Stonehenge Stroll!

(They repeat the Chorus, and execute the Stonehenge Stroll again. During this, Nev enters, and watches amazed at the antics of So Tight and the Seven Dwharfies. At the conclusion of the dance, Nev stands, facing audience, his arms folded, with an intense expression on his face, waiting to be sacrificed. The Dinosaurs approach and sniff him; he does not see them. So Tight gazes intently at him; the Seven Dwharfies whisper together excitedly. The orchestra plays "Some Day My Prince Will Come." So Tight approaches Nev cautiously)

Nev Hurry up - get it over! (Nervously) We - British - are not afraid to die!

So Tight You are British, then? How nice:

Nev We like it. But please - please get it over. We British are always calm in moments of crisis.

(The Dinosaurs! heads are within three inches of his face, on either side. Nev turns and sees them, and gives a bloodcurdling yell)

So Tight (to the Dinosaurs) Go away, dears. (The Dinosaurs slink back to the Seven Dwharfies.) (To Nev) It's quite all right, they're vegetarians.

Nev Hurry - do what you will with me!

So Tight What - can it be that you are my prince?

Nev Pardon me - your what?

So Tight My prince, whom I have dreamed of so long? I knew he would come in the end! My darling! (She embraces him)

Nev Here - I say - please, my good woman - don't - I'm

afraid you're misconstruing - here, lay off please!

(The Dwharfies consult together, nod their heads, and come forward)

Scrappy My dear So Tight -

Wheezy We think you should know -

Sock That this gentleman is Hit the Viking -

Bumpy Sent here to be sacrificed -

Weepy By the Ancient Druids -

Soapy Because he plotted to overthrow Nev -

Hasful In order to rule over Britain himself!

Dwharfies Thank you!

So Tight They must have seen it in the magic mirror! Hit the

Viking: Is it really true?

Nev No - I assure you - it's a gross exaggeration! I am

not Hit - I am Nev the Peacemaker, ruler of Ancient

Britain:

So Tight Ah, now you're trying to be modest! But I do like

modest men!

(She embraces him again. The Dwharfies giggle, and consult together again. The Dinosaurs embrace also).

Nev My dear So - er - Miss Tight -

Scrappy Well, men - I think it would be tactful -

Wheezy If we gracefully retired -

Sock So Tight, my dear -

Bumpy We are going outside for a moment -

Weepy In order to -

Scapy See a man -

Hasful About a Dinosaur!

Dwharfies Thank you!

(The Dwharfies bow, and march out right, to the tune of the Lambeth

Nev This is awful! My good woman - you are labouring under a delusion - I am really Nev the Peacemaker - not Hit!

So Tight (cajoling him) Now, Hitty dear, don't be so silly! Of course, if you were really Nev, we'd call the Dinosaurs and start the sacrifice right away.

Nev Oh, my goodness! By my divine brolly! Oh well - of course, if you insist - I am Hit, then!

So Tight Of course you are, silly!

Nev I'm beginning to think I really am!

So Tight And you will love me till the end of your days?

Nev But really, Miss Tight - I am married, you know -

So Tight Oh, but I'm sure you are broadminded. If not, the Dinosaurs will soon -

Nev (hastily) Oh, yes - I'm broadminded.

So Tight And in return for your love, do you know what I'm going to do?

Nev No, but I think I can guess!

So Tight

I'm going to help you conquer Britain: The Dinosaur
Boys are on my side - we can overthrow the Druids
easily:

Nev (horrified) Oh, I couldn't - I couldn't do that!

So Tight (nastily) You couldn't, eh? (Calls the Dinosaurs)
Denny: Dinah:

(The Dinosaurs advance menacingly towards Nev, pawing the ground. Nev hides behind So Tight, and the Dinosaurs chase him round her)

Nev Oh - take them away - I suppose I'll have to stretch a point.

So Tight (to the Dinosaurs) Go away, darlings - you shall have your dinner later.

Nev (mopping his brow) Oh, dear! Just like when I had that overdose of mead!

So Tight Oh certainly - (tonelessly) - madly - passionately!

SOLO - NEV WITH CHORUS OF DWHARFIES AND DINOSAUR BOYS

(Air - Original Music)

I'm a highly respectable man, And honour is always my goal: All passionate dramas Which mention pyjamas Offend my susceptible soul!

I'm worshipped at afternoon teas, I'm a friend of the Vicar and Squire -I labour all day For the Y.M.C.A. And I warble at night in a choir!

But I can't explain, dear,
Why a smile from you,
Or a soft caress,
Can thrill me through:
I'm quite unsentimental,
But still I know it's true Though I can't explain, dear That I love you.

(The chorus from "I can't explain, dear" is crooned in the traditional modern "blues" manner, with plenty of "bood-a-doops." During the second verse and chorus, the Dwharfies enter in tip-toe, followed by ten Dinosaur Boys, led by Terry Dactyl. The Dinosaur Boys wear cowboy-like leggings, and animal skins, and look extremely primitive. They form up in front of Stonehenge, and sit down, the Dwharfies on the side of the stage. We might as well mention that Terry Dactyl is a caricature of the well-known Pinto Pete,

and the Dinosaur Boys are the Ranchos. For this reason, they languidly hum the air of the chorus while Nev is singing it).

CHORUS - DINOSAUR BOYS AND DWHARFIES

But I can't explain, dear,
Why a smile from you,
Or a soft caress
Can thrill me through!
I'm quite unsentimental,
But still I know it's true Though I can't explain, dear,
That I love you!

NEV

I'm a highly respectable man, From virtue I never have strayed; I burble sea-shanties In cute little panties, And march with Boy Scouts on parade.

My mind is as pure as a lily; I'm constructed of acid and ice; I always avoid The subject of Freud, And I never make use of a vice!

But I can't explain, dear,
Why a smile from you,
Or a soft caress
Can thrill me through!
I'm quite unsentimental,
But still I know it's true Though I can't explain, dear That I love you!

DWHARFIES AND DINOSAUR BOYS

But I can't explain, dear, etc. etc.

So Tight (to the Dinosaur Boys) Hullo, boys - I'm so glad you've come. (Presenting Nev) Meet Hit the Viking, boys - Hit, these are the Dinosaur Boys, and this is Terry Dactyl, their boss.

Terry (very deep Pinto Pete voice) I'm sure glad to meet you, stranger.

(Shakes hands. Nev winces)

Nev Oh - charmed, I'm sure - but really -

So Tight

Hit wants to conquer Britain - and I've promised to help him. With the Dinosaurs on our side, we can win easily. You're with me, aren't you, boys?

Terry Friends of yours are always friends of ours, So Tight. The Dinosaur Boys always welcome you with open arms.

(The orchestra plays softly and slowly "Bring back my bonnie to me" and the Dinosaur Boys hum the refrain. The Dinosaurs sway gently, their heads resting in the arms of two of the Dinosaur Boys)

Yes, when the dying sun sinks slowly over Salisbury Plain, and we've rounded up the Dinosaurs into the old corrals, then we like to sit together round the camp fire, and sing a bit, and - maybe, who knows? - dream a bit, too.

(Pause while the Dinosaur Boys hum the refrain)

And we welcome strangers with a shake of the hand and a cheery song, and we sit together in the flickering firelight and think of the days gone by and the faces we see no longer. Now, who's going to sing for our pal Hit this evening?

1st D. Boy You sing to us, boss.

2nd D. Boy You've got a swell voice, boss.

Terry (laughs with a deep belly laugh) Ha ha ha! Well, I'll sing, then. As a matter of fact, I intended to all the time. I'll sing you a sad song, folks - the saddest song I know - the story of an old friend who we all used to love, and who has now passed over into the Great Unknown - Winifred the Wonder of the West!

SONG - TERRY DACTYL CHORUS OF DWHARFIES AND DINOSAUR BOYS

(Air - Original Music)

Oh, gather round and listen to the story,
Of Winifred the Wonder of the West:
If a cowboy got ecstatic
She would draw her automatic,
And the verdict at the Inquest told the rest.
But Winnie had a wobble that was winsome,
Her face - it would have sunk a thousand ships And the cowboys got hysterics
And recited verse like Herricks
When they watched the gentle swaying of her hips.

Chorus

She was Winifred the Wonder of the West,
And she entered into every game with zest.
Bullets wouldn't pierce her torso Like Diana's, only more so,
She was Winifred the Wonder of the West.

A man from Texas came to visit Winnie,
And walked with her from dawn to set of sun:
He started out to woo her,
For he wanted to undo her,
But Winifred refused to be undone;
She took her automatic from her pinny,
And through her teeth she hissed "You dirty dawg!"
And she shot the man from Texas
In the chest and solar plexus,
And they came and took the body to the morgue!

Chorus She was Winifred the Wonder of the West,
And people say she'd hairs upon her chest;
Bullets wouldn't pierce her torso,
Like Diana's, only more so She was Winifred the Wonder of the West!

But she fell in love herself, did little Winnie, With a cowboy with a captivating smile; How she wished he would assault her And lead her to the altar But he dared to come no nearer than a mile! So she pined away and miserably perished; There was silence in that rancho on the West, And despite the cowboys' urgin! She remained the local virgin When they buried her and laid her down to rest.

She was Winifred the Wonder of the West,
And she hid a heart of gold beneath her vest;
Bullets wouldn't pierce her torso Like Diana's only more so She was Winifred the Wonder of the West!

Well, stranger, we're mighty glad to have seen you to-night, And when you ride home over the plains, perhaps you'll remember Terry Dactyl and his Dinosaur Boys, with laughter in your hearts....and maybe you'll come again sometime.... goodbye.....goodbye.....

Nev But I'm not going!

Terry Well, neither are you, now! Sorry, pal, it was just force of habit!

So Tight When can you get ready to attack the Druids, Terry? Now?

Terry Now, if you wish it, So.

So Tight Come on then - unleash the Dinosaurs!

(The Dwharfies wabble off right in perfect time, followed by the Dinosaur Boys. At this moment Hit, Bubbles and Boring enter left. So Tight and the Dinosaurs dance out, and Nev is about to follow them in the rear when Hit rushes across the stage and seizes him)

Hit Where are you going, Nev?

Nev
Oh, it's awful, awful! That awful woman fell for me - she thinks I'm you - and you're me - and she's going to conquer Britain for me - you - and kill all the poor Druids - because she thinks I'm you - you're me - (wailing) oh, my goodness! Which of us is which? (pitifully) It's awfully confusing!

Hit I'm Hit and you're Nev but So Tight thinks you are me and the Druids think I am you, and they're both wrong. That any clearer?

Nev (smiling) Oh, thanks awfully - that's much better: (Suddenly - his face changing) No - it's much worse! Oh dear - I don't know who I am! What on earth shall I do?

Boring Try to remember some details of your past.

Bubbles No - no - keep the party clean!

Hit Have you any identification marks?

Nev Identification marks? (beaming) Why, yes, of course - I have a birthmark!

Hit Where? (Pause) You may whisper if you wish.

(Nev whispers confidentially to Hit)

Nev Yes, it's on my chest.

(He fumbles at his vest and tries to undo it)

Hit On your chest? Strange - is it anything like this?

(He opens his clothes, and demonstrates an Adolmanian emblem in Brown on his chest)

Nev Why - can it be - but look! Mine's just the same!

(He opens his vest and shows exactly the same mark on his own chest)

Hit (amazed) Surely it can't be -

Nev I suppose it isn't possible -

Hit (speaking quickly and emotionally) Were you left in a clothes basket at a very early age -

Nev (speaking in the same way) - On the doorstep of an ancient Briton - yes -

Hit By your heartbroken mother -

Nev Yes! - Yes! -

Hit Then you must be -

Nev (flinging himself into Hit's arms) Hitty!

Hit Nevvy! My little twin brother!

(They weep unrestrainedly on each others' shoulders)

Nev I thought you were lost for ever!

Hit Found after all these years!

Nev Now I know why I've always admired you!

Hit That's why I've always found you so helpful.

Nev Little Hitty:

Hit Little Nevvyl

(They weep again)

Nev My poor little baby brother: And what have you been doing all these years?

Hit

I've written a book - (Bubbles produces a copy and hands it to Nev) - here, you can read it. But (coyly) don't look at the end first!

Nev What's it called?

Hit "Mein Kampf."

Nev Funny - I'm writing a book, too.

Hit And what's your's called, Nevvy?

Nev "My Gamp." (Pause) But stay, we must remember - the unleashing of the Dinosaurs - they will come back.

Hit True - we must restrain our emotion. Let me think. (Pause).

Nev It's hard, isn't it?

Hit How would it be if we reigned over Britain jointly?

Nev That would be lovely! But I don't think the people would like it, you know.

Well, how would it be if we took turns? When there's any work to be done, or any important

decisions to be made, I'll take the helm, and you can quietly disappear.

Nev Why, that's just what I've always wanted to do!

Hit I've no doubt Miss So Tight will be glad to accommodate you during those periods.

Nev That suits me down to the ground.

And when the Druids are running things - which happens most of the time - you can come back, and I'll amuse myself at Stonehenge. No one'll notice the difference.

Nev Bags first pop at Stonehenge, Hitty.

Yes - I think I ought to be looking after things for a while. There's a little matter of some colonies I want to fix up.

Nev (looking off right) Oh - look - here they are - So Tight and those awful Dwharfies - they're coming to look for me - I think I'd better be getting along, you know -

Hit Good! Lie low for a while, Nevvy - then go to Stonehenge.

Nev I will, Hitty. Farewell, my brother!

(They embrace).

Hit Farewell!

(Nev walks across stage left. The orchestra, for the third time, strikes up "Rule Britannia")

Nev (Going off) I'm perfectly sure it's going to be quite all right this time!

(Exits left. So Tight, with the Dinosaurs trotting beside her, enters right, followed by the Dwharfies, and the Dinosaur boys).

So Tight Where have you been, you naughty Hitty?

Well, you see - I met these two gentlemen - my own men - er - Mr. Bubbles, Miss Tight - Mr. Boring, Miss Tight.

Bubbles Charmed:

Boring Delighted:

Hit These gentlemen have already done our job for us.

So Tight You mean -

Hit They've conquered Britain for my. I have it on excellent authority that it's going to be quite all right this time.

So Tight And you will stay here with me?

I will, my darling. (They embrace) So chain up the Dinosaurs - they won't be needed - yet! Mr. Bubbles - you will attend to the usual publicity. Mr. Boring - do you think a pogrom or two would go amiss? And you people of Britain, be reassured, I shall carry on your old traditions - with a few consequential amendments, of course, and above all, I shall always respect the Great Peace brought to you by Nev the Peacemaker - the Peace

(The Dwharfies and Dinosaur Boys do the Adolmanian salute)

FINAL CHORUS

(To be written later)

CURTAIN