

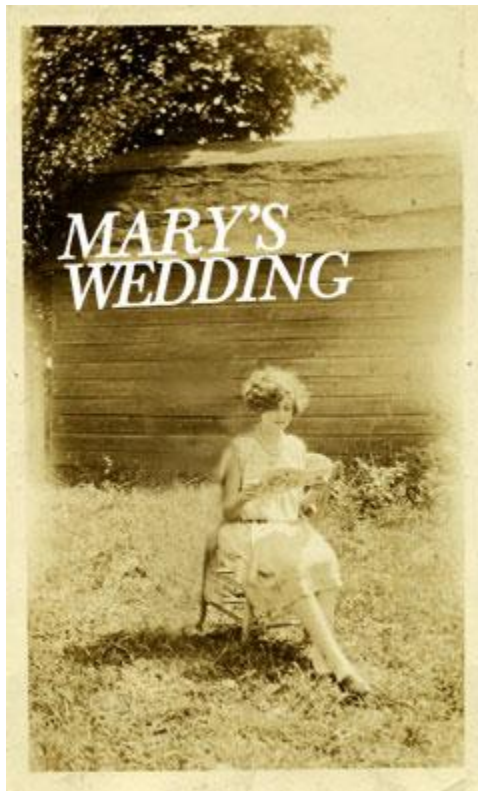
Dramaturgy Research Packet
Rivendell Theatre Ensemble's Production of
Mary's Wedding

Performances January 17 – February 20, 2010

By Stephen Massicotte
Directed by Mark Ulrich

Dramaturgy Research Compiled by Caitlin Kunkel
12/7/09

[Research Packet 1]



The Playwright

From http://artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/mwedding_guide.pdf
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_Massicotte

Stephen Massicotte (born April 18, 1969 in Trenton, Ontario) is a Canadian playwright, screenwriter and actor from Calgary, Alberta. Although he had written several autobiographical pieces that had won awards at various Fringe festivals, *Mary's Wedding* was his first full-length, fictional play. He started out to write a play about the First World War and specifically the Strathcona Regiment's heroic charge on Moreuil Wood – however, the love story of Charlie and Mary closely mirrored personal events in his own life. He found that he was inserting lines that he and his own girlfriend had exchanged during the course of their relationship. As a result of the intensity of that relationship, the love story became the heart of the play with the tragedy of the Great War as the backdrop.



c/o The Core Group Talent Agency
#507, 3 Church St.
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Agent E-mail: literary@coregroupta.com
Attn: Charles Northcote, Literary Agent

Massicotte's Plays:

- *The Jedi Handbooks* trilogy
 - *The Boy's Own Jedi Handbook*
 - *The Girls Strike Back*
 - *The Return of the Jedi Handbook*
- *Mary's Wedding*
- *The Oxford Roof Climber's Rebellion*
- *The Emperor of Atlantis*
- *The Last Seduction of Casanova*
- *Looking After Eden*
- *Pervert*
- *A Farewell to Kings*
- *The Clockmaker*

Mary's Wedding has been performed throughout Canada as well as in Boston, Los Angeles, and other locations across the U.S.

Timeline of Battles in WWI (those referenced in *Mary's Wedding* in bold):

From http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/timeline_of_world_war_one.htm

1914		
	June 28th	Francis Ferdinand assassinated at Sarajevo
	July 5th	Kaiser William II promised German support for Austria against Serbia
	July 28th	Austria declared war on Serbia
	August 1st	Germany declared war on Russia
	August 3rd	Germany declared war on France and invaded Belgium. Germany had to implement the Schlieffen Plan.
	August 4th	Britain declared war on Germany –Canada pledged their military support.
	August 23rd	The BEF started its retreat from Mons. Germany invaded France.
	August 26th	Russian army defeated at Tannenburg and Masurian Lakes.
	September 6th	Battle of the Marne started
	October 18th	First Battle of Ypres in Belgium began.
	October 29th	Turkey entered the war on Germany's side. Trench warfare started to dominate the Western Front.
1915		
	January 19th	The first Zeppelin raid on Britain took place
	February 19th	Britain bombarded Turkish forts in the Dardanelles
	April 22th	Second Battle of Ypres began – poison gas used for the first time.
	May 7th	The "Lusitania" was sunk by a German U-boat
	May 23rd	Italy declared war on Germany and Austria
	August 5th	The Germans captured Warsaw from the Russians
	September 25th	Start of the Battle of Loos
	December 19th	The Allies started the evacuation of Gallipoli
1916		
	January 27th	Conscription introduced in Britain
	February 21st	Start of the Battle of Verdun
	April 29th	British forces surrendered to Turkish forces at Kut in Mesopotamia
	May 31st	Battle of Jutland
	June 4th	Start of the Brusilov Offensive
	July 1st	Start of the Battle of the Somme
	August 10th	End of the Brusilov Offensive

	September 15th	First use en masse of tanks at the Somme
	December 7th	Lloyd George becomes British Prime Minister
1917		
	February 1st	Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare campaign started
	April 6th	USA declared war on Germany
	April 16th	France launched an unsuccessful offensive on the Western Front
	July 31st	Start of the Third Battle at Ypres
	October 24th	Battle of Caporetto – the Italian Army was heavily defeated
	November 6th	Britain launched a major offensive on the Western Front
	November 20th	British tanks won a victory at Cambrai
	December 5th	Armistice between Germany and Russia signed
	December 9th	Britain captured Jerusalem from the Turks
1918		
	March 3rd	The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed between Russia and Germany.
	March 21st	Germany broke through on the Somme
	March 30th	Battle of Moreuil Wood – Canadian Cavalry played an essential role in the victory. Flowerdew killed.
	April 9th	Germany started an offensive in Flanders
	July 15th	Second Battle of the Marne started. The start of the collapse of the German army
	August 8th	The advance of the Allies was successful
	September 19th	Turkish forces collapsed at Megiddo
	October 4th	Germany asked the Allies for an armistice
	October 29th	Germany's navy mutinied
	October 30th	Turkey made peace
	November 3rd	Austria made peace
	November 9th	Kaiser William II abdicated
	November 11th	Germany signed an armistice with the Allies – the official date of the end of World War One.
	Post-war – 1919	
	January 4th	Peace conference met at Paris
	June 21st	The surrendered German naval fleet at Scapa Flow was scuttled.
	June 28th	The Treaty of Versailles was signed by the Germans.

Canada and World War I

From <http://www.linksnorth.com/canada-history/canadaandworldwar1.html>

The new Conservative government, headed by Robert Laird Borden, had the responsibility of rallying the nation to Britain's side in World War I. Germany's invasion of neutral Belgium in 1914 forged a unity of Canadian sentiment and a demand for participation in the conflict.

The first Canadian contingent, numbering 33,000, reached England soon after the outbreak of war in 1914, and it was in the thick of the fighting on the continent a few months later in the second battle of Ypres (April 22, 1915). By 1916 the Canadians had formed four divisions, with a fifth to provide reinforcements. The four divisions of the Canada Corps earned an outstanding reputation as a fighting force. More significant, however, was the fact that Canada was playing a respectable role on the world stage, a role that would soon help undo its colonial status.

Before the war ended in 1918, more than 619,000 officers and men had enlisted, including some 22,000 who had served in the British Royal Air Force. More than 60,000 Canadians were killed in action or died of wounds, a terribly heavy toll in relation to the country's population. Over 66 million shells were produced in Canadian factories. The gross national debt soared from 544 million dollars in 1914 to almost 2 1/2 billion dollars in 1919, most of the money being raised in Canada itself through public war loans.

The Canadian forces at the outset were made up wholly of volunteers. Casualties and the rapidly accelerating pace of the war made the bitter question of conscription a major issue by 1917. Borden met it by forming a coalition government of Conservatives and Liberals, though Laurier refused to join the coalition. In the election of that year, Quebec was almost unanimous in its opposition to the conscription policy that was supported elsewhere across the country. The political solidarity of the province during the next 25 years was largely derived from its memory of that episode.

On the battlefronts in France and Belgium, Canadians of both nationality backgrounds made magnificent contributions to the final victory. They faced with heroism the first poison-gas attack in the history of warfare during the second battle of Ypres in 1915. Other engagements in which Canadian forces earned the admiration of all the Allies included the battles of Mount Sorrel (1916), the Somme (1916), and Vimy Ridge (1917). The victory of Passchendaele Ridge in the autumn of 1917 alone cost 16,000 Canadian casualties. In 1918 during the closing months of the war, Canadians again saw heavy action at Amiens, Cambrai, and Mons.

Canada's Involvement (through Britain) in WWI:

From Wikipedia

When World War I broke out in 1914, all Dominions of the British Empire, including Canada, were called upon by Great Britain to fight on her behalf. Canada's sacrifices and contributions to the war changed its history and enabled it to become more independent, while opening a deep rift between the French and English speaking populations. For the first time in its history, Canadian forces fought as a distinct unit under a Canadian-born commander. Battles such as Vimy Ridge, Second Battle of Passchendaele and the Battle of the Somme are still remembered today by Anglophones as part of Canada's founding myth, to both its identity and culture. Canada's total casualties stood at 67,000 killed and 173,000 wounded. When Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, Canada and the other members of the British Empire were automatically involved; they had not been consulted beforehand. On August 5, 1914, the Governor General declared a war between

Canada and Germany. Canadians of British descent—the majority—gave widespread support arguing that Canadians had a duty to fight on behalf of their Motherland. Indeed, Sir Wilfrid Laurier spoke for the majority of Canadians when he proclaimed: "It is our duty to let Great Britain know and to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart and that all Canadians are behind the Mother Country." Prime Minister Robert Borden offered assistance to Great Britain, which was quickly accepted.

Canadian Calvary in WWI:

From <http://www.2bens.com/userimages/ww13.jpg>



The Canadian Calvary Brigade waiting for inspection by King George V, November 1914. The RCD are in foreground.

King George V of England ruled from 1910-1936



From <http://www.oldukphotos.com/graphics/England%20Photos/London,%20King%20George%20V.jpg>

Gordan Muriel Flowerdew

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordon_Flowerdew

Gordon Muriel Flowerdew VC (January 2, 1885 – March 31, 1918) was a Canadian recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces, received for his actions at the Battle of Moreuil Wood. He was 33 years old and a lieutenant in Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), Canadian Army during the First World War when the following deed, nicknamed "The Last Great Cavalry Charge," took place. For his actions in this battle he was awarded the VC.

Flowerdew's VC was one of twenty awarded during the battles of the German and Allied offensives in the Amiens area in 1918. He was born in Billingford, Norfolk (England) and educated at Framlingham College in Suffolk. He then emigrated to British Columbia where he took up ranching. He was homesteaded briefly in Queen's Bay. When the war broke out in 1914, he enlisted as a private in Lord Strathcona's Horse. He rose quickly through the ranks and was commissioned as an officer in 1916. In January 1918 Flowerdew was given command of C Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse.

For most of the war, the Canadian Cavalry Brigade was not involved in much direct fighting because of the static nature of the warfare. However, when the Germans launched Operation Michael and began a rapid advance in the spring of 1918, cavalry again became an important factor. In late March, as the Germans approached Moreuil and threatened to cross the L'Avre River, the last natural barrier before Amiens, the Canadian Cavalry Corps was assigned the task of stopping them. As the Germans began to enter Moreuil Wood from the east, Flowerdew's squadron rode around the wood and approached the Germans' flank from the north. Flowerdew ordered a cavalry charge.

Riding into the fire of five infantry companies and an artillery battery, the squadron suffered atrocious casualties (more than half of the men in C Squadron were killed), and Flowerdew himself was fatally wounded. However, the cavalry charge so unnerved the Germans that they were never able to capture Moreuil Wood, and their advance turned into a retreat in early April.



VICTORIA CROSS

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Cross

Held by **Lieutenant Gordon Muriel Flowerdew VC**, Lord Strathcona's Horse, Canadian Cavalry
The VC was introduced as the premier award for gallantry, available for all ranks, to cover all actions since the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854. It is the highest military decoration which is, or has been, awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy" to members of the armed forces of various Commonwealth countries, and previous British Empire territories. It takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals. It may be awarded to a person of any rank in any service and civilians under military command.

The decoration is a bronze cross pattée, 41 mm high, 36 mm wide, bearing the crown of Saint Edward surmounted by a lion, and the inscription FOR VALOUR. This was originally to have been FOR THE BRAVE, until it was changed on the recommendation of Queen Victoria, as it implied that not all men in battle were brave. The decoration, suspension bar and link weigh about 0.87 troy ounces (27 g).



Battles Relevant to the Play:

From http://ourwardfamily.com/battles_of_ypres.htm
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ypres>

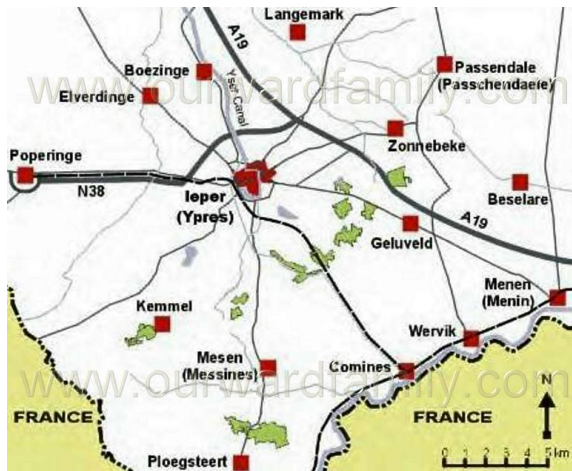
The Battles at Ypres:

Ypres (French pronunciation: [ipʁ], English: /'i:prə/; Dutch: *Ieper*, pronounced ['ipər]) is a Belgian municipality located in the Flemish province of West Flanders. During World War I, Ypres was the centre of intense and sustained battles between the German and the Allied forces. During the war, Tommies nicknamed the city "Wipers."

Ypres occupied a strategic position during World War I because it stood in the path of Germany's planned sweep across the rest of Belgium and into France from the north (the Schlieffen Plan). The neutrality of Belgium was guaranteed by Britain; Germany's invasion of Belgium brought the British Empire into the war. The German army surrounded the city on three sides, bombarding it throughout much of the war. To counterattack, British, French and allied forces made costly advances from the Ypres Salient into the German lines on the surrounding hills.

In the First Battle of Ypres (31 October to 22 November 1914) the Allies captured the town from the Germans. In the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April to 25 May 1915) the Germans used poison gas for the first time on the Western Front (they had used it earlier at the Battle of Bolimov on 3 January 1915) and captured high ground east of the town. The first gas attack occurred against Canadian, British, and French soldiers; including both metropolitan French soldiers as well as Senegalese and Algerian tirailleurs (light infantry) from French Africa. The troops fled in terror, which opened a four mile long hole in the Allied lines. Wearing primitive gas masks, the Germans advanced cautiously into the gap. The arrival of the British Second Army blocked the German advance but the Allied forces had been disadvantaged by the loss of the high ground north of Ypres. The gas used was chlorine gas. Mustard gas, also called **Yperite** from the name of this city, was also used for the first time near Ypres in the autumn of 1917.

Of the battles, the largest, best-known, and most costly in human suffering was the Third Battle of Ypres (21 July to 6 November 1917, also known as the Battle of Passchendaele) in which the British, Canadians, ANZAC and French forces recaptured the Passchendaele ridge east of the city at a terrible cost of lives. After months of fighting, this battle resulted in nearly half a million casualties to all sides, and only several miles of ground won by Allied forces. The town was all but obliterated by the artillery fire. The town had been the centre of battles before due to its strategic position, but the sheer devastation of the town and the surrounding countryside seems to perfectly summarize the futility of battles fought in World War One.



British troops at Ypres

Image from http://ourwardfamily.com/Military/British_soldiers_near_Ypres_-JPG



Allied troops in trenches at Ypres in 1917

Image from <http://ourwardfamily.com/Military/British Troops at Ypres 1917.JPG>



Trench at Ypres

Image from http://ourwardfamily.com/Military/One_of_the_many_trenches_at_Ypres_.JPG

The Battle of Moreuil Wood:

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Moreuil_Wood

The Battle of Moreuil Wood (**pronounced** *euil* – as in *toy*. - **euil, euille, ueil, and ueille are pronounced as a palatalized German ö but are well approximated by an English oy.**

Examples: fauteuil /fo toy/, accueil /ak koy/) 30 March 1918 took place on the banks of the Arve River in France, where the Canadian Cavalry Brigade attacked and forced the German 23rd Saxon Division to withdraw from Moreuil Wood, a commanding position on the river bank. This defeat at the hands of the Allies contributed to the halt of the German Spring Offensive of 1918. **During the battle, a Victoria Cross was awarded to Canadian Gordon Flowerdew.**

Background to the Battle:

By January 1918, the First World War had disintegrated from a mobile conflict into one of trench warfare. On the Western Front, three British offensives, attempting to break the stalemate, had failed and resulted in 860,000 British and 590,000 French casualties, with 850,000 German losses. Russia had departed from the war thanks to the Bolshevik Revolution and peace negotiations, the United States had not yet established a strong fighting force in Europe, and the French Army was suffering heavily. This left only the British forces to oppose any German offensives.

On 23 March the German forces broke through to the village of Ham, and the 3rd Cavalry Division, commanded by Brigadier-General A.E.W. Harman, was ordered to the village of Bouchoire along **with 200 men from the Canadian Cavalry Brigade**. As the German advance moved onwards, the newly formed force fought actions at Cugny, Villeselve, La Neuville and Beaumont. On the 26th, the enemy broke through the lines, and Allied forces began a withdrawal with the force under Harman conducting rearguard actions. By the 30th the attack was renewed; however, by this time the Allied forces had rallied and received reinforcements. By the morning of the 30th, the German 23rd Saxon Division had occupied the Moreuil Woods overlooking the River Arve.

The Battle:

At 08:30 on the 30th, General Seely and his aides travelled towards the Moreuil woods from where his forces were stationed on the other side of the River Avre, with orders to cross the river and delay the enemy advance as much as possible. At 09:30, upon reaching the wood, having received fire from German forces that were occupying it, Seely ordered The Royal Canadian Dragoons to send sections to protect the village of Moreuil, while other sections were to seize the northeast corner of the wood itself. **While this was being undertaken, Lord Strathcona's Horse was ordered to occupy the southeast face of the wood and disperse any German units found there (both the Royal Canadian Dragoons and Lord Strathcona's Horse were two units making up the Canadian Cavalry Brigade).**

The remaining squadrons of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade were ordered to enter the wood from the northwest, and sweep through it towards the eastern face where Lord Strathcona's Horse was awaiting them. After being driven back from their first assault by machine gun fire, the cavalry units dismounted and proceeded to attack a second time with fixed bayonets, driving German forces from the edge of the wood and into its centre. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out in several locations with swords and pistols as Allied forces fought through the German 101st Grenadiers, who became disorganized and demoralized.

Inside the Wood:

As Canadian cavalry fought through the wood, they were channeled eastwards by German machine gun fire. Simultaneously, units of the Royal Canadian Dragoons were forced to wheel into the woods at the north due to German attack. This battle quickly became a series of separate engagements due to the nature of the battlefield, with units separated and dispersed inside the German formations, and the fact that horses were ineffective in the woodland led to the pace of the battle slowing down considerably.

By this time, the remainder of the 3rd Cavalry had crossed the river and was distributed around the wood to support various Canadian forces currently engaged with German forces, many of these reinforcements were instructed to dismount before entering the battle. At this time, units from Lord Strathcona's Horse were formed into scouting teams of around ten men each and sent to discover details about the enemy forces and positions.

The commander of 'C' Squadron Lord Strathcona's Horse, Lieutenant Gordon Flowerdew, ordered his forces to secure the northeast corner then report back to him. Flowerdew was then ordered to cut off the German forces who were retreating to the east in the face of the Allied forces advancing through the wood. During this time, the forces dispatched by Flowerdew to the northeast corner ambushed and killed German forces looting from a French wagon, then dismounted and entered the wood under fire. Flowerdew arrived, assessed the situation, and decided that his unit would move to cut off the German retreat while the other section would help to drive the Germans from the wood.

Cavalry forces approached the southwest corner of the woods, coming under heavy fire and suffering heavy casualties, and they were forced to halt temporarily. Flowerdew reached high ground at the northeast corner of the wood just in time to encounter a 300-strong German force from the 101st Grenadiers, who were withdrawing. Flowerdew ordered, "It's a charge boys, it's a charge!" however, the bugle call was silenced by German fire before it was even sounded. During the charge, both sides were decimated, and Flowerdew was killed, with only 51 of his unit still alive.

By 11:00 Only the southern point of the wood was still occupied by German forces. With reinforcements arriving for the British, Seely ordered the remaining Germans to be driven away. Seely ordered British artillery fire into the wood to cease so he could operate without fear of friendly fire. The Germans were routed from the wood, and the day ended with 305 Allied casualties, but the wood was in Allied hands.

Consequences of the Battle:

The German offense had come to an end after dogged Allied resistance. Despite capturing 1,930 square kilometers of territory, it was at a cost of 250,000 men killed, wounded or missing. In the poor economic state of Germany by this time in the war, they could never recover such losses. The Allies, in comparison, lost 240,000. The strength of Allied forces in defense and in slowing down the German advance in engagements such as those at Moreuil Wood contributed to the ultimate defeat of the German offensive. **Flowerdew's posthumous Victoria Cross for his charge on the German forces was one of twenty that would be awarded during the German and later Allied offensive**

Ranks of Canadian Army

From http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_are_the_order_of_ranks_in_the_Canadian_army

The order of Non Commissioned members in the Canadian Army is as follows:

Private
Corporal
Master Corporal
Sergeant
Warrant Officer
Master Warrant Officer
Chief Warrant Officer

The Officer Ranks are as follows:

Officer Cadet
Second Lieutenant
Lieutenant
Captain
Major
Colonel
Brigadier General
Major General
Lieutenant General
General

Military Terminology

in fan try

-noun, plural -tries.

1. soldiers or military units that fight on foot, in modern times typically with rifles, machine guns, grenades, mortars, etc., as weapons.
2. a branch of an army composed of such soldiers.

cav-al-ry

-noun, plural -ries.

Military.

- a. the part of a military force composed of troops that serve on horseback.
1. b. mounted soldiers collectively.
- c. the motorized, armored units of a military force organized for maximum mobility.
2. horsemen, horses, etc., collectively.

Use of Poison Gas in WWI

From <http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/ypres2.htm>
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/weaponry/gas.htm>

Considered uncivilized prior to World War One, the development and use of poison gas was necessitated by the requirement of wartime armies to find new ways of overcoming the stalemate of unexpected trench warfare. **Although it is popularly believed that the German army was the first to use gas it was in fact initially deployed by the French.** In the first month of the war, August 1914, they fired tear-gas grenades (xylyl bromide) against the Germans. Nevertheless the German army was the first to give serious study to the development of chemical weapons and the first to use it on a large scale.

Initial German Experiments

In the capture of Neuve Chapelle in October 1914 the German army fired shells at the French which contained a chemical irritant whose result was to induce a violent fit of sneezing. Three months later, on 31 January 1915, tear gas was employed by the Germans for the first time on the Eastern Front. Fired in liquid form contained in 15 cm howitzer shells against the Russians at Bolimov, the new experiment proved unsuccessful, with the tear gas liquid failing to vaporise in the freezing temperatures prevalent at Bolimov. Not giving up, the Germans tried again with an improved tear gas concoction at Nieuport against the French in March 1915.

Introduction of Poison Gas

Second Ypres is generally remembered today as marking the first use of gas on the Western Front. 5,700 canisters containing 168 tons of chlorine gas were released at sunrise on 22 April against French Algerian and territorial division troops following a brief preliminary bombardment by 17-inch howitzers. A veil of greenish-yellow mist could be clearly seen rolling across from the German front lines to the French positions.

Puzzled, but suspicious, the French suspected that the cloud masked an advance by German infantry and ordered their men to 'stand to' - that is, to mount the trench fire step in readiness for probable attack.

The cloud did not mask an infantry attack however; at least, not yet. It signaled in fact the first use of chlorine gas on the battlefield. Ironically its use ought not to have been a surprise to the Allied troops, for captured German soldiers had revealed the imminent use of gas on the Western Front. Their warnings were not passed on however.

The effectiveness of the gas attack was so complete that it surprised the German infantry who followed up the release of the chlorine gas. The stunned Allied troops fled in panic towards Ypres, the heavy gas settling and clogging the trenches where it gathered. Covering four miles of trench lines, the gas affected some 10,000 troops, half of whom died within ten minutes of the gas reaching the front line. Death was caused by asphyxiation. Those who lived were temporarily blinded and stumbled in confusion, coughing heavily. 2,000 of these troops were captured as prisoners of war. **The Germans released a second batch of chlorine gas two days later, on 24 April, this time directed against Canadian troops situated north-east of Ypres and again prefaced by a sharp artillery bombardment.**

P.12 "Charlie loads the wagon and whistles "Rule Britannia!"

"**Rule, Britannia!**" is a British patriotic song, originating from the poem "Rule, Britannia" by James Thomson and set to music by Thomas Arne in 1740. It is often called the unofficial national anthem of the United Kingdom.

This website: http://www.audionetworkplc.com/production-music/rule-britannia_12663.aspx has an audio of the song being sung. Click on the classical arrangement. There are also some without vocals.

Lyrics:

When Britain first, at heaven's command,
Aro-o-o-ose from out the a-a-a-zure main,
Arose, arose, arose from out the a-azure main,
This was the charter, the charter of the land,
And guardian A-a-angels sang this strain:
Rule Britannia!
Britannia rule the waves
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.
Rule Britannia!
Britannia rule the waves.
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.
The nations, no-o-o-o-ot so blest as thee,
Must i-i-i-i-in their turn, to ty-y--yrants fall,
Must in, must in, must in their turn, to ty-y-rants fall,
While thou shalt flourish, shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and e-e-e-e-nvy of them all.
Rule Britannia!
Britannia rule the waves.
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.
Rule Britannia!
Britannia rule the waves.
Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

The Charge Of The Light Brigade

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Memorializing Events in the Battle of Balaclava, October 25, 1854

Written 1854

Half a league half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred:
'Forward, the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns' he said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do & die,
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd & thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army while
All the world wonder'd:
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke;
Cossack & Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke,
Shatter'd & sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,

Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse & hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!

The Lady of Shalott
By Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Written 1843



On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early,
In among the bearded barley
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly;
Down to tower'd Camelot;

And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, " 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two.
She hath no loyal Knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the Moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed.
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves

Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, burning bright,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining.

Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And around about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance --
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right --
The leaves upon her falling light --
Thro' the noises of the night,
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and Burgher, Lord and Dame,
And around the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? And what is here?
And in the lighted palace near

Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the Knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."