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Title: "The Scarlet Letter," by Montgomery P. Sellers

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e Scarlet Letter montymeny P Leller

Hapoleon has returned from Olba. He marches through France- it is one grand trumphal march. He reenters Varis Louis XVIII. is nee mon a fugative, and Napoleon, by me mighty wave of propular Enthusiasin is again placed upon the imperial throne. But all Europe has arisen in arms against him. The campaign of the Hundred Days has begun. Ligny and Quatro Brab are fought, and the allies and Mapoleon face Each other wow the full of Waterloo - the closing scene in the great Napoleonic Drama!

As we are told in Les Miserables, that master piece of the human intellect, the battle-field of Waterloo, bounded by two converging roads and intersected by a cross road, forms, as you see, the Capital letter A; a letter which on the Eighleenth day of June, 1815, breomes a Searles Letterscarlet with the human blood. Suyly thousand dead upon the field of battle. Upm all know the slory. For Lours the lempest rages. For hours the mighty floods of humanily heave tound for like the ebbring and the flowing of

the tide. Victory, at one time for the allies, at another pereles itself upon the Eaglet of Sirance And now, just as the sun is disappearing behind the wistern hills, Blicker arrived. The Old Suard, so long mirneible, is checked - wavers - flees. Hapoleon, uncrowered and fallen, brholds the mirage fanother scene-the lone and vocky isle of St. Helene. Years have passed. The Scarlet Letter is no mon visible upon this Earth. Those firlds, once plowed with cannon balls, made froble with human

blood, and from which was reaped a harvest of dead and wounded - to-day, waving with golden gravi or læssled com tell only of the blessings of peace. Tratertoo is a Scarlet Tetter no mon. The din of battle long since Las ceased. Peace reigns victorions. There is Hongomontand of, what memories checker about that name - there is Hongomont, a mady to the Enrice of war. But today, vines in true friendship cling to its runed walls; flowers of peace bloom in Courtyards alive with the songo of birds,

pouring forth their joyful melodies as if in Lonor to the last years of their old friend, their sacred dwelling place. Geace and calm right our all. Yest, to our standing at twilight on that Evermenovable field of battle, as the shades of night close in upon him, lingsing whom the details of that awful day, the present bromes lost in the memories of the past. He Lears the roll of the drums, the rattle of muskely, the tread of marching men. The songs of the birds are no longer heard. The waving gram disappears under

the footsteps of advancing hosts. The mound, with the proud Belgian hon-symbolical of Livore firmmess - fades from veret, and in the place rises the mighty arm of England. Through the startled air again soll the thunders of dread artilley, as the armies like mighty whirlwinde, struggle and struggle to sweep the other from the face of the Earth. Everywhere the demon of war holds high carnival. There the brave currassert rush to their anoful death in the sunken road. There the Imperal

Guardo, until now mouncible, charge and charge again, but all in bain, against the adamantene walls of the Doctish squares. Everywhere are Leard the ground and shouks of the wounded and dying, the clasking of sabors, the bursting of shells, the roarny of artillery and muskely, sending at Every discharge lears Jagony lo distant tomes, bowing aged Leads with greef, and working from human Learle criex, which once heard, can never to forgotten. And there-high about the carnage, the bursting

of shells, the clashing of sabors, the cry of august - there in the foreground of all thes. seething Lell-slands Napoleon, The man who caused it all. and look! there shaving upon his breast, undelibly imprinted whom his soul, lighting up the battlefield in all its good, gleaning throughout the ages to tell mankered of the curse of war of the curse of selfish, unbounded ambition-there, bransferred from Earth to Napoleon, is the Scarlet Letter.

Commencement Oration of Montgomery P Sellers, Class of 1893
Transcribed by Christine Rosenberry, May 2002
Edited by Don Sailer, September 2009

The Scarlet Letter by Montgomery P Sellers

Napoleon has returned from Elba. He marches through France – it is one grand triumphal march. He re-enters Paris. Louis XVIII is once more a fugitive, and Napoleon, by one mighty wave of popular enthusiasm is again placed upon the imperial throne. But all Europe has arisen in arms against him. The campaign of the Hundred Days has begun. Ligny and Quatre Bras are fought, and the allies and Napoleon face each other upon the field of Waterloo – the closing scene in the great Napoleonic Drama.

As we are told in Les Miserables, that master-piece of the human intellect, the battle-field of Waterloo, bounded by two converging roads and intersected by a cross road, forms, as you see, the capital letter A; a letter which on the eighteenth day of June, 1875, becomes a Scarlet Letter – scarlet with the human blood. Sixty thousand dead upon the field of battle.

You all know the story. For hours the tempest rages. For hours the mighty floods of humanity leave to-and-fro like the ebbing and the flowing of

the tide. Victory, at one time for the allies, at another perches itself upon the eagles of France. And now, just as the sun is disappearing behind the western hills, Blücher arrives. The Old Guard, so long invincible, is checked – wavers – flees. Napoleon, uncrowned and fallen, beholds the mirage of another scene – the lone and rocky isle of St. Helene.

Years have passed. The Scarlet Letter is no more visible upon this earth. Those fields, once plowed with cannon balls, made fertile with human

blood, and from which was reaped a harvest of dead and wounded – to-day, waving with golden grain or tassled corn tell only of the blessings of peace. Waterloo is a Scarlet Letter no more. The din of battle long since has ceased. Peace reigns victorious. There is Hougomont – and oh, what memories cluster about that name – there is Hougomont, a martyr to the curse of War. But today, vines in true friendship cling to its ruined walls; flowers of peace bloom in courtyards alive with the songs of birds,

pouring forth their joyful melodies as if in honor to the last years of their old friend, their sacred dwelling place.

Peace and clam reign over all. Yet, to one standing at twilight on that evermemorable field of battle, as the shades of night close in upon him, lingering upon the details of that awful day, the

present becomes lost in the memories of the past. He hears the roll of the drums, the rattle of musketry, the tread of marching men. The songs of the birds are no longer heard. The waving grain disappears under

the footsteps of advancing hosts. The mound, with its proud Belgian lion-symbolhead of heroic firmness – fades from view, and in its place rises the mighty arm of England. Through the startled air again roll the thunders of dread artillery, as the armies like mighty whirlwinds, struggle and struggle to sweep the other from the face of the earth. Everywhere the demon of war holds high carnival. There the brave cuirrassiers rush to their awful death in the sunken road. There the Imperial

Guards, until now invincible, charge and charge again, but all in vain, against the adamantine walls of the British squares. Everywhere are heard the groans and shrieks of the wounded and dying, the clashing of sabers, the bursting of shells, the roaring of artillery and musketry, sending at every discharge tears of agony to distant homes, bowing aged heads with grief, and evoking from human hearts cries, which once heard, can never be forgotten. And there – high above the carnage, the bursting

of shells, the clashing of sabers, the cry of anguish – there in the foreground of all this seething hell – stands Napoleon, the man who caused it all. And look! There shining upon his breast, indelibly imprinted upon his soul, lighting up the battlefield in all its gore, gleaming throughout the ages to tell mankind of the curse of war – of the curse of selfish, unbounded ambition: there, transferred from Earth to Napoleon, is the <u>Scarlet Letter</u>.