their launch will not be long delayed.   In any case, as they are evidently sister ships to the one already afloat, there is no reason to suppose that our present verdict will be modified to any considerable extent.

Mr. Hardy has called his work a drama : he has thereby earned the inevitable comparison with Shakespeare, and has also drawn ingenious suggestions, for staging it, from a gentleman who has at his disposal all the dictionaries and encyclopædias of a great newspaper office.   With such technicalities we have nothing to do : the book is a drama, it is true, of a very unusual kind, but it is none the less a drama in the usual sense of the word.   It is, however, very far from being either a Shakespearean chronicle-play, or a puppet-show, as will be evident when we come to discuss the supernatural element in it.   Let us first say something of the human part.

The historical pageant of this volume begins with the outbreak of war between England and Spain in March 1805, and ends with the death of Pitt.   It is spread out before the mental eye of the reader in a manner which is as simple as it is masterly.   What we are told to see we see : tract after tract of Europe lying below us like a map, men and nations moving, swarming, contending like ants, ships of the line floating over the sea like moths ; then the point of view descends nearer to earth, voices come to us, as they come to those who descend a mountain in clear air, " thin and small, as from another medium," till at last we lose the sense of distance and hear the characters speaking in the tones of the life we share ourselves.

Act I. Scene 1 opens, as we might have hoped, upon " a Ridge in Wessex."   From the first note all is English : King George has rebuffed Bonaparte ; passengers by the Weymouth coach discuss his answer ; they pass companies of infantry singing on the march, and hear from a horseman the news of the threatened French invasion.   The scene shifts to Paris : Decrès receives Napoleon's plan for Villeneuve's feint on the West Indies.   We pass to the old House of Commons, where