

State of the Nation

Late February 1825.

There is a bustle on the barges, things are afire with activity. Some of the servants wail and gnash their teeth. Others nod, they had known this was coming. Wheels turn.

In a hunting lodge Duke Gravewater stands with a start, the tankard falling from his grasp to the floor, the soldiers in the room spring to the alert, but there is no sign of an enemy.

Callowfield looks up from his glass of whiskey, he feels the change coming deep inside him and he shakes his head wearily, wishing he had had a chance to stop it.

On the ice peaked hilltops of Little Germania a man, bones sewn into his flesh pulls his ragged blanket closer around his shoulders and sighs before caving the head in of the spy he had caught earlier that day.

In an immaculately neat study in London Malvess looks up from the book he is reading and is at the window in a moment throwing the curtains aside.

In his camp Henry awakes with a start, the figure of a ragged woman in his doorway, she had sensed it too. Together they look up to the toward the moon.

The stars in the sky shone down on them, but they were altered, different, out of place. The stars of King George, the Sacrifice King are joined by a new constellation, seen across the realms. Gazing upon it they all know that this is the sign of The Eternal Emperor, put there by the French.

Wastelanders across all the linked realms and perhaps beyond feel it happen as they did with George's stars. For some, born under his now-star, the world seems like a slightly different place. Even for those not so, sleep comes less easily for the next few nights.

In other news

Courtly Life

The three courts are wildly different places –

Henry Bolingbroke's court is constantly on the move, as he travels where there is trouble around London. He is ably assisted by a close set of advisors and he brings battle to forces that seek to assail London, often leading the charge into the fray. Critics say he will get himself killed. Most of them haven't seen him fight, for he is like a man possessed in combat. Support for him is high and he has for the most part the backing of the people. There are always dissidents who say that he should be named 'The True King' – indeed the movement is quite vocal, and leaves its pamphlets and scrawlings where they can be seen. Few admit to the view in public though.

Elizabeth's court is a haven of how it has always been. It is homely to those out of their own time and Glorianna is well loved by all of her supporters and for those who have met her it is plain why – she is beautiful and charismatic, an inspiration and touched by the gods. Winchester thrives under her rule.

George IV and Brighton – there is still a lot of opposition to George, but it wains. He has been king for some time now and he has not made too much of a mess of it. Cynics say that's because he does very little, but he does none the less have many a family giving him their support and he holds events which are well attended. He is also very personable – if you get to meet him in the flesh then he is quite a character. None the less it remains the weakest of the three courts. George has a public birthday in June which is said to be expected to be the event of the year.

Commons

There is a movement to limit the power of the Commission – that says they have too much power at present and that they are irresponsible, a vote has not yet been called, but some moves say that everyone should be vetted more carefully, or indeed at all.

Parliament has also called for some research to be done into Psychic phenomena – the precise purpose isn't clear but there is quite the buzz about it at the moment in the Halls of the Commons.

For the most part though the houses of parliament are getting on with their business and have more of a handle on things as they become more used to the peculiarities of the day.

There is still a constant call for necromancy to be deemed a hangable offence, and it is a move gaining more backing.

The Arts

Pamphlets and serialisations of short books continue to be very popular with the recent Experiences of an Opium addict by Thomas DeQuincy being a huge success.

The theatre remains the biggest for of entertainment in the arts, with music hall still remaining fashionable.

Business

Business for the most part is booming – but this in turn brings it's own problems. Wood is being heavily imported from Germania (there being little access to stone), and often raw products can be a problem. Peterloo remains the hotbed of factories and industry that it has been and there are regular recruiters who bring people into the workforce. Anything luxury goods-wise is doing well, in the climate where people want, need maybe things to cheer them up. London it seems has come through the tragedy of the Collapse and now people are trying to find enjoyment in life wheresoever they can.

London

With the Police Act being past and the Peelers becoming the official Police force of London things are going well – they are tackling crime head on and finding that they are making some headway. Of course with that comes problems – criminals are bitter and sometimes seek revenge. Not everyone has accepted the peelers but it is the beginning of a good process. They haven't made any headway in the other realms yet.

Brighton

Brighton continues in it's own way, although there has been an increase in the number of reported hauntings of late. There are many parties, some organised by the King and some by Earl Sandwich who lives there.

Peterloo

Peterloo is massively overcrowded, small cramped houses, coupled with tiny rooms means that people are fit in wherever they can be. There are a lot of fights in the streets and the place is mostly policed by the yeomanry, who are not *very* active.

There is a sort of gang culture in Peterloo, many people belong to them and there are fights behind the scenes, beneath the surface. If one was so inclined there would be a lot to discover in Peterloo, but it is a dangerous place for the unwary to tread.

For all it's troubles though Peterloo has a good heart and a lot of the people that live there are hard working normal folk. But they don't have an easy time of it.

Canterbury and Winchester

Canterbury holds many religious festivals and there are a lot of people who travel there to see the living saint Beckett. It is a place from the middle ages, where one can buy pardons and absolution, but the Cathedral serves anyone who comes there. There is a strong puritanical bent to the place as well, none the less it is a place of very 'pure' faith – it is almost tangible.

Winchester remains firmly in the grip of Elizabeth, it's tradition and customs ruling the day.

Little Germania

Germania is large and sprawling with many hamlets and villages, a lot of it is uninhabitable though and the ill-equipped can find themselves easily lost. It is a hard place to live unless one is used to it, but there is game and open spaces, the like of which are not found elsewhere.

The Romans and the Goths still fight but things are a little more settled.

St Albans

St Albans is carefully managed by the astute Duke Gravewater and Samantha Wade MP, they take care of their people and do the best they can for the place. Wastelanders are most welcome there.

St Albans has many small shrines based around it, with Gravewater welcoming the religious to his land. There is something of an anti-religious movement there as well which is gaining a voice.

The Wasteland Commission

The Commissioner for Army and navy is William Brown and he assumes more duties as the days go by, as he is most efficient. He has hired mostly a new staff to man the commission, sort out passports, papers, stipend and all the clerical things that go into the running of the place.

The new passport system seems to be working very well, and is receiving overwhelming support, some shops in London are even offering discounts

Callowfield and his consorts have made a number of trips to Calais over the last two years. It takes them just as long as everyone else to recover, so they are by no means out all the time, but they do, none the less leave as often as they can push their body and minds to go. Of late, Callowfield, who has been injured, has not been going.

Members of the Commission with psychic talents have noticed a slight trouble sleeping over the last few weeks. It is nothing they cannot get over but it is irritating.

Lady Bridget Isis Constance has fallen ill and has taken to her sick bed, she has missed the last 2 meetings of the Commission.

With immediate effect:

➤ *The Eternal Emperor, February - Knowledge*

Is added to the list of star signs.