

Stop Me If You've Heard This One

The French, it has been observed, take pride in France, in Chamfort's "perfected civilisation," take pride in their physical and cultural *patrimoine*. This patrimony, and this pride steady them, give them confidence. That's good. It's needed, when you are under continuous, varied, and often confusing and demoralizing assault. Shouldn't those who are the natural inheritors, and can claim a life estate in, English law, the English language, the supreme achievements of English literature, not do the same?

Start, with the most obvious and therefore embarrassing of melodramatic choices, here:

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war,
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands,—
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.