





WILLIAM TELL;

A PLAY

BY

SCHILLER.

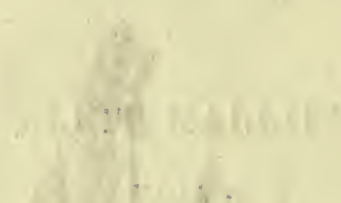
WILLIAM TELL

BY

JOHN GALT

ILLUSTRATED BY

JOHN GALT



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8430  
WILLIAM TELL;

A PLAY,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

SCHILLER, *Johann Christoph Friedrich*

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES.



'Twas late the instrument of tyranny ;  
Hereafter let it be the sign of Freedom!

ACT V. SC. I.

LONDON :

EDWARD BULL, HOLLES STREET,

1829.

LEIT FACHEN

WISSENSCHAFT

VERGLEICHENDE LITERATURWISSENSCHAFT

DEUTSCH

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NO. VIII  
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VERLAG VON  
G. FISCHER

E  
1829

## P R E F A C E.

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PERHAPS there is no European country in which the Wilhelm Tell of Schiller is so little known as in England; yet none can be more capable of entering into the spirit of liberty and poetry which pervades it. In every kingdom and province of Germany it has long been a stock play. Even Austria has received it in spite of national prejudices. So sensible was Madame de Stael of its merit, that she devoted a part of her work on Germany to a review of its principal scenes. Her opinion will always have weight in the literary world; and thus strongly has it been given in favour of the work in question. “Le Guillaume Tell de Schiller est revêtu de ces couleurs vives et brillantes, qui transportent l'imagination dans les contrées pittoresques où la respectable conjuration du Rütli est passée.

Dès premiers vers on croit entendre resonner les cors des Alpes. \* \* \* tout inspire un intérêt animé pour la Suisse; et l'unité d'action dans cette tragédie, tient à l'art d'avoir fait de la nation même un personnage dramatique." Entirely agreeing with these remarks, the translator offers the following pages to the world with a full sense of his incompetency to do justice to the original play. His sole motive in publishing them has been a wish to make the English reader acquainted with one of the best of Schiller's productions, and one which, strange to say, has not, as far as he can learn, yet appeared in the English language. In translating into verse there are occasions continually occurring where it may be permitted to insert or omit a word, so that the sense of the original be not substantially changed. Of this permission he has been, in some few instances, obliged to avail himself; but generally, the play will be found to have been translated line for line, and he hopes—not unfaithfully.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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HERMAN GESSLER, *Imperial Governor of Switz and Uri.*

WERNER, *Baron of Attinghausen, Bannerherr.*

ULRIC VON RUDENZ, *his Nephew.*

WERNER STAUFFACHER,

KONRAD HUNN,

ITEL REDING,

HANS AUF DER MAUER,

JORG IM HOFE,

ULRIC *the Smith,*

JOST VON WEILER

*Inhabitants of Switz.*

WILLIAM TELL,

WALTER FÜRST,

ROZELMAN *the Priest,*

PETERMAN *the Sacrist,*

KUONI *the Herd,*

WERNI *the Hunter,*

RUODI *the Fisherman*

*Inhabitants of Uri.*

ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL,

KONRAD BAUMGARTEN,

MEIER VON SARNEN,

STRUTH VON WINKELRIED,

KLAUS VON DER FLUE,

BURKHART AM BUHEL,

ARNOLD VON SEWA

*Men of Underwald.*

PFEIFER *of* LUCERNE.

KUNZ *of* GERSAU.

JENNI, *a Fisher-boy.*

SEPPI, *a Herdsman's boy.*

GERTRUDE, *Stauffacher's Wife.*

HEDWIG, *Tell's wife, and Walter Fürst's daughter.*

BERTHA VON BRUNECK, *a rich Heiress.*

ARMGART,

MECTHILD,

ELSBETH,

HILDEGARD,

WALTER,

WILHELM,

FRIESHART,

LEUTHOLD,

} *Peasant women.*

} *Tell's children.*

} *Soldiers.*

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, *Gessler's Master of the Horse.*

JOHANNES PARRICIDA, *Duke of Swabia.*

*The Stier of Uri.*

STÜSSI, *a Ranger.*

*An Imperial Courier.*

*An Officer of the Serfs.*

*A Master Stone-cutter, Companions, and Handworkers.*

*A Common Crier.*

*Monks of the Order of Charity.*

*Horsemen of Gessler and Landenberger.*

*Many Country-people ; Men and Women from the Waldstetten.*



# WILLIAM TELL.

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## ACT I. SCENE I.

*The high rocky shore of the Vierwaldstettensee,\* over against Switz. The lake forms a bay in the land. Near the shore is a hut. A Fisher-boy passes in a boat. At a distance over the lake are seen the green meadows, villages, and farm-houses of Switz, lying in the clear sunshine. To the left are the tops of the Haken covered by the clouds. To the right, far away in the back-ground, are seen the glaciers. Before the curtain rises, the Cowherds' melody† is heard, as well as the sound of the cattle-bells, which continues for some time after the opening of the scene.*

FISHER-BOY (*sings in his boat*).

The smiling lake tempted to bathe in its tide.

A youth lay asleep on its green-swarded side,

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\* The Vierwaldstettensee, or Lake of the four Cantons of the Forest, is in England commonly, but perhaps improperly, called the Lake of Lucerne. Anciently the Cantons were but three in number, viz. Uri, Underwald, and Switz. Lucerne was added subsequently to the period at which this play opens.

† This is called Kuhreihen in German, but is probably better

There heard he a melody  
 Flowing and sweet,  
 As when voices of angels  
 In paradise meet.

As thrilling with pleasure he wakes from his rest,—  
 Up rises the water—it flows o'er his breast!

And a voice from the deep  
 Cries, "With me must thou go,  
 I lure the young shepherds,  
 And drag them below."

HERDSMAN (*on the mountains*).

Ye meadows, farewell!

And thou sunny-green shore,  
 The herd must depart,  
 For the summer is o'er.

We traverse the mountain, yet come we again,  
 When the birds of the spring re-awaken their strain;  
 When the earth with new flow'rets its breast shall array,  
 And the rivulet flow, in love's own month of May.

Ye meadows, farewell!

And thou green sunny shore,  
 The herd must depart,  
 For the summer is o'er.

CHAMOIS HUNTER (*appearing on the top of a cliff*.)

When it thunders on high, and the mountain bridge shakes,  
 Undismay'd the bold hunter his dizzy path takes.

---

known to the reader by the title of *Rans de Vaches*. The herdsmen of the Alps play it on a long horn when they drive their flocks. Nothing inflames more a Switzer's longing for home, than this simple strain. Among the Swiss regiments in the service of France, before the Revolution, it was forbidden to be sung under pain of death.

He daringly strides o'er  
 The icy-bound plain,  
 Where spring ne'er can flourish,  
 Nor verdure e'er reign.

All under his feet is a wide misty sea,  
 Which shuts from his sight where man's dwelling may be,  
 Save when, through a rent  
 In the clouds, is reveal'd,  
 Deep under their billows,  
 The green of the field.

*The appearance of the landscape changes. A dull cracking sound is heard among the mountains. Shadows of clouds pass over the ground.*

RUODI *the Fisherman comes from his hut*; WERNI *the Hunter descends the cliff*; KUONI *the Herdsman enters with a milk-pail on his shoulder, and SEPPI his assistant boy follows him.*

RUODI, (*Calling to his boy in the boat.*)

Haste, Jenni, haste, and draw the boat ashore.

The grizzly Thalvogt\* comes. The Firn† sends forth

\* The Thalvogt (or Governor of the dale) is a grey mist so called, which comes from the mountains into the valleys in Switzerland, and usually precedes bad weather.

† The Firn is the upper part of the mountains where the ice commences. At sunrise and sunset it has often a red appearance, which is spoken of farther on. In stormy weather the wind blowing amongst the masses of ice causes the sound here alluded to.

Its low dull roar. The Myttenstein\*  
 Puts on her hood, and from the weatherlock †  
 The breeze blows coldly.—  
 A storm, I'm thinking, will be there ere long.

KUO. There 's rain approaching, boatman; for my  
 sheep

Eat eagerly the grass. The watch-dogs, too,  
 Scratch up the earth.

WER. The fishes leap. The water-fowl  
 Begin to dive. A storm is drawing on.

KUO. Look, Seppi, if the cattle have not strayed.

SEP. There goes brown Lissel—well I know her  
 bells.

KUO. So—then the rest are near. Of all the herd  
 She ever strays the farthest.

RUO. You 've handsome cattle-bells, ‡ good master  
 herdsman.

\* The Myttenstein is a tall cloudcapt rock bordering on the Lake.

† The Weatherlock is the opening between two mountains, and through which the weather is said to come. The German word is Wetterlock, which I have ventured to anglicise for want of a word expressive of its meaning.

‡ These cattle-bells are called in German, Gelaüte, and attached to bands placed around the necks of the cattle. They are very similar to those which were formerly worn by pack-horses in England.



WER. And likely beasts.—Are they your own, my countryman?

KUO. I' faith, I 'm not so rich. My gracious lord Of Attinghausen counts\* them out to me.

RUO. How well that band becomes yon heifer's throat!

KUO. She knows it, too, and always heads the herd. She wouldn't eat were I to take it from her.

RUO. Pooh—you talk idly! A poor senseless beast—

WER. That 's sooner said than proved. Beasts are not senseless,

And *we* who hunt the chamois know it well.

How prudently disposed they walk the mead,

With sentinels advanced, who prick their ears,

And piping shrill, give warning to the rest

Whene'er the hunter comes!

RUO (*to the Herdsman.*) Go you now home?

KUO. Ay, for the Alp 's depastured.

WER. A safe return then to ye.

KUO. Same to you.

The road which you pursue is not the one

Which always leads to home!

---

\* In Switzerland, when the cattle are taken out to pasture, it is the custom for the proprietor to count them out to the herdsman, who when they return home, is obliged to deliver in the number previously counted.

RUO. See, there 's a man runs hither full of haste.

WER. I know him. He is Baumgarten, of Alzel.

*Enter KONRAD BAUMGARTEN, precipitately  
and breathless.*

BAUM. Your boat, good ferryman, for love of God!

RUO. How now! Why all this haste?

BAUM. Unmoor, unmoor.  
You 'll rescue me from death. Quick, set me o'er!

KUO. What ails you, countryman?

WER. Say—who pursues you?

BAUM. Haste, haste—they 're close upon my heels!

—They come—

The horsemen of the Governor. Oh, quick!—

My death is certain if they apprehend me.

RUO. But why do they pursue you?

BAUM. Save me first—  
And then I 'll tell you all.

WER. You 're spotted o'er  
With blood! Say, what has chanced.

BAUM The Emp'ror's Seneschal,  
Who dwelt at Rossberg—

KUO. Wolfenshiesen? What!  
Doth he pursue you?

BAUM. He 'll pursue no more.  
I 've slain him!

ALL. God assoil thee! What hast done?

BAUM. What every freeman, placed as I, had done.  
I 've exercised my hearth-right 'gainst the man  
That sought to soil my honour and my wife's.

KUO. What! did the Seneschal abuse your honour?

BAUM. He did not consummate his vile intent.  
Thanks be to God and my good axe for that!

WER. You cleft his skull then with your axe?

KUO. Let's hear  
The whole. You yet have time until the boat  
Be loosen'd from the shore.

BAUM. While felling wood  
Within the forest, thither came my wife  
Running, all agony. The Seneschal,  
She said, had come into my house,—had giv'n  
His orders that a bath should be prepared—  
And then had sought to do her shameful wrong,  
So that she fled to seek me. As I was,  
I straightway left the place, and with my axe  
I gave his bath a bloody benediction.\*

---

\* The original runs thus—

“Und mit der Axt hab' ich ihm's Bad gesegnet.”

Which

WER. You did but justice. Who'll gainsay the deed ?

KUO. The tyrant !—He hath now his recompense—  
He long deserved it from the Underwalders !\*

BAUM. The deed was public—I shall be beset—  
God ! while we talk time flies—

[ *It begins to thunder.* ]

KUO. Quick, ferryman !  
Skull o'er the honest man.

RUO. Impossible !  
A heavy storm draws on, and you must wait.

BAUM. I cannot wait, each moment of delay  
Brings death.

Which may be rendered—

“ And with the axe have I blessed the bath for him.”

The difficulty of admitting a strictly literal translation of this verse will hardly be contested ; but I trust that I may be pardoned for the one which I have adopted. The idea of blessing a man by doing him violence, is not altogether new to our language,—such, at least, as we find it spoken by persons of Baumgarten's rank in life. Among our peasantry one often hears a man say—“ I gave him a blessing” —meaning I gave him a *blow*.

\* Wolfenshiesen was a native of Switzerland, well born, and attached to the party of Albert of Austria, by whom he was appointed to be governor of the Castle of Rossberg. His levity was well known and much dreaded. Some account of him and of his fate, such as described in the present scene, will be found in Muller's Hist. of the Swiss Eidgenossenschaft, Book I. Cap. 18.



KUO. *to* RUO. Put confidence in God. To help  
One's neighbour is man's duty;—and we all  
May one day need the help that he requires. [*Thunder.*]

RUO. The Fohn\* is loose. See how the lake is toss'd;  
I cannot steer my boat 'gainst wind and waves.

BAUMGARTEN (*imploing on his knees.*)  
May God help *you*, as you now pity *me*—

WER. Consider, boatman, it affects his life.

KUO. He's father of a family—hath wife  
And children. (*Loud peals of thunder.*)

RUO. What! and have not I a life  
As well as he—and wife and child at home?  
Look there—look there!—see how it rolls and rages,  
And how the whirlpool draws and stirs up all  
The waters of the deep.  
Right willingly would I the good man save,  
But 'tis impossible—yourself may see it.

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\* The Fohn is a wind peculiar to this part of Switzerland. "It is not possible," says Muller, speaking of the Waldslettensee, "to navigate this lake during a strong Fohn without the greatest peril; so powerful is it that the laws of the land forbid any fire to be kept in the houses during the Fohn wind, and order the night watch to be doubled. The inhabitants of the high valleys secure the roofs of their houses against it, by loading them with large stones." See *Die Geschichte Schwerzerischer Eidgenossenschaft*. Book I. Cap. 18, Note 227.

BAUMGARTEN (*still on his knees.*)

Then must I fall a victim to my foes,  
E'en with a place of refuge in my sight.  
There—there it is. I reach it with my eyes.  
A voice might easily be heard across.  
See there the boat that might transport me safe,  
Yet must I lie here helpless in despair.

KUO. See, who comes hither?

WER. It is Tell of Burglen.

*Enter TELL, with a cross-bow.*

TELL. What man is that imploring there for help?

KUO. An Alzel-man, that, for his honour's sake,  
Hath slain the Royal Seneschal at Rossberg.  
The horsemen of the State are at his heels—  
He begs a passage over of the boatman,  
And *he*'ll not go, because he fears the storm.

RUO. There's Tell can guide a helm as well as I—  
Let him be judge if I may risk a passage.

[*Heavy thunder, the lake is agitated.*]

Think you, I'll leap into destruction's jaws?  
That would no mortal in his senses.

TELL. A brave man thinks not on himself till last!  
Put trust in God, and rescue the distress'd.

RUO. Safe on dry land you counsel at your ease.  
The boat is *there*—and there the lake—attempt it !

TELL. The foaming water may be merciful,  
But not the Governor. Come, try it, boatman.

WER. *and* KUO. Oh, save him ! save him !

RUO. Were he my brother, or my dearest child,  
I could not. 'Tis the festival of Jude,\*  
And the lake rages for its sacrifice !

TELL. We can do nothing here with idle words,  
Time presses, and the man must have assistance.  
Say, ferryman, wilt over ?

RUO. No, not I.

TELL. Give here thy bark then, in the name of God !  
And with my own poor craft, I'll try the passage.

KUO. Ha ! gallant Tell !

WER. Done bravely ! like a hunter.

BAUM. Thou 'rt my redeemer—my good angel,  
Tell.

TELL. I will redeem you from the tyrant's power—  
Other than I must save you from the storm ;

---

\* There was, (and I believe still is,) a popular belief in this part of the world, that on the festival of Saint Jude, some one was destined to be drowned in the lake. This superstition is alluded to in the verses sung by the fisher-boy in the opening of the play.

But better fall into the Almighty's hands  
Than those of man.

*(To the herdsman.)*

My countryman! do thou  
Bear comfort to my wife, if ought befall me.  
I've done but what I could not leave undone.

*[Springs into the boat.*

KUO. *(to the boatman.)* You're an experienced steers-  
man—could not you

Attempt the hazard Tell hath undertaken?

RUO. Better men than I won't imitate him—  
There are not two like Tell in all the mountains.

WER. He pushes off. God help thee, daring soul!  
See how the shallop struggles with the waves.

KUO. *(from the shore.)* The surge hath swampt  
her—she'll be seen no more.

Yet, stop—she's there, more distant!—Bravely done!  
Right craftily he works her through the breakers.

SEP. Here are the horsemen of the Governor.

KUO. They're here, by Heav'n! This, then, was  
help at need.



*Enter a party of LAUDENBERG'S\* horsemen.*

FIRST HORSEMAN. Give up the murderer you 've hidden here.

SECOND HORSEMAN. He came this way—concealment is in vain.

KUONI and RUODI. What mean you?

FIRST HORSEMAN (*sees the boat.*) Ha! what see I there—damnation!

WERNI (*above on the rock*) Is't he i' the boat you seek? Make after him—

You'll catch him yet—if you ride fast enough.

SECOND HORSEMAN. Confusion! He's escaped.

FIRST HORSEMAN (*to the Herdsman and Fisher.*)

'Twas you that help'd him,

And you shall smart for't. Fall we on their herds!

Down with the hut!—Burn!—Down with every thing!

[*Exeunt Horsemen.*

SEP. (*runs after them.*) My lambs! my lambs!

KUO. (*following.*) Alas! my herd.

WER. The tyrants!

RUO. (*wrings his hands.*) Heavenly justice!

When shall our country find a liberator? [*Exit.*

---

\* — Von Laudenberg was Governor of Underwald.

## SCENE II.

*The outside of STAUFFACHER'S house at Steinen in Switz. A lime tree before it, close by the public road, and near a bridge.*

*Enter WERNER, STAUFFACHER, and PFEIFFER OF LUCERNE.*

PFEIF. (*speaking as he enters.*) Ay, ay, friend Stauffacher, as I have said,  
Swear not to Austria if you can help it.  
Hold fast and stoutly by the realm as hitherto,  
And God will shield you and your ancient liberty.

[*Presses him heartily by the hand, and is about to go.*

STAUF. Yet stay until our hostess comes. In Switz  
You are my guest. I yours when in Lucerne.

PFEIF. Thanks ; but ere sunset I must be at Gersau:  
Whatever burthen you may have to bear,  
From greedy and presuming officers,  
Bear it with patience. Things may change. The realm  
May shortly have another emperor.  
Once Austria's bondman—you are her's for ever.

[*Exit.*

[STAUFFACHER *sits himself sorrowfully on a bench under the lime tree.* GERTRUDE, *his wife, enters and finds him there. She places herself beside him, and, after a moment's pause, breaks silence.*

GER. So serious, my husband? Scarce I know thee.  
 For many a day I 've silently remark'd  
 Thy forehead furrow'd, as in gloomy thought.  
 Some silent sorrow presses on thy heart.  
 Come, trust me with it—me, thine own true wife;  
 Here I demand my half of thy affliction.

[*He takes her hand, and is silent.*

What can oppress thy heart? Oh, tell it me?  
 Blest is thy industry. Thy fortune flourishes.  
 Full are thy barns, thy herds are numerous.  
 Thy breed of steeds, so sleek and so well nurtur'd,  
 Are brought in safety, from the mountains, home  
 To winter in their well-appointed stalls.—  
 There stands thy house upon a noble scite,  
 All newly built with trunks of goodly trees,  
 Ranged orderly and artfully together,  
 Where many a glistening window speaks of home:  
 With chequered scutcheons is it painted o'er,  
 And sage inscriptions, which the traveller  
 Stops to peruse, and marvels o'er their meaning.

STAUF. The house is well constructed ; but, alas !  
The ground on which we've built it, stands not firm.

GER. What meanest thou, my Werner ? Say.—

STAUF. It was

But yesterday,—I sat before that lime tree,  
Musing with pleasure on the work's accomplishment,  
When hither came the Governor from Kussnach,  
His castle, with his horsemen in attendance.  
Before this house he stopt in admiration.

I rose up quickly and respectfully—

As was his due,—and stood before the man

Who represents the realm's judicial pow'r

In this unhappy land. “ Whose house is that ? ”

Asked he maliciously :—he well knew whose !—

With short reflection, I made answer thus—

“ That house belongs to my good Lord and yours—

The Emperor.—The fief is mine, Lord Governor.”

Then answered he, “ I'm Regent of this land,

Placed in the Emp'ror's stead, and I will not

That boors build houses at their own discretion;

And so live on in freedom—just as if

They were the nobles of the land !—

I'll take permission to prohibit this.”

So saying rode he insolently off,



And I remained, with sorrow-laden soul,  
Thinking on what the miscreant had spoken.

GER. My Werner ! dearest husband ! Wilt thou hear  
A candid word of counsel from thy wife ?  
I boast me to be honour'd Iberg's daughter,—  
That far-experienced man ; and oft have I  
Sat with my sisters, spinning wool o' nights,  
When at my father's met the people's elders,  
Read charters of the ancient Emperors,  
And held sage conference of the commonwealth.  
Listening, I there heard many a prudent word,  
Of what the wise man thought, and good man wish'd,  
Which in my heart I since have treasur'd up ;  
So hear, and have respect for what I say ;  
Then see that I have long known what oppress'd thee.

The Governor doth bear thee secret enmity,—  
May do thee wilful wrong ; for thou'rt to him  
A cause of hindrance why the Swiss will not  
Submit themselves to this new princely house,  
But true and steady to the realm remain,  
As did their worthy forefathers of old.  
Is't not so, Werner ? Speak I not the truth ?

STAUF. 'Tis even so ; and therefore Gessler hates  
me.—

GER. He envies thee ; for thou dost happy live  
A freeman on thy own inheritance,  
While he hath none. This house, as thine own fief,  
Thou holdest of the Emperor and realm :  
*That* thou canst show, as clearly as a prince  
Can show a title to his principedom.  
Above thee, knowest thou no Suzerain,  
Unless it be the first in Christendom.  
A younger brother of his house is Gessler,  
With nought to call his own except his mantle ;  
Therefore he views each honest man's success  
With evil eye and venomous ill-will.  
Thy downfall hath he sworn this many a day.  
As yet thou art uninjured. Wilt thou wait  
Until he gratify his wicked pleasure ?  
A wise man takes precaution.

STAUF. What can I ?

GER (*comes near*). Attend to my advice. Thou  
knowest well

That here in Switz all honest men complain  
Of Gessler's avarice and cruelty ;  
And do not doubt that yonder in the land  
Of Underwald and Uri they are tired  
Of their oppression and a heavy yoke.

As he acts here, so governs impudently  
The Landenberger yonder o'er the lake.  
There comes no fishing-boat towards our shore  
But publishes some recent injury  
Or usurpation of the Governor's.  
Good were it, therefore, that amongst you some,  
Who mean sincerely, went to counsel means  
Whereby we may divest us of oppression;  
And sure am I, that God will never fail  
To look propitious on a righteous cause!  
Hast thou, in Uri, no acquaintance—say—  
To whom thou mayest freely ope thy heart?

STAUF. I know abundance of true-hearted men,  
And many well reputed nobles there,  
Who are my intimate and trusted friends.     *(rises up)*  
Wife, what a storm of fearful thoughts thou 'st waked  
Within this tranquil breast! My inmost heart  
Hast thou laid open to the light of day;  
And that which I'd forbid me e'en to think,  
Thy tongue pronouncest boldly and with ease.  
Hast thou reflected well on thy advice?  
Wild discord, and the clang of hostile arms,  
Invitest thou to this our peaceful dale.  
How may we risk, weak shepherds as we are,

To war against the masters of the world?  
That were the very pretext which they want,  
Ere they let loose, on this unhappy land,  
The savage hordes of military power,  
Thereby to rule us with a victor's right,  
And, under such a pretext, overturn  
The charters of our ancient liberty.

GER. You, too, are men, know how to wield an axe,  
And God—oh, doubt it not,—will help the brave.

STAUF. War is a raging, heart-appalling monster,  
That slays alike the shepherd and the sheep.

GER. Man must endure the ill that Heaven sends,  
But earthly wrong no noble heart may brook.

STAUF. This house delights thee that we've newly  
built:—

The monster war may burn it to the ground.

GER. Thought I my heart were set on worldly goods,  
With my own hand I'd cast a firebrand there.

STAUF. Thou trustest to humanity:—but war  
Will not e'en spare the infant in the cradle.

GER. In Heaven above hath innocence a friend:  
Look forwards, Werner, not behind thee, man!

STAUF. Suppose we all fell, fighting valiantly  
In battle; what might be thy destiny?



GER. A last resource lies open to the weak,—  
One spring from yonder bridge and I am free.

STAUF. (*Clasping her in his arms.*) Who presses to  
his bosom heart like thine,  
He can for hearth and home fight cheerfully,  
And never fear the armed might of kings !  
To Uri will I go upon the instant :  
There lives my old acquaintance, Walter Fürst ;  
There also shall I find the noble lord  
Of Attinghausen. Though of high descent,  
He loves the people, and respects old customs.  
With both of these will I advise the means  
To best defend us 'gainst our country's foes.  
Farewell!—and while I'm absent, regulate,  
With prudent management, thy housewifery.  
To pilgrims travelling to holy shrines,  
To pious monks collecting for their cloisters,  
Give freely, and dismiss them well regaled.  
The house of Stauffacher is not concealed ;  
Close by the open public road it stands,  
A hospitable roof for every traveller,  
That wends him on his way.

[*As they go into the back ground enter TELL and  
BAUMGARTEN in the front part of the stage.*]

TELL. (*to BAUMGARTEN.*) No farther now  
 You stand in need of me. In yonder house  
 Dwells Stauffacher, the friend of the afflicted.  
 But see, he 's there himself! Come, follow me!

[*They go off towards him, and the scene closes.*]

---

SCENE III.

*An open place in Altdorf: On an eminence in the  
 back-ground a fortress is building, which has been  
 proceeded with sufficiently to show its boundaries.  
 The backward part of it is finished. Before the  
 front stands a scaffold with workmen. On the highest  
 part of the roof is a slater. All are in motion and  
 at work.*

OFFICER OF THE SERFS. MASTER STONE-CUTTER,  
 WORKMEN, and HELPERS.

OFF. (*Driving the workmen with his staff.*)

Rest not too long; quick! bring the building stone,  
 And lime to make the mortar; so that when  
 The Governor arrives he see the work  
 Advanced! It creeps along like any snail.

FIRST WORK. 'Tis hard that we must carry e'en the  
stones

To build the fortress, that 's to be our jail.

OFF. What mutter ye? 'Tis an ignoble people,  
And fit for nothing but to milk their cows,  
And saunter lazily among the mountains.

AN OLD MAN. (*rests himself.*) I can no more.

OFF. (*shaking him.*) Quick, old one, to the work!

FIRST WORK. Have you no pity, that you thus  
compel

A greybeard, who can scarcely creep along,  
To hard serf-labour?

WORKMEN. Oh! It cries to Heav'n!

OFF. Look to yourselves! I do but what 's my duty.

SEC. WORK. How will the place be called that we  
build there?

OFF. Dungeon of Uri—that shall be its name—  
And all of you shall bend beneath its yoke.

WORKMEN. (*laughing.*) \*Dungeon of Uri!

OFF. What 's to laugh at there?

\* In the original thus—

Zwing Uri!

FROHNOGT.

Nun was gibt's dabei zu lachen?

ZWEITER GESELL. Mit diesem Hauslein wollt ihr Uri zwingen?

SEC. WORK. In that small building will you dungeon Uri?

FIRST WORK. Let's see.—How much on such a moldwarp's pile  
Must we heap up, until it may become  
Great—as the smallest mountain in all Uri?

[OFFICER goes into the back ground.

STONECUTTER. Deep in the water of the lake I'll  
throw  
The tools I use in this accursed building.

*Enter TELL and STAUFFACHER.*

STAUF. Oh! that I'd never liv'd to look on that!

TELL. We may not well stand here. Let's farther  
on.

STAUF. Am I in Uri—in the land of Freedom?

STONECUTTER. Alas! good Sir, when once you've  
seen the pit\*

---

\* In almost all the old German castles is a high tower, generally the most ancient part of the building. In this tower is a small door, about twenty feet from the ground, accessible by a ladder or gallery. The door leads into a chamber, in the centre of which is a trap-door, opening into a subterranean pit about thirty or forty feet deep. Right over this trap-door there was a ring with a rope and pulley fastened to it, which were the means



Beneath the tower — He who lodges there  
Will surely never hear the cock crow more.

STAUF. Good God !

STONECUTTER. Behold these ramparts and these  
buttresses,

That seem constructed for eternity.

TELL. What hands build up, can hands pull down  
again. [*pointing to the mountains.*

There God hath built for us a house of freedom.

[*A drum is heard. Enter a crowd, with a hat on  
a pole, followed by a Crier. Women and children  
throng tumultuously after him.*

FIRST WORK. Why comes the drum ? Attend !

STONECUTTER. And why this troop,  
As from a carnival ? What means the hat ?

CRIER. Hear ! in the Emperor's name.

WORKMEN. Keep silence ! hear !

CRIER. Ye men of Uri, look upon this hat !  
On a high pillar in the midst of Aldorf,  
And in the highest place will it be raised—  
Such is the will and meaning of the Governor :

---

of letting prisoners into the pit beneath. In the small castle  
of Pfaltz, which stands in the middle of the Rhine, opposite Caub,  
there is yet to be seen a tower and machine of this kind.

And further, that to this same hat ye show  
 The self-same honour as is due to him.  
 With bended knee, and with uncover'd head,  
 Shall ye do reverence. The Emperor  
 Will thus discover those who are obedient.  
 And whosoe'er neglecteth this command,  
 His goods and body forfeits to the crown.

[*Exit the crowd laughing, and following the drum.*]

FIRST WORK. What new unheard-of prank 's the  
 Governor

Resolv'd on now? *We reverence a hat!*

Say—hath man ever heard the like of this!

STONECUTTER. What! shall we bend our knees  
 before a hat!

Drives he his game in earnest, worthy people?

FIRST WORK. Were it the Emp'ror's crown we  
 might. But 'tis

The *hat of Austria*—I saw it hang

Above the throne whereon they give the fiefs.

STONECUTTER. The hat of Austria! Take care!  
 'tis sure

A trap to snare us into Austria's hands.

WORKMEN. No honest man will yield to such dis-  
 grace.

STONECUTTER. Come, let us make agreement with  
our comrades,  
To act with one accord in this affair.

[*They retire into the back ground.*]

TELL. (to STAUFFACHER.) You've heard the order.

Fare ye well, friend Werner!

STAUF. Where would you go? Haste not away so  
soon.

TELL. They'll want me at my house. Once more—  
farewell!

STAUF. My heart is full—I'd speak with you  
awhile.

TELL. A heavy heart is not made light by words.

STAUF. But words perhaps may lead us on to deeds.

TELL. All we can *do* is to be still and patient.

STAUF. Can man bear that which is intolerable?

TELL. The rashest rulers have the shortest reigns.  
When from its cavern rushes forth the Fohn,  
We put the fire out,—and the vessels seek  
The haven quickly, and the mighty spirit,  
Harmless and trackless, travels o'er the earth.  
Let every man live quietly at home.  
The peaceful man may easily find peace.

STAUF. What mean you?

TELL.               Serpents sting not unprovoked,  
And even they, at last, are wearied out,\*  
When all around reposes tranquilly.

STAUF.   Much may be done if we but stand together.

TELL.   When ships are wreck'd, each man best helps himself.

STAUF.   So coldly leave you then the common cause?

TELL.   No man may reckon surely on another.

STAUF.   United e'en the weak are rendered strong.

TELL.   The strong are ever strongest when *alone!*

STAUF.   Your country then may not depend on you,  
If driven desperate it fly to arms?

TELL.   (*Gives him his hand.*) Shall I, who, at the  
                  peril of my life,

Have fetch'd a fallen lamb from out the depth

Of an abyss, desert my friends at need?

Whate'er you do, omit me in your counsel;

I've not the art to scrutinise and choose.

But when you want me for a deed determined,

Call then on Tell.—You shall not call in vain.—

[*Exeunt at different sides.*]

---

\* In the original—

“ Sie werden endlich doch von selbst ermuden.”



[*A sudden commotion takes place around the scaffolds.*

STONE-CUTTER. (*Hastens towards them.*)

How now?

FIRST WORKMAN. (*Comes forward crying out.*)

The Slater's fallen from the roof!

*Enter BERTHA VON BRUNECK with people following her.*

BER. He's dashed to pieces? Run and save him—  
help,

If help be possible—here's gold—Oh! save him!—

[*Throws her ornaments among the people.*

STONE-CUTTER. With gold! You think that all is  
saleable

For gold;—and when you've torn apart for aye

Father from children, husbands from their wives,

And fill'd the world with lamentation,—then

You think to make all well again with gold!

Go—we were happy men till you came here,

'Tis you that drive us onward to despair.

BER. (*To the officer who returns.*) Lives he?

[*Officer makes a sign in the negative.*

Unlucky Castle—built with curses,

A curse will dwell for ever on thy walls. [*Exeunt.*



## SCENE IV.

*Walter Fürst's house.*

WALTER FÜRST *and* ARNOLD VON MELCHTHAL  
*approaching him from the opposite side.*

MEL. Good Walter Fürst—

WALTER FÜRST. If we should be surprised !  
Stay where you are. On every side are spies.

MEL. You bring me nought from Underwald? No  
word

How fares my father?—I can bear no more  
To lie here idle as a prisoner.

What have I done so reprehensible,  
That like a murd'rer, I must hide my head?

The finger of an insolent young knave  
Who, at the Governor's command, my oxen—

(Ay my best yoke,) would drive away before  
My very eyes, I've broken with my staff!

WALTER FÜRST. 'Twas all too rash. The boy  
was Landenberg's,

Commission'd by your magistrate. You look  
For penal visitation, and you must  
(However hard) be silently resigned.

MEL. And from shame-harden'd men shall I endure  
 A wanton taunt like this—"If boors would eat,  
 Let them the ploughshare draw themselves for bread!"  
 It cut me to the soul, when, as the boy  
 Unharnessed the oxen from the plough,  
 Deep lowed the comely beasts and tossed their horns,  
 As if they had a feeling of the wrong.  
 'Twas then, by just resentment overcome,  
 No longer master of myself, I struck the envoy.

WALTER FÜRST. Oh scarce can *we* our swelling hearts  
 restrain,

How shall rash youth then moderate its ardour.

MEL. I grieve but for my father; much he needs  
 A son's attention, and his son is far.  
 He's hateful to the tyrant; for throughout  
 For right and freedom hath he frankly striven.  
 They'll persecute the poor old man for that,  
 While no one's near to shelter him from hardship.  
 Come on 't what will I must go over to him.

WALTER FÜRST. Yet stay and bear yourself with  
 patience, till

Advices come to us from Underwald.

I hear a knocking---go—Belike 'tis one  
 Sent by the Governor. Go in! You're not

More safe in Uri from the Landenberger,  
For tyrants never fail to aid each other.

MEL. They teach us then what *we* should do.

WALTER FÜRST. Go in!

Again I'll call you when 'tis safer here.

[MELCHTHAL goes in.]

Unlucky youth! I dare not hint to him  
The ill my heart forebodes. Who knocks?—  
The door ne'er moves but I expect mischance,  
Distrust and treason lurk in every corner.  
Into our houses innermost recess  
The spies of power penetrate, and soon  
May we need locks and bolts upon our doors.\*

[*He opens the door and starts back surprised, as*

WERNER STAUFFACHER enters.]

What see I? You, friend Werner! Now, by Heav'n,  
A dear and worthy guest. No better man  
Has yet o'er-stept my threshold.  
Welcome! thrice welcome, underneath my roof!  
What leads you forth? What seek you here in Uri?

---

\* The simple manners of the ancient Swiss rendered theft very uncommon. Bolts on a house-door were therefore almost useless, and were considered as marking an inhospitable disposition in the owner.

STAUF. (*giving his hand.*) Old times, and Switzer-  
land as 'twas of old.

WALTER FÜRST. You bring them with you. See  
how glad I am.

A sight of you expands and warms the heart.  
Sit down, friend Werner. Tell me how you left  
Dame Gertrude, your inestimable hostess,  
Wise Iberg's fair and highly-minded daughter.—  
All travellers from Germany, who take  
Their route to Italy by Meinrad's Cell,  
Extol your hospitable house. But say,  
Came you directly from Fluellen here?  
And stayed you nowhere else, to look about you,  
Ere you set foot across my door-stone? speak!

STAUF. I stopped, indeed, to see a strange new work  
That's now in progress, and it nothing pleased me.

WALTER FÜRST. You read its purpose doubtless at  
a glance?

STAUF. A thing like that has never been in Uri.  
Since human memory no gaol was there,  
And fast was no abode except the grave.

WALTER FÜRST. The grave! The word fits well—  
it is the grave  
Of freedom!



STAUF. Walter Fürst, I'll not detain you:  
No idle love of gossip led me forth,  
But cares that heavily weigh down my soul.  
Oppression have I left at home, and here  
I find oppression too!  
Our burthen 's more than mortal man can bear;  
While to its pressure none can see a term:  
Free was the Switzer immemorially,  
And wont are we to be respected well.  
The land hath ne'er experienced such a time  
As long as herd hath trodden on our mountains!

WALTER FÜRST. Ay! 'Tis without example how  
they drive it!  
And e'en our noble lord of Attinghausen,  
Who 's had experience of the olden time,  
Thinks that no longer we are bound to bear it.

STAUF. In Underwald, away there, wrong hath  
been,  
And bloody retribution. Wolfenshiesen,  
Th' Imperial officer at Rossberg, long'd  
To feast himself upon forbidden fruit,  
And sought, with shameful purpose, to abuse  
Baumgarten's wife—a resident at Alzell—  
For which he fell beneath her husband's axe.



WALTER FÜRST. God's punishments are ever justly  
dealt!

Baumgarten, said you,—he's a worthy man—  
Surely he's rescued, and in safe concealment.

STAUF. Your daughter's husband put him o'er the  
lake,

And I, at Steinen, keep him well conceal'd.—

But still more horrid news hath this same man

Related to me, which fell out at Sarnen,—

Each honest heart will bleed to hear it told.

WALTER FÜRST. (*attentively.*) Say on, what is't?

STAUF. In Melchthal, as it is

Approach'd by Kerns, there dwells an honest man

Called Henry Von der Halden, and his voice

Passes for much among the commonwealth.

WALTER FÜRST. Who knows him not? What of  
him? make an end!

STAUF. The Landenberger, for a slight offence,  
Amerced his son, and seized on at the plough,

His choicest yoke of oxen. Thereupon

The young man struck the officer, and fled.

WALTER FRÜST. Ay! but the father? say how  
stands it there?

STAUF. The father? He was ask'd about his son,

And order'd to produce him on the spot.

And then the old man swore,—and truly too,—

That he knew nothing of the fugitive.

On that, the Governor call'd in his rackmaster.—

WALTER FÜRST. (*springs up, and offers to lead  
STAUFFACHER to the other side.*) Silence! no  
more!

STAUF. (*in a loud tone of voice.*) “Thy son hath  
—’scaped,” said he,

“But thou art mine.” With that they threw him  
down,

And thrust a pointed iron in his eyes.

WALTER FÜRST. Merciful heaven!

MEL. (*rushes out.*) Said you in his eyes?

STAUF. (*astonished*) to W. FÜRST. What youth is  
this?

MEL. (*grasps him with convulsive violence.*) Speak!  
was it in his eyes?

WALTER FÜRST. Unfortunate old man!

STAUF. But who is this?

[*As Walter First makes him a sign.*  
His son! all-judging God!

MEL. And I must be  
From thence! In both eyes did you say?

WALTER FÜRST. Restrain yourself, and bear it like  
a man!\*

MEL. For my offence! for my transgression too!  
Blind? Is he really blind? entirely sightless?

STAUF. I've said. The well of vision is exhausted!  
He never more will look upon the sun.

WALTER FÜRST. Spare his affliction.

MEL. Never—never more!

*[He places his hand before his eyes, and pauses for  
a few moments; then turning to the one and the  
other, speaks in a low tone, suffocated by tears.]*

Oh! what a noble, heavenly gift is light!

By light,—that blessed essence!—all things live.

The very plants turn joyful towards the light:—

Yet *he*, though sensible, must dwell in night,

Utterly dark. For him, revives no more

The meadow's glowing green, the flower's enamel,—

The redd'ning Firn† he never more will see.

To die, were nothing! but to live in darkness,

That were indeed an evil. Why so piteously

Look you on me? I have a pair of eyes—

\* Schiller appears here to have imitated the passage in *Macbeth*, where Macduff receives the news of the murder of his family.

† See note † at page 4.

Yet can I give my blinded father none.  
No, not one glimmer of that sea of light  
Which enters mine with blinding brilliance.

STAUF. Alas! I e'en must aggravate your grief,  
Instead of healing it. He needs yet more.  
The Governor hath robbed him of his all:  
Naught hath been left him, save indeed a staff,  
To guide him, stript and blind, from door to door.

MEL. Naught but a staff the blind old man to  
guide!

Plundered of all! e'en of the light of day!  
The poorest, universal good! Now speak  
No more to me of staying and concealment!  
Oh, what a heartless miscreant am I,  
That thought upon my own security  
And not on *thine*! And thy beloved head  
Lay as a pawn within the tyrant's grasp!  
Faint-hearted caution, fare thee well! Of naught  
But bloody retribution will I think!  
Hence will I, nobody shall hold me back.  
I'll ask the tyrant for my father's eye-sight!  
I'll find him, even through the very midst  
Of all his horsemen! Life I value not,



If I my hot and boundless grief may cool  
In his accursed life-blood. [*He is going.*

WALTER FÜRST. Stay! oh, stay!

What *can* you do 'gainst him? He sits at Sarnen,  
High in his lordly castle, and secure  
Within its towers, may mock your powerless rage.

MEL. And sat he even in the icy halls  
Of Schreckhorns, or yet higher, where the Virgin  
Sits veiled in everlasting snow—I'd make  
My way to him. Give me but twenty youths  
Who think like me, I'll break into his fastness.  
And if none follow me—and if you all,  
Afraid to lose your houses and your hearths,  
Shall bow you to the tyrant's yoke, the hinds  
Together will I summon in the mountains;  
And there, beneath the boundless vault of Heaven,  
Where yet the mind is pure and hearts are sound,  
Will I proclaim this monstrous cruelty!

STAUF. It's reach'd its summit, even would we wait  
Until the very worst.

MEL. What worst remains  
For us to hold in dread, when human eyes  
Are no more safe within their sockets?



Are we defenceless? Wherefore have we learnt  
To draw the stubborn cross-bow, and to wield  
The heavy battle-axe? Each being finds  
A weapon in the anguish of despair.  
Thus bears him the exhausted stag at bay,  
And shows his deadly antlers to the pack:  
The chamois butts the hunter down the chasm;  
The ox, himself man's patient comrade,  
Who bends his powerful neck beneath the yoke—  
Provoke him, up he springs, whets his strong horn,  
And tosses his tormentor to the clouds!

WALTER FÜRST. If the three Cantons thought as  
think we three,  
Then might our efforts probably avail.

STAUF. If Uri call, and Underwald assist,  
Switz will remember well our ancient Bond.\*

MEL. In Underwald my friends are numerous,  
And each will willingly risk life and limb

---

\* This Bond, or Alliance of the Three Cantons, was of very ancient origin. From time to time, especially when the liberty of the people was endangered, they met and renewed it. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the end of the 13th century, when Albert of Austria became Emperor, and when, possibly for the first time, the Bond was reduced into writing. The reader is referred to Note B. at the end of the play, where he will find a

To back or screen the other. Venerable  
And most experienced fathers of these Cantons !  
I stand between you, a mere boy, whose voice  
Is doom'd to silence in our country's Diet :  
Scorn not my counsel, nor my speech, for thought  
That I am young and lack experience.  
No wanton youthful blood excites me, but  
The smarting impulse of a grief so deep,  
That it would force the very rocks to pity.—  
Fathers are you, and chiefs of families,  
And needs must wish for virtuous sons to pay  
A filial homage to your blanched locks,  
And guard your eyesight with a pious care.  
Because as yet you have not suffered wrong  
In limb or goods,—because as yet your eyes  
Revolve within their sockets fresh and clear—  
Think not that therefore you are free from peril :  
O'er your heads also hangs the tyrant's sword !  
You've made the land averse to Austria's views.

---

translation of the Bond in question. As each individual who was party to this contract was sworn to maintain it, he was called Eid-genoss; that is to say, Sworn-confederate, or, more strictly speaking, Sworn-companion. This will explain the frequent repetition of that title in the Second Scene of the ensuing Act.

That, and no other was my father's crime.  
You've shared his guilt—and *may* his punishment.

STAUF. *to W. FÜRST.* Determine you: I am prepared to follow.

WALTER FÜRST. But let us first hear what the noble lords  
Of Sillenen and Attinghausen counsel.  
Their names, methinks, will raise us store of friends.

MEL. Who bears a name in all the forest mountains

Worthy of honour more than you and yours?

The people set high price upon such names.

They ring well in the land.

Your father's virtue was a rich inheritance,

Which you've augmented richly.—What's the need

Of noblemen? Let *us* achieve the task!

Were we unaided in the land, I think

We should not be without the means of shelter.

STAUF. The nobles' peril equals not our own.

The flood that's foaming in the lowly plain,

Hath not reach'd yet the elevated ground.

But their assistance cannot fail to come,

When once they see their countrymen in arms.

WALTER FÜRST. Were there 'twixt us and Austria  
an umpire,

Their law and justice might decide our cause ;

But our oppressor is our Emperor ;

Our highest judge. 'Tis God must help us then,

And through our arms. Go you and seek allies

In Switz. In Uri I will raise our friends.—

But who may we dispatch to Underwald ?

MEL. Send me—send me ! Whom interests it more ?

WALTER FÜRST. I'll not allow it ; you're my  
guest, and I

Must warrant for your safety.

MEL. Let me go.

I know each by-way and each crag-path well ;

E'en friends enough I'll find who, from the foe

Will hide, and willingly vouchsafe me shelter.

STAUF. Let him go over, and may God protect him !

*There* are no traitors ; for the tyrants there

Are so abhorr'd that they can find no tools.

There also will the Alzeller arouse

The land, and levy us companions.

MEL. But how shall we communicate our news,

And yet pass unsuspected by the Tyrants ?



STAUF. At Brunnen we may hold our conference,  
Or at the quay where land the merchant-ships.

WALTER FÜRST. We dare not carry on the work  
so openly.—

Hear my proposal. Left o' the lake, as o'er  
The Myttenstein one journeys on to Brunnen,  
Secluded in a wood, there lies a field,  
Called Rootli by the herdsmen of the dales,  
Because the wood has been uprooted there.  
There is it that our land-mark and your own

(to *Melchthal*)

Border together. Quickly in a skiff, (to *Stauffacher*)  
May you from Switz pass over to the spot.  
By secret paths, and in the night may we  
Assemble there and quietly consult.  
Thither let each bring with him ten tried men,  
Whose hearts beat all accordantly with ours.  
So may we commune of the commonwealth  
And, God with us, form quickly our resolves.

STAUF. So be it. Give me now your true right hand,  
And give me also yours. And thus, as we  
Three men reciprocally clasp together  
Our hands in perfect truth and honesty,



So shall our Cantons three together stand  
Defensive and offensive—dead and living !

W. FÜRST *and* MELCHTHAL. Dead and living !

*[They hold their hands clasped together for some moments in silence.]*

MEL. Oh ! my blind old father !

Thou canst the day of freedom no more see,  
But thou shalt hear of 't. When from Alp to Alp  
The flaming beacon lifts itself on high,  
And the strong castles of our tyrants fall,  
Then shall the Switzer to thy cot repair,  
Pour the glad tidings in thine ear, and bright  
Shall freedom's sun arise upon thy night ! *[Exeunt.]*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

*The family mansion of the Baron of Attinghausen.*

*A gothic chamber hung round with escutcheons and helmets. The Baron, a grey-headed octogenarian of a tall and noble stature, is clad in a furred doublet, and leans on a staff tipped with chamois-horn.*

*KUONI and six Hinds stands around him with rakes and scythes. ULRICK VON RUDENZ enters in the costume of a Knight.*

RUD. Uncle, I'm here? Say what may be your will?

ATTING. Permit, that first, according to the custom,  
The ancient custom of our ancient house,  
I share the morning-cup with these my hinds.\*

*[Drinks out of a cup, which then goes round among the rest.]*

---

\* In the original "Knechten," which is commonly translated by the word serfs. But to have employed it in the present instance would have conveyed a false impression; because the Knecht of Switzerland was not a slave like the "Knecht," or serf, of Austria, and other countries. His condition was more like the old English Soc-man.

Once I was with them both in field and forest,  
 Directing with mine eyes their energy,  
 As when my banner led them in the fight.  
 I now no more can act as their inspector,  
 And if the warm sun come to me no more,  
 I can no more go seek it in the mountains.  
 Around a narrow circle, ever narrowing,  
 I pass, until it close around its centre  
 Where life worn out shall stop! I'm now but as  
 My shadow! and shall soon be but my name!

KUONI (*offers RUDENZ the cup*).

I bring it t' ye, young master.

[*as RUDENZ hesitates to take it.*

Drink it off!

One cup, one heart's the word among us here!\*

ATTING. Go, go, my children; when the evening work  
 Is done, we'll talk about our country's cause.

[*Exeunt KUONI and Hinds.*

ATTINGHAUSEN and RUDENZ.

ATTING. I see thee girded and caparison'd,  
 Thou'lt to the Herrenburg at Altdorf?

---

\* The German of the original, which offers great difficulty in the way of a literal translation, is as follows:—

“Trinket frisch! Es geht

Aus Einem Becher und aus Einem Herzen.”

RUD. Ay, uncle ! and I must no longer wait.

ATTING. (*sits himself.*) Art thou so hasty ? How ?

Is then thy time

Of youth so shortly measured out that thou  
Canst spare none of it to thy aged uncle ?

RUD. I see my presence here is undesired.  
I am but as a stranger in this house.

ATTING. Ay ! pity that thou art ! Pity that this  
hearth

Should strange to thee become. Oh, Ulric ! Ulric !  
I scarcely know thee more ! In silk thou shinest,  
Wear'st haughtily the peacock's plume in public,\*  
And wrap'st the purple mantle round thy shoulders,  
Looking with scorn upon our peasantry,  
And shaming thee at their familiar greeting !

RUD. The honour due to them I freely give ;  
The right that they 'd assume, I may not yield.

ATTING. Under the heavy anger of the King  
Lies all the land, and every honest heart  
Grieves, on account of the tyrannic power

---

\* The Austrian knights wore a plume of peacock's feathers in their helmets. After the overthrow of their country's dominion in Switzerland, it was made highly penal to wear the peacock's feather at any public assembly there.



Which we endure. *Thou* only art unmoved  
Amid the universal suffering.

A traitor to thy nation dost thou stand  
Among the party of that nation's enemies,—  
Hunt after trivial pleasures, e'en as 'twere  
In mockery of our calamity ;  
And court the smile of princes, all the while  
Thy country bleeds beneath their cruel scourge !

RUD. The land is sore oppress'd ! And, wherefore,  
uncle ?

By whom has it been plunged in this distress ?  
'Twould cost us but a single easy word  
To free it in a moment from oppression ;  
And thereby win a gracious Emperor.  
Woe be to those who blind the nation's eyes  
That it may strive against a real good ;  
Who for their proper profit would impede  
The Waldstetten to swear allegiance  
To Austria like all the land around.  
It fits their humour well to range themselves  
Among the nobles on the Herrenbank,\*  
And choose the Emperor for lord ; because—  
They wish no lord at all.

---

\* The bench reserved for the nobility.

ATTING. Must I hear *this* ! and hear it too from *thee* !

RUD. You've asked me for it ;—let me make an end.  
 What sort of part is 't, uncle, you yourself  
 Play here ? Have you no higher pride than here  
 To be Landamman,\* or a Banner-herr,  
 And exercise dominion o'er these hinds ?  
 How ! is it not a choice more commendable  
 To render homage to a royal master  
 And consort with his brilliant retinue,  
 Than to be peer amongst your proper vassals,  
 And sit in judgment 'mid a group of clowns !

ATTING. Ah, Ulric ! Ulric ! I can recognize  
 The voice of the seducer. He hath seized upon  
 Thy open ear, and poisoned thy heart.

RUD. Ay, I conceal it not ; it grieved my soul  
 To hear these strangers term us scoffingly  
 The *Peasant-gentles*.† I can not endure,

---

\* The Landamman was an officer chosen by the Swiss Gemeine, or Diet, to preside over them. He was called Heerman in the old German, and "Arimannus" and "Minister Vallis" in the Latin of the middle ages, and appears to have been similar to the Hetman amongst the Cossacks—See Müller's History, book, i. cap. 15, no. 30. The word seems to be a corruption of Land-amptman. As to the Banner-herr, he was the officer appointed to take charge of the banner of the State, and those conquered in battle.

† "Den *Baurenadel* schelten." Such was the epithet insultingly applied to the Swiss gentry by the Austrians.—*Vide* Müller.

While all the young nobility around  
Are gathering honour under Hapsburg's banner,  
To lie a sluggard here on my inheritance;  
And in a course of common daily occupation,  
To lose the spring of life. In other parts  
Are deeds achieved. A world of fair renown  
Is moving brilliantly beyond these mountains!  
For me—both helm and shield hang rusting in the hall!  
The warlike trumpet's valour-stirring tone—  
The Herald's call, inviting to the lists—  
Will never find their way to these our dales.  
Nought have we here, except the cowherd's horn,  
And wether-bell monotonously tinkling.

ATTING. Infatuated! Gulled by idle glare,  
Dost thou despise the land that gave thee birth?  
And turn a face of shame towards the customs,  
The good old customs of thy forefathers?  
With burning tears wilt thou hereafter long  
To be at home on thy paternal hills;  
And this same cowhorn's melody, which now  
Thou scorn'st with such imperious disgust,  
Thou 'lt cling to 't with a painful eagerness,  
Whene'er it meets thy ear in foreign climes!  
/ Strong is the impulse of our native land! /

Impawn themselves, and so out-realm their rights.\*—  
No, uncle, 'tis a wholesome, wise precaution,  
In this unhappy time of party strife,  
To make alliance with a mighty chief.  
Th' Imperial crown 's transferred from race to race,†  
And hath no memory for faithful service ;  
But to do such unto a mighty master,  
Whose power 's inheritable, were to sow  
Seed for futurity.

ATTING.            Art thou so wise ?  
Wilt thou see clearer than thy noble ancestors,  
Who strove with land and blood and heroism  
For liberty's inestimable jewel ?  
Ship thyself over to Lucerne, and there  
Demand how Austria's rule o'erloads the Cantons ;  
Her minions come to number o'er our sheep,  
Our cattle, and partition out our Alps,  
To hinder us in our free woods to strike

---

\* This was very often done. In peril of war, or for the purpose of borrowing money, an imperial city might subject or mortgage itself to the Emperor. But by so doing it lost its freedom, became his private seignior, and was considered as put out of the realm.

† This refers to the Imperial crown not being hereditary, but conferred by election on one of the Counts of the Empire.



A heron\* down—or kill a stag; to set  
 Their toll-bar upon every gate and bridge,  
 To purchase land with our poor stinted fortunes,  
 And spend our blood to prosecute their wars.—  
 No! If our blood's to flow in the affair,  
 Let's shed it for *ourselves*. / Oh far more cheap  
 Can we buy liberty than servitude! /

RUD. But what can we, a nation of mere herdsmen,  
 Hope to achieve 'gainst Albert's warlike power?

ATTING. Learn to know better, these same herdsmen,  
 boy,—  
 I know them,—have commanded them in battle,  
 And I have seen them fight before Favenz.  
 'Tis they at last must rid us of the yoke  
 Which we're determined to endure no more.  
 Oh learn to feel from what a race thou'rt sprung!  
 Throw not for idle glare and spangled tawdry  
 The precious pearl of thine own worth away.

---

\* In the original—

“Den Hochflug, und das Hochgewilde bannen  
 In unsern freien Wäldern.”

Hochflug and Hochgewilde are terms of chase, for which there are none exactly equivalent in our language. The former means the larger species of birds of chase, and the latter the larger kinds of four-footed game, such as the great stag, the wild boar, &c. &c.

To call thyself the chief of a free people,  
 Devoted to thee out of heart-felt love—  
 Ready to stand by, fight, and die for thee :  
 Be this thy boast—be this thy noblest praise.  
 Knit fast the holy ties which nature breeds,  
 Cling to thy native land as to a thing  
 Most dear, and hold it firmly to thy heart.  
*Here* is thy power firm and strongly rooted.  
*There*, in the foreign world, thou 'lt stand alone,  
 A trembling reed beat down by every storm.  
 Oh come ! 'tis long since thou hast been with us.  
 Stay with us but one day ;—but this one day—  
 Go not to Altdorf ! Hear 'st thou ? Not to-day.  
 For this one day bestow it on thy friends. [*takes his hand.*]

RUD. I gave my word—O let me—I am bound—

ATTING. (*lets fall the hand of RUDENZ and says earnestly.*)

Bound, art thou ?—Ay, unfortunate !—thou art,  
 But not with tie of word or sacrament.  
 Thy bonds are those which love twines round the heart.

[*RUDENZ turns himself away.*]

Go, hide thee if thou wilt. Bertha of Bruneck,  
 She it is attracts thee to the Herrenburg :  
 By her, thou 'rt fettered to the Emp'ror's service.

And would 'st thou win the noble knightly maid  
 By thy apostacy? Be undeceived.  
 They show her to thee merely as a bait;  
 But think not she's intended as the bride  
 Of such a simple soul as thou!

RUD. I've heard

Enough. Farewell! [Exit.

ATTING. Rash youth, remain! He's gone!

I can nor hold him back nor rescue him—  
 So, Wolfenschiessen from his province, then,  
 Is fallen. Others soon will follow him.  
 A foreign magic tears our youth away,  
 Spite of their efforts, from their native mountains.  
 Oh, fatal moment! when the foreigner  
 Came to our tranquil happy vales to change  
 The habitudes of simple innocence!  
 New fashions press in forcibly upon us,  
 While old respected ones give place and die.  
 New times come on—and men's ideas change!  
 What do I here? All, all are in the grave  
 With whom I lived and acted!  
 My time already is beneath the earth.  
 Well is 't for him no more obliged to live  
 Among the changes of the coming time! [Exit.

## SCENE II.

*A meadow surrounded by high cliffs and forests. On the cliffs are seen steps, rails, and ladders by which they are descended. In the back-ground is the lake, over which, in the beginning of the scene, a lunar rainbow is seen. High mountains, overtopped by still higher icebergs, close the prospect. It is night, but the lake and the white glaciers glisten in the moonlight.*

*Enter MELCHTHAL, BAUMGARTEN, WINKEBRIED, MEIER VON SARNEN, BURKHARDT AM BUHEL, ARNOLD VON SEWA, KLAUS VON DER FLUE, and four others, all armed.*

MEL. (*as he enters.*) The Berg-way opens—quick—  
on after me !

I know this rock and that small cross upon 't :  
We're at the mark. Here is the Rootli.

[ *They approach with wind lanterns.*

WINK.

Hark !

SEWA. All's clear !



MEIR. No countryman's yet there. 'Tis we  
Are first upon the spot. We Underwalders.

MEL. How far is 't in the night?

BAUM. The fire watch  
From Selisberg hath called the second hour.

[*Sounds of a bell are heard in the distance.*]

MEIR. Still! Hark!

BUEL. The forest-chapel's matin-chime  
Rings hither clearly o'er the land of Switz.

FLUE. The air is pure and bears the sound afar!

MEL. Go some and kindle up a brushwood fire,  
So that it burn up clearly when they come.

[*Exeunt two of them.*]

SEWA. 'Tis a fair moonlight night. The lake  
Lies smooth and tranquil as a mirror there!

BUHEL. They'll have an easy course.

WINK. (*pointing towards the lake.*) Ha! see!  
Look there! Look! See you nought?

MEIR. What there? Ay, truly,  
A rainbow in the middle of the night!

MEL. It is the moonlight that produced it.

FLUE. That is an omen strange and marvellous;  
Full many live who never saw the like!

SEWA. 'Tis doubled, see! surrounded by a paler!

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BAUM. A shallop there rows quietly this way.

MEL. That then must be the boat of Stauffacher :  
The honest heart hath not detained us long.

[*goes towards the shore with BAUMGARTEN.*

MEIER. The men of Uri will be latest here.

BUHEL. They must go further round among the  
mountains,

That they may 'scape the Governor's intelligence.

[*During this colloquy two of the party present  
light a fire in the middle of the place.*

MEL. (*from the shore.*) Who 's there? Quick, give  
the word!

STAUF. (*approaching.*) Our country's friends.

[*All go towards the back-ground to meet those who  
arrive. Out of the boat come STAUFFACHER, ITEL  
REDING, HANS AUF DER MAUER, JORG IM HOFE,  
KONRAD HUNN, ULRICH the Smith, JOST VON  
WEILER, and three more, all armed.*

ALL (*cry out.*) Welcome!

MEL. Oh worthy Stauffacher! I've seen  
Him, who, alas! can ne'er again see me.  
I've laid my hand upon his sightless eyes;  
And from his vision's ever darkened sun  
Have I imbibed thoughts of burning vengeance.



STAUF. Speak not of vengeance. We must now  
 converse  
 Of threatened evil rather than of past.  
 Say then your occupation in the land of Underwald,  
 And what you 've levied for the common cause?  
 How think our countrymen? and how yourself  
 Contrived to 'scape the snares of treachery?

MEL. Through the terrific mountains of Surrenne,  
 O'er wide extended desert fields of ice,  
 Where nought is heard but the discordant croak  
 Of vultures, I attained the common where  
 The Hinds of Uri and of Engleberg  
 Exchange their mutual salutations,  
 And feed their flocks together.  
 Quenching my thirst the while with gletcher-milk,\*  
 Which foaming gushed from out the rocky fissures—  
 I rested me at solitary shepherd-huts,  
 Where I was host and guest,† until I came  
 To humanized and social habitations.

---

\* The Snow-water is so called by the Swiss.

† The herdsmen, who pasture their flocks on the upper part of the Alps, build themselves little huts there, and reside in them till the summer is past, and the cold weather obliges them to descend. It was winter when Melchthal took the route which he describes, and therefore he found the shepherd huts empty.

Already was the new atrocity,  
Which they 've committed, bruited 'mong the dalesmen,  
And sympathy was shown for my misfortune  
At every door I knocked at in my wand'ring.  
I found these simple souls provoked to rage  
By our new Ruler's deeds of violence.

For as each Alp successively doth nourish  
Plants of like kind; and as each spring flows on  
Uninterruptedly, and as the wind  
And clouds pursue the same unerring course,—  
So have old customs here, from sire to son,  
Gone on untouched by alteration:  
For they cannot endure to rashly innovate  
Their old established even course of life.  
These welcomed me with clasp of their hard hands—  
Down from the walls they reached their rusty swords,  
And from each eye beamed forth exultingly  
Feelings of courage! When I mentioned names  
Adored by all our mountain countrymen,  
(Your own and Walter Fürst's) they swore  
To do whatever you might think legitimate,  
And swore to follow you till death!  
Safely protected by their hospitality,  
I hastened on my way from farm to farm;

And when I came upon my native dale,  
Where far and wide my numerous kindred dwell—  
And when I found my father, robbed and blind,  
Lying on straw, and living on the charity  
Of kind and pitying friends ——

STAUF. O God of Heaven !

MEL. I did not weep.—No ; not with powerless  
tears

Did I expend the force of my hot anguish.  
Deep in my breast, as 'twere a precious treasure,  
I locked it, and bethought me but of deeds.  
I crept through every winding of the mountains :  
No dale was so concealed but I explored it,  
Until upon the glacier's ice-shod foot  
I stood, and found e'en there men's dwelling-places ;  
And wheresoe'er my footsteps carried me,  
I found an equal hate of tyranny ;  
For even unto the last boundary  
Of living nature—where the chilly earth  
Refuses produce—had the avarice  
Of our new governors committed robbery.  
The hearts of all these uncorrupted people  
Were goaded into excitation by my words,  
And ours are all of them with heart and voice.

STAUF. Much have you done, and in short space  
of time.

MEL. I've done yet more! The fortresses,  
Rossberg and Sarnen, fright our countrymen;  
For under their high walls the enemy  
Protects himself, and depredates the land.  
With my own eyes I wish'd to note the thing,  
So went to Sarnen and beheld the Castle.

STAUF. And ventured you within the tiger's den?

MEL. I went there clothed in a pilgrim's garb,  
And saw our Ruler surfeit at his table.  
Judge how I'm able to restrain my heart—  
I saw my foe—and yet I slew him not!

STAUF. Fortune, indeed, hath smiled upon your  
boldness.

*[During this dialogue some others of MELCHTHEL'S  
party come forward.]*

But say, I pray you, who may be the friends,  
The tried and trusted men, who follow you.  
Make me acquainted with them—that we all  
Draw near in open-hearted confidence.

MEIR. Where is the man within our Cantons, Sir,  
To whom *your* name and worth can be unknown?



The name I bear is Meier von Sarnen. This  
Is Struth von Winkelried, my sister's son.

STAUF. You mention to me no unheard of names ;  
A Winkelried was he who slew the Dragon  
At Wieler in a swamp, and lost his life  
In the encounter.

WINK. 'Twas my ancestor.

MEL. (*points to two others.*) These dwell behind the  
wood—are cloister-serfs

From Engelberg ; but you will not, I'm sure,  
Treat them with disrespect because they're bondsmen,  
And not like us free landed heritors.  
They love their country, and are well reputed.

STAUF. (*to them.*) Give me your hands. He's for-  
tunate who owes  
Corporeal service to no earthly master ;

But honesty succeeds in every rank.

HUNN. This is Herr Reding. He's our old Land-  
amman.

MEIR. I know him well. He's my antagonist,  
And litigates my claim to an inheritance.

Herr Reding, we are enemies at law :

But here, we're friends. [Shakes him by the hand.

STAUF. 'Tis bravely spoken.

[*A horn is heard without.*

WINK. Hark! they are coming. 'Tis the horn of Uri.

[*On the right and left armed men are seen descending the cliff with wind lanterns.*

MAUER. See! Is not that God's pious servitor,  
The worthy priest that 's coming down there with 'em?  
Like a good shepherd doth he tend his flock,  
Despite of toilsome road and darksome night.

BAUM. The sacrist follows him with Walter Fürst;  
But yet I see not Tell among the party!

*Enter WALTER FÜRST, RÖSSELMAN the Priest, PETERMAN the Sacrist, KUONI the Herd, WERNI, and five others. There are thirty-three individuals in all on the stage, who come forward and stand round the fire.*

WALTER FÜRST. Thus even on our own inheritance,  
Our own paternal soil, must we steal forth,  
And slink together like a band of murderers,  
And in the night, whose sombre cloak befits  
Such deeds alone as fear to face the sun,  
Must we attempt to exercise a right  
As clear and palpable as open day!

MEL. Good! Let it be. The web that 's spun at night  
Looks fair and perfect in the morning's light.\*

ROS. Confederates! Hear what God puts in my heart.  
We 're met to represent our country's Diet,  
And act the part of all her population.  
Then let us, as we 're wont in tranquil times,  
Begin according to our ancient customs.  
What may be out of rule in our convention  
The peril of the time may well excuse:  
But God presides where right is exercised;  
And under his own heaven do we stand.

STAUF. Well, let 's begin according to old usage.  
No matter for the night—our right will be  
Apparent e'en amid the darkness!

MEL. Should not our number be complete, the heart  
Of all the nation 's with her best men here.

HUNN. And if old documents be not at hand,  
You 'll find them registered in every heart.

ROS. So be it. Form we quickly then a ring,  
And set the swords of power in the ground.†

---

\* Melchthal repeats here an old German proverb—

“Was die dunkle Nacht gesponnen,  
Soll frei und fröhlich an das Licht der Sonnen.”

† It was the custom at these meetings to set swords upright in the ground as emblems of authority.

MAUER. Let the Landamman take his place, and let His Waibel have a station by his side.\*

SAC. We are the people of three Cantons ! Which— Shall give a President to our assembly ?

MEIR. Let Switz contend with Uri for the honour, We Underwalders freely wave our claim.

MEL. Ay, we'll retire ; for we are supplicants, And seek assistance from our mightier friends.

STAUF. Let Uri then take up the sword. Her banner Doth lead in war the vanguard of our armies.

WALTER FÜRST. Switz shall partake the honour of  
the sword ;

From her we all derive our origin.

ROS. Let me compose this honourable strife.  
Uri shall lead in battle—Switz in counsel.

WALTER FÜRST (*offers the swords to STAUFFACHER.*)  
Take them !

STAUF. Not I. Such honour's for our elders.

HOFE. Ulric the Smith is eldest of us all.

MAUER. The man's a brave one but he is not free.  
No bondman can be judge in Switzerland !†

---

\* The Waibel was a sort of clerk or secretary.

† This was declared in a charter of Rudolph of Hapsburg, bearing date 1291. The words of the charter are, "Inconveniens



STAUF. Is not Herr Reding here, the old Landman?

Where can we find a worthier than he!

WALTER FÜRST. He shall be Amman and our chief to-day.

Let those who vote it so, raise up their hands.

*[All hold up their right hands.]*

RED. *(coming forward into the middle of the group.)*

I cannot lay my hand upon a book,—

So swear I then by the eternal stars,

That I will never deviate from justice.

*[Two swords are set up before him. The circle draws around him. The Switzers compose the middle—the men of Uri the right, and the Unterwalders the left of it. REDING stands leaning on his sword.]*

Why is it we three mountain clans are met

Here, on the lake's inhospitable shore,

And at the hour when spirits walk the night?

What may the purport be of this new bond

Which we must make beneath the starry heav'n?

reputat nostra serenitas quòd aliquis servilis conditionis existens pro judice vobis detur:" and the reason of it was, that he who was bound to obey a bondman, must, *à fortiori*, be bound to obey the lord of that bondman.—See Muller, Book I. p. 17, No. 31.

STAUF. (*coming into the circle.*) A new bond's not  
our object. We'd renew  
An aboriginal agreement made  
Between our ancestors. Confederates !  
Although we're sundered by lake and mountain ;  
Although each Canton rule itself apart ;  
Yet are our blood and lineage the same,  
And to one native land we all belong.

WINK. What, is it true, as ballad rhimes aver,  
That we have wandered here from distant lands?  
Oh, tell us what you know about it ; so,  
The ancient bond shall give our new one strength.

STAUF. Hear then the tale which ancient herds  
relate :

Once was a mighty people, far away  
In northern lands, who suffered grievous famine :  
In this distress the commonwealth ordained,  
That each tenth man, by lot selected out,  
Should quit his native land. That happened !  
And there went forth a number infinite  
Of weeping families towards the South.  
Their swords made way for them through Germany,  
E'en to the highlands of these forest-mountains,  
And never stayed their travel-wearied march

Until it halted on the savage dale,  
Where between Wiesen the Muotta flows.  
No trace of human being there appeared,  
Except a lonely hut upon the shore,  
In which resided he who kept the ferry;  
But angry rolled the water, and denied  
A passage o'er. 'Twas then they saw the land  
More nearly, and remarked the bounteous store  
Of forest; and discovered goodly springs,  
And fancied their beloved native land  
Had re-appeared!  
This spot they fixed on for their resting-place,  
And on it built the ancient town of Switz.  
There spent they many a weary day, to clear  
The wood, entangled with wide-creeping weeds;  
And when the soil could no more yield support  
For the increasing number of the people,  
O'er the Black-mountain went they far away—  
Ay! e'en to Weisland, where they found concealed,  
Behind a wall of everlasting ice,  
Another people with another language.  
The town of Stanz erected they at Kernwald—  
The town of Altdorf in the vale of Rens.  
But ever mindful of his origin,

The real Switzer ne'er hath failed to know  
His brother among all the foreign tribes  
That since have settled in his land. For thus  
The heart can recognise its kindred blood.

MAUER. Ay! we are all in heart and blood the  
same!

ALL. (*joining hands*) One people are we, and we'll  
act as one!

STAUF. The other nations bear a foreign yoke,  
For they have yielded to a conqueror;  
Within our landmarks also, many Serfs  
Reside, who owe their homage to the stranger,  
And whose condition falls upon their children;—  
But *we*—the ancient Switzer's honour'd race—  
*We* have as yet preserved our liberty!  
Before no princely lord bow we the knee:  
Of our free-will we chose the Emperor  
To be protector of our liberty.

ROS. Freely we chose the Realm's supremacy,  
So stands it in the Emp'ror Frederic's charter.\*

STAUF. Thus are the freest never wildly free;  
There must exist a Chief—a Judge supreme—

---

\* This was the charter of the Emperor Frederic II. granted in 1240.—See Muller, Book I. p. 15, note 23.



To give men justice in their controversies ;  
 'Twas therefore that our fathers, for the land  
 They wrought from out the ancient wilderness,  
 Conferred that honour on the Emperor,  
 Who rules o'er Germany and Italy :  
 And, as the other freemen of the realm  
 Are bound alone to serve him with their swords,  
 So is the freeman's only duty this—  
 To guard the realm which guards his liberty.

MEL. All other service were a mark of bondage.

STAUF. Our fathers, when the Heriban\* went forth,  
 Followed the Emp'r's banner—fought his battles—  
 Marched in his armament to Italy,  
 To set upon his head the Roman crown !  
 At home they ruled themselves contentedly  
 After old usage, and their own decrees.  
 The only thing reserved to the Emperor,  
 Was pow'r to punish crime of deepest dye.  
 For this appointed he a puisant Graff,†

---

\* The Hereban was a muster of warriors similar to the *arrière ban* of the French.

† The German title Graff has been employed here in preference to Count, by which word it is, ordinarily, yet erroneously translated. The Graff, at the period here spoken of, was simply judge of a district. (See Putter's *Staat's Verfassang*, Vol. I. cap. 1.).

Who dwelt beyond the limits of our land.  
He, when such crime occurred, was summoned hither,  
And plain and clear beneath the open sky,  
He spake his judgment fearing no man. Where,—  
Where are the traces here of servitude?  
If any—contradict me,—let him speak!

HOFE. No; as you 've spoken think we to a man—  
A reign of force was ne'er by us endured.

STAUF. E'en to the Emperor himself have we  
Refused submission, when, to grace the priests,  
He turned aside from justice!  
For when the clergy from Einsiedeln came\*

---

He was the same officer as the Gereffa amongst the Anglo-Saxons, which title, after having been corrupted into Greve and Reve, with the word Shire prefixed to it, is at length written Sheriff.

\* This passage refers to a claim made in the reign of the Emperor Henry V. by Gerhard, Abbot of Einsiedeln. The Switzers insisted that they had inherited the Alps from their ancestors, and that the Emperor was the only Lord they would receive in their country. The Abbot brought the case before the Emperor, who gave judgment in his favour. It was then that the Switzers made the answer stated in the present scene. This drew down on them the vengeance of both Emperor and Abbot, as far as outlawry and anathema could go. The Switzers, however, went on their own way, both in spite of the one and the other, not being able to comprehend that the maintenance of their rights was a sin against God. At length, when the Emperor Frederic the First came to the throne,

To litigate our title to the Alps,  
 Whereon we've pastured immemorially,  
 The Father Abbot showed an ancient grant  
 Which yielded to him all the lordless waste,  
 (For they had portioned out our very being ;)  
 Thus answered we, "The Charter's an encroachment—  
 "What's ours no Emperor can give away ;  
 "And if the Realm deny us right, why then  
 "We'll do without the realm, upon our mountains."  
 So spake our fathers ; and shall we, their sons,  
 Endure the infamy of subjugation—  
 Take from a foreign vassal what no Emperor,  
 In all his strength, hath dared to offer us !  
 We have created for ourselves this ground,  
 Our industry has changed the ancient wood  
 Which was of yore the wild abode of bears,  
 Into a settlement of human beings :  
 The dragon-brood that, venom-bloated, rose  
 From out the swamp have *we* exterminated—

---

he appointed the Count Ulric Von Lenzburg Governor of the Waldstetten, who said to the people, "The Emperor loves brave men. Do battle for him as did your forefathers, and never mind the parsons." This speech obtained for the Emperor a body of 600 young men, who followed his standard into Italy ; and the claim of the Abbot was no more heard of.—Muller, Book I. c. 15.

We felled the leafy cover of the fog,  
Which hung for ever gray about the wilderness;  
We broke the solid rocks, and o'er th' abyss  
Placed bridges for the welfare of the traveler.  
We've held the land for twice five hundred years.  
Thus is it *ours* :—and shall a foreigner,  
A lordly slave, presume to forge us chains  
And do us outrage on our native earth?  
Is there no help for such oppression?

[*A great movement amongst the assembly.*

Yes!

There *is* a limit to a tyrant's power.  
When the oppressed can nowhere find redress;—  
When he can no longer support his load;—  
He boldly stretches forth his hand to Heav'n,  
And plucks from thence that everlasting justice,  
Which there resides unalienable  
And indestructible as are the stars.  
The ancient state of nature comes again,  
Where man to man is put in opposition;  
As a last mean, if every other fail,  
The sword is given him as arbiter!  
And shall not we our dearest property



Protect 'gainst violence ! Up, up, let 's stand  
To guard our wives, our children, and our country !

ALL, (*clashing their swords.*) Ay ! we 'll defend our  
children and our wives.

ROS. (*comes into the circle.*) Think well upon 't before  
you draw the sword ;

A peaceful compromise is in your pow'r.

Say but one word, and those by whom you 're now

So sorely press'd, will turn and flatter ye.

Do what so often they 've proposed in vain—

Disclaim the Realm, acknowledge Austria.

MAUER. What says the Priest ? We swear to  
Austria !

BUHEL. Hear him no more.

WINK. A traitor counsels us ;

Our country's enemy—

RED. Peace, sworn confed'rates !

SEWA. We do 'em homage after so much wrong !—

FLUE. We let 'em bully out of us through force

What we 've denied to kindness !

MEIER. Then should we

Be slaves and well deserve our slavery.

MAUER. Let him who speaks of yielding us to Austria

For ever lose a Switzer's privilege.  
Landamman, I insist upon 't that this  
May be the first decree that we ordain.

MEL. So be 't. Who speaks of yielding unto Austria,  
Let him be outcast from all right and honour,  
And let no Switzer take him to his fire.

ALL, (*lifting up their right hands.*) We'll have it so.  
Be this a law.

RED. (*after a pause.*) It is.

ROS. Now are you free e'en by the law you 've made ;  
Never shall Austria obtain by force  
That which she could not gain by friendly suit.

WEILER. On with the day's proceedings.

RED. Sworn confederates !

Has every peaceful medium been essay'd ?

Perhaps the King is ignorant—indeed,

He could not well have willed what we have borne.

Let us attempt then, as a last resource,

To bring our grievances before his ear,

Ere we assume the sword ; for violence

Is ever fearful in the fairest cause.

God only helps when human help is vain.

STAUF. (*to CONRAD HUNN.*) Now then 's the time to  
give in your report.

HUNN. I was at Rheinfeld, at the Emp'ror's palace,  
To make complaint against our hard oppression,  
And fetch the charter of our ancient freedom,  
Which each new King confirms on his accession.  
There found I many a Civic Deputy,  
From Swabia, and from the banks of Rhine,  
And each obtained his parchment easily,  
And wended joyfully towards his home.  
Your Deputy was shown unto the Council,  
Who put me off with empty promises.  
"The Emperor has now but little time :  
Another day he'll think on your affair."  
And as I went desponding through the hall  
Of the Imperial Castle, there I saw  
The young Duke John stand weeping bitterly.  
About him were the lords of Wart and Tägerfeld ;  
Who called to me and said, " Help you yourselves ;  
Expect no justice from the King." Alas !  
Hath he not plundered his own brother's child  
And kept him from his lawful heritage ?  
The Duke demanded his maternal land.  
He's now of age, and 'tis full time that he  
Should rule his people and dominions.  
What answer made the Emperor ? He put

A garland on his nephew's head, and cried,  
 "Behold a proper ornament for youth!"

MAUER. / You've heard it! Help yourselves! 'twere  
 folly now

To hope for justice from the Emperor. /  
 No other course is left us. Now to counsel  
 How to bring matters to a prosp'rous end.

WALTER FÜRST. (*comes into the circle*) Let's drive  
 away this hated tyranny,  
 And re-assure the ancient rights which we  
 Have herited from our progenitors.

But let's not run unbridled in our course;  
 Give we to Cæsar what may be his due,  
 And let each man who owns a Seignior,  
 Serve him according to the rules of duty.

MEIER. I hold some land in fief of Austria.

WALTER FÜRST. Then hold it on, and yield her  
 what's her due.

WEILER. I'm tenant to the Lords of Rappersweil.\*

---

\* This was a powerful family of great antiquity in Switzerland. The town of Rappersweil was built by one of its members, and owing, it is said, to a singular accident, which is thus related by Stolberg. The Count Rudolph of Rappersweil, who lived at the end of the 11th century, wished to feel himself happy in the possession of his beautiful wife, whose virtue was neither spotless



WALTER FÜRST. Continue so, and pay them faithfully.

ROS. I'm bound by oath, to serve my patron Saint.

WALTER FÜRST. Then let the cloister have thy services.

STAUF. I hold no fief excepting of the Realm.

WALTER FÜRST. Let that be paid which must, but nothing more.

With their own vassals will we chase the Governors,  
 And force our way into their fastnesses—  
 Yet bloodlessly, if possible. The Emperor  
 Shall see that, driven by necessity,

nor unsuspected by him. As he one day returned home from the field, his steward came out to meet him before his Castle with a thoughtful mien, saying, that he must speak with him on a very weighty affair. And old Chronicle puts the following words into the Count's mouth:—"Say what thou wilt, my good Steward, so long as thou sayest nothing evil of my wife; for whenever I think of her beauty, my soul is so rejoiced, that all trouble and disappointment is checked, and her gracefulness so enraptures me, that I forget all harm and am glad as often as I return home."

The steward, well seeing that the infatuated warrior would take his accusation amiss, bethought him quickly of something else, and said that he had, during the Count's absence, found a convenient place to build a strong city, and showed him the spot on which, in the year 1091, Count Rudolf founded the present town.

We've merely cast aside respect for him ;  
 And if he see us stay within our bounds,  
 Belike his rage will yield to policy ;  
 For nations are with reason to be feared,  
 Who, sword in hand, can act with moderation.

RED. But let's hear how we may accomplish it :  
 The enemy has weapons in his hand,  
 And surely will not leave the field without a blow.

STAUF. He will though, if he see us up in arms—  
 We'll rush upon him ere he be prepared.

MEIER. That's easy said, and yet the doing's  
 hard.

Within the land two castles lift their heads ;  
 These, if the King should fall upon our land,  
 Would give the foe protection, and be dangerous.—  
 Roszberg and Sarnen must be won before  
 A sword be drawn in either of the Cantons.

STAUF. Why wait so long? the foe will be advised :  
 There are too many who partake our secret.

MEIER. Throughout the Waldstetten, you'll find  
 no traitor.

ROS. But even zeal may cause it to be known.

WALTER FÜRST. If thus we dally, we shall have  
 in Altdorf

The Dungeon finished, and the Governor  
Safe fortified within.

MEIER. You think but of yourselves.

SACRIST. And you 're unjust to us.

MEIER. (*Growing angry*) Unjust! dare Uri offer us  
that taunt?

RED. Peace! on your oath!

MEIER. Oh, certainly! If Switz  
Unite with Uri we may well be still.

RED. I warn you both before the Diet here,  
That you disturb it with your controversy.  
Do not we all embrace a common cause?

WINK. Let's wait until the coming feast;\* for then  
The serfs, according to an ancient custom,  
Bring presents to the Governor at Sarnen.  
There can some ten or twelve selected men  
Assemble unremarked within the fortress.  
Let these have lance-heads hidden on their persons,  
Which they may fix upon their staves with ease  
(For no one armed may come within the castle).  
Near in the wood we'll have a reinforcement,  
And if, perchance, the others win the gate,  
Then, on the blowing of a horn, shall all

---

\* This was the feast of Christmas.

Rush forward from their ambuscade ; and thus  
We win the castle at an easy price.

MEL. I'll undertake to scale the walls of Roszberg ;  
For there's within the garrison a wench  
Who's not hard-hearted. I can fool her easily.  
If I arrange with her a nightly meeting,  
She'll not refuse to let me down a rope—  
Once up, I'll draw my friends up after !

RED. Are all agreed in favour of delay ?

[*The majority hold up their hands.*]

STAUF. (*Counts the votes*) There's twenty for it, and  
but twelve against !

WALTER FÜRST. If, on the day we've named, the  
Castles fall,  
From each we'll give a signal to the other  
By means of smoke. Then quickly in the Capital  
Of every Canton shall the \* Landsturm rise.  
If once the Governors behold us armed,  
Believe me that they'll soon give o'er the strife  
And grasp at, gladly, leave to make retreat  
In peace, beyond the borders of the land.

STAUF. With Gessler only do I fear a stand:

---

\* A sort of National Militia.



He's fearfully girt round with cavalry—  
 Blood will be shed ere he retreat. He'll e'en  
 Be fear'd when we've expelled him from the land.  
 'Tis hard and perilous to let him 'scape.

BAUM. Let me be stationed in the post of danger.  
 To Tell I'm debtor for a rescued life,  
 And for his country freely I'll expose it.  
 I've saved my honour, and my heart is light.

RED. Time will bring counsel.\* Wait with pati-  
 ence. We  
 May also trust the moment when we act  
 Will not be adverse.  
 But see! while we prolong our nightly conference,  
 The morning's glowing watch-fire shines above  
 The highest mountains. Come, let's separate,  
 Before the daylight overtake us here.

WALTER FÜRST. Fear not; the night will long be  
 on the valleys.

*[All involuntarily take off their hats and  
 contemplate silently the dawn.]*

---

\* In the original—"Die Zeit bringt Rath," *i. e.* Time brings Counsel. This is a proverb amongst the Germans, meaning, that Time, by developing difficult circumstances, enables us to see our way through them, and so gives us counsel how to act.

ROS. By this fair light, which greets us here before  
All other nations, lying deep beneath us,  
And breathing hard amid the smoke of cities,  
Let's strengthen with an oath our new alliance.—

We'll be a nation of united brothers,  
In no distress nor peril will we part.

*[All repeat it after him, holding up three\* fingers.]*

We'll be as free as were our forefathers,  
And rather die than live in slavery.

*[Repeated as above.]*

We'll put our trust in God omnipotent,  
And tremble not before the pow'r of man.

*[They repeat as above and embrace each other.]*

STAUF. Let each man now go quietly his way  
To his acquaintance and companions.  
Let every hind go winter up his flock,  
And levy friends in secret for our Bond.  
What in the interval we're doomed to bear,  
E'en let us bear it. Let our reckoning  
Grow great against the tyrants till the day  
Of general and especial payment come,  
When all shall be discharged.

---

\* This was the ancient custom on taking an oath.

Let every one repress his just resentment,  
And hoard his vengeance for the general swoop ;  
For he that helps himself, for private ends,  
Commits a theft upon the Commonwealth.

*[While they go off silently at three different  
sides, the orchestra commences a majestic strain,  
and the scene remains open for some time and  
shows the sun rising above the icebergs.]*

## ACT III. SCENE I.

*The court-yard of Tell's house. He is occupied with a carpenter's axe, and HEDWIG with household work. WALTER and WILHELM are in the background playing with a small cross-bow.*

WALTER (*sings.*)

With arrow and bow  
Must the Hunter away,  
Over mountain and dale,  
At the dawning of day.

Though the vulture be king  
Of the region of air,  
Yet the Hunter below  
Hath a kingdom as fair.

He's monarch of space,  
And whate'er through it flies,  
And all that his arrow  
Strikes down is his prize.

[*Comes forward skipping.*

My bowstring's broken.—Make another, father.

TELL. Not I! An archer ought to help himself.

[*The boys go off.*



HED. The boys begin betimes to use the bow.

TELL. He who'd be master of his weapon must.

HED. Ah! would to God they never learnt it.—

TELL. Pooh!

They shall learn all. Who'd fight his way through life,  
Must be prepared alike to strike and ward.

HED. Ah! is there no one destined to remain  
At home?

TELL. Not I, for one.—You know it, wife—  
Nature ne'er made me for a herdsman's life:

She made me restless, and impels me on

After a flying mark! I never feel

The full enjoyment of my life so well

As when I strike down daily something new.

HED. And think 'st thou nought of the anxiety  
Thy wife endures while waiting thy return?

I ever shudder when I hear the servants

Relate thy feats of desperate adventure.

My heart misgives me every time we part,

Lest thou should'st never more return to me.

I fancy thee on some wild frozen mountain,

Bewilder'd among rocks, and leaping fearfully

From crag to crag. I see the Chamois caught,

Spring back, and drag thee with him down a chasm;

Or else I see the snowdrift overwhelm thee;  
Or under thee the treach'rous ice give way,  
And down thou sinkest irredeemably,  
Buried alive in some terrific pit.  
Death, in a hundred varying forms, pursues  
The daring hunter on the rugged Alps.  
Oh! 'tis a most unlucky occupation  
That must be follow'd at the risk of life!

TELL. Who looks about him sharply and with  
judgment,  
And trusts in God and to his pliant strength,  
May bear him easily through every peril.  
He who is mountain-born should fear no mountain.

*[He finishes his work and lays by his instrument.]*

Now then I think the gate will hold awhile.  
An axe at hand oft saves the carpenter. *[Takes his hat.]*

HED. Where would you go?

TELL. To Altdorf—to your father.

HED. Thy thoughts are bent on something dangerous!  
Confess it!

TELL. How came such a thought to thee?

HED. There's something spinning 'gainst the Go-  
vernors.

I know full well that there hath been a meeting  
Upon the Rootli—and that thou 'rt engaged.

TELL. I was not with them; yet, be well assured,  
I'll not hold back whene'er my country calls.

HED. Wherever danger is they'll station thee;  
The hardest service ever will be thine.

TELL. Each man must help according to his means.

HED. The Underwalder hast thou, even in the storm,  
Transported o'er the Lake; a wonder 'twas  
That you escaped. Why, wilt thou never think  
On wife and child?

TELL. Dear wife! I thought on both,  
And therefore rescued I a father for his children.

HED. To launch thy boat upon the raging Lake,  
Oh! never call it putting trust in God,  
But call it rather, tempting his displeasure!

TELL. Who *thinks* so very much, will *do* but very  
little.

HED. Ay! thou art prodigal of thy assistance;  
Thou servest all; and when thou com'st thyself  
To need assistance, thou wilt hardly find it.

TELL. May God forbid that I should have to seek it.

[*He takes his bow and arrows.*]

HED. Why take thy cross-bow? Leave it here.

TELL. I might  
As well leave here my arm, as leave my bow.

[*Boys come forward.*]

WALTER. Where go you, father?

TELL. To your grand-dad, boy,  
At Altdorf. Wilt along?

WALTER. Ay! gladly will I.

HED. The Governor is there. Don't go to Altdorf.

TELL. He goes to day.

HED. But let him first be gone.

Remind him not of thee. Thou know'st he hates us.

TELL. Ay! but his hatred will not injure me;  
I do what's right and fear no enemy.

HED. Those who do right, are those he hates the  
most.

TELL. Because he can't come at them! Sure am I,  
The Knight will let me go my way in peace.

HED. Art thou so sure of that?

TELL. Not long ago  
I hunted o'er the savage neighbourhood  
Of Schachenthal—upon a desert track,  
And as alone a crag-path I pursued,  
Where there was no avoiding me, and where



Above me hung a rugged precipice,  
 And under roared down frightfully the torrent,  
     [*The two boys press towards him on the right and  
     left, and regard him with curiosity on the stretch.*

I saw the Governor approach towards me.  
 He was alone; and so was I. We stood  
 Man against man, and near us the abyss.  
 And as he came in view and recognised  
 In me, a man whom he, short time before,  
 Had punished heavily for slight offence,—  
 And saw me with a stalwart bow in hand  
 Come right upon him, he grew pale as death,  
 His knees refused their office, and I saw  
 That he was on the precipice's edge.  
 I pitied him. I went straight up to him,  
 And said respectfully—"I'm Tell, Lord Governor."  
 But fear had locked his voice within his throat,  
 From whence no sound could issue. With his hand  
 He signed me to be still, and go my way.  
 I went, and sent him his attendants.

HED.

How!

He trembled then before thee! Woe the while!  
 Thou'st seen his weakness and he'll ne'er forgive it.

TELL. Then I'll avoid him—and he'll not seek me.

HED. But go not there to-day. Rather go hunt.

TELL. What 's come to thee?

HED. I'm anxious—stay away.

TELL. But why torment thyself without a cause?

HED. Why wilt thou go without a cause?—Stay here.

TELL. Dear wife, I gave my promise that I'd come.

HED. Must thou?—then go; but leave the boys with me.

WALTER. Oh no, dear mother! I must with my father.

HED. What, Walter, wilt thou, then, forsake thy mother?

WALTER. I'll bring you something pretty back from Altdorf.\* [*Exit with his father.*]

WIL. I'll stay with thee, dear mother.

HED. (*Throwing her arms around him*) Yes, thou art My own dear child. Thou 'lt stay, although alone!

[*She goes to the gate of the court, and follows for a long time, with her eyes, her husband and son.*]

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\* The original has it "vom Ehni," i. e. from Grand-dad.

## SCENE II.

*A secluded wild forest ground. Rivulets\* are seen falling in spray over the cliffs.*

*Enter BERTHA, in hunting attire, and immediately after her, RUDENZ.*

BERTHA. He follows me. Now then, I'll speak my thoughts.

RUD. (*comes hastily in*) Fräulein,† at length I find you unattended.

Here are we moated round by yawning chasms ;  
In this wild waste I fear no witnesses ;  
Thus then I'll rid my heart of a long silence—

BERTHA. Stay, are you sure the chase will not come here ?

RUD. The chase is there—away. Now then, or never !-

I seize this precious moment eagerly,  
For I must see my destiny decided,

\* These are called in German, Staubbache, or dust-brooks.

† The title by which an unmarried German woman of family is addressed.

E'en should it sunder us eternally.  
 Arm not your gentle eye with dark reproof,  
 As if 'twould say to me, "What man art thou,  
 "That elevates his daring wish to me?"  
 As yet, indeed, am I unknown to fame,  
 Nor dare I range me in the glittering rank  
 Of knights, renown'd in arms, who court your smiles.  
 I've nothing but a heart of love and truth.

BERTHA. Dare you discourse to me of love and  
 truth?—

You, who are false to your most sacred duty!

[*Rudenz starts back.*

You, who have sold yourself a slave to Austria,  
 The foreign tyrant of your countrymen!

RUD. Hear I, from you, this imputation, Fräulein?  
 What but yourself sought I on Austria's side?

BERTHA. And didst thou think to find me on the  
 side  
 Of treachery? I'd rather give my hand  
 To Gessler even, tyrant as he is,  
 Than to a Switzer who forgets his nature,  
 And who can make himself a servile—tool!

RUD. O God! must I hear this?

BERTHA. How! what is there



A good man prizes dearer than his country?  
 What fairer duty for a noble heart,  
 Than to be champion of innocence,  
 And vindicate the right of the oppressed?  
 Deep in my soul I feel your nation's wrongs—  
 I suffer with it; and can't but love  
 So mild a people, yet so energetic.  
 They've fully won my heartfelt admiration,  
 And every day increases my respect.  
 But *you*, by nature and by knightly duty,  
 Their born and constituted guardian—  
*You* have abandoned them! and, traitor-like,  
 Deserted to their enemy, and now  
 Make fetters for their land. The part you've played  
 Has hurt and mortified me sorely! I'm compell'd  
 To curb my heart, that I may hate you not.

RUD. Can I do better for my people's weal?  
 I'd give them, under Austria's mighty scéptre,  
 The peace——

BERTHA. *The bondage*—that's what *you'd* prepare!  
 You'd hunt their freedom from the last retreat  
 That yet remains to it upon the earth.  
 The people better understand their happiness:

No gilded bait beguiles their steady sense.  
Your head has long been in the fisher's net.

RUD. You hate me, Bertha—you despise me!

BERTHA. Ah!

'Twere better that I did. But when I see  
The very man despised and despicable  
Who might indeed be loved—

RUD. O Bertha! Bertha!

You point me out the highest heavenly bliss,  
And in a moment plunge me in despair.

BERTHA. No, no, your nobleness is not quite stifled,  
It merely slumbers. I'll awaken it.

You've tried by violence to mortify  
The innate virtue of your ancient race:  
'Tis well that it was mightier than you,  
And, 'gainst your will, preserved you good and noble.

RUD. You trust me, then? O Bertha, for your love,  
Will I be all you'd wish me to become!

BERTHA. Be that which Nature made you in her  
bounty,

And fill the place for which she destined you.  
Stand by your people and your native land,  
And combat for their heav'n-born right.

RUD. Alas!

How can I hope to win you, and possess you,  
 If I oppose me to the Emp'ror's power?  
 It is your kindred's will, and not your own,  
 Must be consulted where your hand's bestowed.

BERTHA. In the Waldstetten lies my patrimony;  
 And when the Switzer's free, shall I be too.

RUD. What a perspective do you show me, Bertha!

BERTHA. Hope not to win my hand through Aus-  
 tria's favour.

Already do they grasp at my inheritance,  
 That it may be united to a greater.  
 This hunger after land, which wars against  
 Your liberty, doth also threaten mine.  
 Oh, I am destined for the sacrifice!  
 Perhaps to recompense some favourite.  
 There, where deceit and falsehood find abode,—  
 There, to the Emp'ror's court, shall I be dragg'd  
 To wear the chains of some detested marriage!—  
 'Tis love—and your's alone—can rescue me!

RUD. And *could* you then determine here to live,  
 And be my own upon my native soil?  
 O Bertha! all my longing to go forth,  
 What was it, but a wish to follow you?  
 You sought I only on the way to glory;

And my ambition—all arose from love !  
But can you really, in these tranquil vales,  
Renounce with me the splendour of the earth ?  
Oh! *then* I 've found the mark at which I aim'd :  
*Then* may the stream of this tempestuous world  
Strike the firm basis of our mountain land.  
No more I feel a fugitive desire  
To roam abroad on the expanse of life.  
*Then* may these rocks extend around us here  
Their strong impenetrable battlements,  
And this secluded vale of happiness  
Alone be open to the light of heav'n !

BERTHA. Now thou art all that my foreboding  
heart

Declared. My confidence has not betrayed me.

RUD. Away thou vain conceit that turn'd my brain !  
Now shall I find my happiness at home,  
Here where my playful boyhood was developed,  
Surrounded by a thousand joyful recollections ;  
Where every spring and tree but lives for me ;  
Here, in my native land, wilt thou be mine.  
Yes, I have always loved it, and I feel  
Without it earthly bliss had not been perfect.

BERTHA. Where may a clime of happiness be found



If 'tis not in this land of innocence?  
Here, where primeval faith hath still a home  
Which falsehood hath not yet discovered?  
Envy shall ne'er disturb our happiness,  
And ever brightly shall the hours fly on.  
There see I thee, in pride of manly worth,  
Free and the first among as free a people;  
Honoured with purely free allegiance;  
Great as the sceptred monarch of a realm!

RUD. There see I thee, the paragon of women,  
Fulfil the endearing duties of a wife,  
Create for me a heav'n within my halls;  
And, as the spring-time spreads abroad its flow'rs,  
Enrich my life with exquisite enjoyment,  
And all around thee bless and animate.

BERTHA. Now then thou knowest wherefore I was  
grieved,  
At seeing thee thyself annihilate  
The prospect of this life of more than bliss.  
Alas, alas! how hard would be my fate,  
Were I obliged to follow some proud knight,  
Some cruel tyrant, to his gloomy castle!  
Here is no castle;—here no battlements  
Divide me from a people, I would prosper.

RUD. But how to rescue me—how loose the noose  
My own imprudence placed around my neck ?

BERTHA. Rend it apart with manly resolution,  
And, come what will of it, support thy people.  
It is thy born and bounden duty.

[*A hunting horn is heard in the distance.*

Hark !

The chase comes nearer, we must separate.  
Fight for thy country, and thou'lt fight for me.  
'Tis but one enemy that makes us tremble,  
And one enfranchisement will make us free. [*Exeunt.*

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### SCENE III.

*A meadow near Atdorf. Trees are in the foreground,  
and in the background is a hat on a pole. The pros-  
pect is bounded by the Bannberg, over which rise the  
snow-covered mountains.*

FRIESHART and LEUTHOLD *keeping watch.*

FRIES. We keep our watch in vain ; for nobody  
Will come this way to pay the hat respect.  
Once it was like a yearly market here,

But now the green 's entirely desolate,  
Since we've stuck up that scarecrow on the pole.

LEUT. Only the wretched rabble show themselves,  
Doffing their ragged caps as if to mock us;  
What honest folks there are, will undertake  
A circuit over more than half the town  
Rather than bend their backs before the hat.

FRIES. They'll be obliged to cross this place at noon,  
As they come hither from the council-house.  
Then, to my thinking, we shall have a catch;  
For no one going thought to greet the hat.  
One Rozelman, the parson, saw it. He  
Had just been visiting the sick, and stood  
Right opposite us with the Eucharist.  
Just then the Sacrist rung his little bell,  
And all fell on their knees—myself among 'em,  
And hail'd the Pix; but never one the hat.

LEUT. Hark ye, my comrade, I begin to think  
That here we're in a sort of pillory.  
'Tis scandalous to make a soldier  
Stand sentinel before an empty hat:  
Each honest fellow must despise us for 't.  
And then to make obeisance to a hat!  
Upon my soul, 'tis but a silly order.

FRIES. And why not bow before an empty hat?  
Thou 'st bent thy knee to many an empty skull.

*Enter HILDEGARD, MECHTHILD, and ELSBETH, with children, and place themselves about the pole.*

LEUT. And thou 'rt a busy knave, that takes delight  
In bringing honest fellows into trouble.  
Let who will pass along before the hat,  
I 'll shut my eyes, and so he 'll pass unseen.

MECH. There hangs the Governor. Now mind, you  
boys,  
Pay him his due respect.

ELSBETH. I would to God  
He 'd go and leave us nothing but his hat!  
The country wouldn't be a bit the worse.

FRIES. (*drives them away.*) Will ye be gone? ye  
cursed tribe of women!  
Who ask'd for you? Go, send your husbands here,  
If they be brave enough to slight the order.

[*Exeunt women and children.*]



*Enter TELL with his cross-bow, leading his boy WALTER by the hand. They go past the hat without remarking it, towards the front part of the scene.*

WALTER. (*pointing towards the Bannberg.*) Father,  
is 't true that on the mountain there

If anybody give the trees a cut,  
Blood will be seen to flow?

TELL. Who told thee so?

WALTER. The master-hind.—“The trees are charm-  
ed,” said he,

“And whosoever does them injury,  
His hand won't rest beside him in the grave.”

TELL. The trees are charmed. He told thee but the  
truth.

See in the distance there—the frozen horns  
That lose their lofty summits in the sky.—

WALTER. Those are the glaciers, where the nightly  
thunder

Roars and sends down on us the avalanche.

TELL. 'Tis even so. Long since the avalanche  
Had buried Altdorf underneath its weight,  
Had not those forest trees above the town,  
Stood like a band of patriots in its way.

WALTER. (*after a moment's thought.*) But, father,  
are there countries without mountains?

TELL. Ay. If a man go downwards from our  
heights,

And keep descending as the rivers flow,  
He'll reach at last a broad and level country,  
Where streams no more rush foaming through the woods,  
But train their floods on slow and tranquilly.  
The corn grows there in long and beauteous islets,  
And all the country shows like any garden.

WALTER. But why then, father, do not we go down  
Immediately to such a beauteous land,  
Instead of grieving and complaining here?

TELL. The land is fair, and bounteous as Heav'n;  
But those who till it,—they may not enjoy  
The blessings of a harvest.

WALTER. Dwell they not,  
Like you, in freedom on their heritage?

TELL. Their fields belong unto the King and Bishop.

WALTER. But may they not go hunt among the  
woods?

TELL. The wood and all within it is their lord's.

WALTER. But may they not fish freely in the  
streams?

TELL. Stream, lake and sea, belong unto the King.

WALTER. Who is the King whom all men fear so much?

TELL. He's one, who feeds and gives them his protection.

WALTER. Have they not courage to protect themselves?

TELL. Not one of them dare trust his neighbour there.

WALTER. So broad a land were too confined for me ;  
I'd rather dwell beneath the avalanche.

TELL. Ay, my brave boy, an iceberg at one's back  
Were better than an evil-minded man.

[*They move onwards.*

WALTER. Why, father, there's a hat upon a pole!

TELL. Pooh! what's the hat to us? Come, let's  
begone!

[*While he is going on, FRIESHART advances to him with his pike extended.*

FRIES. Stand, and surrender in the Emp'ror's name!

TELL. (*taking hold of the pike.*) What would you?

Wherefore do you stop me thus?

FRIES. You broke the order—You must follow us.

LEUT. You have not made obeisance to the hat.

TELL. Friend, let me go!

FRIES. Off, off with him to prison!

WALTER. To prison with my father! Help! oh,  
help!

Here, here, you men—good people come and help!

Quick, quick, they're taking him away to gaol!

*Enter ROZELMAN the Priest, PETERMAN the  
Sacrist, and three other men.*

SAC. What is 't?

ROZ. Why lay'st thou hands upon this man?

FRIES. He is the Emp'ror's enemy; a traitor!

TELL. A traitor, I!

ROZ. Thou err'st, my friend! 'tis Tell,

An honourable man, and worthy citizen.

WALTER. (*Sees Walter Fürst, and hastens to him.*)

Grandfather, help! They're forcing him away.

FRIES. Away with him to prison!

WALTER FÜRST. (*entering and going towards them*)

Hold! I offer surety.

For God's sake, Tell, say what 's befallen thee?

*Enter MELCHTHAL and STAUFFACHER.*

FRIES. He hath despised and will not recognize  
The sovereign power of the Governor.



STAUF. Has Tell done that?

MEL. 'Tis all a lie, thou knave!

LEU. He would not make obeisance to the hat.

WALTER FÜRST. And therefore take ye him to  
prison?—Friend,

Take my assurance, and dismiss him harmless.

FRIES. Keep thy assurance to assure thyself:

We do our duty. Forth with him, I say!

MEL. (*To the people*) No, this is crying violence!  
Shall we

Let him be taken insolently thus

Before our very eyes?

SACRIST. We are the strongest! Friends, don't  
suffer it.

Let's stand, and back each other here.

FRIES. Who is 't

Resists the order of the Governor?

PEOPLE. (*hastening up to them*) What is 't? We'll  
help you. Strike 'em to the ground!

TELL. I'll help myself alone. Go, go, good people!  
Think you, that if I wished to rescue me

By force, I'd tremble at a lance's point?

*Re-enter* HILDEGARD, MECHTHELD, and ELSBETH.

MEL. (*to FRIES.*) Now, then, remove him from us  
if you dare!

WALTER FÜRST. Be quiet !

STAUF. Still !

FRIES. (*cries out*) A riot ! a revolt !

[*Hunting horns are heard.*]

WOMEN. There goes the Governor !

FRIES. (*Raising his voice*) Revolt and murder !

STAUF. Cry, rascal, till thou burst !

ROS. Wilt hold thy tongue ?

FRIES. (*cries louder.*) Help ! help the servants of  
the law !

WALTER FÜRST. Here comes

The Governor ! Oh ! what will happen now ?

*Enter GESSLER on horseback, with a falcon on his wrist,  
RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, BERTHA, and RUDENZ,  
and a great suite of men-at-arms, who form a circle  
of lances round the stage.*

HARRAS. Room for the Governor !

GESS. Disperse them, there !

Why do the people crowd ? Who called for help ?

[*A general silence.*]

Who was it ? Know I *will*. Thou comest forward !

[*To Frieshart.*]

Who art thou ? and why holdest thou that man ?

FRIES. Most potent sir, your man-at-arms am I ;  
 A trusty sentinel before the hat.  
 This man I seized in the very fact  
 As he refused obeisance to the hat.  
 And when, as you commanded, I'd have ta'en him off,  
 The people tried to rescue him by force.

GESS. (*after a pause.*) Dost thou *so much* despise thy  
 Emp'ror, Tell,  
 And me who here give order in his stead,  
 That thou refusest honour to the hat  
 Which I set up to prove your loyalty ?  
 Thou hast betrayed to me thy wicked thoughts.

TELL. Forgive me, gracious lord ! It happened  
 Not through contempt, but pure forgetfulness.  
 If I were circumspect, I were not Tell.\*  
 Pray pardon me, I'll not again offend.

GESS. (*after another pause.*) Thou art a master of  
 the cross-bow, Tell ;  
 Men say no archer can compete with thee.

WALTER. And that 's the truth, my Lord ; my  
 father 'll hit  
 A growing apple at a hundred paces.

GESS. Is that thy youngster, Tell ?

---

\* Wär' ich besonnen, hiess ich nicht der Tell ;

TELL. Ay! my good Lord.

GESS. And hast thou more of them?

TELL. Two boys, my Lord.

GESS. And which is't of them that thou lov'st the best?

TELL. Sir, both of them are equally my children.

GESS. Since thou canst hit an apple on a tree  
A hundred paces off, I'll have thee show  
Thy mastery before me. Take thy bow—  
Thou hast it there at hand,—and make thee ready  
To shoot an apple—upon that boy's head!—  
*But, I advise thee, take unerring aim.*

Shoot, and but once, and see thou hit the mark;  
For if thou fail thy head is forfeited! [*All shudder.*]

TELL. Sir! what unheard of thing is this that you  
Propose to me? I! on my own child's head!  
No, no, my Lord, you surely could not mean it.  
Forbid it, gracious God, that seriously  
You *could* require it at a father's hand!

GESS. An apple shalt thou shoot on that boy's head.  
I *do* require it, and I'll have it done!

TELL. I! I direct my bow against the head  
Of my own child! No, rather death than that!

GESS. Shoot, or, by God thou diest with thy boy!

TELL. I shall become the butcher of my child!



You have no children, sir.—You cannot know  
The strong emotion of a father's heart.

GESS. Why, Tell, thou 'rt suddenly grown *circumspect*!  
They told me that thou wert a visionary,  
Who shunned the ways of ordinary men.  
Thou lov'st the marvellous, and, therefore, I  
Have sought thee out a most uncommon venture.  
Another had reflected on 't, but *thou*—  
Can'st shut thy eyes and go about it bravely.

BERTHA. Sport not, my lord, with these poor  
wretched people ;  
You see them stand before you pale and trembling,  
So little are they used to hear you jest.

GESS. And who told *you* I jested?

[*Catches at the branch of a tree that hangs over him.*

Here 's the apple.  
Make room there,—room! and let him take his distance,  
As 'tis the use. I give him eighty yards ;  
Not more nor less. He boasts himself that he  
Can hit his man a hundred paces off.  
Now archer, shoot! and fail not of the mark!

HARRAS. God, that was earnest! Fall, boy, on thy  
knees,  
And beg the Governor to spare thy life.

WALTER FÜRST. (*aside to MELCHTHAL, who can scarcely restrain his impatience.*)

Restrain yourself.—I pray you to be calm.

BERTHA. (*to the Governor.*) Let it suffice, my lord ;  
it is unmanly

To sport so with a father's agony.

Could this poor man, for such a slight offence,

Have been condemned to forfeit life and limb,

Already has he suffered tenfold death.

Let him go home uninjured to his hut :

He's learnt to know you ; and this hour will be

Remembered even by his children's children.

GESS. Open the lane there—quick ! [ *To TELL.*

Why tarriest thou ?

Thy life is forfeited. I might condemn thee.

Yet see, I mercifully place thy fate

E'en in thy own most scientific hand.

He that is master of his destiny

Should not impeach the doom that makes him so !

Thou gloriest in a never-failing eye !

'Twill serve the, archer, here to show thy art.

The mark is fair, and the reward is great !

To hit the centre of a target,—*that*

Were occupation for a common man :

The man whom I term master, he must be

Supremely perfect in his mystery,  
Nor let his heart disturb his hand or eye.

WALTER FÜRST. (*falls on his knees.*) Lord Governor,  
we recognise your greatness,  
But, oh, let mercy here prevail o'er justice ;  
Take half my fortune,—take it all ; but let  
A father 'scape from such a hideous doom !

WALTER. Grandfather, do not kneel to that false  
man !

Where shall I place me ? Say. I fear me not.  
My father 'll shoot a bird upon the wing ;  
And sure am I, he will not harm his child.

STAUF. (*to GESSLER.*) Have you no pity for the  
poor child's innocence ?

ROZ. Oh ! think that there 's a God in heav'n above—  
That you must one day answer for your deeds.

GESS. (*points to the boy.*) Bind him directly to that  
lime tree.

WALTER. Bind me !  
No, I will not be bound. I 'll stand as still  
As any lamb. I will not even breathe ;  
But if you bind me—no, it cannot be,  
For I should surely struggle 'gainst my bonds.

HARRAS. But let, at least, thy eyes be bound, my  
boy !

WALTER. And why my eyes? Because you think  
I fear

An arrow from my father's hand? I'll wait it  
Calmly, and not so much as wink an eyelash.

Quick, father, show 'em thou 'rt an archer! They  
Believe it not, and think to ruin us.

Shoot and succeed in spite of tyranny!

[*He goes to the lime tree, and the apple is put  
on his head.*]

MEL. (*to the people.*) What! shall such wickedness  
before our eyes

Be consummated? Wherefore have we sworn?

STAUF. 'Twere vain. We're here entirely weapon-  
less.

See what a wood of lances hems us in!

MEL. Oh, that we'd fixed an earlier time to act!  
God pardon those who counsel'd the delay!

GESS. To work! men do not carry arms for nothing.  
'Tis dangerous to bear such deadly weapons.

The arrow oft recoils upon the bowman;  
And this proud right, which peasants would assume,  
Offends the highest lord of all the land.

Let none go armed but those that have command.

It pleases *you* to carry bow and bolt;—

It rests with *me* to find you out a mark.



TELL. (*draws his bow and sets his arrow.*) Open the  
lane—make room!

STAUF. What, Tell, you would! on no account—  
you tremble—

Your knees are faltering, and your hand's unnerved.

TELL. All swims before my eyes!

WOMEN. O God of Heav'n!

TELL. (*to the Governor.*) Absolve me of this shot.

Here, here's my heart. [*He lays bare his breast.*

Call up your horsemen—bid them strike me low.

GESS. I do not want thy *life*, I'd see thee *shoot*.

Thy talent's universal! nothing daunts thee!

The rudder and the bow fit equally thy hand;

No storm affrights thee when a rescue's needed!

Now then, philanthropist, go help thyself—

Thou rescuest all!

[TELL *stands fearfully struggling with his feelings, his hands clasped and his eyes rolling, and directed alternately towards Heaven and the Governor. At length he cautiously takes from his quiver a second arrow and sticks it in his goller.\* The Governor marks all his movements.*

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\* The goller was a sort of belt worn on the upper part of the person.

WALTER. (*under the lime tree.*) Shoot, father, shoot!  
I fear me not.

TELL. I must.

[*He collects himself and takes aim.*]

RUD. (*who has been all the while standing in violent  
excitation, and forcibly constraining his feelings,  
comes forwards.*)

Lord Governor, the thing must go no further.

It *shall* not. 'Twas but an experiment.

Your object's now attained. Severity,

Although it be required, doth miss its mark

When driv'n too far. A bow that's overstrained

Will break—

GESS. Be silent, till you're called upon.

RUD. I must, and will have liberty to speak.

To me the honour of the King is holy;

But such a rule must needs engender hate.

Such hath the King not will'd—I dare avouch it.

My nation merits not such cruelty,

And you have no commission to inflict it.

GESS. Ha! you grow bold!

RUD. I've tamely held my peace

In spite of all the grievous deeds I've seen;

My eyes that saw them I've essayed to shut—

My swelling and rebellious heart have I  
Kept under in my bosom forcibly ;  
But longer to be silent were a treason  
At once against my country and the Emperor.

BERTHA. (*Throws herself between them.*) O God !

you but provoke his rage the more.

RUD. I left my nation, I abandoned  
My blood relations, and I rent asunder  
All ties of nature, to unite with you.  
I thought to benefit the general weal  
By making strong the Emperor's authority.  
The scales have fallen from my eyes—I shudder !  
I see the precipice on which I stand !  
My artless judgment have you led astray,  
My candid heart seduced—I'd nearly wrought  
My nation's ruin, meaning to befriend it.

GESS. Insolent boy ! this speech unto thy lord ?

RUD. The Emperor's my lord—not you ! I'm born  
As free as you ; and I will measure me  
With you in any knightly virtue.  
And if you stood not in the Emp'ror's name,  
Which I respect, howe'er it be abused,  
I'd throw my gauntlet down before your feet,  
And you should give me answer as a knight.

Ay, beckon to your horsemen ! I stand here  
 Not weaponless like those— [*Pointing to the people.*  
 A sword have I,

And he who dares approach—

[*During this dialogue, and while all draw near,  
 and BERTHA throws herself between RUDENZ  
 and the Governor, TELL shoots the arrow.*

STAUF. (*Calls out.*) The apple's fallen !

ROZ. The boy's unhurt !

MANY VOICES. The apple's hit ! He lives !

[*WALTER FÜRST falters, and is ready to sink ;  
 BERTHA supports him.*

GESS. (*astonished*) What ! has he shot ? The rav-  
 ing lunatic !

BERTHA. (*To WALTER FÜRST.*) He lives, good  
 father ! He comes on towards you !

WALTER. (*Comes running with the apple.*) Here,  
 father, here's the apple ! Well I knew  
 That you would never harm a hair of me.

[*TELL stands with his body bent forwards, as if he  
 would follow the arrow with his eyes. The bow  
 falls from his hand as he sees the boy come to-  
 wards him, and he hastens to meet him with open  
 arms, presses him violently to his bosom, and then*



*falls down powerless. All the bystanders compassionate him.*

BERTHA. Gracious Heav'n!

WALTER FÜRST. My children! Oh my children!

STAUF. Now God be thank'd!

LEUT. A shot indeed was that!

They'll talk of it as long as time shall last.

HARRAS. Men will relate Tell's feat of archery,  
As long as mountain stands upon the ground.

*[Gives the apple to the Governor.]*

GESS. By God! the apple's shot i' the very centre.  
That *was* a master-shot—e'en I must praise it.

ROZ. The shot was good; but woe to him that drove  
A father so to tempt God's providence.

STAUF. (*To TELL.*) Courage! stand up, you've  
wrought your freedom bravely:  
You now may go uninterrupted home.

ROZ. Come, come, a mother waits her son's return.

*[They are going off.]*

GESS. Tell!

TELL. What may be your will, Sir?

GESS. Thou did'st place  
A second arrow in thy bosom. Ay,  
I marked it well. What would'st thou now with that?

TELL. (*Hesitating*) Sir, 'tis a common practice  
amongst archers.

GESS. No, Tell, that answer will not pass with me.  
I know full well it had another meaning :  
Tell me the truth at once, and cheerfully.  
Whate'er it be I warrant thee thy life—  
Wherefore the second arrow ?

TELL. Well then, Sir,  
Since you assure me that my life is safe,  
I'll tell you candidly the very truth.

[*He draws the arrow from his goller and fixes  
his eyes fearfully on the Governor.*]

This second bolt was destined for yourself,  
If ought but good had happened to my child ;  
And had I shot, believe me I'd not failed.

GESS. Well, Tell—thy life have I secured to thee :  
I gave my knightly word, and I will keep it.  
But since I know thy murderous intention,  
I'll have thee taken and kept heedfully,  
Where neither moon nor sun shall visit thee ;  
So shall I be in safety from thy bolt.

Seize on him there, and bind him ! [*Tell is bound.*]

STAUF.] How, my Lord !

And can you think to injure thus a man  
Who's been deliver'd by the hand of God?

GESS. Let's see if they'll again attempt his rescue.  
Put him aboard my bark. I'll follow straight,  
For I will carry him with me to Küssnach.

ROZ. You dare not—e'en the Emp'ror dare not  
do't,

'Twould contravene the charters of our freedom.

GESS. Where are they? Hath the Emperor  
Confirmed them? No, he hath not. Such a favour  
Must first be won by your obedience!

You're rebels all against the Emp'ror's judgment,  
And nourish insolent rebellion.

I know ye all. I see through all your plans.

Ye all participate the guilt of him

Whom I've just taken from the midst of ye.

Let prudent men learn silence and submission.

[*Exit GESSLER followed by BERTHA, RUDENZ,  
RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, and the men-at-arms.  
FRIESHART and LEUTHOLD stay behind.*

WALTER FÜRST. (*with intense grief*) 'Tis over  
with me, he's determined

To ruin me and all my family.

STAUF. (*To TELL*) Oh, why would you exasperate  
his rage?

TELL. Let him be calm who feels a smart like mine!

STAUF. Oh now is all—ay, every thing undone!  
With you we all are captive and enchained.

PEOPLE. (*coming round TELL*) With you departs  
our only consolation!

LEUT. (*Approaches*) Tell, I am grieved for thee—  
but must obey.

TELL. Farewell!

WALTER. (*Hanging on him with violent grief*) O  
father, father, dearest father!

TELL. (*Pointing to Heaven*) There is thy father.  
Call on him above!

STAUF. Say, is there nothing I may tell your wife?

TELL. (*Pressing his son with vehemence to his breast*)  
The boy's uninjured. God will succour me.

[*Tears himself away, and follows the soldiers.*

[*Exeunt.*



## ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The eastern shore of the Waldstettensee. The irregularly shaped rugged cliffs to the westward of it close the prospect. The lake is agitated. A violent rushing and roaring, and between whiles thunder and lightning.*

KUNZ VON GERSAU, FISHER, and FISHER-BOY.

KUNZ. I saw it with my very eyes. You may  
Depend on 't all has happened as I told you.

FISHER. Tell in confinement!—then there goes to  
Küssnach

The best and bravest arm in all the land,  
If ought's to happen for the cause of freedom.

KUNZ. Gessler himself transports him o'er the lake:  
All was in readiness for their embarkment,  
Before I left Fluellen; but the storm  
Which made me hasten to a landing-place  
May well have hindered their departure.

FISHER. Tell in captivity!—in Gessler's power!  
Believe me he'll be buried deep enough  
Where ne'er again he'll see the light of day:

For Gessler needs must dread the just revenge  
Of one whom he 's so grievously provoked.

KUNZ. The old Landamman too, the noble lord  
Of Attinghausen, lies, they say, expiring !

FISHER. So breaks the latest anchor of our hope :  
He was the only one who dared exert  
His voice in favour of the people's right.

KUNZ. The storm increases—fare ye well, my friends !  
I'll lodge me in the village ; for to-day  
All further passage may no more be thought on. [*Exit.*

FISHER. Tell in captivity ! The Baron dead !  
Lift up thy daring forehead, Tyranny,  
And cast all shame away ! The lip of truth  
Is dumb ; the eye that watch'd thee, blind ;  
The arm that should have saved us, bound in chains !

BOY. The hail falls hard—come, father, to the house ;  
It is not good to stay here out of doors !

FISHER. \*Rage on, ye winds ! Flame down, ye  
deadly lightnings !  
Burst, ye swol'n clouds ! Ye cataracts of Heav'n  
Pour yourselves out and drown the land ! Destroy

---

\* The reader will probably recognize here an imitation of the celebrated speech of Shakspeare's Lear.

The germ of every unborn human creature !  
Reign lords of all, ye savage elements,—  
Ye bears, ye ancient wolves that cavern'd here  
When all was wilderness—come back again ;  
The land belongs to you !  
Who would live here deprived of liberty ?

BOY. Hark, how the whirlpool roars from out its  
depths !

It never raged so yet within the Gulf !

FISHER. To aim against his own child's head ! The  
like

Was never yet commanded of a father !  
And shall not Nature, seeing it, run wild  
With fury, and revolt. I should not marvel  
If every rock bent down into the lake ;  
If every peak and every ice-bound spire,  
That ne'er hath thawed since God created it,  
Should from its lofty summit melt away ;  
If every mountain burst, and every cliff fell down,  
And if a second sin-destroying flood  
Should swallow up all living men's abodes.

[*The sounds of a bell are heard.*

BOY. Hark ! they are ringing there upon the  
mountain.

Some ship in danger surely hath been seen,  
And the bell calls to prayer for her safety.

[*He goes up the cliff.*]

FISHER. Woe to the vessel now upon her way,  
Doomed to be rock'd in such a fearful cradle.  
The storm is master, and the wind and waves  
Toss her about as if she were a ball;  
Nor far nor near is any friendly port  
Open to offer refuge. All around  
The help-denying and inhospitable rocks  
Stare from their tow'ring summits grimly down,  
And offer her their rugged stony breasts.

BOY. A ship comes, father, from Fluellen here.

FISHER. God pity the poor souls! If once the storm  
Should here attack them; in this bay of ours  
'Twill rage as furious as a beast of prey  
That strikes the iron bars before his cage,  
And howling seeks in vain to find escape;  
For rocks bound every thing about us here,  
And high as heaven wall the narrow pass.

[*He ascends the cliff.*]

BOY. Why, 'tis the Governor of Uri's ship;  
I know it by its banner and red deck.

FISHER. Just God! It is indeed the Governor



Himself who hither comes. There sails he on,  
 And with him shipp'd his full amount of crime.  
 Soon hath the arm of justice found him. Now,  
 Now hath he over him a stronger lord.

These waves yield no obedience to his voice ;  
 These stubborn cliffs will never bow their heads  
 Before his hat. Boy, boy, thou shalt not pray !  
 Thou shalt not hold the arm of the Avenger !

BOY. I pray not for the Governor ; I pray  
 For Tell alone, who's with him in the ship.

FISHER. Oh, blinded folly of the elements !  
 And must Thou then to strike down one offender  
 Destroy the ship and steersman both together.

BOY. See, see ! they have already passed by  
 The Buggisgrat,\* although the raging storm,  
 Which comes rebounding from the Teufelsminster,\*  
 Has thrown them back on the Great Axen.\* I  
 Can no more see them now.

FISHER.                                   The Hackmesser\*  
 Is there where many a gallant ship's been wreck'd ;  
 If they don't double it right skilfully,  
 Their ship will go to pieces on the Fluh,\*  
 Which shoots, 'mid foaming breakers, from the deep.

\* Rocks on the shore of the Waldstettensee.

They 've one good pilot at the least on board.  
Could any body save them it were Tell,  
But he'll be manacled from head to foot.

*Enter TELL with his cross-bow. He comes on at a rapid pace, looks around him in amazement, and shows the most violent emotion. When he arrives at the middle of the scene, he falls on his knees, places his hands on the earth, and then extends them to Heaven.*

BOY. (*remarks him.*) See, father! who's the man  
that 's kneeling there!

FISHER. He fastens on the earth with both his hands,  
And seems as if he were beyond himself.

BOY. (*comes forward.*) What see I! Father, father,  
come and see!

FISHER. Who is it? What! Good God of Heav'n,  
'tis Tell!

How came you hither from the ship?

BOY. Why! were you not  
There in the ship, a prisoner, and bound?

FISHER. Were they not taking you away to  
Küssnach?

TELL. (*stands up.*) You see me free!

FISHER. Free! God 't is wonderful!

BOY. Whence come you here?

TELL. There, from the vessel.

FISHER. What!

BOY. Where is the Governor?

TELL. Floating on the waves!

FISHER. Is 't possible! But *you*, how came you here?

Can you have 'scaped your fetters and the storm!

TELL. Through God's good providence I have.—

Attend!

FISHER *and* BOY. Oh, tell us, tell us.

TELL. You already know

What passed at Altdorf?

FISHER. I know it all: say on!

TELL. How I was seized and fettered by the Governor,  
And how he wished to lead me off to Küssnach;—

FISHER. And went on shipboard with you at Fluellen.  
We know it all. Speak! how have you escaped?

TELL. I lay on board severely bound with cords,  
Disarm'd and given up; I never hoped  
To see again the gladdening light of day,  
Nor the loved faces of my wife and children,  
And comfortless I look'd upon the watery waste.

FISHER. Poor man !

TELL. So set we out ; the Governor,  
Rudolph der Harras, and the serving men.  
My quiver and my cross-bow lay together  
Astern, and close beside the helmsman's post ;  
And just as we arrived at the cape  
Which forms the Little Axen, God ordained  
That such a fearful, deadly hurricane  
Should burst from out the Gothard's yawning gorge,  
As made the heart of every rower sink,  
And made all think of drowning wretchedly.  
Then heard I the chief servant of the Governor  
Turn to his master and accost him thus :  
“ You see your peril and our own, my lord,  
And that we hover on the verge of death.  
The steersmen, so invet'rate is their fear,  
Know neither what to counsel, nor are well  
Advised what course to steer. But there is Tell,  
A stark and able man to steer a ship—  
How, if we use his skill in this our strait ?”  
Then said the Governor to me,—“ If thou  
Wilt undertake to help us from the storm,  
I'll set thee, Tell, at freedom from thy bonds.”  
I answer'd,—“ Ay, my lord, with God's assistance,



I'll undertake to help us for this turn."  
So was I loosened from my bonds, and stood  
Beside the rudder and steer'd fairly on.  
But sideways glanced I at my shooting gear,  
And sharply mark'd I all around the shore,  
Where'er a vantage offered to spring out,  
And, as I spied a reef of flattened rocks\*  
Which runs projecting out into the lake—

FISHER. I know it, 'tis the foot of the Great Axen ;  
But yet I cannot think it possible,  
So steep it mounts, to leap there from a ship.

TELL. I told the crew, all hands must go to work  
Until we came before that rocky flat.  
"There !" cried I out aloud, "the worst is past !"  
And as we reach'd it soon by rowing quickly,  
I recommended me to God's protection,  
And press'd the vessel's stern with all my strength  
Right up towards the rock. Then seizing quick  
My shooting implements, and springing high,  
I swung myself upon the flat above,  
And with my foot I push'd the vessel off  
Behind me far on the devouring waters.  
There, as God pleases, it may stem the waves,

\* This reef is up to the present day called Tell's Platt.

So that I'm here delivered from the storm,  
And from the still worse violence of man.

FISHER. Tell, Tell, a special miracle hath God  
Performed for you. I scarce can trust my senses.  
But tell me ! where have you resolv'd to fly ?  
Security is not for you if e'er  
The Governor escape the storm alive.

TELL. I heard him say, as I on board the ship  
Lay bound, that he would land himself at Brunnen,  
And over Switz conduct me to his castle !

FISHER. Will he then make his journey overland ?

TELL. He *thinks* so.

FISHER. Hide thyself without delay:  
God may not rescue thee a second time.

TELL. Tell me the nearest way to Arth and  
Küssnach.

FISHER. The open public road leads over Steinen,  
But there's a shorter and more private way,  
My boy can show you, that leads over Lowertz.

TELL. (*gives him his hand.*) May God reward you for  
your goodness—fare you well !

[*Goes, then turns back.*

Have you not also sworn upon the Rootli ?  
I think they named you to me.

FISHER. I was there,  
And swore the oath prescribed for our Bond.

TELL. Do me the kindness, then, to haste towards  
Burglen ;

My wife despairs for me. Assure her, pray,  
That I am rescued, and lie well concealed.

FISHER. But where shall I inform her you are fled ?

TELL. You'll find her father at her side, and more  
Who've sworn upon the Rootli. Tell them all  
To be awake, and keep their courage up—  
That Tell's at large—this arm as strong ever,  
And that e'er long they'll hear of him again.

FISHER. What is't you'd do? reveal it to me  
frankly.

TELL. *If it be done*, you'll soon have news of it.

[*Exit.*

FISHER. Show him the way, Jenni; and God stand  
by him!

He'll hit the mark, whate'er he undertakes. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.

*Family mansion of Attinghausen.*

*The* BARON *dying in an arm-chair.* WALTER FÜRST, STAUFFACHER, MELCHTHAL, and BAUMGARTEN, *busy about him.* WALTER TELL *kneeling before the dying man.*

WALTER FÜRST. It's over with him—he's departed!

STAUF. No;

He lies not like the dead. The feather, see,  
Moves on his lip! His sleep is calm,  
And o'er his features plays a peaceful smile.

[BAUMGARTEN goes to the door and speaks with some one.

WALTER FÜRST. (*To Baumgarten*) Who is 't?

BAUM. Tell's wife, your daughter Hedwig;  
She'd speak with you, she says, and see the boy.

WALTER FÜRST. Can I give comfort who am comfortless?

On my devoted head all sorrows fall!

HED. (*Entering*) Where, where's my child? Let me—I *must* go to him!



STAUF. Be tranquil. Think! you're in the house  
of death.

HED. (*runs towards the boy*) My Walter! Oh he  
lives for me!

WALTER. (*Hanging about her.*) Poor mother!

HED. And is it true? Art thou, indeed, unhurt?

[*Looks at him with anxious attention.*]

And is it possible that he could aim  
'Gainst thee? How could he? Oh he has no heart  
That could direct his arrow 'gainst his child!

WALTER FÜRST. 'Twas done with anguish; with a  
grief-rent soul

They forced him—'twas the ransom of a life.

HED. Had he a father's heart he would have died  
A thousand times, e'er he had done such deed!

STAUF. You ought to thank God's gracious provi-  
dence

Which ordered things so well.

HED. Can I forget

What might have happened? Oh, Great God of Heav'n!

If I should live a century, the boy

Will stand, for ever, bound before my eyes;

And I shall see the father take his aim,

And feel the deadly arrow in my heart.

MEL. You know not how the Governor provoked him!

HED. Oh cruel hearts of men! If once their pride  
Receive an insult, they lose all discretion,  
And stake with blinded fury on their game  
The child's existence and the mother's heart!

BAUM. Is not your husband's fortune hard enough,  
That you must add to it a heavy blame?—  
Have you no feeling for his sufferings?

HED. (*Turns herself towards him and looks him full  
in the face.*)

Hast *thou*, then, tears *alone* for his misfortune?  
Where, Sir, were *you* when your deserving friend  
Was cast in bonds? Where then was *your* assistance?  
You saw, and let the cruel deed be done!  
You coolly suffered them to take your friend  
From out the very midst of ye! Would *Tell*  
Have acted so by you? Did he that time,  
When your pursuers press'd upon your heels—  
Did he stand whining, as the raging lake  
Was foaming in your path? No! not with idle tears  
He pitied *thee*! He sprang into the boat,  
Forgot both wife and child, and—set thee free!

WALTER FÜRST. How might we hazard his deli-  
verance,

That were so few in number and unarm'd !

HED. (*Throws herself on his breast.*) Oh, father, thou  
hast lost him too ! The land—

We all have lost him !

He's wanting to us all, and we to him !

May God preserve his spirit from despair !

Low in the dreary dungeon doth he lie,

Where comes no friendly comfort. Should he sicken !—

Ah ! in the darkness of the humid vault,

He cannot fail to sicken !—As the Alpine rose

Blanches and withers in the swampy air,

So is for him no life, unless enjoyed

In sunshine, and the free air's balsam-stream.

Imprison'd !—he !—his very breath is freedom.—

A prison's atmosphere were death to him.

STAUF. Be tranquil : we will all unite our means  
To burst his prison-gate.

HED. Oh, what can *you* achieve deprived of him ?

As long as Tell was free there yet was hope !

So long had innocence a constant friend,

And persecution an opposer !

Tell had redeemed you all ! but all of you  
Together cannot rescue *him* from bonds !

[*The Baron awakes.*]

BAUM. Be still, he moves !

ATTING. (*Raising himself.*) Where is he ?

STAUF. Who ?

ATTING. He 's absent !

In my last moments he 's forsaken me !

STAUF. He means his nephew. Some one go and  
seek him.

WALTER FÜRST. We 've sent out after him. Con-  
sole yourself.

He 's found at last his heart, and he is ours.

ATTING. Hath he then spoken for his native land ?

STAUF. Most valiantly !

ATTING. But wherefore comes he not  
That I may bless him once before I die.

I feel my life fast drawing to a close.

STAUF. Not so, my noble Sir: your eye is clear—  
This short repose hath given you new life.

ATTING. To live is pain, and pain hath left me now ;  
My suffering has ended with my hope.

[*He remarks the boy.*]

Who is that, boy ?



WALTER FÜRST. Oh bless him, Sir ! for he's  
My daughter's child, and he is fatherless.

[*Hedwig falls with the boy at the feet of the  
dying man.*]

ATTING. And fatherless I leave you all ! Ay, all  
Behind ! Alas ! and must my latest look  
Behold the ruin of my native land !  
Have I attained the longest span of life  
But to expire amid expiring hopes !

STAUF. (*To* WALTER FÜRST.) He shall not die in  
this dark mood of sorrow.

Let us light up his last departing hour  
With one bright ray of hope. Oh, noble Baron !  
Lift up your spirit. We're not quite deserted ;  
We are not ruined irredeemably !

ATTING. Who shall redeem you ?

WALTER FÜRST. We ourselves. Attend !  
Throughout the Cantons we have pledged our word  
To chase our tyrants from the land. The Bond  
Is now concluded, and a holy oath  
Obliges us ! 'Twill be perform'd before  
The year revolves anew, and so shall rest  
Your ashes in a land of liberty.

ATTING. Oh, tell me ! is the Bond concluded ? say !

MEL. On the same day will every Canton rise.  
 All is prepared, the secret hath been kept  
 Religiously till now, though many hundreds share it.  
 The ground is hollow underneath the tyrants.  
 The days are numbered of their dominion,  
 And soon no trace of it shall more be found.

ATTING. Ay, but the castles that are in the Cantons?

MEL. They all will fall upon the self-same day.

ATTING. And are the nobles party to your Bond?

STAUF. We hope to have their help when time may  
 serve.

As yet the peasants only have been sworn.

ATTING. (*raises himself slowly up with great astonishment.*)

And *have* the peasants dared to do such deed,  
 Through their own means?—without the nobles' help?  
*Have* they so far confided in their strength?  
 Ours, then, they need no more, and we can go  
 Down to the grave, consoled with the thought  
 That 'twill live after us. Man's fairest treasure  
 Will be upheld by other hands than ours.

[*He lays his hand on the head of the child,  
 who kneels before him.*]

On this same head, where late the apple lay,

A new and better liberty shall flourish.

✓ The time has changed : Old things are overthrown,  
And from their wreck shall bloom a new existence. ✓

STAUF. See what a brightness overspreads his eyes !  
That is no symptom of expiring nature :  
A renovated life beams forth in that.

ATTING. The nobles from their lofty tow'rs descend,  
And, to the cities, swear their Burger-oath.  
Uechtland and Thurgan have already seen it.  
The noble Berne lifts high her lordly head,  
And Friburg is a fortress of the free.  
The active Zurich arms her corporations  
In war's array. The might of kings is wreck'd  
Against her firm and everlasting walls.

[*He speaks the following in the tone of a seer, and  
his voice is raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.*

I see the princes and the noble lords  
Advancing, in their panoply of steel,  
To war against a harmless race of herdsmen.  
For life and death they fight, and gloriously  
Is many a passage bloodily achieved.  
I see the Switzer rush with naked breast\*

\* See Note D. in the Appendix.

A willing victim on a rank of lances ;  
He breaks their line—down, down into the dust  
Doth fall the flower of a proud nobility !  
And conquering freedom lifts her banner high !

[*He joins together the hands of WALTER FÜRST  
and STAUFFACHER.*

Therefore, stand fast together, fast in unity.  
Let all abodes of freedom be allied ;  
Let signal-posts be on your mountains placed,  
To gather quickly all the Cantons! Be  
United—be united—be united—

[*He falls back on the cushion holding their hands,  
even in death, between his own. FÜRST and  
STAUFFACHER consider him some time in silence,  
and then retire overwhelmed with grief. In  
the meantime some of the servants have pressed  
into the chamber, and approach with signs of  
silent and violent grief. Some kneel down by his  
side and weep over his hand. During this dumb  
show the bell of the Castle tolls.*

*Enter RUDENZ hastily.*

Lives he? Oh, tell me! Can yet but hear?



WALTER FÜRST. (*with averted face.*) You are our  
Seignior and protector now ;  
And now this castle hath another name.

RUD. (*regards the corpse with violent feelings of grief.*)  
O God ! then my repentance comes too late !  
Could he not live a few pulsations longer ?  
Enough to see how much my heart is changed ?  
Oh ! I have slighted his true warning voice,  
While yet he wandered in the light—and now  
He 's gone for evermore, and left to me  
A heavy and an unpaid debt ! Oh say !  
Died he in enmity against me ?

STAUF. No ;  
He heard while dying what you did of late,  
And bless'd the bravery with which you spoke.

RUD. (*kneels at the side of the corpse.*) Yes ! holy  
relics of a worthy man—  
Body without a soul—I here make vow,—  
Here in thy cold dead hand, that I have rent  
Apart for ever all outlandish ties.  
At length am I restored to my nation.  
A Switzer am I, and I *will* be one  
With my whole soul. [*Rising up.*

Let 's sorrow for our friend,

Our common father—but let's not despair.  
 I've not alone inherited his land :—  
 His heart and spirit have descended on me.  
 My youth shall execute for you whate'er  
 His hoary age has left him in your debt.  
 Respected fathers, give me both your hands ;  
 And give me yours—and you too, Melchthal, yours.  
 O do not hesitate, nor turn away !  
 Give credit to my oath, and to my promise.

WALTER FÜRST. Give him your hand : his altered  
 heart deserves

Our confidence.

MEL. You've ne'er respected *us* !

Say, on whose party shall we reckon *you* ?

RUD. O think not on the error of my youth !

STAUF. (*To MELCHTHAL.*) Come, be united ! Those  
 were the last words

Of one that was a father to us. Think

On that !

MEL. Then here's my hand ~~✓~~ a peasant's hand !

And even that, my noble sir, may plight

A brave man's word. ~~✓~~ Without us, what were the  
 nobility ?

Besides, our rank's more ancient than your own.

RUD. I honour it, and I'll protect it with  
My sword.

MEL. That arm, Sir Baron, which subdues  
The stubborn earth, and makes her bosom fruitful,  
May also manage to protect a man.

RUD. You shall give me protection—I'll give you :  
And so shall each be strengthened by the other.  
But wherefore talk we when our native land  
Is even now a prey to foreign tyrants ?  
When once the soil is clear of enemies,  
Then will we reconcile ourselves in peace.

[*After a moment's pause.*

You're silent ! Have you nought to say to me ?  
How ! Have I not deserved that you should trust me ?  
Then must I penetrate against your will  
The secret of your covenant. Your summons  
Has been sent out ;—you've sworn upon the Rootli.  
I know it. I know all that you've done.  
And what you would not venture to impart,  
I've kept as if it were a holy pledge.  
Never was I my country's foe, believe me,  
And never had I worked against your weal.  
You've done unwisely to delay so long.  
Time presses and needs speedy execution.

Tell has already fallen sacrifice  
To your delay.

STAUF. We swore to wait till Christmas.

RUD. I was not there, nor party to your oath.  
Wait then, I'll make it my affair.

MEL. You will!

RUD. I count me now amongst our country's fathers,  
And my first duty 's to protect it.

WALTER FÜRST. Stay!  
To give these precious relics to the earth  
Is yet a nearer and a holier duty.

RUD. When once we've set our country free, we'll  
place

A wreath of victory upon his bier.  
O friends! 'tis not your cause alone excites me,  
I have my own, to battle with the tyrants.  
Hear me! and know my Bertha's disappeared.  
In secret, and with daring wickedness,  
Has she been stolen from the midst of us!

STAUF. And hath the tyrant dared such violence  
Against a lady free and nobly born?

RUD. Alas! my friends, I promised you assistance;  
Yet I myself must beg it first of you.  
Robb'd—snatch'd away from me—is my beloved.



Who knows where they 've concealed her in their fury :  
 What violence they 've villainously dared,  
 To force her heart to some abhorr'd engagement !  
 Forsake me not ! Oh help me to her rescue !  
 She loves you ! She 's deserved it of the land  
 That every hand should arm in her behalf.

WALTER FÜRST. What would you undertake ?

RUD. Alas, I know not !  
 In this dark night which veils her destiny ;  
 In this intense anxiety of doubt,  
 Where nothing firm appears to fasten on,  
 One only thing stands clear before my soul :—  
 That we must fairly dig her into light  
 From out the ruins of despotic power ;  
 Therefore must every strong-hold be reduced,  
 If we would free her from her prison-house.

MEL. Come, lead us on ! We'll follow you. But

why

Defer till morning what may now be done ?  
 Tell 'was in freedom, and this monstrous deed  
 Undone, when we took oath upon the Rootli.  
 The time is pregnant with a change of rule.  
 Who is there now that *could* become a coward ?

RUD. Meanwhile to arms. Be ready for the task.

Expect the signal fire upon the mountains :  
 For sooner than a boat can sail the Lake,  
 Shall you have tidings of our victory,  
 And see us kindle up the welcome flame ;  
 Then burst, like Heaven's lightning on the foe,  
 And dash the work of tyranny to atoms. [ *Exeunt.*

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SCENE III.

*A hollow way near Küsnach, which descends from the background between rocks, and travellers are seen on the high part of it before they come on the stage. Rocks surround the whole scene. On one of the foremost is a projecting point covered with bushes.*

*Enter TELL, with his cross-bow.*

TELL. He needs must travel through this hollow way ;  
 No other path will take him on to Küsnach.  
 Here, then, I'll do it. The occasion suits—  
 Yon elder-tree will hide me from his view.  
 From thence my bolt will surely reach him here,  
 And the path's narrowness may mock pursuit.

Make thine account with Heaven, Governor !  
Hence must thou go ; thine hour has run out !

I lived retired and inoffensively ;  
At forest deer alone my bolt was aim'd ;  
Pure was my mind from thought of homicide ;  
But thou hast scared away my peace, and turn'd  
The milk of human tenderness within me  
Into fermenting dragon-venom. *Thou*  
To monstrous feelings hast accustomed me.  
Who strikes a mark upon his own child's head,  
Can strike his foe as surely to the heart !

My little ones ! my helpless innocents !  
My faithful wife—am I compelled to save  
'Gainst thy fell rage.  
In that same hour when I my bow-string drew,  
While my hand trembled like a leaf, and thou,  
With grim and devilish pleasure, mad'st me aim  
Against the head of my beloved child—  
Then as I stood before thee faint and supplicating,  
E'en then, internally, I swore an oath—  
A dreadful oath, which God alone could hear,  
That my next arrow's first and only mark

Should be thy heart. The promise that I made  
 In that short moment of infernal agony,  
 Is as a holy debt—and *I'll discharge it!*

Thou art my lord—my Emp'ror's officer ;  
 But never had the Emperor allow'd  
 Such deeds as thine. He sent thee here to judge us,  
 (Perhaps severely, for 'twas done in anger,)  
 Not to regale thy murder-loving lust  
 With crimes done wantonly, and which the law  
 Lets pass unpunish'd. / But a God there is,  
 Who lives above to punish and avenge /

[*Takes out his arrow.*

Come forth, thou winged messenger of pain !  
 Thou priceless jewel ! thou unpurchasable treasure !  
 I'll send thee to a spot, which, though't hath been,  
 Till now, impregnable to Virtue's pray'rs,  
 Will not be so to thee. And thou, my bow-string,  
 That oft hath served me true in joyous sport,  
 Play me not false to-day in fearful earnest.—  
 Hold fast this once, thou tried and trusted string,  
 That hast so often wing'd the pointed bolt ;  
 For if it now escape my hand in vain,  
 I have no second to repeat the blow.

[*Travellers cross over the stage.*



I'll seat me here upon this bench of stone,  
Framed to repose the traveller awhile ;  
For here 's no human habitation. Here  
Doth each man pass his fellow quick and carelessly,  
Nor think what trouble may afflict him. Here,  
The careful merchant—the light truss'd-up pilgrim—  
The pious monk—the gloomy-hearted robber—  
The gay musician—and the carrier,  
Who hither comes, with heavy-laden horse,  
From far and foreign lands ; (for by each path  
May one approach the world's extremity,)  
All these pass on to their vocation—  
And mine is murder !

[Sits down.]

Once, my beloved children, when your father  
Went to the chase, joy waited his return ;  
For never came he home, but brought you something—  
Either an Alpine flow'ret, or perchance  
A curious bird ; or else an Ammon's horn,  
Such as the traveller finds among the hills.  
Now goes he to far other sort of hunting,  
And sits him down upon a wild way-side  
Intent on bloodshed. 'Tis his foeman's life  
For which he lies in wait ; and yet, even now,  
He thinks on you alone, beloved children !

For your defence, and your sweet innocence,  
To shield against tyrannical revenge,  
Will he now strain his bow—to do a murder ! [Rises.

I lie in ambush for a noble quarry.  
The hunter shrinks not, when the winter's hardest,  
To bound the whole day long from crag to crag,  
And climb the slipp'ry precipice, to which  
His own spilt blood oft helps him to adhere ;—  
And all to chase a miserable animal.  
Here is at stake a far more precious prize—  
A mortal foeman's life, who seeks my ruin !

[Approaching lively music is heard at a distance.

My whole life long I've practised the bow,  
And exercised me after rules of archery.  
Oft have I shot into the white, and oft  
Have I brought home full many a fair prize  
From sportive archer meetings. But to-day,  
Will I the master-shot of all perform ;  
And win the fairest prize that can be found  
Within the whole circumference of the mountains !

[A marriage procession passes over the stage, and goes off through the hollow way. TELL considers it leaning on his bow. STUSSI, the Ranger, joins and accosts him.

STU. That is the cloister steward of Morlischachen,  
 Who holds the wedding feast. A wealthy man,  
 And hath full ten good pastures on the Alps.  
 He fetches now his bride from Imisee,  
 And there 'll be special cheer to night at Küssnach;  
 So come along, each honest man 's invited.

TELL. A guest like me fits ill the house of marriage.

STU. Down with your sorrow,—fling it from your  
 heart,—

Take the good luck God sends you. Times are hard;  
 Therefore must man snatch readily at joy.

Here there 's a merry-making—there a funeral.

TELL. And oft indeed the one brings on the other.

STU. Why that 's the way the world goes now. Ill  
 luck

Is ever in abundance. There 's a Ruffi \*  
 Has fallen in the Glarnerland and sunk  
 A side of Glarnish underneath it.

TELL. What!

E'en do the mountains tremble? Nought on earth  
 stands firm!

STU. Elsewhere men also talk of prodigies.

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\* A sort of avalanche.

I spoke with one who came from Baden. He  
 Related, that a knight who sought the King  
 Was on his way assaulted by a swarm  
 Of hornets, which so fell upon his steed,  
 That down it sunk in torture on the ground,  
 And he was forced to seek the King on foot.

/TELL. E'en to the weakest thing is given a sting! /

*Enter ARMGART, with many children, and places herself  
 in the entrance of the hollow way.*

STU. Men reckon on some national misfortune,—  
 Some grievous and unnatural event.

TELL. Such things arrive with every passing day.  
 They need no omens to announce their coming.

STU. Ay, he does well who tills his field in peace,  
 And sits at home unvex'd by what 's around.

/TELL. The best of men can not remain at peace,  
 If any wicked neighbour will it not! /

[TELL looks often with uneasy expectation  
 towards the upper end of the path.]

STU. Farewell! You wait, perhaps, for some one  
 here?

TELL. Ay, do I.

STU. Prosperous return to ye!



You are from Uri? Our all gracious lord  
The Governor's expected thence to day.

A TRAVELLER (*who passes.*) Expect the Governor  
no more to day.

The heavy rain has swell'd the water so,  
That every bridge is broken by the flood.

[TELL *retires to the background.*

ARM. (*coming forward.*) The Governor then comes  
not?

STU. Seek you *him*?

ARM. Alas, 'tis so!

STU. But wherefore place yourself

Right in his way in so confined a path?

ARM. Here he can *not* escape. He *must* give ear.

FRIES. (*comes hastily down the hollow way and calls  
out.*)

Out of the way there, you! My gracious lord

The Governor rides onward, close behind.

[*Exit* TELL.

ARM. (*in a tone of animation.*) He comes! he comes!

[*She goes with her children into the foreground,*

GESSLER and RUDOLPH DEL HARRAS appear  
*at the top of the hollow way.*

STU. (*to FRIESHART.*) How came you through the  
water?

The stream has swept the bridges all away.

FRIES. Friend, we have battled with the stormy Lake  
And arn't afraid of any mountain stream.

STU. Were you on shipboard in that dreadful storm?

FRIES. Ay that we were—I 'll think on 't all my life.

STU. Oh stay and tell us!

FRIES. Let me go,—I must,—

To make the Governor's arrival known. [*Exit.*]

STU. Had any honest men been in the ship,  
Down she 'd have gone, both man and mouse together;  
But neither fire nor water injure these!

[*He looks about him.*]

Where went the hunter hence, with whom I spoke?

[*Exit.*]

*Enter GESSLER and RUDOLPH DER HARRAS*  
*on horseback.*

GESS. Say what you will, *I* am the Emp'ror's servant,  
And I must think thereon, how I may please him.  
He hath not sent me to this land to flatter,  
And make soft speeches to the people. He  
Expects obedience,—and the question is,  
Whether the peasant or the Emperor,  
Shall lord it o'er the land.

ARM. Now then 's the moment. Now must I  
accost him. [*She draws near timidly.*]

GESS. Think not that I've set up the hat, in  
Altdorf,

By way of pleasantry, nor yet to prove  
The people's heart. I've known that long ago.  
I put it there that they may learn to bend  
To *me* their necks, which now they bear so stiff.  
'Twas therefore that I placed this stumbling block  
Full in the path which they 're obliged to tread.  
There let them exercise their eyes upon 't,  
And recollect their lord whom they 've forgotten.

HARRAS. The people have, however, well-known  
rights.

GESS. But this is not the time to measure them.  
Great things are working for futurity.  
Th' Imperial power will grow; and what the sire  
So gloriously begun, the son will finish.  
This petty people is but as a stone  
Upon our path; and, one way or the other,  
It *must* succumb at last.

[*As they are about to go on, ARMGART throws her-  
self at the Governor's feet.*]

ARM. For charity,  
Lord Governor, have mercy! mercy!

GESS. Why do you stop me in the public road?  
Back! back!

ARM. My husband's in confinement,  
And these poor orphans cry for bread. Dread Sir,  
Have pity on our grievous misery!

HARRAS. Who then are you, and who may be your  
husband?

ARM. A poor Wildheur, Sir, from Rigiberge,\*  
Who mows, upon the precipice's edge,  
The grass that grows all wild among the rocks,  
Where e'en the cattle do not dare to climb.

HARRAS. By heav'n! a wretched piteous existence.  
I pray you, Sir, to let the poor man loose.  
E'en had he heavily offended you,  
His daily work were punishment enough.

[To ARMGART.]  
You shall have justice. On towards the castle.  
Make there your prayer. Here is not the place.

ARM. No, no! I never will depart from hence  
Till he has giv'n my husband back to me.  
'Tis now six months since he's been in the tower,  
In vain expecting sentence from his judge.

---

\* The Wildheur is a man who mows the grass upon the waste.



GESS. What ! would you do me violence ? Away !

ARM. Justice, Lord Governor ! Our judge art thou,  
Placed here to represent the Emperor.

Do then thy duty ; and as thou dost hope

Justice from Heav'n, so show it unto us !

GESS. Off ! Take these daring people from my sight !

ARM. (*taking hold of his bridle.*) No, no ! I now  
have nothing more to lose.

Thou shalt not leave this place till I have had

Thy promise to release him. Bend thy brow

And roll thy eyeballs if thou wilt, for we

Are so completely wretched that we care

But little for thy anger !

GESS. Woman, hence !

Or else my steed goes over thee.

ARM. Then let it !—

Let it go over me.—*There !*

[*She throws her children on the ground and casts  
herself down with them in his way.*]

Here I lie—

Here with my children. Let the guiltless orphans

Be trodden underneath thy horse's foot—

It will not be the worst that thou hast done !

HARRAS. Woman, thou'rt raving mad !



ARM. (*rising up.*) He reels! He sinks! They've  
shot him! Murder! murder!

HARRAS. (*springs from his horse.*) Oh, horrid acci-  
dent!—Good God! Sir Knight,  
Call on Heav'n's mercy quickly, for you're in  
The grasp of death!

GESS. That arrow came from Tell!

[*He slides down from his horse into the arms of  
RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, and is laid softly  
on the bench.*]

TELL. (*appearing on the top of the cliff.*) Thou know'st  
the hand that shot it—seek no other.

Free are our hearths—secure is innocence—  
Thou wilt, at least, no more infest the land!

[*Disappears over the top of the cliff, people  
enter hastily.*]

STU. (*who is foremost of the party.*) Why, what's the  
matter here? What's taken place?

ARM. The Governor has just been shot to death.

PEOPLE (*bursting in.*) Who? who's been shot?

[*While the foremost of the bridal party  
come in, the hindmost are seen on the high  
part of the hollow way, and the music  
proceeds.*]

HARRAS.                   He bleeds to death.  
 Forth—get assistance!—After the assassin!  
 Unhappy man, and must thy end be thus?  
 Alas! thou would'st not hearken to my warning!

STU. By God! he lies there pale and lifeless.

MANY VOICES.                   Who  
 Hath done the deed?

HARRAS.                   What! are the people mad?  
 To play their music at a murder! Stop it!

*[The music breaks abruptly off and more people enter.]*  
 Speak, if you can, Sir, is there nothing more  
 That you'd confide to me!

*[GESSLER makes a sign with his hand,  
 which not being understood, he repeats  
 with violence.]*

Where would you that  
 I went. To Küssnach? I conceive you not.  
 Be not impatient; leave the things of earth,  
 And try to reconcile yourself with Heav'n.

*[The whole of the marriage company stand  
 round the dying man.]*

STU. Oh, see how pale he is!—Now, now, comes  
 death  
 And preys upon his heart. His eyes are sightless.



ARM. (*lifts up her child.*) See, children, how a wicked man departs!

HARRAS. Off! frantic women! Have ye no compassion That thus you stare on such a horrid sight? Help there! Take hold of him. Stands no one here To draw the fatal arrow from his breast?

WOMEN (*receding.*) We touch the man whom Heaven's wrath has struck!

HARRAS. May curses and damnation strike ye!

[*Draws his sword.*

STU. (*holds his arm.*) Hold!

Don't venture it, your reign is at an end.  
The tyrant of the land has fallen, and we'll bear  
No farther violence;—for we are free!

ALL (*tumultuously.*) The land is free!

HARRAS. And is it come to this?  
Fear and submission—end they then so soon?

[*To the men-at-arms who enter.*

You see the cruel deed of death that here  
Hath been committed. Help is all in vain.  
'Twere useless to pursue the murderer,  
And other cares oppress us. On to Küssnach,  
That we may save the Emperor a fortress;

For now all order, every bond of duty  
Is loose, and no man's truth is to be trusted.

*[Exit with the men-at-arms. While they are going  
off six Monks of the order of the Charity appear.]*

ARM. Room for the Brothers of the Charity.

STU. There lies the victim!—Here come down the  
ravens!

MONKS OF THE CHARITY. *(who form a half circle  
round the dead man, and chant in a deep tone.)*

Death presses on us with a rapid pace,

Nor respite gives the soul;

Attacks man oft when half perform'd his race,

And oft when he's attained its farthest goal;

Prepared or not, he must away,

To stand a culprit on the Judgement day.

*[Whilst they repeat the last lines the curtain falls.]*

## ACT V. SCENE I.

*An open place in Altdorf. In the foreground of the right side, the Dungeon of Uri, with the scaffolding yet standing as it was in the Third Scene of First Act. On the left are seen many mountains with signal-fires burning on them. It is just day-break and bells are heard at different points in the distance.*

RUODI, KUONI, WERNI, MASTER STONE-CUTTER,  
and others, men, women, and children.

RUODI. See you the beacons flaming in the mountains?

STONE-CUTTER. Hear you the bells there, over-right the wood?

RUODI. Chased are our foes.

STEIN. The castles are subdued.

RUODI. Shall we then still in Uri tolerate  
That castle of the tyrant on our soil?

Shall we the last of all proclaim our freedom?

STONE-CUTTER. Shall that *yoke* stand, that was to  
bend our necks?

Up! let us tear it to the ground!

ALL. Ay, come!

Let's pull it down! let's have it to the ground!

RUODI. Where is the Stier of Uri?

STIER. Here! What shall I?

RUODI. Climb to the highest watch tow'r, blow  
your horn,

That its wide spreading tone may o'er the hills

Be heard, and every echo that it wakes

Among the rocky cliffs, may quickly call

The mountaineers together. [Exit STIER.]

*Enter WALTER FÜRST.*

Hold my friends!

As yet have we no news of what's been done

In Switz and Underwald. First let's await

The messengers.

RUODI. And why? The tyrant's dead,  
The day of freedom dawns!

STONE-CUTTER. Is't not enough  
To see those flaming messengers around us,  
Blaze out their news on every mountain top?

RUODI. Come all, come lend your hands, both men  
and women!

Down with the scaffolds! break in every arch!



Tear down the walls, till not one stone shall rest  
Upon another.

STONE-CUTTER. Comrades, let 's to work!  
We that have built it up, at least should know  
The way to pull it down.

ALL. Ay! down with 't!—come!

*[They rush on every side towards the building.]*

WALTER FÜRST. The chase is up. I cannot hold  
it back.

*Enter MELCHTHAL and BAUMGARTEN.*

MEL. What! stands the castle yet while Sarnen lies  
In ashes, and while Rossburg is in ruins?

WALTER FÜRST. Are *you* here, Melchthal? Bring  
you liberty?

Say, are the Cantons cleans'd of enemies?

MEL. (*embraces him*) Pure is our soil. Rejoice,  
my aged friend,

In this same moment that we talk together,  
No tyrant breathes throughout all Switzerland!

WALTER FÜRST. Say, how did you obtain the for-  
tresses?

MEL. 'Twas Rudenz who, by hazardous adventure  
And manly boldness, won the Castle Sarnen.

For Rossberg--I the night before had scaled  
 Its walls. But hear what happened. As we cleared  
 The castle of the foe, and as we kindled up  
 A joyful flame, that, crackling smote the heav'n,  
 Diethelm, the page of Gessler, rush'd thereout,  
 Crying that Bruneck's heiress would be burnt.

WALTER FÜRST. Just God!

[*The noise of the scaffolds falling is heard.*]

MEL. 'Twas she herself, who secretly  
 Had been shut up there by the Governor.  
 Then up rose Rudenz like one mad; for we  
 Already heard the beams and posts give way,  
 And forth from out the smoke the wailing voice  
 Of that unfortunate.

WALTER FÜRST. But she was rescued?

MEL. Courage and quickness were of value there.  
 Had he been nothing but our feudal lord,  
 Perhaps we might have lov'd our lives too well.  
 But he was our confed'rate, and his Bertha  
 Respects the people; so we waited not—  
 We set our lives upon 't, and on we rush'd  
 To seek her in the fire!

WALTER FÜRST. But she was saved?

MEL. Ay! Rudenz and myself

Bore her, between us, safely from the flames,  
 While joist and rafter crackling fell behind ;  
 And when she knew herself from danger free,  
 And lifted up her eyes to Heav'n above,  
 'Twas then the Baron fell upon my breast,  
 And silently was an attachment sworn,  
 Which harden'd in the fire's glowing heat,  
 Will stand unchang'd mid every change of fortune !

WALTER FÜRST. But where's the Landenburger ?

MEL. O'er the Brunig.

Oh lay it not on me, that he who took  
 My father's eyesight, bore away his own.  
 I follow'd him—I took him in the flight—  
 I dragg'd him off to where my father stood ;  
 Already o'er him waved my sword, and yet  
 It fell not ; for his blinded victim's mercy  
 Heard him implore, and granted him his life.  
 He swore an oath\* that he'd return no more,  
 And he'll observe it—for he's felt our arm.

---

\* In the original—"Urphede schwur er." The *Urphede* was a particular sort of oath. When a man was at feud with another, and invaded his lands, and was worsted, he often made terms with his enemy by swearing the *Urphede*, whereby he bound himself to depart and never to return with a hostile intention.

WALTER FÜRST. 'Twas well, 'twas well! Your  
victory was pure  
From blood pollution.

CHILDREN. (*Hastening over the stage, with pieces of  
the scaffolding.*) Freedom! freedom! freedom!

[*The horn of Uri is blown loudly.*

WALTER FÜRST. See what a holiday! The child-  
ren all  
Will recollect it to their latest hour.

[*Girls bring in the hat on a pole, and the whole  
scene is filled with people.*

RUODI. Here comes the hat to which they made us  
bow!

BAUM. Give us the order. What shall be its fate?

WALTER FÜRST. My God, 'twas under this my  
grandson stood!

MANY VOICES. Destroy that monument of despotism.  
Into the fire with 't!

WALTER FÜRST. No; preserve it rather.  
'Twas late the instrument of tyranny;  
Hereafter let it be the sign of Freedom!

[*Men, women, and children, stand and sit on the  
beams of the destroyed scaffolding. They group  
themselves together in a picturesque half circle.*



MEL. Thus stand we now rejoicing on the wreck  
Of tyranny ! and gloriously have we  
Fulfill'd the oath we swore upon the Rootli.

WALTER FÜRST. The work 's begun ; but 'tis not  
yet complete.

We 've need of valour now and firm adherence ;  
For be assured the King will not delay  
To take deep vengeance for the death of Gessler,  
And with an armed force bring back the fugitives.

MEL. Let him come on then, with his armed legions.  
Now that the foe is driven from within,  
We 'll find a way to manage him without.

RUODI. The passes that the land affords are few,  
And these we 'll bravely cover with our bodies.

BAUM. Eternally are we united now,  
And all his armies shall not make us quail.

*Enter ROZELMAN and STAUFFACHER.*

ROZ. (*Entering.*) That, that indeed, was Heaven's  
fearful judgment !

PEOPLE. What is 't ? What news ?

ROZ. In what a time we live !

WALTER FÜRST. Say on. What is it ? Ha ! are  
you here, Werner ?

What brings you here ?

PEOPLE.                   What is it?

ROZ.                        Hear and wonder!

STAUF. From one great evil are we scarcely freed—

ROZ. The Emperor's been murder'd!

WALTER FÜRST.           Gracious God!

[ *The people press tumultuously round* STAUF.

ALL. Been murder'd! What! the Emperor been  
murder'd!

MEL. Impossible! How came you by the news?

STAUF. 'Tis surely true. King Albert fell at Bruch  
Beneath his murderer's hand. A credit-worthy man,  
Johannes Müller, brought it from Shaffhausen.

WALTER FÜRST. Who dared commit a deed so  
horrible?

STAUF. 'Twas yet more horrible through him that  
did it.

His nephew was it—his own brother's child,  
Duke John of Swabia, who murdered him.

MEL. What drove him to that deed of parricide?

STAUF. He was impatient—eager to possess  
His patrimonial inheritance,  
Which, as they say, the Emperor withheld,  
Thinking to find a mitre for the Duke;  
And so, to cut the matter short at once,

The young Duke listen'd to the wicked counsel  
Of his companions in arms, 'tis said,  
And with the noble lords of Eschenbach,  
Of Tägerfeld, and those of Wart and Palm,  
Determined he, as justice was denied,  
To take deep vengeance with his proper hands.

WALTER FÜRST. But tell us how the cruel deed  
was done?

STAUF. The King was journeying from Stein to  
Baden,  
T'wards Rhinfeld, where his court was held ;  
The Princes John and Leopold were with him,  
Together with a suite of high-born gentlemen.  
And when they reached the river Reus,—just where  
Its stream is traversed by a public ferry,—  
The murderers throng'd all into the boat,  
To separate the Emp'ror from his suite ;  
And as he landed, and was riding through  
A corn-field, where a great and ancient city  
Once stood, and flourished in Pagan times,—  
(Old Hapsburg's castle too within his sight,  
From which his high-born race derive their name)—  
There the Duke plunged a dagger in his throat ;  
Rudolph of Palm transfix'd him with his lance,

And Eschenbach so smote him on the head,  
That down he sank expiring in his blood,  
Murdered by \* kinsmen on his own domain.  
Those on the other side beheld the deed ;  
But parted from him by the rapid stream,  
They could but raise a powerless cry of woe.  
Close to the spot there sat a peasant's wife,  
And in her lap expired the Emperor.

MEL. Thus hath he dug himself an early grave,  
Who, never satisfied, would grasp at all.

STAUF. A monstrous horror reigns around the land.  
Shut up is every pass upon the mountains,  
And every place secures its boundaries,—  
Ay, e'en the ancient Zurich shuts her gates,  
Which have not closed for thirty years. All fear  
The murderers,—but still more the avenger !  
For hither, armed with the church's ban,  
Comes on, stern Agnes, the Hungarian Queen,  
Who ne'er hath known the softness of her sex,  
To wreak her vengeance upon every one  
That counts him kindred with the murderers,  
Their serfs, their children, and their children's children,—

---

\* The literal translation of the original is—"Murdered by his own upon his own."



Ay, e'en the very stones that form their castles !  
Whole generations hath she made a vow  
To immolate upon her father's grave,  
And bathe herself in blood, as if 'twere dew !

MEL. Is 't known which way the murderers have  
gone ?

STAUF. They fled immediately the deed was done.  
They took five roads, distinct from one another,  
And separated never more to meet—  
Duke John is wandering among the mountains.

WALTER FÜRST. So then their crime hath not pro-  
duced them fruit.

Revenge bears never fruit. It feeds upon  
Its fear-inspiring self !

Its meal is death, and its contentment horror.

STAUF. The deed hath brought the murderers no  
profit.

But we may reap, with unpolluted hand,  
A blessed harvest from their bloody crime ;  
For we're deliver'd from a grievous fear.

The greatest foe to liberty is fall'n.

The realm asserts its freedom to elect ;

And now, 'tis said, the sceptre will go forth  
From Hapsburg's family to other hands.



Hath plunged the Queen, she yet remembers well  
The ancient faith and love of Switzerland."

MEL. She never thought of that in her prosperity.

ALL. Peace! let us hear!

WALTER FÜRST. (*reads*) "And she's persuaded  
that her faithful people  
Will manifest a proper detestation  
Of all the cursed doers of the deed:  
And therefore she expects it of the Cantons,  
That they will not abet the murderers,  
But rather loyally bestow their help,  
To give them into the avenger's hand,  
Holding in mind the ancient love and favour,  
Which they've received of Rudolph's royal House."

MANY VOICES. The love and favour!

STAUF. We have, indeed, had favour from the father;  
But what have we to boast of from the son?  
Has he confirm'd the charter of our freedom,  
Like every Emperor that's reigned before him?  
Did he e'en wish to hear the messenger,  
Whom we dispatched to tell him our distress?  
Not one of all these things has e'er the King  
Performed for us; and had we not ourselves

Procured us justice with our own good hands,  
 Our peril ne'er had moved his heart / Thank *him!*  
 Thanks has he never planted in our dales.  
 He stood pre-eminently high; he could  
 Have been a father to our people; *but*  
 It pleased him for his own alone to care.  
 Let those whom he enriched, bewail his fate. /

WALTER FÜRST. We will not triumph in his fall,  
 nor yet

Remember *now* the evil we've received:  
 Far, far be that from us. But to revenge  
 The death of him who never did us *good*,  
 And harass those who never did us *harm*,  
 Were neither due nor fitting. / Love must be  
 A voluntary sacrifice / and death  
 Releases us from services constrained.  
 All such are now for ever satisfied.

MEL. And weeps the widow'd Queen in her retire-  
 ment,

And doth she weary Heav'n with her woe?—  
 So see you here a people, freed from anguish,  
 E'en to the self-same Heav'n returning thanks.—  
 / He that would gather tears, must sow affection! /

[*Exit. Courier.*]



STAUF. (*To the people.*) But *Tell!* where's he,  
 The founder of our freedom?  
 Shall he alone be wanting? He hath done  
 The best of all—endured the hardest fate.  
 Come on, then, come—let's forward to his house,  
 To greet the brave deliverer of us all. [*Exeunt.*]

---

 SCENE II.

*The interior of Tell's house. A fire blazes on the hearth.  
 The open door shows the country without.*

HEDWIG, WALTER, and WILHELM.

Hed. To-day returns your father. Dearest children,  
 He lives—is free—and we, and all, are free;  
 And 'tis your father that hath saved the land.

WALTER. And I've done something also for it,  
 mother.

I must be mentioned; for my father's bolt  
 Went near my life, and yet I did not tremble.

HED. Oh yes! and thou, thou also art restored.  
 Twice have I borne thee—twice endured for thee  
 A mother's pang!

But now 'tis past, and I possess ye both—

Both! and your father will return to-day!

[A MONK appears at the door.]

WIL. See, mother, see! there stands a pious Monk.  
He's here perhaps to ask our charity.

HED. Go, lead him in, that he may be revived.  
He feels that he has reached the house of joy.

WIL. (to the MONK.) Come in, good man. My  
mother 'll give you food.

WALTER. Come in and rest, that you regain your  
strength.

MONK. (looking round him, as if afraid.) Where am I?  
Tell me. In what country?

WALTER. What!  
You've lost your way then if you don't know that  
You are in Burglen, sir, and in the land  
Of Uri, on the road to Schachenthal.

MONK (to HEDWIG, who comes back.) Are you alone?  
Your husband—where is he?

HED. I now expect him. Wherefore do you ask?  
You hide your face as if you brought no good;  
But whosoe'er you be, you're needy. Take it.

[Offers him a cup.]

MONK. Howe'er my heart may long for nourishment,  
Nought may I touch till you have promised me—

[*Lays his hand on her.*]

HED. Touch not my garment, nor approach me nearer.  
Stand at a distance, if you'd have me hear.

MONK. By this same fire which hospitably blazes ;  
By these dear children's heads which thus I—

[*Attempts to place his hand on the children's heads.*]

HED. Man,

What mean ye? Back! stand farther from my children.

You are no Monk. You know that you are none.

Within this habit peace should find a home ;

But peace ne'er dwells in features such as yours.

MONK. I am the most unfortunate of men.

HED. Misfortune's voice ne'er fails to touch the heart ;  
But yours doth make it shudder to its core.

WALTER. (*running out.*) Here, here comes father!

HED. Oh, great God!

[*She offers to follow him, but trembles and stops.*]

WIL. Dear father!

[*Hastens after his brother.*]

WALTER (*without.*) Here he's come back again!

WIL. (*without.*) O dearest father!

TELL. (*without.*) Ay, that I am. But where's your  
mother, boys?

[*They enter.*]

WALTER. She stands there at the door, and can't  
come farther,

She trembles so with fearfulness and joy!

TELL. (*embracing her.*) O Hedwig, Hedwig, mother  
of my children—

'Twas God that help'd me, and no tyrant more  
Shall ever part us.

HED. (*throwing her arms about his neck.*) O beloved  
Tell!

What agony have I endured for thee.

[*MONK listens attentively.*]

TELL. Forget the past, and live alone for joy.  
Here am I back again, and on my own hearth  
I stand once more among *My Own*.

WIL. But where,  
Dear father, hast thou put away thy bow?  
I see it not.

TELL. Thou 'lt never see it more;  
'Tis now secure within a holy shrine;  
It never more will serve me in the chase!

HED. (*recedes and lets fall his hand.*) Oh, Tell!



TELL. Why, what alarms thee, dearest wife?

HED. How, how art thou come back to me? This  
hand—

Dare I take hold of it,—this hand, O God!—

TELL. Has been your safeguard and the land's  
salvation!

Freely to Heaven I can lift it up.

[*The MONK makes a sudden movement.*

TELL *sees him.*

What Monk is here?

HED. Ah! I'd forgot him quite.

Speak thou to him. His presence makes me shrink.

MONK (*approaches.*) Are you that Tell, who slew the  
Governor?

TELL. The same: from no man would I hide the deed.

MONK. You *are* that Tell!—'Twas then the hand of  
God.

That here directed me beneath your roof.

TELL. You are no Monk. Who are you?

MONK. You struck down

The Governor who did you wrong;—and I

Have slain a foe who would not do me right.

He was your enemy as well as mine,

And I have freed the land of him.

TELL. (*starts back.*) You are—  
Amazement!—Children, children, go away:  
Go, dearest wife! Go! go!—Unfortunate  
You are——

HED. My God, who is it?

TELL. Do not ask.  
Go, go! the children must not hear it spoken.  
Go from the house—away, thou must not dwell  
One moment underneath a roof with *him*!

HED. Alas! what is it?—Come!

[*Exit with the children.*]

TELL. (*to the MONK.*) You are the Duke  
Of Swabia. You are. You slew the Emperor,  
Your uncle and your Suzerain!

JOHANNES PARRICIDA. He was  
The robber of my heritage!

TELL. Your uncle—  
Your Emperor you've slain; and yet the earth  
Supports you, and the sun doth light you still!

PAR. Tell, hear me ere you—

TELL. Dripping with blood  
Of parricide and regicide, dar'st thou  
Set foot within my unpolluted house?

Dar'st thou appear before an honest man,  
To ask the rights of hospitality?

PAR. With you I hoped to find some charity.—  
You too took vengeance on your foe.

TELL. Unfortunate!  
Wilt thou confound ambition's blood-guilt  
With what a father did in life's defence!  
Hast thou protected a beloved child,  
Or stood to guard thy house's sanctuary?  
Hast thou averted, from thy flesh and blood,  
The greatest and the last of horrid fates?  
To Heaven above I lift my guiltless hands,  
And curse thee and thy deed. I did but vindicate  
The holy ties of home and nature. *Thou*  
Hast shamed them all—we've nought in common. *Thou*  
Hast murder'd! *I*—my dearest—have protected!

PAR. You thrust me from you helpless and des-  
pairing.

TELL. I shudder while I speak to thee—away!  
Go! wander on thy fearful pilgrimage.  
Stain not the home where innocence resides.

PAR. (*turning as if to go*) I cannot, will not live  
another hour!

TELL. And yet I pity thee. Good God of Heav'n!  
So young, from such a noble family,  
King Rudolph's grandson, flying and denounced,  
Assassin of my Lord and Emperor,  
Here at a poor man's door imploring in despair!

[*He covers his face with his hand.*]

PAR. Oh, if you ever wept, let my sad fate  
Call forth your tears, for it is terrible.  
I am a Prince, at least I was, and might  
Have been a happy one, had I but known  
To place restraint on my impatient wishes.  
I saw my youthful cousin Leopold,  
Covered with honour, recompensed with land;  
And I, although of equal age with him,  
Was held in slavish wardship!

TELL. Unhappy man, thy Uncle knew thee well,  
When he refused to give thee land and people.  
Thou hast thyself, by this wild wayward deed,  
Fearfully justified his wise resolve.  
Where are the bloody helpers of thy crime?

PAR. Where'er the demon of revenge has led them.  
I saw them not since that ill-fated act.

TELL. Know'st thou a ban pursues thee, and that  
thou



Art interdicted to thy friends, and given up  
An outlaw'd victim to thy enemies ?

PAR. And therefore I avoid all public roads ;  
Nor dare I knock at any cabin door.

I turn my steps towards the wilderness—

All horror-struck I wander through the mountains,

And start back shudd'ring, from my very self,

Whene'er a brook reflects my wretched image.

Oh ! if you've pity and humanity—

[*Falls at TELL'S feet.*]

TELL. Stand up ! stand up !

PAR. No ! not till you've stretch'd out your hand  
to help me.

TELL. Can I assist you ? *I, a sinful man !*

But up ! although you've done so foul a deed,

You're still a man ! I also am no more !

From Tell shall no one part uncomforted—

Whate'er I may, I'll do.

PAR. (*springing up, and grasping his hand with violence.*) O, Tell, you've snatch'd my soul

From desperation !

TELL. Let my hand go free.

You must be gone ; for undetected here

You can't remain, and were you once detected,  
You could not reckon on protection.

Where will you go? Where hope you for repose?

PAR. Alas! I know not.

TELL. Hear then what God hath whisper'd to my  
heart.

Go forward into Italy, towards  
St. Peter's city. There, when you're arrived,  
Throw yourself down before the Pope, and make  
Confession of your guilt, and free your soul.

PAR. Will he not give me up to the avenger?

TELL. Whate'er he do, receive it as from God.

PAR. How shall I reach a land to me unknown?  
I've no experience of the way, nor dare  
I join the company of travellers.

TELL. I'll point you out the way. Observe me  
well!

You must ascend along the river Reus,  
Which down the mountains headlong flings its stream—

PAR. The Reus! 'Twas done upon its banks.

TELL. Your way  
Lies o'er the precipice, and many a cross  
Betokens it, erected in remembrance  
Of travellers entombed beneath the snow drift:

PAR. I fear not nature's horrors, could I once  
But tame the wild affliction of my heart.

TELL. Before each cross fall down and expiate,  
With hot repentant tears, your wickedness ;  
And should you 'scape the dangers of the way,  
And should the snow drift, from the frozen ridge  
Of some high mountain, overwhelm you not,  
You'll gain at length the Bridge which you must dust !\*  
And if it break not down beneath the weight  
Of your offence—if e'er you pass it o'er,—  
You'll find a gloomy portal in a rock,  
Which day-light never enters. Go through *that*  
'Twill lead you to a happy vale of peace.  
Hasten across it. Give your foot no rest,  
For *you* may not remain where peace resides.

PAR. O Rudolph, Rudolph, royal ancestor,  
Thus is thy grandson doom'd to quit thy Realm !

TELL. Keep on ascending till you reach the height  
Of Gothardt, where the everlasting lakes,  
Fill'd by the streams of Heav'n, are situate.  
There will you bid farewell to German earth.  
Another river's swiftly flowing current,

---

\* This is the celebrated *pont du diable*. To dust it was an act of humility which pilgrims to Rome did by way of penance.

Will lead you on to Italy, for you  
The land of promise.

[*The cowherds' melody is heard blown on  
the Alpine horn.*]

Forth! Begone! I hear  
Approaching voices. Go!

HED. (*hastens in.*) Where art thou, Tell?  
My father comes. The sworn-confederates, all  
In joyous company, draw near.

PAR. (*covls himself.*) Alas!  
I dare not stop to look on happiness.

TELL. Go, dearest wife, and give this man refresh-  
ment.

Fail not to load him richly with donations:  
His way is long, and he will find no harbour.  
Haste, for they come.

HED. Who is he?

TELL. Do not ask!  
And when he goes, do thou avert thine eyes,  
That they may not e'en see which way he wanders.

[*PARRICIDA makes a rapid movement towards  
TELL, who signs to him with his hand to go.  
Both go off at different sides, and the*



## LAST SCENE

*exposes the whole valley before Tell's house, with the surrounding hills covered with people, forming one large group, while others come forward over a high mountain-bridge which leads across the cliffs. WALTER FÜRST, with the two boys, MELCHTHAL, and STAUFFACHER come forward. Others press after them. As soon as TELL appears he is received with loud shouts of joy.*

ALL. Tell ! Long live Tell ! the archer—the redeemer !

[ *While the foremost press around TELL and embrace him, RUDENZ and BERTHA appear. The latter embraces HEDWIG. The music from the mountain accompanies this dumb show. When it is ended, BERTHA comes forward into the centre of the people.*

BERTHA. Receive me, countrymen and sworn confederates,

A party to your Bond. The first shall I  
 Of happy maidens be, that here have found  
 A shelter in the land of liberty.  
 I place my rights in your courageous hands.  
 Will you defend me as your countrywoman?

ALL. Ay, that we will, with land and blood :

BERTHA. Agreed !

Thus to this noble youth I give my hand,  
A free Swiss maiden to as free a man.

RUD. And I acknowledge all my vassals free.

[*The music suddenly recommences and  
the curtain falls.*]

NOTES.

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general  
 introduction of the subject. It is shown that the  
 theory of the present paper is a special case of  
 the more general theory of the preceding paper.  
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## NOTES.

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### Note A.

“ *Enter Tell with a cross-bow.* ”— Page 10.

ALL that is clearly known of Tell's history may be related in a few words. He was a free born native of the Canton of Uri, a skilful steersman, an expert hunter, an unerring archer, and a warm friend of freedom. Having refused to pay servile reverence to a hat, which Herman Gessler, the Governor of Uri, had set up in the streets of Altdorf as an emblem of the arbitrary power claimed by his sovereign; and having hastily expressed his mind so as to make him suspected of being dangerous to the Government, he was secured and led off by the Governor in person to the Castle of Küssnach. As they pursued their way across the Waldstattensee, there came suddenly from the gorge of St. Gothardt a violent Fohn wind, which menaced all with instant destruction. The Governor, terrified at the peril of his situation, ordered that Tell, the most able helmsman on board, should be unchained, and that he should take the rudder. Tell obeyed, and steered the ship along, till they

came to a flat shelf of rocks which ran out into the lake. There, by a sudden effort, he sprang on shore, clambered over the adjoining mountain, and escaped. The Governor, finding the storm inclined to abate, continued his voyage, and landed near Küssnach. His road onwards lay through a hollow way. There Tell lay in wait for him, and, as he approached, shot him dead with an arrow on the very spot where now stands the Chapel built in commemoration of the deed.

This was done in the latter part of the year 1307, and apparently without any connexion with the confederates who in the early part of the following year delivered Switzerland from the Austrian yoke. It was, however, a welcome event throughout all the Cantons, and procured its author much esteem and reputation amongst his countrymen.

The circumstance of Tell having been compelled to shoot at an apple on his son's head, has been much called in question; and if not untrue, is certainly not supported by sufficient proof to make it pass current as an historical fact. J. Muller, whose History of the Swiss Confederation is highly esteemed, wholly omits to notice it. Zschocke, indeed, mentions it, but without citing any authority. It seems to rest entirely on the evidence of traditions and old ballads, to which may be added the two rudely carved old stone figures mentioned by Madame de Stael in her "Germany," Vol. 1. c. 19.

Tell is believed to have perished in the great flood which desolated Burglen in the year 1354, forty-seven years after the death of Gessler; so that at the time of that event he must have been but a young man. He appears to have died worth a considerable property, which was inherited by his descendants. His two sons, Walter and Wilhelm, were named Von Klingenberg, probably from a fief so called which they held. The male part of his family became extinct in 1684, in the person of John Martin Tell Von Attinghausen; but how the fief of Attinghausen came into the family is not known. The last of his female descendants died in 1720.—See the History of Muller, Book I. c. 18, notes, 221—225. Also the History of Zschocke.

Note B, page 40.

As the reader may be curious to know what the Bond of Confederation, so often spoken of in the foregoing Play, really was, I have inserted the following translation of the oldest known document relating to it. The original, which is in Latin and German, is dated in the year of God 1291, in the beginning of the month of August, and is under the seals of the whole of the men of Switz, the commonalty of the dale of Uri and the whole of the men of the upper and lower vales of Stanz. It lay for a long time forgotten and undiscovered, till in 1760, Mr. Glasser, of Ball, made it

known to the world in his dissertation *Circa Helveticorum Fœdera.*

### THE BOND.

Be it known to every one, that the men of the Dale of Uri, the community of Switz, as also the men of the mountains of Underwald, in consideration of the evil times, have full confidently bound themselves and sworn to help each other with all their power and efforts, property and people, against all who may do violence against them or any of them. That is our Ancient Bond.

Whoever hath a Seignior, let him obey according to the conditions of his service.

We are agreed to receive into these dales no Judge who is not a countryman and indweller, or who hath bought his place.

Every controversy amongst the sworn confederates shall be settled by some of the most prudent of them, and if any one challenge their judgment then shall he be constrained [to obey it] by the rest.

Whosoever intentionally or deceitfully kills another, shall for such wickedness be executed, and whoever shelters him shall be banished.

Whoever burns the property of another shall no longer be considered as a countryman, and whoever shelters him, shall make good the damage done.



Whoever injures another or robs him, and hath property in our country, shall make satisfaction out of the same.

No one shall distrain a debtor without a Judge, nor even any one who is not his debtor or the surety for such debtor.

Every one in these dales shall submit to the Judge, or we the sworn confederates all will take satisfaction for all the injury occasioned by his contumacy. And if in any internal division the one party will not accept justice, all the rest shall help the other party. These decrees shall (if God be willing) endure eternally for our general benefit.— See Muller's History, Book I. cap. 10, and note 43.

#### Note C.

The *Landes Gemeinde*, or Diet of the Cantons, was formerly held by all three together. Since it has been held by each separately. The Diet of Switz is convened biennially on the last Sunday in April. That of Uri takes place annually. The following description of it is extracted from "*Lettres sur la Suisse, par M. Raoul Rochette.*"—Vol. 3, let. xxiii.

At the distance of half a league from Altdorf, on the road which leads to the valley of Schaken or the Schaken-thal, and at the foot of the mountains which command the entrance of it, and in a circular area, is the place where the *Landes Gemeinde*, or national Diet, is held. Benches, placed gradually one above another, receive the citizens, of every age and condition, who come to take part in the delibera-

tion. The children are placed in the centre to receive, under the eyes of their fathers, the first lessons and the first examples of republican virtue. The women, the weakness of whose sex prevents them from taking part in so important an assembly, accompany their fathers and husbands there with their prayers, and although placed at a distance, their presence adds to this assembly of a free people, the interesting appearance of a family holiday.

In a vacant space, in the middle of the area, is a table, on which are placed the books of law, the seal of state, and the keys of the archives, enclosed in a black and yellow bag, those being the colours of the Canton. On the same table is also offered to the veneration of the people, one of those ancient swords with which the citizens of Uri acquired and defended their liberty; and this sword forms at the present day, the pacific sceptre of the Landamman.

At the moment when the sounds of national music announce the approach of their magistrates, the assembled people rise up to receive them. At the head of these walks the Landamman, and behind him, in the order of their ages and dignities, the ancient Landammen, the members of the Council, the Secretaries of State, and the Ushers. A profound silence suddenly pervades the assembly. The Chief of the Republic opens the session by a speech, in which he briefly enumerates the chief acts of his administration, and which he terminates by inviting the people to implore the

light of Heaven before occupying themselves with the affairs submitted to their examination.

After their devotion is concluded, business is proposed and discussed in order. The people express their opinions according to rank and seniority; for the rights of age are sacred amongst this people, who respect old men as the living archives of their history, and who have not yet thought fit to deliver over their councils to the ardour of imprudent youth. If when the magistrates have announced and moved their propositions no one amongst the people demands to be heard, an usher, placed on a sort of elevated bench, invites the assembly to manifest its opinion, which is done by raising the hand as a mark of approbation, and the same usher then declares the majority of votes.

It is not until after the different measures proposed by the council, and the other business, have been entirely disposed of, that they proceed to the election of new magistrates. Each of the old ones comes forward according to the rank of his office to resign into the hands of the people the powers which he received from them; thus the last act of this paternal authority is to pay homage to the source from which it emanated. It is rarely the case that the gratitude which the magistrate testifies on such an occasion is not instantly followed by a similar sentiment on the part of the assembly; and the noisy and tumultuous proofs of the satisfaction of a whole people become at once, for the citizen



who receives them, a reward for the good he has done, and for those who have participated in it a source of salutary emulation. Each magistrate having thus resigned his office, and quitted his seat to re-enter the mass of the citizens, the Government may be said to have disappeared and the sovereign authority to reside in the people now about to confer it anew.

The moment which follows the retreat of the magistrates is the only one favourable to licentiousness, and the people sometimes profit by it to give themselves up to disorderly movements, which are here but a rude imitation of unrestrained liberty, or rather but a parody on it. But this imitation has even its dangers, and they hasten to abridge its course in order not to leave true liberty too long exposed to licence. A solitary usher standing, if one may say so, on the ruins of the ancient Government, demands in a loud voice, addressing himself to the last Landamman, what citizen he designs for his successor, and the majority of votes, gathered from mouth to mouth, even including the lowest ranks of the people, proclaim the new chief of the Republic. If any virtuous and capable citizen has been forgotten in this distribution of suffrages, any member of the assembly may be heard in his favour; and there are instances of elections thus spontaneously made on the proposal of citizens the most obscure. Thus is authority re-created in the same manner as it was dissolved, and very often of the



same elements; for the constitution, as to certain posts in the magistracy, permits the re-election of those who have previously exercised them.

The election being terminated, nothing remains but to consecrate the alliance about to be contracted between the people and their new magistrates. The chief of the state swears to respect the laws and independence of his country, and the people at length testifies by an acclamation, that it is ready to devote itself to the same cause, and that it will obey the voice of the Landamman as that of the country. Thus is annually renewed between the chiefs and citizens of a Republic, and under the auspices of religion, the voluntary oath to live and die together, united and free. Thus are the destinies of a whole people prepared and accomplished in the peaceful solemnity of a family fete, and without the apparel of arms, which can but frighten liberty when they do not serve to defend it. Games and patriotic songs conclude the day, and the people, each time that it thus reproduces itself, acquires a new motive to love the constitution bequeathed to it by its ancestors, and which procures for it so much repose without weakness, and so much liberty without disorder.

Note D, page 143.

*I see the Switzer rush with naked breast,  
A willing victim on a rank of lances.*

The event alluded to by the line in the text, took place at the battle of Sempach, which was contested near a town of that name, between Leopold, Duke of Austria, and the sworn confederates of the United Cantons.

The Austrians had felt most bitterly the expulsion of their governors, and the overthrow of their government in Switzerland in 1308, and this, amongst other circumstances, led to the battle of Mongarten, fought on the 14th of November, 1315, in which 1,300 Swiss, under the command of Rudolph Reding Von Bibereck, routed a large body of Austrians, under Leopold, the son of the Emperor Albert, and killed in the battle and the flight upwards of 9,000 of them. The battle of Sempach happened some years afterwards, and was no less honourable to the arms of Switzerland, and the cause of liberty. The following account of it is chiefly extracted from Müller.

On the 9th of June, 1386, the Duke advanced against the Swiss at the head of an army of 4,000 (or, as some say, 8,000) mounted barons and knights; and followed by a much superior force of infantry, bringing with them a few pieces of artillery, then newly invented, and intended to be used at the siege of Sempach. Arrived there, he

ordered the standing corn which grew around the place to be cut down; and while it was in the act of being reaped, some of the Knights, seeing the chief magistrate on the walls, rode up for the purpose of scoffing at him, and requested that breakfast might be sent to the reapers. "Wait awhile," replied he, "the Sworn-Confederates prepare it." This retort is said to have so irritated the Austrian chivalry, that confident of their own numerical strength, they determined to attack their enemies, without waiting for their infantry, the greatest part of which had not yet arrived.

The Confederates, about 1,400 in all, were posted on a rising ground, broken in front, and ill-suited to cavalry movements. The Duke, therefore, ordered his nobles to dismount, and march against the enemy in a phalanx. That this might be done the more easily, they cut off the long, and at that time fashionable spikes, worn at the end of their boots. Thus unimpeded, and armed with spears eighteen feet long, they were led on by the Duke in person. The Confederates awaited their approach, armed with short swords, and small round shields, axes, and morgensterns,\* and as the Austrians toiled up the hill, under the weight of their armour, rushed down on them in a close body.

\* Morgenstern, *Anglice*, morning-star. A staff with an iron club-head, with spikes shooting from it after the fashion of the rays of a star.

The phalanx, however, withstood the assault, and preserved its ranks unbroken, receiving its assailants on a triple row of lances. A desperate conflict followed. Clad in complete mail, the Austrians were invulnerable at the distance at which their close array and extended spears kept their enemies. Sixty of the best men among the Swiss were down, and the arrival of the Austrian infantry was every moment expected. Suddenly a voice was heard calling out, "I will open a lane for freedom, Sworn Confederates! Take care of my wife and children!" and immediately a Switzer rushed with extended arms on the Austrian lances, grasped eight, and fell with them buried in his body. This was Struth von Winkelreid. For an instant he had made an opening in their line. The advantage was seen. In rushed the Confederates, and all gave way before them. Their unincumbered bodies, and short and heavy weapons, gave them all advantage at close quarters over opponents who were obliged to fight not only under heavy cavalry armour, but under the noontide sun of a hot summer's day. A complete rout ensued. Some of the Austrians were found dead, not by wounds, but smothered by their harness. Their great banner was taken, and their Duke, together with almost all his nobility, slain on the field. One only of all the male branches of the House of Reinach escaped, and many other noble families were completely extinguished. On the part of the Confederates,



about 200 perished, and with them their leader, Gundoldingen of Lucerne. Three days after the battle they returned home, bearing with them fifteen of the Austrian standards; and, if we may believe the old ballad made on the occasion, more than a waggon-load of the spikes which the Austrian nobles had cut off their boots.

Note E, page 175.

*“The King was journeying from Stein to Baden.”*

The murder of Albert of Austria, (who was himself accused of having slain his predecessor Adolph,) forms a striking incident in the history of the fourteenth century. It is unnecessary to enter into the particulars of the event, because Schiller has adhered strictly to history in his narration of it. The place where the murder was committed was a large ploughed field, standing directly under the hill on which the Castle of Hapsburg is built, and forming part of the plain on which stood the old city of Bindonissa. The conspirators who assisted the Duke of Swabia in its perpetration, were his friends Walter von Eschenbach, Rudolph von Balm, Rudolph von Wart, and Conrad von Tægerfeld, all of whom, excepting Von Wart, seem to have been actively engaged in the affair. The conspiracy appears to have been entered into hastily, and from motives of personal revenge. It is not known that it had any political object; nor is it

probable, as the conspirators formed no plan of defence against the consequences of their crime; for no sooner was it committed, than all connexion between them was dissolved—each fled his own way, caring only for his own safety, and seeking it where he might best find it. The Duke bent his course towards the mountains, stayed a few days at Einsudeln, and then wandered into the woods and was no more seen. What became of Von Balm is not known, and Von Tægerfeld was never more heard of. Von Eschenbach fled to Falkenberg, the castle of his uncle, and Von Wart took refuge in the same place.

The consequences of this murder were still more tragic than the deed itself. Albert left surviving him his queen and widow Elizabeth, and two children, Leopold Duke of Austria, and Agnes Queen of Hungary. These formed a league of vengeance against the murderers, and pursued it to the uttermost. Their castles, families, vassals, servants, and all that belonged to them, were spoiled and destroyed. At Farwangen, Agnes, notorious for her cruelty, had sixty-three gentlemen, guilty of no crime, but of being related to the conspirators, put to death in her presence; and as the blood of her victims was poured out before her, cried, exultingly, "*Nun bade Ich in May-thau,*"—Now bathe I in May dew.

But the most unfortunate of all who suffered on account of the King's death, was Rudolph von Wart. He had

remained a passive spectator of the murder. He was, however, numbered amongst those devoted to the anger of the avengers. Travelling to Avignon, for the purpose of getting absolution of the Pope, he was betrayed for a sum of money by the cousin of his wife, Diebold von Blamont, (who from that circumstance acquired the sobriquet of *Kaufman*, or dealer,) into the hands of Albert's children, and by their order broken alive on the wheel. As he lay there, after his sentence had been inflicted, he said of his own accord, "I die guiltless; yet, in truth, the others are equally so; for they have slain no king, but one who, contrary to his honour and his oath, laid bloody hands on King Adolph; who contrary to justice withheld from Duke John his patrimony; and who were well worthy to suffer what I now suffer. May God forgive my sins." For three successive days this unhappy man lay in torment on the wheel, during the whole of which time his wife, a lady of the House of Balm, (who had in vain implored Agnes to spare his life,) stayed without tasting food by his side, praying with him, and endeavouring to comfort him. At length, when his sufferings were at an end, she retired from the scaffold to a convent, and there concealed from the world herself and her sorrows.

After this, chiefly through the influence of Agnes, more than a thousand innocent men, women, and children, were delivered over to the executioner. With the property of these, and of those who had been previously her victims, she

built and endowed, on the place where her father fell, the Abbey of Königsfeld. Hither she invited Berchtold Strebel von Offtringen, who had been an old warrior under King Adolph, and now lived as a hermit on a mountain near Hapsburg. He, however, refused her invitation, and accompanied his refusal with these words, "Lady, it is doing God a poor service, to spill innocent blood, and endow cloisters out of plunder."

THE END.

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