

**WILLIAM TELL: A  
HISTORICAL PLAY FROM THE  
GERMAN OF SCHILLER WITH  
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS**

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William Tell: A Historical Play from the German of Schiller with Notes and Illustrations by  
William Peter

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**WILLIAM PETER**

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# WILLIAM TELL

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A

HISTORICAL PLAY FROM THE GERMAN

OF

SCHILLER

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

WILLIAM PETER Esq.

M. A. CH. CH. OXFORD.

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**Die alten Zeiten und die alte Schweiz.**  
The olden Times and olden Switzerland.

TO  
THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, OF HOLKHAM  
IN THE COUNTRY OF NORFOLK,  
EARL OF LEICESTER, &c. &c.  
FOR UPWARDS OF SIXTY YEARS,  
AN UNWEARIED BENEFACTOR OF HIS COUNTRY AND OF MANKIND:  
WHO,  
BY HIS EFFORTS AND EXAMPLE AS A COUNTRY-GENTLEMAN,  
HAS ACCOMPLISHED FOR THE AGRICULTURE OF GREAT-BRITAIN,  
THAT, WHICH THE WATTS, WEDGEWOODS, ARKWRIGHTS,  
AND OTHER EMINENT MEN,  
HAD DONE FOR ITS MANUFACTURES AND COMMERCE,  
SCATTERING PLENTY OVER A SMILING LAND,  
AND AUGMENTING NOT LESS THE GENERAL WEALTH AND POWER  
OF THE STATE,  
THAN THE INDIVIDUAL COMFORTS AND RESOURCES OF ALL  
CLASSES OF ITS CITIZENS:  
WHO,  
AS A POLITICIAN,  
AND, FROM EARLY MANHOOD TO LATE AGE,  
ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES OF HIS NATIVE COUNTY  
IN PARLIAMENT,  
HAS APPROVED HIMSELF, IN ALL TRIALS,  
-- BY WORD AND DEED -- THROUGH EVIL REPORT AND GOOD  
REPORT -- THE CONSISTENT FRIEND AND NEVER FLINCHING  
ADVOCATE OF PEACE, LIBERTY, AND JUSTICE,  
OPPOSING  
(AMONG OTHER INIQUITIES OF THE TIMES)  
THE AMERICAN AND FRENCH WARS;

AND SUPPORTING  
PARLIAMENTARY - REFORM, CATHOLIC - EMANCIPATION,  
THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION-LAWS,  
THE MITIGATION OF OUR PENAL CODE,  
THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE AND SLAVERY,  
THE ENFRANCHISEMENT OF IRELAND,  
AND ALL THE OTHER — THE MANY OTHER — ACTS  
OF ENLIGHTENED AND RIGHTEOUS POLICY,  
WHICH HAVE DISTINGUISHED THE WHIG-PARTY OF HIS AGE,  
AND WHICH,  
— HOWEVER DECRIED BY THE SELFISH FOLLY OR BLIND  
VIOLENCE OF EXTREME FACTIONS —  
WILL NOT FAIL TO SECURE TO THEIR AUTHORS AND UPHOLDERS  
THAT BEST OF EARTHLY REWARDS,  
THE GRATITUDE AND VENERATION OF THE WISE AND GOOD,  
IN ALL SUCCEEDING AGES, —  
TO THOMAS WILLIAM COKE, THEREFORE,  
IN THANKFUL, THOUGH HUMBLE, TESTIMONY OF HIS LONG  
SERVICES IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM AND HUMANITY,  
THIS DRAMA,  
RECORDING THE STRUGGLES OF AN INNOCENT AND OPPRESSED  
PEOPLE IN DEFENCE OF THEIR DEAREST RIGHTS,  
IS, WITH SINCERE AFFECTION AND RESPECT, INSCRIBED  
BY HIS LORDSHIP'S OBLIGED FRIEND AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,  
WILLIAM PETER.

THE HOLY-HOUSE, RÜTLI

1 OCTOBER 1837.



## PREFACE.

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The Subject of this Drama was first suggested to SCHILLER by his Friend GOETHE, who, after a tour through the Forest-Cantons in 1797, had intended to have made it the Groundwork of an Epic Poem. "One valuable idea (says the Edinburgh Review) he certainly appears to have communicated to him, namely his own conception of the Character of TELL. With the exception of Schiller, all Dramatists, who have attempted the theme, paint him too much as a sentimental Reformer. But Goethe saw that the true Dramatic capability of the Character lay in his simplicity both of feeling and expression; in representing him, as he was, a rude Dweller among the Mountains, leading a life of labour and never thinking of political Freedom or Slavery, until Oppression penetrated to his own Fireside, and, even then, only anxious at first to escape the evil as best he might, till, step by step, he is led on to the death of Gessler, as the only means of preserving his own existence and that of his Family. — And thus, too, Schiller has represented him, as a Man of iron nerves, with all the homeliness of an Alpine Shepherd, — an affectionate Father and Husband, — a Being, naturally of a soft and gentle heart — who, even when driven at last to the death of his Enemy, and watching, from

his rocky cover, that Enemy's advance along the lonely Valley, shudders at the prospect that his Hands, which have hitherto only been dyed with the blood of the Chamois, are now to be steeped in that of his Fellow-Man. — Accordingly, as might have been expected, the success of this living Picture, upon the Stage was complete."

The Quarterly Review, on the same subject observes: "The noble Simplicity of Helvetic Manners is admirably painted in WILLIAM TELL, and the Enthusiasm of the Nation, in favour of Liberty, represented in colours the most captivating. This Piece, which breathes the cordiality of unsophisticated Nature, the rustic heroism of Men, whose Courage defied the gigantic power of Austria and whose Religion proceeded from the heart, deserves to have been acted at their National Festival, when, after enjoying Independance for 500 years, the Swiss celebrated the Birthday of their Freedom. — It is perhaps (adds the Reviewer) the only Tragedy in any language that has been improved by omitting the fifth Act." — However just or ingenious the contrast which is presented between the characters of Tell and John the Parricide, and the motives by which they were respectively instigated, to the death of their Enemies, the introduction of the latter can only serve to divert the attention and interest of the Spectator from the principal Catastrophe, which terminates with the death of Gessler and the deliverance of Switzerland.

*Lucerne, September 30<sup>th</sup> 1837.*

## CHARACTERS.

HERMANN GESSLER, Governor of Schwytz and Uri.

RUDOLPH DER HARRAS, his Lieutenant.

WERNER, Baron of ATTINGHAUSEN.

ULRIC VON BUDENZ, his Nephew and Heir.

WERNER STAUFFACHER,

CONRAD HUNN,

ITEL BEDING,

HANS AUF DER MAUER,

GEORGE IM-HOFE,

JOCELYN VON WEILER,

ULRIC, the Smith,

WALTER FÜRST,

WILLIAM TELL,

RÖSSELMANN, the Priest,

PETERMANN, the Sacrist,

KUONI, the Herdsman,

WERNI, the Hunter,

RUODI, the Fisherman,

ARNOLD OF THE MELCHTHAL,

CONRAD BAUMGARTEN,

MEYER VON SARNEN,

STRUTHAN VON WINKELRIED, of Unterwalden.

NICHOLAS VON DER FLÜE,

BURKHARDT AM BÜHEL,

ARNOLD VON SEWA,

Country people of Schwytz.

of Uri.