

**WILLIAM TELL. A
DRAMA OF THE ORIGIN
OF SWISS DEMOCRACY**

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William Tell. A Drama of the Origin of Swiss Democracy by Arthur Dougherty Rees

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ARTHUR DOUGHERTY REES

**WILLIAM TELL. A
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WILLIAM TELL

William Tell

A Drama of the
Origin of Swiss Democracy

By
Arthur Dougherty Rees

Author of
"The Double Love" "Columbus"



Philadelphia
Press of J. B. Lippincott Company
1908

THE SPIRIT OF THIS DRAMA
IS
DEDICATED
TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN PROGRESS WHICH
HAVE REARED
THE PEOPLE OF SWITZERLAND
FROM THE CONDITION OF CRUDE INDIVIDUALITY
AND DEMOCRACY
OF SIX HUNDRED YEARS AGO
TO THEIR PRESENT POSITION AS A SPLENDID EXAMPLE
TO THE WORLD
OF
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE
AND
FOR THE PEOPLE.

INTRODUCTION

This drama presents at least one distinctive addition to the Tell literature, namely: the dramatic form in which it is cast; five acts, related intimately by the sequence of events portrayed, and the absence of the usual divisions into scenes.

The play has been constructed without regard for the historical criticism that has greatly shorn the original legend of its fiction. It aims to depict not merely the Tell episode, but the movement of that epoch toward freedom and the unity of Switzerland. Therefore, I have introduced in the final act the death of the Austrian King and the Swiss victory at Morgarten,—which events took place somewhat later than the others. Whatever similarity this play may have to any of the other Tell dramas, is due almost entirely to the legend itself and a similarity of historical sources, for there are extremely few adaptations from previous plays, and those that do exist—less than a half dozen,—are but minor details.

A. D. R.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.
December, 1907.

PERSONS REPRESENTED

Of Uri.

The Baron of Attinghausen.
 WALTER FURST.
 JOHANN FURST, his son.
 WILLIAM TELL.
 HEDWIG, his wife.
 WALTER and WILLIAM, his sons.
 MARGRETH OF SERLSBERG.
 HEINRICH TUSS, a hunter.
 FRANZ, the ferryman.
 LANDVOGT TRAUTMAN.
 PETER GERIG.
 KLESTER, a priest.
 HANS LUDWIG.
 JACOB LUSSE.
 STEFFAN }
 ULI } Shepherds.
 SEppi }
 GESSLER, Governor of Uri and Schwytz.

Of Unterwalden.

HENRI MELCHTHAL.
 ARNOLD MELCHTHAL.
 CONRAD }
 CASPER } Huntsmen.
 REDING }
 CONRAD BAUMGARTEN.
 JOHANN STAIGER.
 HEINRICH KASS.
 WINKELRIED.
 LANDBERG, Governor of
 Unterwalden.

Of Schwytz.

WERNER STOFFACHER.
 GERTRUDE, his wife.
 HANS HUENER.
 HANS GROSS.
 VOGT ZWYER.
 CONRAD HUM.
 PETER MOOHR, a hunter.

An Austrian Nobleman, an
 overseer, workmen, shopkeep-
 ers, peasants, women and
 girls; guards, troops, hunts-
 men, fishermen, judges of the
 sports, horsemen of the gov-
 ernors, servants, spies and a
 messenger.

WILLIAM TELL

ACT I

On a broad grassy plot by the shore of Lake Lucerne near Treib. A ferry-house is at the right extremity and at the left a road that leads to the village.

Opposite can be seen, at the right, the peaks, Hacken and Great Mythen; at the left, the crest of the Rigi. Between them lie the farms and hills of the Canton Schwytz.

The scene opens as the autumn sports and festival are about to end. Many of the people are seated about, including shepherd boys, huntsmen, fishermen; William Tell, his wife and his two sons. All are watching the wrestling match.

Archers, stone throwers, runners and wrestlers are also looking at the contest. Two venerable men, Walter Furst, with a sword buckled at his side, and the aged Baron of Attinghausen, with his sword and shield, holding his helmet in his hand, occupy seats of honor. Near them are the judges of the contest and the gayly decorated musicians. As the curtain rises the two wrestlers are seen contending with each other. An instant later one of them is thrown on his back upon the grass. The Alpine horns are blown and the people shout. The judges declare that Reding, the huntsman, has won. The wrestlers arise, and retire among the people.

William Tell

MARGRETH. Reding, the huntsman, champion wrestler, too!

A JUDGE. (*Pointing to the left.*) Here come the runners! Make ye way for them!

(*The people look and draw back; the judge marks a line upon the ground in front of Furst and the Baron. The girls shout and clap their hands. Alpine horns are blown.*)

GIRLS. O see them coming! Seppi! Seppi! fast!

BOYS. Casper, Casper, run it harder, Casper!

(*Judges take their stand near the line and an instant later, five racers rush in from the left. Seppi, the shepherd boy, leads and crosses the line first. The others follow quickly, amid shouts and blasts of horns. All take their places among the other participants.*)

JUDGE. Seppi, the shepherd, wins the distance race. (*More shouts and blasts of horns.*)

Now let the archers come!

GIRLS. The archers! Good!

Tell, Reding, Conrad and Casper, all huntsmen, come forward; each with a cross-bow in hand.)

BARON. (*To Furst.*) What splendid men they are!

FURST. Yes; Schwitz's * best.

JUDGE. Now, archers, shoot. The target's on that rock.

(*Points to it at the left, beyond the scene. Tell and the archers stand in a row facing it. Reding shoots first and misses.*)

REDING. A miss! I'll try again. (*Retires.*)

CASPER. (*After shooting his arrow.*) A hit! a hit!

(*The people applaud.*)

* Schwitz refers to the three cantons as a whole: Schwytz, to the single canton only.