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THE DRAWING OF THE SWORD

A PAGEANT FOR
THE PRESENT HOUR



THE
DRAWING OF THE SWORD

A PAGEANT
FOR THE PRESENT HOUR

BY
THOMAS WOOD STEVENS



THE STAGE GUILD
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Servia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	C. Fredrick Steen
Belgium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ena Lewis
England	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Richard Mansfield II.
France	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Eula N. Guy
Imperial Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Theodore A. Viehman
Canada	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Francis Hogan
India	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Alexander Buchanan
Australia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	John Mulvey
Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Frederic McConnell
Armenia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Dorothy Rubenstein
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Norwood Engle
Poland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Hazel Beck
Portugal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	William Mulligan
Roumania	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	George Trabert
The New Russia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ellen Crowe
America	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Veolante Bollinger

Production made under the direction of B. Iden Payne.
 Costuming under the direction of Katherine Jones. Music
 under the direction of J. Vick O'Brien. Stage Managers,
 Arleigh B. Williamson and William F. Viehman.

THE DRAWING OF THE SWORD

THE SETTING is a formal court, dominated by three high thrones. The thrones are upon an elevation, from which steps descend to the lower stage. Trumpets are heard. Enter the Herald.

THE HERALD

Hear ye, Americans, and mount with me
On the pale wings of thought to that high court
Where, overlooking all the lands and wars,
Three mighty spirits brood above the world,
These three: Justice and Liberty and Truth.
Here then be reared their thrones, and soaring still,
Give us your leave, in high imagining,
To speak their purposes and judge the cause
Of those true nations, calling to your hearts
From stricken fields or glorious battles—all
Who hold the right above the might of arms—
Our friends—our Allies—in the fields of war.

[A March is heard. The Herald moves aside, and Truth, Justice and Liberty enter, with their trains, Truth taking the central throne, Justice the right, Liberty the left.]

TRUTH

[A Goddess figure, majestically robed in white and azure.]

Hail, Justice, throned above the thoughts of men.

JUSTICE

[A powerful male figure, commanding, in Roman arms of brass and scarlet.]

Hail, Spirit of Truth, eternal memory.

TRUTH

Hail, Liberty, the light beyond men's dreams.

LIBERTY

[*A Goddess robed in white, a star above her brow.*]

Hail, Truth, immortally divining.

TRUTH

Spirits above the world, I see far off
In the dark past, intrigues of force and pride;
In the bright future, starry skies of hope;
And midway, in the present hour, a strife
Rising to shake the firmament. Behold.

[*Music—The Marche Slav. Enter Servia, presented by a man in the national dress, followed by a banner bearer and a group of Servian men. Servia leaves his group and runs to the height between Truth and Justice. He holds above his head a great curved sword.*]

SERVIA

O Truth, I, Servia, hold in my hands
The sword of Karageorge.
Hear me and judge me, Truth and Liberty,
Hear me and answer, Justice.
There has been struck down in mine enemy's house
A prince. And lo, mine enemy,
Proud Austria, charges me with his blood.
I have answered as thou dost remember, Truth.
Mine enemy has laid on me a charge of eleven demands,
Like a chain of eleven links, and to ten
I have submitted, bending my pride.
But the eleventh link I can not bear
Save with the death of my sovereignty among the peoples;
Ten demands have I yielded, O Justice,
And I have said that mine enemy may sit for vengeance in
my courts of judgment;
Ten links have I borne of his chain, O Liberty;
But now—but now I call out in the high court of the Three
who sit above the nations,
Shall I bear this last, and my people be hounded by this alien
hate?

J U S T I C E

Too far hast thou yielded now, O Servia.

L I B E R T Y

Draw forth the sword, lest thy foe bear thee down.

T R U T H

[*Rising.*]

So Freedom bids, and Justice. Yet I see
Beyond this wrath a greater wrath to fall.
Sheathe or unsheathe, the foe will not show mercy.
Unsheathe the sword—you set the world aflame!

S E R V I A

I may not choose.

[He draws the sword. There is a clash of cymbals and a roar of drums. Servia returns to his group below. A solemn music sounds and Belgium, with her stricken people, is seen approaching. She is a tragic figure, who comes slowly, with outstretched arms; from her shoulders flutters a great cloak of black and gold—now tattered to shreds. She mounts between Truth and Liberty.]

T R U T H

Hail, mother of heroes!

B E L G I U M

Hail, Justice, Liberty and Truth!
I, Belgium, broken and exiled, cry to you,
Still unestranged, unshamed.
I have forbidden the destroyer's way
And he hath trampled me,
I have defended for one fiery hour
The fortress gateway of my sister France,
And for one hour held the black eagles back.

L I B E R T Y

And for that hour, the fiery hour of Liege
The unborn future freedoms of the world
Shall kiss thy sacred sword.

BELGIUM

And now my cities are fallen, my gardens gray
With ashes of my peoples' homes. My children
Torn from my hearth, my young men gone to death,
Mine ancient seats of learning to the torch,
My daughters given to the lust
Of the black eagles. All that I had wrought
In the long industry of patient years
Ruined and ravished, and the few who still,
Amid my fallen roof trees, cling to life,
They now have driven into slavery
To bitter toil to feed mine enemies.
This is my doom, and I bow down to it,
Calling to those who held me safe, to those
High signatories of my lasting peace
Who still are true. Though I be dispossessed,
And crushed beneath the shadow of black wings,
Still in thy courts august I face thee, Truth,
And losing all, proclaim mine upright soul
Still faithful unto God, and peace, and thee,
And were the choice again to make, still staunch.

JUSTICE

In my name and the name of Liberty,
Who will defend this land?

[Music. Enter from the back, England and France, with their attendant banners. England stands between Truth and Justice, France between Truth and Liberty.]

ENGLAND

[He is figured as a grave, cloaked man of the age of Elizabeth; his followers bear upright lances.]

My voice for England's might.
I will defend, as I did hold her safe,
Mine honor pledged, my seal upon the bond,
Call me to battle, though the foe cry out
That treaties be but paper, and so burn.
I am unready, for my sword hath slept

Long in the scabbard, and mine armies long
Have melted in the sun of peace. I dwell
Beyond the shielding of the silver sea.
I know the blood cost of this hour. I come
Deliberate and resolute. And first,
With all my fleets I do forbid the seas
To the black eagles; and my hoards of gold
I give to war, that in the peace to come
Assurance may be doubled. And if I
Be slow to strike, know well that having struck,
I will not sheathe until be made a peace
Not to be shivered at a trumpet's blast,
Not to be ground beneath an iron heel,
Nor frightened by the gleam beneath the moon
Of helmets flashing pride across the night.
Thus speak I, England, taking up the gage,
And Liberty and Justice know me well
For one not quick to fire, but slow to yield
When once I give my heart to righteous war.

J U S T I C E

Hail, England, and all honor to thy sword.

T R U T H

Hail and beware. Not all is known to you,
Who have the silver zone of foam for shield.
Your fleets forbid, but now the creeping death
Through your blue robe of safety burrows in,
And high aloft the wings are beating down
The winds of your deliverance.

E N G L A N D

I may not choose. Come weal, come woe,
My sword is for the right unscabbarded.

[He draws his sword.]

[France has stood rapt in vision. She is a slender girl, in the arms of Jeanne the maid, a surcoat of white with lilies over the hauberk. Now for a moment the Marseillaise is heard, faintly, and she stirs, but does not speak.]

LIBERTY

Still art thou silent, France.

FRANCE

Not for
The ravished fields nor the lost provinces,
The orchards stripped forever of their bloom
The villages where peace and thrift abode,—
But for the deep wound in the spirits' heart,
For Rheims, and all its carven glory twined
With sainted memories, I give my tears.
For what am I, France, in the world's high court
That is not there struck down; my faith,
And all that vision of eternal law,
Of beauty, and the grace that I have lived,
These have my foes marked for their deadliest stroke.
What harm to them the gray cathedral's towers
Where once Jeanne d'Arc did crown a king? Why, this,
That there my spirit knelt, and they who smote
Those towers with ruin left my shrine unhoused,
And hoped my prayer would never reach its God.
But now I pray amid the open fields,
Along the blasted trenches that have reft
So deep a scar across my brow; and there
I re-create the spirit from the stone,
And pray and fight in silence till the end.

LIBERTY

Thine is the deepest wound—the highest heart.
God for thy glory give thee guerdon, France.

[The Marseillaise is now heard again. Listening, France moves up to the side of Liberty's throne, her face alight. She draws her sword, kisses it, and kneels before Liberty. As the music ceases, the other figures salute her with upraised arms, crying out,]

ALL

God save thee, France!

[*The music changes to the Russian National Anthem, and Russia appears; he is a figure of gorgeous pride, in the hierarchical robes of the Romanoff dynasty. He stands with his back to Liberty.*]

R U S S I A

Here I salute you, nations in arms, and Truth and Justice.

T R U T H

Greet you not Liberty?

R U S S I A

I know not Liberty. I come to the blood call
Of the Slav lands, and first of Servia, my kinsman.
From the far north where the swift summer flowers,
From the Siberian east, and south, from the Ukraine,
I call my children into battle.
Not theirs to weigh the issues of my quarrel
Nor dream of freedom ere I make them free.
But theirs to march, host upon thundering host
Far gathered, to the longest leaguered line.
And though they fall, my standard still I trace
Through the gold billows of the battle smoke,
Borne for the faith of holy Russia, and our house,
And the Imperial Little Father's pride,
Even to blessed death.

[*A murmur rises among the Russian group, and hands are uplifted.*]

Be silent.
I have cast the die. And Russia bends not
Either to foe or fate.

T R U T H

Yet Russia bears within his smouldering heart
A fire that will not die for all his pride.

[*Russia returns to his group.*]

E N G L A N D

I to my standards call my far frontiers,
To Canada amid untrodden snows,

To India's jeweled princes, to the isles
Of the South Seas and the Australian plains,
For they are wandering children of my hearth
And though they range afar they dream of me.
Free are they, yet I trust their freedom most
To bring them home against mine enemies.

[*Enter Canada, India, Australia and their
groups.*]

CANADA

England, thy sons come home. An unbought sword
Here doth the North return to thee.

INDIA

England, thine empire of the Orient brings
Its loyalty and duty to thy throne.

AUSTRALIA

England, the men of the Antipodes,
Sons of thy youngest tribe, and gay with youth,
Come asking only "Which way lurks the foe?"

LIBERTY

Well have my counsels profited thee, England.

TRUTH

Well for thy fate and for thy future fame
These strong arms to thy comfort, for the fight
Shall need them all.

[*Enter Japan.*]

JAPAN

England, my friend, and Russia once my foe
I for the East do proffer brotherhood.
To guard the long Pacific wave be mine;
To quench the greed that looks with leering eyes
On the rich plains beneath the dragon flag
I honorably bring the sword of new Japan.

TRUTH

Now East and West are leagued, yet still mine ears
Are smitten with undying agonies.
Armenia comes.

*[Enter Armenia. She comes alone and no music
sounds for her.]*

ARMENIA

Faintly your voices reach me, nations, where
On the cold hills beyond far Erzeroum
The crescent blade with unresisting blood
Anew is crimsoned. For the pledges of the Turk,
Made when he feared you, now are swept away,
Since he hath sold alliance unto one
More strong, more false, more terrible than he.
Armenia calls you, but my bitter woe
Can never find a voice so loud, so deep
As fits its suffering. For we who have no crown
Standard nor nation's pride, what shall we hope
Save heavier burdens till we all go down.
But if the Christian name and faith still live
And move you any wise, you may not turn
Away from our despair, but yield us still
Under the Moslem power and hate,
Your pity—pity—pity for our pain—
Your vengeance, ere the peace be made,
For the unholy alliance of your foes
And the slow rending of a people's life.

RUSSIA

For you, Armenia, my legions shall strike southward
Through the snows of Caucasus.

ENGLAND

For you, Armenia, and your deathless wrongs,
I will strike northward from the Persian sea.

ARMENIA

Be swift, O nations, lest ye find the land
Barren of life, forever desolate.

[Armenia kneels before the throne of Justice.]

JUSTICE

I have recorded and will not forget
Thy history, Armenia.

*[The Garibaldi Hymn is heard, and Italy, clad
as a man of the Bersiglieri, enters.]*

THE NATIONS

Hail Italy!

TRUTH

These greet thee, Italy, as one lost, and now
From the foe's camps recovered.

ITALY

I was unto a triple bondage vowed,
Unnaturally, forced by the hand of steel
That did compel submission. I was pledged
To Germany and Austria for defence.
I never vowed to join offensive war
Nor help marauders raid a peaceful world.
Therefore my vows I now cast off, and from
My shield I do erase their black device,
Remembering well the Austrian yoke, and well
The red injustice of the Austrian law.
And now
To carry back to my imprisoned kin
The shield of their United Italy,
I send my sons to mark the Alpine snows
With scarlet, and to flutter the high air
With wings that beat and soar for Liberty.

LIBERTY

And I do take thee back, true Italy
Into my favor and my heritage.

*[The Chopin Funeral March is heard, and a
figure cloaked and veiled in black moves slowly
into the centre of the court. She is Poland.]*

TRUTH

Look now on one who comes remembering

Through all her years of bondage and division,
Liberty, thy star.

P O L A N D

I too
Have felt a triple bondage, I have grown
Gray in my heart's division. You with flags
Still kissing in the wind, go past me, gay
With battle glories. You forget me now,
Who once was blithe as you amongst the nations.
But for me,
In the long silence since my voice was heard,
I forget never; but my sons, my sons
Remembering not, but burning still with wrath,
Clash swords and slay each other, and I weep,
For pillaged lands neath sweeping sudden flags.

*[Now the black veil slips from the impearled
head dress, and from the parted robe a gleam of
rose and blue appears.]*

But lo, when the storm breaks and the lightning flames,
New fires, new hopes are lighted in my heart,
And I, who never lost from my dear dreams
Thy faith undying, Liberty, I rise,
And casting off the years, call unto thee,
And unto Justice, and these warring lands,
What shall be Poland's fate, what shall the dawn
Beyond the night bring home to me?

*[She drops from her the black garments, and
stands young and glowing.]*

R U S S I A

I pledge thee, Poland, justice when my hour
Shall serve to send it.

L I B E R T Y

Now is the world arrayed
For me against the might of despotism.

T R U T H

Not all as yet, nor all the struggle needs,
Nor undivided stand they.

LIBERTY

Two more come yonder.

[*Enter Portugal and Roumania.*]

PORTUGAL

I for the Portuguese Republic lend my power
To these who for Democracy lift spears.

ROUMANIA

And I, Roumania, give my golden fields,
And the rich flowing of mine oil-streaked hills
To these Allies. And by the Slavic ranks
I set my banners.

LIBERTY

Now Truth, behold, and Justice raise with me
Your voice in joy. So much of the free world
Leagues here that surely there can be no end
But in the victory of the free born.

TRUTH

O blind and trusting Liberty, O stern
And slothful Justice, hearken now to Truth.
I marshall here the dark and threatening days,
The days of war. The foe is strong. His heart
Remembers not the mercies of his peace.
Look with mine eyes, and see the trenches deepen
Year long and wide as the abyss of doom.
See the tall ships that shudder at the stroke
Of the death blast. Now greatest of all these,
The Lusitania, warm with trusting folk,
Throbbing with hateless hearts,
The fiery creeping thing betrays
To the chill ooze and darkness of the sea.

[*As Truth speaks; the Nations bend low as to a storm.*]

Justice, who strikes—who strikes for this foul murder?
None. The foe is strong. And the torn skies
And the blue under-wave resist him not.

And now new words of death, new warnings
Insolently flung in the world's face
He lashes forth. League well, O nations,
But remember well: The foe is strong
And pitiless, and unimaginably armed.
Not by loud trumpets shall this fight be won,
Nor by just causes only. Think on this
And meditate the last and desperate thrust
That shall win all for Liberty and Justice.
Or lose the world and all its sovereignties.

E N G L A N D

My sinking ships on all the seas go down
Heeding thee, Truth.

R U S S I A

My wavering line of ruin cries you true.

B E L G I U M

And all my tears and all my children's tears

S E R V I A

And my lost kingdom and my shattered hope

F R A N C E

And the white faces of my bloodless dead.

T R U T H

And I, who see the truth of all these things
Can but lament for life locked fast to death,
And the years running red with waste.

L I B E R T Y

I will not yield to thy black vision, Truth,
Not yet shall life go down. I call
To my strong daughter in the dreaming West.
Call to America.

J U S T I C E

And I my voice
Lift, and when Justice calls, Democracy
Will not refrain her hand.

America, come forth and strike and save
For the world crumbles in its bitter need.

TRUTH

Listen, and wait.

*[In the Russian group voices are heard crying
"Down——Down with the Imperial Power——
Down"! The imperial figure of Russia staggers
forward out of the rising wave of violence.]*

RUSSIA

What tumult shakes my heart? I reel,
I fall.

*[As Russia falls, a new figure, a girl, wild and
breathless, is disclosed over him by the sudden
drawing back of the group. She is the New
Russia.]*

THE NEW RUSSIA

I grope with eager hands to the new fire,
I blink at unaccustomed light, I start
At the strange sound of freedom. What is this?
This war of terrors, that my peasant blood
Should shower these grisly trenches dug
From Riga to the Bessarabian coast.
What fearful vows have I inherited—
What leagues and perils—I who now am free?

LIBERTY

Now art thou mine, and I will guide thy steps.

THE NEW RUSSIA

Not there—not there!
Dwells not peace with Liberty?

LIBERTY

I have loved peace, but deeper have loved life.
Look forward. Gird your new-found freedom's sword
To meet again your ancient adversary.

THE NEW RUSSIA

Is this the same—this threatening sleepless foe?

LIBERTY

The same, but stronger, and against my star
More venomous.

NEW RUSSIA

What hope—what light—what haven lifts to me?

TRUTH

Behold, a child—a wondering, 'wildered, child
Standing alone to guard the longest line.

POLAND

And I between her and the flaming hate,
Crushed and forgotten.

FRANCE

Fight on, fight on—'til the last heart be cleft.

ROUMANIA

How shall the future years redeem this hour
Of our despair?

ARMENIA

The future years are come, and they are black
With night and ruin.

BELGIUM

What hope—what light? for we are swept with death.

[Trumpets are heard, blowing martially.]

THE NEW RUSSIA

What sound is that?

LIBERTY

My child—my daughter in the dreaming West,
Awakes!

*[Enter America, followed by young men, soldiers.
As America takes her place, all cry out—*

ALL

Hail, America!

A M E R I C A

My brothers, I, America, answer your call with trumpets.
My sisters, I, America, pulse to your pain with tears.
The foe is strong. But strong hearts are my sons,
Who give their arms to-day to this good fight,
To battle-chance and star of victory.
O nations leagued with Liberty, I come.
I draw for justice an unvenomed sword,
And I salute you, comrades, pledging you
I will not sheathe until the cause be won
And we attain through strife the lasting peace
Of Freedom under the great hand of God.

*[The Star Spangled Banner is sung; then the
pageant vanishes into darkness.]*

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