

PR

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K5W55



William Tell

by

J. Sheridan Knowles.

1825?

As Collins

WILLIAM TELL:

A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

5
447

BY JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES, Esq.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre Royal Drury Lane,

MAY 11, 1825.

LONDON:

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Price Three Shillings and Sixpence.

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DEDICATION.

TO GENERAL MINA.

ILLUSTRIOUS MAN,

TO YOU I DEDICATE THE PLAY

OF

WILLIAM TELL.

WHO WILL DEMAND MY REASONS?

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

GLASGOW, MAY 6, 1825.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

AUSTRIANS.

Gesler, <i>Governor of the Waldstetten,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. ARCHER.
Sarnem, <i>his Lieutenant,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. THOMSON.
Struth, <i>his Seneschal,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. GATTIE.
Rodolph,	}	<i>his Castellains,</i>	-	-	-	MR. COMER.
Lutold,						MR. HOWELL.
Gerard,						MR. FENTON.
Braun, <i>Servant to the Seneschal,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. KNIGHT.
Anneli, <i>Step-daughter to the Seneschal,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MISS POVEY.
Agnes, <i>her Cousin,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MRS. YATES.

Archers, &c. &c. &c.

SWISS.

William Tell,	-	-	-	-	-	MR. MACREADY.
Albert, <i>his Son,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MISS C. FISHER.
Melchtal, <i>Erni's Father,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. YOUNGE.
Erni,	}	<i>Patriots in league with Tell,</i>	-	-	-	MR. WEBSTER.
Furst,						MR. ARMSTRONG.
Verner,						MR. MERCER.
Waldman, <i>a Burgher of Altorf,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. HUGHES.
Michael, <i>his Son,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. WALLACK.
Jagheli, <i>Michael's Friend,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MR. PENLEY.
Pierre,	}	<i>Inhabitants of Altorf,</i>	-	-	-	MR. YARNOLD.
Theodore,						MR. O. SMITH.
<i>Savoyards</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MASTER EDMONDS.
						MR. FITZWILLIAM.
						MR. FOSTER.
Emma, <i>Tell's Wife,</i>	-	-	-	-	-	MRS. BUNN.

Burghers, Mountaineers, Women, &c.

SCENE—Altorf and the neighbouring Mountains.

WILLIAM TELL.



WILLIAM TELL,

Act 3rd Scene 3rd

TELL, BEHOLD YE ARE FREE.

of Altorf.

lead a life
his,
e
e boy,
eless name
nd games,
g as thou
t comes of

thee place

esteem?
hairs?

Father!

run

s, which
t a child,
e a man,
e call'd

p
urvey those

THINK of the tyrants whom they lodge, and then

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Gesler, *Gover*
Sarnem, *his L*
Struth, *his Ser*
Rodolph, }
Lutold, }
Gerard, }
Braun, *Serva*
Anneli, *Step-d*
Agnes, *her Cl*

William Tell
Albert, *his S*
Melchtal, *Er*
Erni, }
Furst, }
Verner, }
Waldman, *a*
Michael, *his*
Jagheli, *Mic*
Pierre, }
Theodore, }

Savoyards

Emma, *Tell's*

SCEN

WILLIAM TELL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Outside of the Castle of Altorf.
Alpine Scenery in the back Ground.*

Enter WALDMAN and MICHAEL.

Wald. Don't tell me, Michael! thou dost lead a life
As bootless as a jester's—worse than his,
For he has high retaining. Every one
Calls thee his fool—the gallant and the boy,
The gentle-born and base! Thy graceless name
Is ever tagg'd to feasts, and shows, and games,
And saucy brawls, which men as young as thou
Discourse of with grave looks. What comes of
this?

Will't make thee rich? Will't give thee place
in life?

Will't buy thee honour, friendship, or esteem?

Will't get thee reverence against gray hairs?

Mich. Father!

Wald. The current of thy life doth counter run
To that of other men's. "Thy spirits, which
"Were reason in thee, when thou wast a child,
"As tameless still, now thou'rt become a man,
"Are folly! thriftless life, that may be call'd
"More rational when in the nurse's lap
"Than when in manhood's chair." Survey those
towers,

And act the revel o'er of yesternight.

Think of the tyrants whom they lodge, and then

Link hands with fools and braggarts o'er their
 wine,
 Fancy the sounds their dungeons hear, and tell
 Of such and such a jest of thine, that made
 Thy wanton comrades roar.

Mich. Dear father!

Wald. Pshaw!

Thou canst not try to speak with gravity,
 But one perceives thou wagg'st an idle tongue;
 Thou canst not try to look demure, but, spite
 Of all thou dost, thou show'st a laugher's cheek:
 Thou canst not e'en essay to walk sedate,
 But in thy very gait one sees the jest,
 That's ready to break out in spite of all
 Thy seeming.

Mich. I'm a melancholy man,
 That can't do that which with good will I would!
 I pray thee, father, tell me what will change me?

Wald. Change thee!

Hire thyself to a sexton, and dig graves:
 Never keep company but at funerals:
 Beg leave to take thy bed into the church,
 And sleep there: fast, until thine abstinence
 Upbraid the anchorite with gluttony;
 "List to the music of a passing bell"—

Mich. But if

The bells, that ring as readily for joy
 As grief, should chance to ring a merry peal—

Wald. Then take the rope,
 And hang thyself: [*crosses*] I know no other way
 To change thee.

Mich. Nay, I'll do some great feat yet.

Wald. You'll do some great feat! Take me Gesler's
 castle!

Mich. Humph! that would be a feat, indeed!—I'll
 do it!

Wald. You'll do it? you'll get married, and have
 children,

And be a sober citizen, before
 You pare your bread o' the crust. You'll do it?
 You'll

Do nothing! Live till you are a hundred,

When death shall catch you, 'twill be laughing.
Do it?

Look grave, talk wise, live sober, thou wilt do
A harder thing, but that thou 'lt never do. [*Exit*

WALDMAN.]

Mich. [*solus.*] Hard sentence, that! Dame Nature!
gentle mother,

If thou hast made me of too rich a mould
To bring the common seed of life to fruit,
Is it a fault? Kind Nature, I should lie
To say it was. Who would not have an eye
To see the sun, where others see a cloud;
A skin so temper'd as to feel the rain,
Gave other men the ague, him refresh'd;
A frame so vernal, as, in spite of snow,
To think it genial summer all year round;
And bask himself in bleak December's scowl,
While other's sit and shiver o'er a hearth?

I do not know the fool would not be such
A man! Shall I upbraid my heart because
It hath been so intent to keep me in
An ample revenue of golden mirth,
It hath forgot to hoard the duller coin
The world doth trade on? No, not I, not I.
Yet here comes that, despite my wealth of mirth,
Can make a beggar of me! Father, could
You see me now, you 'd find me sans a smile
In all my jester's scrip.

Enter GESLER'S Archers, escorting some Swiss Peasants, Prisoners to the Castle, across the Stage, and enter a porch, TELL at a short distance, following them.

Tell. [*to Michael, who is looking after them.*] Do you
know them?

Mich. No.

Tell. Nor I, thank heaven! How like you that?

Mich. What?

Tell. That?

Mich. I like it not.

Tell. It might as well be you or I.

Mich. It might.

Tell. Do you live in Altorf?

Mich. Yes.

Tell. How go they on
In Altorf?

Mich. As you see. What was a sight
A month ago, hath not the wonder now
To draw them 'cross the threshold!

Tell. Would you like—

Mich. What would't thou say to me?

Tell. No matter, friend.
Something so slight, that in the thinking on 't
'Twas gone.—The field of Grutli, Tell!—the
hour's

At head! The spirits are expecting thee
Shall bring thy country back the times again
She'd wonder this to see! [*going.*]

Mich. Stay, friend! a word.
If of my mind thou haply art, and think'st,
When fortune will not make us theme of mirth,
Ourselves may take the task in hand—

Tell. For what?

Good day. [*Exit hastily.*]

Mich. Acquaintance briefly broke as made!
Take Gesler's castle, did my father say?
Would I were well within the ramparts, and
At large as now!—I might do such a thing.—
Soft! Who comes here? Jagheli! Ha! a youth
That's tender as a love-sick damsel's sigh.
What brings him sighing here? The Seneschal
Has a fair daughter! Friend Jagheli, mind
Thy secret! Half on 't I have got already
Without thy leave; the rest thyself shalt give me.
[*Retires.*]

Enter JAGHELI and Savoyard.

Jag. You know the air, I'm sure! 'tis very sweet:
The young musician who composed it loved;
But 'twas a bootless flame!—You must have
heard
The story? It is said he taught the lady,
Who was of high degree, and made that strain
To sing to her the love he dared not speak:—

Do n't you remember it?—Draw thy hand
 Across the strings, and wake thy saddest chord,
 Perchance 'twill mind me of it. Thou hast hit it:
 See if the rhymes I've strung for it agree.

[*Savoyard sings.*

Lady, why are you so fair?
 Though to love is madness, still
 Who beholds you can't forbear,
 But adores against his will.

Reason warns the heart in vain;
 Headlong passion won't obey:
 Hope's deceived, and sighs again;
 Love's abjured, yet holds its sway.

Mich. [*Coming forward.*] I pray you have the ditty
 o'er again!

Of all the strains that mewing minstrels sing,
 The lover's one for me. I could expire
 To hear a man, with bristles on his chin,
 Sing soft with upturn'd eyes and arched brows,
 Which talk of trickling tears that never fall.
 Let's have it o'er again.

Jag. To make thee mirth?
 When I'm thy lacquey, honest Michael, I'll
 Provide thee music. There, with thanks to boot.
 [Gives money.
 I an not in thy pay. [*Exit Savoyard*

Mich. No; but I mean
 To take thee into it.—Wilt thou hire with me?
 Nay, hang thy coyness, man! Why, thinkest thou
 Thou art the only man in Altorf knows
 The Seneschal has a fair daughter?

Jag. Fair
 Or not, she's naught to me.

Mich. Indeed? O, then
 I'll tell her so!

I pray thee tell me, hath she not black teeth?

Jag. Thou know'st 'twould take the pearl to challenge
 them.

Mich. Her nose, I think, is somewhat set awry?

Jag. It sits like dignity on beauty's face.

Mich. Her hair is a dull black?

Jag. 'Tis shining gold!

Mich. Her figure's squat?

Jag. Betwixt the full and slim.

A mould where vie the richest charms of both!

Mich. Well, then, she hobbles in her gait?

Jag. She moves the light and flexible chamois,
If you could lend the chamois her beauty,
And add to that her modest stateliness.

Mich. You are a hopeful painter, sir! How well
You've drawn the daughter of the Seneschal!

Jag. Good Michael, thou'rt a jester; but thou'rt kind.
Thy mirth doth feast at every man's expense;
Yet with such grace of frankest confidence,
That none begrudge thee. Wilt thou be my friend?
I love the daughter of the Seneschal!
Help me to see her.

Mich. Come to church with me
Next Sunday.

Jag. I was there last Sunday, Michael—
And Sunday before last—and Sunday, too,
Preceding that.

Mich. How wondrously devout thou'rt grown of late!
'Thou'lt have a name for most rare sanctity!

Jag. Good Michael, canst thou help me?

Mich. If I knew
The lady.

Jag. What! dost thou not know her, then?
With what impediments is love environ'd!
Why—

Mich. Why that's love's gain: it would not else
be love.

They know not love who need but woo to wed,
But they who fain would wed, but dare not woo!
That's to be sound in love—to feel it from
The heart's deep centre to the fingers' ends.
As sweetest fruit is that which is forbid,
So fairest maid is she that is withheld.
When I *do* fall in love, I'll pick a maid
Whose sire has vow'd her to a nunnery;
And she shall have, moreover, for her warders
Two maiden aunts past wooing; and to these

I'll add an Abigail, has bridesmaid stood
 To twenty younger cousins, yet has ne'er
 Been ask'd herself; and under her I'll set
 A male retainer of the family
 For twenty years or more—as surly as
 A mastiff on the chain; and, that my fair
 May lack no sweet provocative of love,
 Her tempting lattice shall be grated, and
 Her bower shall be surrounded with a wall
 Full ten feet high, on which an iron row
 Of forked shrubs shall stand and beckon me—
 And then I'll be a lover.

Jag. Show me how
 Thou 'd'st win thy love by winning mine for me.

Mich. Hush! here's the servant of the Seneschal;
 A dog he sends on errands without brains
 To take them half a yard.—What! would'st
 attempt
 To win the daughter of the Seneschal?
 Would'st enter Gesler's castle?

Jag. Yes!

Mich. The man—
 The very man for me!—Aside and mark!

[*They retire.*]

Enter BRAUN from porch.

Braun. Three yards of buckram—right! Thread
 thereunto—

But how much thread?—a hank?—a hank's too
 much

To sew three yards of buckram!—It must be
 A skein. A skein it is.—Right there! What next?
 Twelve buckles, with the straps—that is, twelve
 straps.

O very right! In the fourth place, a score
 Of needles—twenty needles to the score.
 I'm right again, by that! And lastly—what
 Comes lastly? Something is behind, I know,
 For I bethought me of my fingers to

Enter SENESCHAL.

Remember, there were five things I should get ;
 And what's the fifth ? Or, have I counted wrong ?
 There's buckram, one,—thread, two ; a skein of
 thread,

Twelve buckles, and the straps—the straps and
 they

Do go together—three : the fourth thing is
 A score of needles. There's my little finger
 Remaining yet. I'd give my hand to know
 For what that finger stands.

Sen. [*Coming forward.*] What stands it for ?

Braun. Dear master !

Sen. Dolt !

Braun. Kind master !

Sen. Jackanapes !

What stands it for ?

Braun. I'll tell, and give me time.

Sen. What time ? a day ? a week ? a month ? a year ?
 Or till my daughter's dead ?

Braun. I was to fetch
 A leech unto your daughter.

Sen. Wast thou so ?
 Wilt thou forget again ?

Braun. No, sir !

Sen. Thou wilt !
 Or that, or something else.

Braun. Indeed, sir, no !

Sen. Then say thy errand o'er again ! Say't out !
 See thou art right in every tittle on't,
 Or look to't ; Now !

Braun. Three yards of buckram—

Sen. No !
 Begin with the leech.

Braun. I set the leech against
 My little finger, sir.

Sen. Begin with him.

Braun. My little finger, sir, stood for the leech.

Sen. I say begin with the leech !

Braun. I will ! I will !

Well, then, the leech. I go to bring him to

My lady, your daughter, for she's sick.

Sen.

Go on.

Mich. [*Aside to JAGHELI.*] Jagheli, thou must play
the leech! Away! [*Exit JAGHELI.*]

Sen. Go on.

Braun. I am to fetch three yards of buckram;
Twelve buckles, and the straps; and, to conclude,
A score of needles.

Sen. [*Striking him.*] Rascal, where's the thread
To sew the buckram? Bring'st thou needles, fool!
And not the thread?—Eh, starling? Eh? Wilt sew
The buckram without thread?

Mich. [*Coming forward and striking him.*] Eh? ras-
cal! Eh?

Heard ever mortal man the like of this?
Eh, platter! tankard! nightcap! Good for naught
Except to eat, and drink, and sleep! Forget
Thy errand! Serve thy worthy master thus!
Thy patient master! thy kind master!—Get
Three meals a day, thy lodging, clothing, hire,
And civil words to boot, and yet not be
Trust-worthy to the fetching of a skein
Of thread! Eh? Stomach! Master Seneschal,
I'll run your errand straight. [*Crosses.*] A leech,
three yards
Of buckram, thread a skein, a gross of needles—
Bring needles without thread! Eh? gullet!—and
A dozen buckles with the straps.

Sen.

Good lad!

What art thou, prithee?

Mich.

Sir, a sober youth,
Son to a worthy burgher of the town;
Was brought up in a monastery, has
Read Greek and Latin, knows to cast accounts,
And writes a hand as good as any clerk's
In Altorf, sir; with sundry other gifts,
As people say, but which 'twere not discreet
In me to speak of.

Sen. Why, a modest lad. Dost want a service?

Mich.

Not as varlets want
A service, sir, who let their duty out
For coin: I have enough; but I would serve

For love at any time, especially
The Seneschal of Altorf. Shall I run
Your errand?

Sen. Why, a model of a youth!
Thou shalt. Give him the money, sir.

Braun. The money!

Mich. Ay, Sit-over-meals! can I provide the things
Without the money?

Sen. Rascal! where's the money?

Braun. I put it in this pocket, sir; I'm sure
I put in in this pocket.

Sen. Come! where is it?

Braun. Or could it be in this?

Sen. The money!

Braun. Yes, sir.

Sen. Thy vest:—try that! The money, sirrah!

Braun. Good, sir, this instant!

Sen. Instant, dog! Wilt swear
Thou 'lt find it in an hour?

Mich. Or in a day.

Eh? Lack-grace! knave! incorrigible knave,
To chafe so sweet a temper'd gentleman!

What's that thou keep'st the last three fingers of
Thy careful hand upon?

Braun. The money! There's
The money.

Sen. Give it him!

Mich. A patch! a rag!

A tatter of a serving man! to carry
His master's money in his greasy hand,
Instead of lodging 't in a safe and comely purse!
I'll run your errand, sir. Three yards of buckram,
A skein of thread, a score of needles, and
Twelve buckles with straps; not to forget
To bring a leech to see your daughter, sir.
A turnspit cur! I'll run your errand, sir.

[*Exeunt* SENESCHAL, BRAUN, and MICHAEL.]

SCENE II.—*The Field of Grutli—a Lake and Mountains.*

Enter TELL.

Tell. Ye crags and peaks, I'm with you once again!
 I hold to you the hands you first beheld,
 To show they still are free. Methinks I hear
 A spirit in your echoes answer me,
 And bid your tenant welcome to his home
 Again!—O sacred forms, how proud you look!
 How high you lift your heads into the sky!
 How huge you are! how mighty and how free!
 Ye are the things that tower, that shine—whose
 smile
 Makes glad—whose frown is terrible—whose
 forms,
 Robed or unrobed, do all the impress wear
 Of awe divine. Ye guards of liberty,
 I'm with you once again!—I call to you
 With all my voice!—I hold my hands to you
 To show they still are free. I rush to you
 As though I could embrace you!

Erni. [*Without.*]

William! William

Tell. Here, Erni, here!

ERNI enters.

Erni. You're sure to keep the time,
 That comes before the hour.

Tell. The hour
 Will soon be here. O when will liberty
 Be here, my Erni? That's my thought, which still
 I find beside. Scaling yonder peak,
 I saw an eagle wheeling near its brow
 O'er the abyss:—his broad-expanded wings
 Lay calm and motionless upon the air,
 As if he floated there without their aid,
 By the sole act of his unlorded will,

That buoy'd him proudly up. Instinctively
I bent my bow; yet kept he rounding still
His airy circle, as in the delight
Of measuring the ample range beneath,
And round about absorb'd, he heeded not
The death that threaten'd him.—I could not
shoot!—

'Twas liberty!—I turned my bow aside,
And let him soar away!

Verner. [*Without.*] Tell!—Tell!

Tell. [*Crosses to him.*] Here, Verner!

Furst. [*Without.*] Tell!

Tell. Here, worthy Furst.

Enter VERNER and FURST.

Here, friends!—Well met!—Do we go on?

Ver. We do.

Tell. Then you can count upon the friends you named?

Ver. On every man of them.

Furst. And I on mine.

Erni. Not one I sounded, but doth count his blood
As water in the cause! Then fix the day
Before we part.

Ver. No, Erni; rather wait
For some new outrage to amaze and rouse
The common mind, which does not brood so much
On wrongs gone by, as it doth quiver with
The sense of present ones.

Tell. [*To VERNER.*] I wish with Erni,
But think with thee. Yet when I ask myself
On whom the wrong shall light for which we wait—
Whose vineyard they'll uproot—whose flocks
they'll ravage—
Whose threshold they'll profane—whose hearth
pollute—
Whose roof they'll fire?—When this I ask myself,
And think upon the blood of pious sons,
The tears of venerable fathers, and
The shrieks of mothers, fluttering round their
spoil'd
And nestless young—I almost take the part
Of generous indignation, that doth blush
At such expense to wait on sober prudence.

Furst. Yet it is best.

Tell. On that we 're all agreed!
Who fears the issue when the day shall come?

Ver. Not I!

Furst. Nor I!

Erni. Nor I!

Tell. I 'm not the man
To mar this harmony. Nor I, no more
Than any of you! You commit to me
The warning of the rest. Remember, then,
My dagger sent to any one of you,
As time may press, is word enough:—the others
I'll see myself. Our course is clear—Dear Erni.
Remember me to Melctal. [*Crosses.*] Furst, provide
What store you can of arms. Do you the same.

[*To ERNI and VERNER.*

The next aggression of the tyrant is
The downfall of his power!—Remember me
To Melctal, Erni;—to *my* father. Tell him
He has a son was never born to him!
Farewell!—When next we meet upon this theme,
All Switzerland shall witness what we do!

[*Exeunt TELL and the rest.*

SCENE III.—*A Chamber in the inside of the Castle,
with an open Window.*

Enter ANNELI and AGNES.

An. Art sure thou heard'st him?

Ag. Do I hear you, coz?
As sure did I hear him, and see him, too,
From yonder casement.

An. Sweet! look out again:
Perhaps he'll still be there.

Ag. I wonder, cousin,
You'd send another's eyes to look for that
You'd give your own to see! You silly thing!
Look out yourself.

An. Ah, sweet! look out for me,

For should he not be there, 'twill pain me less
To miss him by your eyes than by my own.

Ag. Well, lend me your hand,
To help me up. Dear love, you tremble so
You 'll pull me down! O silly, silly thing,
To be so scared at what you so desire!

An. Fear, coz, you know, is offspring to desire.

Ag. A gentle mother to a froward child!
Love finds out wonders, coz; but find not I
The thing I look for. No; he is not there.

An. Nay, look again.

Ag. I cannot make him there
By looking, coz—could you?

An. I would I could!
I 'd look my eyes blind till he came.

Ag. Indeed!
And see him then?

An. And see him then! the thought
That I might see him then would bring me back
My sight.

Ag. It would! O, wonder-working love!
I would not have you risk your sight, dear coz;
But I would have you try another thing.
You 'd run no risk to love, unless they wrong
Our sex, who say it's voice is lasting as
'Tis sweet. Sing, coz; he'll hear and come.
Come, sing.

An. Sing, cousin!

Ag. Ay.

An. Am I not sick?—confined
To my own chamber—sick, coz—doubly sick
For fear of one, I would not wed, for love
Of one I would? Have they not sent just now
To bring the leech to see me? And you 'd have
Me sing! O, thoughtless coz!

Ag. For too much thought,
Never at rest to do my cousin good,
Did I not bid thee hate the Castellain,
When thou didst say thou couldst not love him,
coz?

Did I not bid thee love the burgher's son,
When thou didst say, thou never couldst hate him?
And when thy father swore he 'd have thee wed,

And thou didst say thou'dst sooner die than wed,
 Did I not bid thee, coz, fall sick at once,
 And die? And now, when to the casement comes
 The man thou d'st wish the casement, door, and all
 Were open to, would I not have thee sing,
 To let him know there's neither bolt nor bar?

An. What shall I sing? the ballad, love,
 I learn'd last Saturday?

O well you ride, Sir Knight! O well
 Your courser you bestride;
 But you'd ride better, could you tell
 Who sees you as you ride.

Not your lady, Sir Knight—Not your lady, Sir Knight—
 But her father, who wishes you far out of sight.

O well you sing, Sir Knight, O well
 Your ditty you rehearse;
 But you'd sing better could you tell
 Who lists your tender verse.

Not your lady, Sir Knight—Not your lady, Sir Knight—
 But your rival, who's fretting and fuming for spite.

O well you climb, Sir Knight, O well
 You climb to your lady's bower;
 But you'd climb better could you tell
 Who sees you scale the tower.

'Tis your lady, Sir Knight—'Tis your lady, Sir Knight—
 Who wishes the tower were not half the height.

O fast you fly, Sir Knight, O fast
 You urge your laden steed;
 But you'd ride slower, if you guess'd
 How little is the need.

They have turned to the left—you have taken the right—
 And you should be wedding, not riding, Sir Knight.

Enter the SENESCHAL.

Sen. How now! What's this? Ha! singing at the
 casement? Anneli here!

Ag. I woo'd her from her chamber: change, they say,
 Is physic to the sick, when medicine
 More costly's virtueless!

Sen. What, Anneli! art better, girl?

An. No, sir.

Sen. Better or worse I'll have thee soon. The leech
Will strait be here—he should be coming now.
Thy chamber!

An. [to Agnes.] Should he find I am not ill!

Ag. He'll find he's not a ducat richer by it,
So never fear:—he'll find thee very ill.
If thou'rt not well until he makes thee so,
Thou shalt be sick, coz, to thy heart's content.

(*Exit* ANNELI.)

Sen. Agnes.

Ag. Yes, sir.

Sen. What says thy cousin?

Ag. Naught, sir.

Sen. What didst thou say to her?

Ag. I told her, sir,
To keep her heart up, and not fear the leech.

Sen. Not fear the leech!

Ag. E'er since you spoke of him
She has done nothing, sir, but talk of lancets,
Caustics, and blisters; powders, nauseous
draughts;
With fifty other shocking things, that much
I fear me, sir, she will feign well to cheat
The leech.

Sen. Ha, think'st thou so?

Ag. I'm sure on't.
She has been practising e'er since you named him.

Sen. I thought she look'd much better!

Ag. Better, sir! She's worse, much worse.
In short, she's going—going, sir; and yet
She'd sooner die than undergo the leech.

Sen. Ne'er fear, ne'er fear; she shall not cheat him so.
I'll not believe him. Though he says she's well,
I'll make him think her ill. No drug he has
But shall be fully tried on her; his pills,
Emplastrums, ointments, julaps, cataplasms,
Shall take their turn with her; and, if these fail,
We'll bring his knives and lancets to her; nor,
When all is done, shall he give o'er, until
She's well again, and weds the Castellain.

BRAUN *entering.*

Braun. The leech is here, sir.

Enter MICHAEL, *with* JAGHELI *disguised as a leech.*

Mich. Sir, I've brought the gentleman,
And all the articles you bade me get.

Sen. Good lad, and active. [*Crosses to* JAGHELI] Wel-
come, sir! Methinks

He's very young! Art sure he is
A leech?

Mich. A leech, sir!—such a leech as not
His fellow can be found in Altorf, sir.
Remember, sir, it is the use of time,
Not time itself that's written in our looks.

Forty is younger far than twenty, sir,
When that sees husbandry, but this does not.
But never take my word for 't; only try
His lancet—do, sir—'tis miraculous
How skilfully he can phlebotomize.
No scratch, sir, prick of a pin, or flea-bite, sir,
But real blade-work. Let him bleed you, sir.

Sen. No, no; on second looks, methinks he's not
So young.

Mich. Past forty, sir.

Sen. Past forty! Come,
Take ten from that.

Mich. Ten, sir! I pray you, lady,
Provide a ribbon for the Seneschal,
And something soft to make a compress of.

[*Exit* AGNES.]

Ten do you say, sir? Ten? Ten years ago
He bled and blistered me—I'll shew you, sir,
The mark of his lancet.

Sen. Nay, good youth, don't strip
Thy sleeve.

Mich. Strip yours, then, sir, and let him try
His lancet on you. Fetch a basin, rascal!

[*Exit* BRAUN.]

'Twill do you good, sir: for a healthy man,
You're over-full of blood. Your cheek's a tint

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Tell's Cottage on the right of a Mountain: a distant view of a Lake, backed by Mountains of stupendous height, their tops covered with snow, and lighted at the very points by the rising Sun; the rest of the distance being yet in shade. On one side a Vineyard.*

Enter EMMA from the cottage.

Emma. O, the fresh morning! Heaven's kind messenger.

That never empty-handed comes to those
 Who know to use its gifts.—Praise be to him
 Who loads it still, and bids it constant run
 The errand of his bounty!—"Praise be to him!"
 "We need his care that on the mountain's cliff
 "Lodge by the storm, and cannot lift our eyes,
 "But piles on piles of everlasting snows,
 "O'erhanging us, remind us of his mercy."

ALBERT appears on an eminence.

Alb. My mother!

Emma. Albert!

Alb. [*Descending and approaching EMMA.*] Bless thee!

Emma. Bless thee, Albert!

How early were you up?

Alb. Before the sun.

Emma. Ay, strive with him. He never lies a-bed
 When it is time to rise. He ever is
 The constant'st workman, that goes through his
 task,

And shows us how to work by setting to 't

With smiling face ; for labour 's light as ease
That cheerfulness doth take in hand. Be like
The sun.

Alb. What you would have me like, I 'll be like,
As far as will, to labour join'd, can make me.

Emma. Well said, my boy ! "Kneel you when you
got up
" To-day ?

Alb. " I did ; and do so every day.

Emma. " I know you do ! And think you, when you
kneel,
" To whom you kneel ?

Alb. " To HIM who made me, mother.

Emma. " And in whose name ?

Alb. " The name of him, who died
" For me and all men, that all men and I
" Should live.

Emma. " That 's right. Remember that, my son :
" Forget all things but that—Remember that !
" 'Tis more than friends or fortune ; clothing, food ;
" All things of earth ; yea, life itself !—It is
" To live when these are gone, where they are
nought
" With God ! My son, remember that !

Alb. I will !"

Emma. You have been early up, when I, that play'd
The sluggard in comparison, am up
Full early ; for the highest peaks alone,
As yet, behold the sun. Now tell me what
You ought to think on, when you see the sun
So shining on the peak ?

Alb. That as the peak
Feels not the pleasant sun, or feels it least ;
So they, who highest stand in fortune's smile,
Are gladden'd by it least, or not at all !

Emma. And what 's the profit you should turn this to ?

Alb. Rather to place my good in what I have,
That think it worthless, wishing to have more :
For more is not more happiness, so oft
As less.

Emma. I'm glad you husband what you 're taught.
That is the lesson of content, my son ;

He who finds which, has all—who misses, nothing.

Alb. Content is a good thing.

Emma. A thing, the good
Alone can profit by.

Alb. My father's good.

Emma. What say'st thou, boy?

Alb. I say my father's good.

Emma. Yes; he is good! what then?

Alb. I do not think

He is content—I'm sure he's not content;

Nor would I be content, were I a man,

And Gesler seated on the rock of Altorf!

A man may lack content, and yet be good.

Emma. I did not say all good men found content.—

I would be busy; leave me.

Alb. You're not angry?

Emma. No, no, my boy.

Alb. You'll kiss me?

Emma. Will I not!

The time will come you will not ask your mother

To kiss you!

Alb. Never!

Emma. Not when you're a man?

Alb. I'll never be a man to see that time:

I'd rather die, now when I am a child,

Than live to be a man, and not love you!

Emma. Live—live to be a man, and love your mother!

[*They embrace—ALBERT runs off into the cottage.*

Why should my heart sink? 'tis for this we rear
them;

Cherish their tiny limbs; pine if a thorn

But mar their tender skin; gather them to us

Closer than miser hugs his bag of gold;

Bear more for them than slave, who makes his
flesh

A casket for the rich, purloined gem—

To send them forth into a wintry world,

To brave its flaws and tempests!—They must go!

Far better, then, they go with hearty will!

Be that my consolation.—Nestling as

He is, he is the making of a bird

Will own no cowering wing. 'Twas fine—'twas fine

To see my eaglet on the verge o' the nest,
Ruffling himself at sight of the big gulf
He feels anon he'll have the wing to soar.

[*Re-enter ALBERT, with a bow and arrows, and a rude target, which he sets up during the first lines, laying his bow and quiver on the ground.*]

What have you there ?

Alb. My bow and arrows, mother.

Emma. When will you use them like your father, boy ?

Alb. Sometime, I hope.

Emma. You brag! There's not an archer
In all Helvetia can compare with him.

Alb. But I'm his son ; and when I am a man,
I may be like him. Mother, do I brag,
To think I sometime may be like my father ?
If so, then is it he that teaches me ;
For ever as I wonder at his skill,
He calls me boy, and says I must do more
Ere I become a man.

Emma. May you be such
A man as he—if heaven wills, better—I'll
Not quarrel with its work ; yet 'twill content me
If you are only such a man.

Alb. I'll show you
How I can shoot. Look, mother! there's within
An inch!

Emma. O fy! it wants a hand.

[*Going into the cottage.*]

Alb. A hand's
An inch for me. I'll hit it yet. Now for it!

[*While ALBERT continues to shoot, the light gradually approaches the base of the mountains in the distance, and spreads itself over the lake and valley. TELL enters, and watches ALBERT some time in silence.*]

Tell. That's scarce amiss that comes so near the mark!
Well aim'd, young archer! With what ease he
bends

The bow! To see those sinews, who'd believe
Such strength did lodge in them? Well aim'd
again!

There plays the skill will thin the chamois herd,
And bring the lammer-geyer from the cloud
To earth. Perhaps do greater feats—perhaps
Make man its quarry, when he dares to tread
Upon his fellow man. That little arm,
His mother's palm can span, may help, anon,
To pull a sinewy tyrant from his seat,
And from their chains a prostrate people lift
To liberty. I'd be content to die,
Living to see that day!—What, Albert!

Alb.

Ah!

My father!

Emma. [*Running from the cottage.*] William!—welcome,
William,—welcome!

I did not look for you till noon. Joy's doubly joy
That comes before the time—it is a debt
Paid ere 'tis due, which fills the owner's heart
With gratitude, and yet 'tis but his own!
And are you well—and has the chase prov'd good?
How has it fared with you?—Come in; I'm sure
You want refreshment.

Tell.

No; I did partake

A herdsman's meal, upon whose lonely chalet
I chanced to light. I've had bad sport—my track
Lay with the wind, which to the start'lish game
Betray'd me still. Only one prize; and that
I gave mine humble host.—You raise the bow
Too fast. [*To ALBERT, who has returned to his
practice.*] Bring't slowly to the eye—
You've miss'd.

How often have you hit the mark to-day?

Alb. Not once, yet.

Tell.

You're not steady. I perceived
You waver'd now. Stand firm!—let every limb
Be braced as marble, and as motionless.
Stand like the sculptor's statue, on the gate
Of Altorf, that looks life, yet neither breathes
Nor stirs. That's better!

Emma.

William! William!—O!

To be the parents of a boy like that!—
 Why speak you not—and wherefore do you sigh?
 What's in your heart to keep the transport out
 That fills up mine, when looking on our child,
 Till it o'erflows mine eye?

Tell. You've miss'd again!
 Dost see the mark? Rivet your eye to it!
 There let it stick, fast as the arrow would,
 Could you but send it there!

Emma. Why, William, don't
 You answer me?

Tell. Again! How would you fare,
 Suppose a wolf should cross your path, and you
 Alone, with but your bow, and only time
 To fix a single arrow? 'Twould not do
 To miss the wolf! You said, the other day,
 Were you a man, you'd not let Gesler live—
 'Twas easy to say that. Suppose you, now,
 Your life or his depended on that shot!—
 Take care! That's Gesler!—Now for Liberty!
 Right to the tyrant's heart!—Well done, my boy!
 Come here!—Now, Emma, I will answer you:
 Do I not love you? Do I not love our child?
 Is not that cottage dear to me, where I
 Was born? How many acres would I give
 That little vineyard for, which I have watch'd
 And tended since I was a child? Those crags
 And peaks—what spired city would I take
 To live in, in exchange for them?—Yet what
 Are these to me?—What is this boy to me?—
 What art thou, Emma, to me—when a breath
 Of Gesler's can take all?

Emma. O, William, think
 How little is that all to him—too little
 For Gesler, sure, to take. Bethink thee, William,
 We have no treasure.

Tell. Have we not? Have we
 No treasure? How! No treasure? What,
 Have we not liberty? that precious ore,
 That pearl, that gem the tyrant covets most,
 Yet can't enjoy himself—for which he drains
 His coffers of their coin—his land of blood;

Yea, makes a pawn of his own soul—lacks ease—
 Goes without sleep—pines himself sallow, pale—
 Frets till the bile gnaws appetite away—
 Forgets both heaven and hell, only to strip
 The wearer of it! Emma, we have that,
 And that's enough for Gesler!

Emma. Then, indeed,
 My William, we have much to fear.

Tell. We have,
 And best it is we know how much. Then, Emma,
 Make up thy mind, wife; make it up: remember
 What wives and mothers on these very hills
 Once breath'd the air you breathe: Helvetia
 Hath chronicles, the masters of the world,
 As they were called—the Romans—kept for her:
 And in those chronicles 'tis writ—and praise
 Set down by foes must needs at least be true.
 'Tis writ, I say, that when the Rhetians—
 (They were the early tenants of those hills)—
 Withstood the lust of Roman tyranny,
 With Claudius Drusus, and a certain Nero,
 Sons-in-law of Octavius Cæsar, at
 Its head—the Rhetian women, when the men,
 O'ermatch'd by numbers, did at last give way,
 Seeing that liberty was gone, threw life
 And nature, too, as worthless, after it;
 Rush'd thro' the gaping ranks of them that fled,
 And on the dripping weapons of the red
 Victorious van, impal'd themselves and children!

Emma. O, William!

Tell. Emma, let the boy alone;
 Don't clasp him so, 'twill soften him! Go, sir,
 See if the valley sends us visitors
 To-day; some friend, perchance, may need thy
 guidance.
 Away! [*Exit ALBERT.*] He's better from thee,
 Emma; the time
 Is come, a mother on her breast should fold
 Her arms, as they had done with such endearments,
 And bid her children go from her to hunt
 For danger, which will presently hunt them—
 The less to heed it.

Emma. William, you are right ;
 The task you set me I will try to do :
 I would not live myself to be a slave—
 I would not live to be the dam of one.
 No! woman as I am, I would not, William !
 Then choose my course for me ; whate'er it is,
 I will say, ay, and do it, too ; suppose
 To dress my little stripling for the war,
 And take him by the hand, to lead him to 't,
 Yes, I would do it at thy bidding, William,
 Without a tear : I say that I could do it,
 Tho', now I only talk of doing it,
 I can't help shedding one !

Tell. Did I not choose thee
 From out the fairest of the maids of Uri ?
 Less that in beauty thou didst them surpass,
 Than that thy soul that beauty overmatch'd.
 Why rises on thy matron cheek that blush,
 Mantling it fresh as in thy virgin morn,
 But that I did so? Do I wonder, then,
 To find thee equal to the task of virtue,
 Altho' a hard one? No, I wonder not!
 Why should I, Emma, make thy heart acquainted
 With ills I could shut out from it—rude guests
 For such a home! Here, only, we have had
 Two hearts; in all things else—in love, in faith,
 In hope, in joy that never had but one!
 But henceforth we must have but one here also.

Emma. O, William, you have wrong'd me— kindly
 wrong'd me.

Whenever yet was happiness the test
 Of love in man or woman? who 'd not hold
 To that which must advantage him? who 'd not
 Keep promise to a feast, or mind his pledge
 To share a rich man's purse? there's not a churl,
 However base, but might be thus approved
 Of most unswerving constancy. But that
 Which loosens churls, ties friends, or changes
 them,
 Only to stick the faster. William! William!
 That man knew never yet the love of woman,
 Who never had an ill to share with her.

Tell. Not even to know that would I in so
 Ungentle partnership engage thee, Emma,
 So will could help it; but necessity,
 The master yet of will, how strong soe'er,
 Commands me prove thee. // When I wedded thee,
 The land was free! Heavens, with what pride
 I us'd

To walk these hills, "and look up to my God,
 "And bless him that it was so. It was free—
 "From end to end, from cliff to lake 'twas free!
 "Free as our torrents are that leap our rocks,
 "And plough our vallies, without asking leave;
 "Or as our peaks that wear their caps of snow,
 "In very presence of the regal sun."

How happy was it then! I lov'd
 Its very storms. (Yes, Emma,) I have sat
 In my boat at night, when, midway o'er the lake,
 The stars went out, and down the mountain gorge
 The wind came roaring. I have sat and eyed
 The thunder breaking from his cloud, and smiled
 To see him shake his lightnings o'er my head,
 And think I had no master save his own.
 You know the jutting cliff round which a track
 Up hither winds, whose base is but the brow
 To such another one, with scanty room
 For two a-breast to pass? O'ertaken there
 By the mountain blast, I've laid me flat along,
 And while gust followed gust more furiously,
 As if to sweep me o'er the horrid brink,
 And I have thought of other lands, whose storms
 Are summer flaws to those of mine, and just
 Have wished me there—the thought that mine
 was free

Has check'd that wish, and I have rais'd my head,
 And cried in thralldom to that furious wind,
 Blow on! This is the land of liberty! //

Emma. I almost see thee on that fearful pass,
 And yet so seeing thee, I have a feeling
 Forbids me wonder that thou didst so.

Tell. "Tis
 A feeling must not breathe where Gesler breathes,

But may within these arms. List, Emma, list!
 A league is made to pull the tyrant down
 E'en from his seat upon the rock of Altorf.
 Four hearts have stak'd their blood upon the cast,
 And mine is one of them!

Emma. I did not start;
 Tell me more, William!

Tell. I will tell thee all.

Albert. [without] O, father!

Old Melctal. [without] Tell—Tell—William!

Emma. Don't
 You know that voice?

Enter OLD MELCTAL, blind, led by ALBERT.

O. M. Where art thou, William?

Tell. Who is 't?

Emma. Do you not know him?

Tell. No! it cannot be
 The voice of Melctal!

Alb. Father, it is Melctal.

Emma. What ails you, Tell?

Alb. O, father, speak to him.

Emma. What passion shakes you thus?

Tell. His eyes—where are they?
 Melctal has eyes!

O. M. Tell!

Tell. 'Tis Melctal's voice
 Where are his eyes? Have they put out his eyes?
 Has Gesler turn'd the little evening of
 The old man's life to night, before its time;
 To such black night as sees not with the day
 All round it. Father! speak; pronounce the
 name
 Of Gesler!

O. M. Gesler!

Tell. Gesler has torn out
 The old man's eyes! Support thy mother! Erni?
 Where's Erni? Where's thy son? Is he alive,
 And are his father's eyes torn out?

O. M. He lives, my William,
 But knows it not.

Tell. When he shall know it! Heavens!
When he shall know it!—I am not thy son,
Yet—O, when he shall know it!

Emma. [*alarmed at his increasing vehemence*] Wil-
liam—William!

Alb. Father!

Tell. Could I find
Something to tear—to rend, were worth it—some-
thing

Most ravenous and bloody—something like
Gesler: a wolf—no, no; a wolf's a lamb
To Gesler! it is natural hunger makes
The wolf a savage, and savage as he is,
Yet with his kind he gently doth consort.
'Tis but his lawful prey he tears, and that
He finishes, not mangles, and then leaves
To live! they slander him who call him cruel:
He hath no joy in cruelty, but as
It ministers to his most needful want:
He does not know that he is cruel—no—
Not when he rends an infant. I would let
The wolf go free for Gesler! Water! Water;
My tongue cleaves to my roof.

O. M. What ails thee, William?
I pray thee, William, let me hear thy voice!
That's not thy voice!

Tell. I cannot speak to thee.

Emma. [*returning with a vessel of water*] Here, Wil-
liam.

Tell. Emma!

Emma. Drink!

Tell. I cannot drink!

Emma. Your eyes are fixed.

Tell. Melctal! he has no eyes!

[*Bursts into tears.*]

The poor old man! [*Falls on Melctal's neck.*]
O. M. I feel thee, Tell! I care not
That I have lost my eyes. I feel thy tears—
They're more to me than eyes! When I had eyes,
I never knew thee, William, as I know
Thee now without. I do not want my eyes!

Tell. How came it, father? briefly, father! quick
 And briefly! Action! Action! I'm in such glee
 For work—so eager to be doing—have
 Such stomach for a task, I 've scarcely patience
 To wait to know what 'tis :—here, here; sit down.
 Now, father!

O. M. Yesterday, when I and Erni
 Went to the field, to bring our harvest home,
 Two soldiers of the tyrant's came upon us,
 And without cause alleged, or interchange
 Of word, proceeded to unyoke the oxen.

Tell. Go on!

O. M. As one stunn'd by a thunder-clap
 Stands sudden still, nor for awhile bethinks him
 Of taking shelter from the storm, so we,
 Confounded by an act so bold, awhile
 Look'd on in helpless silence: till at length
 Erni, as sudden as the hurricane,
 That lays the oak uprooted, ere you see
 Its branches quiver, bounding on the spoilers,
 Wrench'd from their grasp the yoke, and would
 have laid

Them dead, had they not ta'en to instant flight.

Tell. Did he pursue them?

O. M. No; I threw myself
 Between!

Tell. Why didst thou save them?

O. M. 'Twas my son
 I sav'd! I clasp'd his knees! I calm'd his rage.
 I forc'd him from me to the caverns of
 Mount Faigel, William, till the tyrant's wrath
 Should cool, or be diverted. 'Twas my son
 I sav'd, for scarcely was he out of sight,
 And I within my cottage, when the cries
 Of Gesler's bands beset it, calling for
 The blood of Erni—William—he was safe!
 Clear of their fangs! my son was safe! O, think—
 Think, William, what I felt to see his lair—
 His very lair beset, and know my boy—
 My lion boy was safe. Enough; they seiz'd me,
 And dragg'd me before Gesler.

Tell. Say no more!

His life cost you your eyes. 'Tis worth a pair
Of eyes, but not your eyes, old man. No, no,
He would have given it ten times over for
But one of them. But one? But for a hair
O' the lash—My bow and quiver.—He was by?

O. M. Was by.

Tell. More arrows for my quiver.
And looking on?

O. M. And looking on.

Tell. [*Putting the arrows into his quiver*] 'Twill do—
He would dine after that, and say a grace—
Good heavens! to tear a man's eyes out, and then
Thank God!—My staff. He'd have his wine, too.

How

The man could look at it, and drink it off,
And not grow sick at the colour on't. Enough;
Put by the rest. [*To EMMA, who has brought
him a bundle of arrows*] I'll grow more calm.
My flask—I want it fill'd; and put provision
Into my pouch. [*The expression of EMMA's coun-
tenance, as she assists to equip him, catches
his eye.*] I thank thee for that look.

Now seem'st thou like some kind o'er-seeing angel,
Smiling as he prepares the storm, that, while
It shakes the earth, and makes its tenants pale,
Doth smite a pestilence. Thou would'st not stay
me?

Emma. No.

Tell. Nor thy boy, if I required his service?

Emma. No, William.

Tell. Make him ready, Emma.

O. M. No;
Not Albert, William.

Emma. Yes; even Albert, father.

Thy cap and wallet, boy!—thy mountain staff—
Where hast thou laid it?—Find it! Haste; don't
keep

Thy father waiting!—He is ready, William.

[*Leading ALBERT up to TELL.*]

Tell. Well done! Well done! I thank you love; I
thank you!

Now mark me, Albert! Dost thou fear the snow,
 The ice-field, or the hail flaw? Car'st thou for
 The mountain mist, that settles on the peak
 When thou 'rt upon it! Dost thou tremble at
 The torrent roaring from the deep ravine,
 Along whose shaking ledge thy track doth lie?
 Or faint 'st thou at the thunder-clap, when on
 The hill thou art o'ertaken by the cloud,
 And it doth burst around thee? Thou must
 travel
 All night.

Alb. I 'm ready; say all night again!

Tell. The mountains are to cross, for thou must reach
 Mount Faigel by the dawn.

Alb. Not sooner shall
 The dawn be there than I.

Tell. Heaven speeding thee.

Alb. Heaven speeding me.

Tell. Shew me thy staff. Art sure
 O' the point? I think 'tis loose. No—stay!
 'Twill do.

Caution is speed, when danger's to be pass'd.
 Examine well the crevice. Do not trust
 The snow! 'Tis well there is a moon to-night.
 You 're sure o' the track?

Alb. Quite sure.

Tell. The buskin of
 That leg 's untied; stoop down, and fasten it.
 You know the point where you must round the
 cliff?

Alb. I do.

Tell. Thy belt is slack—draw 't tight.
 Erni is in Mount Faigel: take this dagger,
 And give it him; you know it's caverns well.
 In one of them you 'll find him. Bid thy mother
 Farewell. Come, boy; we go a mile together.
 Father—thy hand!

O. M. How firm thy grasp is, William.

Tell. There is a resolution in it, father,
 Will keep.

O. M. I cannot see thine eye, but I know
 How it looks.

Tell. I'll tell thee how it looks. List, father,
List. Father—thou shalt be reveng'd! My Emma,
Melctal's thy father; that's his home, till I
Return; Yes, father, thou shalt be reveng'd.
Lead him in, Emma, lead him in; the sun
Grows hot; the old man's weak and faint. Mind,
father,
Mind, thou shalt be reveng'd. In, wife; in—in.
Thou shalt be sure reveng'd. Come, Albert.

[*EMMA and MELCTAL enter the cottage.*

[*Exeunt TELL and ALBERT hastily.*

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Mountain with mist.*

GESLER *is seen descending the mountain with a hunting pole.*

Ges. Alone—alone! and every step, the mist
 Thickens around me! On these mountain tracts
 To lose one's way, they say is sometimes death!
 What ho! Holloa! No tongue replies to me!
 What thunder hath the horror of this silence!
 "I dare not stop—the day, though not half run,
 "Is not less sure to end his course; and night,
 "Dreary when through the social haunts of men
 "Her solemn darkness walks, in such a place
 "As this comes wrapp'd in most appalling fear."
 I dare not stop—nor dare I yet proceed,
 Begirt with hidden danger: if I take
 This hand, it carries me still deeper into
 The wild and savage solitudes I'd shun,
 Where once to faint with hunger is to die:
 If this, it leads me to the precipice,
 Whose brink with fatal horror rivets him
 That treads upon't, till drunk with fear, he reels
 Into the gaping void, and headlong down
 Plunges to still more hideous death. Curs'd slaves,
 To let me wander from them! Ho!—holloa!—
 My voice sounds weaker to mine ear: I've not
 The strength to call I had, and through my limbs
 Cold tremor runs—and sickening faintness seizes
 On my heart. O, heaven, have mercy! Do not see
 The colour of the hands I lift to thee!
 Look only on the strait wherein I stand,
 And pity it! Let me not sink—Uphold!
 Support me! Mercy!—Mercy!

[*He leans against a rock stupified with terror and exhaustion—it grows darker and darker—the rain pours down in torrents, and a furious wind arises—the mountain streams begin to swell and roar. ALBERT is seen descending by the side of one of the streams, which in his course he crosses with the help of his pole.*]

Alb. I'll breathe upon this level, if the wind
Will let me. Ha! a rock to shelter me!
'Thanks to't—a man! and fainting. Courage,
friend!

Courage.—A stranger that has lost his way—
Take heart—take heart: you're safe. How feel
you now?

Ges. Better.

Alb. You've lost your way upon the hill?

Ges. I have.

Alb. And whither would you go?

Ges. To Altorf.

Alb. I'll guide you thither.

Ges. You're a child.

Alb. I know

The way: the track I've come is harder far
To find.

Ges. The track you've come!—what mean
you? Sure

You have not been still farther in the mountains?

Alb. I've travell'd from Mount Faigel.

Ges. No one with thee?

Alb. No one but HIM.

Ges. Do you not fear these storms?

Alb. He's in the storm.

Ges. And there are torrents, too,
That must be cross'd?

Alb. He's by the torrent, too.

Ges. You're but a child?

Alb. He will be with a child.

Ges. You're sure you know the way?

Alb. 'Tis but to keep

The side of yonder stream.

Ges. But guide me safe,

I'll give thee gold.

Alb. I'll guide thee safe without.

Ges. Here's earnest for thee. Here—I'll double that,
Yea, treble it—but let me see the gate
Of Altorf. Why do you refuse the gold?
Take 't.

Alb. No.

Ges. You shall.

Alb. I will not.

Ges. Why?

Alb. Because

I do not covet it;—and though I did,
It would be wrong to take it as the price
Of doing one a kindness.

Ges. Ha!—who taught
Thee that?

Alb. My father.

Ges. Does he live in Altorf?

Alb. No; in the mountains.

Ges. How—a mountaineer?

He should become a tenant of the city:

He'd gain by 't.

Alb. Not so much as he might lose by 't.

Ges. What might he lose by 't?

Alb. Liberty.

Ges. Indeed!

He also taught thee that?

Alb. He did.

Ges. His name?

Alb. This is the way to Altorf, sir.

Ges. I'd know

Thy father's name:

Alb. The day is wasting—we

Have far to go.

Ges. Thy father's name, I say?

Alb. I will not tell it thee.

Ges. Not tell it me!

Why?

Alb. You may be an enemy of his.

Ges. May be a friend.

Alb. May be; but should you be

An enemy—although I would not tell you

My father's name—I'd guide you safe to Altorf.
Will you follow me?

Ges. Ne'er mind thy father's name.
What would it profit me to know 't? Thy hand :
We are not enemies.

Alb. I never had
An enemy.

Ges. Lead on.

Alb. Advance your staff
As you descend, and fix it well. Come on.

Ges. What, must we take that steep?

Alb. 'Tis nothing! Come,
I'll go before. Ne'er fear—Come on! come on!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Altorf.*

Enter MICHAEL and JAGHELL.

Jag. Yes, Michael, so it stands : she only is
Step-daughter to the Seneschal—the less
Her debt of duty, which, though it were more,
She were absolved from by the tyrant's part
He acts, who'd wed her where she cannot love.
O win her for me, Michael, or you'll have
To get a leech for me.

Mich. Get thee a leech! I'll be in want of one
Myself. Thy sickness is infectious. Would
A scalded foot had kept me to the house—
A fever tied me to my bed—a fit
Tripp'd up my heels in the street, ere I had met
thee
To make thee play the leech! I was as sound
As reckless laughter, then; could eat or drink
With him that ask'd me—could go here or there,
And find me ample fund of mirth, where'er
I went—could sing—could dance—could keep
awake
Or sleep as well as any one. You've sped me!
Concluded me—brought all my fair estate

Of rich content to melancholy end—
Jagheli, I'm in love.

Jag. In love!

Mich. In love.

Jag. Michael in love! What, prithee, made thee fall
In love?

Mich. A cup of wine.

Jag. Another cup

Will work thy cure.

Mich. If thou could'st give me with 't
The hand that help'd me to 't, and with the hand
The lip that kiss'd the cup ere it touch'd mine—
Nor was it yet the hand,—nor yet the lip;
But the arch smile that quiver'd on that lip,
And seem'd to mock the motion of that hand,
Moving in maiden staidness. Plague on 't! I've
Been posed at mine own trade—proved an ap-
prentice

With mine own tools. I'm in love. I have it here;
Here in the very centre of my heart.
That ever I should live to see the day
I said I was in love.

Jag. Pshaw! Michael; you've
Been only laughing till you got a stitch
In the side.

Mich. A stitch! If thou hast such another,
It will not let thee sleep. But hither comes
Thy lady's chamberlain, with dulcet voice,
To call thee to her. Now her father's out,
Make profit of thy calling, master leech,
Or follow it no more.

Braun. [*Entering.*] My lady says
She'll see you, sir;—come this way.

Mich. Mind!

Jag. I will.

[*Exeunt* BRAUN and JAGHELI.]

Mich. [*Solus.*] I'd like to try a race with him in love.
Can he compare with me in such a strife—
With me could talk him dumb at any time?
Ere he began to woo, I should be done—
But, to be done, a man must needs begin.

Ag. [*Entering.*] What! mischief plotting?—'Tis a graceful cheat!

Rogue as he is, the man's a man to love.

Mich. Hang modesty!

Ag. Well said: when it doth die,
No cousin goes of thine to put thee to
The charge of mourning.

Mich. I'll take heart and woo
Her soundly.

Ag. Love have pity on her, then.

Mich. This very hour I'll tell her I'm in love.

Ag. This very hour she'll tell thee thou'rt a fool.

Mich. I'll marry her in a week.

Ag. You'll wait, perhaps,
A little longer.

Mich. Nay, a week's too long:
Three days from this.

Ag. Why not to-morrow, sir?
You'd be as near your wedding.

Mich. Send her now,
Kind Cupid—send her now. I'm in the mood—
In such a mood, that, were she marble,
I'd soften her—or ice, I'd make her melt!

Ag. But if she's not in the mood—

Mich. Now, Cupid, now, I do defy her
In all her charms that vanquish'd at a sight,
By every arrow in thy quiver, boy,
If thou hast made me smart—she shan't go free,
So send her to me.

Ag. Who ever fear'd a boaster?

Mich. Cupid, now!
Boy, I would stake my heart against thy wings,
I'd woo, and win, and wed her in a day!

Ag. (*coming forward*) O, sir, you are the youth—
that brought the leech.

Mich. Ma'am?

Ag. And a pretty leech it is you've brought.

Mich. Ma'am.

Ag. He must needs have studied very hard,
To be so sapient and profound a one;
Where studied he, I pray you?

Mich. Studied, ma'am?

Ag. Yes, studied! Thinkest thou a leech is made
By only putting on the coat of one?
At such a rate, you would yourself be one,
Instead of his good trusty serving man.

Mich. His serving man!

Ag. Yes, sir, that pounds his drugs—
Makes ready his emplastrums—
Boils his decoctions, and makes up his powders,
Ointments and mixtures: I am sure I've seen you
In your working clothes, without that Sunday chin
You now have on, beating a tune upon
The leech's mortar—to the which you sung
In such melodious strain.

Mich. Madam,—I,—I,

Michael! Michael!

Are you a man?

Ag. What wages do you get,
Besides the blows the leech bestows on you
When you forget to make his nostrums up,
Or mar them in the mixing?

Mich. Blows!

Ag. Ay, blows.
Come, come; Don't look so fierce; you're just
the man
To take them kindly, as, indeed, you should.
If the worthy leech
But beats thee once week, he's not more wise
Than patient.

Mich. Michael, thou hast found thy match!
But wilt thou yield without a struggle for 't?
No! Courage, Michael! Now or never, man!
Ma'am!

Ag. Bless me, sir, perhaps I may be wrong,
And you are not his serving man!

Mich. No, ma'am.

Ag. Nor anything unto the leech?

Mich. No, ma'am.

Ag. Then, sir, I'll e'en make bold to tell you,
I think the leech is just as much a leech
As you are.

Mich. Ma'am!

Ag. I've found him out, sir.

Mich. Have you?

Ag. And found out you—you shall be flay'd alive, sir,
For passing him for a leech. A pretty way
To make my cousin well.

Mich. Your cousin, ma'am!

I took you for the lady's Abigail.
Come, come, you are, or nature in her work
Shows little thrift—you are her Abigail.

Ag. I vow I'm not.

Mich. I'll take an oath thou art her Abigail—
As much as I'm the leech's serving man—
As much as he's the leech. Sweet, we are both
True serving men to love. And you're the hire
I serve for. [*Catching her in his arms.*]

Ag. [*Disengaging herself.*] Stay! who serves for hire
doth wait
'Till it be given him, ere he takes his hire,
Not helps himself.

Mich. But say you'll give me mine.

Ag. Hush! some one comes.

Mich. I'm mute as faith
That's sworn to silence. Let me keep thy hand.

[*They retire.*]

Enter BRAUN.

Braun. Now, Braun, whoever after calls thee drone
Doth lie, and men shall tell him so. Thou'rt wise,
Watchful, and keen of sight; canst see, when all
The house besides, with open eyes, are blind—
Stone blind! Thou shalt no more be Braun the
dolt,
The sluggard Braun, the hound, the hog; or
Braun
The good-for-naught; or every thing but Braun
Himself. Thou shalt be honest Braun—good
Braun,
Braun that can see a thing—can find it out
Before the Seneschal! brave Braun! The leech
Is but a cheat—my lady but a cheat—
Her sickness all put on; he is to come
On Wednesday—No—to-day is Wednesday—No,
Wednesday was yesterday. He is to come—

I have forgot the day ; no matter. I
Remember, he's to come, and that's enough.
He is to come at—plague upon the hour!
'Twas not at breakfast hour, or dinner hour
Or any hour of meals or sleep—I'm sure
Of that; but then, what signifies the hour,
When I've forgot the day! Most true—most
true!

A lucky thought. No matter what the hour,
Or what the day; 'tis what he purpos'd at
The hour and day, concerns me to remember,
And that I don't forget. He is to come
To take away my lady mistress, who
Is nothing loth. Remember that, good Braun,
And make thy fortune with the Seneschal.

[*Exit* BRAUN.

Ag. Undone, undone! if thou remain'st 'tis death!

Mich. And if I fly, what fly I to but death!

Ag. Nay, save thy life!

Mich. You are its precious breath,
And parted from thee 'tis no longer life.

Ag. Could I believe thee!

Mich. If thou would'st thou could'st:
There lack of power is only lack of will.

Ag. Nay, say not so: in sooth, I've all the will.

Mich. Then here I plight my faith to thee—

Ag. Nay, hold.

Mich. 'Tis done, sweet maid, and cannot be recall'd,
So give me vow for vow. No sentinel
Keeps watch beneath the casement where you
sleep:

There could I hang by aid of this kind night
A ladder, such a one as lovers find
'Their way by to their mistress' arms, when doors
Are barr'd against them. Thou'rt not happy
here:

This house of wolves is no abode for thee:
Let's to our friends, and briefly, ere we part,
Resolve the means and time for meeting, ne'er
To part again!

Ag. You'll take the Abigail?

Mich. If you will take the leech's serving man!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Gate of Altorf.**Enter GESLER and ALBERT.*

Alb. You're at the gate of Altorf. [*Is returning*]

Ges. Tarry, boy!

Alb. I would be gone; I am waited for.

Ges. Come back!

Who waits for thee? Come, tell me; I am rich
And powerful, and can reward.

Alb. 'Tis close

On evening; I have far to go; I'm late.

Ges. Stay! I can punish, too.

Alb. I might have left you,
When on the hill I found you fainting, and
The mist around you; but I stopp'd and cheer'd
you,

Till to yourself you came again. I offer'd
To guide you, when you could not find the way,
And I have brought you to the gate of Altorf.

Ges. Boy, do you know me?

Alb. No.

Ges. Why fear you, then,
To trust me with your father's name?—Speak.

Alb. Why

Do you desire to know it?

Ges. You have served me,
And I would thank him, if I chanc'd to pass
His dwelling.

Alb. 'T would not please him that a service,
So trifling, should be made so much of!

Ges. Trifling?

You've sav'd my life.

Alb. Then do not question me,

But let me go.

Ges. When I have learn'd from thee
Thy father's name. What ho! [*knocks*]

Sentinel. [*within.*] Who's there?

Ges. Gesler! [*The gate is opened*]

Alb. Ha, Gesler!

Ges. [*to the soldiers*] Seize him. Wilt thou tell me
Thy father's name?

Alb. No!

Ges. I can bid them cast thee
Into a dungeon! Wilt thou tell it now?

Alb. No.

Ges. I can bid them strangle thee! Wilt tell it?

Alb. Never.

Ges. Away with him! Send Sarnem to me.

[*Soldiers take off ALBERT through the gate.*]

Behind that boy, I see the shadow of
A hand, must wear my fetters, or 't will try
To strip me of my power; I have felt to day
What 'tis to live at others' mercy. I
Have tasted fear to very sickness, and
Ow'd to a peasant boy my safety! Ay,
My life; and there does live the slave can say
Gesler's his debtor! How I loath'd the free
And fearless air with which he trod the hill!
Yea, though the safety of his steps was mine.
I wish'd some way
To find the parent nest of this fine eaglet,
And harrow it! I 'd like to clip the broad
And full-grown wing that taught his tender pinion
So bold a flight.

Enter SARNEM through the gate.

Ha, Sarnem! Have the slaves,
Attended me, returned?

Sar. They have

Ges. You 'll see

That every one of them be laid in fetters.

Sar. I will.

Ges. Didst see that boy just now?

Sar. That pass'd me?

Ges. Yes.

Sar. A mountaineer.

Ges. You d' say so, saw you him
Upon the hills; he walks them like their lord!
I tell thee, Sarnem, looking on that boy,

I felt I was not master of those hills.
 He has a father. Neither promises
 Nor threats could draw from him his name ; a father
 Who talks to him of liberty. I fear
 That man.

Sar. He may be found.

Ges. He must; and soon
 As found dispos'd of! I can see the man.
 He is as palpable to my sight as if
 He stood like you before me. I can see him
 Scaling that rock; yea, I can feel him, Sarnem,
 As I were in his grasp, and he about
 To hurl me o'er that parapet! I live
 In danger, till I find that man. Send partiés
 Into the mountains, to explore them far
 And wide; and if they chance to light upon
 A father, who expects his child, command them
 To drag him straight before us. Sarnem, Sarnem,
 They are not yet subdued. Some way to prove
 Their spirit; take this cap, and have it set
 Upon a pole in the market-place, and see
 That one and all do bow to it; whoe'er
 Resists, or pays the homage sullenly,
 Our bonds await him. Sarnem, see it done.

[Exit SARNEM through the gate.]

We need not fear the spirit would rebel
 But dares not:—that which dares we will not fear.

[Exit, accompanied by soldiers, through the gate.]

SCENE IV.—*The Market Place*

*Burghers and Peasants, with PIERRE, THEODORE,
 and Savoyard.*

CHORUS.

Pierre. Come, come, another strain.

Theo.

A cheerful one.

Savo. What shall it be ?

Theo. No matter, so 'tis gay.

Begin!

Savo. You 'll join the burden ?

Theo. Never fear.

Go on:

Savoyard plays and sings, during which TELL and VERNER enter. The former leans upon his bow, and listens gloomily.

The Savoyard from clime to clime
Tunes his strain, and sings his rhyme.
And still, whatever clime he sees,
His eye is bright, his heart 's at ease.
For gentle, simple, all reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

The rich forget their pride—the great
Forget the splendour of their state,
Whene'er the Savoyard they meet,
And list his song, and say 'tis sweet,
For titled, wealthy,—none regard
The fortune of the Savoyard.

But never looks his eye so bright,
And never feels his heart so light,
As when in beauty's smile he sees
His strain is sweet, his rhyme doth please.
O that 's the praise doth best reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

But tho' the rich retain'd their pride,
And tho' the great their praise denied,
Tho' beauty pleas'd his song to slight,
His heart would smile, his eye be bright:
His strain itself would still reward
The labours of the Savoyard.

[*They shout, and laughingly accompany the Savoyard to the right upper wing, who exeunt through, with some of the crowd.*]

Tell. What 's the heart worth that lends itself to glee
With argument like theirs for bitterness ?

Or is 't the melancholy sport of grief
 To look on pleasures and to handle them,
 That, when it lays the precious jewels down,
 It may perceive its poverty the more?
 Methinks those cheeks are not exactly dress'd
 To please the hearts that own them.

Ver. Doubt it not.

They feel their thralldom.

Tell. So they should—that's hope—
 I'd have it gall them—eat into their flesh!
 While they do fester there's a remedy;
 But for your callous slave I know no cure!
 To-morrow brings the test will surely prove them.
 You'll not forget the hour—

Ver. Be sure I will not.

Tell. Erni is warn'd ere this; and Furth, I've said,
 Is ready. Fare you well.

Ver. Stay, William! Now
 Observe the people.

*[The people have gathered to one side, and
 look in the opposite direction with appre-
 hension and trouble: those who had gone
 off return.]*

Tell. Ha! they please me now—
 That's honest—that's sincere. I still prefer'd
 The seasons like themselves.—Let summer laugh,
 But give me winter with a hearty scowl:
 None of your hollow sunshine—fogs and clouds
 Become it best!—I like them now—their looks
 Are just in season. There has surely been
 Some shifting of the wind, upon such brightness
 To bring so sudden lowering.

Ver. We shall see.

Pierre. 'Tis Sarnem!

Theo. What is that he brings with him?

Pierre. A pole; and on the top of it a cap
 That looks like Gesler's—I could pick it from
 A hundred!

Theo. So could I!—My heart hath oft
 Leap'd at the sight of it. What comes he now
 To do?

[SARNEM enters, with soldiers bearing GESLER'S cap upon a pole, which he fixes into the ground; the people looking on, in silence and amazement. The guards station themselves on the right of the pole.]

Sar. Ye men of Altorf!
Behold the emblem of your master's power
And dignity. This is the cap of Gesler,
Your governor; let all bow down to it
Who owe him love and loyalty. To such
As shall refuse this lawful homage, or
Accord it sullenly, he shows no grace,
But dooms them to the penalty of bondage
Till they 're instructed—'tis no less their gain
Than duty, to obey their master's mandate.
Conduct the people hither, one by one,
To bow to Gesler's cap.

Tell. Have I my hearing?

Ver. Away! Away!

Tell. Or sight?—They do it, Verner!
They do it!—Look!—Ne'er call me man again!
I'll herd with the baser animals! They keep
Their stations. Still the dog's a dog—the reptile
Doth know his proper rank, and sinks not to
The uses of the grade below him.—Man!
Man! that doth hold his head above them all,
Doth ape them all. He's man and he's the reptile.
Look!—look! Have I the outline of that caitiff
Who to the servile earth doth bend the crown
His God did rear for him to heaven?

Ver. Away,
Before they mark us.

Tell. No! no!—since I've tasted,
I'll e'en feed on.
A spirit's in me likes it. Draw me not
Away! I swear I will not leave off yet;
I would be full—full—full! I will not budge,
Whatever be the cost!

Sar. What smiled you at?

Pierre. You saw I bow'd as low as he did.

Sar. But

You smiled. How dared you smile?

Tell. Good!—good!

Sar. [*Striking him.*] Take that;
And learn, when you do smile again, to do 't
In season.

Ver. Come away.

Tell. Not yet—not yet.
Why would you have me quit? the fare, you see,
Grows better and better.

Ver. You change colour.

Tell. Do I?

And so do you.

Sar. [*Striking another.*] Bow lower, slave!

Tell. Do you feel
That blow—my flesh doth tingle with 't. Well
done!

How pleasantly the knave doth lay it on!

Well done! well done! I would it had been I!

Ver. You tremble, William. Come—you must not
stay.

Tell. Why not?—what harm is there? I tell thee,
Verner,

I know no difference 'twixt enduring wrong
And living in the fear on 't. I do wear
The tyrant's fetters, when it only wants
His nod to put them on—and bear his stripes
When, that I suffer them, he needs but hold
His finger up. Verner, you 're not the man
To be content because a villain's mood
Forbears. You 're right—you 're right!—have
with you, Verner!

Enter MICHAEL through the crowd.

Sar. Bow, slave. [*TELL stops and turns.*]

Mich. For what?

Sar. Obey, and question then.

Mich. I'll question now, perhaps not then obey.

Tell. A man! a man!

Sar. 'Tis Gesler's will that all

Bow to that cap.

Mich. Were it thy lady's cap,

I'd curtsey to it.

Sar. Do you mock us, friend?

Mich. Not I. I'll bow to Gesler, if you please;
But not his cap, nor cap of any he
In Christendom.

Tell. A man! I say—a man!

Sar. I see you love a jest; but jest not now,
Else may you make us mirth, and pay for't too.
Bow to the cap.

Tell. The slave would humour him,
Holds he but out.

Sar. Do you hear?

Mich. I do.

Tell. Well done!
The lion thinks as much of cowering
As he does.

Sar. Once for all, bow to that cap.

Tell. Verner, let go my arm!

Sar. Do you hear me, slave?

Mich. Slave!

Tell. Let me go!

Ver. He is not worth it, Tell—
A wild and idle gallant of the town.

Tell. A man!—I'll swear a man!—Don't hold me,
Verner.

Verner, let go my arm!—Do you hear me, man?
You must not hold me, Verner.

Sar. Villain, bow
To Gesler's cap!

Mich. No—not to Gesler's self.

Sar. Seize him.

Tell. [*Rushing forward.*] Off, off, you base and hire-
ling pack!

Lay not your brutal touch upon the thing
God made in his own image. Crouch yourselves;
'Tis your vocation, which you should not call
On free-born men to share with you—who stand
Erect, except in presence of their God
Alone!

Sar. What shrink you, cowards? Must I do
Your duty for you?

Tell. Let them stir—I've scatter'd

A flock of wolves that did outnumber them—
For sport I did it—Sport!—I scatter'd them
With but a staff, not half so thick as this.

[*Wrests SARNEM's weapon from him—SARNEM flies—Soldiers fly.*]

Men of Altorf,
What fear ye? See what things you fear—the shows
And surfaces of men. Why stand you wondering
there?

Why look you on a man that's like yourselves,
And see him do the deeds yourselves might do,
And act them not? Or know you not yourselves
That ye are men—that ye have hearts and thoughts
To feel and think the deeds of men, and hands
To do them? “You do say your prayers, and
make

“Confession, and you more do fear the thing
“That kneels to God, than you fear God himself!
“You hunt the chamois, and you've seen him take
“The precipice, before he'd yield the freedom
“His Maker gave him—and you are content
“To live in bonds, that have a thought of freedom,
“Which heaven ne'er gave the *little* chamois.”
Why gaze you still with blanched cheeks upon me?
Lack you the manhood even to look on,
And see bold deeds achieved by others' hands?
Or is't that cap still holds your thralls to fear?—
Be free, then—There! Thus do I trample on
The insolence of Gesler. [*Throws down the pole.*]

Sar. [*Suddenly entering with Soldiers.*] Seize him.

[*All the people, except VERNER and MICHAEL fly.*]

Tell. Ha!

Surrounded!

Mich. Stand! I'll back thee!

Ver. Madman! hence.

[*Forces MICHAEL off.*]

Sar. Upon him slaves!—Upon him all at once.

[*TELL, after a struggle, is secured and thrown to the ground, where they proceed to chain him.*]

Sar. Now raise him.

[They raise him, heavily chained, bursting with indignation, and breathless.]

Tell. Slave!

Sar. Rail on—thy tongue has yet its freedom.

Tell. Slave!

Sar. On to the castle with him. Forward!

Tell. Slave! *[Exeunt.]*

Re-enter MICHAEL, still held by VERNER.

Mich. There!—There! They bear him off
In chains! Why held you me? What was my life,
To save that noble lion from the toils?

Ver. Michael; I knew thee not till now: I see
Thou art a man to trust. If thou would'st free
That lion from the toils, there is a way.

Mich. Shew 't me.

Ver. Before this time to-morrow, Michael,
The cantons will be up in arms, and here
In Altorf.

Mich. Ha! the tyrant's castle!—

Ver. Yes.

Mich. Verner, thou'st saved a precious life to-day
In saving mine!—Let's see—how many friends
Can I provide me with 'twixt this and night?

Ver. For what?

Mich. This night I mean to win a bride,
And marry her to-morrow.

Ver. Art thou mad?

Mich. I am—why not?—who'd not be mad upon
The golden eve of his bright wedding day?
Don't wonder at me, Verner.—Do you see
Yon turret?

Ver. Yes.

Mich. Spy you a casement, too,
Just half way up?

Ver. I do.

Mich. This night to me
That casement opens, and a cord, let down,
Takes up a hempen ladder, strong enough

For me to mount—

Ver. What then?

Mich. When I have won
The prize I venture for, and safe bestow'd,
What hinders ten or twenty of my friends—
What hinders them, I say, to lodge
This night in yonder tower? Come along;
I've scanty time to bid so many guests.
Come on, and as we go, possess me of
Your plans, the minute you're to act upon them,
With all the rest. Don't wonder at me, man;
You'll bless the day that Michael took a wife.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Castle.*

Enter GESLER with RODOLPH, LUTOLD, GERARD, and Officers.

Gesler (to Rodolph) Double the guards! Stay!
Place your trustiest men
At the postern. Stop! You'd go with half
your errand.

I'll tell you when to go. Let every soul
Within the walls be under arms. The sick
That do not keep their beds, or can rise from them,
Must take a weapon; if they can but raise
A hand, we've use for them. Away, now! Tumult
[*Exit* RODOLPH.]

Under our very brows! They'll come
In torrents from the hills, and with a flood
O'erwhelm us. [*To Lutold.*] Lutold, say our
orders are,

On pain of death, no quarter shall be given!
Another word—Let them be men this once,
I promise them the sacking of the town!
Without reserve, I give it them—of property
Or soul! I've nothing further, sir. [*Exit* LU-
TOLD.] I'll rase

Their habitations, hunt them from their hills,
Extirminate them, ere I'll live in fear!

What word now? [*To RODOLPH, who re-enters.*

Rod. 'Twas a false alarm. The people
Paid prompt submission to your order, one
Alone resisted, whom they have secur'd,
And bring in chains before you.

Ges. So! I breathe
Again. 'Twas false, then, that our soldiers fled?

Rod. 'Twas but a party of them fled, my lord;
Which, re-enforc'd, return'd, and soon o'er-
power'd
The rash offender.

Ges. What, fled they from one?
A single man? How many were there?

Rod. Four,
With Sarnem.

Ges. Sarnem! Did he fly?

Rod. He did;
But 'twas for succour.

Ges. Succour! One to four,
And four need succour? I begin to think
We're sentinel'd by effigies of men;
Not men themselves!—and Sarnem, too? What
kind
Of man is he can make a tiger cower?
Yea, and with backers! I should like to see
That man.

Rod. He's here.

Ges. I'm on the hills again.
I see their bleak tops looking down upon me,
And think I hear them ask me with a scowl
If I would be their master! Do not sheathe
Your swords! Stand near me! Beckon some
of those
About me. I would be attended. If
He stirs, despatch him.

Rod. He's in chains, my lord.

Ges. I see—I see he is.

*Enter SARNEM, with TELL in chains, through centre,
and guarded.*

Sar. Down, slave!
Behold the governor. Down! down! and beg
For mercy.

Ges. [*Seated.*] Does he hear?

Sar. Debate it not.
Be prompt. Submission, slave! Thy knee!
Thy knee!
Or with thy life thou playest.

Rod. Let's force him to the ground.

Ges. Can I believe

My eyes?—He smiles!

Ger. Why don't you smite him for that look?

Ges. He grasps

His chains as he would make a weapon of them

To lay the smiter dead. What kind of man

Is this, that looks in thralldom more at large

Than they who lay it on him?

Rod. Lo you how

The caitiff scowls! Pull out his eyes.

Lut. Lop off

A limb for him.

Ges. A heart accessible as his to trembling

The rock or marble hath. They more do fear

To inflict than he to suffer. Each one calls

Upon the other to accomplish that

Himself hath not the manhood to begin.

Why don't they take him from my sight? Behold,

He has brought them to a pause; and there they stand,

Like things entranced by some magician's spell.

[Rises.] They must not see

Me thus. Come, draw thy breath with ease—

Thou'rt Gesler—

Their lord; and he's a slave thou look'st upon.

'Tis only in the absence of thy wrath

He braves it. Let it show itself—at once

He's passive as the dust thou tread'st upon.—

Why speak'st thou not?

Tell. For wonder.

Ges. Wonder?

Tell. Yes,

That thou should'st seem a man.

Ges. What should I seem?

Tell. A monster!

Ges. Ha! Beware—Think on thy chains.

Tell. Tho' they were doubled, and did weigh me down

Prostrate to earth, methinks I could rise up

Erect, with nothing but the honest pride

Of telling thee, usurper, to the teeth

Thou art a monster! Think upon my chains!

Show me the link of them, which, could it speak,
 Would give its evidence against my word!
 Think on my chains!—Think on my chains!
 How came they on me?

Ges. Darest thou question me?

Tell. Darest thou not answer?

Ges. Do I hear?

Tell. Thou dost.

Ges. Beware my vengeance.

Tell. Can it more than kill?

Ges. Enough—it can do that.

Tell. No; not enough:

It cannot take away the grace of life—
 Its comeliness of look that virtue gives—
 Its port erect with consciousness of truth—
 Its rich attire of honourable deeds—
 Its fair report that's rife on good men's tongues:
 It cannot lay its hands on these, no more
 Than it can pluck his brightness from the sun,
 Or with polluted finger tarnish it.

Ges. But it can make thee writhe.

Tell. It may.

Ges. And groan.

Tell. It may; and I may cry

Go on, though it should make me groan again.

Ges. Whence comest thou?

Tell. From the mountains. Would'st thou learn
 What news from them?

Ges. Canst tell me any?

Tell. Ay;

They watch no more the avelanche.

Ges. Why so?

Tell. Because they look for thee. The hurricane
 Comes unawares upon them; from its bed,
 The torrent breaks, and finds them in its track.

Ges. What do they, then?

Tell. Thank heaven, it is not thou!
 Thou hast perverted nature in them. The earth
 Presents her fruits to them, and is not thank'd:
 The harvest sun is constant, and they scarce
 Return his smile: their flocks and herds increase,
 And they look on as men who count a loss:

They hear of thriving children born to them,
 And never shake the teller by the hand;
 While those they have, they see grow up and
 flourish,
 And think as little of caressing them,
 As they were things a deadly plague had smit.—
 There's not a blessing heaven vouchsafes them,
 but
 The thought of thee doth wither to a curse,
 As something they must lose—and richer were
 To lack!

Ges. That's right! I'd have them like their hills
 That never smile, tho' wanton summer tempt
 Them e'er so much.

Tell. But they do sometimes smile.

Ges. Ay!—when is that?

Tell. When they do talk of vengeance.

Ges. Vengeance! Dare
 They talk of that?

Tell. Ay, and expect it, too.

Ges. From whence?

Tell. From heaven!

Ges. From heaven?

Tell. And the true hands
 Are lifted up to it on every hill
 For justice on thee.

Ges. Where's thy abode?

Tell. I told thee in the mountains

Ges. How lies it—north or south?

Tell. Nor north, nor south.

Ges. Is't to the east or west, then?

Tell. Where it lies
 Concerns thee not.

Ges. It does.

Tell. And if it does,
 Thou shall not learn.

Ges. Art married?

Tell. Yes.

Ges. And hast a family?

Tell. A son.

Ges. A son!

Sarnem.

Sar. My lord, the boy.

[GESLER *signs to SARNEM to keep silence, and, whispering, sends him off.*

Tell. The boy!—what boy?
Is 't mine?—and have they netted my young
fledgeling?
Now heaven support me, if they have! He 'll
own me,
And share his father's ruin! But a look
Would put him on his guard—yet how to give it.
Now, heart, thy nerve: forget thou 'rt flesh: be
rock.
They come—they come!
That step—that step—that little step, so light
Upon the ground, how heavy does it fall
Upon my heart! I feel my child!—'Tis he!—
We can but perish.

*Enter SARNEM with ALBERT, whose eyes are rivetted on
TELL'S bow, which SARNEM carries.*

Alb. 'Tis my father's bow;
For there's my father! I'll not own him tho'.
Sar. See!
Alb. What?
Sar. Look there!
Alb. I do; what would you have
Me see?
Sar. Thy father.
Alb. That is not my father.
Tell. My boy—my boy!—my own brave boy!—He 's
safe!
Sar. [*Aside to GESLER.*] They 're like each other.
Ges. Yet I see no sign
Of recognition to betray the link
Unites a father and his child.
Sar. My lord,
I'm sure it is his father. Look at them.
It may be
A preconcerted thing 'gainst such a chance
That they survey each other coldly thus.
Besides, with those who lead their mountain life,
The passions are not taken by surprise

As ready as with us. They do commune
From day to day with nature's wonder, till
They see her very terrors without awe,
And catch from her stern and solemn look,
'That e'en their joy seems thoughtful.

Ges. We shall try.
Lead forth the caitiff.

Sar. To a dungeon?

Ges. No;

Into the court.

Sar. The court, my lord?

Ges. And send
To tell the headsman to make ready. Quick!
The slave shall die! You mark'd the boy?

Sar. I did.
He started—'tis his father.

Ges. We shall see.

Away with him!

Tell. Stop!—Stay!

Ges. What would you?

Tell. Time!

A little time to call my thoughts together.

Ges. Thou shalt not have a minute.

Tell. Some one, then,
To speak with.

Ges. Hence with him!

Tell. A moment!—Stop!

Let me speak to the boy.

Ges. Is he thy son?

Tell. And if

He were, art thou so lost to nature, as
To send me forth to die before his face?

Ges. Well!—Speak with him. Now, Sarnem, mark
them well.

Tell. Thou dost not know me, boy—and well for thee
Thou dost not. I'm the father of a son
About thy age—I dare not tell thee where
To find him, lest he should be found of those
'Twere not so safe for him to meet with. Thou,
I see, wast born like him upon the hills;
If thou shouldst 'scape thy present thralldom, he
May chance to cross thee; if he should, I pray thee

Relate to him what has been passing here,
 And say I laid my hand upon thy head,
 And said to thee—if he were here, as thou art,
 Thus would I bless him.—May'st thou live, my
 boy!
 To see thy country free, or die for her
 As I do!

Sar. Mark! he weeps.

Tell. Were he my son,
 He would not shed a tear! He would remember
 The cliff where he was bred and learn'd to scan
 A thousand fathoms' depth of nether air;
 Where he was train'd to hear the thunder talk,
 And meet the lightning eye to eye—where last
 We spoke together—when I told him death
 Bestow'd the brightest gem that graces life—
 Embrac'd for Virtue's sake—He shed a tear!—
 Now were he by I'd talk to him, and his cheek
 Should never blanch, nor moisture dim his eye—
 I'd talk to him—

Sar. He falters!

Tell. 'Tis too much!
 And yet it must be done!—I'd talk to him—

Ges. Of what?

Tell. The mother, tyrant, thou dost make
 A widow of!—I'd talk to him of her.
 I'd bid him tell her, next to liberty,
 Her name was the last word my lips pronounc'd.
 And I would charge him never to forget
 To love and cherish her, as he would have
 His father's dying blessing rest upon him!

Sar. You see, as he doth prompt the other acts.

Tell. So well he bears it, he doth vanquish me.
 My boy—my boy!—O for the hills, the hills,
 To see him bound along their tops again,
 With liberty, so light upon his heel,
 That, like the Chamois, he flings behind him.

Sar. Was there not all the father in that look?

Ges. Yet 'tis 'gainst nature.

Sar. Not if he believes
 To own the son would be to make him share
 The father's death.

Ges. I did not think of that!—
I thank thee, Sarnem, for the thought—'Tis well
The boy is not thy son—I've destin'd him
To die along with thee.

Tell. To die!—For what?

Ges. For having brav'd my power, as thou hast. Lead
Them forth.

Tell. He's but a child.

Ges. Away with them!

Tell. Perhaps an only child.

Ges. No matter.

Tell. He

May have a mother.

Ges. So the viper hath;
And yet who spares it for the mother's sake?

Tell. I talk to stone!—I talk to it as tho'
'Twere flesh; and know 'tis none.—No wonder—
I've

An argument might turn as hard a thing
To flesh—to softest, kindest flesh, as e'er
Sweet Pity chose to lodge her fountains in,
But I do talk to stone.—I'll talk to it

No more. Come, my boy—

I taught thee how to live—I'll shew thee how
To die—

Ges. He is thy child.

Tell. He is my child.

Ges. I've wrung a tear from him! Thy name?

Tell. My name?—

It matters not to keep it from thee now:

My name is Tell.

Ges. Tell!—William Tell?

Tell. The same.

Ges. What! He so fam'd bove all his countrymen
For guiding o'er the stormy lake the boat?
And such a master of his bow, 'tis said
His arrows never miss!—Indeed—I'll take
Exquisite vengeance!—Mark! I'll spare thy life,
Thy boy's too—Both of you are free—on one
Condition.

Tell. Name it.

Ges. I would see you make

A trial of your skill with that same bow
You shoot so well with.

Tell. Name the trial you
Would have me make.

Ges. You look upon your boy
As tho' instinctively you guess'd it.

Tell. Look
Upon my boy!—What mean you? Look upon
My boy as tho' I guess'd it!—Guess'd the trial
You'd have me make!—Guess'd it
Instinctively! You do not mean—No—No—
You would not have me make a trial of
My skill upon my child!—Impossible!
I do not guess your meaning.

Ges. I would see
Thee hit an apple at the distance of
A hundred paces.

Tell. Is my boy to hold it.

Ges. No.

Tell. No!—I'll send the arrow thro' the core!

Ges. It is to rest upon his head.

Tell. Great heaven,
You hear him!

Ges. Thou dost hear the choice I give—
Such trial of the skill thou'rt master of,
Or death to both of you; not otherwise
To be escap'd.

Tell. O monster.

Ges. Wilt thou do it?

Alb. He will! He will!

Tell. Ferocious monster!—Make
A father murder his own child.

Ges. Take off
His chains if he consents.

Tell. With his own hand!

Ges. Does he consent?

Alb. He does.

[*GESLER signs to his Officers, who proceed to
take off TELL's chains, TELL all the while
unconscious of what they do.*

Tell. With his own hand!

Murder his child with his own hand—This hand!
 The hand I've led him when an infant by!—
 'Tis beyond horror—'tis most horrible
 Amazement!—'Tis too much for flesh and blood
 To bear—Men should be made of steel to stand it:
 And I believe I am myself about
 To turn to some such thing; for feeling grows
 Benumb'd within me, that I seem to lose
 Almost the power of hating him, and keep
 A calm, when heaven and earth give warrants for
 A tempest—[*his chains fall off.*] What's that
 you have done to me?
 Villains! put on my chains again—My hands
 Are free from blood; and have no gust for it
 That they should drink my child's!—Here!—
 here!—I'll not
 Murder my boy for Gesler.

Alb. Father—Father!

You will not hit me, father!—

Tell. Hit thee!—Send

The arrow thro' thy brain—or, missing that,
 Shoot out an eye—or, if thine eye escapes,
 Mangle the cheek I've seen thy mother's lips
 Cover with kisses!—Hit thee!—Hit a hair
 Of thee, and cleave thy mother's heart—Who's he
 Asks me to do it?—Shew him me, the monster!
 Make him perceptible unto my reason
 And heart!—In vain my senses vouch for him;
 I hear he lives—I see it—but it is
 A prodigy that nature can't believe!

Ges. Dost thou consent?

Tell. Give me my bow and quiver—

Ges. For what?

Tell. To shoot my boy!

Alb. No—father—no!

To save me!—You'll be sure to hit the apple.

Will you not save me, father?

Tell. Lead me forth—

I'll make the trial!

Alb. Thank you!

Tell. Thank me?—Do

You know for what?—I will not make the trial

To take him to his mother in my arms,
And lay him down a corse before her!

Ges. Then
He dies this moment—and you certainly
Do murder him whose life you have a chance
To save, and will not use it.

Tell. Well—I'll do it :
I'll make the trial.

Alb. Father—

Tell. Speak not to me :
Let me not hear thy voice—Thou must be dumb ;
And so should all things be—Earth should be
dumb,
And heaven—unless its thunder mutter'd at
The deed, and sent a bolt to stop it!—Give me
My bow and quiver!

Ges. When all's ready.

Tell. Well!—
Lead on!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Enter, slowly, several Citizens, as if observing something following them, VERNER, and THEODORE.*

Ver. The pace they're moving at is that of men
About to do the work of death. Some wretch
Is doom'd to suffer—Should it be my friend—
Should it be Tell!

Theo. No doubt 'tis some good man.

Ver. Poor Switzerland—poor country! Not a son
Is left to thee that's worthy to be one.
'Tis not a common man, with such parade,
They lead to death: I count four castellains
Already—

Theo. There's a fifth.

Ver. And Sarnem too!

Do you see him?

Theo. Yes; and Gesler follows him.

Who can it be?

Ver. We'll see, He's coming now—
'Tis William Tell!

Theo. Verner, do you know the boy
That follows him?

Ver. A boy!—It is his son!
What horror's to be acted? Do you see
The headsman?

Theo. No!—I see no headsman there,
No apparatus for the work of death.
Perhaps they're not to suffer!

Ver. Lo you how
The women clasp their hands, and now and then
Look up to heaven! You see that some do weep.
No headsman's there; but Gesler's at no loss
For means of cruelty because there lacks
A headsman!

Pierre. [*rushing in*] Horrible!—most horrible
Decree!—To save his own and Albert's life,
Tell is to shoot an apple from the head
Of his own child!

Enter slowly Burghers and Women—LUTOLD, RO-
DOLPH, GERARD, SARNEM, GESLER, TELL, AL-
BERT—a Soldier, bearing Tell's bow and quiver—
another, with a basket of apples—Soldiers, &c.

Ges. That is your ground. Now shall they measure
thence

A hundred paces. Take the distance.

Tell. Is

The line a true one?

Ges. True or not, what is 't

To thee?

Tell. What is 't to me?—A little thing,

A very little thing—a yard or two

Is nothing here or there—were it a wolf

I shot at!—Never mind.

Ges. Be thankful, slave,

Our grace accords thee life on any terms.

Tell. I will be thankful, Gesler!—Villain, stop!

You measure to the sun.

Ges. And what of that?

What matter whether to or from the sun ?

Tell. I'd have it at my back.—The sun should shine
Upon the mark, and not on him that shoots.
I cannot see to shoot against the sun—
I will not shoot against the sun !

Ges. Give him his way !—Thou 'st cause to bless my
mercy.

Tell. I shall remember it. I'd like to see
The apple I'm to shoot at.

Ges. Stay !—Show me
The basket !—There—

Tell. You've pick'd the smallest one.

Ges. I know I have.

Tell. O ! do you ?—But you see
The colour on 't is dark—I'd have it light
To see it better.

Ges. Take it as it is :
Thy skill will be the greater if thou hit'st it.

Tell. True—true !—I didn't think of that—I wonder
I did not think of that.—Give me some chance
To save my boy ! [*Throws away the apple with all
his force*] I will not murder him
If I can help it—for the honour of
The form thou weart's, if all the heart is gone.

Ges. Well ; choose thyself.

Tell. Have I a friend among
The lookers on ?

Ver. Here, Tell !

Tell. I thank thee, Verner !

He is a friend runs out into a storm
To shake a hand with us. I must be brief
When once the bow is bent, we cannot take
The shot too soon. Verner, whatever be
The issue of this hour, the common cause
Must not stand still. Let not to-morrow's sun
Set on the tyrant's banner !—Verner ! Verner !
The boy !—the boy !—Think'st thou he has the
courage
To stand it ?

Ver. Yes.

Tell. Does he tremble ?

Ver. No.

- Tell.* Art sure ?
- Ver.* I am.
- Tell.* How looks he ?
- Ver.* Clear and smilingly.
If you doubt it—look yourself.
- Tell.* No—no—my friend,
To hear it is enough.
- Ver.* He bears himself
So much above his years—
- Tell.* I know!—I know.
- Ver.* With constancy so modest—
- Tell.* I was sure
He would—
- Ver.* And looks with such relying love
And reverence upon you—
- Tell.* Man ! Man ! Man !
No more ! Already I 'm too much the father
To act the man !—Verner, no more, my friend !
I would be flint—flint—flint. Don't make me feel
I'm not—you do not mind me !—Take the boy
And set him, Verner, with his back to me.
Set him upon his knees—and place this apple
Upon his head, so that the stem may front me
Thus, Verner ; charge him to keep steady—tell him
I'll hit the apple !—Verner, do all this
More briefly than I tell it thee.
- Ver.* Come, Albert !
[*Leading him behind.*]
- Alb.* May I not speak with him before I go ?
- Ver.* No—
- Alb.* I would only kiss his hand.
- Ver.* You must not.
- Alb.* I must !—I cannot go from him without !
- Ver.* It is his will you should.
- Alb.* His will is it ?
I am content then—Come.
- Tell.* My boy !
[*Holding out his arms to him.*]
- Alb.* My father !
[*Rushing into Tell's arms.*]
- Tell.* If thou canst bear it, should not I ?—Go now,
My son—and keep in mind that I can shoot—

Go, boy—Be thou but steady, I will hit
 The apple—Go!—God bless thee—go.—My bow!
 Thou wilt not fail thy master, wilt thou?—Thou
 Hast never fail'd him yet, old servant—No
 I'm sure of thee—I know thy honesty,
 Thou'rt stanch—stanch.—I'd deserve to find thee
 treacherous,
 Could I suspect thee so—Come, I will stake
 My all upon thee!—Let me see my quiver.

Ges. Give him a single arrow.

Tell. Do you shoot?

Lut. I do.

Tell. Is't so you pick an arrow, friend.
 The point you see is bent—the feather jagged,
 That's all the use 'tis fit for. [*breaks it.*]

Ges. Let him have

Another.

Tell. Why 'tis better than the first,
 But yet not good enough for such an aim
 As I'm to take—'Tis heavy in the shaft:
 I'll not shoot with it!—Let me see my quiver.
 Bring it!—'Tis not one arrow in a dozen
 I'd take to shoot with at a dove, much less
 A dove like that—What is't you fear? I'm but
 A naked man—a wretched naked man!
 Your helpless thrall—alone in the midst of you,
 With every one of you a weapon in
 His hand—What can I do in such a strait
 With all the arrows in that quiver?—Come!
 Will you give it me or not?

Ges. It matters not.

Show him the quiver—You're resolv'd I see
 Nothing shall please you.

Tell. Am I so?—That's strange,
 That's very strange!—See if the boy is ready.

Ver. He is.

Tell. I'm ready too!—Keep silence for
 Heaven's sake, and do not stir—and let me have
 Your prayers—your prayers—and be my witnesses
 That if his life's in peril from my hand,
 'Tis only for the chance of saving it.

Now, friends, for mercy's sake, keep motionless
And silent.

[TELL bends his bow, and fixes the arrow.
As he raises the bow to take aim, one of
the spectators drops lifeless—TELL lowers
the bow.

Tell. Do you see!

Ges. Away with him!—

Go on!

[He raises the bow again, and when he has
brought it to his eye, a woman shrieks and
falls fainting in the arms of another.

Tell. Do you hear?

Ges. Remove her, slaves—Go on!

Tell. I will.

[TELL shoots, and a shout of exultation bursts
from the crowd. TELL'S head drops on his
bosom; he with difficulty supports himself
upon his bow.

Ver. [rushing in with Albert] Thy boy is safe—no
hair of him is touch'd.

Alb. Father, I'm safe—Your Albert's safe—Dear
father,

Speak to me!—Speak to me!

Ver. He cannot, boy!

Alb. You grant him life?

Ges. I do.

Alb. And we are free?

Ges. You are. [crossing angrily behind.]

Alb. Thank heaven!—Thank heaven!

Ver. Open his vest,
And give him air.

[ALBERT opens his father's vest, and the ar-
row drops. TELL starts—fixes his eyes on
ALBERT, and clasps him to his breast.

Tell. My boy!—My boy!

Ges. For what

Hid you that arrow in your breast?—Speak, slave!

Tell. To kill thee, tyrant, had I slain my boy!

Ges. My Guards!—Secure him!

Tell. Tyrant! every hill shall blaze

With vengeance.—

Ges. Slaves obey me.

Tell. Liberty

Shall at thy downfall shout from every peak!

Ges. Away with him.

Tell. My country shall be free!

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Gesler's Castle. A Lake in view.**Enter GESLER, RODOLPH, and Officers.**Ges.* How say you?—Uri in commotion?*Rod.* Yes;

Our scouts report on sure intelligence.

Ges. Well, what of Uri! [*Calling*] Sarnem! [*To Rodolph*]

Go, patrol

The town, and take especial note of all

You see, and straight report to Sarnem. [*Exit*

RODOLPH.] Sarnem!

Sar. [*entering*] My lord.*Ges.* The bark—is 't ready? hurry it!And lead him from his dungeon. [*Exit SARNEM.*]

He shall change

His prison for a stronger; then, perhaps,

I'll rest.

Yet if I close my eyes, sleep only draws

Her curtain round my thoughts, to shut them in

With restlessness, from which they turn to watching

As to refreshment.

Then I'm on the hills,

And he is with me there, their master: at

His call, the clouds do gather, and let loose

Their thunders on me, till I'm deafen'd with

Their din, and feel their lightnings blasting me!

The dark ravine then opens at my feet,

And down I splash into the torrent, where

The cataract begins its fearful leap,

That drags me over with 't. Or on the brink

He sets me of the cliff, and makes me scan

The mountain's base, that lies direct below,

Too deep for eye to bear; till with the sight

Maddening, I spring into the void, and straight
Go spinning down the air,—that when I wake,
Convuls'd for very lack of breath, I can't
Believe but still I'm falling.

Sar. [*Entering.*] Now, my lord—

Ges. [*Catching hold of him*] Sarnem!

Sar. My lord, what moves you?

Ges. We are so

Beset with traitors, Sarnem, we forget

The voices of our friends!—The bark is ready?

Sar. It is, my lord.

Ges. Our prisoner, too? That's well!

What kind of night?

Sar. Clear star-light;—not a breath

Of wind!

Ges. That's strange!

Sar. My lord!

Ges. I say, 'tis strange

The night should be so calm. I'm glad of it,

And yet I marvel at it. I did look

To find it was o'ercast; 'tis very strange.

Why should I look for frowns to the mild night

That seems dispos'd to send me none? What's

that? [*Noise of wind and distant tempest.*]

Sar. The wind is rising.

Ges. Did I not say it, Sarnem?

Sar. You did, my lord.

Ges. The night will be a rough one.

Re-enter RODOLPH.

Rod. Lutold, my lord, reports the town is quiet,

Save that the burghers frequent pass from house

To house, with looks that argue restlessness,

And brooding discontent. [*Exit RODOLPH.*]

Ges. Is this revolt? [*Louder wind.*]

You'll see the guards are trebled, Sarnem. Hark!

Now you may hear the wind!

Sar. 'Twill be a storm.

My lord, 'twere well you ventur'd not yourself;

Those lakes are dangerous at night; the course

Is long!

Ges. No, Sarnem; I must see the slave

Dispos'd myself. My castle on the lake's
 Impregnable; I'll take him there, and plan
 Some means of signal punishment, to check
 The spirit of revolt. The storm I fear
 Is that we carry with us. Tell's the cloud
 From which I dread a thunderbolt! besides,
 He is a hostage worth my life. [*Aside.*] The boy
 Remains—should they attempt the castle, lead him
 To the walls; and threaten them, if once a bow
 Is bent, to sacrifice him in their sight.

Rod. [*Re-entering.*] My lord, we've news of gatherings
 in the hills!

Ges. A storm, indeed, is rising. Come, the boat.

[*Exeunt GESLER and Officers.*]

Sar. They're fairly off. The wind's against them;
 but

It blows a gentle tho' a fitful breeze.

I would not be in Gesler's place.

Rod. Why so?

Sar. Something will chance to-night.

Rod. Why think'st thou so?

Sar. I know not why—The look he gave, before
 He left us—did you mark it, Rodolph?

Rod. Yes.

Sar. I never saw a look like that. It lower'd
 To very darkness. Fate was in that look.
 Come, Rodolph, to our charge, We must prepare
 To meet a storm to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Supposed to be in the vicinity of the
 Castle.*

Enter WALDMAN and MICHAEL.

Wald. I sore mistrust thee, Michael. If thou play'st
 The trifler with me now—

Mich. Dear father, fear not.

Wald. But I do fear thee, boy; and if not thee,
 I fear this stormy night. Dost hear the thunder?

[*Thunder.*]

Mich. I do; but it is distant. [Thunder.

Wald. There again!

Mich. It sounds in the direction of the lake.

Wald. Why hast thou brought me hither?

Mich. Worthy sire,

Thou said'st I'd never marry till my teeth
Were gone. To show thee to thy heart's content
The prophecy was wrong, I've brought thee hither
To help me to take home my gentle bride,
Whom thou shalt see anon.

Wald. He's past all hope.

Am I thy butt to play a jest upon?

Is this a place to jest?

Mich. No place more safe:

No sentinel is here to mar a jest,

Were I disposed for one. [Thunder and rain.

Wald. The storm is on.

Would'st hold me here to bide this pelting storm?

Mich. Dear father, hush, unless you'd spoil my wedding,

And mar the only chance of making me

A sober man. And, look, my bridesmen come.

Enter JAGHELI and a band of young men, with a rope ladder.

Welcome, Jagheli! Father, my chief man,

Who means to take example by your son—

Marry a wife, and ever after live

The gravest man in Altorf.

Wald. Where wilt thou get thy bride, then?

Mich. Thou shalt see.

Ha! there's the light—Jagheli, that's the case-
ment.

Come on! Friends, stay you here. And, father,
pray

Command your patience till I give you proof

Such as shall full content you, that I mean

With all my heart to be a married man.

[*Exeunt MICHAEL and JAGHELI with rope ladder.*

Wald. Friends, can you help me to a clue to find

This riddle out?

Theo. We 're sworn to secrecy,
And may not answer you.

Wald. I see—I see—
He's not content to make a jest of me,
But brings his friends to join him in the laugh.
He wed!—He take a wife!—He brings some boy,
Dress'd in his sister's gown and tucker, with
His voice upon the crack—to pass him for
His bride upon me. I'll begone, and baulk
[*more thunder.*]
His most irreverent mirth! Good night, my
friends,
I give you joy of this fair night.

Enter MICHAEL and AGNES—JAGHELI and ANNELI.

Mich. Most trusting love,
Fear not; I'll give thee to safe warding, till
I take thee to mine own. Fair Anneli,
Go with thy cousin. Father, to thy care
We trust these jewels that shall keep us rich
For life! Don't wonder, sweet—There's not a
care
To-night doth cost thee, but each after day
Shall bring as many golden joys as hours
To pay thee for. [*Storm*]

Wald. A woman as I live!

An. Dear coz!

Let us go back.

Ag. Nay, coz, we'll e'en go on.
These gallants trusted once, to trust them on
They say is sometimes to secure the debt. [*Storm.*]

Wald. Fair lady, I will be your bond, to see
Due payment made—if you will take me for't.

Mich. Dear father, when you hear me jest again
You'll drink your grandson's health that is to be,
And pardon me for him—Away!—Away!
[*Thunder and rain.*]

These heads do ask a kinder canopy
'Than this rough sky affords.

Wald. Go you not with us?

Mich. No ; our brides forbid.
 Nor may we see them till we bring the priest
 To visit them to-morrow—And besides
 We've comrades here, bright gallants, as our-
 selves
 Were once, of whom we'd take a handsome leave.
 This night, that parts us thus, we will forgive,
 For the fair fellows that shall follow it.
 Good night—sound sleep—sweet dreams—good
 night—good night !

[*Exeunt* WALDMAN, AGNES, and ANNELI.]

Now friends, the casement ; there the ladder
 hangs ;
 Climb fast and silently. The chamber on
 The postern opens and is lock'd within,
 Thence we can watch the motions of our friends,
 And at the moment lend our sudden aid,
 When it can most avail—on—on and up !
 Now, Michael, here's the closing of thy jests,
 Or making of thee!—Fortune hold thy friend,
 There's not a sober man in Altorf but
 Would wear thy brows, for all their cap and bells !
 [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*A Mountain, with a view of the Lake
 of Lucerne.*

Enter EMMA, leading OLD MELCTAL.

O. M. I keep thee back ?

Emma. No—no !

O. M. I'm sure I do.

Emma. And if you do, it matters not—we've gain'd
 The cliff.—Should Erni come, how lies the track
 From this he'll take ?

O. M. The lake's in view ?

Emma. It is.

O. M. Then set me fronting it. Now, as I point,
 See'st thou the shoulder of a wooded hill

That overlooks the rest?

Emma. I see it well.

O. M. Another hill's in front of it?

Emma. There is.

O. M. His track lies o'er the verge of that same hill,
And so exact from this, what moves upon 't
Is plainly seen betwixt the sky and you.
Discern you aught upon 't?

Emma. I think I do.

Yes—yes, I do. There, father, there!—O, father!
Forgive me that the mother and the wife
Forgot your eyes were out!

O. M. Thou may'st forget

What I forget myself with care for thee.
What dost thou see upon that hill, my child?

Emma. Figures of men in motion; but as dim
As shadows yet.

O. M. 'Tis Erni! O that I
Had eyes to see the shadow of my child!
O blest are they that see!—they twice embrace
The precious things they love.—If it be they,
They'll soon be here.

Emma. Too late, I fear, too late
To save my husband and my child. Why fled
The churl soon as he told us they were in
The tyrant's power?

O. M. Blame not his haste, my child;
'Twas sure for good.

Emma. I see a bark upon
The lake. How oft has William cross'd that lake!
He'll cross it ne'er again.

O. M. Have hope—have hope.

Emma. Father!

O. M. My child?

Emma. I think I see the gleam
Of lances in the bark—I'm sure I do!

O. M. Likely, my child: the tyrant and his guards
Perhaps are there. He has a hold, you know,
Upon the lake—a castle, stronger far
Than that at Altorf.

Emma. Father—father!

O. M. What?—

What moves you so, my child?

Emma. The form of him

Who steers the bark is like—

O. M. Like whose?

Emma. My husband's!

Yes—yes! 'Tis William!—So he holds the helm

I'd know him at the helm from any man

That ever steer'd a bark upon the lake!

I fear—I fear!—

O. M. What is't you fear, my daughter?

Is't the lake?

Emma. No—no! The lake is rough,

Chafed with the storm of yesternight—'tis rough;

But 'tis not that I fear. What business have

The lances in that bark? What's that he does?

He steers her right upon a rock!—'Tis in

Despair; and there he'll die before my eyes!—

Ha! what!—What's that? He springs upon
the rock!

He flies!—he's free!—but they pursue him! Stay
here.

O. M. What would'st thou do, my child?

Emma. Fly to his aid.

O. M. Alas! what aid can you afford to him?

Emma. Cling to the foremost of his murderers.

O. M. And help them so to surely stop his flight.

Would he not cling to you?

Emma. Alas! he would.

What should I do?

O. M. See how our friends come on.

If it was they, they should be nearer now.

Emma. They are!—They are!

O. M. Let's haste to meet them, then.

The track—the track! Is't this way? Come,
my child;

I'll show thee where—if thou wilt stand, and
wave them,

They're sure to see thee. Let us trust to them

For aid. Don't look behind. Come on—come on!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter TELL from an eminence.

Tell. Whene'er I choose, I have the speed of them.
 Nor dare they shoot: so oft as they prepare,
 If I but bend my bow, the terror of
 The deadly aim alone transfixes them,
 That down they drop their weapons by their sides,
 And stand at gaze, with lapsed power, as tho'
 In every heart an arrow from my bow
 Stood quivering. I knew that beetling cliff
 Would cost them breath to climb. They top it now.
 Ha! [*Bends his bow.*] Have I brought you to a
 stand again?
 I'll keep you there, to give your master time
 To breathe. Poor slaves! no game are you for
 me;
 But could I draw the tyrant on that shrinks
 Behind you—There he is! I'll take yon crag,
 From which a leap, they dare not take, at once
 Enables me to distance them, and there
 Bring him to parly. [*Ascends the crag.*]

Enter Archers and Spearmen, followed by GESLER.

Ges. Wherefore do you fly?
Tell. Wherefore do you pursue me? Said you not
 You'd give me liberty, if thro' the storm
 I safely steer'd your prow? The waves did then
 Lash over you; your pilot left the helm;
 I took it, and they rear'd their heads no more,
 Unless to bow them and give way to me
 And let your pinnace on. You did repeat
 Your promise, as you trembling lay along
 The bottom of the bark, and scann'd the looks
 Of your pale crew that shrunk, while fiercer wax'd
 The fury of the wind, and to its height
 The roaring of the angry thunder rose,
 Through which I brought you as through savage
 foes,
 My friends, that for my sake forbore. You twice
 Promised me liberty. I only take

What you did promise?

Ges. Traitor, 'twas your place
To wait my time.

Tell. It would have been, had I
Believed that time would come. If I'm a prize
Worthy to take, why hang you thus behind
Your minions? Why not lead the chase yourself?
Lack you the manhood e'en to breast the sport
You love!

Ges. Transfix the slave with all your darts
At once.

Tell. Ha!

*[Takes aim again—they drop their weapons,
which they had half raised.]*

Follow me! Keen huntsmen they
The game itself must urge. Keep up the chase!

Ges. You keep too close together. Spread yourselves,
That some of you may hit him unawares.
His quiver full of ducats to the man
'That brings him down. On, cowards—on, I say!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE THE LAST.—*The outside of GESLER'S
Castle—the drawbridge up—the ducal banner of
Austria hoisted—the ramparts lined with archers
and spearmen. SARNEM, RODOLPH, GERARD, and
LUTOLD, on the top of an advanced bastion. In
the front VERNER, THEODORE, and PIERRE, with
Burghers, and FURST, with Mountaineers, all
armed.*

Sar. What means this hostile show? Speak, burg-
hers, why

Before these walls assemble ye in arms?

Ver. To drive the spoilers of our country from
Their hold, avenge her cruel wrongs, and set
Her children free!

Sar. Be warn'd in time!—Disperse!—
Your homes! your homes! or not a man of you
But treads upon his grave.

Ver. Take warning thou!
 Of thee and every soul that with thee bides
 That castle is the tomb, unless you straight
 Surrender William Tell!—Is he alive?—
 Give up our countryman—We'll treat with thee
 For but the sake of sparing human blood!

Sar. Traitor, he is not here.
 He lives—But for your threat, to show you what's
 Its weight—Behold his son!

[ALBERT is led forward by the Headsman,
 with a drawn sword.]

And heed how he's
 Attended!—Mind! the gnomon's on the hour:
 If when it rings a single soul remains
 Of those rebellious bands, the headsman does
 His office.—Mark me further, renegade!
 Gesler is at his castle on the lake,
 Where lies thy countryman, in chains, last night
 Transported thither—whom the torture hath
 Confess'd.—The governor is master of
 Your plans; and, reinforce'd, is on his way—

TELL *rushes in, followed by ERNI and Mountaineers.*

Tell. Villain, 'tis false!—Alive thou ne'er shalt see
 Thy master more!—An arrow from this bow
 Hath felt the last throb of the tyrant's heart.
 Proceed to the assault.

Ver. See! William—see!

Sar. A single arrow drawn, he dies.

Tell. [confused] How's this?

Ver. Yes, William, 'tis thy son. I know not how
 He fell into their power.

Tell. I see him not!—
 I see my country, Verner, not my son!
 She holds her arms to me—with piteous cries,
 Recounts her children's wrongs—shows me the
 hands
 Of free-born sons, festering in chains—the locks
 Of hoary parents steep'd in their own blood;
 And tangled tresses of her daughters, torn

By hands that did despoil them: of the gem
 Life has no price to name for. I've no son,
 Ye men of Switzerland! Look there, and see
 Your tyrant's hold—Who'll draw an arrow first?
 Will none dispute the glory of the deed
 With Tell?— There then!

TELL shoots, and the Headsman falls.—The hour is rung—MICHAEL, JAGHELI, and their friends, rush out upon the ramparts, and some secure SARNEM and his Officers, while others rapidly lower the portcullis.—TELL, entering the fortress over the bridge, with his friends, strikes down the Austrian banner, and, hurrying on, receives ALBERT from MICHAEL.—Enter on each side EMMA and OLD MELCHTAL, AGNES, ANNELI, and WALDMAN.

Tell. My country's free!

[A burst of exultation from the Swiss.

Save what is shed, we win
 A bloodless victory. We'll temper vengeance
 With mercy—Austrians, you'll quit a land
 You never had a right to—and you'll learn
 A country's never lost that hath a son
 To wrestle with the tyrant who'd enslave her.

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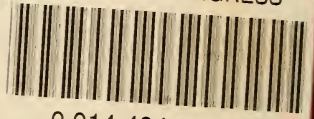
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