

was further resolved that, in the enterprise upon which they were now embarked, no one should be guided by his own private opinion, nor ever forsake his friends; that they should jointly live or jointly die in defense of the common cause; that each should in his own vicinity promote the object in view, trusting that the whole nation would one day have cause to bless their friendly union; that the Count of Hapsburg should be deprived of none of his lands, vassals, or prerogatives; that the freedom which they had inherited from their fathers they were determined to assert, and to hand down to their children untainted and undiminished. Then Stauffacher, Fürst, and Melchthal, and the other conspirators, stepped forward, and, raising their hands, swore that they would die in defense of that freedom. After this solemn oath, and after an agreement that New Year's Day should be chosen for the outbreak, unless, in the meantime, a signal fire should arouse the inhabitants on some sudden emergency, the heroes separated. Arnold returned to Stautz, Werner to Schwytz, while Tell and Fürst took their way to Altorf. The sun already shone brightly as Tell entered the town, and he at once advanced into the public place, where the first object which caught his eye was a handsome cap embroidered with gold stuck upon the end of a long pole. Soldiers walked around it in respectful silence, and the people of Altorf, as they passed, bowed their heads profoundly to the symbol of power.

19. Tell was much surprised at this new and strange manifestation of servility, and, leaning on his cross-bow, gazed contemptuously both on the people and the soldiers. Berenger, captain of the guard, at length observed this man, who alone, amid a cringing populace, carried his head erect. He went to him, and fiercely asked why he neglected to pay obedience to the orders of Hermann

Gessler? Tell replied that he saw no reason why he should bow to a hat, or even to the one which the hat represented. This bold language surprised Berenger, who ordered Tell to be disarmed, and then, surrounded by guards, he was carried before the governor. "Wherefore," demanded the incensed bailiff, "hast thou disobeyed my orders, and failed in thy respect to the emperor? Why hast thou dared to pass before the sacred badge of thy sovereign without the evidence of homage required of thee?" "Verily," answered Tell, with mock humility, "how this happened I know not; 'tis an accident, and no mark of contempt. Suffer me, therefore, in thy clemency to depart."

20. Gessler was irritated at this reply, feeling assured that there was something beneath the tranquil and bitter smile of the prisoner which he could not fathom. Suddenly he was struck by the resemblance which existed between him and the boy Walter, whom he had met the previous day, and immediately ordered him to be brought forward.

21. Gessler now inquired the prisoner's name, which he no sooner learned than he recognized as that of the archer so celebrated throughout the canton. As soon as the youth arrived, the governor turned to Tell and told him that he had heard of his extraordinary dexterity, and was accordingly determined to put it to proof. "While beholding justice done, the people of Altorf shall also admire thy skill. Thy son shall be placed a hundred yards distant, with an apple on his head; if thou hast the good fortune to carry off the apple in triumph with one of thy arrows, I pardon both, and restore your liberty. If thou refusest this trial, thy son shall die before thine eyes!"

22. Tell implored Gessler to spare him so cruel an experiment, but, finding the governor inexorable, the hero

submitted to the trial. He was conducted into the public place, where the required distance was measured by Berenger—a double row of soldiers shutting up three sides of the square. The people, awe-stricken and trembling, pressed behind. Walter stood with his back to a linden-tree, patiently awaiting the exciting moment. Hermann Gessler, some distance behind, watched every motion. His cross-bow and belt were handed to Tell; he tried the point, broke the weapon, and demanded his quiver. It was brought to him, and emptied at his feet. William stooped down, and, taking a long time to choose one, managed to hide a second in his girdle; the other he held in his hand, and proceeded to string his bow, while Berenger cleared away the remaining arrows. After hesitating, he drew the bow, aimed, shot, and the apple, struck through the core, was carried away by the arrow.

23. The market-place was filled by loud cries of admiration. Walter flew to embrace his father, who, overcome by the excess of his emotions, fell insensible to the ground, thus exposing the second arrow to view. Gessler stood over him awaiting his recovery, which speedily took place. Tell rose, and turned away from the governor, who, however, thus addressed him: "Incomparable archer! I will keep my promise; but," added he, "tell me what needed you with that second arrow which you have, I see, secreted in your girdle? One was surely enough." "The second shaft," replied Tell, "was to pierce thy heart, tyrant, if I had chanced to harm my son!" At these words the terrified governor retired behind his guards, revoked his promise of pardon, commanding him further to be placed in irons, and to be reconducted to the fort. He was obeyed, and, as slight murmurs rose among the people, double patrols of Austrian soldiers paraded the streets, and forced the citizens to retire to their houses. Walter,

released, fled to join Arnold, of Melchthal, according to a whispered order from his father.

24. Gessler, reflecting on the aspect of the people, and fearful that some plot was in progress, which his accidental shortness of provisions rendered more unfortunate, determined to rid his citadel of the object which might induce an attack. With this in view, he summoned Berenger, and said to him: "I am about to leave Altorf, and you shall command during my absence. I leave my brave soldiers, who will readily obey your voice; and soon, returning with supplies and reinforcements, we will crush this vile people, and punish them for their insolent murmurings. Prepare me a large boat, in which thirty men, picked from my guard, may depart with me. As soon as night comes on, load this audacious Tell with chains, and send him on board. I will myself take him where he can expiate his crimes!"

25. The evening was fine and promising; the boat danced along the placid waters. The air was pure, the waves tranquil, the stars shone brightly in the sky. A light southern breeze aided the efforts of the oarsmen, and tempered the rigor of the cold, which night in that season rendered almost insupportable so near the glaciers. All appeared in Gessler's favor. The extent of the first section of the lake was soon passed, and the boat headed for Brunnen. Tell, meantime, loaded with irons, gazed with eager eye on the desert rocks of Grütli, where the day before he had planned with his friends for the deliverance of his country. While painful thoughts crossed his mind, his looks were attracted by a dim light which burst forth near his own house. Presently this light increased, and before long a blaze arose visible all over Uri. The heart of the prisoner beat with joy, for he felt that all efforts were making to rescue him. Gessler observed

the flame, which in reality was a signal-fire to arouse the cantons, but supposed it some Swiss peasant's house accidentally in flames.

26. Suddenly, however, between Fluelen and Sissigen, when in deep water, intermingled with shoals, the south wind ceased to blow, and one of those storms which are common on the lake commenced. A north wind burst upon them, raised the waves to a great height, and dashed them over the gunwale of the boat, which, giving way to the fury of the storm, flew toward the shore that, rocky and precipitous, menaced their lives. The bleak wind brought also frost, snow, and sleet, which spread darkness over the waters, and covered the hands and faces of the rowers with ice. The soldiers, inert and panic-stricken, prayed for life, while Gessler, but ill prepared for death, was profuse in his offers of money and other rewards if they would rouse themselves to save him.

27. In this emergency the Austrian bailiff was reminded by one of his attendants that the prisoner Tell was no less skillful in the management of a boat than in the exercise of the bow. "And, see, my lord," said one of the men, representing to Gessler the imminent peril they were all incurring, "all are paralyzed with terror, and even the pilot is unable to manage the helm!"

28. Gessler's fear of Tell induced him at first to hesitate, but, the prayers of the soldiers becoming pressing, he told the prisoner that if he could take them safely through the storm he should be at once unbound. Tell having replied that, by the grace of God, he could still save them, was instantly freed from his shackles and placed at the helm, when the boat, answering to a master-hand, kept its course steadily through the bellowing surge, as if conscious of the free spirit which had now taken the command.

29. Guiding the obedient tiller at his will, Tell pointed the head of the boat in the direction whence they came, which he knew to be the only safe course; and, encouraging and cheering the rowers, made rapid and steady progress through the water. The darkness which now wrapped them round prevented Gessler from discovering that he had turned his back on his destination. Tell continued on his way nearly the whole night, the dying light of the signal-fire on the mountain serving as a beacon in enabling him to approach the shores of Schwytz, and to avoid the shoals.

30. Between Sissigen and Fluelen are two mountains, the greater and the lesser Achsenberg, whose sides, hemmed in and rising perpendicularly from the bed of the lake, offer not a single platform where human foot can stand. When near this place dawn broke in the eastern sky, and Gessler—the danger appearing to decrease—scowled upon Tell in sullen silence. As the prow of the vessel was driven inland, Tell perceived a solitary table-rock, and called to the rowers to redouble their efforts till they should have passed the precipice ahead, observing with ominous truth that it was the most dangerous point on the whole lake.

31. The soldiers here recognized their position, and pointed it out to Gessler, who demanded of Tell what he meant by taking them back to Altorf. William, without answering him, brought the bow suddenly close upon the rock, seized his bow, and, with an effort which sent the unguided craft back into the lake, sprang on shore, sealed the rocks, and took the direction of Schwytz.

32. Having thus escaped the clutches of the governor, he made for the main road between Art and Küssnacht, and there hid himself until such a time as the bailiff should pass that way. Gessler and his attendants having, with

great difficulty, effected a landing at Brunnen, proceeded toward Küssnacht. In the spot still known as "the hollow way," and marked by a chapel, Tell overheard the threats pronounced against himself should he once more be caught, and, in default of his apprehension, vengeance was vowed against his family. Tell felt that the safety of himself and his wife and children, to say nothing of the duty he owed to his country, required the tyrant's death; and, seizing an arrow, he pierced Gessler to the heart.

33. The bold deed accomplished, the hero effected his escape to Stemen, where he found Werner Stauffacher preparing to march. Immediate action was now necessary, but the original decision of the conspirators remained unchanged. Accordingly, on the morning of New Year's Day, 1308, the castle of Rostberg, in Obwalden, was taken possession of, its keeper, Berenger, of Landasberg, made prisoner, and compelled to promise that he would never again set foot within the territory of the three cantons, after which he was allowed to retire to Lucerne.

34. Stauffacher, the same morning, at the head of the men of Schwytz, destroyed the fortress of Schwanan, while Tell and the men of Uri took possession of Altorf. On the following Sunday the deputies of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwalden met, and renewed that fraternal league which has endured to this day.

35. In 1315 Leopold, second son of Albert, determined to punish the confederate cantons for their revolt, and accordingly marched against them at the head of a considerable army, accompanied by a numerous retinue of nobles. Count Otho, of Strasberg, one of his ablest generals, crossed the Brunig with a body of four thousand men, intending to attack Upper Unterwalden. The bailiffs of Willisan, of Wodhausen, and of Lucerne meantime

armed a fourth of that number to make a descent on the lower division of the same canton, while the emperor in person, at the head of his army of reserve, poured down from Egerson on Mogarten, in the country of Schwytz, ostentatiously displaying an extensive supply of rope wherewith to hang the chiefs of the rebels.

36. The confederates, in order to oppose this formidable invasion, occupied a position in the mountains bordering on the convent of Our Lady of the Hermits. Four hundred men of Uri, and three hundred of Unterwalden, had effected a junction with the warriors of Schwytz, who formed the principal force of the little army. Fifty men, banished from this latter canton, offered themselves to combat beneath their banner, intending to efface by their valor the remembrance of past faults. Early on the morning of November 15, 1315, some thousands of well-armed Austrian knights slowly ascended the hill on which the Swiss were posted, with the hope of dislodging them; the latter, however, advanced to meet their enemies, uttering the most terrific cries. The band of banished men, having precipitated large stones and fragments of rocks from the hillsides and from overhanging cliffs, rushed from behind the sheltering influence of a thick fog and threw the advancing columns into confusion. The Austrians immediately broke their ranks, and presently a complete rout, with terrible slaughter, ensued. The flower of the Austrian chivalry perished on the field of Morgarten, beneath the halberts, arrows, and iron-headed clubs of the shepherds. Leopold, himself, though he succeeded in gaining the shattered remnant of his forces, had a narrow escape, while the Swiss, animated by victory, hastened to Unterwalden, where they defeated another body of Austrians. In this instance Count Otho had as narrow an escape as the emperor.

37. After these two well-fought fields, the confederates hastened to renew their ancient alliance, which was solemnly sworn to in an assembly held at Brunnen on the eighth day of December.

38. After the battle of Morgarten one canton after another threw off the Austrian yoke, and joined the forest cantons, until nearly all Switzerland was joined in a confederacy. A later war waged by Albert proved disastrous to the Austrian cause, and ended by a further consolidation of the Swiss cantons. In 1386, seventy years after Morgarten, the Austrians made another attempt to bring the brave mountaineers into subjection. An army of nine thousand men, the best trained soldiers of the empire, under the lead of the Archduke Leopold, invaded the country. To these the confederates opposed a force of fourteen hundred. They met in a valley near the lake of Sempach. The Austrians had learned something of Swiss warfare, and knew that they stood no chance in a hand-to-hand conflict with the Swiss, and so they formed their men into squares, with a wall of bristling spears on every side. Upon this solid mass of men the Swiss could make no impression. In vain they charged with the fiery courage which had so often gained them the victory; they could find no vulnerable point in the serried columns, and it seemed that the brave mountaineers must all perish, and leave their homes again to the mercy of the Austrian soldiers. But, when almost in despair, the tide of battle was turned by the acts of a single Swiss soldier, Arnold Winkelried, of Unterwalden. He communicated his plan to his immediate neighbors, and then, rushing forward, he grasped as many of the Austrian spears as he could reach; and, gathering them together, he bowed to the ground with the spears buried in his breast. Into the breach his companions rushed, and with their powerful

swords they soon widened the space, so that the whole Swiss force had room for action. The Austrians were almost annihilated, Leopold himself being slain. The poet Montgomery has given the following version of this event:

ARNOLD WINKELRIED.

39. "Make way for liberty!" he cried;  
"Make way for liberty!" and died.
40. In arms the Austrian phalanx stood,  
A living wall, a human wood!  
A wall where every conscious stone  
Seemed to its kindred thousands grown;  
A rampart all assaults to bear,  
Till time to dust their frames should wear!  
A wood, like that enchanted grove  
In which with fiends Rinaldo strove,  
Where every silent tree possessed  
A spirit prisoned in its breast,  
Which the first stroke of coming strife  
Would startle into hideous life;  
So dense, so still, the Austrians stood,  
A living wall, a human wood!  
Impregnable their front appears,  
All horrent with projected spears,  
Whose polished points before them shine,  
From flank to flank, one brilliant line,  
Bright as the breakers' splendors run  
Along the billows, to the sun.
41. Opposed to these, a hovering band  
Contended for their native land;  
Peasants, whose new-found strength had broke  
From manly necks the ignoble yoke,