

William Tell in English literature

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WILLIAM TELL IN ENGLISH LITERATURE.

The performances of Schiller's famous drama "Wilhelm Tell" in Altdorf and Interlaken have, in the course of years, become a tradition, so much so that they would be sadly missed by visitors and Swiss alike were they to be suspended for a summer season. It was in the latter half of the 18th century that the story of Switzerland's historic fight for liberty, and of her national hero, William Tell, began to arouse the interest of Europe. Both Rousseau and Gessner had written much of Switzerland, international travel was just beginning, and the ideas of the French Revolution, coupled with the invasion of Swiss territory by foreign armies, drew the sympathy of many nations to the ancient Republic. William Tell, who had already been glorified in a widespread French book before the outbreak of the Revolution, became the hero of all lovers of liberty. Thus it was not surprising that Schiller's masterpiece, which appeared in 1805, had an enormous international success and found so many admirers in England that a number of translations were made into English, and even one into Gaelic. Within 75 years, in fact, no fewer than 12 different translations of Schiller's "Tell" were published in England, namely, between 1829 and 1904.

Meanwhile subjects from Swiss history, such as Arnold Winkelried, the hero of the battle of Sempach, had already been treated in the "Lyrical Ballads" of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and poems on Swiss Liberty had been published by W.L. Bowles in 1801 and by James Montgomery in 1808. About this time, Jean Pierre Claris de Florian's prose work "Guillaume Tell, ou la Suisse libre" was read by an English journalist Eugenius Roche, who had lived in Paris for some years, and who dramatised the story and published it in 1808 under the title "William Tell. A Tragedy in Five Acts." The play was accepted by the Drury Lane Theatre and was ready for performance, when, on February 24th, 1809, fire broke out and destroyed the theatre.

Several other independent dramas on the subject were published in English, one in 1825 ("William Tell. A Dramatic Sketch") by an anonymous author, and another in the same year by an Irishman, James Sheridan Knowles. An opera text "William Tell", by Henry R. Bishop, also appeared in the same year, as well as H.C. Deakin's work "The Deliverance of Switzerland. A Dramatic Poem". Subsequently a number of shorter poems were written in English, the most outstanding of which was perhaps "William Tell and the Genius of Switzerland", by another Irishman, Thomas O. Davis.

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NEWS IN BRIEF.

Grace Moore, much admired star of "One Night of Love", and other recent film successes, together with her husband, Mr. Parera, enjoyed holidays successively at Maloja and St. Moritz. So entranced were both with the beauties of the Engadine that they promised to be back again next year.

BETTER PRICES ON THE STOCK MARKET IN SAANEN, BERNESE OBERLAND: The first Autumn stock market in the Bernese Oberland always gives a quite accurate picture of the tendency of the prices of stock for the coming season. All prices have slightly increased this year as compared with the same period of last year. Calves ranged from 250 - 600 Frs., steers 200 - 300 Frs., bulls from 500 - 900 Frs., heifer calves 600 - 1100 Frs., cows 400 - 700 Frs. 25 pedigree cows were bought for export at an average price of 1000 Frs.

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