



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

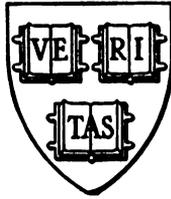
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



47512.61.72



**Harvard College Library**

FROM

.....  
**Cambridge Historical**  
.....  
**Society**  
.....  
.....

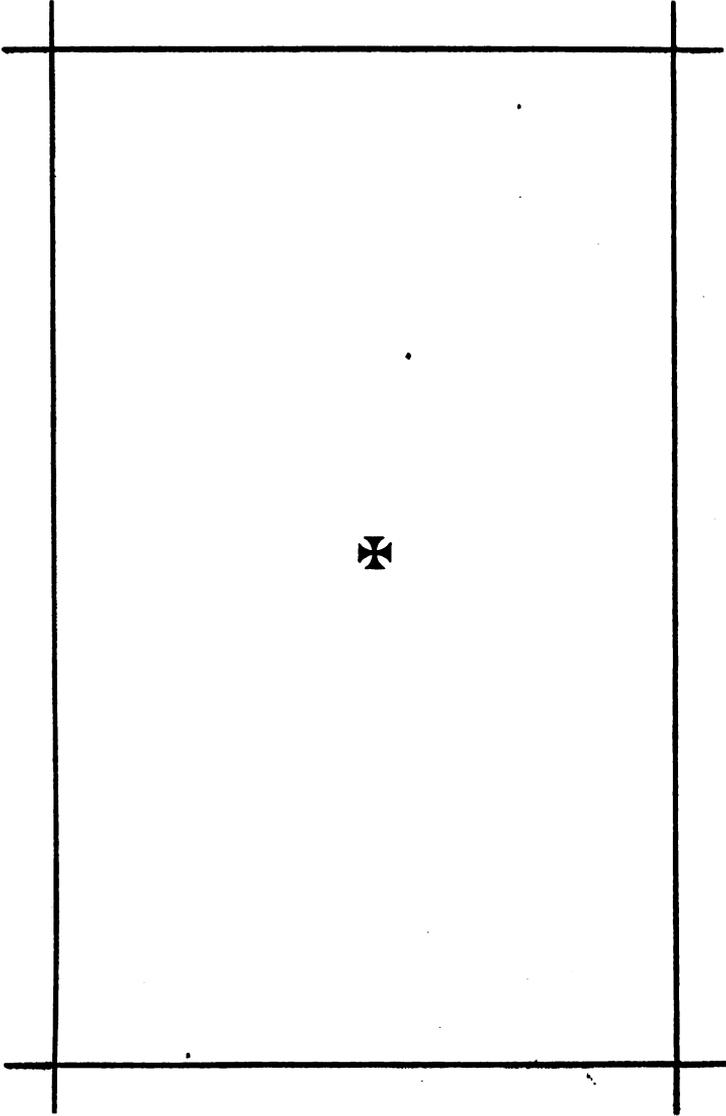




200

100

**THE PASSION-PLAY  
AT OBER-AMMERSGAU**







*Isahel Burton*

THE  
PASSION-PLAY  
AT  
OBER-AMMERGAU

BY THE LATE  
ISABEL, LADY BURTON

Edited, with a Preface, by  
W. H. WILKINS, M.A.

Author of  
"The Romance of Isabel, Lady Burton"  
and Editor of the Burton MSS.

LONDON  
HUTCHINSON AND CO  
PATERNOSTER ROW  
1900

47512.61.72

✓

PRINTED BY  
H. WATSON & CO. LTD.  
LONDON AND AYLESBURY

PRINTED BY  
HAZELL, WATSON, AND VINEY, LD.  
LONDON AND AYLESBURY

H

## Contents

	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	9
LADY BURTON'S PRAYER . . . . .	35
THE PASSION-PLAY AT OBER-AMMERGAU .	37
MUNICH TO MURNAU . . . . .	43
MURNAU TO OBER-AMMERGAU . . . . .	56
THE VILLAGE AND CHURCH . . . . .	69
THE ORIGIN OF THE PLAY . . . . .	78
THE ARRANGEMENTS . . . . .	85
THE GREAT DAY . . . . .	91
WHAT WE WITNESSED . . . . .	102
COMMENTS ON THE PLAY . . . . .	120

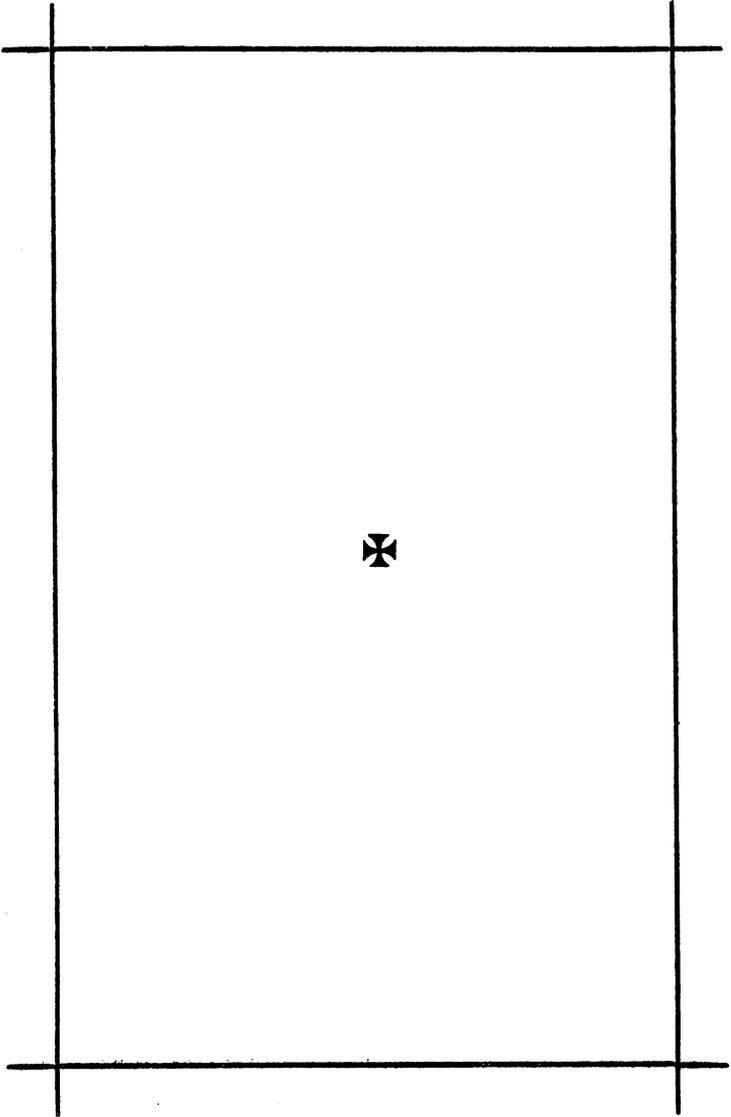
**Contents**

	PAGE
THE CHRISTUS . . . . .	123
HIS JUDGES . . . . .	129
ST. MARY MAGDALEN . . . . .	133
JUDAS . . . . .	135
THE BLESSED VIRGIN . . . . .	138
THE LAMENT . . . . .	141
THE LAST SUPPER . . . . .	143
THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE . . . . .	148
JUDAS'S END . . . . .	153
THE SCOURGING AND CROWN OF THORNS	155
THE WAY OF THE CROSS . . . . .	161
THE CRUCIFIXION . . . . .	170
THE ANOINTING AND BURIAL . . . . .	178
THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION . . . . .	182
RECESSIONAL . . . . .	186
THE AUDIENCE . . . . .	189

## Contents

7

	PAGE
THE EFFECT OF THE PLAY . . . .	193
NON-CATHOLIC OPINION . . . .	212
HOW MISUNDERSTANDINGS ARISE . . . .	221
THE CRUCIFIXION GROUP . . . .	229
MAYR AND OTHERS . . . .	234
EXPENSES . . . .	243
OUR RETURN JOURNEY . . . .	247



## Preface

LADY BURTON wrote this little book on her return to Trieste, after visiting Ober-Ammergau in August, 1880. It was written from her notes, jotted down within a few hours of witnessing the Play, when her impressions were fresh and vivid, and bears, like everything she wrote, the impress of her remarkable personality. Sir Richard Burton, who accompanied his wife, also recorded

his impressions from a very different point of view.

“Richard,” says Lady Burton in her *Life of her husband*, “was anxious that they should be produced together, under the heading ‘Ober-Ammergau as seen by Four Eyes.’ He wrote the cynical and I the religious side; but as the man who printed them was too poor to produce the two, he published Richard’s only, and I shall bring them out together in the ‘Uniform Library’ of my husband’s works, just as he wished it.”

Lady Burton did not live to com-

## Preface

II

plete this "Uniform Library"; indeed, only one volume, "The Pilgrimage to Meccah," now out of copyright, made its appearance. The following interesting fragment has therefore never been published, and in bringing it out now I am only obeying her wishes. It is not in my power to incorporate with it Sir Richard Burton's little essay; the fact that it has already appeared makes this impossible. It may be doubted, too, whether such a plan would have conduced to the harmony of the whole.

In the preface to his pamphlet Sir Richard declares: "My object

**Preface**

was artistic and critical, with an Orientalistic and anthropological side—the wish to compare, haply to trace, some affinity between this survival of the; Christian Mystery and the living scenes of El-Islam at Meccah.”

He confessed himself disappointed. “I found it impossible,” he says, “to draw any parallel between the Passion-Play and the three days’ pilgrimage at Meccah; the ideas are totally disconnected; there is not even a rope of sand to join them.”

In other respects, too, he was frankly critical, and often far from complimentary to the Play or the

players. Only one scene touched him, the Crucifixion scene, which he declares was "the gem of the piece." "Two crosses are seen at the Podium as the curtain rises; the thieves, with bare heads and wild hair, hang on by their arms being passed over the cross-piece. The central Cross, slowly raised from the ground by the hangman, drops into its socket, and the tall, white figure, apparently only nailed on, hangs before us. The idea is new—a live crucifix. We have seen them in thousands, artistic and in-artistic; but we never yet felt the reality of a man upon a cross. The

**Preface**

glamour of the legend is over us ; and we look upon, for the first time, what we shall not forget to the last."

From a man of Burton's calibre this is remarkable testimony to the dramatic power of the Passion-Play. But the vast majority of pilgrims to Ober-Ammergau go not as critics, but as devotees ; and the exoteric view taken by Burton would strike a jarring note.

With Lady Burton's description of Ober-Ammergau this is far different. As a devout Catholic, a sincere Christian, she approached the Passion-Play in a devotional spirit ;

all that she writes is tempered by reverence. She began her day by being present at the Celebration of the Divine Mysteries in the little village church, she consecrated it by meditation and prayer, she ended it by thanksgiving for the spiritual benefits received. The Passion-Play had for her an inward and spiritual meaning ; for her the Sacrifice of the God-Man on Calvary was no "legend," but Divinest truth. And this, it seems to me, is the proper spirit in which to go to the Passion-Play. Those who have it not would do better to stay away.

Twenty years have passed since Lady Burton visited Ober-Ammergau, and the Play has been once repeated. The Passion-Play of 1890 was almost identical with the one she witnessed in 1880; but the flight of time has since worked inevitable changes in the place and the *personnel* of the players. Since 1880 the venerable parish priest, Father Daisenberger, has entered into his rest; but his death has made no difference to the devotional spirit with which the villagers of Ober-Ammergau view their Passion-Play. With them the dominating desire is to come nearer to Christ in His Passion, to

live over again the scenes of the holy drama, and to show forth their faith not only with their lips but in their lives. The corrupting influences of gold and publicity have until now left them untouched, and the peasants count it the highest honour to take some part, however lowly, in the great Play. Some seven hundred persons, of all ages, will appear in the representation this year.

The part of Christus, so worthily upheld by Josef Mayr in 1880 and 1890, will pass into other hands. Mayr is only fifty-two years of age, and it might therefore have been

possible for him to have taken the part of Christus for a third time. The fatigue involved is very great, especially in the Crucifixion scene; and at the last play, in 1890, it was no unusual thing for him, strong man though he was, to faint upon the Cross. Still Mayr clung to the hope of appearing as Christus once again until four years ago, when the question was finally settled by an untoward event. In the winter of 1896, while chopping logs in the mountains—for it is characteristic that this man, who might have gained untold gold by his genius as an actor, still pursued his

## Preface

19

humble avocation—he met with a serious accident. A log fell upon his foot, pinning him to the ground, and for nearly an hour he lay in the snow before help came. The injury was so severe that it was feared at first that his leg would have to be amputated; and though this happily proved unnecessary, the accident has left after-effects which have made it out of the question for him ever to take the part of Christus again. The shock to the system has greatly aged him; his tall figure is bowed, and his hair has grown white. The strong physical resemblance between him and the great

## Preface

Russian teacher, Count Tolstoi, is said to have become more striking. There is no doubt that Mayr feels the disappointment keenly, but to quote his own words: "It would have been the goodness of God if I could have played Christus once again; but since He has seen otherwise, it is still the goodness of God." It is some consolation to know that he will this year undertake the recitation of the Prologue, a part for which his splendid elocutionary powers make him peculiarly fitted.

The Christus will, this year, be played by Anton Lang, who has been

## Preface

21

chosen by acclamation. Lang is a young man of blameless life, and his gentle, reverent face and quiet dignity of manner render him an ideal Christus. He has the great advantage of having been carefully and reverently trained by Mayr in every detail, and those who are in a position to judge say that he will worthily uphold the great part.

By the villagers of Ober-Ammergau Johan Rundl, who in 1890 admirably impersonated St. John, was long regarded as Mayr's successor; and he may be said to have possessed hereditary claims, for he has married

**Preface**

Mayr's daughter. Quite lately, however, it was found that his physical powers would be unequal to the strain, and the choice fell on Anton Lang. Johan Rundl will, it is hoped, appear again as St. John.

The other great part, that of the Madonna, will also undergo a change, and will be played this year by Anna Flunger, a young, unmarried woman of Ober-Ammergau of considerable beauty and consistent holiness of life. She is the daughter of the village postman; her grandfather has played the part of Christus, and her aunt that of the Blessed Virgin. Her young life



## Preface

23

has been not without its sorrows, and she bears upon her face that look of chastened suffering which we are wont to associate with the Mother of Christ.

It is the unwritten law of Ober-Ammergau that the woman who plays the part of the Madonna must herself be a virgin. This was the case also with Rosa Lang, who in 1890 took the part of the Blessed Virgin. She was betrothed to a handsome young peasant of the Bavarian Tyrol, and the marriage was only postponed until she should have appeared in the great Play. Shortly

**Preface**

after, for some reason, the betrothal was broken off. Until last year it was hoped that Rosa Lang would again take the part, but now it is announced that she has taken the veil. In 1890 she delayed her nuptials in order that she might enact the Madonna; now, on the eve of another representation of the great Play, she has become a bride of Christ.

As at present arranged, Bertha Wolff will play the part of St. Mary Magdalen, Andreas Braun that of St. Joseph of Arimathea, and Peter Rundl that of St. Peter. Other



minor changes have also taken place in the characters of the drama, but all of a nature to strengthen the representation of the sacred Play. It is impossible, however, to foretell the cast with accuracy, as illness or other causes make it liable to change even at the eleventh hour.

Lady Burton speaks of the carriage-drive of eight miles past the Ettal Monastery to Ober-Ammergau, which formed the last stage of the pilgrims' journey, and this was the same in 1890. But visitors this year will find a brand new electric railway running from Murnau up the Valley

**Preface**

of the Ammer right into the heart of the village. Those who can afford it will do well to keep to the carriage-drive, which is one of great beauty.

The old wooden theatre has been demolished, and one of iron erected in its place. The new building will be roofed over, not open to the sky, like its predecessor; but it will be open towards the mountains and the stage, so that the background will not be destroyed. The new playhouse will accommodate six thousand persons.

The representations will take place, weather permitting, on the following days :—



**Preface**

27

*May 20th* (grand rehearsal), *21st*,  
and *27th* ;

*June 4th*, *10th*, *16th*, *17th*, *24th*,  
and *29th* ;

*July 1st*, *8th*, *15th*, *18th*, *22nd*,  
and *29th* ;

*August 5th*, *8th*, *12th*, *15th*, *19th*,  
*25th*, and *26th* ;

*September 2nd*, *8th*, *9th*, *15th*,  
*22nd*, and *30th* ;

and on each occasion will last from  
8 a.m. until 5 p.m., with one and a  
half hour's interval.

There will also (should weather  
permit and the attendance justify)  
be supplemental representations on

**Preface**

dates to be arranged, and in the event of the number of visitors exceeding the accommodation a special representation will be given the day following.

On the evenings previous to each day appointed for representation a band of music will parade the village, and again during the night. Masses are celebrated in the village church from 3 a.m. until 7 a.m.; the actors also attend High Mass, and are specially blessed before the representation.

Most English people will probably prefer to go to Ober-Ammergau

## Preface

29

direct, but the great number of Americans who will this year flock to Europe for the Paris Exposition will, it is thought, swell the total number of visitors to the Passion-Play to nearly half a million.

It is satisfactory to learn that every effort is being made to meet the inrush, and great facilities will be afforded in the way of travelling and accommodation in the village. Visitors, however, would do well to give notice through one of the recognised travelling-agencies of their intention to go to Ober-Ammergau at least a month beforehand, as the

total number of beds of every description that can possibly be provided in the village does not exceed four thousand, and these are scattered about in small inns, private houses, farmhouses, and cottages. It is not an expensive place. The board and lodging (all included) varies from about 9 marks (shillings) to 15 marks a day, and the prices of admission to the theatre range from 1 to 10 marks. There is, of course, the railway journey in addition, and it is good news to learn that, bearing in mind the religious character of the Passion-Play, there will be no

cheap excursion trains ; but here again intending visitors can get through tickets at comparatively moderate prices from any of the chief agencies, such as Messrs. Cook or Messrs. Gaze. The latter firm are erecting a temporary hotel, while the former have taken a large number of lodgings in the village.

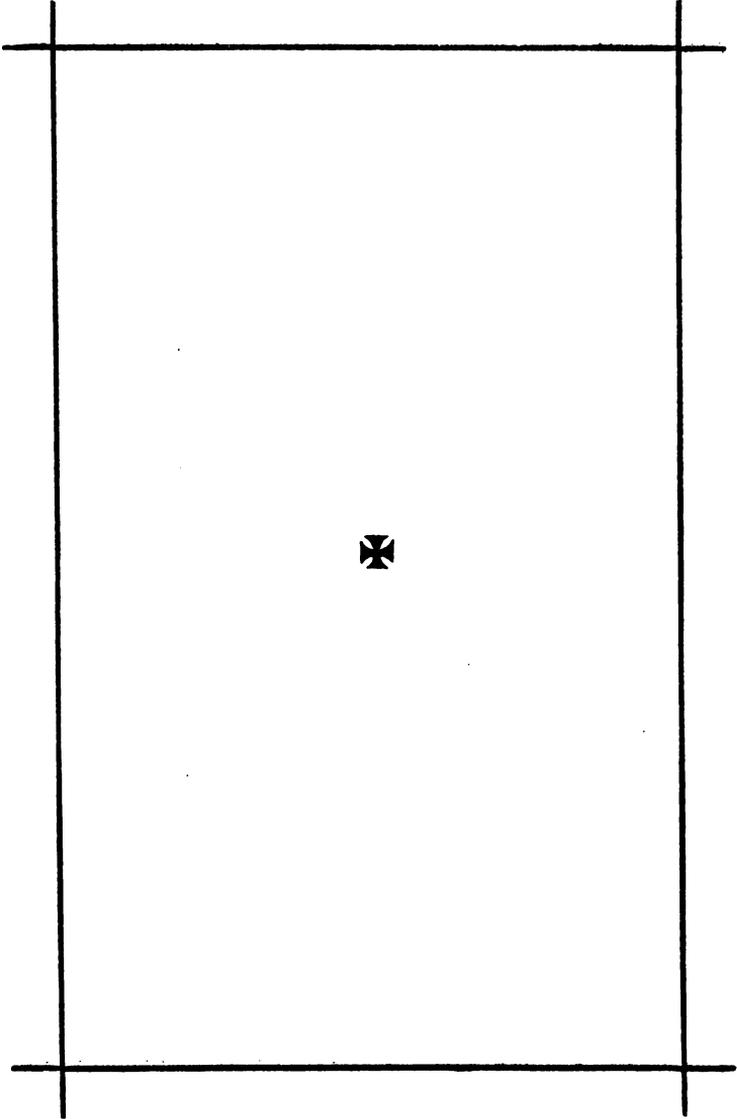
The Play itself only lasts one day, but visitors would do well to spend three days at Ober-Ammergau, to avoid hurry and rush. Moreover, the neighbourhood is very beautiful, and there are many pleasant excursions to be made, as, for instance, to

Graswangthal, one of the most picturesque valleys of the Bavarian Tyrol, and to the splendid and romantic castles of Linderhof and Neuschwanstein, built by that ill-fated monarch the late King Ludwig II. of Bavaria. Three days of rest and meditation in this beautiful Bavarian village will not be time wasted.

It will be seen that things have changed somewhat at Ober-Ammergau since Lady Burton visited the place in 1880. But the wondrous Play remains the same, and the truth which it teaches is eternal. To those who are going to Ober-

Ammergau this year, not as tourists, but as pilgrims, this little book, the record of the impressions of a good and holy woman, may be a help and a guide. For she who wrote it had her feet set fast upon the Everlasting Rock; her life was a witness to the power of the Cross, and of Him Who said, "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*"

W. H. WILKINS.



**Lady Burton's Prayer**

“O SWEET Jesu! Who by Thy Cross and Passion hast redeemed the world and opened unto us the Gate of Everlasting Life; Grant that I, all unworthy though I be, may so witness this holy memorial of Thy sacrificial love, Thy glorious victory over death and hell, that I may be drawn nearer to Thee and hold Thee in everlasting remembrance. Let the representation of Thy bitter sufferings on the Cross

renew my love for Thee, strengthen my faith, and ennoble my life, and not mine only, but all those who witness it. Grant that those who come to scoff may remain to pray, and those who are weak in faith may be strengthened, and those who have erred may come back to Thee. Bless those who take part in this representation, and bring us all to a truer sense of Thy infinite love and mercy. Grant this, I beseech Thee, dear Jesu."

# **The Passion-Play**

at

## **Ober-Ammergau**

**F**OR years I had wished to see that pearl of dramatic worship, the Passion-Play of Ober-Ammergau; and when, in August, 1880, my husband obtained a fortnight's sick-leave from his Consulate, and left the choice of place to me, I at last saw the opportunity of realising my hope, and chose Ober-Ammergau for our brief holiday.

We left our Trieste home very early in the morning of August 18th, 1880, and in seven and a half hours were in Venice. Six hours after leaving Venice we arrived at Ala. Here we changed from an Italian to an Austrian train, and began to ascend the mountains of the Austrian Tyrol, and in four hours, passing through glorious scenery, we arrived at Botzen, where we stayed the night. The next morning we started off again for Munich, always ascending until we reached Brenner, five thousand feet high, and the scenery growing ever more and more beautiful. At Kus-

at Ober-Ammergau 39

stein, two hours before we reached Munich, we changed from the Austrian to the Bavarian train, and ran over a flat, ugly-looking country into the Bavarian capital.

At Munich we went to The Four Seasons, a famous hostel. Munich is too well known to need description. It is full of interest, and a most creditable place, considering its climate and other disadvantages, but much of its Art is too new to be very good. Still, all that money and good-will can do to make Munich beautiful is done. The buildings are fine, and the decorations of the Royal

Palace superb. To us, coming from Austria, Munich seemed dull. It is surprising how, in each instance, when you change country, the features of the landscape and the people's faces change too, as if Nature marked out their boundaries. Austrian scenery is totally different from Italian, and Bavarian differs from either, as well as the men's, women's, and children's faces. Austria is far superior in nature, cultivation, cleanliness, and prosperity to the other two.

When, however, you have seen one good specimen of Austrian scenery, you must not expect much variety.

at Ober-Ammergau

41

It consists of high wooded mountains, towered over by stupendous peaks, sometimes crowned with snow. The bosoms of the lower ranges are covered with cultivation, smiling village pictures in every possible nook and cranny. On every pert eminence is a little church with its tower, that looks small enough to put in your pocket, whilst a frowning fortress or feudal castle tops every peak. Below is only place for the river, dashing over boulders and rocks, whilst the railway darts along the edge of a precipice. Still, when all is told, I do not know what more you could wish to see, and

I know by experience that one never tires of looking out of the window.

Still, Munich has a charm all its own, and would well repay a detailed description, were it not that our interest centres elsewhere. To us it was chiefly interesting as the general point of departure for the *Passionsspiel*. Hitherto our journey had merely been that of the ordinary traveller. From Munich it assumed (to me, at least) something of the nature of a pilgrimage.

### Munich to Murnau

**W** E left Munich at two o'clock, by what may be called "the pilgrims' train," a so-called express put on for the special convenience of those going to Ober-Ammergau. It was a long train, and there was no overcrowding or excitement, save that caused by the presence of a Crown Prince, which gave the officials much opportunity of airing their uniforms. It was a poor and dreary land over which we travelled, a monotonous plain covered with tracts of thin grass

and peat soil. Yet the children of Attila once cried, "To Bavaria! to Bavaria! where dwells God Himself." The halting-places somewhat relieved our tedium, and by-and-by the sameness was pleasantly broken by the beautiful Starnberg Lake, formerly known as the Würm See. It reminded my husband of Lake Tanganyika, and me of the Thames in its most beautiful part. The placid sheet of blue water was broken by the white sails of yachts, and the occasional puff of smoke from a steamer. The blue-and-purple Alps form a background, and the sides of the lake



are adorned with woods and fields,  
and many a turret and spire. Starn-  
berg See is a favourite place for  
holiday-makers from Munich, and in  
August it is crowded. In the hotels

“Teller klappern, Gläser klingen,  
Zungen plappern, Kellner springen ;  
Mussiggänger steh'n am Strande,  
Kinder tummeln sich am Lande.”

*“Dishes clatter, glasses ring,  
Chatter tongues, and waiters spring ;  
Tourists saunter o'er the strand,  
Brats are tumbling on the sand.”*

Fortunately we were not called upon  
to patronise them.

Both soil and view improved as we approached the Bavarian Highlands. At Polling we were almost at the end of our journey.

Polling, founded by Thassilo II. (A.D. 800), boasts a huge, desolate pile, at first a nunnery and then an Augustine convent. After a thousand years of life it was secularised (A.D. 1803); the church, however, is preserved, with its figure of Christus, eight feet high. The railway runs between the little Rieg See to the left or east, and the triangular Staffel See on the other hand. The latter has three islets, the largest containing a

giant linden and a small *Kapelle*, said to have been consecrated by St. Boniface, "Apostle of the Germans." Passing the lake, we arrived somewhat abruptly at Murnau.

We found the road by the station crowded by a confusion of carriages : it was Saturday, and great crowds were hurrying to be in time for the Sunday performance at Ober-Ammergau. The scene reminded me of Epsom. Hung to the palings were big, black letters on white cloths, "Gray," "Gaze," and "Cook," and the bustle and general absence of repose certainly did not conduce to

the reverential spirit I wished to cultivate. We knew that the rush for the Sunday performance would be great, so we resolved not to hurry on to Ober-Ammergau, but to spend the night at Murnau, and go the following day.

The tourists rush to Ober-Ammergau, see the Play, which is their sole wish, and even before the Schutzgeister have finished their last fine Hallelujah Chorus the greater part are springing into their carriages to get back to Munich, being, for one or other reason, tied to time ; or, as I heard one Englishman express it, desirous of

getting "back to civilisation and clean shirts." In one way I was thankful, since it is not done out of disrespect, but because the hurried tourist must see all he can in his month's holiday, which is, perhaps, all he can screw out of his professional or his home duties, in whatever class he may belong to; and then he spares us true pilgrims the applause, so *triste* in the midst of woe, so dear to all actors, but understood without the doing by the Ammergauers.

However, to my mind, that is not the real way to see the Play, if it is

to do you good. We had not more than seventeen days, but we used every minute of it. The morrow was to be the Sunday performance, and, as we knew, we were twelve thousand, and six thousand would get in. We knew that the Crown Prince of Germany and his daughter were going; we knew that Brown, Jones, and Robinson would be miserable if they did not look at the Play with Royalty; so we good-naturedly resolved to wait for the Monday performance, and not to push. I must remark that the performance on Monday is just as carefully acted

and as fully attended as the one on Sunday.

We slept at Murnau, at an old-fashioned hostelry (the Pantelbrau) kept by a certain Herr Kottmüller, who, despite his being a man worth his £60,000 in lands and forests, keeps to the good old fashion, and attends to his inn and brewery. The good *Hausfrau* and four daughters, albeit right well educated, pretty, and ladylike, attend to the comforts of their guests themselves, and make the old Bavarian *Gasthaus*, or inn, a comfortable home.

We had large, amply furnished

rooms, good beds, cleanliness, and many luxuries I have not found in large towns, excellent food, and two delicious wines, Zeller I., white, and Schwarzer Herrgott, ruby red, so called because the church took fire and was destroyed, except the crucifix, which was charred black but not burnt. Both these vintages are delicious. This is a grand country for mountain trout, being full of torrents. It is the most delicious fish in the world, so sweet and fresh, with a pale pink flesh.

From our windows we had a beautiful view of the purple-blue Alps of

Oberbayern, and on the other side the deep blue little lake close to Murnau, called the Staffel See.

In the evening the tables for the family and better classes were in one room, and those of the working classes in another adjoining. There was one table set apart for coachmen in the latter, which drew us all away from our own. One played and sang with a guitar quaint country songs; another produced wonderful music out of a bit of common pine-wood; and a third was a born clown and ventriloquist, and he kept the house in roars of laughter all the

evening, making epigrams on every one present in the very broadest Bavarian dialect.

I visited the church ; it contained a picture which not even the nuns could explain to me. There is a body buried, leaving only the head above ground ; round this head are dice, a money-bag, a book on which is inscribed "Lehren," a snake is moving off, a little smoke ascending. A kind man appears to be sorry for the body belonging to the head, and is hurrying to the rescue, but is stopped by his Guardian Angel, who appears to be forbidding him to

meddle and explaining matters, whilst a Madonna and Child, angels and stars, preside over the scene in the air.

The houses of Murnau are all painted different colours, have pent-roofs for snow, gable ends, and many are six storeys high from ground to attic. The people are immensely civil, and "*Grüss Gott*" meets you at every corner.

### Murnau to Ober-Ammergau

THE next morning, Sunday, I went to early Mass in the quaint little church, and felt restored to the proper pilgrim frame of mind, which had been somewhat jarred by the tourist atmosphere. After *déjeûner* we started in a carriage drawn by two stout horses for Ober-Ammergau. There was no railway, and owing to the steep ascents the drive of sixteen miles took four hours, allowing for

a visit to the monastery of Ettal. We began at once to descend by the Jämsbruck high-road ; we crossed the wooden bridge of the Ranisau brook, and thence into the valley. The drive was charming through the valley of the Loisach. Arriving at Unternberg, there was a sort of wayside hostelry, where we ordered the *Vorspanner*, two extra horses for the ascent of the Ettalerberg. Here we got out and watched the peasantry, who were very merry, dancing to music played by a poor fellow without feet, whilst another made castanets on the table. We gave them a trifle

*Jams:*

to keep up their merriment, and proceeded on our way.

The Ettalerberg is truly beautiful, and steep indeed, so much so that we got down to relieve the horses, though it poured with rain and the mud was deep; and I could see the bodies of these four great, strong horses bent and strained to the utmost even to get up the empty carriage. It is an ancient engineering road without zigzags. Along it are duly chronicled by crosses and slabs all the accidents and sudden deaths that have taken place on this mountain at different periods.

The mountain-peaks are often covered with snow ; they are five and six thousand feet high, and the pass is so closed in by mountains that there is only room for road and river to run between ; and so it continues till you emerge from this mountain-pass under the Kofel, the peak, two thousand feet high, of sugar-loaf shape, whose crowning iron cross looks down upon Ober-Ammergau. Whilst you are still on your mountain journey, however, you have a preliminary pilgrimage to make before you reach the Passion-Play village, and that is to the Ettalerberg

Monastery, which is intimately connected with Ober-Ammergau.

The Ettal Monastery, a huge pile on the slope of a peak five thousand feet high, is now so well known through the various writers of the Passion-Play that I shall say but few words; no writer could pass by so important and romantic a spot. This Benedictine Monastery of Ettal nestles beneath the Ettalermundl, whose peak we saw from Murnau. It is the guardian of the valley through which Ammergau is reached. The monastery is now occupied by Count Pappenheim and his brewery, and the monks are

*monastery re-established, 1910.*

long since dead, save Daisenberger, to be spoken of later.

There used to be two monasteries connected with Ammergau. The other was Rothenbuch, five or six leagues off, which for centuries had pastoral charge of the Play. The abbots were feudal lords of the valley, and had secular jurisdiction. In the twelfth century the Ammergauers became wood-carvers and Passion-dramatists under Rothenbuch ; but when Ettal and its monks were established, they, being nearer, took the spiritual guidance and perfected the Play. Indeed, many of the costumes now

**The Passion-Play**

used were bought in 1803 from the suppressed Bavarian monasteries, of which Ettal was one, showing that they acted religious plays amongst themselves, as, indeed, do most convents and monasteries.

Ettal originated in a romantic way. The German Emperor, Ludwig the Bavarian, had been crowned in Rome, and was attacked at Milan. In the Monastery of St. Victor he prayed for aid. A monk appeared, bearing a beautiful image of the Blessed Virgin, and promised him the Divine blessing, if, on arriving at the valley of the Ammer, he would found a

Benedictine monastery and place the image there to be venerated. He promised ; and as he rode up the Ettalerberg, his horse fell three times on his knees, and could go no farther. He took it as a sign, and, dismounting, ordered a little chapel to be hastily constructed, where he placed the image, until he could lay the foundation-stone of the great monastery, which he did in 1330.

His father had commanded the epic poem "Tituel" to be written by Wolfram of Eschenbach, which contains a grand description of the Holy

Grail, and the Castle of Monsalvat, the legendary home of Parzival and Lohengrin. His son took the poem for his model and realised it. He created a clerical order of knighthood. Ettal was Monsalvat, and he filled it, not only with monks, but incapacitated knights and warriors, who guarded the Madonna, which was their Holy Grail. This was quite the poetic spirit of old Christian times.

He himself acted the part of Anfortas on the waters of the Brumbane, neither living nor dying, in his barge, on a lake hard by, called the Plan See, the cause being his

melancholy consequent on having quarrelled with the Vatican.

In 1744 lightning destroyed all, but the Prior saved the Madonna at the risk of his life. In 1803, after four hundred years' splendour, Ettal was suppressed with other monasteries. Count Pappenheim preserves the organ and the Madonna, the frescoes by Jacob Zeiller of Reutl, and the ceiling by Knoller, a Tyrolese artist; and he brews beer. Pilgrims still flock there, and there is a project for restoring it, which occasionally rises and then falls to the ground.

It is thought that Wagner had

Ettal in his mind when he wrote his wondrous description of the home of Lohengrin :—

“Once every year a dove from heaven descendeth,  
To strengthen then its wondrous power anew ;  
This is the Grail, and purest faith it spendeth  
Among the knights who are its chosen few.”

From the Ettalerkloster we turned into the Grasswangthal, and followed the right bank of the Ammer Water, which names the village. The “pellucid stream,” a brook of sulphurous hue, rises in seven springs. It waters the

valley, and, lastly, falls into the Ammer See. The road then runs through a "gate" formed on the right by the Kapellenwand, a serrated hogsback of stone and tree. The yawning cavern, which we sighted from the carriage, bears the name of Bärenloch (bear-hole), and is said to tunnel the whole mountain. To the left rises the Sonnberg-Kofel, a name supposed to be derived from the Roman station Coveliacae. Standing stiffly up from the plain and two thousand feet above it, this rock is strikingly crowned by a large cross, and beneath it Ober-Ammergau nestles.

A turn of the road revealed the dome-shaped church, and the little village, the goal of our pilgrimage, lay outstretched before us.

### The Village and Church

WE duly arrived at our lodging about half-past four in the afternoon—Frau Hauser's, No. 43, Haus—a pretty Swiss whitewashed cottage covered with creepers, where we had two little whitewashed rooms.

Mine had two beds without sheets, a cupboard and drawers locked, a small table with the inevitable pie-dish and pint of water for ablution, a chair, a crucifix, and a glass, which made me look just as one looks in

a spoon. I was used to this sort of thing; nay, so often glad to get a room at all, that I was just as happy as if I had been at the Vier Jahreszeiten at Munich. The only person in the house to wait upon travellers was the little old woman, like a winter apple; and she always had some excuse for not making our beds, so we used to have to do our rooms ourselves. The second day I came in tired and scolded her, and she replied that "she was not used to people who required so much luxury," which set us laughing.

The windows had a lovely view of

the Kofel. After a nice cup of coffee—the first and last the Frau ever made us, for we had to board out—we went outside to the theatre to see the stream of people pour off at 5.30. We were separated in the crowd. I got into the theatre, but an old German gentleman grumbled so at me, and so scolded the door-keeper, that I beat a retreat to avoid any unpleasantness. I then joined my husband, and we inspected the village together.

Ober-Ammergau at the time whereof I write—1880—contained 1,260 souls, of whom 120 were artists in wood.

To quote a well-known writer, it "has the reputation of being one of the neatest and cleanest villages in the Bavarian Highlands. The sparkling Ammer rushing along the streets, the deep shadows of the lofty Kofel, and those of the high mountain-ranges all around, render it one of the most picturesque of situations. The peak of the Kofel, with its cross, is the presiding genius of the place, to which all eyes are wistfully turned, as to a benefactor. Long before the sun sends its rays into the valley, the Kofel cross is radiant with golden light; and when the orb of day sinks

to rest, it reflects the last faint glow of its vanishing fires." The whole place is indeed dominated by the Cross, and permeated with its holy teaching. I cannot say, however, that I found the village particularly cleanly; the lane-like streets, of which the longest may measure one-third of a mile, are unpaved, and broken with pools of water and mud in bad weather. But the chalet-like cottages were neat and clean, and with their green shutters and trim gardens spoke of comfort and content. The rude frescoes and pictures with which so many are adorned speak of the life of the people,

reverently treating as they do of sacred subjects ; and I noticed in many rooms the crucifix and the image of the Ettal Madonna, which further testify to the devotional spirit of these simple-minded villagers.

The noteworthy point of the church, about mid-village, is that the cupola and tall steeple are attached to the western gable, where the entrance should be. The interior contains many pictures—oils and frescoes—reminding me of the churches one sees in Portugal, and an interesting list of departed villagers, especially those who fell in the wars of 1870-71.

The great school of the Passion-Play has all along been the village church, and above the high altar there is a large space serving as a stage. During the greater part of the year this is hidden by a painting, but every Thursday evening during Lent it is illuminated, and forms the scene of an impressive tableau of our Blessed Lord's Anguish on the Mount of Olives. Many other ceremonies take place here, such as the brilliant illuminations for the Mass before daybreak in Advent, the celebrations of Corpus Christi, and the exhibition of the Holy Sepulchre. The Resurrection and the

Ascension are also represented in the church, but they are tableaux merely, whereas the Passion-Play is a Tableau Vivant. Thus the village church is the preparatory school of the Ammergau Drama.

That night we picked up our food at the "Stern," the German inn. What a confusion! We met people carrying away great lumps of meat in their hands, having found nowhere to sit and eat it or put it down. It was pouring with rain and the mud was deep, yet the hotel was full, and crowds of people were sitting outside in the court and garden,

amongst whom we were. We went on purpose, for the sake of seeing, as we could quite well have gone to Gaze's, but half the fun of travelling is to rough it and see everything; and it was amusing and enjoyable, with the exception that I only took one gown and one pair of boots, and wore them, so that I was wet through for two days. The streams of people continued to pour away in various traps until the twelve thousand were reduced to six thousand, amongst whom we remained for the next day's performance.

### The Origin of the Play

**O**BER-AMMERGAU is the last resting-place of Religious Drama in the Christian world, where it is still acted in all its integrity, and with all the splendour and more reverence than even in ancient days ; and whosoever abolishes it will act like the Wandering Jew who drove our Saviour from the last resting-stone of the last house of Jerusalem. The oldest known text-book dates from 1662, but it refers to a far older

book. In 1633 the Play was already known and acted, for at least three centuries, under Ettal guidance, and before that no one knows how many centuries under Rothenbuch.

That year (1633) the village was struck with the Plague. The villagers met and held a council, which concluded by a solemn vow made to God to perform the Play as an act of devotion to the Lord (if the Plague was stopped) every ten years, "for thankful remembrance and edifying contemplation, by the help of the Almighty, of the sufferings of Jesus the Saviour of the world." So says

the local tradition. The Plague did stop, since when the peasants have religiously kept their vow, beginning in 1634, and their decadal period was fixed for 1680. So this practice has been kept up for two hundred and forty-six years; and though many attempts have been made to put it down, by the special interposition of Providence it has always been spared by the King of Bavaria and the Pope.

To show the feeling that they themselves have about it, when peace was proclaimed in the Franco-German war, the Ammergauers performed their play "as a method of thanking God for

bestowing on them the blessings of Victory and Peace"; and they generally choose Sunday as their training-day, because they look upon it as an act of Divine worship.

The learned monks of Rothenbuch or Ettal composed and perfected this great Drama in old times, and in our days Ottmar Weiss, the last of Ettal's monks, became, on the suppression of his monastery, parish priest of Jesewang, and kept with him his favourite pupil, Anton Alois Daisenberger, who was also afterwards parish priest, and was eventually transferred to Ober-Ammergau, his darling

wish for many years. Ottmar Weiss, who died in 1843, aged seventy-two, recast the play; and at the same time Rochus Dedler, organist and school-master, modified the music. He was a local Sebastian Bach, born in 1779, composed in 1814, died in 1822. Then Father Daisenberger succeeded Weiss, his master, and still (1890) lives for and works amongst his people, exercising great influence over them, although eighty-two years of age. Between 1840 and 1849 he recast the play again for the performance of 1850.

The text and music were never

committed to writing—*i.e.*, given to the performers; they were obliged to learn and commit to memory from dictation and rehearsal both music and dialogue. So jealously were they guarded, that they would not suffer a word or a bar to be copied. This year we have the text in German, and three specimens of the music, of which one is, "Wo ist er hin," accompanying the tableau of the Bride of the Canticles, which some years ago they refused to an Englishman who offered three thousand florins for it, for they will not traffic about their Play.

All the accounts of the four Evangelists are blended into one, and the Old Covenant and the New form a complete pendant, side by side, the latter the sequel to the former. The peasants train on Sundays and festivals. Father Daisenberger is the true model of a parish priest—pious, humble, simple, living only for his flock, and educating them up to their high calling, a most holy man, and a great author of some thirty or forty works, chiefly Biblical and historical plays and dramas.

### The Arrangements

**T**HERE are seventeen principal performers, including the Choragus, or Proclamator, and the Conductor—these are the intelligent, cultivated, artistic wood-carvers; between five and six hundred persons appear on the stage—these are the peasants; and the theatre altogether, with workmen, machinery, etc., etc., gives occupation to seven hundred out of the thirteen hundred inhabitants

of Ober-Ammergau. The money that flows into the village through the Passion-Play is divided into four parts: the first to the poor; the second to the expenses of the theatre; the third to their school of design, hospital, and all the other pious and useful institutions of their village; the fourth part is divided into a trifle for each actor; and the surplus is divided equally among the thirteen hundred inhabitants of Ober-Ammergau. Mayr, who performed the part of Christus both now, 1880, and in 1870, only received the sum of £20 in 1870, and £31 10s. in 1880; Judas had

about £5. It is not even enough to compensate them for the time lost in wood-carving.

The whole thing is as perfect as can be. Christus (Mayr) and Judas (Lechner) stand far higher in excellence than the others, and Judas is also the best wood-carver.

The Play consists of four elements: chorus, tableaux, dramatic incident, and the actors. There is great excitement in the village the year before the Play. On December 6th, the Feast of St. Nicholas, a chapter-day, as it is called in convents, is held to settle and distribute the parts.

This is done by general election, forty-five house-holders presiding, headed by the priest and Geistlicher Rath Daisenbergh, who has yet to be described.

The Play is cast and recast and the parts distributed. Some keep their parts for years. For example, this year, 1880, there are eight performers of 1870. Two others are also old actors, who have had their parts changed, and there are seven new ones. They can always choose new performers or fill up a blank, because they train the whole ten years. Mayr is now a king amongst them : firstly,

it is a great thing to be an Ober-Ammergauer ; secondly, it is a high distinction to be employed at all in the theatre ; next to that, a person rises in value in proportion to what part he acts, and Christus is the king of them all. No Ammergauer can rise to a higher position than this. It is a thing to dream of and hope for from babyhood. The aspiration of the young generation is to rise to one of the principal parts. It is held for the girls as a reward of virtue, like the former Rosière of France. The slightest whisper against her good name bars a girl from

the theatre. Then every actor must be an Ober-Ammergauer; there are only thirteen hundred to choose from.

### The Great Day

**M**Y day (Monday, August 23rd, 1880) began with Mass and Communion and a Blessing in the church, every performer receiving, and most of the Catholic pilgrims. The service began at 3 a.m. The first incident of my pilgrimage was yesterday to the Madonna of Ettal, and this was my second. People of every nation, tongue, creed, class, and occupation were here assembled, from prince to peasant, and even Israelites. They

were gathered together from the ends of the earth to witness the great drama of Redemption represented by these villagers; and some are very humble pilgrims, who have walked from far and scraped and hoarded up their pence. It reminded me of Jerusalem in Holy Week.

The music in the church was beautiful and devotional, and evidently proceeds from the same pen as that sung by the Schutzgeister. The people are born with music in them. We could not get that out of an English village, perhaps not out of a great town; but to them it is a matter of

course, with their refined art and simple devotion. They are unaware of the effect upon strangers. There is no ostentation or display; they have it even when they are quite alone. Later on, after the service, the band parades through the village, giving notice and collecting the pilgrims, and we proceed to the theatre through the little streets and across a bit of field—for it is the last building in the village towards the plain—and take our seats.

The village churchyard was used for the representation up to 1830; but the pastor, finding the crowd

damaged it and demolished the grave-stones, refused to let them play there. And so it was that fifty years ago the present theatre was first built, at a cost of £2,000, and covers a space of 20,000 square feet. It is only made of boards, and is shed-like. All is exposed save the actual stage and three rows of reserved seats called boxes.\* An umbrella or parasol would be put down at once. All hats are off, and a bonnet if too large. I was requested to ask the lady in front of me (in the reserved seats) to take

\* This theatre has now been rebuilt (*vide* p. 26).

off her bonnet, but she refused with some *hauteur*. I knew about it before, and wore a Jersey cap that fitted close to my head.

In July, 1880, it snowed. The day before we went it poured with rain, but the crowd never moved a muscle. We had a fine day; swallows and other birds and butterflies came in and fluttered round us; the open air, the magnificent background, and the side view of Nature in one of her most stupendous forms were something so novel and fascinating in a theatre that it seems like a poetic dream.

I recommend everybody to take a fan to keep off the flies, and for the heat ; a pair of neutral-tinted spectacles for the glare ; and opera-glasses, as the actors are some distance from the reserved seats. But although a large space of open air intervenes, I could hear almost every word. Taking notes is not allowed.

Precisely at 8 o'clock the booming of the cannon from the Kofel smote upon our ears, and announced that the Passion-Play was about to begin. I was at last in the presence of my desire of years. The musical overture began ; but the curtain of the central

stage was not at once removed. Behind it, unknown to most, the aged priest and father of the village and the whole company of the performers were engaged in silent prayer, offering it up as incense to the Almighty, considering their Art only in the service of Religion. The sense of the Divine Presence was over all, and I too offered up unuttered prayer for those who were about to take part in, and those who came to see, this most sacred drama. The beauty of the morning, brilliant after the heavy rain of yesterday, seemed a token of the Divine Grace. Presently

the chorus of the Schutzgeister came upon the stage, and the Play began.

The Schutzgeister, or Guardian Spirits, with a leader called the Choragus, or Proclamator, now stand before us. They have come up from both sides, and form a line right across the theatre—eight men in the middle, and five women on each side. They are dressed in various-coloured brilliant mantles, whilst the orchestra are in Tyrolese dress. These Spirit-singers prepare us for what we are about to see. The Choragus, in a most dramatic tone, recites in a few words the history of what is coming, like an argument.

at Ober-Ammergau 99

The chorus, with their arms crossed upon their breasts at first, in a prayerful attitude, take it up in song—first faint and low, as coming from afar, and gradually swelling into thrilling harmony.

The music is ancient German (Bavarian) ecclesiastical, pure and classical, drawn from psalms, hymns, masses, and old church songs. It is soft, sweet, and sad, chiefly in the minor key, and a refrain or lament runs through the whole, dwelling on the same sad story. The voices are all true and correct, some very good, all very fair, despite the disadvantage

of the open air carrying away much of the sound.

No one, I think, realises the hard work of the Schutzgeistler. They come on between every one of the eighteen acts, and give the Prologue and the Epilogue. They sing forty-seven times, and often at great length, and that two days in the week. They supply all the interludes whilst the scenes are being changed, exposed to sun, rain, wind, or snow, and get the least praise or thanks. Whether they come on the stage, fall back at the tableaux, close up again, or leave the stage, their deportment is perfect. They are really



at Ober-Ammergau

101

like spirits, every action is so quiet, slow, calm, and in unison ; you do not hear them come or go off ; their walk is natural, manly, and majestic ; their actions large, graceful, and full of ease. You are affected by their dignity, and the whole effect is most artistic.

**What We Witnessed**

**I**T will be best, I think, to give the programme of the Play, and then comment on it in detail. From 8 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. it proceeds without a break, and then an hour and a half is allowed for luncheon and rest. The Play resumes at the stroke of one o'clock by the cannon, and goes on for another four and a half hours to the end. Omitting the interval, the performance takes eight hours in all.

at Ober-Ammergau 103

The interval is between the first and second divisions in the following programme :—

## First Division

---

### PROLOGUE

#### *Tableaux*

1. Adam and Eve expelled Paradise.
2. The Redemption—Adoration of the Cross.

**The Passion-Play****ACT I****Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem***Scenes*

1. Christ casts out the money-lenders from the Temple.
2. Priests and people.
3. Dathan and the money-changers.

**ACT II****Assembly of the High Council***Tableau*

Joseph's brethren plot his death.

*Scenes*

1. The Sanhedrim.
2. Caiaphas and priests.
3. Caiaphas and money-changers.
4. Caiaphas and Annas.

ACT III

**Leave-taking at Betbang**

*Tableaux*

1. Tobias quits home.
2. The Bride of the Canticles.

*Scenes*

1. Christ and the Twelve.
2. Simon meets and invites him. They go in, and also Lazarus and Martha.
3. Simon's supper-chamber.
4. Christ with Martha and Mary (here Magdalen). The anointing. Evil enters Judas's heart.
5. His disciples urge him not to go to Jerusalem.
6. The Virgin's farewell. Jesus desires Simon to take care of his Mother, and she goes into Simon's house with the women.

**ACT IV****Last Visit to Jerusalem***Tableau*

Ahasuerus puts away Vashti for Esther.

*Scenes*

1. Jesus laments over Jerusalem. He sends on Peter and John to prepare.
2. Christ and Judas.
3. Judas does not follow.
4. Judas is tempted alone, and then by Dathan and other money-changers.
5. Judas alone and resolved.
6. Peter and John meet the man with the pitcher and go to the house of Mark.

ACT V

**The Last Supper**

*Tableaux*

1. Israelites fed with manna.
2. The spies and grapes of Eschol.

*Scenes*

1. The supper-chamber. Christ and the Twelve.
2. Christ rebukes Peter.
3. The washing of the feet.
4. The institution of the Mass and the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Judas leaves.

## ACT VI

**The Betrayal***Tableau*

Joseph sold by his brethren

*Scenes*

1. The High Council.
2. Judas before the Sanhedrim. Dathan and  
Judas before the Council.
3. Dispute of High Council. Joseph and  
Nicodemus leave them.
4. The High Council decides on its course.

ACT VII

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

*Tableaux*

1. Adam digging the ground.
2. Joab murdering Amasa.

*Scenes*

1. Judas and his tempters, Silpha, Malchus, and others.
2. The agony in the garden.
3. The angel appears.
4. The kiss of Judas.
5. Peter and John come from their hiding-place.

**Second Division**

---

**ACT VIII****Jesus before Annas***Tableau*

Micaiah struck for prophesying.

*Scenes*

(Here begin the five trials of Jesus.)

1. Annas and three priests are on his balcony.
2. Annas is joined by four deputies of the Sanhedrim and Judas.
3. Christ before Annas. Balbus strikes him on the cheek.
4. Christ amongst his enemies.
5. Peter and John with a priest before Annas's house.

ACT IX

**Jesus before Caiaphas**

*Tableaux*

1. Naboth stoned by false witnesses.
2. Job tempted by his wife.

*Scenes*

1. Christ led away by his enemies.
2. Caiaphas in undress. Priests and Pharisees.
3. Christ before Caiaphas.
4. Caiaphas and the priests. The soldiers insult Jesus in the ante-chamber.
5. Judas beginning to despair.
6. Denial of Peter.
7. Christ mocked.
8. The repentance of Peter, who is joined by John.

**The Passion-Play****ACT X****Christ before the Sanhedrim.***Tableau*

The despair of Cain over Abel's dead body.

*Scenes*

1. Judas alone.
2. Sanhedrim dooms Christ to die.
3. Judas rushes in and throws down the purse.
4. The Council resolve to buy the Potter's Field.
5. Christ before the High Council.
6. Three delegates of the Sanhedrim before Pilate's house.
7. Agony of Judas, who hangs himself.

ACT XI

Christ before Pilate

*Tableau*

Daniel accused before King Darius.

*Scenes*

1. Sanhedrim and money-changers and witnesses. Christ before Pilate's house.
2. Pilate and suite appear on the balcony.
3. Christ is brought upon the balcony, announces himself a King, and Pilate asks, "What is truth?"
4. Pilate's servant reports his wife's dream.
5. Pilate's dialogue with his suite.
6. Pilate descends under his balcony to the Sanhedrim party going to Herod.

## ACT XII

**Christ before Herod***Tableau*

Samson in the Dagon Temple, a sport for  
the Philistines.

*Scenes*

1. Herod and court.
2. Enter Caiaphas, Annas, and priests, and  
Christ led in by soldiers.
3. Dialogue of Caiaphas and Herod. Christ  
is treated as a fool.
4. Dialogue of Herod and courtiers.

ACT XIII

Scourging and Crowning with Thorns

*Tableaux*

1. Joseph's coat shown to Jacob.
2. Abraham sacrificing Isaac.

*Scenes*

1. Sanhedrim, traders, witnesses, soldiers, and Christ before Pilate's house.
2. Pilate and suite on balcony. Proposes Barabbas.
3. Dialogue of priests under the empty balcony.
4. Christ scourged and crowned, mocked and ill-used.

**ACT XIV****Jesus Condemned to Death***Tableaux*

1. Joseph's triumph in Egypt.
2. The Scapegoat.

*Scenes*

1. Christ appears before Pilate's house.
2. Christ brought in with the crown of thorns and shown to the people (*Ecce Homo*), and set beside Barabbas.
3. Dialogue of priests and people. The thieves are brought in.
4. Dialogue of Pilate and suite. Jesus' sentence is read out, and he is led off by soldiers.

ACT XV

The Road to Calvary

*Tableaux*

1. Abraham and Isaac. Isaac carries the wood for his own sacrifice on Mount Moriah.
2. The Israelites are bitten by fiery serpents.
3. Moses raises the brazen serpent and cures them.

*Scenes*

1. The holy women, with John, Lazarus, and Joseph of Arimathea, come from Bethany to look for Jesus.
2. The procession (five hundred persons of all sorts) of the Cross, and the three falls of Jesus.
3. The Mother's party meet the procession, and she recognises her Son.
4. The Wandering Jew, Veronica, and the Women of Jerusalem.
5. Pilate's messenger stops the procession. They charge Simon the carpenter.

**The Passion-Play****ACT XVI****Jesus on Mount Calvary***Scenes*

1. The Crucifixion.
2. Caiaphas sends messengers to Pilate to have the inscription changed and the limbs broken, and receives a rebuff. The soldiers casting lots.
3. The penitent thief. The centurion clears a space for Mary and her friends. The vinegar and gall. The seven last words.
4. *Consummatum est.*
5. The piercing of the side.
6. The earthquake and rending of the Temple veil. The priests and people depart in fear.
7. The descent from Cross and burial.

## Epilogue

---

### ACT XVII

#### *Tableaux*

1. Jonah and the whale.
2. The passage of the Red Sea.

#### *Scenes*

1. The guard at the grave.
2. The holy women at the grave.
3. The priests and the guards.
4. John, Peter, Magdalen, Christ, and the angel.
5. Christ appears to Magdalen alone.

### ACT XVIII

#### *The Ascension*

The Grand Hallelujah Chorus.

**Comments on the Play**

**T**HE tableau of the Adoration of the Cross at the beginning was exceedingly impressive. When the spirit-singers glide back to disclose the scene, they too, on beholding the Sign of Redemption, fall on their knees. The group of five hundred kneeling, motionless figures in costume, the audience of six thousand spectators, so still that you might hear a pin drop, the theatre shut in by a glorious amphitheatre

of mountains, the sides disclosing valley, hill, river, green slopes, barren peaks, the far-off village of Unter-Ammergau, the tinkle of distant cattle-bells, made such a picture as to render theatrical scenery superfluous. It seemed not a play, but as if we were carried back eighteen hundred and forty-seven years ago, and that all was real, and we were taking part in it.

I should here remark that all the twenty-six groups or tableaux, which represent the Old Testament foreshadowings of the New, are most artistic, but I would single out the

**The Passion-Play**

Israelites being fed with manna. The hundred and fifty little children, some looking up, and all collecting and catching it, is one of the finest.



### The Christus

**B**UT when Christ makes his appearance, his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, gliding off the ass whereon he sat, and walking amongst the people, perfect as all the rest is, all your soul is concentrated on that one figure. You never take your eye off him. I can shut my eyes and see him now.

Mayr, who plays this part, is a very tall, well-knit, splendidly made man, a model for a sculptor. He has long,

**The Passion-Play**

dark, flowing hair, moustache, and beard, which he wears as our Saviour is represented to have done. We are used to think of a chestnut-haired Christ with beautiful features. Mayr is not that; but he makes you forget it by his manner, which is modest, gentle, manly, with an admirable dignity, which he never loses in his greatest humiliation. His sad, majestic melancholy, his expression of pain, sorrow, and patient endurance, his walk, dress, voice, manner, his natural, noble bearing, his stamp of refined intellect, all combined, make you feel as if Christ

had stepped down from those innumerable pictures and images we know from our childhood, and was again walking about upon earth, and that you were following Him with His disciples.

The Cleansing of the Temple was too tame, and, indeed, every scene which should be brutal was too tame also; but I was told by a priest that the Church would no longer allow anything too appalling. I confess I would rather have seen the Play fifty years ago, before Ottmar Weiss began to refine and prune it to suit present fastidious-

ness; it would have been nearer the truth, and would teach us still more contrition for sin, a truer idea of what our Saviour suffered for us, and a still greater love for Him.

Every scene which represented the Sanhedrim, High Council, Jews, and people, the rage and excitement of the populace, was, I thought, exceedingly well done. I judge by what I have seen in Damascus and Jerusalem. The fury of the priests, the wild frenzy of the mob, were well portrayed. It was just as in the East, where the Shaykh-el-Islam can so easily preach a *Jehád* or Holy War.

Jesus, during the enormous length of time (and you can now, for the first time only, realise the words, "He suffered part of three days"), preserves that same manner, that strong inward self-repression, not as of a man who does not feel, but as of one who knows all that must happen, no matter what he says or does. He is mostly silent, never unmanly in his humility.

The Ammergauers thoroughly understand Christ. There is a delicacy, a refined perception, and a true touch of nature in all their dealings with him, and delicate shades as well.

One loved to see Simon come out and ask him to dinner, just as all Easterns do when any person of note passes by their house, and go miles out of the way to do it; also to see Jesus sitting amongst his chosen band of friends, whilst Martha waits, and Simon and Lazarus mingle with the disciples, also helping.

### His Judges

PILATE was a fat, sleek, well-fed Roman governor; and Caiaphas and Annas were equally good. In the long five trials of Jesus there is a fine line drawn between all his judges.

Annas, an old Jew, steadfast in his faith, thinks he is doing an act of virtue in making away with Christ, and closes the Council with these words: "Father and friends! in spite of my old age I could leap for joy.

I feel my heart once more warmed and cheered. I seem to awake strengthened by sweet sleep. Let us go and do what we have determined on. Praise to our fathers, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!"

Caiaphas, on the contrary, is a young man, violent, bigoted, and malicious. He forgets all dignity in his hot pursuit of vengeance. His plea is, "All the world runs after him. What is to become of us?"

Herod is a jolly good liver, who does not want to be bothered, and treats Christ like a fool only because he is silent. "Do a miracle," he

says; "explain my dream; change that roll of paper to a serpent." He, however, knows that the Jews are spiteful and vindictive, and despises them. He is not weak, and absolutely refuses to condemn him.

Pilate is young and kind-hearted; sees the position perfectly of both Christ and the Jews; but he is weak and a place-hunter. At first he has grace; he knows Jesus' innocence, the Jews' spite; his wife's dream impresses him; he would give anything to let him off; but what clenches his half-and-half good desires and shuts off grace is, "Thou art no friend of

Cæsar's." He says to himself, "Better let one innocent man die than have a disturbance, and perhaps lose my place." And that very Cæsar shortly afterwards deprived him of his post for allowing a prophet of Samaria to be unjustly executed; and one always thinks what a pity he did not lose his place for Christ's sake.

**St. Mary Magdalen**

**M**AGDALEN (who, as many in our Church think, was Martha's sister, and is the Mary so often named here) comes naturally and quietly up behind him, and, with a vase in her hand, lets the oil drop slowly on his hair, and then, coming round sideways, kneels humbly at his feet, slowly and deliberately pours the oil over them, quietly bows her head, and wipes them with her long hair. He is unconscious of her presence until

he feels something touch his foot, and then he does not try to prevent her; but looking down upon her as one used to such loving acts, and ever grateful for them, exclaims, with exquisite tenderness, only one word, "*Maria.*"

### Judas

JUDAS'S fall is well drawn. He was not born a vile monster ; he was tempted and fell, just like us ; it was a passing sin, to which he gradually attracted himself, and which, the moment he had committed, equally revolted him ; but the consequences were so fatal of that momentary act, that, in spite of the traditional efforts of Mary and John, he had not the courage to return.

The Master was always talking of

death, of leaving them, of sad things, and they did not understand him. They thought, witnessing his power and miracles, that they were secure for life. They were true Easterns; they loved his power and might. They did not bargain to see their Leader prostrate in the dust; and when the (to them) overthrow came, they fled and looked after their own safety. Now, Judas had less love and softness than the others, less confidence, more selfishness, more practical ideas, and he began to say, "What is to become of us, and, above all, of me? We have no money, and I am the

purse-bearer ; and this woman has just flung away three hundred pence. I must make some, somehow, anyhow. I shall not follow the Master if he is going on like this." The first germ of vice (avarice in Judas) had fascinated him and entered his heart. Here Jesus' friends and disciples urge him not to go to Jerusalem ; he must let the late affair in the Temple blow over, and the anger of the priests and people subside. They do not know what Christ knows.

**The Blessed Virgin**

**O**UR traditions say that before Jesus began His Mission He went and asked His Mother's permission out of filial obedience, and knelt and asked her blessing as a mother, and then that she knelt and asked His blessing as her God. So when the hour came for the Great Sacrifice, He also went and asked her permission for the Last Supper, and knelt and asked her blessing, which she, knowing the

designs of God, gave with heart-rending agony, and then knelt and received the blessing of her God. It is described as a cruel scene of heart-breaking resignation.

I am so used to think on this, that when the Virgin at Ober-Ammergau took leave of her Son in public, and acted as if his going were a surprise to her, and that he had never told her of it, I found it cold; but other women were weeping, so that there must have been something wanting in me. I think that (except in our Church) people try too much to make Jesus an unnatural man—*i.e.*, so good

in all things, but always treating His mother worse than anybody else, which He certainly could not have done. At this point Jesus desires Simon to take care of his mother; she obeys, and retires into his house with the other women.

### The Lament

**I**T is most touching the way Christ takes a last look of everything and every one from this moment forward, lingering as a person would who was saying a long good-bye to home, and it well depicts the depth of human tenderness in his heart, likewise in his lamenting over Jerusalem; and the chant, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, bekehre dich zu deinem Gott," reminded me of the Lamentations in Holy Week, from which it

is doubtless taken, rising in tones of warning, and dying away in a weird wail.

Here we resume the gradual falling away of Judas, already disposed to evil, the Sanhedrim employés sneaking up to him like reptiles, and one by one tempting him, till at last he has made up his mind, and consents to betray for thirty pieces of silver. He thinks, "Now I have money enough to be independent. When the Master is taken, he can do a miracle, and slip out of their hands as before, and they will all say I was very clever to have so well filled the purse."

### The Last Supper

**A**ND now comes the Last Supper. In the washing of the feet and in the administration of the Holy Sacrament, so difficult to do well, Mayr is perfect. Every action is noble and graceful, slow and prayerful, as if he thought within himself, "What I do now will be celebrated for all time." They all sit, and he goes round to each one, firstly to wash the feet, secondly with the bread, thirdly with the wine.

I hope I shall not be considered impertinent if I quote my own sensations as a proof of what I found most touching. The Virgin's farewell failed to impress me, and made other women cry; but I broke down when I saw Judas shudder as Christ approached him with the Holy Communion, but took it out of human respect, and spat it out as soon as Christ had passed on to the next, not "to eat his own damnation."

Then came the sop, and I heard several saying, "That is not in the Bible"; but it is—in John xiii. 25-27: "He, therefore [John], leaning on the

breast of Jesus, saith to Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the morsel Satan entered into him, and Jesus said to him That which thou doest, do quickly." After this Judas rushes out.

In the Play Jesus dips a bit of bread into the wine, and puts it into Judas's mouth (an Eastern fashion, considered a compliment during the meal); but some were not content, thinking Judas was receiving two

Communion. I think Mayr would have done better to have stretched across the table than to have gone round to him as if it were Communion.

After this we had a splendid Sanhedrim scene, the High Council raving against Jesus. Grace enters Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who, after hearing all his enemies have to say against him, rise up and take his part, are anathematised by the High Council, and leave the Sanhedrim with dignity. Caiaphas gets up and violently asks if the Nazarene has any more friends present, as, if so, they had better declare themselves and

go at once ; but there are in all that large assembly only two "chosen."

Judas, the best actor of all, who would make a sensation on any boards, clutches his thirty bits of silver with greedy hands and hungry eyes, and counts and rings them every one like a true usurer.

### The Garden of Gethsemane

THE Agony in the Garden was far too tame. There was no "bloody sweat," and I was childishly disappointed because the angels had no wings.

The Garden scene, however, was in other respects very good. When Jesus is seized, and says, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," and he answers, "I am HE!" it was most effective the way the soldiers involuntarily fell upon their knees, and only recovered

their brutal insolence upon Jesus saying, "Arise! why do ye fear?"

The conduct of the disciples is also well depicted. Nine of them ran away and hid in two caves without the walls of Jerusalem, and were heard of no more. Peter and John alone stayed. Peter, who was all bounce and brag in Simon's house when all seemed safe, is now creeping and skulking after effeminate, delicate, boyish John, who said nothing, but whose love makes him fearless. Peter shrinks at every word and look; John alone, out of the twelve, shows courage: perhaps he was better bred

than the others. Anyway, our Saviour loved him best. John's appearance is everything that one thinks of John, but I thought his manner too cold.

The mocking and insults of the soldiery and people are perfectly done. One feels thoroughly awed, although one knows it is only a play. Judas now begins to realise the extent of his crime. He had no idea it would end so badly. He begins to fear that his Master either cannot or will not become invisible and save himself. His grief becomes a dead certainty when he hears the prophetic curse of Annas, meant as a compliment, "Judas !

thy name shall head our annals for all time.”

Very emphatic is the scene of Peter's denial when his Divine Master, just condemned to death, having been scourged and crowned, passes through the Hall. Peter throws out his arms imploringly to him, and Jesus turns a look upon him of reproach, sorrow, love, and forgiveness. Peter's repentance choked me. His sobs and tears were heart-rending, but not loud, as he rushed out into the dark night with his shame and remorse, to wrestle with it, till, like Jesus, he was crucified, only head downwards, at his own

request, because "it was too great an honour for him to die like his Saviour."

In all the Ober-Ammergauers do, they are never loud, never rant, never tear their hair, fling themselves down, or strut about the stage. They are true to Oriental dignity and calmness; but it is none the less deep, and you feel it is so. That quiet, slow, gentle dignity is so telling; those large, noble actions, that natural, manly walk and carriage, perfect many a difficult situation.

### Judas's End

JUDAS'S repentance is equally heart-rending and moving, and even more so, because it is accompanied with despair and suicide. They ought to make Mary and John try to induce him to ask for pardon, and then he should reply, "No! my sin is too great; I cannot even look the Master in the face."

Judas is grand when he rushes into the Sanhedrim and demands the reversion of the sentence, because "he has sinned and betrayed innocent

blood.' They laugh him to scorn with cold mockery. They have used him for their purpose. What is his agony to them? He has had his money, and ought to be content. "What is that to us? look thou to it." He flings the purse at the High Priests, and tells them that they shall all go to Hell with him, and rushes out. They pick up the purse with the utmost coolness, and begin at once to settle about the Potter's Field. Judas, after a passionate soliloquy on the "Field of Blood," hangs himself, the curtain descending as he flings his girdle about the tree.

## The Scourging and Crown of Thorns

**W**HEN the multitude from the Sanhedrim arrive at Pilate's house, they will not enter it because he is an infidel, but stand and parley under the balcony. The porter who opens the door to know what they want, with a knowing wink at their sanctimonious cant, says, "Cunning rascals! who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," at which the audience laugh heartily.

**The Passion-Play**

The peasant audience laugh like children when anything funny occurs, just as we do if the boy rolls down the altar steps with the book at Mass, or tumbles over the bell; but it is not the mocking ribaldry and irreverence of an every-day audience—the next instant they are as rapt and devotional as ever.

The scourging was a painted scourging. The crowning of thorns was well done, the soldiers, according to our tradition, pressing it down with rods; but somehow the *Ecce Homo* does not much move you.

I have so studied and meditated

on the Passion of Christ from my childhood—I am so familiar with every detail, be it legendary, traditional, or accepted—that I would fain have seen the representation more brutal. I can shed torrents of tears over what I think, what I read, what I hear; but what I saw of the Passion at Ober-Ammergau up to this moment did not make me cry.

We have a Revelation which tells us “that Christ received 30 buffets, 820 blows, 5 falls, 550 blows upon the breast, 5 cruel blows upon the shoulders, was raised by the hair of the head 630 times, received 30 blows

!?

“

upon the mouth, was drawn by the beard 388 times, received 6,666 stripes in the flagellation with whips and bound to a pillar, was spat upon 68 times, crowned with thorns, received an additional 558 stripes with whips from the soldiery, one mortal wound from one fall, with many kicks and blows, 5 large wounds upon the Cross, and one terrible gash on the shoulder from the weight of the Cross."

This Revelation speaks of 10,652 separate injuries and insults ; so that when a person who has the habit of meditating daily upon this, and saying a prayer of atonement, goes into the

Ober-Ammergau theatre and sees a beautiful white skin with little spots of blood the size of a sixpence painted at regular intervals, it does not move him or her so much as it would a person who had seldom heard or never thought of such things. And that is, I suppose, how I felt it come short of reality.

But what did touch me infinitely was the utter abandonment of Christ to the strong, cruel world, without a friend to sympathise, and the calm, manly dignity of his sorrow. The storm raged around him ; but he was as calm as a rock in an angry sea,

pale, sweet, and sad, but self-repressed —the strength that knew all things were to pass. His Divine Majesty suffers nothing even when he is flung to the ground; you feel awed by his grandeur and simplicity, and you worship him as well in his shame and disfigurement as if he had come in his glory and power to judge you.

The thieves are brought in, and look their part well. They are buffeted and pushed about by the crowd.

### The Way of the Cross

**N**OW henceforth I cannot complain that anything is painted or coldly done.

I know of nothing so moving as the Procession of the Cross, which, as we who have measured the distance in Jerusalem know, was about one thousand yards. First comes the Roman horseman with a national standard ; Pilate's centurion and soldiers, with the Saviour in their midst, crowned with thorns, staggering from

exhaustion, with his pale, wan face agonised by suffering ; his executioners urge him on with blows and pushes ; the priests hound the rabble on, who pursue him with jeers and cries ; the thieves are behind with lighter crosses ; more soldiers, priesthood, and boisterous rabble, with Caiaphas, Annas, and the Sanhedrim, bringing up the rear.

There were five or six hundred people on the stage. The three falls were admirably done. You see the agony and failing strength, and the impatience of the priesthood. The Ammergauers have made a marked

difference between Pilate's Roman soldiers and the Guard of the Temple. The former behave like men, whilst the Synagogue Guard behave shamefully. One perceives that the Centurion in charge is receiving grace. When Christ falls he hands him a flask of wine. He does not drink, but blesses it with a gesture of the hand, and turns one of those ineffable looks upon him.

From the opposite side Mary and her party are coming to look for him, and just as he falls under the Cross she recognises that it is Jesus whom they are leading to death, and

they are all overcome with grief and horror. Then comes Veronica and her veil, and the women of Jerusalem, weeping, and sobs burst forth from the audience right and left, and last during the whole procession.

Two very touching incidents here take place. Christ would fain rest awhile on a stone, when Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, a deformed, malicious-looking object, rushes out and says, "Away from my house! here is no place for thee to rest!" Ahasuerus did his part feebly, but Christ's look was a whole history,

because it was the last house in Jerusalem, and Christ so loved the city he would fain linger on the last stone. The last Jew hurled him forth, and the curse was complete : "I go ; but thou shalt wander evermore until I come to judge the dead !"

Christ now can go no farther ; he falls most painfully, and Caiaphas fears he will die before he has the fiendish joy of crucifying him. They meet a strong, robust figure in working blouse, with his carpenter's satchel on his back. It is Simon of Cyrene. First he is angry. "Why should you

saddle me with the Cross? I have never done any harm." But when he sees who it is, his face lights up, and he willingly puts himself in our Saviour's place, transferring the Cross to his shoulder. "For love of thee willingly will I do it. Would I could do more for thee!" Christ turns upon him one of those ineffable looks, and says, "God's blessing be upon thee and thine."

Now Caiaphas brutally says, "Thou canst move thy feet a little quicker"; but the Centurion interposes, "Cease! all goeth well. The man hath need of rest before he ascends the Hill

of Death." "What! more delays?" cries the enraged Caiaphas.

John says, "Come, beloved Mother, let us go back to Bethany; thou wilt not be able to bear the sight"; but the true woman and true mother says, "No! I will share his elevation and his degradation. I will die with him. I prayed to God for strength, and He hath heard me." "Mother," cry all the little band, "we follow thee."

Mary's party consisted of nine in all, including herself—Mary Magdalen, Martha, their brother Lazarus, Simon with whom Jesus dined, John the

beloved disciple, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, who left the Sanhedrim, and one more woman whose history is uncertain, and who in the Gospel is always called "and that other Mary," for no one knows if Mary Magdalen was Martha's sister, the Mary who sat at our Saviour's feet, which seems the more likely, as is here accepted, or if Martha had some other sister called Mary. I always think it must have been Veronica who joined them after the signal favour she had received.

The Schutzgeister now appear clothed in black mantles. Their faces and

at Ober-Ammergau 169

attitudes betoken grief. They sing a wailing lament, which doubtless in old times occupied the place of our "Stabat Mater."



**The Crucifixion**

**T**HE Crucifixion scene is perfect. Before the curtain rises you hear the sickening blows of the hammer, and when it ascends you cannot believe your senses. This, you think, must surely be a Vision of Calvary. There are, indeed, the two thieves bound to their crosses, their arms over the top, but on the ground lies an enormous Cross, and on it is nailed our Saviour. The executioners are nailing the title upon it still.

They raise the enormous weight from the ground, and drop it with a jerk into the socket, as is represented in the History of the Passion, the whole weight seemingly hanging on those three great nails, from which blood issues. The Crucifixion is after Guido Reni's, the arms extended straight.

Caiaphas points out to the priests that the title is wrong, sends to Pilate to have it altered, and asks leave to break the legs when our Saviour is dead. He is eager to wreak the last bit of cruelty and spite upon him, but he receives a

rebuff: "What I have written I have written," and "My own soldiers have orders concerning the limbs and burial."

And so the soldiers dice and swear and laugh and cast lots under his dying eyes; the priests wag their heads; the rabble laugh and jeer and scoff; the Pharisees come and gloat over the horrible sight.

The audience sobs aloud.

The bad thief joins in the blasphemies; and the other gives Christ the first consolation in his sufferings: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy Kingdom." Christ slowly turns his dying head with one

of those looks, and utters his memorable promise of salvation in answer to his appeal.

That is the supreme moment.

The Centurion orders a place to be cleared at the foot of the Cross for Mary and her little band. They are weeping at a distance. The priests are angry; but the Centurion is a Roman, and in command; he does not care in the least for what the Jews say. This is another delicate graduation towards his conversion. The vinegar and gall are now given; the priests and people continue to mock; the seven touching last words

are spoken ; Mary and John have received their last parting recognition ; the band of friends are all around his feet ; a shudder passes through the whole frame ; and, after eighteen minutes of this agony and suspense,  
CONSUMMATUM EST.

Upon this follows the darkness, thunder, and earthquake, and signs. All are terrified. The Centurion exclaims, "Truly this was the Son of God!" A boy rushes in and tells them that the veil of the Temple is rent in twain, and the priests and people depart to see, Caiaphas saying he will return for the breaking of

the limbs and burial. The Centurion, however, has Pilate's orders, and is determined to disappoint him ; and he knows that Nicodemus with Joseph of Arimathea will presently arrive with Pilate's leave to have the body ; but he must be careful that none of the three are buried alive, and on account of the morrow's feast they must be buried before the sun goes down.

They therefore take huge clubs and beat the thieves all over to death ; but, as they approach our Saviour, Magdalen starts up and defends his body with outstretched arms. "They have done enough," she says ; but

she does it so coldly that it was a moment when I did not appreciate artistic restraint, and it could be *so* effective.

The Centurion's last act, therefore, is to select a spear, and, carefully looking for the heart, plunges it in, and blood spurts forth. I quite agreed, however, with my husband that this was not well done; that the lance should have a caoutchouc point filled with real blood. A vigorous thrust would thrill the whole audience. According to tradition, Longinus the Centurion was blinded by the blood and water spurting

at Ober-Ammergau 177

from our Saviour's side, was converted, and did penance the remainder of his life. All depart, and Mary's little band stand alone with the dead Saviour on the Cross for the first time since the parting at Bethany.

### The Anointing and Burial

**J**OSEPH of Arimathea and Nicodemus reappear with ladders, rolls of linen, pincers, spices, and ointments. The five men approach the Cross; the three women surround the Mother, who seats herself on the nearest rock weeping. The tall ladder is behind, the shorter in front of the Cross.

Nicodemus draws out the nails of the hands with great difficulty, after first removing the crown of thorns, which is given to the Mother, who

has a large sheet spread before her to receive the body. Joseph, mounted on the short ladder, receives the shoulders, which are half supported by him, half by the roll of linen passed under the arms and allowed to fall over the Cross, the ends being held by Simon. "Come upon my shoulders, beloved burthen!" exclaims Joseph, receiving it. The arms are already stiffening, and have to be tenderly and delicately handled. Lazarus draws out the nails from the feet, and John reverently takes them; then the five men together transfer the body and tenderly lay it

on the sheet, with the shoulders and head on the Mother's lap, and a minute or two is consecrated to their sorrow. "Oh! my Son!" exclaims the weeping Mother; but John says, "Mother! from these wounds flowed the salvation of all Mankind," showing that John understood Him best.

This descent from the Cross is most artistically and tenderly done, and occupies a long time. It is after Rubens, and is carried out most naturally and most gracefully. Mayr must be an enormous weight, and how they lifted the Cross with him upon it I cannot think; enough to

at Ober-Ammergau 181

lift him as a corpse, I should say ;  
yet they did it with perfect ease.

They continue their work of love,  
the anointing and burial, as in the  
Gospel, and the stone is rolled against  
the aperture.

### The Resurrection and Ascension

WE next have the Guard at the Grave, sleeping and talking over the events, when the stone falls and terrifies them. Christ, radiant, appears at the aperture, and disappears. The soldiers fly away and return with the priests, who try to corrupt and offer them money; but one stout fellow says, "By my honour, I will relate it just as it happened."

It is now Easter Sunday at sunrise,

and the holy women, then Magdalen, John, and Peter successively come to weep and pray. At last Magdalen is left alone, and is mourning over "her only friend," when Christ appears to her. This little bit is very sweet. She does not recognise him at first; he says only one word, "*Maria*," but the way he says it speaks volumes. She turns round and casts herself at his feet. Then, for the first time, Magdalen is not cold, but gives vent to her joy. "I have seen him," she exclaims in rapture.

One of the most beautiful traits in Jesus' life is His gratitude for personal

tenderness (and throughout He shows the most to John and Magdalen). He would not leave mankind too abruptly or in too great sorrow. He left them gradually, dying first, and reappearing and associating with them afterwards, and allowing them to see Him ascend to Heaven.

The Schutzgeister now return, radiant in dress and countenance. The Choragus's face beams with joy as he announces, "He is risen," and begins the joyous hymn of "Praise and victory, Hallelujah," which continues during the whole scene.

Christ did not ascend, as in former

at Ober-Ammergau 185

representations. He was clothed in white, radiant, on a mount, surrounded by all his friends, and the Pagans, Jews, High Priests, Pilate, Herod, and soldiers are all prostrate before him; but the curtain fell just when he should ascend.

22

### Recessional

THE sun was setting on that August afternoon, the Schutzgeister were still carolling the "Hallelujah"; there was no noise, the crowd simply melted away. I found myself thanking God for having been allowed to see this wonderful Divine Tragedy. By common consent it seemed to be understood that applause would be indecent at such a moment, so that no clapping of hands, or shouts, or calls before the curtain

grated on our too finely strung nerves, which had been held in tension for eight hours ; we have witnessed eighteen acts ; the Schutzgeister have sung forty-seven times ; we have also seen twenty-six magnificent tableaux, groups representing Old Testament scenes, corresponding and linking themselves together with the history of our redemption ; and in scenes with dialogues we have followed in thought, word, and deed the history of Christ, from His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, until His Death and Burial, Resurrection and Ascension.

The Schutzgeister gathered up their

flowing robes and glided away as they first appeared ; and we separated each to our temporary homes, with our hearts full, to pray, to think, to write, as the case may be. For my part, I found my way first to the little village church, and there before God's Altar offered up a thanksgiving for the spiritual benefit received.

### The Audience

I WOULD here say a word about the audience. I heard complaints that people ate and drank, and also that some high ecclesiastic wished to prohibit the Play because certain tourists drank beer during the Crucifixion scene. Now this is quite untrue. No one ate and drank at the solemn parts of the Play. The spectators are too rapt, and I never saw a better-conducted audience in my life ; and I am told it is always so.

I wish congregations in church were half as good. Six thousand people of all sorts were sitting there as quiet as mice, and all except three hundred were exposed to the air, wind, rain, sun, and sometimes snow, without a murmur. The favoured three hundred, where most of the English sit, in the three rows called boxes, are under cover, and have backs to their seats; the rest are in the open, and have only benches. The boxes being reserved, you can come and go as you like, and have an hour and a half to lunch, or walk, or rest; but the others have to take their chance, if they

leave their seats, of getting the same again ; and it is nonsense to suppose that any one can remain for nine and a half hours without moving or taking refreshment.

If during the long performance a few carry biscuits in their pockets or in little bags, and munch them silently, and if jugs of light beer are handed up the benches during the long choruses, who can blame them ? None but humbugs, I think. All I can say is, there was not a sound ; and the people outside crept about on tiptoe for fear of disturbing the performance.

I have heard the Passion preached

every Good Friday, often for three hours, and I never saw the congregation half so motionless or devotional. It is a true Passion-pilgrimage, and certainly five thousand five hundred of those who attend a representation come out of devotion, for it is far removed from the noise of the great world, and no little exertion is used in reaching Ober-Ammergau.

### The Effect of the Play

I SHOULD now like to add a few words on the effect of the Play, as I have heard that, since the Ammergauers have had the good and bad fortune to be known to what we call the world, there are people in it who wish to put their Play down. I should like, not to make excuses for what I think most beautiful, but to plead against the strong and cruel portion of that world which can

always crush individuals, but cannot conquer Truth. Christ could not escape being treated as an impostor by it, and it would now fain work against this little band of faithful villagers.

I felt that, however much you may meditate upon the Passion, and feel a shortcoming here and there, the Play brings you to an intimate personal knowledge of Christ on earth as Man-God such as you could never acquire by thought, prayer, reading, or sermons. It brings you into union with His daily life, and with that marked characteristic He possessed, and

which is here so clearly depicted,—  
how much He felt and appreciated  
personal affection; how gratefully He  
rewarded the slightest act of kindness,  
of attention, of love; what a tender  
heart He had. So much the more  
must He have felt when all abandoned  
Him.

As religion, it is instructive, edifying,  
and devotional; as art, it is a powerful  
and absorbing drama, quite unique in  
the world, with nothing to shock the  
most refined and sensitive religious  
instinct, or yet the most ignorant.  
If any one objects, it will be the  
slightly educated, and that only to

pose, for they probably understand not art, nor heart, nor religion. A thousand clergymen in England and years of schooling could never teach the Old and New Testament as one learns it there in those eight hours.

I thought the performance as near dramatic and artistic perfection as human acting could be, and that it could be done nowhere else than here, where such a peculiar combination of circumstances exist, generations for centuries having been brought up to it; but I am grateful also for the safeguards which exist—since the vil-

lagers' temptations are great and the sums they have refused are enormous—for preserving its simplicity, devotion, and art.

Firstly, the Ammergauers are quite cut off, by their geographical position, from the contaminating influence of the outer world. The Ettalerberg acts as a barrier. How strange it must be to live in retreat for ten years, and then to be brought into contact with perhaps two hundred and sixty-four thousand people in one summer! This is what I have calculated the visitors at; but it would be interesting to know the total when the Plays

are over. I have allowed for two representations a week for five months, with six thousand persons for each.

Bad luck, then, to all those who would abolish the Passionsspiel. Do they fancy themselves better than St. Gregory of Nazianzen and other holy early Christians who dramatised portions of the Holy Scriptures upon the model of ancient Greek plays, which had their origin in mythology and worship of the gods?—for all dramas, both ancient and modern, had a religious origin, just as the worship of God gave rise to the Early

Mysteries and Convent Plays in the time of Charlemagne. Are they better than the Crusaders who acted the Passion? Better than the saintly Abbot of St. Alban's, who composed and acted them with his scholars? Better than holy, excellent Father Daisenberger, the priest-dramatist of Ober-Ammergau, the author of so many Biblical and historical plays and dramas, the pious man who undertook this very play "for the edification of the Christian world"?

Forbid the people ridiculing the plays and players, as they should

be held in veneration, but not from witnessing the plays, and least of all this Play, which is a something that should not be touched, which has a halo of its own, from its origin, its religious importance, its native refinement.

It must do a world of good ; it cannot do any real harm. Whoever is scandalised or takes it in bad part was bad by nature before going to Ober-Ammergau. There are those who would pull down church, altar, and priest equally with this Play.

It is like our Midnight Mass ; we

are frequently not allowed to have it now because certain ill-conditioned persons misconduct themselves in church; so all Catholics must be deprived of it. In the good old Catholic time we had all our institutions and customs intact. Would it not be as easy to issue an order that only those should be admitted to Midnight Mass and Communion who bear a ticket from their Confessors? But no! it must be entirely swept away because of a few bad people, as if they were the strong and the majority the weak.

In this instance one must fear that

God will manifest His displeasure. If the Ammergauers are forced by undue pressure to break their vow, a chastisement will probably fall on the author of the prohibition, or a scourge will come upon the village at the ten years if the Play is not acted.

Who would be such a spiritual iconoclast as to rob this bright village of its glory, its birthright, its romance, its support, its only interest in life? I, for one, should grudge to bow my knee before such an authority, and feel rebellious, heart and soul, tongue and pen.

Let such a one go and see the Play before he injures it, and not take hearsay, and he will see that the people are not acting—they are living their lives naturally before us. They have seen this ever since they could toddle two steps—they know nothing else. They do not think of us spectators any more than the priests and their acolytes who are occupied at the Altar think of the people and strangers in the church. To them it is not a mere theatre with stage and scenery. They are in a church, doing an act of devotion, with their simple, innocent, unquestion-

ing faith, and loyal fidelity to Bible history. The beauty of their lives speaks for its effect upon them. They are so unaffected whilst they do it, they seem to believe they are really the people they represent for the moment.

Every child is so trained and so at home that the babe holding its little skirt to catch the manna thinks that the whole Play depends upon its doing it well, and with devotion, and to please God. Every one is natural; no one strives to shine; he does it as if he lived for that and nothing else. Thus it is a perfect

whole ; and this is the secret of the six hundred people all doing a natural act of devotion at one and the same time, falling into perfect harmony.

In 1870-71 the news spread abroad in our world for the first time that in a highland village of Bavaria a living picture of the Divine Tragedy was being given such as the world had never before seen, and the world began to rush there. What can the peasant players care for the *habitués* of London and Paris theatres sitting there criticising? It's not the same thing ; they are unconscious of us.

They did not ask us to come ; they cannot hinder us from coming. They did it for two hundred and thirty-six years by themselves and for their fellow-peasants just as grandly, carefully, and piously as now. Would it not be unjust, because the world heard of it ten years ago and rushes in, to punish them for this, to deprive them of their birthright, heirloom, the glory of their village, their labour of love?

As individuals, if we are not pleased we ought not to go there, any more than we should go to a place of worship and mock at the worshippers.

Such people would destroy the devotees and their altars; and such ideas only emanate from miserable rags of education, or bad Catholics, who think it fine to pass for free-thinkers, but never from well-informed, wholesome minds.

What impressed me the most was the grace and dignity, the natural, manly walk, all being done with such calm, everything happening so quietly and naturally. I have seen all the best actors and actresses of my day, and I have never beheld this before. There is never a stage strut nor a loud emotion; save when the Jews

grow excited and passionate over their revenge—it is quite an Eastern idea—the gravest woes are calm and dignified.

There is no *tour de force*, no thirst for reputation; it is their religious and dramatic training, from the cradle to the grave, which enables them in so artistic, realistic, and devotional a spirit to portray thus the life and sufferings of Jesus.

The ceremonial life of the Holy Catholic Church and the refinement and art of their calling as wood-carvers may account for much; also they have a School of Art and

Design at Partenkirchen and a School of Design at Ober-Ammergau ; but the great training-school is the village church, with its ceremonies, processions, music, and song. It is not mere theatrical drilling ; they do not act, a great deal of it takes place in the church all the year round. Take our processions on Palm Sunday or Corpus Christi, for instance.

The music is much the same. Their organist and their school-master must be a musician and a composer ; the children learn by heart and sing the music of the Drama in

**The Passion-Play**

school, the same as many teach their children Watts's hymns. They play many other things—their favourite piece is "The Founding of the Monastery of Ettal"—and these private performances are attended by hundreds of the peasantry from the surrounding districts. In winter there are weekly plays.

It is recounted, that the great actor Lehmann, of Hanover, attended the performance of 1850, and was so struck at the way the Drama had been put on the boards that he asked to be introduced to the manager, and was amazed beyond measure when he

at Ober-Ammergau 211

was presented to the parish priest,  
Daisenberger, at the time I write  
eighty-two years of age, living amongst  
them still.

### Non-Catholic Opinion

THE best books on the Passion-Play (there are some thirty or forty, and I have read ten) are those by Mr. John P. Jackson and "Oxonian," also a new little German book, giving the whole text and three specimens of the music. I entirely agree with Mr. Jackson and "Oxonian." I should like to quote one or two passages from the latter which express much of what I would say, and come from an Anglican, who evidently understands



and must have seen much of interior Catholic life.

“Oxonian” says: “They [the performers] don’t make their daily life one thing and their religious life another. They don’t speak with solemn face and bated breath of their religion. The refinement of the peasant takes a religious turn.” (I add, in every Catholic cultivated village or town, and in Ober-Ammergau especially.) “The child who first handles a pencil or brush, instead of scribbling a pig or a cow, scrawls a Madonna. The man warms his cottage whitewashed walls with Holy

Family frescoes. Ober-Ammergau is full of wood-carvers; that means crucifixes and images. The Play does not stand out in sharp isolation from a background of inharmonious, dreary commonplaces. Their lives are passed in the bodily presence of spiritual beings; wooden Christs, painted saints, are at every turn of the road, on every wall or tree. The Play is a culmination of all that the years, days, and hours bring round to every one of the actors and audience of the village and surrounding mountains, in hearty sympathy with their daily life and thought. It is to them a religious

service, one step from the church to the theatre, all mingled and intertwined. No secularism stands over against religious thought; the Word of Life is as their daily food and work."

He further adds: "The profanity which startles the blood out of your face is not to be looked for in this Life of Jesus as interpreted by the Old World spirit of Catholicism, but in the 'Vie de Jesus' as read in the light of the New World criticism."

He continues: "Faith unshaken, unswerving, with them is a matter of every-day life, a blend of religious and

secular. They do not feel uneasy about it, or suspicious or uncomfortable in it, as if they were not sure whether it was their own or not. It has the true poetic form of religion"—(I add, the picturesque Catholicism which exists everywhere where it has not been abused and persecuted)—“and has not been so philosophised as to lose its hold on the thing and the fact which centralised it. Like a child, he lives in two worlds at once. His faith is childlike because it has never been shaken; but it is such a faith we all want to get, and it puts him a step above us.”

Again: "All through the Play I kept saying to myself, 'This is a primitive, mediæval, half-civilised peasantry, still sunk in the trammels of priest-craft; it has never known what it is to have an open Bible, a free press, the blessings of the electric telegraph, and is three hundred years behind the present age.' But it would not do. I could not but confess that I was witnessing not only a beautiful, but a most subtle and delicate thought-rendering of the Gospel history, a rendering in which the truth was gathered up into a whole, with a power and a grasp that put to shame the loose

and carnal apprehension of this or that interesting trait or striking light, which is sufficient fodder for the weak stamina of the modern religious view. As to general intelligence, refinement, and dignity, who would not give all he had to see a spark of it in the average English rustic or London rough?" (The "Oxonian" may mount much higher than that without finding it.)

The Rev. Malcolm MacColl,\* an Anglican clergyman, says : "In a single day that which could not be taught

\* Now a Canon of Ripon Cathedral.

for years, the Old and New Testament, and the composition which seems unconnected by circumstances, time, place, and authorship, are gathered up, brought into one tale, one book, teaching one high morality, and pointing to one Central Figure.”

Imagine this being engraved on the minds and hearts of perhaps two hundred and sixty-four thousand people in one summer! What a splendid, holy school! What a responsibility to destroy it! Familiarity cannot breed contempt, as it is performed only once in ten years, and most persons only see it once

**The Passion-Play**

in a lifetime. Not only are the actors shut out from the world, but not for anything would they carry their Play elsewhere.

### How Misunderstandings Arise

THE remarks of "Oxonian" greatly struck me. I can remember when we were children we used to play with some little friends, whose good parents were of the Low Church School of the Church of England, but great allies of our father and mother, and I can recollect their being much shocked and complaining of us because we used to put up a box and play at saying Mass, using our little Noah's ark men for

**The Passion-Play**

priests and acolytes ; and also we used to have processions up and downstairs. We used to ring a little bell the while ; and once the baby lisped out at the end of our prayers : " God bless Tiny [our little dog], and make him a good and faithful servant."

We shortly after received an order never to play at these things when our friends came, unless they were Catholics. This made us feel a little restraint, unknown before.

On the other side, the only Sunday we spent with our little Protestant friends they looked very glum, put on long faces, spoke in whispers,

wouldn't play, and told us to "hush."

I was a sensitive child, and felt the change instantly, and turning to the boy next to me said, almost in tears,—

"Oh, Willie! have we offended you?"

"Oh no!" the boy said good-naturedly. "Don't you know? It's the Lord's Day!"

The following Sunday we put on the same faces, would not speak, and had our prayer-books by us at dinner. We looked so sad that mother asked us what was the matter, and we answered,—

“Don’t you know, mother? It’s the Lord’s Day!”

Our mother understood.

“But, my dear children,” she said, “every day is the Lord’s day, every day should be like Sunday. You have been to Mass, you have had your Bible and Catechism lecture, and you are going to Vespers. You are to rest from lessons; you are to play, but not loudly; and you are to be twice as good, sweet-tempered to each other, and obedient to your father and me, as on any other day; and you are constantly to think of Jesus, and all He is doing for you

throughout the day ; but you are to be cheerful.”

Next Sunday we were invited by our friends again, but we preferred a week-day with them and Sunday at home. This is the way Catholics and Protestants begin to get separated. We should none of us have done each other any harm had we been let alone. We should have grown to appreciate each other.

To conclude, I had that pre-sanctified Divine Service feeling after the Play the same as if I had just left our Mass of the Pre-sanctified on Good Friday, Tenebræ, and the

preaching of the Passion at three o'clock. It was all the offices of Holy Week in one. Or I felt as if I had just come out of a "Spiritual Retreat." It helps out marvellously in holy meditation, above all on Communion days. I have now no difficulty in following Christ in my thoughts. I have seen the Man-God as He was during His sojourn on earth. Before I had imagined it; now I know it.

Mr. Jackson writes: "It is no longer an interesting relic of the past, out of keeping with our time, but the most memorable, elevated, dramatic exhibition of our epoch—

the perfection of Religious Drama. It makes us see Christ on earth once more preaching in the sunny hills and valleys of Judæa, living over the sad yet glorious events of His life amongst men, who misunderstood, persecuted, and brutally pushed out of existence that life in Whose sacrifice is hid the Mystery of Redemption and Reconciliation."

May God preserve and prosper this wondrous Drama and these devoted village players; and I add, may He confound their enemies and opposers, and manifest that it is His pleasure not to deprive the world of such a

gem, for His own honour ;—in which danger we stand from a few ignorant, uneducated people making false reports to high ecclesiastics who have certainly never visited Ober-Ammergau.

### The Crucifixion Group

I FELT very tired after the events of the day, and indisposed for any distraction. I spent the evening in prayer and meditation, and went early to bed. The next morning we further explored the village at our leisure, ascending first to the Crucifixion group on the eminence called Kreuzkügel and Osterbichel, overlooking the village, from which point you

are complete master of the whole situation.

The sugar-loaf peak known as the Kofel guards the entrance of Ober-Ammergau from the outer world. A small, green plain lies between ranges of woody, grassy, sloping mountains, narrow in the part which contains the smiling village.

The entrance of the village, near the gorge, is a straggle of houses, which broadens out as it nears the other end around the church, and tails off again, culminating in the simple wooden theatre. The river Ammer dashes through the village.

The plain broadens slightly, and one sees a bit of open country beyond the village of Unter-Ammergau, which lies about two miles distant, nearer the opposite mountain outlet, and is somewhat broader than the entrance to the valley of Ammergau, which may be said to be almost closed in.

The two villages of Ober- and Unter-Ammergau, lying so close in the same little plain, remind me of Cain and Abel, and Jacob and Esau—one so elevated and one so unnoticed. I wonder if Unter ever feels envious of Ober?

The air is beautiful on fine days, of which we had part of one; but generally there is much rain and mud, and of course, in the cold season, much snow. It is just such a climate as our own Highlands, and the people take bad weather as a matter of course. The women here also wear sealskin busbies, as they do at Murnau. The Crucifixion group, under whose shadow we sat, was carved by Halbig of Munich in sandstone, and was a present from the King in 1871. It is three times larger than life. It killed the artist coming up the Ettalerberg; the cart

at Ober-Ammergau

233

tilted, and St. John fell upon him and crushed him to death. On the way down we noticed a terra-cotta house built by the Choragus.

**Mayr and Others**

I HAD taken introductions to Frau Sebastian Weit, Josef Mayr, and the Burgomeister Caiaphas, and in the evening called upon them. I went first to call on Frau Weit, and to buy some of her photographs and carvings. Whilst so engaged I saw Mayr pass through another room, and I sent to ask if he would come to speak to an English lady. He sent word that he was too busy ; so I went to him, and said, "Herr Mayr, if

you will not come to me I must come to you, and thank you for the very great pleasure you gave us yesterday. My husband and I have longed to come for ten years, and I cannot tell you how delighted we were."

Of course his personal appearance is very different off the stage; but he has the same expression, almost shy, and the same modest, gentle, manly manner. I asked him if he would kindly write his name under two photographs for me, as a remembrance. He said, "With pleasure"; but whilst writing I saw he suffered. He said,

“I can hardly write to-day, my arms are so stiff.” I asked him, “Is it very painful to be on the Cross?” He said, “Not so painful, but so fatiguing; my hand shakes next day.” Once, when asked if the Cross hurt him, he only answered, “Oh, but the honour of it!”

I then asked him if we might go and look at the empty theatre and behind the scenes, and if he would meet us there and show us about. He said he could not then, as they were trying some new machinery and a new Cross, but perhaps he could at one o'clock. My husband, who was

longing to go, would not come when he heard that Mayr was to be there—he was so afraid of losing the impression of Jesus on the Cross. I knew I should not—that I could keep the man and the Christus distinct in my memory.

I went, but Mayr did not come. He sent some one who let me in, and I saw all over the building, which holds four ranks of places for six thousand sitters. What he who showed me over the theatre took the greatest pride in were the little cells running all round the stage containing the costumes of five or six

hundred players. The costumes hang on nails on the walls inside, and over the top of each cell was written the name—Christus Mayr, Judas Lechner, Petrus Hett, Caiaphas Lang, Frauen, Maria-Anastasia Krach, etc., etc. The arrangements were simple ; the side scenes were chiefly the streets of Jerusalem and floral or grassy scenes.

I saw all the crosses and the arrangements for the new Cross ; but as I know they keep this secret, and I was let in as a favour, I will not tell it. But I may say that I tried to lift the Cross. I am very strong and can carry a good weight, but

when I put my shoulder under it I could not even move it off the ground, so heavy is it ; I must have fallen if I had moved it or let it drop.

I brought also a card to Caiaphas Lang, Burgomeister ; as I knew he was very busy, I did not go. But I went to see the person who was really the most influential and powerful at Ober-Ammergau, though many seem generally not to know it, and that was the excellent priest, Father Daisenberger, who talked with me a long while, and gave me his blessing.

Last, but not least, I went to see

Mayr's wife, and to buy some of his beautiful carvings. She is a pleasant woman ; they have four pretty children and a nice little cottage. Whilst buying we joked. I told her how famous her husband is all over the world—that his acting and his pictures are in all the shop windows, that his name is in all the papers, and said how proud she must feel. She said, "Yes ; he is immensely run after," and laughingly added, "He often asks me if I feel jealous ; he can't stay at home nor yet in the *Gasthaus*, so many people come to see him, and leave him no time for his

work." So I laughed and said, "Well, I'm one of them, you see; but you need not mind us, as nobody stays more than two days." Joking apart, it is a fact that young English ladies stop to see him go into the post-office or a *Gasthaus*, and wait till he comes out again to catch a glimpse of him, so great an impression does he make; and there is a legend that an American walks after him with a pair of scissors, that on the last day of the Play he may cut off Mayr's hair, and has offered him £1,000 for it. But, with all this flattery, Mayr keeps his modest, unassuming manner;

and I, after all I had read, was quite disappointed that he did not move about amongst us in flowing robes, uttering gentle words of greeting.

### Expenses

**T**O be practical I must offer a word as to the cost of a visit to Ober-Ammergau. The arrangements for playgoers are very cheap; there is not the slightest inclination to extort money, notwithstanding every temptation to do so, but only a wish to give all the chance of joining this act of devotion to our Lord.

All is simple and well ordered. The trains from Munich and Murnau, forty-seven miles, as before described,

are good, and the tickets cost very little money. Your carriage is provided by one of the agents, Cook, Gray, or Gaze. We paid thirty marks, then five marks for the coachman, five marks for the two extra horses up the Ettalerberg, thirty marks down, and five to the coachman; making in all seventy-five marks or shillings, which for thirty-two miles of hard and heavy road, including a very steep mountain with two extra horses, cannot be called dear.

We had two rooms for two nights at twenty-four marks—*i.e.*, six shillings a room, for a bedroom to yourself,

when they positively might extort anything. We picked up our food promiscuously, as you see more in that way—sometimes at Gaze's, now at the German inn, the Stern, coffee in the tiniest *Gasthäuser*, and so forth. The best seats in the theatre were ten shillings apiece. None of them were dear.

There are twenty houses besides Gaze's and Stern's where visitors are taken in, so that thirteen hundred inhabitants stow away from eight to twelve thousand visitors during the week. The houses are all numbered; no streets are named.

It is very easy to have anything and everything if you go in time. Americans telegraph all the way from New York and Boston to have their carriages, beds, and food ready. So do English from London and Munich. The consequence is the unfortunate Burgomeister's house is surrounded by clamouring Germans and other foreigners, who expect to get everything without notice, and find that everything is taken and occupied by English and Americans. The Burgomeister gets soundly abused, and must hate the sight of a stranger.

### Our Return Journey

**W**E were not fortunate in the weather at Ober-Ammergau.

The day we saw the Play was the only fine one, and the next day it simply poured. We had not intended to leave so soon, but we could not bear up against the mud and wet. So we left without making any excursions in the neighbourhood, which is described as so beautiful. It really would have been no pleasure, as we

could have seen no views through thick clouds and downpour of rain, especially as we had with us only the clothes we wore. We drove back to Murnau in the evening and stayed there the night. We noticed on the road the grazing horses, turned out by the week, over their girths in thick muddy swamps, greedily eating marshy grass. Horses unused to it would have stuck and broken their legs. They seemed to draw one out at a time, and give a hop, and so progress.

We remarked that the country was full of wooden sheds to house

hay. In our part of Austria harps, or *Harpfen*, are used. They are like large covered clothes-horses. I wonder people in England do not use some such means to protect their harvests.

The next morning Murnau was *en fête*, it being August 25th, a double festival to celebrate the saint's name of the King of Bavaria (St. Louis), and also that which hails Bavaria as seven hundred years old. The little lake Staffel See, by Murnau, was illuminated, and the pleasure-boats like fire-flies made an evening picnic. I was much

struck by the holiday attire of the peasantry.

The native Tyrolese dress is a green felt hat, black ribbon, and cock wood-grouse feathers, mounted with edelweiss at the back ; a grey felt jacket of enormous thickness, short green cuffs, woollen waistcoat, the same as the coat, with large silver buttons ; flapped breeches of black dyed doe-skin, with a broad green stripe ; they end above the knee, leaving the leg bare, Highland fashion ; grey worsted gaiters, slashed with green, cover the calves, and terminate in stout shoes without stockings.

From Murnau we returned to Munich and its comfortable Quatre Saisons Hôtel, which is so large that we were in the same house with some of our dearest friends and never knew it till too late. We loitered about among the art galleries of the capital, and then went to Innsbrück, about four hours by rail.

At the Hôtel de la Post there was quite an English *table d'hôte*, amongst whose numbers were several tourists, who were, I should say, on their first outing, and looked unutterable scorn at us in our rusty travelling attire, as if to say, "How

dare you intrude amongst us people of fashion and elegance?" Innsbrück is a delightful place, with delicious air and charming environs. One might ride and drive unceasingly, and always see something new. The cathedral is very well worth seeing; it is full of beautiful things. We went there to study the swords in the museum, but we did not reap a large harvest of knowledge.

We did not stay at Innsbrück long, but worked our way leisurely back towards Trieste, breaking our journey here and there as the fancy took us. I confess I rather avoided the beaten

track, and shunned crowded hotels, for the influence of the wondrous Play was still strong upon me, and I felt that dislike to resuming the jarring life of the world which one feels after meditation in some holy Retreat. We got back to Trieste and our pleasant home after an absence of seventeen days, and took up the daily round again. But the memory of the Passion-Play lingered with me for months, to the spiritual benefit and refreshment of my soul. In me, at least, were fulfilled the aspirations of the venerable priest of Ober-Ammergau, Father Daisenberger,

in his "Words of Admonition"; I would also fain hope and believe in many, many others. I cannot better conclude than by quoting those earnest words, for they sum up the whole essence of the motive of the sacred Play :—

“Through the living remembrance of the Saviour’s sacrificial death, many Christians will be moved and edified, strengthened anew in their faith and love to Him, and will return to their homes with renewed determination to be truer followers of Christ. Many of the lukewarm and light-minded will not be able to cast aside all the

earnest impressions of what they see and hear ; and these impressions may become in them the seed-corn of a zealous Christian life! Many a hardened sinner may be induced to shed tears of penitence at the sight of the dear Redeemer, at the sight of the bitterness He was compelled to endure for our sins ; and, under the influence of Divine grace, these tears may be the foreboders of true conversion. The witnessing of the Passion may become the means of the Good Shepherd seeking and finding the lost lambs of His flock.”

So may it be. Long may the

Passion-Play at Ober-Ammergau continue in this spirit to glorify the Name of Jesus the Crucified, and kindle new faith and love in Him !

2

137

**THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.**

**Harvard College Widener Library  
Cambridge, MA 02138 (617) 495-2413**

