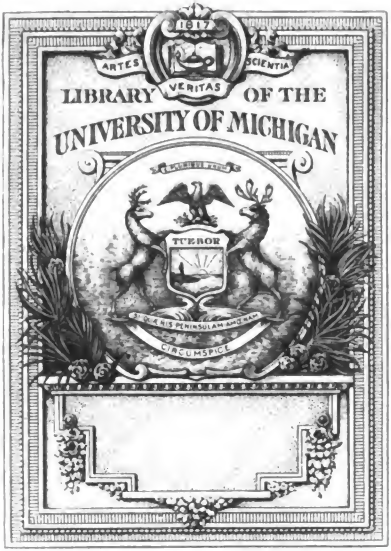
Oberammergau : its passion play and players

Louise Parks Richards



OBERAMMERGAU

ITS PASSION PLAY AND PLAYERS

A 20th Century Pilgrimage

to a

Modern Jerusalem and a New Gethsemane

Dr. C. Wolf & Sohn
K. Hof- und Universitäts-Buchdruckerei
Lithographische Kunstanstalt
Munich.

To the memory of my beloved friend, Frau Emma Lang, the worthy daughter of a noble father, the late Bürgermeister Lang, and of her baby girl, the little God child who bore the name Louise Parks Richards Lang, both of whose graves are now in the village churchyard of Oberammergau.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Passion Play Performers of 1910.

Manager: Director Ludwig Lang
Assistant Manager: Hans Mayr
Prologue: Anton Lechner
Leader of chorus: Jacob Rutz.

Christ	Anton Lang
John	Alfred Bierling
Peter	Andreas Lang
Judas Iscariot	Johann Zwink
Caiaphas	Gregor Breitsamter
Annas	Sebastian Lang
Pontius Pilate	Sebastian Bauer
King Herod	Hans Mayr
Nathaniel	Ruppert Breitsamter
Mary	Ottilie Zwink
Magdalene	Marie Mayr
Archelaus Rabbi	Wilhelm Rutz
Joseph of Arimathea	Peter Rendl
Nicodemus	Wilhelm Lang
Ezekiel	Sebastian Schauer
Simon of Bethany	Thomas Rendl
Simon of Cyrene	Andreas Kratz
Longinus, a Roman Captain	Anton Haser
Sadoc	Martin Oppenrieder
Joshua	Melchior Breitsamter
Dariabus	Rochus Lang
James the Elder	Mathias Dedler
Andrew	Alois Gerold senior
Philipp	Andreas Braun
Thaddaeus	Joseph Kurz
Matthew	Joseph Albrecht
Thomas	Anton Mayer
James the younger	Benedikt Klucker
Bartholomew	Balthasar Keller
Simon	Martin Hohenleitner
Selpha, leader of a gang	Peter Nairz junior
Dathan	Andreas Mayr
Esron	Joseph Haser
Ephraim	Roman Gast
Kore	Joseph Hohenleitner
Moses	Alois Guggemos
Albiron	Emanuel Lang

Booz	Andreas Lindele
Eleazar	Anton Albl
Gaad, witness	Michael Deisenberger
Nun, „	Sebastian Albl
Raphim, „	Leopold Mayer
Eliab	Johann Hett
Mark, Publican	Andreas Stadler
Lazarus	Richard Lang
Martha	Viktoria Bauer
Rabinth	Eduard Uhl
Ptolomäus	Alois Samm senior
Samuel	Georg Schallhammer
Aser	Andreas Albl
Amiel	Johann Lang senior
Gerson	Andreas Albrecht
Oziel	Dominikus Klammer
Amon	Andreas Böld
Merari	Klement Gindhard
Jehosaphat	Martin Liebherr
Nathan	Joseph Bierling
Salamon	Peter Nairz senior
Saras	Andreas Wiedemann
Ameram	Peter Maderspacher
Balsam	Heinrich Gebhard
Gamaliel	Martin Haser
Jacob Rabbi	Alois Schmid

Chief Controller: Franz Rutz.

Time table Munich—

Arrival of trains in the

	Passion Play trains					
. . . . Train number	I	III	V	VII	IX	XI
. . . . Kind of train	F	F	F	F	F	E
. . . . . Class	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	3.	1. 2.
Munich Hbf. . . . . . from	4^{50}	8^{50}	10^{35}	1^{10}	2^{44}	3^{12}
Pasing . . . . . to						
Pasing . . . . . from	△4^{59}					
Planegg . . . . . from						
Gauting . . . . . from						
Mühlthal . . . . . from						
Starnberg . . . . . from	△5^{22}				3^{17}	
Possenhofen . . . . . from						
Feldafing . . . . . from						
Tutzing . . . . . from	△5^{40}	9^{41}		2^{04}		
Diemendorf . . . . . from						
Wilzhofen . . . . . from						
Weilheim . . . . . to	5^{56}			2^{20}		
Augsburg . . . . . from	*3 55*	—	—	*9 13*	—	—
Weilheim . . . . . from	5^{57}			2^{21}		
Polling . . . . . from						
Huglfing . . . . . from						
Uffing . . . . . from						
Murnau . . . . . to	6^{26}	10^{29}	12^{07}	2^{52}	4^{18}	4^{38}
Murnau . . . . . from	6^{34}	10^{39}	12^{17}	3^{04}	4^{30}	4^{45}
Bad Kohlgrub . . . . . from	|	|	|	|	|	|
Oberammergau . . . . . to	7^{31}	11^{36}	1^{14}	4^{01}	5^{27}	5^{42}
Murnau . . . . . from						
Oberau . . . . . to						
Oberau . . . . . from						
Garmisch-Partenkirchen to						

Only on day of Performance. — before, and on day of Performance.

Passion Play trains take passengers only for Oberammergau.

X Connections daily in July and August, otherwise only on Sundays and holidays.

☐ Connections in July and August on Sundays and holidays; July 4, August 8, in May, June and September, only on Sundays, holidays, weather permitting, also on day before principal performance.

☞ O = ordinary train; F = fast train;

Murnau—Oberammergau.

Starnberger Bahnhof.

Daily trains to Oberammergau

1381	1361	1379	1363	137	1365	1375	1369	1371	1377
D	O	F	O	E	O	F	O	O	F
2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.	1.2.3.
4^{05}	5^{50}	7^{00}	735	9^{10}	10^{50}	2^{10}	3^{35}	6^{20}	7^{20}
↑	↑	↑	747	↑	11^{03}	↑	↑	↑	↑
e4^{17}	↑	↑	748	↑	11^{07}	↑	↑	↑	↑
↑	↑	↑	759	↑	11^{20}	↑	↑	↑	↑
↑	↑	↑	808	↑	11^{30}	↑	↑	↑	↑
↑	↑	↑	817	↑	11^{42}	↑	↑	↑	↑
e4^{44}	↑	7^{34}	824	↑	11^{51}	2^{44}	4^{13}	7^{02}	7^{54}
e4^{54}	↑	7^{43}	836	↑	12^{04}	↑	4^{24}	7^{14}	8^{04}
e5^{00}	↑	7^{49}	843	↑	12^{13}	↑	4^{31}	7^{21}	8^{10}
e5^{06}	6^{49}	7^{56}	850	10^{26}	12^{28}	3^{02}	4^{40}	7^{32}	8^{17}
↑	6^{57}	↑	900	↑	12^{39}	↑	4^{48}	7^{42}	↑
↑	7^{05}	↑	907	↑	12^{48}	↑	4^{56}	7^{50}	↑
5^{23}	7^{11}	8^{11}	913	10^{40}	12^{54}	3^{17}	5^{02}	7^{55}	8^{32}
—	*4 15*	—	×*7 20*	×*7 20*	*9 13*	*1 10*	*1 44*	—	—
5^{26}	7^{21}	8^{14}	920	10^{42}	1^{02}	3^{20}	5^{10}	8^{08}	8^{35}
↑	7^{29}	↑	927	↑	1^{10}	↑	5^{18}	8^{15}	↑
↑	7^{42}	↑	938	↑	1^{23}	↑	5^{30}	8^{26}	↑
↑	7^{58}	↑	953	↑	1^{39}	↑	5^{46}	8^{40}	↑
6^{03}	8^{09}	8^{43}	10^{03}	11^{09}	1^{50}	3^{50}	5^{57}	8^{49}	9^{06}
6^{20}	8^{21}	9^{03}	10^{14}	11^{16}	2^{08}	4^{00}	6^{08}	→	9^{20}
6^{56}	9^{01}	9^{44}	10^{54}	12^{00}	2^{48}	4^{39}	6^{48}	→	10^{00}
7^{17}	9^{28}	10^{11}	11^{21}	12^{27}	3^{15}	5^{06}	7^{16}	→	10^{27}
6^{08}	8^{19}	8^{48}	10^{11}	11^{14}	2^{00}	3^{55}	6^{05}	→	9^{15}
6^{39}	8^{54}	9^{15}	10^{47}	11^{41}	2^{36}	4^{22}	6^{42}	O 191 1.2.3	9^{50}
6^{40}	8^{56}	9^{16}	10^{48}	11^{41}	2^{38}	4^{23}	6^{44}	▪S^{20}	9^{51}
6^{52}	9^{10}	9^{27}	11^{02}	11^{53}	2^{52}	4^{35}	6^{59}	▪8^{34}	10^{05}

▪ From May 15 on Sundays and holidays.

on Sundays and holidays.

From May 15

June 1 daily.

From

o Connections in July and August, Sundays and holidays; on July 4 and August 8, in May, June and September, only on Sundays and holidays, weather permitting.

△ Stop at request.

From 6^{00} p. m. to 5^{59} a. m. the minute numbers underscored.

E = express train; D = direct passenger train.

Time table Oberammergau—

Departure of trains in the

	Passion Play trains					
....Train number....	II	IV	VI	VIII	X	XII
....Kind of train....	E	F	E	F	F	F
.....Class.....	1. 2. 3.	3.	1. 2.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Garmisch-Partenkirchen from	Passion Play trains take passengers only for Oberammergau.					
Oberau ..... to / from						
Murnau ..... to						
Oberammergau ..... from	9^{15}	6^{20}	6^{35}	6^{49}	7^{32}	8^{06}
Bad Kohlgrub .... to						
Murnau ..... to	10^{05}	7^{10}	7^{25}	7^{39}	8^{22}	8^{56}
Murnau ..... from	10^{14}	7^{20}	7^{34}	7^{46}	8^{32}	9^{06}
Uffing ..... to		On schedule	On schedule	On schedule	On schedule	Only on day
Huglfing ..... to						
Polling ..... to						
Weilheim ..... to	Day	7^{42}		8^{08}	8^{56}	
Augsburg ..... to	—	*9 46*	—	—	×*11 14*	—
Weilheim ..... from	10^{10}	7^{43}		8^{08}	8^{57}	of Performance.
Wilzhofen ..... to	after each Performance.	and extra Performance days.	and extra Performance days.	and extra Performance days.	and extra Performance days.	
Diemendorf ..... to		8^{03}		8^{28}	9^{17}	
Tutzing ..... to						
Feldafing ..... to					9^{33}	10^{09}
Possenhofen ..... to						
Starnberg ..... to					△ 9^{57}	
Mühlthal ..... to						
Gauting ..... to						
Planegg ..... to						
Pasing ..... from / to						
Munich Hbf. ..... to	11^{40}	8^{50}	8^{55}	9^{19}	10^{06}	10^{32}

Fares

one way.

	all trains		
	I	II	III
	Class		
	ℳ	ℳ	ℳ
Munich-Oberammergau	**9.40**	**6.20**	**4.10**
Munich-Oberau ♂	**8.60**	**5.60**	**3.50**
Munich-Garmisch-Partenkirchen	**9.20**	**6.—**	**3.80**

Government motor post: ♂ **Oberau — Oberammergau ℳ 1.10.**

Murnau—Munich.

Starnberger Bahnhof.

Daily trains from Oberammergau

1364	1378	1366	1368	138	1370	1372	1376	1374	1380	1382
O	F	O	O	E	O	O	F	O	D	D
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	2. 3.	2. 3.
5 30	7 57	—	11 25	1 35	2 58	5 12	7 20	7 45	—	9 13
5 45	8 10	—	11 39	1 46	3 12	5 26	7 31	7 59	—	9 25
5 47	8 11	—	11 41	1 46	3 14	5 28	7 32	8 01	9 00	9 26
6 25	8 44	┐	12 19	2 13	3 53	6 05	8 01	8 39	9 30	10 00
5 18	7 17	|	10 36	12 44	2 30	4 52	7 00	7 39	|	8 50
5 47	7 45	|	11 05	1 14	2 59	5 27	7 30	8 08	|	9 19
6 20	8 17	↓	11 46	1 47	3 32	5 59	8 02	8 40	|	9 51
6 35	8 52	9 00	12 29	2 20	4 02	6 16	8 10	8 49	9 36	10 08
6 42	|	9 07	12 36	|	4 09	6 23	|	8 56	|	|
6 52	|	9 18	12 47	|	4 20	6 34	|	9 07	|	|
6 59	|	9 25	12 55	|	4 28	6 43	|	9 15	|	|
7 06	9 14	9 32	1 02	From 2 43	4 35	6 50	8 34	9 22	9 58	10 30
—	*11 57*	—	—	*6 18*	o *8 00*	*10 43*	×*11 14*	—	—	—
7 15	9 15	9 42	1 12	2 44	4 45	7 00	8 36	9 23	9 59	10 31
7 24	|	9 51	1 21	|	4 54	7 09	|	9 42	|	|
7 37	|	10 04	1 35	|	5 08	7 23	|	9 56	|	|
7 43	9 34	10 10	1 41	3 02	5 15	7 30	8 55	10 03	10 22	10 55
7 57	|	10 25	1 56	|	5 31	7 46	9 05	10 18	10 33	11 06
8 02	|	10 30	2 02	|	5 37	7 51	9 10	10 23	10 38	11 11
8 09	9 50	10 37	2 10	|	5 45	7 58	9 16	10 30	10 44	11 17
8 20	|	10 50	2 23	|	6 00	8 11	|	10 42	|	|
|	|	10 57	2 30	|	6 08	8 18	|	10 49	|	|
|	|	11 04	2 37	|	6 16	8 25	|	10 56	|	|
|	|	11 13	2 46	|	6 26	8 34	|	11 05	|	|
|	|	11 15	2 48	|	6 28	8 36	|	11 07	|	△11 43
8 46	10 21	11 26	2 85	3 46	6 38	8 47	9 48	11 18	11 23	11 53

From June 1 daily.

holidays according to requirements.

Sundays and holidays.

July and August Sundays and holidays.

From May 15

Fares one way.

	fast or ord. trains		fast trains	ord. trains
	I	II	III	III
	Class			
	ℳ.	ℳ.	ℳ.	ℳ.
Munich-Oberammergau . . .	8.40	5.20	3.60	2.75
Munich-Oberau ♂	7.60	4.60	3.—	2.—
Munich-Garmisch-Partenkirch.	8.20	5.—	3.30	2.15

▼ Garmisch-Partenkirchen-Oberammergau ℳ 2.—(Express post ℳ 3.—)

Photograph by Lorenz Fränzl, Munich

Passion Play Theater — erected in 1900

Preface.

THIS little book is not intended in the strictest sense as a guide to Oberammergau, but rather as a sketch book of personal reminiscences for those English speaking visitors who may wish to see the Oberammergauer and his Passion Play with the interest of intimate acquaintance, thereby obtaining an insight into the actuating motives as well as immediate influences that are brought to bear on the sacred drama.

In a residence abroad of nearly twenty years, ten of which were spent in Munich, less than three hours from Oberammergau, the writer had the opportunity of often visiting this village of the Ammer. Not content with merely seeing its plays, which she witnessed many times, she finally went to live among its people.

Speaking their tongue, and understanding the dialect of the Bavarian Highlands, she did not come to them as a foreigner, but as one of them, between whom and herself there were no barriers of misunderstanding. Months at a time spent with the Oberammergauers in their own homes, where she shared their daily lives and personal interests, brought them to her in a very close relationship.

There was however a still closer bond. As the wife of an artist, the distinguished American painter, the late Samuel Richards, who had been a student for many years in the Royal Academy of Munich, their own Capital, she met them with a sympathetic appreciation of their artistic occupations and aspirations, and thus she came to see in the Oberammergauer the reflex of an artistic, as well as religious, soul. Her

view point, therefore, is taken from a personal acquaintance with the Oberammergauers, and an intimate knowledge of their lives, their work, and their ambitions.

For official information relative to the performances of 1910, grateful acknowledgements are hereby made to Bürgermeister Bauer and members of the town council, as well as those of the Passion Play Comittee, to whose records she was given access. For much of the historical data and various matters of personal interest, indebtedness is hereby recognized to Herr Ludwig Lang, the gifted artist, director of the wood carving school and of the Passion Play: to Herr Guido Lang, Postmaster, one of the worthy exponents of the intelligence, graciousness and culture in Oberammergau: to Frau Hermine Diemer and her valuable book on Oberammergau and Its Passion Play: lastly to the all inclusive number of personal friends, who have never failed to contribute to the comfort and delight of the writer in their Oberammergau homes, where she has been made to forget all the world outside.

Special indulgence is hereby asked of the reader for the incompleteness of this booklet, both as regards the literary and typographical shortcomings. Owing to the limited time allowed for its preparation, (it was written in Oberammergau during the six weeks previous to the opening of the Passion Play) together with the absence of a proof reader, these pages must of necessity be generously sprinkled with errors. In corresponding humility it is solicited that a not too critical judgment be meted out either to printer or writer.

Preface to second edition.

AN unexpected demand for the first edition of this little book is the excuse for its reappearance, in the same dress, and under the same cover design by our distinguished artist whose name alone has its note of interest to every American. A few additional illustrations have been added to the reproductions of official photographs and kodak views.

In conformity with the desire of many of my English speaking readers for a general plan of the Passion Play performance without the minutiae of detail, a more complete synopsis of the libretto has been incorporated in this edition.

It is hoped this will meet the demand of those who do not wish to lose sight of the stage itself while following the translation of a full text, whose words after all are not in the language spoken on the stage. The marvellous colour scheme, and the artistic design of the play, as it is unrolled in a succession of scenes and tableaux, do not allow of a moment's diversion from the stage, even to study the words of a text, without a sacrifice on the part of the spectator of much of the beauty of the performance.

Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Bird's eye view of Oberammergau.

Evolution of the Passion Play.

The Folk Drama in Bavaria.

PLAY acting is as old as humanity itself. Taking the part of some other being — either imaginary or real — *playing some one else,* is one of the first deliberate acts of childhood, even babyhood. The toddling tot of scarcely a year, who caresses her dolly as she rocks it to sleep, cooing and babbling to it in the tender, inarticulate language of babyhood, is but an infant actress, playing its first role. The tiny boy in dresses, who prances up and down the nursery astride a stick, is only another baby actor, while his little women sisters, in the sweeping gowns borrowed from the grown up's wardrobe, with long skirts tucked up in front out of the way of little feet, but left to train behind in the envied style of the *Grand Dame* in their play of *"come to see",* are but playing their first roles in the coming social drama.

The oft heard expression among children of *"let's pretend"* but voices the histrionic instinct latent in humanity, though it never be developed beyond the embryonic stage. While this *"let's pretend"* is common to childhood, simple play acting has been peculiar to many nations in the childhood of their development.

With some of the simple German folk, such as the Bavarian Highlander, and the Tyrolese peasant, even among the artisans of the village and the mechan-

ics of the shop, the enacting of plays — home made plays — has been for ages an integral part of their uneventful lives. The folk play, therefore, is not a mere incident, or accident, in the lives of people in certain districts. It is rather an evolutionary marking.

In the larger towns and cities it was the *Bürger,* or middle classes, with the members of the *Zünfte,* organizations which correspond to the trade guilds of England, who performed plays on the occasions of special festivities. These plays were usually written by some one of their own number, the material being taken either from Bible lore, or from some chapter of their own local history.

Thus the folk drama, together with religious plays, has been for centuries a feature of German civilization, while Bavaria, as a singular fact, has led all other countries in her long continued passion for dramatic representation. Not only in her villages and remote mountain districts, but in her Capital itself, have the Bavarians from the very beginning of their history been accustomed to their own drama and dramatic presentations.

After centuries there was introduced a new feature — a scenic one — on a gigantic scale in this play acting of Bavaria, when the festival play was inaugurated. The first of these festival plays, given in Munich in the year 1574, was the tragedy of Constantine, the early Christian Emperor.

This play lasted two whole days. As an instance of its magnitude it is enough to say that the wonderfully decorated stage was the entire city, and that over one thousand people took part as actors. From far and

near the people came in throngs to witness the great play; — not on a narrow stage, but through the city's own gates, to see the approach of the one who impersonated the victorious Emperor Constantine, as he sat in a real chariot drawn by four horses, and surrounded by four hundred knights in genuine glistening armor.

Two years later there was a similar presentation of the play of Esther in which two thousand actors took part. Of such proportions were the great open air dramas of the Bavarian Capital more than three hundred years ago, when the folk drama became merged into the festival play, which in turn was incorporated in the later Wagnerian productions.

This monomania for the dramatic has prevailed in *Baiernland* for nearly a thousand years, down to the so called *"theater madness"* of the late King Ludwig II, who in fact was Bavaria's greatest patron of dramatic art as well as of music. Even today there is perhaps no people in the world who hold the drama in such regard, and in whose lives it occupies such a place, as the Bavarian.

In Bavaria the theater is an educational power, and students regard the drama, as well as the opera a part of their curriculum of study. Among the most faithful attendants at the *Hof Theater* in Munich are the students of all institutions under government control — students of the University, of the Academy, of the Conservatorium, and pupils of the higher schools. Beside these are the cadets of the military schools, the army officers, and even the common soldiers who serve their two years in the city barracks. For

such are specially reserved places, and merely nominal prices — only eighty pfennige (20 cents).

Far removed though it be from metropolitan centers there is scarcely a village so small, or so hidden from highway travel, which is not found in summer by some of the many little wandering troups of actors who bring their modicum of delight to the play-loving Bavarian. Among the peasantry of the country, as well as in many a village community where modern progress has not been too insistent, plays are even yet written and performed by the villagers, the characters and scenes being historical or traditional.

In Rothenburg ob der Tauber, that charming medieval old town less than a day's journey from Munich, is given every year on the Monday following Whitsuntide the remarkable play of *Der Meister Trunk.* This play, founded on an episode in the medieval history of Rothenburg, and written in blank verse, had for its author a glazier, who died only two years ago. As the *Hans Sachs* of Rothenburg he divided his time between writing poetry of a no mean order, and putting in window glass where broken panes made it necessary.

Like many another of its type, this folk play is enacted by the whole town. The stage in a measure is the little city itself, while the actors include the entire adult population, and many of the children.

In the Middle Ages play-acting prevailed notably in the secluded monasteries of remote districts. Here the monks, with small opportunity for intellectual recreation, often wrote plays for themselves. The material for their plays they took from Holy Writ, and then dramatized the Biblical stories according to individual ability

and literary taste. These plays were not seldom written in imitation of the old Greek dramas, with which the classical studies of the monks had made them familiar.

They were enacted by the monks themselves in the churches, and in the churchyards connected with the monasteries. They usually took place on religious holidays, especially at Easter time, at Pentecost (Whit Sunday), and at Christmas-tide. According to an old German writer these plays at Easter — and even on Good Friday, the holiness of which did not prevent it being made a day of play-acting — were always an incomparable tit-bit for the dramatic hunger of the Bavarian („ein unvergleichlicher Leckerbissen für den Schauspielhunger der Bayern").

As far back as the IX century we read of Christmas plays, written in Latin and given at the Cathedral of Freising in Bavaria. These plays were of Herod and the Magi, while there were also presented such dramatic descriptions as the slaughter of the Innocents at Bethlehem; but of all the material which Biblical history affords, none presents such possibilities for dramatic rendition as the story of the Passion of our Lord.

Passion Plays thus became the most general form of the religious drama. The early Passion Plays were usually set to music. It has been said by certain authorities that the most beautiful things ever sung by travelling students *(„fahrende Schüler")* were some of these Passion Plays which were given in the XII century.

If we choose to go back still further into history, we learn that Bible Plays were known in England as early as the V century. These Mysteries and Miracle Plays were dramatic exhibitions of Scripture stories, or

of legends of saints. Then came Moralities in which virtues and vices were personified. Under the veil of allegorical abstractions real men later began to take a part, and the people found a new delight in the realistic representations of historical scenes.

The Anglo Saxon, however, has long since outgrown his primitive histrionic habits; he has become more advanced, and possibly less devout; he has grown more practical, and probably less idealistic. Not so with the German peasant, the denizen of the mountains, to whom the centuries bring comparatively little change in habits of life, dress, or thought.

In early and less progressive civilizations it was by means of dramatic representations, as well as through the medium of poetry, music and pictures, that religion and religious worship came to play by far the largest and most engrossing part of life. Even today, where simple people have not been bent, pruned, nor trained out of their natural direction, it is in religious forms and channels that ideality and artistic instinct often find expression. Religion and religious worship thus become the outlet for many an artistic soul that would otherwise be atrophied.

Is is the child with an artistic temperament who finds his supreme delight in religious ideas and fancies, and upon whose sensitized nerve films are constantly recorded pictures of the spirit world. It is this artistic child who conjures up angels, whose white wings seem always hovering near, as he dreams by day as well as by night of celestial wonders, while his imagination runs riot in the glories of a Heaven as real as the stars.

Grown up children of Nature are like children of the nursery; with them poetic fancy is stronger than reason, and imagination becomes a far more potent factor in life than all the realities of material existence. Mountaineers, who live close to Nature, and who have not been over-civilized — materialized — often instance in their non-complex make-ups the union of a religious ideality with a love of art, crude as this art may be, that is remarkable.

It is not surprising, therefore, that among some of the undisturbed folk of the Bavarian Alps, the common people should be given to religious plays, with the Passion Play as the acme of all other dramatic endeavour. Within the last hundred years these Passion Plays were given in sixty different localities of Bavaria, while a little more than a hundred years ago nearly every town and village of the land had its own Passion Play.

These plays, often commemorative of the passing of some great calamity, owe their origin — in part at least — to the beliefs of an age in which there was an unwavering faith in Divine intervention. People of the soil, especially those who dwelt in far away districts, sometimes lived so close to Nature and her inspirations, that they discerned spirits, good and evil, contending for rule in the world and in the heart of man, producing what we now call natural phenomena. For such as these there was no distinct borderland between the known and the unknown.

Living once in a Tyrolese village I was deeply impressed with this strange fact. For these peasants there were no mysteries, no impossibilities. Every natural phenomenon, every roll of thunder, every flash of light-

ning, was to them but an expression of Divine significance. They literally saw God in everything, and the connection between the material and the spirit world was too close to be broken, even by the extraordinary.

So it happened that when the village of Oberammergau, hidden away in the mountains of Bavaria, was once visited by a pestilence, nothing but the intervening hand of God Himself was deemed sufficient to stay its ravages. The story of this dread visitation of nearly three hundred years ago is quaintly told in an old chronicle, which was preserved in the village Rath Haus (town hall), in the archives of Oberammergau.

According to this document a pestilence had been raging in Europe, especially in Germany, in the year 1633. Up to the time of the *Kirchweih Fest*, one of the greatest celebrations of the year, the upper (Ober) village in the district (Gau) of the river Ammer had been spared the plague raging elsewhere, owing probably to its isolation in the mountains, which rise up on all sides, around holding it as in the hollow of an Almighty Hand.

A man named Caspar Shüsler (whose name has been faithfully handed down in the chronicle) had been at work all summer in the neighbouring village of Eschenlohe on the other side of the mountains. At the approach of this church festival he decided to break through the quarantine lines established by the Oberammergauers, and smuggle himself across the mountains to spend this Sunday with his family. He found his way over the hills, and down into the valley of the Ammer, but on Monday he was a corpse —

a victim of the plague which he had brought with him from over the mountains.

At once the terrible disease spread among the inhabitants, and raged with such violence that their very extinction was threatened. In their need and suffering the members of the village council met in solemn conclave, and as was their wont in great extremity, called upon God to turn away their affliction. They knew nothing of the measures of sanitary boards, nor of the precautions of health commissioners, and if they had, they would in all probability have preferred the more direct method of resorting to Divine intervention. This after all was quite the natural recourse, and to them far more comprehensible than would have been any rules for disinfection based on a microbe theory.

Besides, for these faith abiding people, there was no such thing as a doubtful miracle, nor an incredible manifestation of the power of Deity. In their appeal to the Almighty Father they made a promise — recorded a vow — that, should God spare them, and lift this curse from His people, in recognition of the Divine compassion, they would perform every ten years, as a memorial, the tragedy of the Passion of His Son. The records state, that from that hour not a single person more died of the plague, although several had upon them already "*das Pestzeichen*" (sign of the pest).

Unlike the fate of many a vow made in times of peril, this promise to God was not forgotten when the danger was passed, but the very next year saw the Passion Play performed for the first time *in accordance with the vow,* the Oberammergauers in all probability having long been accustomed to performances

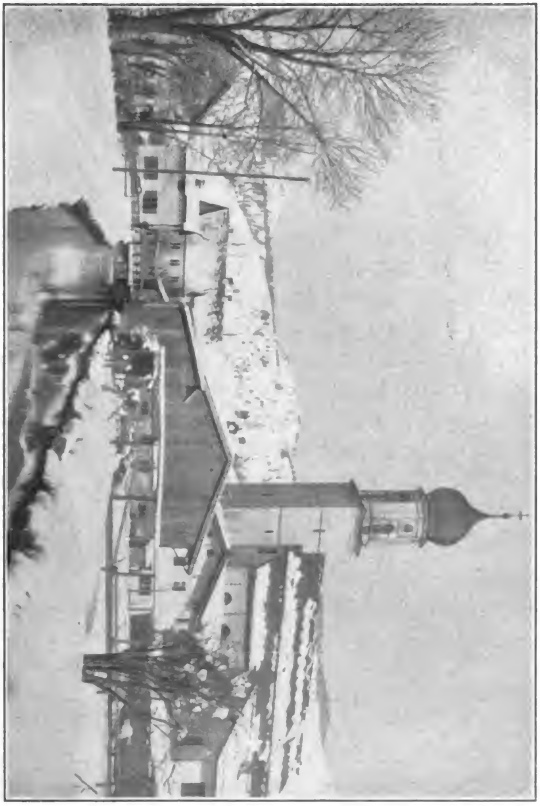
of the Passion Play, as were other villagers of this region. The keeping of this promise to God has been no easy matter, and many have been the difficulties to surmount, yet the determination of the people has never waned.

Beginning with 1634 the Play was performed every ten years up to 1674, when it was then put upon an even decennial basis beginning with 1680. From that time on, with but one omission brought about by a general edict against all religious plays, the Passion Play has been given with each recurring decennium, and will be given as long as Oberammergau has an existence, notwithstanding rumours to the contrary, spread abroad and encouraged every ten years by those outside who hope to profit materially by the pretence that each decennium will offer the last opportunity to witness the Divine Tragedy.

As to the obstacles that from time to time arose against the continued performances of the play, not the least had its origin from within. As with all good things after seasons of uninterrupted success, there gradually crept into these religious plays in the earlier days certain features which were inconsistent with their solemnity.

Allegorical figures, with most grotesque features, were often introduced which added more to the hilarity of the onlookers than to their edification. Satan himself was often characterized as a donkey, with long ears and a tail, and when this caricature was represented in a quarrel with the angels over the soul of Judas, the betrayer of his Master, in the vestibule of purgatory, then comedy took the place of religious drama.

It was when the clerical authorities forbade these representations in the churches and the church yards,



Village Church — in winter
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

that they were then transferred to the grassy plots outside the churchyard walls. That first crude Passion

Play of 1634 was thus given in Oberammergau, when the churchyard walls served as a foundation for the stage, which was built of rough hewn boards. In the shadow of the village church spire, with the mountains as a background, the Heavens as a cover, and the green sward outside as an auditorium, the audiences — even when there were no benches — did not weary of standing for hours, unabashed alike by sunshine or showers.

Nearly a hundred years had the Oberammergauers performed their decennial Play when there was an edict sent throughout the land forbidding henceforth all religious plays, and especially the Passion Play. It was the 31st of March 1770, the year of the recurring Passion Play in Oberammergau, and the preparations with the expenses incident thereto had been made. In a state of desperation the Oberammergauers began to plead their cause before the authorities, civil and religious, but their begging was to no purpose. They were obliged to bow their heads in humble submission, and for the first time their vow was unfulfilled.

Not to be disheartened, however, they continued their prayers for recognition at the Capital. After ten years of petitioning, and finally placing a new text of their Play before the Ducal authorities in Munich, the Oberammergauers were granted a special privilege by Karl Theodore, the reigning Duke of Bavaria. With a joy that can only be imagined they resumed their performances of the Passion Play in 1780.

After the decennial presentation of the Passion Play in 1800 a second mandate was issued forbidding all religious plays under the penalty of arrest and a fine of

thirty *Reichsthalern,* recalling the special *Privilegium* previously granted the Oberammergauers. Again were they in a state of consternation, for there was not only a play called School of the Cross to be given up, but their Passion Play, whose presentation every ten years they had so solemnly promised in an irrevocable vow.

Besides, for these Oberammergauers, with their village on the then boundary line of Bavaria and Austria, whose wars, together with the invasions of Napoleon I, had brought suffering, poverty and distress alternately from first one then the other, until oftentimes they had actually been reduced to eating the roots of grass to save them from starving, the Passion Play had become more or less a last hope of existence.

It was only by reason of their persistent and tireless efforts through the leader of their deputation George Lang, (great grandfather of Guido Lang, the head of the wood carving industry in Oberammergau) who literally laid siege to the church and state authorities in Munich, that there was finally obtained the exceptional grant of continuing their Play henceforth uninterruptedly. Thus once more were the Oberammergauers made a favoured people.

The texts of their plays were again revised by a certain Pater Ottmar Weiss, a brother in the neighbouring Monastery of Ettal, who cut out all the allegorical figures, which had occasioned so much abuse, introducing in their place scenes from the Old Testament which foretold the life and character of Christ. This text, with many of the earlier ones, is fortunately still in existence.

Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich.

Monastery of Ettal

After half a century another revision of the Passion Play text was held advisable, not only by the government authorities, but by the community of Oberammergau. In the meantime Alois Daisenberger, a pupil of Pater Weiss, had become the pastoral shepherd of the flock in Oberammergau. To him came the request from Munich that he take upon himself this task. He consented, asking for two years time in which to complete the work.

It was this man of extraordinary ability, even genius, who revised for the last time the old manuscript of the Passion Play, which has been used since 1850, but never published until 1900. Thus it was that Father Daisenberger came to be the dramatic as well as the spiritual head of his people. For them he wrote many a secular play, as well as religious drama, to be performed in their winter evenings and on their fest days. Being a profound student and lover of the classics, he even translated for them from the original Greek the drama of Antigone, that they might have a classical play in their own tongue.

Of all their pastors, Father Daisenberger, a man of remarkable gifts and a sympathetic appreciation of the aspirations of his people, with whom he kept in the closest touch, was their best beloved, and most revered. This man's unusual intellect, his heart, his life, were given the people he loved so well — a love, which cost him the refusal of many a high honour, even a bishop's chair.

To his devoted Oberammergauers, with whose affection and undying reverence he was richly rewarded, Father Daisenberger was spared to a ripe old age,

when in 1883 he went down to his grave mourned and beloved in such a manner as falls to the lot of few mortals.

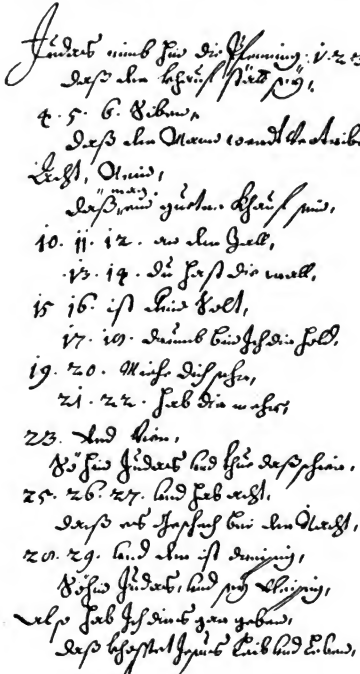
He too loved their Passion Play with an intensity that would not let him rest, and in 1880 he had appeared before the village council with an entire

Daisenberger Strasse
Home of Father Daisenberger on right, in house of his nephew Sebastian Lang
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

revision of the text in blank verse, which, however, the Oberammergauers did not dare attempt to produce, on account of the technical difficulties for those who were so long accustomed to the prose of the old Play, and whose memories might not be relied upon in a poetic version.

As to the original manuscript of the Oberammergau Passion Play, that in all probability was compiled from the various texts existing in neighbouring monasteries, from time to time revised by different fathers, notably those of Ettal, three miles distant, a monastery by the way which has always been an integral part of the history of Oberammergau.

In the possession of Herr Guido Lang there is the oldest Oberammergau manuscript in existence dating



back to the year 1662, twenty eight years after the first memorial Passion Play. A note at the end on the last page, stating that this manuscript *"is again revised and re-written in the year after the glorious birth of Christ, 1662" (ist wiederumben Renoviert vnd beschriben worden, im Jahr nach der Gnadenreichen Geburtt Christi 1662),* shows that there was at least one other manuscript that possibly antedated that first performance of the Passion Play in 1634.

This is one of the many interesting manuscripts from the house of Guido Lang, where there is a remarkable collection of old Biblical dramas and rosary plays; also of the early texts of the Passion Play, which represent an almost unbroken series. This text of 1662 in old German, edited by Georg Query, has just been given out by Herr Guido Lang in a charming edition, which cannot fail to be of interest to those who would delve into the literature of ancient Passion Plays.

Lang House

A Modern Pilgrimage.

WHEN I saw the Passion Play the first time it was in 1890. I was at once possessed with a consuming desire to get behind the scenes, to see the spiritual as well as material machinery of this unique performance. In fact, like the Oberammergauer of old I too registered a vow, that if in another ten years I were on this side of the water I should come and dwell among these people, take up my abode with them, and learn to know them from the inside as well as outside.

This privilege was to be mine, and ten years later found me again on the way to this obscure village of the Ammer, to a spot that becomes once in every decade the shrine of a burning, world wide interest, unequalled in modern times: again in Munich, King Ludwig's Capital, that he fain would have made the center of the music and dramatic world; again passing Lake Starnberg, whose waters closed over the body of this unhappy king, and never told that which he would not have the world know; again at Murnau, the little village with its tiny picturesque lake, where the new electric road begins, leading up into the mountains and to the valley of the Ammer; and again nearing the home of the Passion Play in a pilgrimage that leads up to this new Gethsemane.

Filled with vague wonderings as to what experiences might await me in this other world of Biblical

story, I found myself gradually attuned on the way "*up to Jerusalem*" by the peaceful suggestiveness of the country around. Along the new railway beautiful vistas were revealed as the clouds rolled away from the mountain tops, sweeping down their rugged sides.

The Kofel in winter
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

Bordering the route there stood, like posted sentinels, many a beautiful mountain ash tree, upon whose branches hung thick clusters of scarlet berries. Like great globules of blood they hung, as though Nature herself were joining in the rememberance of Calvary.

As we climbed up to the narrow plateau, where the village lies almost encircled by its mountains walls,

a strange and solemn sight met our wondering gaze. From the summit of the highest mountain peak, the Kofel, and outlined against the sky, stood a cross. With a feeling akin to awe I gazed upon this emblem of the Passion raised there on high, pointing to Heaven as though to draw all men unto Him for whom this sacred sign stands.

Reaching the station I was still further inpressed with the strangeness of environment, for standing about, waiting to conduct guests to their own homes, were the men of Oberammergau — men whose long flowing hair, falling over their shoulders, suggested the pictures seen in churches and in old Bible illustrations.

At each step through the village the strange feeling of having been suddenly transported back to Biblical times was intensified, for at every turn there were men and boys whose long waving locks, parted over serious brows, portrayed in living pictures the children of ancient Judea.

It was almost impossible to shake off the belief that one had set foot on Holy ground as the newly arrived visitors were assigned to the homes of Peter and of John, to the house of Annas or of Caiphas, to the home of Mary and of Magdalene, and to the house of Pilate and of Herod, for during the Passion season as it is called, family names are completely laid aside for those of the casts in the Play.

In the narrow winding streets that are puzzling as a riddle, no two of which I have ever yet found running in the same direction, there surged a strange medley of people, and there was a Babel of tongues that brought to mind that old tower of confusion. It

was Saturday, and train after train, all day long had been unloading people from all the ends of the earth, until the little village was teeming with an indiscriminate throng of nationalities.

Priests and prelates, bishops and deacons, with ecclesiastics of all cuts of dress and shades of doctrine, mingled with Jew and Gentile, scholar and sceptic, and all the ranks and all the cranks of the world outside. From the humblest peasant of the surrounding country, who in days gone by was accustomed to make of this journey to the Passion Play a sacred pilgrimage, with the village church as the last station, to the highest dignitary of state, together with many a crowned head, — all had been brought here by one common desire, meeting on one common ground, to witness the scenes of Golgotha.

Among the celebrities who, previous to 1910, had visited Oberammergau were first of all the five kings of Bavaria, which constitute the entire list since it has become a kingdom; then the King and Queen of Saxony, the Dowager Queen Margarita of Italy, Queen Isabella of Spain, Crown Princess Stefanie of Austria, a number of the Grand Dukes of Russia, the Prince of Monaco, Crown Prince of Roumania, Emperor Friedrich Wilhelm as Crown Prince of Germany, King Edward as Prince of Wales, the Maharajah of Johore, beside Richard Wagner, and no less a personage than the female anarchist Louise Michel.

Wandering through the great conglomerate of humanity that clogged the crooked streets of the little village, all intent on the Oberammergauer and his coming play, I was startled by the firing of a cannon at the foot

of the Kofel, the mountain upon which stands the cross. A second firing, and a band of musicians preceded by the fire brigade — the only organization as I learned afterward that could make a display in uniform — commenced its march through the streets, proceeding to the theater building, disbanding on return at the Kofel.

A company of little boys preceded this band, beating at intervals the muster role on their tenor drums. An unusual sight they were as they stretched their little legs to accommodate them to the stride of their elders, while long soft locks were fanned back from fair brows.

Their little faces bore not a trace of careless boyhood, not even youthful exhuberance, but were stamped with an earnestness far beyond their years. Then I remembered that the one hope in the heart of each of these little boys was that some day its possessor might be found worthy the role of the Christus, than which for an Oberammergauer there is no higher ambition, no greater honour.

This was the prelude of the Play on the morrow, at the thought of which a strained expectancy was imprinted on many a face. A certain hush was in the very air, for this was the eve of the Sunday on which was to be presented the Passion of our Lord, and the most worldly could scarce escape the spell that now hung over this mountain village.

On this eve of the Passion Play all night long the streets resounded with the echo of voices, and the hurrying of belated travellers, seeking somewhere to lay their heads in this overcrowded village, whose every nook and corner, loft and stable were already

filled to overflowing with those who had come days before.

More than once had it happened that a royal head had slept without a pillow, or not slept at all, as was instanced in the year 1880, when the Duke of Alençon and his brother, the Prince of Brazil, had to spend the night in their travelling carriage, and that too in a down pour of rain.

Herr Guido Lang told me of a Russian Duke, who came to him one night of that same year, asking for lodging, however primitive it might be. Herr Lang explained that he himself was sleeping in the attic on a sack of straw, when the Duke exclaimed:

"Then give me a straw sack beside you. Many a time during the army maneuvers in Russia have I slept on straw, out in the open fields, and I certainly can do it again"; and so the postmaster of Oberammergau had a royal bed-fellow under his roof, though at the top of the house.

One night, in a pouring rain, a party of Americans arrived at the home of the postmaster. As they entered the house they cried out:

"We are here, and we are here to stay."

They would listen to no protest that the house was full, but opening a door leading from the room where they had encamped themselves, they discovered a little unfurnished room, when they exclaimed:

"Here is a place, and we can all sleep in here".

Every week in fact in 1900 found women begging to lie on the floor of dining rooms, while men were offering a price for the privilege of resting on chairs or sleeping in a hay mow.

Father Schroeder, the priest of Oberammergau, told me later, that in that same season a little man appeared at the parish house, introducing himself as the Bishop of New Zealand. When he was told with apologies that he could not be accommodated with anything more than a mattress on the floor, he laughingly replied:

"That's all right, I am accustomed to that at home."

An Englishman, however, kindly gave up his own bed to the Bishop, spending the night himself on a hard chair.

That first night in Oberammergau is one to be remembered. It is as though the world has suddenly emptied itself here, where there is no abiding place. Oft until the small hours of the morning the narrow streets resound with the tramp of feet, and the anxious inquiries of the night. These sounds have hardly died away when the deep toned bells from the church tower ring out the five o'clock call to morning prayer.

From this time on until nearly eight the beautiful village church is filled from altar to choir with a worshipping congregation. On bended knees, with uplifted hands, the assembled actors of the great tragedy are praying for the blessing of God upon themselves and the play about to begin, and which is to fill this Sabbath day.

Here are the Mary and the Magdalene, Peter and John, with the rest of the twelve, even Annas and Caiaphas, and all the members of the Sanhedrim. Looking over this silent company, seeking out the one central figure of the Passion Play, one may see, kneeling in an obscure corner, the sad faced Christus, utterly absorbed in his prayer to the Father and the Son, whose

presence he invokes, as he is about to personify His humanity.

Thus dawns that Sunday morning in Oberammergau, and thus are taken the first steps toward

A coming Oberammergau actor, with the passing ones in the background, waiting their turn on the Passion Play stage.
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

the enactment of a sacred drama that has outlived the centuries, and been perpetuated by one of the most unique communities in the civilized world.

The Passion Play

A Synopsis with Running Commentary.

THE boom of a cannon at a quarter to eight announces the approach of the hour for the assembling of the spectators in the great auditorium of the new theater. By eight o'clock every seat is filled, and four thousand people are hushed by a strange solemnity. A seriousness akin to awe overspreads that vast assemblage as it awaits the opening scenes of a drama which has drawn people from beyond seas and across continents.

Through the end of the vast building, open from the floor to the top of the high arched roof, is seen the great stage outside. Except for the temple-like structure in the center, the stage itself is uncovered. The sky alone is its canopy, while the sloping hills beyond form the background.

In front of the temple hangs a great curtain, upon which are painted in monochrome the statuesque figures of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Moses of Michael Angelo. Upon this drop curtain we have one of the first reminders of the artistic trend of the Oberammergauer, in that nothing less than the reproductions of these master pieces greet the spectators of his Passion Play.

Could we but glance behind this curtain a strange scene would meet our gaze — a scene such as perhaps never elsewhere has ushered in a play upon a stage. Here, behind that lowered screen, grouped about their director, or the village priest, the hun-

Stage of Theater

dreds of performers are softly repeating a prayer — the prayer formulated by the Son in the words of "Our Father".

Though unseen, unheard, by that great audience, its solemnity seems to penetrate that curtain, and settle down upon the waiting, expectant ones outside. Then upon the ear break the sounds of the overture, as they roll up from the orchestra, hidden from view in the sunken pit before the stage. These notes have not yet died away when, through the colonnades at either end of the proscenium, there appears the chorus, coming before us in the form and garb of the classical chorus on the ancient Greek stage.

With solemn mien and measured tread the long line of monumental figures gravely files down through the arcades, and across the stage, meeting with the Prologue in the center.

At the left of this stately figure, with his golden scepter surmounted by a cross, stands the Choragus, or leader of the chorus, who now intones and sings the

Prelude.

In this introduction of the Sacred Drama he calls upon the race of man to bow down in adoration and "holy wonder" before the Eternal One.

As the curtain of the temple in the center of the stage now parts for the first time, there is disclosed, a wonderful

Tableau

The Banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

As we gaze upon this beautiful picture of living

Official Photograph 1910 Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Leader of the Chorus, Jakob Rutz

figures the chorus in the proscenium sings of humanity banished from Eden's joys, and of the peace of the world that comes from Calvary's height. This is followed by the strong, well modulated voice of the

Prologue.

A greeting to all those who, from far and near, have come here today to follow the Saviour on His last journey of suffering, is concluded with a call upon the spectators to "Pray—pray with us as the hour draws near when we pay the debt of our sacred vow to the Eternal".

Then follows another

Tableau

The Adoration of the Cross.

Two figures in sweeping draperies are clinging to a dark rude cross. Young girls and little children, exquisitely posed, are kneeling in groups on either side. With beautiful faces gazing upward to the lifted tree, and little hands clasped in rapt devotion, we have an ideal representation of the remedy for humanity's evil.

The chorus, which has fallen back in a divided semi-circle, now sinks to its knees, or bows the body in various attitudes of devotion. Softly, reverently a prayer is sung, a prayer of gratitude in the hearts of these God's stammering children for His mercy and deliverance from death in the bygone days of dire extremity — those days that were overshadowed by plague and pestilence, the freedom from which is this day commemorated in the Passion Play.

Official Photograph 1910. Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Prologue Anton Lechner

This prayer is then supplemented with an appeal for His presence with them today in fulfilling that vow made centuries ago as they now attempt to follow the sacrificed Son along His thorny way. Such is the opening of the Passion Play.

PART I.

FROM JESUS'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM TO HIS ARREST IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

First Act.

The entrance into Jerusalem amid the shouts and joyful acclamations of the people — Casting the money changers, buyers and sellers out of the temple — The return to Bethany.

SCENE I.

Jesus rides into the City amidst the songs and hosannas of a multitude.

The exquisite rhythm of the prayer, breathed in tones of subdued melody, has scarcely died away, and the majestic chorus has hardly left the proscenium, when in the distance is heard a strange clamour. With the sound of singing voices, there mingles from a multitude just coming into view the cries of Hosanna! Gradually these shouts of joy become blended into a simple, chant-like hymn of praise, when the curtain in the center of the stage parts upon the opening scene which is nothing short of marvellous.

Pouring in from all directions through the streets of Jerusalem, a dense mass of people in all the won-

derful colourings, and picturesqueness of Oriental dress, is filling temple and stage. Stretching itself across the broad proscenium, pressing in under the colonnades and up over the porches and porticoes of the palaces on either side, everything is overspread with the rich warm glow of Eastern life.

A throng of men, women and children, amounting to five hundred people, singing, chanting, and waving branches of palm, and glancing backward in the direction from which they have come, at last, proclaim the approach of him who is the object of this manifestation. Then bursts from every throat the shout:

"All Hail to Thee, Thou Son of David!"

As the throng now parts itself, the people are seen spreading palm branches in the way. Looking far down the road way there appears in the distance the slight form of the youthful John, the beloved disciple. He is leading a small donkey — the "*foal of an ass*".

Upon this humble beast is seated a figure, at sight of which many a pulse throb of spectator is quickened, many a breath comes short and stifled. A sudden hush, a solemn stillness pervades that vast audience. In a silence that is felt, the form and face of the Christ, made familiar through painting and sculpture, and one which we seem to have known always, now appears before us a living, breathing reality.

There is the same long waving hair of light brown parted over a fair brow, the same finely chiselled features, the same delicate, sensitive mouth, with deep blue eyes of a compassionate tenderness, and a countenance of unutterable sadness — all this is here before us in the striking figure that embodies the human

Jesus, to whose personality our minds and thoughts have become accustomed by both art and tradition.

The strange, intangible beauty of this face, the gentle dignity, and the light of an ennobled nature within, such as is reflected on the countenance of this Oberammergau son, one seldom if ever meets with in ordinary creatures. A counterpart may possibly be found in the paintings of some of the old Masters, yet as often as we have looked upon the pictures of Jesus, as much as we have read of, and heard dissertations upon the life of the Son of Man, nothing before has ever brought to our minds His personality with even an approach to the vividness of this living representation.

At first thought of seeing this impessonation, one is fairly chilled by a sense of dread at what it seems after all can be little short of mockery — the impiety of a human creature daring to represent the Son of God! — forgeting that the Christ in drama may be no more a sacriligeous representation, no less an artistic conception, than the Christ in painting, or the Christ in sculpture.

Insensibly, however, one soon finds himself in such sympathy with this impersonation, which so completely typifies the ideal of the human, loving, gentle Christ, that scruples gradually give way to a sense of wonder and admiration.

Jesus is led through the parting multitude, followed by his disciples, each carrying the long staff of a shepherd, and each wearing a simple garb, which contrasts strikingly with all the brilliancy of the throngs in these streets of Jerusalem. Gently the Master slips from the back of the donkey to the ground,

where the people are bending in homage before him, and with his hands outstretched in blessing them, he

Official Photograph 1910

The Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem

now stands before the multitude, with the strange calm of one who is not of this world.

The fair face, stamped with a heavenly mission (and such Anton Lang believes his to be) now uplifted as in a prophetic vision, brings to mind the face of the Child Christ of Guido Reni. The features of the child seem only veiled by the earnestness of the man.

This wonderful Oriental scene in the city of Jerusalem, with its moving, ever shifting forms of gorgeous hue, with the branches of green palm waving over the heads of the people, and in the midst of it all the ideal figure of the Christ — this has woven a kind of spell over that entire audience. With these artistic groupings which are continually changing and unfolding, and these masses of glowing colour blending into a harmonious whole, the composition of a picture is spread out before us that would challenge the brush and test the palette of the greatest master.

He who can look on unmoved upon this *Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem* may have had the emotional element left out of his character entirely (and consequently been robbed at his very birth of much of the joy of living) but no one with a single artistic chord in his being can escape its quivering in responsive appreciation.

By my side one day there sat an artist, whose name is known throughout the art world, and whose genius, together with his keen artistic feeling, has made him one of our own celebrities.* This man, who had at first hesitated to see this play, lest his artistic conceptions be offended, and his ideals of the story of the Christ be shattered, now sat as one in a dream.

* Carl von Marr, now Professor in the Royal Academy of Munich, whose cover design by special favour adorns this little book.

Official Photograph 1910.

Jesus and the Apostles

Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Transfixed with astonishment, fascinated by the wondrous scene before him, every fiber of his being was tingling in response to its beauty. Oblivious to all else about him, he whispered to himself, rather than to me:

"Marvellous! Incomprehensible!"

The wealth of colour, the infinite variety of costume, without a single repetition in material or design, the striking contrasts, and yet exquisite harmonies, with the setting of the whole in the landscape of old Judea — all this betrayed the hand of a master, a genius.

"Could this be an Oberammergauer?" my artist friend questioned.

"No, impossible!" he whispered; and yet it was an Oberammergauer, a wood carver like the rest, who having planned and executed every detail, was then behind the scenes, managing, directing all with the firm hand, and iron will of a master mind. It was none other than Ludwig Lang, director of the Oberammergau Wood Carving School, who had designed every one of these five hundred costumes, and it was his sister Josepha, who from her brother's drawings had cut them out from stuffs direct from the Orient to be made by the fingers of Oberammergau women.

SCENE II.

Christ in the temple; dealers, priests aud pharisees.

The temple is thronged with money changers and market dealers, with their sheep and doves exposed for sale for the coming sacrificial Passover. Turning from the people in the streets to this church bazaar in the temple, Jesus suddenly appears in the midst of the market sellers. Until now he has not

spoken, but here, in a voice full of indignation he cries: "What see I here? So is my Father's House dishonoured? Is this God's House, or is it a market-place? And you, priests and guardians of the holies, you see this rabble and allow it?"

To this the priests and dealers break out in resentful remostrances when Jesus exclaims in the familiar words of the Bible: "My house, saith the Lord, shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves!"

With the overturning of the tables of money changers, and the cages of doves, which follow these words, there is afforded a pleasing example of the realism which marks this entire representation. As the birds are set at liberty, they mount upward toward the blue sky, taking their flight right over the heads of actors and spectators.

Thus begins the Passion Play, with Jesus at Jerusalem, where he has gone to spend the last week of His life, the Passion Week, and which he begins by taking a stand against the traffic which dishonoured the consecrated temple of the Father.

SCENE III.

Priests call upon the people to hold to their fathers — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — upon all others be the curse of Moses.

SCENE IV.

Temple dealers, priests and Pharisees join in a cry for revenge. Nathaniel proposes to bring complaint before the Sanhedrin against this man of false doctrine who must perish.

Second Act.

The Plot of the High Council.

Prologue.

The Choragus declaims of arrogant human might striving against our Lord, introducing, the

Tableau.

Sons of Jacob conspiring against Joseph.

This is followed by the chorus singing of that ancient conspiracy against a dreamer, which now is about to be re-enacted by those who cry for the blood and death of Jesus.

SCENE I.

The High Priests und Scribes take counsel together how they are to get Jesus into their power.

The members of the great Jewish Council, the Sanhedrin, have assembled to deliberate, and take action in the matter of this Galilean, whose unheralded appearance in the temple, as well as teachings to his followers, threaten not only the religion of their fathers, but the stability of the whole Jewish nation, whose political situation is already most critical.

In this bitter council no voice of the actors is assumed, no individualities masked. The strong voices of the younger rabbis and scribes, raised in angry denunciation, and the quaking voices of the elders, one of whom in 1900 was in reality nearly ninety, pitched to the highest keys of menace and excitement, are their own perfectly natural expression.

The Oberammergauer may not be an actor in the

critical sense of the world, but he possesses the faculty of feeling and thinking his part (possibly a species of auto-suggestion) and for the time is capable of merging his identity into his role to the point of absolute self effacement. He only intensifies his own individuality by giving full rein to his emotions while he thinks, lives for the time in the character he impersonates.

In this open air, daylight theater there are none of the conventional artificialities of the foot lights, no accessories except those of costume. These actors are no made up characters with wigs, false beards, and wrinkles made by cosmetics; not even paint or powder is to be found on the face of a single performer, man or woman.

"What a pity" says my artist friend, "that the world does not know there is infinitely more charm in this natural representation in the broad light of day, than in all the stage trickery of a modern theater".

SCENE II.

Caiaphas exorts his followers to be of good courage; that Moses watches over them, while their fathers look down from Abraham's bosom.

SCENE III.

Temple dealers and traders demand satisfaction for the loss of their goods in the temple, and the insult from the Nazarene.

SCENE IV.

Annas and Caiaphas promise victory over the Galilean, and all join in praise to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Third Act.

The parting of Jesus with His Mother at Bethany.

Prologue.

In anticipation of the next tableaux *(The young Tobias taking leave of his parents, and The Lamenting Bride)* the prologue explains these types as referring to the farewell of Jesus to His Mother. "Even so wept the mother of the Son of God when she beheld Him going to His fate, to expiate by His death the sins of mankind.

First tableau.

The Departure from home of Tobias.

The chorus sings of the bitter grief of an agonized mother's heart.

Prologue.

The weeping bride of Solomon's Song suggestive of the *„pain in the soul of Mary, whose heart is pierced as with a sword".*

Second tableau.

The lamenting bride of the canticles with eight daughters of Jerusalem.

Accompanying this tableau, one of the best voices among the female members of the chorus sings the solo, Where art Thou O my Beloved, one of the most beautiful as well as difficult passages in the whole play.

SCENE I.

Jesus and the disciples at Bethany.

Jesus suggests to His disciples a last visit to their friends in Bethany telling them "the hour has come when the Son of Man shall be glorified."

Official Photograph 1910 Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Jesus with Simon of Bethany and Lazarus — Thomas Rendl and Richard Lang.

SCENE II.

In the house of Simon, where Jesus is met by Lazarus, who embraces him with grateful joy.

SCENE III.

The Guest Chamber of Simon.

Mary Magdalene anoints the head and feet of Jesus. Judas's remonstrance.

In the life of Jesus some of the minor incidents are beautifully brought out, and so simply, so naturally as to disarm all criticism. The instance of Mary Magdalene with the alabaster box of precious ointment, which, as she kneels before her Master, she pours out over his feet, is one of the most beautiful. As she bends over them, her long, golden brown hair falling down like a veil, she gently, lovingly wipes them with her own tresses.

As Judas remonstrates at this waste of money which might have been better spent, we have the familiar reply of Jesus: "The poor ye have always with you, but Me ye have not always".

SCENE IV.

Jesus takes leave of his friends.
A farewell to Bethany.

SCENE V.

Jesus's parting with His Mother.

Jesus is just leaving the house of Simon, when he is met by a little group of women, one of whom presses forward to meet him, telling him, her "beloved son", that she has come up from Bethany with these friends to see him just once more before he sets out on his last journey up to Jerusalem.

Nothing could be more touching than this last interview between mother and son. As he tries to prepare her for his tragic death, which she begs to be allowed

Jesus and Mary Magdalene

to share, there flows many a mother's tear from blinded eyes among the spectators, while the stillness of the grave has settled down over that vast audience.

Wonderfully pictured is this struggle between hu-

man affection and Divine resignation, in which after a supreme effort the Son seems to rise above the earthly in the triumph of the God-man. As Jesus finally moves away, his last glance resting with unutterable tenderness on the fainting mother, sobs only half suppressed well up from stricken hearts in the great company of spectators. At my side one day was faintly whispered:

"If I could believe in reincarnation, I should say that the Christ had come back to earth, and was again in the flesh and body of this man before us."

Fourth Act.

The last Journey into Jerusalem.

Prologue.

With Jerusalem proving blind and deaf, and rejecting the Hand of the Great Deliverer, causing the Lord to give her up to her own destruction, the Prologue instances here a comparison with the angry King who banished the proud Queen Vashti, and chose a nobler woman to be his bride. Thus is foreshadowed the rejection of the Synagogue, while God's kingdom is given to another people.

Tableau.

King Ahasuerus rejects the proud Vashti, and exalts Esther as Queen.

The Chorus, alternating with the Choragus, calls upon Jerusalem to awake and "Return thee to thy God". The beautiful chorus ends with the warning that the day of grace is passed:

"And as I live", so spake the Lord,
"A people who will walk aright
I chose, and will with them unite,
As Ahasuerus Esther wed."

Official Photograph 1910.
Jesus's Meeting with His Mother as she comes up from Bethany with her friends

SCENE I.

Jesus and His Disciples on their way up to Jerusalem. Jesus weeps over the city. Sends Peter and John to go on before and prepare the Passover meal.

SCENE II.

Jesus asks the other disciples to attend Him for the last time to His Father's House.

Judas remonstrates against the Master leaving them unprovided for, and with only an empty purse.

SCENE III.

Jesus and the Disciples having gone on, Judas remains behind, taking counsel with himself as to whether it be advisable to remain with a leader whose prospects promise nothing but poverty and want. *Tired of believing and hoping,* he decides he will save something for himself, and quit Him who had raised hopes of the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, but now speaks only of shame and death.

SCENE IV.

Judas. The temple trader Dathan.

Speculating on the disaffection of Judas, Dathan wins his confidence, obtaining from Judas the confession that he has decided to forsake Jesus, as he has nothing but an empty bag.

SCENE V.

Dathan's comrades steal in.

Though Judas is at first startled at their presence, he is gradually won over to a promise that he will

tell them the nightly resort of this Jesus, for which he is offered a fine reward, and prospects of rich emoluments from the High Council.

One of the most significant passages in the Play is this meeting of Judas with the one who tempts him to the betrayal of his Master. To the alluring propositon of the Sanhedrin's envoy, Judas's weak nature readily responds, yet not without the hesitation of one who has known the good.

SCENE VI.

Judas alone. — The word is given.

Fine is this monologue of Judas, as, left alone he weighs all the considerations for and against the proposed betrayal, balancing the risks with the probable advantages to himself, and then planning his retreat in case of danger. In this play of conflicting emotions we realize that we have before us the one consummate actor of the Passion Play — an actor whose talents might command recognition on any stage.

On the day this Johann Zwinck is to appear as Judas he does not wish to be spoken to, not even behind the scenes on the stage.

"It makes me angry" he told me, "for it brings me out of my role. I must *think* Judas, *feel* Judas, all day long in order to *act* Judas."

It is just this *thinking,* this *feeling* his role, that is the key note to the Oberammergauer's acting, and to the success of the Passion Play.

SCENE VII.

A street with a well. — John, Peter, Baruch, Markus.

Peter and John follow into the house the man with the water pitcher, which is the sign given them by the Master.

The connecting link between Old Testament prophecy, and its fulfilment in the New Testament story of the Christ, is fitly presented in the twenty six tableaux which precede the scenes. These tableaux illustrating stories of old Jewish history, foreshadow the particular incidents in the life and Passion of our Lord that are unrolled as the Play progresses.

Among the most remarkable of these tableaux are the two ushering in the scene of the Last Supper. The Prologue first introduces the scene by announcing the new manna, the bread of Heaven, which Jesus is about to offer as the Eucharistic Sacrament. As the curtain is then parted there is disclosed the

First Tableau.

The Rain of Manna in the Wilderness.

This is immediately followed by

Second Tableau.

The Grapes from the Land of Canaan,

while the Chorus sings of the bread and wine of the New Covenant.

These tableaux, consisting of hundreds of figures in the most exquisite combinations and harmonies, are arranged with an appreciation of the aesthetic in pose as well as colour, and throughout all a knowledge of composition that is phenomenal. Here is the unmistaka-

Official Photograph 1910. Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Peter and John — Andreas Lang and Alfred Bierling

ble hand of a genius, imbued with an inherited love, not only for dramatic, but pictorial art.

The intermission of only a few seconds, as I have often counted them, between the closing of the curtain upon one tableau, and its opening upon the other entirely different in composition, is of itself one of the innumerable suggestions of that wonderful director, Ludwig Lang, the Conried of Oberammergau.

The music here too seems to reach a climax of beauty and fullness, as the chorus, accompanied by the well trained orchestra, sings of the new offering as a substitute for the old. The simple, melodious passages are suggestive of Mozart, and a music of the past, just such music as one would expect from an art-loving people.

Its composer was the son of an Oberammergauer, an inn keeper. He was the village schoolmaster a century ago (born in 1779) but a man of God given talent. Like Ludwig Lang, Father Daisenberger, and a score of others, Rochus Dedler dedicated himself and his all to the home and the people he loved so well, and became their teacher.

Loving music scarcely less than their Play the Oberammergauers have always selected the teachers of their school with reference to their musical qualifications. Thus did Rochus Dedler have an appreciative field for his genius in musical composition, though elsewhere it would have won for him more fame, certainly more fortune, than could ever come to him here, but *his heart was in these Highlands,* and to all alluring proposals from the outside world — and there were not a few — he closed his ears and his thoughts.

It was to his school children — the little Oberammergauers — that he gave of what he was and what he had: it was they who were to profit by the advantages of his superior training, which he had gone to Munich to obtain, and where his unusual ability was duly recognized.

The village church choir, for which he wrote many a mass, was trained to sing his songs and his anthems, and it was his compositions that later were incorporated into the Passion music. This music, parts of which remind us oft of Händel as well as Mozart, is no less a surprise than some of the beautiful passages of the text of the Passion Play, and when one remembers that neither is the work of professionals, but both of simple, humble men, lovers of their mountain home, and of their own kind, surprise must turn to reverence.*

Fifth Act.

The Last Supper.

SCENE I.

Jesus with His disciples celebrates the Passover, and in rememberance of Himself institutes the Last Supper, after having washed the feet of the apostles.

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* At the midnight mass on Christmas eve in Oberammergau, there is always performed a Dedler mass, with full orchestral accompaniment. It was on one such Christmas eve that I lay ill from an accident in the Gasthof zum Thurm (Turm-Haus) opposite the church. As the weather chanced to be mild that season in Oberammergau, I asked that the church doors might be left open, as were my windows, that I might hear this music. As I lay there and the sounds of that music were wafted in to me, it seemed that the very windows of Heaven had opened, and a choir of angelic voices had sung out into the night. It was a Christmas eve never to be forgotten.

Dedler's music seems indeed a fitting prelude to the solemn scenes of the Last Supper, which are now presented in pictures strangely, strikingly familiar. With Jesus seated at the long table, the twelve apostles ranged on either side, we find ourselves looking upon a fac-simile of the picture of Leonardo di Vinci.

When Jesus rises from this table and girds himself with the towel, preparatory to giving his disciples that sublime example of lowliness, one can only be amazed at the dignity, the nobility, with which he performs the lowly act of serving his servants. Kneeling before each one of the twelve, bending over their feet as in a benediction, he washes them as with a baptism.

Every movement is full of the grace and gentleness that comes from an innately pure and lofty character, as well as the consciousness of a holy purpose. The sacredness of this emblemmatical function has lifted its performer quite out of himself, and he looks the fitting representative of the meek and lowly, as well as the Divine Exalted.

When he is again seated at the table, breaking the bread and blessing the cup, which with his own hands he gives to each of the disciples, no sacrament within the walls of a church could be more intensely, overpoweringly solemn than this sacred scene. *

* In the audience one day there sat near me one of the celebrities of our day — a singer whose marvellous voice has held thousands upon thousands spell-bound in nearly every metropolis of the civilized world. It was no less a person than Adelina Patti. Throughout the entire Play she sat fascinated, immovable, except when sobs shook her form, and her face bathed in tears was hid in her hands. With still shining eyes she said to me the next day:

SCENE II.

Peters's avowal of constant fidelity, and that he will never deny his Lord. — Jesus seeks to comfort His disciples. Let not your hearts be troubled.

Sixth Act.

The betrayal.

Prologue.

As the false friend for thirty pieces of silver betrays his Master, so did the sons of Jacob sell their own brother into the hands of foreign usurers.

"This is the most wonderful scene I have ever beheld in my life! The strange beauty, the wonderful dignity, grace, and gentleness of this Christus as he bends over the feet of his disciples, then his marvellous gliding from one to the other, and even his passing across the stage in front of the table, I shall never forget. — I have seen much, but I have never seen anything that approached this."

She told me then of her recent visit to Munich where for the first time she had heard the Ring of the Nibelungen, with which she had been deeply impressed.

"I thought then", she said, "that in this Wagner Trilogie I had seen the most extraordinary production that could ever come into my experience, but it did not compare with this Passion Play."

Such was the testimony of the supposedly worldly-minded Patti. On that day as she left the theater building at the noon day pause, she was fairly supported by her husband, so overcome had she been by the scenes of the morning. In the evening after the performance was over, I found her outside behind the theater, where as she told me in explanation of her presence there, she stood waiting for the children and the Christus that she might take their hands. — Adelina Patti waiting to pay homage to an Oberammergauer!

Tableau.

Joseph sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver.

Chorus sings of the two betrayals as a true picture of the world, and of the extermination of all peace and joy and blessing through envy, avarice and hate.

SCENE I.

The Sanhedrin assembled. Caiaphas sends a priest to fetch Judas before them.

SCENE II.

Judas comes to the Sanhedrin and promises to deliver his Master into the hands of the Pharisees for thirty pieces of silver, which are counted out to him.

SCENE III.

The High Council.

Caiaphas congratulates himself that all goes exactly as they would wish. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea declare themselves against the high handed measures of the Sanhedrin, and curse the decision against the innocent, swearing, as they leave the Sanehedrin, that they will take no part in the vile deed of blood.

SCENE IV.

The Sanhedrin vows death to the enemy of the Holy Law.

Seventh Act.

Jesus at the Mount of Olives.

Prologue.

As Adam struggled with bitter toil to atone for his own guilt, so was the Holy One burdened by the guilt of mankind.

Official Photograph 1910. Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Judas receiving the thirty pieces of silver from Rabbi Archelaus

First Tableau.

Adam earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. Eve and her children.

Chorus sings of the Saviour's struggles as in bloody sweat he drinks the cup of suffering.

Second Tableau.

Joab murders Amasa while he gives him the kiss of friendship.

Chorus sings of the scene near Gibeon's rocks, where Joab, with hypocritical mien gave the kiss of friendship with his lips, while with the dagger's point in his hand he gave the treacherous stab. — Part of the chorus is echoed from behind the rocks.

SCENE I.

Region surrounding the mount of Olives. — Judas and the four deputies of the Sanhedrin, whom he promises to givea sign for the arrest of Jesus by a kiss.

SCENE II.

The Garden of Gethsemane. — The sleeping disciples.

The sentence of death has been passed upon the Nazarene, while the Sanhedrim cried: "Down with the enemy of our Holy Law, so must he die!" In the Garden of Gethsemane we hear the wail of the forgotten, the forsaken, alone with his God as he cries aloud:

"Father! my Father! If it be possible let this cup pass from me!"

The actor is no more an actor. The absorption of Anton Lang into the personality of his Lord has become so intense, that he is loosing all consciousness of his material self; his own personality has become obliterated, merged into that of the suffering Christ.

Then I remember that this Christus, this Anton Lang, in one of our earnest talks together, has told me that in this Garden of Gethsemane he completely

Betrayal kiss.

loses his indentity, that he is no more himself, as he fails to remember he is simply man. Forgetting all else he actually feels and suffers with the Christ, whose words he now makes his own.

He is never an actor, much less here, but he is infinitely more; for his pure life, his beautiful character, his guileless soul, have made it possible for him to feel the Christ, be Christ-like, and appear the ideal Son of Man.

SCENE III.

An Angel appears. — Judas comes with the rabble.

SCENE IV.

Judas betrays his Master with a kiss. — Peter strikes off the ear of Malchus.

With the betrayal kiss of Judas Jesus is led away as prisoner by the Roman guard.

Midday has arrived. Four hours have passed, and four thousand people have sat as under a spell. Pouring out of the building the faces of both men and women bear the traces of the emotions they have experienced in these last hours. In silent throngs they wend their way to the noon day meal, where many are to be served by those who have taken part in the morning's performance.

In the little bare dressing room back of the stage the Christus remains alone. During the Play from beginning to end he avoids speaking a word outside his role, and now he carefully keeps out of sight of the many who would throng about him. He must be undisturbed, must come in contact with no one, or no thing, that might distract his mind from its concentration upon the character which he is personifying. His simple meal is carried to him and he is left alone to think on, to live on in the spirit of the persecuted Lord.

PART II.

FROM THE TAKING OF JESUS PRISONER IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE TO HIS SENTENCE BEFORE PILATE.

At a quarter to two the audience again assembles, and the chorus once more files across the proscenium.

Act Eight.

Jesus before Annas.

Prologue.

A comparison is made between the insulting blow given Jesus for His courageous word of reply to Annas, and that of the lying Prophet who smote Micaiah for speaking the truth to King Ahab.

Chorus sings of the battle of pain begun now in Gethsemane, introducing the

Tableau.

The Prophet Micaiah smitten on the cheek before King Ahab.

SCENE I.

The High Priest Annas, with three other priests, appear on the balcony of his house.

Annas declares he will have no rest this night until he knows the disturber of their peace is in their hands.

SCENE II.

The four delegates appear with Judas on the balcony.

Judas is startled as he hears that the death of Jesus has been decreed, and hastens away.

SCENE III.

Jesus is brought before Annas, where he is smitten on the cheek.

SCENE IV.

Jesus in the midst of the rabble.

SCENE V.

Peter and John appear before the house of Annas.

Act Ninth.

Jesus before Caiaphas.

Prologue,

followed by the chorus, introduces prophetic pictures of ancient Biblical history.

First Tableau.

Death of Naboth.

Second Tableau.

The afflicted Job is mocked by his wife and children.

SCENE I.

Caiaphas in his bedchamber, confident of his plans.

SCENE II.

Jesus is brought in and accused by the testimony of many false witnesses.

SCENE III.

Caiaphas orders the sentence of death to be pronounced before the High Council and confirmed by Pilate.

SCENE IV.

Judas haunted by terrible forebodings of the death of Jesus.

Official Photograph 1910 Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Gregor Breitsamter as Caiaphas in 1910

SCENE V.

Hall in the house of Caiaphas where Peter is led to deny his Master.

SCENE VI.

Peter alone — His remorse.

SCENE VII.

Jesus blind-folded, and seated on a mock throne in prison, is thrust to the ground.

Act Tenth.

The Despair of Judas.

Prologue.

Behold the wages of sin!

Chorus sings of woe to the man by whom Jesus is betrayed, introducing the

Tableau.

Cain as murderer of Abel.

SCENE I.

Judas alone — His remorse.

SCENE II.

High council in the Synagogue.

SCENE III.

Judas rushing in denounces his tempters, calls for vengeance, and flings at them the bag of money.

SCENE IV.

Proposal of the Sanhedrin to use Judas's blood money to buy a potter's field.

SCENE V.

Jesus brought in before the High Council.

SCENE VI.

Delegates before the house of Pilate.

SCENE VII.

Judas's self accusation and preparation for suicide.

Act Eleventh.

Jesus before Pilate.

Prologue

followed by the Chorus introduces the

Tableau.

Daniel impeached before King Darius.

This tableau, glowing in all the richness of Eastern magnificence, represents Daniel accused before King Darius by the rulers of the land, who insist on casting him into the den of lions.

The counterpart of this persecution of the innocent, amid scenes of similar splendour, is now presented in the streets of Jerusalem. The high priests and rulers of the Jewish people, attended by a brilliant retinue, are bringing to the governor of their land, their Sav iour, accused, reviled, and insulted by the rabble.

It is Jesus whom they thrust before them with cruel hands. Through all the abuse and humiliation by a senseless mob, the expression on the face of the Nazarene prisoner is that of exalted patience, and one cannot but feel that here is a fitting type of the world's burden bearer. To those who sit near the stage it is strikingly, painfully evident, from his facial expression

alone, that the actor has become one with the role he is impersonating.

SCENE I.

Before Pilate's House.

SCENE II.

Arrival of the High Council announced by Rabbi.

SCENE III.

Accusation before Pilate.

SCENE IV.

Personal examination of Jesus by Pilate.

Sending the multitude away, Pilate has the prisoner brought upon the balcony of his palace into his immediate presence, where he takes him into a personal examination. With the reply to Pilate's question, if he be the King of the Jews, there occurred one day a singular coincidence. Just at the moment when Jesus answered:

"Thou sayest it — I am King of the Jews" there pierced the clouds above a single ray of sunlight, which fell directly upon his head as he stood there, bound with the cords of a felon. Like an aureole the afternoon sun touched the fair brow, and tinged the long waving hair with a golden light.

As the serious upturned face was encircled by this gleaming radiance, it seemed as though Heaven itself were setting her crown upon this martyr's head. One was half inclined to ask if this were not a testimony of the Heavens rather than a mere coincidence, or an accident of Nature.

Official Photograph 1910

Hearing before Pilate

Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

We now come to see this innocent one sent and returned from Annas to Caiaphas, from Pilate to Herod, like a shuttle cock, from one court of injustice to another. Following him through all the bitter scenes of his persecution, a victim of human greed, malice, and envy, we seem to understand as never before, from the human point of view, what meant the martyrdom of this Man of Sorrows.

SCENE V.

Pilate is warned through dream of his wife.

SCENE VI.

Pilate summons High Priests again to appear before him.

SCENE VII.

Pilate finds no fault in the prisoner. Sends him to Herod.

Act Twelfth.

Jesus before Herod.

Prologue

declaims of the new disgrace that fell to the Saviour, because he would not make an exhibition of His wonder-working might.

Tableau.

The blind Samson, imprisoned by the Philistines, is ridiculed.

Chorus sings of Jesus who also stood reviled and derided, the victim of scorn and spite.

SCENE I.

King Herod's Court.

Official Photograph 1910 Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

Jesus before Herod

SCENE II.

Caiaphas, Annas, Priests. Jesus is led in by soldiers. Herod's interview.

SCENE III.

Herod's verdict — Jesus only a foolish man, incapable of the crimes attributed to him.

SCENE IV.

Herod declares himself deceived in finding Jesus only an ordinary man, when he had hoped to see a magician, and be entertained by his wizard feats.

Act Thirteenth.

The Scourging and Crowning with Thorns.

Prologue.

As Jacob saw the coat of his son stained with blood, and wept with bitter tears, so let us also weep as we witness the patient endurance of our Redeemer.

First Tableau.

Joseph's brethren show the aged Jacob the blood-stained coat of his son.

Chorus sings of Jesus's body, to be torn with wild rage.

Second Tableau.

The ram chosen for the sacrifice in place of Isaac.

SCENE I.

Caiaphas, Annas, the High Council, traders, and witnesses again appear before the house of Pilate, bringing with them Jesus under a guard.

SCENE II.

Pilate with his retinue appears upon the balcony. Proposes a choice by the priests between Jesus and Barabbas. Allows Him to be led away to be scourged.

SCENE III.

Caiaphas plans to incite the populace.

SCENE IV.

Scourging in the Judgment Hall.

Act Fourteenth.

Jesus Sentenced to Death.

Prologue.

Whereas Joseph of Egypt was freely acknowledged by the Egyptians as their Saviour, the Saviour of the world is surrounded by the rage of a blinded people, who force an unwilling judge to say: Take ye Him, and crucify Him.

Chorus: Behold the Man!

First Tableau.

The triumph of Joseph in Egypt.

Second Tableau.

The loosing of the Scapegoat from the old Temple.

A double chorus here sings alternately with the people behind the scenes.

SCENE I.

The Uprising of the People.

This scene, with the one following, are among the most wonderful of the Play. Jerusalem is represented

in three perspective views: from the two narrow streets at the right and left of the stage come a mass of people led by the priests Nathaniel and Ezekiel. From the centre of the stage pour forth throngs at the right and left, with Caiaphas and Annas respectively at their heads. As they draw near the front they mass together in one great body in the proscenium, where they rage and cry for the blood of their enemy.

SCENE II.

Pilate appears on the balcony with Jesus.

In seeking an escape from the importunities of the Sanhedrin, Pilate has insisted upon having the voice of the people, where-upon Caiaphas as High Priest has given orders to have all Jerusalem aroused by whatever means, fair or foul, and incited to frenzy against this enemy of Moses.

Shouts in the distance already announce the gathering of the people, who now come pouring in through the streets of Jerusalem, led by members of the Sanhedrin, exhorting them into a state of fanatical fury against this usurper, who dares defy their own law-givers.

Caiaphas, whose breastplate of the twelve precious stones glitters and sparkles at every move, directs the mob with the irresistible might of a man born to command. He is the typical bigot intolerant of opposition.

Annas, the accentuation of pompous arrogance, calls upon those who declare themselves free from the false

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Pilate Washing his Hands of Innocent Blood

teacher to throw themselves back into the arms of the Sanhedrin, where they will find safety.

While the high priests thus harangue the people over their allegiance to the Law and the Prophets, there again appears upon the balcony with Pilate, and between two Roman soldiers, the figure of Jesus, this time mockingly clothed in the purple mantle, and with the crown of thorns pressing upon his head.

At this sight of their victim, the Roman governor had hoped much, trusting that no mob, however blood-thirsty, could withstand the look of this patient, unresisting, suffering Jesus. The multitude nevertheless breaks forth in menacing shouts, demanding the immediate death of the hated Nazarene.

Pilate, declaring himself constrained by their fury to consent to their demands, washes his hands of the innocent blood of this just Man.

Barabbas having also been led away, Pilate finally breaks his staff of office, crying: Now take ye Him — and crucify Him.

The contrast of the first Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, surrounded by a joyful multitude, waving palms of peace, hailing Him as the Messiah, and making Him in his majestic simplicity the center of a triumphal ovation, with His re-appearance in the midst of these same people, now mocking and crying for His blood — this, says Frau Diemer, is a dramatic work of art worthy a Shakespeare.

PART III.

FROM THE SENTENCE OF JESUS TO HIS RESURRECTION.

Act Fifteenth.

The Way of the Cross.

Prologue.

As Jesus on His way to Calvary was burdened by the weight of His own cross, so Isaac, at his father's command, bore the wood to the mountain height for his own sacrifice: and as as the serpent, lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, gave healing to all who looked upon it, so salvation comes to us from the Tree of the Cross.

Chorus introduces the

First Tableau.

Isaac bearing the wood of sacrifice up to Mount Moriah.

Second Tableau.

Moses lifts up the Brazen Serpent.

SCENE I.

Mary and Magdalene, with John and Joseph of Arimathea, coming up from Bethany.

SCENE II.

The Cross-Bearer on His way.

With Barabbas the Robber set free instead of the Nazarene prisoner, we now see Jesus on His way to Golgotha, bending, staggering under the weight of the great cross He is bearing.

SCENE III.

The Way of the Cross in the Foreground.
Simon of Cyrene.

SCENE IV.

Mary's outcry. Veronica and the other women of Jerusalem draw near the procession.

As Mary the mother of Jesus catches a glimpse of the awful vision through the mob, a cry of anguish escapes her lips:

"It is he! O God, it is my Son! my Jesus!"

Torn and bleeding in deeply stirred emotion is every mother heart in that audience of 4000 people, which is as silent as the death that is foreshadowed.

SCENE V.

A servant of Pilate calls a momentary halt in the procession.

Stumbling, tottering under the inhuman burden, the merciless rabble only goad Him forward, actually striking, buffeting the Son of God. At this painful scene rugged men and wordly women, shuddering, bow their heads in dumb sorrow, while tears flow from many an eye unused to weeping.

As the Son is being urged on to His execution, His last look rests lovingly on the mother, supported by her women, and on John, both of whom are following him on this last journey. At the suggestion of John to Mary that they turn back to Bethany, lest the mother be not able to bear the final scenes on Calvary, she replies:

"How could a mother leave her child in the last hour of bitterest need! Fear nothing, I have prayed the Father for strength, and He has heard me. Let us follow!"

Official Photograph 1910

Jesus on the way to Golgatha

Copr. F. Bruckmann, Ltd., Munich

With her pure face full of the sadness, which these words have called up, yet overspread with the peace of resignation, she looks indeed the Holy, sorrowing Mother.

Act Sixteenth.

Jesus at Golgatha.

The chorus now again appears, but their brillant coloured mantels have been exchanged for the black robes of mourning.

Prologue.

(Melodrama.)

. . . "patiently, through every ill,
He pitied, loved, forgave thee still.
. . . . . .
I see the wounds the nails are making,
As sharply through the flesh they tear.
I hear the hammer's strokes meanwhile,
Through hands and feet send piercing's vile."

During these last words, from behind the drawn curtain there fall upon our ears hollow, ominous sounds that make one's heart stand still. The strokes of a hammer are heard, and the driving of nails — as into a coffin!

SCENE I.

Calvary.

As the curtain slowly parts there hang already the two malefactors, who are to be crucified with the Saviour, while upon the prostrate cross between is stretched, already nailed to the tree, the body of Jesus.

A final nail, fastening the inscription above the head, is driven, and then the gigantic cross with its

tender burden is slowly elevated, lifted up, like the serpent of Moses in the wilderness — a tableau of which had preceded this scene.

What a moment! What a vision! this of our crucified Lord in all its realistic magnitude! Over-spreading the countenances of spectators there comes a look of such painful intensity, that features grow set — sharpened — as with long pent up suffering.

One day a gathering storm, with a sudden clouding of the sky, and the rolling of thunder, came at this moment as a mighty suggestion from the Heavens of the terrible solemnity of the Crucifixion. From out the gloom of the shadows, as it is already late in the afternoon, there falls the voice of prayer — the prayer of the God-Man:

"Father forgive them, they know not what they do!"

At the foot of the cross, while yet the death agonies are rending asunder the mortal from the spirit of the Crucified One, but before the final parting in twain, the Roman soldiers are actually parting His garments, casting lots for the seamless outer coat that cannot be divided, while the chief priests and scribes, and "they that passed by" revile and mock the dying victim of their merciless hate.

Looking down upon a jeering mob, deriding Him as the King of the Jews, who could save others, but Himself he cannot save, the eyes now slowly veiling in death fail to discover a single follower, a single friend to be near Him in this last hour.

With the final despairing effort of His humanity, He calls to the Divine Spirit, now seemingly so far away:

"Eloi! Eloi! lamma sabachthani!" — "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me!" Then the bruised form, bound and stretched out upon that great cross, seems to lift itself in one long agony of separation of soul and body. Slowly sinking again within itself, with His last breath He exclaims:

"It is finished! Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit!"

The thorn crowned head droops in the limpness of death, while the entire body seems to shrink in its embrace.

The already strained faces in the audience, as the scenes of the Crucifixion have progressed, have now become drawn and bloodless, have grown thin and pinched, as with some haunting fear. The terrible intensity ot the spectators has reached its climax — its last degree before the snapping point.

SCENE II.

The two thieves are taken down.

If this were a work of artistic fiction, a tragedy that closes with a climax of dramatic power, the Passion Play would probably be made to end here, but historical truth and the scheme of Divinity have still more to add to the Story of the Cross, for, as the gospels tell us:

"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him".

"But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs."

"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side —"

At the merciless thrust the blood spurts out in a tiny crimson stream which trickles down His side, leaving its dark stain. Another involuntary shudder sweeps over the audience, while many a head involuntarily turns aside from the realistic spectable.

SCENE III.

The priests, with Caiaphas at their head, go back to Golgotha, exulting over their triumph, and calling the curse of the law upon Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, the friends of the crucified false Teacher.

SCENE IV.

The descent from the cross, and burial of Jesus.

The two thieves having been removed, the little company from Bethany, with Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, now cluster around the foot of the cross, alone with their dead. Lovingly, tenderly, the women talk with each other of the last words of their Jesus, and of the hope which His promise of another meeting has left them.

A sweetly solemn thought of His presence seems to reach out even beyond this sacred group, softening the drawn lines stamped upon the faces of the audience. The Mary asks that the body of her son, her child, be brought to her, and laid in her lap.

A ladder is then placed at the back of the cross, and from its top is unrolled the strip of linen that is to lower the body. As the long lengths fall to the ground on either side, and while the figures remaining below, together with those mounting the cross form a kind of

pyramid, a feeling of recognition comes over us, and we seem some where to have seen all this before.

There is Nicodemus just back of the top of the cross, bending over the bruised and drooping head of the Crucified, while Joseph of Arimathea stands on the ladder resting against the front, clasping in his arms the body of Jesus as it is loosened from the cruel nails. With John and the women at the foot, gazing upward at their dead Lord, ready to receive the precious burden, we are looking upon a familiar picture, the counterpart of one of the world's great masterpieces.

It is none other than that picture in the Cathedral at Antwerp — Rubens's Descent From the Cross in all its sacred beauty, but with its figures touched by a magic spark of life — a remarkable suggestion of that greatest work of one of the greatest artists who ever caused canvass to glow with the creations of genius.

When the body is anointed and wrapped in the linen sheet, the little procession bears away its dead Lord to be laid in the new tomb of Joseph. It is here we have another reproduction by living figures of one more familiar picture.

Act Seventeenth.

The Resurrection.

Prologue.

All is now fulfilled.
Chorus sings a burial song.

SCENE I.

Watchers at the grave talk of the possibility of the disciples stealing the body of their Lord, and of His rising the third day.

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Mary Magdalene — Marie Mayr

SCENE II.

Women come to the Sepulcher. Jesus appears for a moment to Magdalena.

The stone from the sepulcher is slowly turned away, and the risen Lord appears to Magdalena, but only for a moment, then glides away from view.

THE CLOSING SCENE.

Prologue.

He is risen! Rejoice ye heavenly host! He is risen!
Chorus:
Halelujah!
He hath conquered, He victorious . . . .

With this final scene — that of the Ascension — we have a fitting climax of this sacred drama.

From a group of the faithful until death, with the gentle mother standing beside Him, there slowly begins to rise the figure of her Son. In robes of shimmering, silvery white, with hands outstretched as in blessing those below, He is taking his way back to the Father.

Almost imperceptibly He is now moving upward, upward, upward, when at last, as He is drawn toward Heaven, that great hall resounds with a burst of joy, echoing and re-echoing with a triumphal song of gladness, and final Hallelujahs to the risen Lord and Saviour of Mankind.

After the Passion Play.

IT was the last day of the Passion Play season in 1900, as I sat listening to the last performance. The orchestra was intoning the overture for the last time as the performers on the stage behind the lowered curtain were clustered about the village priest. With bowed heads and hushed voices they were repeating together their final "Vater Unser". The solemnity of this recital was further deepened by the consciousness that for another decade this was to be its last repetition as the usual preparation for the Divine Tragedy.

With heavy hearts and sorrowful faces they had donned their costumes that morning for the last time, each one asking himself:

"Shall I ever wear these robes again?" for this day marked the end, the rounding up of one more chapter of their history. To these people time is marked by cycles — paragraphs — of ten years each, whose culmination is the Passion Play, wherein are centered all their hopes, their interests, their ambitions, their very lives.

The morrow was to be the beginning of a new era, a new decennium, the relaunching into a new cycle with all its uncertainies, all its hidden shoals. This last day therefore, was the burial of a completed past, with its joys and happy associations finished.

"How many will be here to answer the roll call of 1910?"

"How many absences will be marked by a gravestone?" — not next year, nor the year after, but in ten years.

These were the questions repeated in the heart of every performer. Only those who have lived among these people, and learned to know the inseparableness of their lives from their Passion Play, can understand the overwhelming emotions of that last day. Not even the brilliant sunshine illuminating the open stage, and falling again like an aureole on the head of the Christus, could dispel the clouds that hung over the spirits of the actors.

As the last scenes drew to a close, and the last chorus was being sung, the tremulous voices were hardly able to sustain their parts. Those of the audience, to whom the hearts of these actors were open, were scarcely less affected by the oppressive solemnity of this last performance of the Passion Play. The very air seemed burdened with a last farewell, which had no ring of a probable Aufwiedersehen.

When the curtain had closed for the last time the players abandoned themselves to the grief whose tide they had stemmed in front of the audience. Young men and young women, for whom another ten years would make their present roles impossible, old men for whom a decennium meant a grave in the little churchyard, singers, actors, Director and Bürgermeister — all were weeping.

Down the fair face of the Christus rolled the tears he too had long held back. He stood surrounded, as usual at the close of the Play, by the little children of the village, who loved him devotedly, and whose

affection bore the strongest testimony to a beautiful character.

Clinging to him, each trying to touch at least one of his fingers, they were sobbing as though their little hearts would break. It was the mere contagion of grief that affected them, the sadness of their Anton, the Christus, having communicated itself to their sensitive spirits.

The home-coming from the theater was as the return from a cemetery. Loth to part with each other, the women went from house to house, mingling their tears, while the men joined each other in quiet groups according to their roles.

Standing at the door of the home of the Christus, where I had my abode, I was half startled by a voice at my side asking:

"Have the apostles come yet?"

"Only Judas is here" was the reply.

One by one the disciples finally appeared, when they entered a little low room, where they were to have a final supper and cup together, taking their seats at a long table with the Christus at the head.

With many a pang they were to take leave of their other, their apostolic selves, and to resume with their daily avocations their own names, which had long since been laid aside and half forgotten, so entirely had they been living in their roles the last half year.

As Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Bartholemew, they had been known, not only to witnesses of the Passion Play, but to themselves. The morrow, however, was to see them, with Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, and all the priestly and

kingly sort of Judea, again as simple men — wood carvers — of Oberammergau.

As of yore they would answer to the call of Herr Lang and Herr Rendl, Herr Rutz and Herr Mayr, Herr Zwinck and Herr Hohenleitner. A serious air that was depressing pervaded that whole company about the board of their Christus, notwithstanding the efforts to be gay, and as I was allowed to look in upon them two or three times, I felt that here was an unconscious repetition of that last supper on the stage, which had touched so many hearts in the afternoon.

The next morning the whole village repaired to the church to render thanks for all the blessings which had attended its people throughout the season of the Passion Play. The beautiful church was filled to the doors with a devout people, while the full orchestra, with all the singers and musicians of the Play, rendered one of the exquisite compositions of Dedler, the gifted Oberammergau musician and composer of the music for the Passion Play.

By the time the last peal of the organ died away, the congregation had already moved out into the churchyard. Over the bronze bust of Father Daisenberger, — the work by the way of an Oberammergauer sculptor — there hung a laurel wreath, placed there by those who had acted and spoken the words he had written for them in the present text of the Passion Play.

Reverently the congregation passed before his grave, sprinkling it with holy water in token of loving remembrance, while silently breathing a prayer for the

repose of the soul of their beloved pastor. The day before I had seen a little girl of twelve, quite alone,

Grave of Bürgermeister Lang

stop before his grave, say a prayer, scatter over it a few drops of water as she made the sign of the cross.

Thus is kept warm in the hearts of the Ober-

ammergauers the memory of their loved and worthy dead, sleeping, not in a remote and lonely cemetery, but at the very church doors, where daily footsteps pass their resting places, and where, their grave stones ever in sight, they are not forgotten.

On the other side of the churchyard is the monument to Dedler, whose grave too bore tokens of remembrance. Nearby is the grave of Bürgermeister Lang, who died in the first weeks of the Passion Play, and to whom the Oberammergauers owe a debt of deepest gratitude — a debt they gladly acknowledge to a man who consecrated all his splendid talents, all his ability, all his life to the welfare and betterment of his own people.

Before this grave the new Bürgermeister, the former Christus, Josef Mayr, and the new Caiaphas, Sebastian Lang, bearer in 1900 of the role which Bürgermeister Lang had played so marvellously, together with the Town Council and all the men of office and dignity in the village, stood one by one with bared heads and dimmed eyes in silent prayer. It was a solemn and inspiring sight, this voiceless tribute of love and respect to the memory of a worthy man.

From the churchyard the people went to the theater, where was to take place a final ceremony — the farewell for ten years to their Passion Play. In the great, barren auditorium the little band of Oberammergauers drew together, a tiny community of only a few hundred souls, which seemed strangely small in that great building, where only the day before there had been a sea of faces lifted to the stage, now closed for another decennium.

On the open proscenium before the lowered curtain stood the Bürgermeister, with the village priest beside him; on their right was the full orchestra, on their left the members of the Town Council. In a feeling speech the Bürgermeister reviewed their success of the summer, the manifest approval of Heaven on the re-fulfillment of their vow made 267 years before, the blessings they had enjoyed in the exceptionally fine weather, and in the material advantages that had accrued to their village.

In recognition of God's favour and the Divine approval, he ordered that on the following morning at half past six o'clock, after a service in the church, the entire village should proceed on a thanksgiving pilgrimage to the monastery at Ettal, three miles distant. In conclusion he said:

"— — — and now my dear Oberammergauers, as we return to our several occupations, let us seek to live in peace, love, and concord."

As he called upon the people to join with him in silent prayer, they rose and stood with bowed heads, while the orchestra played a choral. When they went out of that theater building, it was as though they were leaving a funeral chamber, whose doors now closed upon them for another decade.

The next morning before the sun had tinged the mountain tops, and while they were yet grey, the road to Ettal presented an unusual sight. Every man, woman, and child who could walk, had joined that pilgrimage, and the hum of voices reciting prayers, as the people moved along in solemn procession, was like the murmur of waters, or the sighing of

winds echoing against the mountain sides of the narrow valley.

Arriving at the ancient church and historic monastery of Ettal, the band of pilgrims disappeared within, where, to the music of a grand organ morning mass was held. It was still early, and the morning sun was just peeping over the mountain tops, when the people started on their return to Oberammergau.

With the sound of voices in reverent unison, rising like incense within these mountain walls of Nature's temple, the long line of pilgrims wound its way around the many-indented base. As the morning sunlight glistened upon the bright banners, the scarlet cassocks, and the white surplices of priests and attendants, one could almost fancy this procession had strayed out of the Middle Ages — a band of Crusaders in search of the Holy Grail.

On their return to the first station of their pilgrimage, the village church, a final prayer was said, and the people then dispersed to their homes to take up anew the old threads of life that so long had been dropped. As I passed from the church through the churchyard after every one had gone, I saw the Christus gently disengage his hands from some children, who were clinging to him, and turn to his mother's grave. Here alone, and unobserved, he stopped to pray at the shrine of her whom he had known only as a little child, but whose memory was sacred, and whose last resting place was his final station in this thanksgiving pilgrimage.

The afternoon of the return from Ettal, the Christus gave to his children friends, who filled the room where

the apostles had sat the evening before, a little banquet of cake and coffee, and I was allowed again to be one of the company.

Sitting at the table, the waving locks parted and falling over his shoulders, his truly Christ-like face was beaming with the happiness he shared with the children, who were gazing up at him in child-like trust and innocence. Here in the midst of these little ones, who seemed to lack nothing but his outstretched hands in blessing, he was even more the unconscious prototype of the Christ than on the stage.

The words recurred to me so constantly, that it seemed I must hear him say: "Suffer little children to come unto me — — —." To bring myself back to reality I asked these children which one of them loved the Christus most.

Instantly and spontaneously there burst from each little throat the single word "ich", while every little right hand was stretched across the table to clasp that of their Christus in token of their boundless affection. A brown-eyed, round faced, lisping tot of six, the pet of all, had slipped under his arm. As he bent in loving tenderness toward the little Stefanie, he called her his little John *("kleiner Johannes")*, while to each of the others he gave the name of some one of the twelve.

The little girl to whom fell the name of Judas at first resented, but rather than be left out of the number, she finally accepted the undesirable name. In this familiar interchange of Bible names and subjects with present day associations, there may seem a lack of rev-

erence for Holy things. To the ear there may be a flavour of sacrilege.

The incidents in the life of Christ are so real, so familiar to these people, that among themselves their every day conversation is constantly interlarded with allusions, which possibly might startle those to whom the story of Jesus is more a pious legend than a physical actuality.

After the children had sung some of their school songs, I asked them to sing the *"Heil Dir!"* (All Hail! O Davids Son!) — the song they had sung with the people in the Play, on the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. Instantly every little face took on its accustomed look of seriousness, and as the psalm-like chorus began, the countenance of Anton Lang once more became that of the Christ, with the far away look of the dreamer, and that expression of sadness, natural always to him in repose, which makes him on the stage the so nearly perfect image of the Man of Sorrows.

As he sat there abstracted, unconscious of the personality of the little company around him, he was living over again the tragedies he had felt as he personified the Christ. The change from gay to grave had been so complete, the solemnity that had taken possession of the children so profound, and the look of sorrow in the face of Anton so painful, that I was glad when the song was finished.

The autumn days were not yet spent, when down the mountain sides thick white clouds began to roll, and when they had lifted the tops were covered with snow, The guests of Oberammergau had fled. I alone

Official Photograph 1910

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All Hail! Thou Son of David!

Children in the Triumphal Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem

remained behind, living on with the people their simple lives, joining with them in their pleasures, and sharing some of their sorrows.

The Oberammergauer again took up the work so long laid aside while he became an actor, and now sat at home carving the crucifixes his fathers had made for centuries. His long hair, which he had cultivated nearly two years before the Play, was now shorn, a heap of locks more than two feet high having been left at the village barber's the day after the last performance — a final trophy of the Oberammergauer's *growth into his role.*

As he sat and carved, he lived over and over again the events of the last Passion Play. Five years he looked backward; the next five years he looked forward. — Today another decennium has rolled around, and now again he is living in the time of the Christ, while all the world is on its way up to this new Jerusalem to witness the scenes of Calvary in the setting of Oberammergau hills.

Preparations for the Passion Play.

Assignment of Roles.

THE snow had come down to the foot of the Kofel, and lay deep in the valley, when the year after the Passion Play of 1900 I came to say to my Oberammergauers, Adieu, Auf Wiedersehen! When I came again in 1910, refulfilling the vow of twenty years before, it was still winter, for Oberammergau is never more attractive than when her mountains rise up around her in their snow mantles, and a thick white blanket is spread out over the valley.

It was a night in February when I looked out through the windows of the little electric railway train and saw the whole mountain range silvery white in the moonlight. The Kofel with its cross on top was still covered with snow, while the Ammer was but a narrow blue thread twisting its way between overhanging snow drifts.

These mountains were not the same one sees in daylight, but higher, more fantastic, and infinitely more beautiful. It was not difficult to imagine why the romantic King Ludwig II chose these Highlands for his habitation, and the night time for his royal sleigh rides through their passes. I could almost fancy I heard the echoes of the jingling bells, and could see that imposing figure seated in his gilded sleigh, with the white horses in their gold and silver trappings, skimming over the snow of these Bavarian Alps in a wild

midnight ride, then back to the beautiful Neu Schwanstein, or the hidden Linderhof nearer Oberammergau.

At the station in Oberammergau there was no one to meet strangers this time of year, only a *"Bursch"* in a box-like sled, drawn by a bob tailed horse that started up with the most unexpected jerks at that peculiar, inarticulate sound made by the driver — a sound which cannot be spelled, but which every Bavarian horse understands. Choosing first one side of the road then the other, he pulled me through the snow drifts to the house of my destination.

This was Oberammergau, only whiter, stiller, as it lay in the frozen moonlight. When daylight came I saw a new Oberammergau spread out in the valley. The houses had grown larger through additions having been built on, while several new ones had grown up in some unexpected quarter, or been set upon some three cornered piece of ground; for Oberammergau is a village without plan or points of compass, and except for the one long street that runs through the town with a single crooked turn, there is no such thing as a rectangular square or lot on any street, that runs in any direction, before it bends or sharply turns to end up against the corner of a house or the wrong side of a cow stable.

In front of many an old Oberammergauer dwelling, with its painted outer walls, and quaint decorations, which has housed generations of families, there were heaps of sand and gravel, boxes of mortar and sacks of cement, with masons and carpenters busy in adding a room here, putting in a door or window there, while plasterers and painters were patching and decorating

the old rooms preparatory to receiving the guests that were already announced months beforehand.

It may be well to say here, that these new additions, even these new houses, did not necessarily mean that the Oberammergauer had grown more prosperous, more pretentions, either in his tastes or in his simple way of living. These new rooms, these late improvements, were all to meet the ever-increasing demand for more comforts, more conveniences for the international concourse of people that are drawn here by the Passion Play.

When these guests will have gone, the Oberammergauer will close these rooms, nail up the windows, and retire back into the little low *Stuben* where he was born, where he feels at home, and where he is warm and happy in the old mother nesting place.

Now that the walls had been made fresh and bright with new stencilled designs in water colours, and the floors having been given their fresh coatings of paint, housewives and daughters began rearranging the furniture in these rooms that had so long been closed, putting up the freshly starched curtains to the low windows, and hanging up the crucifixes, and the photographs of the actors in the family, who had taken part in former Passion Plays.

In the living-room with its low, wooden-beamed ceiling, the pewter mugs and plates that stand on the shelves received a polish like silver, while in the kitchen the copper pans and kettles that adorned the walls were made to shine as the setting sun. Out of the old wooden chests, with their stores of household linen, which have been a part of the dowry of every

provident bride, the ribbon tied packages were counted over, and room was made for the new supplies which every decennium entails.

On the days of sunshine there hung from the windows, and across the narrow balconies, huge square red pillows that were to bolster up to distraction many a sleepy head that fain would lie down to a resting level the coming summer. Sunning beside them were the puffy feather beds, whose downy bulk was further inflated by the vigorous beatings they received in the sunshine.

These feathery *Oberbetten* were destined to rise up over the middle half of many a perspiring, profane Anglo-Saxon, like swollen sausages *("geschwollene Würste")*, too full and too narrow to turn under without their falling off, and too short to cover the daintiest of feet, which would be left to stick out in the cold against the foot board of a German bed, whose economical dimensions are the everlasting wonder of the European traveller.

The principal street scene this time of year, the only one that might cause any one to look out of his window, was the hauling of great logs, eighty feet long, through the one long street to the saw mill at the end of the village. Cut from the mountain sides and left to slide down lengthwise on the snow, they were then lashed to short sleds, one under each end, with a driver in front and a woodman in the rear acting as a rudder to steer the end sled.

More than a hundred years ago these logs were sawed to the length they are today, then however, that they might be lashed together in rafts that were

floated down a chain of Bavarian lakes and rivers to the Danube, sometimes as far as the Black Sea. Today, though only brought from the foot of the mountains to the village saw mill, they are still sawed to *eighty feet,* there being no reason to a conservative German why such a little thing as the measurement of a saw log should be changed.

Hauling Saw Logs

When night came on, after teams had been put away, and he had had his frugal meal of "*Schmarrn*", — a kind of batter cake chopped up in fat while it is frying — and a huge cup of coffee with chunks of bread floating in it, this Oberammergauer *log roller* took off his hob nailed, water soaked boots, put on his Sunday shoes, a white collar and made up tie, and hied himself

away to the evening rehearsals. Here he was drilled in his part as a figure in some of the Old Testament tableaux, or as one of the folk in the streets of Jerusalem.

Like the rest of these Oberammergauers he had been "*growing into his role*" *down from the top* for nearly two years, since in that time his hair had not been cut, nor his face shaven, as long hair and bearded faces are the only accessories outside of costumes that were to transform these men of Oberammergau into the men of Judea.

What particular role the Oberammergauer was to grow into he did not know until seven months before the opening of the Play, but that he can *grow out* of a former role and *into* a new one, not always a higher one, the older ones know only too well, for the years leave their scars. He who, for instance, can play the part of a younger character possibly up to thirty years of age, can hardly hope to have the same role at forty, since the usual accessories of the footlights, such as wigs, false beards, paint and powder, or any sort of *make up* are not tolerated on the Oberammergauer stage. An older man or woman, therefore, can not be expected to take the part of a younger character than the years or natural appearance would justify.

It was out at the theater building where I witnessed the greatest activity that had prevailed in Oberammergau for a decade. From over the painted figures in the niches of the outside walls they were taking down the wooden coverings that had shielded them from the weather for the last ten years. The end of the building towards the stage, as well as the

Workmen on the Passion Play Stage — Shovelling the snow off the streets of Jerusalem preparatory to the first

From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

stage itself, which was closed and nailed up after the Play of 1900, was now open, the boards having been taken down, and the place once more flooded with light.

While carpenters were putting down floors and mending broken seats, women were busy cleaning off the dust of years of accumulation. On the open stage outside men were digging into the great mounds of frozen snow, shovelling it off the *streets of Jerusalem,* and off the squares that were to face the palaces of Pontius Pilate and of Caiaphas.

It was here where I was climbing over piles of lumber and heaps of snow that I met the new Caiaphas (Gregor Breitsamter) who was overseeing the workmen in putting down a new stage floor where Jesus was to make his *Entry into Jerusalem,* and where a little later this same Caiaphas was to harangue these same workmen, whom as the men of Judea he would incite into a mob against the Nazarene.

How intetesting it all was as I stood there alone and watched the men at work in a chaos of tools, lumber and snow, which in a few months was to be the theater of the world's greatest tragedy! When I asked that I be allowed to photograph this unusual scene, it was Caiaphas who called together the workmen, and who at my suggestion took his place on top of a mound of snow, where he stood in the unconscious pose of *one in authority.*

At the other and extreme end of the village, on the road that leads to Ettal, could be seen the most unusual evidences of enterprising progress that had ever been known in Oberammergau. Here were

workmen engaged in erecting buldings for an *automobile garage* for 200 motor cars.

In 1900 an automobile was one of the forbidden things in Oberammergau, one not even being allowed to pass through the town. In fact the familiar *Verboten* sign for automobiles still stands at the entrance to the village at the present writing, no one as yet having had the temerity to take it down. An automobile garage in Oberammergau, like the railway station in Jerusalem, and the elevator in St. Peter's, has but followed in the wake of modernization, whose desecrating hand has fallen alike on the Vatican, on the Holy City, and at last on the village of the Passion Play.

The Oberammergauers stood out valiantly, and as long as it was possible, but when resistance seemed no longer a virtue they capitulated without conditions. Though hitherto out of the way of electrical devices and push the button appliances, their domains, were at last invaded and there came the honk! honk! of the XX century motor car.

It was planned that a flying machine should make stated trips between Munich and Oberammergau, but that turned out to be *only in the air,* so far as Oberammergau was concerned, as no visible preparations have yet been observed in the village.

As to the Passion Play, nearly three years beforehand there were taken the first official steps toward its production. According to a custom of by-gone centuries, the community (on July 7th 1907) had assembled at the Town Hall *(Rath Haus)* to take the usual vote as to

whether the Passion Play would be performed in this decennium. This of course was only a formality, as that the Oberammergauers should vote against giving their Play was an unthinkable thing.

A few months later (Oct. 27th, 1907) the citizens of the village again assembled at the Rath Haus to nominate the candidates for the six new members to be added to the fourteen members of the Town Council, who, together with the parish priest as honorary member, were to constitute the Passion Play Committe, with the Bürgermeister as chairman. Five days later (Nov. 2nd) the election of these six men out of the twenty candidates, by a plurality of names on the papers handed in to the Bürgermeister, was announced.

Every detail was entrusted to this committee, which assumed all responsibility, its decisions being absolute and final. The members were expected to observe the strictest secrecy as to its discussions and preliminary measures, thus precluding all outside interference, and largely obviating personal conflict.

It now became the duty of this Committee to send in a petition to the government authorities at the Capital for permission to give the Passion Play, a polite expression of the deference of these people to their sovereign, notwithstanding that exceptional grant, which was obtained in Munich a hundred years ago, providing for the uninterrupted continuance of their Play.

Contrary to former experiences, when both the civil and religious authorties in Munich joined in putting every obstacle in the way of the Oberammergauer giving his Play, and keeping that vow of 1633

— one decennium forbidding it altogether — the permission was now granted in an astonishingly short time. Instead of causing the Oberammergauers to wait months, sometimes a year and more, as had been the custom when there was nothing more at stake than the fulfillment of an old promise — a vow — by a handful of people up in the mountains quite out of the ranks of the ordinary petitioner, the scarcely yet expected permit was graciously accorded on the 3rd of June, 1908, nearly two years before the beginning of the Passion Play.

"Ah" said an Oberammergauer to me, "those people in Munich know now how much it all means to their own interests!"

Thus the Munich Hotels and big mercantile establishments had plenty of time to set their houses in order, preparatory to reaping the harvest from the passing Oberammergau tourist, who, on the recommendation of these same Munich authorities, has been offered the opportunity of procuring his tickets and his lodgings in Oberammergau through outside agencies.

The same stipulations were imposed, however, as in 1900, and earlier, as to have granted a petition without corresponding exactions might have savoured too largely of granting a right rather than a favour. At the same time it is only just to say that some of the conditions imposed, however paternal they may seem to one of a less *regulated* system, have only redounded to Oberammergau's lasting benefit and credit.

These required regulations relating to public welfare and order, provide for sanitary measures both civic and private, the delivery and control of tickets, the

apportionment of actors salaries to be settled in advance, and above all for the setting aside of one third of the gross receipts from the sale of tickets to the play to be devoted to charitable objects, and public improvements in the village.

Among the latter was 5000 Marks to be set aside for the Wood Carving School, and an order for the deepening and restriction of the river Ammer, whose yearly overflows were always disastrous to the villagers. This work already completed has cost the respectable sum of 100,000 Marks. Added to this was the provision for the building of a slaughter house outside the village, which, like the artificial banks of the Ammer, has already been built, in anticipation of the funds required, while a mortuary is yet to be erected from this same *third* of the coming income.

The Passion Play Committee had already begun its serious work, holding its sessions every Wednesday evening. Its very first election, after that of secretary, was for the post of Director of the Play, when Ludwig Lang, the artistic genius of Oberammergau Director of the Wood Carving School, and the moving spirit of the Passion Play, was unanimously chosen.

Herr Wittman, the head of the village school, a musician of unusual attainments, was made director of the vocal music and of the orchestra, while Ferdinand Rutz a young wood carver, was elected leader of the brass band, or of the *Turkish music* as it is called in Oberammergau.

Just why the blasting of horns, the flaring of trumpets, and the rolling of bass drums should be called "*Turkish music*", which as a matter of fact is the

farthest removed of all things possible from genuine Turkish music, and moreover particularly offensive to

Turkish Music in Oberammergau

Turkish ears — not a man in the place could tell me. The origin of the term seemed as hidden as the most secret thought of the Turk himself. A facetious Ober-

ammergauer suggested that its very dissimilarity to the real thing might be the reason of its name.

In March of 1909 the young girls of the chorus were asked to appear before the Committee in a preliminary rehearsal, when the entire mixed chorus of forty two voices was organized. The orchestra was composed of forty five men, the *Turkish music* of fifty.

According to a custom of ancient date only unmarried women are allowed to take part in the Passion Play, but owing hitherto to the scarcity of material it was found necessary to cull out of the ranks of married women recruits for the female voices of the chorus. For this season, however, enough young girl musicians have grown up in Oberammergau to fill all the places and all the requirements for the female half of the chorus, and no married woman, therefore, will be seen on the stage in 1910.

A happy chorus girl

After all the many committees on the press, music, photographs, buildings, lodgings, tickets etc. had been elected, there came the question of supreme and all absorbing interest, the election of the performers. On the 27th of September 1909 began the nominations for the principal roles. The nominations for the sixty five different speaking roles were continued on September 29th and 30th, and on October 8th and 11th.

Ludwig Lang the Director commenced the work of the Committee by taking up each role in question, and explaining to his co-workers the necessary qualifications requisite to each impersonation. Commencing with the first and most important roles, the several

members of the Committee proposed in writing a candidate's name, which on a folded paper was placed in an urn. After each name for this role was thoroughly discussed there was a secret ballot. The name or names resulting from this ballot now became the nominations. In this manner all the candidates were separately considered and voted upon.

After two weeks of deliberation, when there had been time for due individual consideration, the Committee was again called together. The day of all these ten years had arrived. It was the 12th of October, 1909. At eight o'clock in the morning the Committee assembled together at the Rath Haus, and in a body repaired to the church to attend a solenn service with high mass, returning immediately afterward to the council chamber for a final voting.

Fresh from the communion with the Father, whose direction they had asked, — naturally with more or less mental reservation, for they are very human — the previous nominations were once more canvassed, and each individual's fitness for the proposed role thoroughly gone over. In this solenn conclave the ballots were once more taken, each member dropping a white or black ball in the urn as the several candidate's names were offered, and the resulting vote became irrevocable.

Two weeks had this Committee been in secret deliberation, and two weeks had the village been in a state of feverish suspense and anxious speculation hardly equalled in our own country during a presidential campaign when candidates are eagerly awaiting returns. In fact who is to be the next Christus or

the new Caiaphas, the next Pilate or the new Peter, means infinitely more to the man of Oberammergau than it does to the ordinary American citizen as to who is to be the next governor of New York, or even the new President ot the United States.

The announcement of the Committee's decisions brought a personal message to each man and every family in this community. Every male inhabitant was assigned his place, if not an actor on the stage, a singer, or member of the orchestra, he was made a shifter of scenes, an usher, or a fireman in the wings, for it is always an honour to be allowed to take part in any capacity. To every boy and girl is given a place either in groups on the stage or in tableaux.

Aside from the married women, for whom there is no place, there is another class, the new residents of the village, who are also debarred, as the Passion Play is held — and justly so — as the peculiar inheritance of the native born Oberammergauer. The children of these *new comers* sometimes become pathetic figures, as I have more than once observed. One day in a company of little children I was asking each one to tell me what part it had in the Play, when a pretty little girl, her brown eyes shining with unshed tears, said:

"I am not an Oberammergauer, and so I can't be in the Play, but I should so love to have a part with the rest of the children!" and as I saw the brave, forced smile of consciousness that she was an *outsider* — the saddest realization that can ever come to childhood — I too wished that this heart-longing might be gratified.

With the assignment of roles (which was followed nearly three months later by the election of under-

Little Oberammergauer Actors
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

studies), there began the work on the new costumes which each decade necessitates. Director Lang, the untiring leader and overseer of every detail, after hav-

ing designed every costume of the six hundred worn in the Play, making his own sketches and drawings which betray the master hand, now went to Munich to select the materials, some of which had to be ordered from Paris, some from Berlin, others from Jerusalem, while for the robe of the Prologue an order was despatched to Damascus.

Josepha Lang, sister of the Director, who cuts out all these costumes with no other pattern than that of her brother's drawings spread out before her, now set to work with twelve young girls under her direction to make these costumes. According to an observation written by way of parenthesis in the note book of a member of the Committee, to whom I am indebted for the records of its meetings:

"Josepha has a sharp tongue, but she understands her business."

The latter is at least well authenticated, for this remarkable woman, now sixty seven years old, is nothing short of a marvel in her management of a pair of scissors, as she cuts into the rich cloths and Oriental brocades with a skill and precision that would be the envy of the best costumer in a metropolitan atelier.

As to the *sharp tongue,* she laughingly said to me, with her index finger raised in front of an expressive face:

"*That* you *must* have if you are to accomplish anything with a lot of girls."

For more than a year busy hands had been at work making these six hundred wonderful costumes,

By special permission of Official Passion Play Photographer Traut, Munich 1910

Josepha Lang (on the left) and her sewing girls making the Passion Play costumes

each one of which is a work of art. It was a day in March (Good Friday it chanced to be) when at the invitation of Director Lang I went to the theater to see these costumes after they were finished and hung in their places.

In a labyrinth of rooms and passages he led me from one to the other, each room filled with the rarest, the most artistic creations concievable. The beautiful costumes of 1900 were only a hint of the gorgeous robes of 1910. There were twenty three rooms containing a thousand costumes, six hundred of which were the ones made for this season, the material for which alone was obtained at a cost of 20,000 Marks.

Each one of these thousand costumes in this Oberammergauer wardrobe was the product of the little man at my side, for each one was the design made, the material chosen, the harmony of colour and its relation to the whole carefully considered and adjusted by this one man, this wonder worker of Oberammergau. Well may it be said that it is not the Passion Play that is the marvel of Oberammergau, but its Director Ludwig Lang.

In one room were hundreds of pairs of sandals, another was filled with Roman spears and helmets, shields and cuirassess, another contained the dainty white robes with their mantles of delicate blues and pinks and lavenders for the angels in the tableaux, another was for the flowing robes of the Jewish Sanhedrin, with the magnificent gowns of the Scribes and Pharisees, in another were hung the regal robes of Herod and Pilate, and side by side were those of Annas and Caiaphas, while in still another were the simple

shepherd gowns of the disciples, with that of the Master, and last was the room which contained the multi-coloured dresses of the folk in the streets of Jerusalem. Here was a collection worthy a museum.

Photographer Traut, Munich 1910
Ludwig Lang

As Ludwig Lang in a few hurried words, touching a robe here, pulling out a fold there, explaining all in the sharp, staccato voice of one whose energies are ever at the boiling point, but whose modesty will

allow of no wordy recognition, I was dumb with amazement. Words were trifling, belittling, and as Ludwig Lang used few in showing me what was there to see, and none in telling what *he* had done, I could think of no way in which words could be of any use to me in the presence of a creative genius who expended his energies in doing rather than talking.

From the maze of Oriental splendour in which I had been stumbling for want of expression, we came out upon the stage where they were setting up the scenery. Here the Director stopped to give instructions in certain details, always with the correctness of the artist, and the minuteness of the expert. There is never anything superfluous with Ludwig Lang, not even when he is staging an Oriental scene. With this man at their head, the Oberammergauers may well astonish the visitors to the Passion Play.

It was on the morning of the 8th of December that the principal actors were called together at the rehearsal building. On the afternoon of the 12th the remainder of the performers were assembled at the same place. Here each one was presented with a paper for his signature, the translation of which is a follows:

> "The long hoped for season of the Passion Play is drawing near, and thousands upon thousands will be brought here to witness the same.
>
> For us there arises the sacred duty of bringing our entire energies to bear upon meeting the demands of the hour.
>
> With this in view every participant must obligate himself to a conscientious performance of his task, and emphasize this by signing the following contract.

CONTRACT.

The undersigned accepts tho appointed role (place, servjce) as ..... and obligates himself to perform his task according to the best of his knowledge and ability, and especially to take his part at every performance in the coming acts or tableaux.

The requirements of the Director of the Play and of the Committee are to be followed unconditionally.

For the men taking part on the stage, a smooth face, or full beard and long hair, according to the requirements of the management, is made a stipulation during the season of the Play. Non-conformity to this requirement will entail the immediate withdrawal of the role (place, service).

In case of absence or negligence during rehearsals or performances, as well as willful injury to costumes or outfits, corresponding damages will be demanded of the undersigned.

Whosoever refuses, without satisfactory reasons, to accept the role (place, service) assigned him, can expect the partial withdrawal of the tickets to which he may otherwise be entitled.

Whoever from the beginning of his acceptance of a role (place, service) and on, or during the time of the Play, through unbecoming conduct, shall injure the community or the Play, from him will be withdrawn his role, or a corresponding fine will be levied.

Incompetency in performing a role will entail the exemption from the same, and installation in some other employment.

Any additions or withdrawals of participants in the tableaux, not indicated in the contract, is reserved by the management.

Voluntary transfer of solo parts to singers for whom they were not intended is forbidden; also the abstraction of single parts of roles which have been assigned to others.

In case of extraordinary or insufficient capabilities the Committee reserves the right of raising or lowering the salaries of such.

The participants are obliged, with an indemnity for loss of time, to be photographed in costume by the photographer determined upon by the community.

To be photographed by any other photographer in costume, or to have the role title imprinted on pictures in civilian dress, or on postcards is forbidden. Participants whose pictures are not among the official photographs will be permitted by consent of the council to be photographed in costume at their own expense.

Non-conformity to the above contract will be punished by withdrawal of the role (place, service), and a corresponding fine according to the decision of the Committee."

Thus are the Oberammergauers, through the gloved, but iron hands of their capable leaders, at whose head always stands the modest but mighty force of Oberammergau, Ludwig Lang, brought face to face with the unalterable conditions which go to make the Passion Play the worthy shrine of modern pilgrimages.

As these contracts were handed the performers, Bürgermeister Bauer and Ludwig Lang each addressed them in inspiring speeches, whose burning words admonished them to harmony and co-operation, laying stress upon the fact that the smallest role and the smallest impersonator conduce to the success of the whole. To him who was not willing to conform to the demands made upon him was given the warning in unmistakable tones of immediate dismissal.

One young man has already been made to feel the heavy hand of discipline, when in a moment of anger he committed a deed unworthy one who would tread the stage of the Passion Play. In the loss of his role the mother's heart was sorely smitten, but the boy had to suffer his humiliation. Another son of Oberammer-

gau became guilty of conduct unbecoming a participant in the sacred drama. Anticipating the loss ofhis role, and feeling he could not bear the consequent disgrace, he left his home and family with only an hour's warning. In shame and sorrow he is now paying the self imposed penalty of his own folly.

That these people have the same weaknesses, the same passions, the same failings as the rest of humanity, so long as they are born into the same world, must never be forgotten, but it can also be seen that even the approach of the Passion Play is not without its influence in arousing conscience as to the fittness of its performers, however far short it may fall in producing blameless lives.

A further reminder to the hyper-critical as well as the blind enthusiast may be in place, viz. that the Oberammergauers, even in presenting to the world that tragedy of nineteen centuries ago in living, moving, speaking figures of modern time, are no less human than were those disciples with their doubting Thomas, faithless Peter, and treacherous Judas, who in personal, physical relationship *walked* with the Master in the days of ancient Jerusalem.

That the Oberammergauer should not have his mind taken up unduly with frivolous things on the eve of the Passion Play, no amusements, no gaieties are permitted in the village from the beginning of the Passion year.

During the winter preceding the Passion Play, *die Faschingszeit,* or carneval season before lent, is not celebrated in Oberammergau, it being held as an unsuitable preliminary to the sacred drama of the

Passion of our Lord. In fact it is a lenten season in Oberammergau from the beginning of the rehearsals in January until the Play is over in September.

Even a wedding, which in the Bavarian Highlands is the occasion for the greatest festivity, the feasting and drinking, singing and dancing, sometimes lasting for days, is in Oberammergau at this season the mildest of affairs. The couples, therefore, who reckon upon the hilarities of an old time *Hochzeit* as a remembrance to be carried with them the rest of their lives, deliberately postpone their nuptials until after the Passion season when weddings may again become the fashion.

From the beginning of the year the rehearsals take place almost nightly in the Rath Haus, or at the rehearsal theater across the way. On March 13th the first music rehearsal was held in the Passion Play Theater, the snow having been shovelled off the open stage the week before. No one is permitted to attend any rehearsal except the actual participants in the act or scene being rehearsed. This being a music rehearsal, however, the villagers clustered outside the building to hear again the music of chorus and orchestra which rose in great volumes above the open stage, and was carried far into the village.

That Sunday afternoon the people stood about in groups, quietly listening, exchanging with their neighbours a word of comment here, a criticism there, as the different voices were recognized and compared with those of ten years before. To me there was a thrilling solemnity which suggested a resurrection, as I heard again that music of Dedler, which had stirred me so many times before.

By special permission of official Passion Play
Photographer Traut, Munich 1910

Peter — the town crier — announcing the hour for rehearsals

On the 7th of May there was given the first complete dress rehearsal, when the doors of the theater were opened to all the people in the village, and in the valley of the Ammer. On that day the Oberammergau Hausfrau had the only opportunity she will probably have during the season to witness the performance, as that was the only day her house was not filled with guests for whose entertainment and comfort she must provide month after month, when she is relegated to the kitchen, with not a moment for any other thought than that of a *provident provider of provender.*

Four days later was the general rehearsal for members of the press, while on the 16th, the Monday after Whitsuntide, was given the first performance for the general public, when from that day on Oberammergau became the final station in pilgrimages from every corner of the civilized world.

Happiness and Heart Aches of the Passion Play Players.

ON that memorable 12th day of October 1909, when the black balls and white balls were being counted out of the urn in the council chamber, the men of Oberammergau stood about the Rath Haus, unable to work at their wood carving, or to think of anything except but the proceedings in that locked room, while at home the women sat waiting for the first news from husbands, sons, and fathers, for whose steps they now eagerly listened.

When the doors were at last opened, and the words of immutable fate were given out, every Oberammergauer was at once cast down with disappointment, or lifted up with new honours, as his place or rôle in the coming Play turned out to be lower or higher than he had hoped for, or deemed were his deserts. Years, a life time, do these people patiently wait for the rôles they have dreamed of and aspired to with a longing of which we can have only a faint conception.

Herr Rochus Lang, the Herod of the Passion Play in 1900, in whose house I lived for a time, first led me to appreciate this aspiration.

"In the beginning" he said to me one day, "I had only small, unimportant parts, was one of many in tableaux and in folk groups on the stage; then later I impersonated an insignificant character. — It took me just *fifty three years* to get my Herod."

Notwithstanding his satisfaction in "*getting his Herod*", this had not been the extreme height of his ambition, for with a trace of regret he added:

"I never got as far as the Christus, they didn't think me good enough, but at last they gave it to my son Anton, and I had the satisfaction of seeing my boy have the rôle I could not reach."

The pride and pleasure, however, with which this potter played his part as a crowned head in royal robes, and with a golden scepter, his handsome face and fine figure contributing their share to the kingly impersonation, made him one of the striking characters on that Oberammergauer stage. The decisions of 1910, however, did not bring him the triumphs of the previous decade. He had lost his Herod, as the rôle was given a younger man, Hans Mayr, son of the late Josef Mayr, former Christus of the Passion Play.

"Of course it hurt," he said to me on my return to Oberammergau, "but I myself know that I am too old for the part now, though" he added with characteristic sly humour, "I might have run a pencil through my beard and blackened some of these white hairs."

Rochus Lang's naturally happy disposition came to his support in the loss of the rôle he had waited for more than half a life time, and in the lesser rôle of Dariabus, though only a Pharisee, he saw another take *his Herod* without a grudging thought. Besides there was for him the comfort that he was to be the understudy for the new Herod, and always ready to don again the royal robes when called upon.

The steps that led up to *Herod* are those taken by every Oberammergauer in his evolution from a

Rochus Lang as King Herod of 1900

lower to a higher rôle, namely, a growing fitness in character, appearance, or histrionic ability. While the intervening years between the Passion seasons are years of hope and promise to the young, who wait with keen expectancy the return of the decennial play, to those on the downward incline of life they are often years of bitter grief and pitiful disappointment.

When the Passion Committee of 1900 came to elect the performers for that season, it was self evident that Josef Mayr, the Christus of three decennial plays, those of 1870, '80, '90, had grown too old to enact for the fourth time the character of the Son of Mary. The Committee not only had the task of finding a new Christus, — one suitable in his life as well as in appearance for the impersonation of Jesus of Nazareth, — but it was also confronted with the unpleasant duty of taking from Mayr the honour that had been his for thirty years, and of consoling him for the loss of a rôle that had grown to him as dear as his life.

Sad as was the duty of the Committee it was plain, and to Mayr it was explained, that he was no longer young enough for the part, a fact he had hardly dared acknowledge to himself; that the beard streaked with grey, the hair already frosted, was no longer suited to the youthful Jesus: that the face which had hitherto borne the lofty, almost superhuman expression of the Divine, had now become too seamed with the furrows of years to show the sacredness of sorrow without its scars in one whose earthly life measured only a span of thirty years. Mayr broke down and wept like a child.

"I know" he said, "that I am too old for the part; but I had so hoped in spite of all you might still have left me my Christus."

As a partial compensation Mayr was given the rôle of Prologue created expressly for him that year,

Rochus Lang and his grandson Ludwig 1910
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

and a little later he was made Bürgermeister of the village, but he never recovered from the loss of his Christus. Three years later, when ordered to Munich for a surgical operation, he spent his last hours before

leaving home out at the theater building, alone. He never returned from the Munich hospital. Into the beyond he carried the wound in his heart still unhealed.

Johann Lang, a man of unusual ability and exceptional gifts, was for many years the honoured head of the community of Oberammergau. As Bürgermeister for twenty four years he was the worthiest representative the village had ever known.

Possessing a singular power over men he had become, like a Moses and Aaron all in one, the leader of the people in all their undertakings. He was the soul of the Passion Play, the director and manager of its stage, and the instructor of all its actors. From his youth he himself had played the rôle of Caiaphas, and so remarkable had been his interpretation of this character that in his one great rôle he had grown to be an Oberammergauer Joe Jefferson.

When the Passion Play of 1900 came around, Bürgermeister Lang had not only grown old, but he was enfeebled by an incurable malady. His voice had become that of an ill man, and no longer had the resonance of the Caiaphas of former years. Again was the duty of that Committee plain, but the hardest with which it had ever been confronted. It fell to his two nephews, Ludwig Lang, the present director, and Guido Lang, the postmaster, to tell the Bürgermeister of the decision against him, and of the necessity of choosing a new Caiaphas.

These two men of unswerving character and unflinching adherence to the best interests of the village, regardless alike of personal or family considerations,

Josef Mayr as Prologist of 1900

broke to the Bürgermeister the Committee's unalterable decision.

At the news of his being dispossessed of the rôle he had fairly created himself, and in which it had never occutred to him he could be supplanted, that fine old head bent, crushed, humiliated, and with tears and sobs choking the already weakened voice, he wailed out:

"Had I never again been chosen as Bürgermeister, I should not have minded, but that you have taken from me my Caiaphas — this will be my death!"

With the heroism of a martyr, he continued at his post, not only as Bürgermeister, but as director of the Passion Play. Though his body was rapidly giving way to undermining disease, yet with the energy of old-time determination, and the fire of an unconquerable spirit, he would rise from his bed of illness, and go out into the rain and storm to attend the rehearsals. Night after night for months this brave man, though dying by inches, continued to instruct the actors in their several rôles, returning to his home after all was over in a state of complete exhaustion, only to throw himself again upon his bed of pain and fever.

At last the Play commenced; and Bürgermeister Lang, though with the hand of death upon him, still stood at his post behind the scenes, directing with a masterful hand. At the third performance of the season, it was noticed that he could only stand by supporting himself against the *coulissen.* This was the last time he stepped upon the stage. Late in the afternoon he was found outside the theater building

Bürgermeister Lang as Caiaphas

in a state of conscious helplessness that was heart-rending. With quivering lips, and trembling hands which he reached out to the music director, he stammered:

"It is the end. Ludwig is now everything and I am nothing." (Ludwig Lang was Assistant Director.)

As to the cry that the loss of his Caiaphas would be his death this proved true. Before many days had passed they laid this able man, this hero, away in the little churcyard.

To the other disappointed one, Josef Mayr, was given the Bürgermeister's staff of office as a further, though only partial compensation for the loss of his rôle. I say partial, for no office, no honour, no preferment could ever fully compensate an Oberammergauer for the loss of his rôle as Christus in the Passion Play.

The successor of Bürgermeister Lang in the rôle of Caiaphas was Sebastian Lang, whose impersonation of the Pharisaical bigot, with the broad philacteries and the breastplate of twelve precious stones, was hardly less remarkable than that of the Bürgermeister. Notwithstanding his unusual histrionic ability, a fine physique, and a sonorous voice that rang out like a deep toned bell in the great theater, yet this Caiaphas was destined to suffer the same pangs of disappointment as his predecessor.

A new Caiaphas was chosen for 1910. To Sebastian Lang fell the role of Annas, a second one in importance to that of Caiaphas, who, according to the tradition held by the Oberammergauers, was the son-in-law of Annas, but in the impersonation of Sebastian

Photograph by Lorenz Fränzl, Munich

Anton Lang in his work shop 1910

Lang the role of Annas has been made to have an importance it has never had before.

As to this Caiaphas of 1910, his cup of happiness was full when the white balls told their story of his election. He told me he had not expected this honour, but he left me no doubt, that he held it as the greatest of his life, as he responded to my congratulations in all modesty, but with the serenity of one who had attained the acme of his earthly ambitions.

While there may be no keener sorrow than the disappointment of an Oberammergauer in loosing his rôle in the Passion Play, there is also no greater happiness than that of this same Oberammergauer when he has realized the dream of a life time in *getting* his Caiaphas or his Herod, his Pontius Pilate or his Judas Iscariot, above all else his Christus.

On the day that the Passion Play Committee was electing the performers of the summer the family of Rochus Lang sat at their noon day meal in the low-ceilinged room on the banks of the Ammer. Into this room a young man suddenly rushed exclaiming:

"Toni! I congratulate you! You have got the rôle of Christus!" Then turning to the father, "And you are to be the Herod!"

Rochus Lang, who is never overwhelmed by the unexpected — not even joy, hardly tragedy could bring him out of that placidity which is peculiarly his own — replied with his never failing spontaneous drollery:

"Then two crowns have fallen upon this house — one a crown of thorns, the other a *zackige*." (pointed one.)

As to "*Toni*", the son Anton, then a young man of twenty five, he fell back from the bench upon which he sat against the wall, his face as white as death. Finally, without uttering a word he left the room. His joy was of the kind that, combined with surprise, sometimes kills; for Anton Lang is of that

Anton Lang and Family 1910
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

refined, sensitive make-up that feels more than it can express. Oppressed, however, with the sense of responsibility that had come to him, its burden outweighed the measure of his happiness.

Young and untried as he was, (he had never had a rôle of importance), with no experience, no training, except that which was to come from the old Bürger-

meister, — who by the way, had once suggested to him he had better go out in the fields and try his voice, as he might be given a rôle some day — this youth had no other obvious recommendation than a modest, pleasing appearance, and a spotless character. To follow in the footsteps of Josef Mayr, who as an actor could hardly have a rival, required a courage that was yet to come.

With what success Anton Lang filled his rôle, the world has already borne testimony. When 1900 came, therefore, his re-election as Christus was no surprise aither to himself or to the community. He is no longer under the parental roof, however, but now has a home of his own; for the pretty daughter of Jakob Rutz — the village blacksmith, and leader of the chorus in the Passion Play, where Mathilda had been the leading soprano — has become his wife.

Three children in the mean time have come to them, the eldest of whom Carl, has a face that suggests a little Christus *Kopf* (head) painted by Raphael himself. When I saw the father drawing pictures for his little Carl, and filling them in with coloured crayon, I remembered the stories he had told me of his own boyhood. It was his greatest delight to draw and paint the figures with which he ornamented the stable door, the walls of his own room, as well as of the cow stalls, and every plank and rough board he could find.

Had the finances of the family justified, he would have followed his natural bent and studied to be an artist, or a poet, the dreams of his childhood; but Anton Lang is not of those who quarrel with fate, and so he cheerfully took up the work of his father, and became a potter.

In the capable and practical Frau Mathilda, who as a complement to the artistically inclined husband, has been a kind of balance wheel, Anton Lang has found

Carl — 1910
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

one of his greatest blessings, which he happily never fails to recognize. Though only a potter, this little wife has stimulated him into giving his pottery an artistic touch, and in 1906 he sent some of his work to the Nuremberg Exhibition where he was awarded a medal.

There is no room, however, in the heart of Anton Lang for personal pride, or self exaltation. Though since 1900 he has seen much of the world, and has acquired a certain self possession through its contact, he is otherwise unchanged. Immediately after the Play of 1900, in company with four other performers of the Passion Play, he made a journey to Rome, where he was kindly, benevolently received by Pope Leo XIII, who sent him away with blessings, and later bestowed upon him the order of *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice.*

On his return from Rome he was invited to spend a week on the estate of Countess Windischgrätz in Austria, where he was the recipient of many attentions. The next year he accepted an invitation to spend a month in England as the guest of a well-known English family. On their wedding day Anton and Mathilda received, among the innumerable rememberances from distinguished people, and congratulatory telegrams from many foreign countries, a beautiful wedding present from the dowager Queen Margherita of Italy.

Notwithstanding all these marks of favour and consideration, Anton Lang is unharmed, unspoiled. With a simple, gentle dignity, he still receives the visitors, who call upon him in season and out of season, in his blue work-apron, his hands stained with clay and his hair grey with potter's dust.

It is this perfect naturalness, with the lack of self-consciousness, that is the charm of many an Oberammergauer, whether he be the impersonator of a regal role, or only a fireman in the wings, whether he be the Christus, or only one of the multitude in the street scenes of Jerusalem.

Marie Mayer
— Magdalena —
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

One of the first visits on my return to Oberammergau in the winter of 1909—1910, was to the family of Johann Zwinck, my old friend Judas. His youngest daughter Ottilie had been chosen as the Mary for the coming Play. How charmingly modest and naive she was as I put my arms about her in congratulation upon receiving this rôle!

As we sat in the quaint low-ceilinged room, with its huge green-tile stove, more than a hundred years old, there was much to tell, for nearly five years had gone by since I had been in Oberammergau. In her work-apron, covered with splotches of paint — for she had been helping her father in painting the floors and decorating the walls of the old-fashioned house preparatory to receiving guests for the Passion Play — there was no trace of embarassment, no nervous movement of hands or feet.

As perfectly at ease as she was unconscious, yet with a gentle reserve that is characteristic of the Oberammergauer, she told me a story that thrilled

me to the innermost with its simplicity and earnestness.

"It was the 12th of last October," she began: "Father had gone to the church at eight o'clock in the morning, and from there to the Rath Haus, where the Committee (of which he is a member) was to ballot for the last time in choosing the actors for the Play. I kept watching for him to come back, but he did not come, though he had promised to return soon after the church service.

"I kept looking, and kept saying, why doesn't he come?" *(Hab' immer 'guckt und immer gesagt warum ist er nicht gekommen?)* she said, as she again peered through the windows in an involuntary movement in rememberance of that anxious expectation.

"Finally he came!" *(Endlich kam er!)* her voice vibrating even now with the recollection. "I saw, as he came up to the door, that he was terribly excited, for he was deathly pale, as he always is when under great excitement, and my heart sank as hope left me.

"When the door opened I could not ask him a word. I stood perfectly still. Then he came toward me, took me by the hand, and, the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said: I wish you joy, you have got your rôle! (Ich wünsche Dir Glück, Du hast Deine Rolle bekommen!) And you didn't get yours? (Und Du die Deine nicht?) I said, as I saw he was still so excited."

"We had not expected that two principal rôles would be assigned to one family, as that had not been customary, and so the father had said that he would willingly give up his Judas if I might have the Maria; and now as he told me that he had received his old

rôle again, and that he would still be Judas once more, the tears continued to roll down his face — tears of joy and gratitude."

As to her own emotions, this self-contained little woman of Oberammergau said:

Ottile Zwinck
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

"So long as I remained with the father I kept back my own tears, but only until I was alone, then . . . . . Ten years I had thought of this hour; ten years I had hoped and prayed — so often prayed,

even before the Play of 1900, but I was too young then, and not very strong. I had thought to myself always, if only I might have this rôle, *dann wünsche ich mir Nichts mehr!* (then I should want nothing more) and now it has all come to pass and I am so happy."

The delicate face, radiant with the rememberance of the joy of that day, the mounting flush of an inner delight showing through the fair skin, told me more even than her words. Here was a happiness so deep, so immeasurable, that, in all the wide world there was nothing more after the rôle of the Holy Mother — nothing more after once living the thoughts and agonies of the Sorrowing Mother of Jesus.

Would she ever marry, if she could know that she might again have her Mary? To this question she answered what I knew every other Oberammergauer maiden would have said, that no marriage could ever tempt her to give up the certainty of playing the part of Mary.

Was this then the Oberammergauer's love for a sacred memorial? Was it religious zeal? Or was it simply an overpowering love of the dramatic? Financial gain it could not be, for no young girl ever experienced any such emotions for a business enterprise.

The summer preceding the Passion Play Ottilie was staying with friends in Munich. One day a letter came from her father saying that a play was to be given in the village for the summer guests, and, if she wished to come home, she might have the principal rôle, Claudia, in this religious play of "Sebastian".

Ottile Zwinck as Claudia in the Play of Sebastian

"At once," she said "I told my friends I must go home, for I felt I *must* play this part. Oh! how I love to act! It is my greatest happiness! I came, and when I played my part, people began to say, 'Here is the Maria for the Passion Play'. Then it was that father said he would willingly give up his Judas if I might have the Mary. This made me very sad, for, though I wished more than all else in the world that I might at last have *my Mary,* I knew down in my heart that it would hurt the father to give up his Judas."

When asked if she had rehearsed her part before her father for his criticism, this Judas being held by many as the best actor on the Oberammergau stage, she replied:

"I cannot act before the father; and when he reads to me the lines, telling me how I should say them, I say nothing to him, but in my own mind I *think* how I shall speak and act, and then, when I am alone, I can put my whole self in my rôle."

She told me that she felt no embarassment in playing before others. "It is only before the father that I am auxious" *(. . . . nur vor dem Vater bin ich ängstlich).*

As to the father of Ottilie, it is the third time he has been given the rôle of Judas, having played the part in 1890 and in 1900. He is now fifty nine years old, though this should be spoken lightly, as he neither looks nor feels, much less acts his age. On account of his years, however, he had hardly expected to be chosen again; but his remarkable impersonation of the betrayer decided the Committee that none other should fill this rôle than the painter Johann Zwinck.

Johann Zwinck, painting his house 1910

From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

It is this *Maler Hans,* as he is familiarly called by his friends, who, in the secular plays that are often given at other seasons in Oberammergau, always plays the part of the comedian, and his appearance on the stage is the invariable signal for a storm of applause. With a figure so thin and so alert as to suggest an animated caricature, with spider like legs, and long arms, whose very hands, restless and nervous as they are, express any emotion he chooses to present, and with keen grey eyes that fairly dance with furtive amusement under a mass of reddish brown hair that curls up close to his head when not pulled out straight by force of persistent combings — this man himself is a piece of comedy incarnate.

As Judas, however, these same hands, these same eyes, in fact the whole personality, all become those of the betrayer. An American woman, who had been much impressed with this man's impersonation of Judas, once said to me:

"I wouldn't meet that man for anything! I shouldn't ever want to know him! That he is a Judas I am perfectly sure. He must be the traitor he appears. It is all too real!"

Yet, this imitation Judas, under the outside cover, is one of the simplest, most ingenuous creatures I have ever known. He is the same Johann Zwinck, who, as a younger man, in 1870 and 1880 enacted the part of John the beloved disciple, which impersonation is spoken of today as one of the finest that has ever been given. An Oberammergauer has told me that the most distinct recollection of her childhood was the beautiful John as portrayed by this present day Judas.

"In my heart I am not a Judas" he has said to me in the simplicity of confidence, for to me he has unfolded much of his inner life, and his devoted friendship I hold among my treasured possessions carried away from Oberammergau. It is his hands I have held in mine, as he has stood trembling, his whole body convulsed with overwhelming grief in the presence of death — the sudden taking away of an afflicted son a few weeks before the beginning of the Passion Play.

This Judas has lived through tragedies, but he is the same believing, hopeful man he was when he filled the rôle of the beloved disciple, and dipped into the same dish with the prototype of the Master.

There is another man in Oberammergau, none the less gifted as an actor, and possibly none the less able to fill the trying rôle of the betrayer, who, without grudge or envy, has hoped and waited patiently for many a decade that he might be awarded the rôle of Judas. This man is none other than the genial, sympathetic, happy hearted Anton Lechner, teacher of drawing in the wood carving school, and one of the best actors in Oberammergau.

He was chosen, however, as prologue, one of the most strenuous rôles of the Passion Play, as it requires his intermittent appearance on the stage all day long. He is still on the upper side of fifty, with an exuberance of spirits that spreads its contagion where ever he goes. No company in the little village is complete without Herr Lechner, who never takes himself seriously enough to be troublesome.

He tells of himself, that sometimes when he has had hot words with his neighbour, he often finds himself the next day in such friendly and familiar relationship with his antagonist of the day before, that he has to be reminded of his quarrel with this particular person before he can adjust himself sufficiently to comply with the demands of ordinary self respect, to say nothing of offended dignity. Even then he *makes a botch of it* he says, for the temper wont last even as long as the memory.

In explanation of the figure 13, which he wears in his tie as a stick pin, he told me that this *hoodoo* number was his pet numeral, which had repeated itself so often in his life, that he held to it in defiance of all the ill luck it is supposed to forbode. With his birthday on the 13th, his name day the 13th, his wedding day twice 13 (26th), his house even is numbered 13, which he laughingly said had kept many an American from lodging with him during the Passion Play, a fact that seemed to serve him more amusement than it did chagrin.

The Judas rôle — not the Judas character — is a sort of heir-loom in the Lechner family, it having been played by both father and grandfather. In 1830 and '40 the grandfather, Johann Lechner, filled the rôle. The next decennium it fell to the son Gregor, one of the best wood-carvers in Oberammergau, who became the Judas of 1850, '60, '70, '71 and '80.

When 1890 came around, Gregor Lechner was 71 years old, a man in falling health, having had an accident in hauling logs brought down from the mountains. He nevertheless begged and pleaded for his

Judas once more, claiming he could still play as well as ever the rôle in which he had starred with such honour and success. When he found himself actually dispossessed of his rôle, the poor old man, in a frenzy

Gregor Lechner as Judas

of despair, fairly went on his knees imploring the Committee to give him back his Judas.

The inopportune words of comfort from his son Anton, which the father took to be nothing less than a justification of that heartless, soulless corporation

— the Committee — which had robbed him of his Judas, so cut him to the quick, so incensed him, that for two or three months (as the son told me) he could not bring himself to talk to a boy who had not spirit enough to resent an injury and insult to a helpless father.

That he was given the smaller part of Simon of Bethany was no compensation for the loss of his Judas. Heart-broken, humiliated, he never rallied, and died the following April. Little wonder that it should be the heart's desire of the son to follow in the footsteps of a father to whom this rôle meant so much, and who bore the name of being the greatest actor of his time on the Oberammergau stage.

Soon after my return to Oberammergau, I met Thomas Rendl, the apostle Peter of 1900. Bowed with years, his long white hair falling about the strong, fine face, he looked like a father in Israel. As I took his roughened hand in mine, and felt the warm clasp of an old friend (one with whom I had once danced a Highland Polka at an Oberammergau wedding) I wondered what I should say to this old patriarch of seventy-two by way of consolation for the loss of his beloved rôle of Peter.

During these first days in Oberammergau expressions of tender sympathy were continually alternating with those of happy cheer, while visits of condolence were as much the order of my days as those of congratulation. At last when I told this hoary apostle of my regret that I should not see him again as that stalwart disciple, the foundation rock of Christendom, reminding him however, of the many important rôles

with which he had already been honoured, the shadow that my words of consolation had called up suddenly lifted, and his rugged face lit with a glow of pride and satisfaction as he said:

"Yes, I was Joseph of Arimathea in 1870; was Pontius Pilate twice — in 1880 and '90 — had the rôle of Peter in 1900; and now that of Simon of Bethany. Then comes the end". *(dann kommt der Schluss).*

Thomas Rendl 1910
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

He had been playing in the Passion Play since 1850 — sixty years — and now he was in reality nearing the end. When I suggested that seventy-two was not so old after all, that he might live to see several decades yet, and again take part in the Passion Play, remembering that one man in Oberammergau had been on the stage in 1820, he replied:

"O no, I would not have it so. To be old and not be myself, to live and lose my faculties, that I do not want."

Alone in the little house at the end of village, his children all with homes of their own, the mother lying for many a year in the churchyard, he still carves the little figures he has been making for a life time. A feeling of deep sadness swept over me when we had parted, as I looked after the bent form pushing before him a little hand-cart which had carried into the village a load the old arms could no longer bear.

The mantle of this apostle has now fallen on Andreas Lang, one of the best actors as well as wood-carvers in the village. He had ambitions that reached out even beyond the rôle of Peter, up to that of Pontius Pilate; but his light heart and sunny nature would never permit him to look upon any disappointmen, however keen, in the light of a tragedy and here at least there is no real heart-ache.

There is a singular fitness in the order of things concerning the bearer of the rôle of the Roman Ruler, in that the head (ruler) of the community of Oberammergau again appears as Pilate in Jerusalem, carrying himself with the dignity which marked his enactment of this part in 1900.

Nearly ten years ago, the year after the Passion Play of 1900, on a certain festival occasion I sat in a company of Oberammergauers at a table beside the beloved disciple John, who was the son of Thomas Rendl, the Apostle Peter. I asked some one near me if this son, Peter Rendl, would probably have the same rôle in 1910. The reply came in a whisper:

"No; he will be too old for that rôle in ten years, but don't speak of it to him, for he cannot bear to have it even mentioned."

At last the long-dreaded, long-hoped-for year came and the rôle of the loved disciple was indeed awarded another. Owing to his continued youthful appearance, Peter Rendl had twice played this rôle; but the years

Peter Rendl as John — 1900

had rolled up against him, and now he was forty years old, too old by far for that youth whom tradition holds as the cousin of our Lord, and many years His junior.

"I am only Joseph of Arimathea now", said Peter Rendl, when we met again, in a half apologetic tone, and with a sad smile. I could not look directly into his face, for I felt I must read there a secret sorrow at which I had no right to steal even a glance. I wondered, however, just how much it had cost him to give up his beloved John. I asked him no questions, for I could still hear that whisper at my side:

"Don't speak of it to him, for he cannot bear to have it mentioned."

Alfred Bierling, a youth of eighteen, had been chosen as the new John, and in the gentle manner and attractive face, which lights up with a rare beauty when he is speaking, one reads here that the Committee has done well. He is too young to have had any histrionic experience — that is yet to come — but his records with both his teachers and his pastor tell the story of a boy worthy in every way to be a beloved disciple.

At the home of his father, the goldsmith, where I found him at work, with the soft, waving hair falling about his face, making him look the ideal youthful John, he told me the simple story of his surprise and pleasure on that memorable 12th of October. While he was at work (he is a plumber by trade) his father brought him word that he had been chosen as the beloved disciple. He could not, dared not, believe it at first, and it was not until his friends began to congratulate him, that he came to realize the truth.

"Then" he told me, "I could work no more that day. I wanted to get away and be alone, where no one could see me, and I could see no one, and so I went

out of the village and into the woods. When I came back it was nearly night."

Again I wanted to ask no questions, for this boy's heart was too sacred a thing for me to probe into

Alfred Bierling — John 1910

further. He had been alone taking account of himself, and no one had a right to penetrate into the inner sanctuary of even a boy.

Late one afternoon I overtook an old man who carried a little milk-bucket in one hand to get the

milk for his evening cup of coffee, and in the other a stick with which to steady himself on the icy snow. It was Barabbas, the Robber. He had grown stout, but was very feeble and wheezy. When I asked him if he were to be the Barabbas again in the coming Play, he replied in the good old Bavarian dialect, which has neither gutterals, nor troublesome case endings:

„Jetzt ko i' nimma" (I can't any more).

Then he went on to tell me of the pain in his feet, *(„Fuass Leida")* and the other rheumatic pains that had overtaken him in his old age. Glad to be recognized as the Barabbas of former years, yet here was one, who gave up the honours of bygone days without any other pain than this *„Fuass Leida"*.

A few days later I overtook him again, hobbling along in the snow, when he talked to me of his army days; for Barabbas is one of the old veterans of "66" and of "70". In the latter year the Passion Play, after a few performances, was interrupted by a call to arms, when the shepherd's crooks of the disciples going up to Jerusalem, was exchanged for the gun of a soldier marching on Paris and Sedan. At that time the Passion Play was postponed until after the close of the Franco-Prussian War, when it was resumed in 1871.

My Barabbas, then, had been to Paris — not as a globe trotter, but as a fighter behind a gun. He had many a tale to tell of the days when he could shoot in righteous (?) warfare — not as a highway robber. As we walked along at a slow, rheumatic gait, the village church bells began to ring out a call for prayer.

Instantly the Tyrolese hat with its feather was off the old bald head, as he stood for a moment in response

Barabbas of 1900

From Mrs. Richards's kodak views 1910

to the call; and I thought: "Here is one of the Oberammergauers who has not *lived into his role,* else

Barabbas the Robber would hardly have stopped in the middle of the street to say his noon day prayers."

As a final number in the list of the disappointed, there was one other who had shared the heart-aches of the Oberammergauer. Instead of the little child who bore the name of an American God mother, and to whose appearance in the Passion Play I had looked forward, also to whom, after the manner of the Oberammergauer, I had hoped might sometime come the role of the blessed Maria — there was only a little grave in the churchyard. Here, with Bürgermeister Lang, his daughter, and grand daughter, lay buried one more hope that failed of its fruition.

The humble beast of the triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

Ludwig II.
The Romantic Ruler of Bavaria, and Patron King of Oberammergau.

OF all the tales of romance, few have equalled those in real life which have had their nucleus in the strange story of Ludwig II. As no one has borne a closer relationship to Oberammergau, no series of sketches, either of the people or of their Passion Play, would be complete without a leaf bearing the outlines of this romantic ruler of the Kingdom of Bavaria.

The mystery and pathos of Ludwig's life began in a lonely childhood, though in a royal household, and within palace walls. His early training was severely simple — so simple and so severe as might have stunted even a less sensitive child than this beautiful, dreamy eyed boy, destined for the crown and scepter of a king.

In the severity of its rules and regulations, and in the extremes of even its privations, his early youth was barren of all indulgence. This may be judged from the single fact that the queen mother required him as a child, with his younger brother Otto, to eat the plainest food, which the humblest boy in the land would hardly have envied, and that too from a bare wooden table. His was not the traditional golden spoon, already at birth in the mouth of every son of royal blood; there was scarcely a silver fork on that uninviting table where he had his frugal meal.

The simple life on the material side, and reduced down to its first principles, was held by these royal parents as a wise regime for the future King of the young Kingdom of Bavaria, which together with this royal son was just growing up, and needed a healthy foundation.

Out of the old Duchy of Bavaria had sprung with a single leap this new Kingdom, only a few years older than Ludwig himself. Its first king was Ludwig's grandfather, Ludwig I, whose artistic bent was the principal inheritance of the grandson Ludwig II.

This love of art and the beautiful, far from being an abnormal manifestation, was but the natural outcome of inheritance, both national and parental. While the Bavarian's love of the drama has been the growth of centuries, Bavaria's royal family, the Wittelsbachers, have always been lovers of art, many of its reigning heads contributing at personal sacrifice toward its protection and patronage in their capital.

It is to Ludwig I that the Bavarian Capital owes her position today as one of the art centers of the world, while to the grandson, the second Ludwig, is the Isar Athens indebted for the incomparable opera seasons, and Wagner Music Festivals, which have made Munich to-day the Mecca of song.

Very early did the young Crown Prince give evidence of an impressionable nature, and that susceptibility to the influences of art and the romantic which later characterized the king. This love of art, especially music and the drama, was destined to be the controlling influence of his life. This was true from its very beginning, and even after the beautiful spirit

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King Max II and Queen Marie with their children the Princes Ludwig and Otto, in the royal garden at Hohenschwangau

began to loosen from its moorings, drifting away into the regions of the impossible, it was always borne along by song and poetic illusion.

The joys of the young Ludwig were few, and his distractions rare — so rare that the chief and almost only source of real pleasure was in the paintings and frescoes of the palace in Munich, and in the old castle of Hohenschwangau, an ancient seat in the Bavarian Highlands, where the delicate health of King Max obliged the royal family to spend much time.

It is easy to imagine this dark-eyed boy of artistic temperament, usually alone, going from one great hall to another, roaming over the old castle in the mountains, as well as the historic *Residenz* in Munich, gazing with growing interest on the paintings and statuary which adorned these old rooms with the great oak ceilings, and filled with the treasures of the House of Wittelsbach. Many of these pictures represented the heroic deeds of some old ancestor, while others illustrated the romantic legends of Teutonic lore.

Here were Lohengrin and the Swan; here was Siegfried with the vulnerable spot in his back; here were Wotan and Brunhilde; here were Tannhäuser and Parsival; here were the Walküre and the Knights of the Holy Grail; in fact nearly all the traditional characters of German legendary history looked out at him from some frescoed wall, or down from some painted panel, and to his aroused imagination they became realities.

When the young Ludwig was fifteen years old he heard for the first time the opera of Lohengrin, — that Lohengrin in whose romantic history he had revelled,

By permission of Piloty & Loehle, Munich

King Ludwig II at the age of 18

and whose pictures, with Elsa and the swan, had been the delight of his child heart. Lohengrin, together with Tannhäuser, the two early operas of Wagner, which up to this time had received only an occasional hearing even in Germany, made upon the sensitive, delicately attuned Ludwig a profound impression, such as stamped his whole after life.

To the imaginative young prince this music opened up a new world — a world of song, but peopled with familiar creatures whom he had long since known from the legendary figures and scenes in the frescoes of his ancestral halls. It was their voices he now came to hear. In a music, such as he had never dreamed of, they now spoke to him, and thrilled his very soul — this hungry soul of a lonely boy, with no other companionship than the invisible beings of his own imagination.

The author of this Lohengrin and Tannhäuser, Ludwig had held from the first in a wondering admiration which fell little short of reverence. With the keenest interest and sympathy he had followed Wagner's career, marked by struggles and disappointments — watching, waiting for the opportunity, when, as a royal patron, he could help this gifted being to a just realization of the great ideals which were clamouring for expression.

Among Ludwig's first acts, therefore, only a few weeks after his accession to the Bavarian throne (1864), when he was just a little past eighteen, was to call Richard Wagner to Munich. From comparative obscurity, even want, and that state of misery bordering on desperation in which the lack of recognition had

placed him, Wagner now found himself at court, the acknowledged favorite of a king — and what a king!

Richard Wagner — 1864
At the time he was called to Munich by King Ludwig
Published for the first time

One of the ineffaceable pictures in my memory is that of Ludwig II as I have seen him in Munich, leaving the *Residenz* for his daily drive through the

English Garden. Though the shadows of fate had already begun to settle upon his head, he was the ideal king and I shall always remember him as the handsomest, the most imposing creature I have ever seen.

It was this *kingly* king, who, with the magic wand of royalty made all things possible for the poet-musican, even to the production in the Court Theater of Munich, and under Wagner's personal direction, of all his operas, many of which had not obtained so much as a hearing elsewhere.

"Nothing less than this wonder-working king did it have to be", wrote Wagner at the time, "else I was done for, completely done for. In reality I had been forsaken by all my friends."

That King Ludwig's was a royal hand, stretched out to the sinking ship of a Wagner genius, is the debt of gratitude left to subsequent generations. Heinrich Porges, the great Wagnerian director, paid the highest tribute to Bavaria's King when he wrote:

"That the German people today should have *at all* the Meistersinger, the Ring of the Nibelungen, and Parsival, we have to thank, next to the genius of Richard Wagner, King Ludwig II."

With the munificence of a royal benefactor Ludwig now began to have plans drawn for a Wagner Opera House, a *Festspiel Haus,* where Wagnerian Opera could be given on a scale hitherto undreamed of in all Europe, and which should establish the prestige of Munich as a center of the music world.

Just back of the Palace grounds there lay at that time a malodorous suburb of narrow, alley like streets and unsightly buildings. Out of this back street chaos

was to arise a new and beautiful quarter, through which was to run, leading down to the Isar, a broad boulevard, lined with stately buildings, grassy plots and springing fountains.

A splendid bridge was to span the Isar, while on its further bank, surmounting a high position at the end of a long vista, was to stand the crowning point of the whole design — *The Wagner Festspiel Haus.* These wonderful plans and designs failed to find favour with the king's ministry, however, without whose co-operation there could be no execution. The economical and short sighted ministers of state, under the influence of the anti-Wagnerian party, then in its first glow of zealous opposition, cut short this project, not only as chimerical, but as a ruinous undertaking.

Time has proven, however, that Ludwig II was only in advance of his generation, for at last Munich has now, not only the beautiful *Prinz Regent* Strasse, with its new National Museum, said to be the finest building in Germany, together with many another projected building, on the site of that low sodden district Ludwig had planned to beautify, but also a Festspiel Haus, though the latter is on a different site from that projected by the far seeing king.

All this is but a belated carrying out of King Ludwig's own plans and ideas, on a somewhat smaller scale, but with many a detail which has been executed after his own designs. It is this Festspiel Haus, with its Wagner Festivals, that was first conceived and planned by Ludwig II, and which every year has become a shrine for music-loving pilgrims from all over

the world. Others reap today the reward, the honour, even the *name,* which rightfully belong to him whose spirit and ideals rose above the level, and out beyond the horizon of his own people.

It was with a single blow — that of disapproval from his ministry — that Ludwig was doomed to see destroyed his cherished work, over which he had dreamed and worked daily, hourly, for many months. Over the idealistic, super-sensitive spirit of the young king there swept the annihilating wave of disappointment. In his chagrin he saw his ideals shattered, and his whole future a meaningless chaos, without a single ray of promise.

To one of his intense feeling, and delicately poised nature — one whose spirit was already quivering in the ibalance, on the verge between genius and madness — the effect of this shock can hardly be overestimated. Then the removal of Wagner was hinted at, as his presence in Munich, with the repeated productions of his operas in the Hof Theater was held as a menace, not only to the finances of the court treasury, but to the young king whose imagination it was believed was too easily played upon by the fantastic Wagner with his exalted notions.

Ludwig was already too visionary, too overwrought, thought the old sages, for the political head of a nation. When he was finally made to understand that his love for the romantic, and for the music into which it had been incorporated, was held as an unhealthy symptom, and that the influence of his one friend Wagner was regarded as inimical to the welfare of

not only king but kingdom, there came his first trial, his first humiliation.

Thwarted in his one great plan, which he had meant for the honour and beauty of his capital, begrudged of his one inspiring friend, who had opened up to him a new world, and tinged the old with romance and song, the new-born hopes of being a patron of genius and art suddenly died in the heart of the young king. It was then, possibly, that there first began to darken that little cloud which overhung his destiny, and which presaged the coming gloom of distorted vision.

The immediate removal of Richard Wagner from the presence of the king was demanded, and, under the implied threat of revolution, finally effected. Without a word of contention Ludwig bowed to the dictates of his ministers, but the proud wounded spirit within rebelled. Wagner left Munich, but the king's heart, and the king's favour went with him.

King Ludwig's saving hand was again stretched out to Wagner from Munich, furnishing him the means to finish the Bayreuth Festspiel Haus — that building which, on a grander scale yet, should have adorned the capital city.

During the twenty years which lay between Wagner's first arrival in Munich, and his last days in Bayreuth, he occasionally came to the capital where he was always received by the king in private. As further proofs of Ludwig's unswerving devotion, were his own visits to Bayreuth, where many a happy hour was spent with his inspired friend, and where

he listened to his works produced on the stage which his own princely liberality had created.

It was not until 1882 that Ludwig became invisible to Wagner. This was Wagner's last visit to Munich. Well do I remember that evening when, at the performance of one of his own operas, Wagner was present at the Hof Theater for the last time, but he was not in the royal *loge,* nor at the king's side. The royal box was empty. King Ludwig, chagrined, and opposed in whatever direction he had attempted the carrying out of his great plans, which in fact as seen now would have redounded but to the advantage and glory of his capital, had gradually withdrawn from the outside world, to the inner one of his own romantic fancy.

He now rarely appeared in public, and seldom did the royal carriage take him beyond the daily drive in the English Garden, where guards were secretly posted along the route, lest he fall under the hand of an assassin, which he had come to fear in his unhappy hallucinations. To the hurt, humiliated king the world, which at first was full of beautiful dreams and bright hopes, had now grown dark and cruel, and he felt himself not only friendless, but in dread of impending evil.

No longer did his superb presence grace the royal box at the opera. On the contrary he was now accustomed to order for himself separate performances, when entirely alone and as sole spectator he could enjoy to the fullest, without being distracted by a curious audience. From the shadowy recesses of the royal box, and with no opera glasses turned in his

direction, he could now watch the stage with the delight of one who is freed from some great incubus.

In complete absorption, and with the keenest critical interest, this royal spectator followed the interpretation of players and singers, as well as every detail of stage management with which he was perfectly acquainted. Possart, the great actor and director of the Hof Theater, tells of the king's dislike of being the center point of opera glass observation. To him Ludwig once said:

"I myself can have no illusions in the theater so long as the people persist in staring at me continually, and in watching every expression of my face through their opera glasses. I want to look myself, but I don't wish to be an object to be gazed at by the crowd."

After a time he began to absent himself from Munich for weeks, then months together, retiring for indefinite periods to the old castle of Berg on Lake Starnberg, and to that of Hohenschwangau in the mountains. His return to the capital became less and less frequent, while his sojourn in these old castles was of longer and longer duration.

At last he began to have plans drawn for new castles in which not only his love for architectural beauty and artistic decoration might be gratified, but where he might withdraw himself entirely from contact with an unsatisfactory world, and live among the creations of art in Nature's own wild settings.

In an ideal region near the old Hohenschwangau of his childhood, on a high rock quite inaccessible

except from one side, was built the beautiful Neuschwanstein. In this castle were executed some of Ludwig's own architectural designs, while the interior decorations, painted by Munich artists, were scenes from the Nibelungen and other old Teutonic legends.

Then there was built the castle at Linderhof, near Oberammergau; another at Chiem See, while still another was projected — that of Falkenstein — which was to crown a great rock in a wonderfully picturesque spot of the mountains near Neuschwanstein and the old Hohenschwangau.

It was in these castles, amid sorroundings of an almost unparallelled prodigality, that the self-exiled king, cut off from all court as well as family relations in the capital, led an existence of the imagination. Like a medieval prince in sentimental fancy, and in his isolation from the rest of the world, he dwelt in habitations that were the product of an imagination that knew no bounds in its creations. These castles were embellished and adorned with a richness and profusion that suggested the dwelling place of an Oriental Potentate, rather than that of a XIX century King of a little Kingdom.

In an atmosphere of his own creation, and in the company of creatures he called up out of the mists of olden time, he was constantly in a world that had no part nor lot with the present, nor with realities. As some hero of the Nibelungen, as a Knight of the Holy Grail, or even as some historic emperor, his days were spent in poetic dreams and fantastic unrealities.

By permission of Piloty & Loehle, Munich

From the painting of A. T. Compton

Neuschwanstein

In the blue grotto at Linderhof, constructed to appear like that natural wonder at Capri, this magnificent king caused himself to be rowed in a boat, fashioned like a swan, in imitation of the Lohengrin of his early fancy.

It is good to know that Ludwig's world, this world of fancy, was peopled with noble creatures, with heroes of great deeds, and was beautiful, for he kept out of it the ugly people of reality. As a matter of fact he had the strongest aversion to homely people.

It is told of him that once on a state occasion he was confronted with one of his ministers, whose face was anything but good to look upon. Inspired with a horror of this man's *mis-fit* features, he urged his immediate dismissal from office. As this could not be reasonably effected, the king always turned his back upon this unfortunate man when he came into his presence, never being able to bring himself to believe that a face so *out of drawing,* and of such unsightly proportions, was fit for public view.

At his royal retreats in the mountains, Ludwig was undisturbed by the ugly faces he did not wish to look upon. In solitary grandeur, surrounded by the treasures of art in magnificent salons, with the beauties of Nature opened to him in glorious vistas through the casements of his mountain eyries and forest homes, he was always king.

When he drove through the mountains it was in the gorgeous state of a royal ruler. Roads were prepared for his coming; snow from the mountain tops was shovelled and packed on the highways, even in summer, that his gilded sleighs might dash over them in a wild, midnight sleigh ride.

While he had turned his back upon those of his capital, who had failed to understand and appreciate the intentions of their king, to the folk of the hills and forests he did not hide his face. To these sons of the soil, he was a kind of fairy king, who held out a lavish hand, and whose presence always brought prosperity and well being wherever he sojourned.

Instead of remaining in the great, cold, unfriendly city, he had come to their mountains, and these people now held him as their own, *their* Ludwig, their Highland Chieftain. Thus singularly close became the relation in which Ludwig II, the recluse, the unapproachable, stood to the people of the Bavarian Highlands, and the peasants of the forests.

Especially by the villagers of Oberammergau, which lay near the Castle at Linderhof, was Ludwig held in greatest affection. In 1871 the king came to see the Passion Play, which followed the close of the Franco-Prussian War of '70. When the Oberammergauers were sent to the front with the rest of the Bavarian troops, King Ludwig issued a special order, commanding Josef Mayr, the Christus of Oberammergau, to be kept in the commissary department in Munich, where his valuable life would not be endangered, and where his long hair need not be sacrificed to the exigencies of the battlefield.

It was in a separate performance given for him alone (as were the so-called "*Separat-Vorstellungen*" in the Munich Theater) that the lonely King of Bavaria sat in the rude Oberammergauer Theater. With no one beside him, no one in front or behind him, except his own suite, he gave himself up completely to the spirit

of the play, and the emotions awakened by the scenes on that open-air stage.

Of the impression made upon him by the Divine tragedy, as it was enacted by these simple people, there stands in Oberammergau today an everlasting record in marble and stone. At the outskirts of the village across the Ammer, where the mountains rise up directly behind like a great somber screen, there stands on an eminence against this background, a solitary piece of statuary — a crucifixion group of three figures of colossal size.

In glistening white marble it stands there in strange isolation, in a peculiar setting of Nature's own grandeur, and tells a unique story. To the humble people of this little mountain village this was a royal gift, and the giver was their king. Not only a lasting token of singular favour, such as King Ludwig conferred on no other class of his subjects, this gift was also an enduring testimony of appreciation of the aims and aspirations of a singular people, whose expression best found itself in religio-dramatic plays.

Graven into the marble of this gift, standing there on the mountain side, is the following inscription:

"Den kunstsinnigen und den Sitten der Väter
treuen Oberammergauern von
König Ludwig II
zur Erinnerung an die Passionsspiele."

"To the art-loving Oberammergauers, faithful to
the customs of their fathers, from
King Ludwig II
in rememberance of the Passion Play."

Photograph by Lorenz Fränzl, Munich

Crucifixion Group

"To the art-loving Oberammergauers" — — — these are the words which reveal the bond that drew King Ludwig, and held him a sympathetic patron of his lowly subjects in these mountains.

It was on this visit to the Passion Play that Ludwig invited the Christus and a number of the principal actors to dine with him in the evening at Linderhof. One of these men has since told me of that evening's experience; of the gentle graciousness with which they were entertained by their king; of how he talked with them of themselves, and of their Play; then of the royal presents they received on leaving at the hands of this magnificent being, for whom they would gladly have laid down their lives.

The experiences of Gregor Lechner, the Judas of that season, were the most thrilling of any in that company, as he was the only one who did not have a black coat in which to appear at the king's table, his *wedding garment* having been long since worn out (he was 51 years old), as was explained to me by his son Herr Anton Lechner, who told me the story in his own inimitable way.

Judas was obliged, therefore, to set out in his every day *Joppe* (jacket), but when he reached the castle, and was ushered into the regal splendour of Linderhof's halls by attendants in their powdered wigs and medieval livery, that *joppe* became the most oppressive thing he had ever worn. In an agonizing self consciousness of his mean appearance, he only pulled the *joppe* closer about him, as he stood in deepest humiliation near the door where he had entered.

Photograph by Christa, Oberammergau

Linderhof

As a lackey motioned him forward, Lechner pointed to his joppe, which had never seemed so hopelessly out of place before, stammering that he did not belong here, whereupon the lackey said to him:

"Go right along, his Majesty will only be pleased with your joppe."

At last he found himself in the presence of the wonderful King Ludwig, who made him so far forget himself, as well as the joppe, that he was soon pouring into the eager ears of the king all about himself, his Judas, the Passion Play, and the Father Daisenberger, who wrote other plays for them, a thing he said that seemed to afford the king the greatest amusement. That evening stood out paramount in the memory of Gregor Lechner, as it has with all the other Oberammergauers in that company.

One Christmas eve (1871), when the snows lay deep upon the mountains, Ludwig's carriage rolled over the road that leads from Linderhof to Oberammergau. He had come to make a Christmas pilgrimage, and to pray in the village church. With the religious feeling which characterizes exalted natures, he made his pilgrimage on foot to the church, having left his carriage at the entrance of the village.

In this Oberammergau church, according to the old Christmastide custom, there was displayed the usual *Weihnacht's Krippe,* a collection of figures beautifully carved in wood by the Oberammergauers of a century ago, and arranged to represent the Nativity. The king inspected this *Krippe,* wherein the Christ Child lay, with the keenest interest and manifest

pleasure, then knelt and prayed in that village church.

This historic group of the Nativity, carved more than a hundred years ago, consists of one hundred

King Ludwig II — 1871

human figures, and one hundred and twenty animals. These little figures, about one and a half feet in height are jointed and movable, and are clothed in

costumes after the designs of those in former Passion Plays.*

It was the Bürgermeister of Oberammergau, who recalled to me this incident a few years ago, dwelling tenderly, affectionately, upon the reminiscences of the loved King Ludwig. In our conversation I asked him if this visit to Oberammergau on that Christmas eve was after the king became *menschenscheu,* or mentally unbalanced. As he did not reply I thought he had not understood, and I repeated the question. His final answer was very significant, as he said:

"Yes, after they *said* he was *menschenscheu.*"

Then I was reminded that the Oberammergauers have never cared to admit that their king was in any sense abnormal, nor have they allowed his reason to be questioned. In fact any reflections on his mental condition, even in his last years, were oft regarded as cruel maligning, and thus my unguarded question had touched a sensitive wound.

At the end of the village, the last house on the road to Linderhof, is the home of Andreas Lang, (the apostle Peter) who has recounted to me out of his childhood recollections, a story of Ludwig and one of his strange visits to the village. On *Theresien Tag* (Oct. 15th), the name day of his grand-mother, the king was accustomed to drive to Oberammergau at midnight

* This Group is the property of Herr Sebastian Lang, the Annas of the Play, a nephew of Father Daisenberger. In order that it may be seen to advantage, it has been placed in position in the studio of Herr Schauer, where, with the best facilities for lighting, the quaint little figures and their artistic arrangement cannot fail to excite interest.

to pray at the foot of the Crucifixion Group, he had presented the village.

It was one such October night that this Oberammergauer, then a lad of eight years, together with some of his boy companions, concealed themselves behind the fence of his own home, which was on the road to the Crucifixion Group, here to await the king's coming, and to see the wonderful cavalcade which always attended him on his midnight rides.

Near the hour of twelve, when there was the deepest hush in the mountains, and the whole valley of the Ammer in its soundest sleep, a stream of light far down the road heralded the coming of the Alpine King. How the little hearts beat fast in the awe and wonder of that hour, as these watchers crouched behind that fence in the darkness!

On and on came the brilliantly lighted train, illumined by candles and torches, as were always these midnight expeditions through the mountains. Following the liveried outriders came the gorgeous court carriage of the King, for Ludwig loved the magnificence of royalty, though its display be only for his own eyes, and in the hidden recesses of the mountains.

Clinging to the swaying coach were footmen in blue and white and silver, with three cornered hats set upon their powdered wigs. Tufts of plumes in blue and white, the colours of Bavaria's royal insignia, stood up at each of the four corners of the carriage, while the wavering light of torches was reflected upon the gorgeous trappings of silver and gold. From the heads of the horses — four in hand — long white plumes streamed back, or nodded forward, as the

beautiful creatures, urged to the utmost, beat with flying feet the road that led from Linderhof.

As the royal carriage arrived at the spot where the little boys were lying concealed, the tension of overwrought nerves had reached the snapping point. At sight of their beautiful king in the midst of a fairy like scene, such as no child had ever beheld, even in its most fantastic dreams, they could no longer restrain their enthusiasm. Springing up from their hiding places a shout of wild delight rang out in the night, as they swung their little round hats with the Tyrolese feather in a delirium of exulting joy.

At sound of the boyish voices that broke on the stillness of the valley, there bent forward to catch sight of these midnight watchers, the majestic figure of this romantic King of the Mountains. With a smiling salutation he responded to the greeting of this little group of loyal sons of Oberammergau. Little wonder, with the recollection of that gracious king, and his undisguised preference for the mountains, that the Oberammergauers should cherish with affectionate devotion the memory of Ludwig II.

Their loyalty was of a kind that would admit of no doubt as to his perfectly normal condition, even after the rumours of strange mania had sifted through the immediate circles about him — not even after unmistakable darkness had overtaken the strained fancy of him who was so singularly endowed.

When one summer's day (June 10th 1886) word came of the appointment of a regent of the government, following upon the testimony of medical experts as to the mental condition of the king, there was the wildest

indignation among the people of Oberammergau. It was at first reported that the deposed king was to be brought to Linderhof, where he was to be confined under medical supervision.

Not a man in Oberammergau who was not ready to join in the general uprising which threatened the entire mountain and peasant districts about Füssen, the village by Neuschwanstein. This revolution was

From the painting of A. T. Compton

Füssen

to have for its object the liberation of King Ludwig from a supposed imprisonment in his own castle — an imprisonment believed to be the result of nothing less than state intrigue.

Already had the mountain folk assembled in great numbers about Füssen, many of them congregating as a guard around the entrance of Neuschwanstein, where the king had been surprised at three o'clock in the morning by a state commission from Munich,

which had come to announce the proclamation of a regency.

An entrance of these high officials to the castle and the presence of the king had been stoutly refused by Ludwig's faithful attendants, and the commission was obliged to return to Hohenschwangau, where it had taken up quarters the previous evening.

An hour later the several members of the commission had the thrilling experience of being conducted by gendarmes, under arrest back to Neuschwanstein, where they were locked up in an underground chamber, as *prisoners of the king.* Shortly afterward the physicians belonging to the commission met the same fate, after being conducted from Hohenschwangau to Neuschwanstein through a throng of people, excited and outraged over the mysterious attempt, as they understood it, upon the liberty, if not the life of their king.

The Bezirksamtmann — a kind of district chief of police — finally succeeded in quieting and dispersing the people, who had surrounded Neuschwanstein and pressed into the court of the castle, ready to defend the king against the high handed — or under handed — measures of his supposed usurpers.

After a couple of hours of anxious suspense the imprisoned commissioners were finally set at liberty, though they had been condemned to a frightful fate — happily not executed — by the poor king, whom the excitement of their coming had plunged into a terrible state of unbridled dementia. At six o'clock in the evening the unsuccessful commission was again in Munich, drawing the first breath of relief for many

an hour, for its mission had been as full of trying experiences as it had been empty of results.

The next day the physicians, Drs. von Gudden and Müller, with their attendants, this time accompanied by a guard of gendarmes, again made their way to Neuschwanstein. On their arrival every precaution was taken in securing the person of the unhappy king before he should elude them, or put himself beyond their reach by his own hand.

Ludwig was fully aware of the plan to supplant his rule by a regency, which meant to him, with the loss of his throne, the loss of everything. By herculean efforts of will, and a self control that was astounding, he had endeavoured to conceal from the world the shadows that were slowly creeping upon him.

He now realized that the hour had come when he could no longer keep at bay those who had a right to approach him, nor hide from others that of which he himself was so cruelly conscious, and whether from fear or shame, he at least decided he could not survive this last humiliation.

With the avowed intention of putting an end to it all by taking the life which had nothing more to offer, and which he could no more direct, he tried to reach the tower of the castle, from whose dizzy heights he might throw himself down to the rocks below. Dr. von Gudden intercepting his passage, however, at last stood before the imposing figure, still that of a king, but whose arms were now held in the clasp of the care takers, and spoke to him these words:

"Majesty, it is the saddest duty of my life, this that I have undertaken. Your Majesty has been ex-

amined by four physicians, specialists in mental disorders, and following upon their report Prince Luitpold has undertaken the regency. I have the order to accompany your Majesty to Castle Berg, and indeed this night. If it please your Majesty the carriage will be ready at four."

In reply the king uttered a single word of painful surprise: "Ach!" which he repeated over and over again. Then he added: "What do you want?" "What does this mean?"

In all that followed, however, he showed himself ready and willing to accommodate himself to whatever was asked of him. His repeated observations, that they would find some little means of getting him out of the world, alone betrayed the anxious, cruel, and pitiful dread that haunted the unhappy king.

On account of the excitement and the ominous attitude of the mountain folk, it had been decided to remove the king to castle Berg on Lake Starnberg, instead of to Linderhof near Oberammergau, where only a spark failed to start a seething, roaring flame. To Berg he was finally conducted by his physicians in the middle of the night, but seated alone, in royal state in his own carriage, drawn by four horses.

Along the route groups of peasants in dense masses had posted themselves to see that no harm should come to their Ludwig. As the strange cavalcade dashed by with their king, still the same regal figure in his own carriage and alone, they could only look on in wonder. They did not understand, but there was dark menace in their faces that could not be mistaken.

There was something infinitely pathetic in these demonstrations, which attested the loyalty of a people, who refused to believe that which their king had not wished them to know — that which by infinite pains, and an almost superhuman self control that characterizes few men of the sanest minds, the doomed king had striven so long to conceal from his own people.

The day following the arrival in Berg was Sunday — Whitsunday. That morning the king with his physician took a walk in the park. On their return the doctor expressed himself with satisfaction to his companions at table, saying that the king had been as gentle and tractable as a child. Another walk was planned for the evening.

Though raining, this promenade was undertaken about six o'clock. Just as they were leaving the doors of the castle it was noticed that the king addressed some remark to Dr. von Gudden, who then turned and requested that they be accompanied by no attendants. At eight o'clock they were to have returned. Though the night grew darker, and the rain poured heavier, no returning steps were heard.

Uneasy at the long delay messengers were at last sent out with lanterns, and calls were shouted through the park, while search was made under the dripping trees. After an hour the hats and overcoats of the king and his physician, together with the doctor's umbrella, were found on the bank of the lake. By eleven o'clock a boat was rowed out from shore. It was but a short time until this boat returned with its sad freight.

The mystery of Ludwig's life was only continued in death, when his lifeless body, together with that of his physician, was found in Lake Starnberg. With the same pride he had endeavoured to hide from the world, and his own household, the struggles of reason with irrational thought and action, with the same consciousness of the cloud which overhung his destiny, while fighting the battles of his own duality, he sought his death.

Rather than the world should come to know of this double, this other self, and rather than suffer the shame of living a deposed, a demented king, he went down into the merciful waters. In a desperate struggle with the hands that doubtless strove in vain to hold him back, he finally dragged them with him, that his secret might be the better hidden under waves that close over and never tell.

When there took place that final tragedy which ended the life of the gifted, but unhappy Ludwig, no greater sorrow ever fell upon the hearts of a community than upon those of Oberammergau. It was *Pfingst Montag*, the day after Whitsuntide, when the Oberammergauers were in their church at the morning mass in celebration of the day of Pentecost.

The services were just ended, and many people were still on their knees, when a telegram was handed the village priest. Ascending the altar steps, he read to the congregation with choking voice its contents, which announced the sudden and mysterious death of their beloved king. The terrible news was received with an outburst of grief that was irrepressible.

With heads bowed, as though stricken by a common blow, their sobs and moans filled the church from altar to galleries, welling up like the cries of bereaved children mourning for a lost father. Little less was the shock that came into the artist home in Munich, where we had mourned for one of our martyred presidents, Garfield, then later Grant, finally Mc Kinley.

A few summers ago the memory of that sad morning in Oberammergau was recalled to me by the Bürgermeister, whose half-suppressed emotion would scarcely allow him to tell the story, and then only in broken sentences. The quivering lips and dimmed eyes of this strong man were eloquent with the faithful love and unchanging devotion to the dead king, whom twenty years had not made him forget.

Not one of these Oberammergauers who had not felt a personal loss in the death of King Ludwig. He was peculiarly their own. He had lived in their mountains, had loved their rocks and their streams, their snows and their skies, and had come close to them, closer than to many a one in high office away at the capital.

As a young prince Ludwig had often ridden through the narrow, zigzag streets of their village, had reached out his hand to the little children, and had come to pray in their church. In their theater he had listened to their Passion Play, and to Linderhof he had bidden them as his guests.

When there took place the final ceremonies of laying the body of this much loved sovereign away to rest, no more solemn nor affecting scenes in the

nature of a public service could be witnessed than those in connection with the funeral cortege of Ludwig II. Immediately in front of the great funeral car was the bowed form, bent with grief and oppressed with grave responsibilities, of the King's uncle, Prince Luitpold, the newly appointed Regent.

Following the body of his master was Ludwig's favorite horse, saddled but riderless. Beside the catafalque there strode the princes and representatives of all the kingdoms and sovereignties in Germany.

The most prominent figure among them all was that of the Crown Prince of Germany, afterward Emperor Friedrich, father of the present Emperor Wilhelm. "*Unser Fritz*" he was affectionately called in Bavaria, having been the commander of the Bavarian troops in the Franco-Prussian War of '70.

Sad was the contrast of this June day of 1886 with that July evening of 1870, when Prussia's Crown Prince, on his way to the front where he was to lead Bavaria's sons, arrived in Munich, and appeared beside his cousin, Bavaria's King, in the royal box of the Hof Theater. As they entered together the whole house sprang to its feet, while the air was rent with shouts and hurrahs of wildest enthusiasm.

Then these two splendid, truly regal creatures, Friedrich and Ludwig, coming to the front of the box, stood with their hands clasped in a brotherly union, thus signifying at last a united Germany in a common cause. On that evening the acme of Ludwig's life was reached. Today was the end, and Friedrich was again at his side — beside his funeral bier!

As I stood among the throngs that lined the streets of Munich through which passed that solemn processional train, with all the mournful pomp of royalty, I felt the grip of tragedy in the very air. Upon the

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Luitpold, Prince Regent of Bavaria

tens of thousands there had settled a strange hush, an oppressive silence, as though that black covering of death had widened, and spread itself out over the whole city. Motionless the people stood, with bared

heads, and with scarce a dry eye in all that multitude. There was not a human sound except that of stifled sobs, when there came slowly into view that somber car with the dead body of the king.

As to Ludwig's loyal subjects in the mountains, their grief was pitiable, since it was not without helpless resentment toward those whom in their hearts they held responsible for his death — or disappearance as many of them believed it to be. Well do I remember the grief of the peasants in Berg, as, sobbing out their heart's sorrow at the bier of their dead king, they called upon him to come back to them in all the endearing terms at their command.

When his body was brought to Munich some of them followed. Many refused to believe, however, that the body exposed to view in the court chapel was that of their beloved, majestic Ludwig. Though time has done its work in softening hearts, and tempering judgments against the king's supposed enemies and betrayers, there are still those who yet believe that that body, bedded in flowers, as it lay in state in Munich, was but a pretense, a lay figure, whose features were only a waxen mask made to counterfeit the king.

Not many years ago I was told a strange story, while looking upon a beautiful sight one midsummer's night with some of my village friends in Oberammergau. It was the 25th of August, the name day of their king — *Ludwig Tag* as it is called by the Oberammergauers — a day they have never failed to observe since the death of Ludwig II.

The tops of the mountains, which tower above the village almost in a circlet, were glowing with fires,

like the beacon lights or signal fires of Medieval times. Upon the side of the Kofel, high up near the summit surmounted by the cross, there burned the initial letter of King Ludwig, a colossal *L* in fire. Its fires fed by faithful watchers, there burned and glowed until far into the night this gigantic *L* — this monogram of Ludwig.

The monumental Crucifixion Group, illumined by Bengal fire, now stood out on the black screen of night radiantly white, then alternately reflected the exquiste tints of colour, as they were thrown upon the marble figures of the Christ, with Mary and John at the foot on either side. As this picture of the Crucified Son stood out from the darkness, it seemed as though God Himself had caused it to appear, there on His own black curtain of night, in the shadows of His own mountain studio.

Under the spell of these scenes reflected from hill and mountain top, bringing to mind the pathos and tragedy of the life of the romantic King of Bavaria, there were half whispered in my ear words that made me start:

"You know our King is not dead," said the voice.

"Where is he then?" I asked, puzzled at the mysterious assertion.

"He is in exile" came the answer.

"But where?" I again asked.

"His place of banishment is not known, and he cannot come to us," was the pathetic reply, "but he still drives over these mountains in the night, and in the moonlight."

Here was a loyalty that would not admit of the suspicion of a shadow that clouded this monarch's reason, not even of the mysterious death, which culminated a despairing hope. To the outside world their lips were discreetly closed, but in their hearts their Ludwig, for whom they mourned as for a martyr, was but the victim of evil machinations.

Where the representative Oberammergauers would not be willing to say today that their king was only in exile, yet these faithful souls are ever ready to shield his memory with sacred devotion, and to draw over all the cloak of loving excuse and charitable affection. As a part explanation of the unhappy mental condition of the king in his last days, an Oberammergauer told me the following incident, verified by his own knowledge:

During the building of his castles, Ludwig was accustomed to inspect the progress of the work. On one occasion he ordered his carriage to be driven to the new Falkenstein, where, according to the reports given him, the foundations were nearing completion. In reality they were not even begun, and in order to conceal this fact from the king, he was warned not to go in that direction, it being alleged that there had been found in the road a bomb, placed there by some one with intent upon the king's life.

Such stories were the not infrequent inventions of those in the king's employ, who found them convenient recourses in concealing from His Majesty those things it was not intended he should discover.

"What man of us," said this Oberammergauer, "whose reason would stand the strain of being con-

stantly warned not to do this thing but the other, as the plausible thing was always the dangerous thing; not to go this way but that, in order to avoid the assassin just around the corner; not to take this measure but that, lest he fall into the hands of conspirators and traitors, represented as plotting against his life?"

A pathetic instance of Ludwig's own consciousness of being a victim of the inevitable through constant suggestion, was cited by my friend from a story told him by one of the royal attendants, to whom the king, only the day before his death, made the following statement:

"Where is the man," said Ludwig, "against whom, should a commission be ordered to inquire into all his sayings, and all his doings, there would not be found sufficient evidence to convict him of insanity?"

"Tell me the man, who, if everything he said and did were reported, would not be adjudged a lunatic, should a board be appointed to pass upon his sanity?"

As to the innumerable stories of the disappearance of Bavaria's King, of his death, suicide, or murder, these can be left to the province of sensational journalism, and speculative story writers. None but the pitying eye of God witnessed that last scene in this tragedy, and its mystery will never be solved this side of eternity.

The Wood Carvers of Oberammergau.

CONTRARY to the general impression which obtains in regard to the folk of the mountains, the Oberammergauers are not the rude, ignorant peasants, blunted and stunted by their narrowed horizon, who might be found in some other districts. The stranger who has thought to find here a village of peasant houses, tenanted by a stolid, fanatical folk, is sure to have an awakening when he meets in Oberammergau men of gentle manners, quite on a par with those of the city bred, while many a younger man and fair daughter may be speaking his own tongue (if that tongue be English).

As to the general character of the Oberammergauers, that is the result of conditions which have had centuries of influence. In the very early times, when other villages and villagers were little more than the personal property of feudal lords and mighty bishops, the Oberammergauers were a specially favoured people by reason of certain rights and privileges, which were in common with those of the so-called free cities of Germany, and which were accorded them by Ludwig the Bavarian.

This emperor of the XV century, the first of the House of Wittelsbach, had his hunting reserves in the valley of the Ammer, and sometimes came with his retinue to the village. It was this Ludwig who founded the neighbouring monastery of Ettal, which

has been so closely connected with Oberammergau history.

Aside from the peculiar privileges conferred by Emperor Ludwig, Oberammergau enjoyed the advantage of being on the main road that led up from Italy to Augsburg and Nürnberg, over which were accustomed to pass the great merchant caravans of mediœval days. It is recorded in the archives of Oberammergau, that when these caravans arrived in the village on Saturday, they were not allowed to continue their journey on Sunday, but were obliged to stop over until Monday, and as the Oberammergauers had the *monopoly,* as we would call it today, of transporting all merchandise to the next station by their own teams and drivers they naturally profited materially by this communication with the outside world.

Coming into contact with people from other countries, and being in constant touch with foreign tongues and foreign ideas, there was possibly laid the foundation for that apparent liberality of sentiment, which characterizes the Oberammergauer of today, and makes him at ease with men of all sorts and conditions.

As to his material well being, that was further benefitted through the opening up of a market for his wood carvings, which were the noted industry of Oberammergau. Just how far back dates the beginning of the Oberammergau wood carving is not known, but near four hundred years ago a traveller, in writing the history of Ettal, told of the astonishingly gifted men in this village of Oberammergau who carved the most wonderful little figures. These men were so skillful, according to this record, that they could carve

a crucifix out of a nut shell with a delicacy that could hardly be equalled anywhere else in Europe.

Thus centuries ago were the Oberammergauers a unique people, a separate folk — separate from the rest of the world, not only by being hidden away in the Bavarian Alps, but separate from the people of like station and environment by their aims and aspirations, and by the very work of their hands.

A village of wood carvers rather than peasants, it is a village of artisans, more than two hundred out of the entire population of 1600 inhabitants earning their bread by fashioning beautiful things out of wood. The very nature of their work has put them on a plane quite above the ordinary level of the usual villagers and the folk of other mountain districts.

A highly sensitive people, with an unmistakable artistic bent, they have led an existence that has uplifted them, and kept them from lapsing into the blunt stolidity peculiar to the denizens of other Bavarian districts. They have thus become a distinct folk, preserving the simplicity without the ruggedness of the mountaineers, but with a certain nobility in their very simplicity.

The very faces of these Oberammergauer wood carvers bear a stamp such as I have never seen in any peasant community. Their features, especially noses and mouths, where lie the most tell tale expressions of character, are sometimes of astonishingly fine mold, while in the delicate lines and curves, there is often a sensitiveness that betrays little of their peasant origin.

I have often stood at the workbench of these wood carvers, where I have studied not only faces but hands, as they plied their tools in the work whose technique is as much inborn as it is learned, and I have been amazed at the fine, well formed — even well kept — hands of some of these younger men, wherein heredity has left its own peculiar trademark.

Not only are these visible signs of the artistic instinct prevalent, but an intimate association with the people will reveal a feeling for artistic effect, even among some of the humblest, that is no less remarkable.

Anton Schiestl — stage driver

One of the executioners in the Crucifixion scene

One day while wandering about the village with my kodak, I found myself on the banks of the Ammer. Suddenly there stepped out of the door of the slaughter house on the opposite bank a boy, who pointed out to me a particular spot up the stream, saying:

"There is a good place to take a picture from."

This *butcher* boy knew his Ammer, and had a sufficient appreciation of its beauties to show me from what point the most picturesque effects were to be obtained.

One evening, while arranging with a stage driver to take me to a neighbouring village, I chanced to

show him a sketch for a picture by a celebrated artist. This sketch was in reality an artist's study, with none of the detail of a finished picture, but with the suggestiveness of an artistic impressionist, who does not expect appreciation outside of the *elect.* As I set this sketch before my *jehu,* he fairly startled me with an exclamation of wonder and delight.

"*Herrschaft!*" he cried, and as he shifted his position from one vantage point to the other, never taking his eyes from the sketch, apparently revelling in the joy it gave him, his comments showed his appreciation of its artistic merits, and I felt as though I were in a studio with an artist, who saw with the eye of a critic. It was only an Oberammergauer mountain driver, who was a hangman in the Passion Play, but he had the heart of an artist, and its chords were responsive to the lightest touch.

It was this artistic predilection of the Oberammergauers, which was recognized by their King Ludwig II, who gave expression to his appreciation in that marble of the Crucifixion Group, when he caused to be inscribed: "To the *art-loving* Oberammergauers —."

The evolution of Oberammergau wood carving is well illustrated in the collection of Guido Lang, who has at his own expense built a museum, and filled it with carvings which represent more than two hundred and fifty years. For thirty years Herr Lang has been making this collection, a part of which has come to him from his own parental house, which was founded in 1775 by his great grandfather, Georg Lang, who first established an organized industry for the sale of wood carvings in Oberammergau.

Previous to that time the Oberammergauers were accustomed to pack their wooden toys and crucifixes in crates which they carried on their backs as they went out into the world to peddle their wares. Later the Oberammergau wood carving industry enjoyed such a degree of prosperity, that these toys were sent to nearly all parts of the civilized world, especially to

Museum — on the right —

Spain, France, Italy, Holland and Russia. There were certain families in Oberammergau who at one time owned ships, which traversed the North Sea, the Baltic, and even the Black Sea, filled with toys and other wares of Oberammergau wood carvers.

After many disastrous vicissitudes wood carving received a new impulse about sixty years ago, since

which time Oberammergau carvings have been exported throughout all Europe, and to different parts of North and South America. Today there can be seen in the houses of Sebastian Schauer, Hermann Schilcher, Hans Mayr, son of Josef Mayr, and Guido Lang the most beautiful specimens of modern religious statuary, as well as other examples of wood carving which are sent to all parts of the world.

As to the religious carvings of a by gone day, some of which date back to the XV century, these are in the museum of Guido Lang, where there is also a collection of charming little figures, not more than two or three inches high, carved and painted to represent the quaint dress and court costumes, as well as actual distinguished personages of a century or two ago. Some of these little figures are jointed, and made to sit in the funny little court carriages, drawn by perfect little horses, the whole a miniature clipping out of ancient history.

With these exquisite statuettes, there are also queer toys, including every sort of jumping jack, the whole a veritable lilliputian bazaar, which is calculated to bring no less delight to the child than to the connoisseur.

Across the street in the etablishment of Seb. Schauer is the Nativity Group, whose many figures of men and animals on the way to the manger of the Child Christ, is one of the most interesting objects to be seen in Oberammergau. These figures were carved about one hundred years ago, and were originally in the village church, where they were put on view at Christmas-tide. It was this Group that Ludwig II came to see that Christmas of 1871.

One hundred and ten years ago (1800) was founded the first drawing school of Oberammergau. This was the beginning of the wood carving school of today, which, since 1874 has been under the direction of Ludwig Lang, who was for many years a student in the art schools of Munich. He is assisted by Anton Lechner and Xavier Müller, both of whom have had training in the Munich schools.

By special permission of Passion Play Photographer Traut, Munich

Wood Carving School

Whereas formerly most of the other Oberammergau wood carvers were entirely ignorant of drawing, each man carving only a certain figure, or sets of figures year after year, today every child has the advantage of a course in the drawing school, and under proficient instruction.

In 1888 the first building for the drawing and wood carving school was erected, but this soon proved inadequate to the needs. With 45,000 Marks the community had put aside for the purpose, to which was added another 45,000 by a grant from the Bavarian House of Representatives (Landtag), the whole from various other sources increased to 107,000 Marks, there was erected in 1909 the present new and commodious building, which is a worthy representation of the artistic aspirations of Oberammergau. Today over one hundred students are in the drawing and carving classes of this school.

It is owing to these wood carvers, who have always been the moving and over ruling spirits in the Passion Play, that the Oberammergauers have succeeded in drawing the attention of the world to their sacred drama.

While the wood carving Oberammergauer is a man of artistic trend, it man be that he is *therefore* a religious being. The church services and religious ceremonies rarely find his presence wanting. The church is the natural center of his interests, material as well as spiritual, for the dividing line is not sharply drawn. With no religious observance neglected, his church, with its ceremonial along artistic lines, claims and holds his fidelity to its outward formens, at least, though he never really poses as a pious creature, being quite as human as he is religious.

As to this religious phase of character in the present day Oberammergauer, usually two extremes of view prevail: the one most prevalent among foreigners, especially among English and Americans, is that he is

By special permission of official Passion Play Photographer Traut, Munich

Interior of Wood Carving School

abnormally devout, living from one decennium to another in a state of pious fervour that never cools — over a kind of *hot box* of religious exaltation — that he constantly "*lives in his role*" as the enthusiast invariably puts it, merging his own personality into that of the character he represents in the play.

By these characters are always meant (for some unexplainable reason) the good ones, such as the disciples and their Master, for it never seems to occur to the fervid, that by far the largest proportion of the roles in the Passion Play are those of evil creatures, of such stamp as Judas, King Herod, and the venomous Pharisees of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

When it is asked if these supposedly pious Oberammergauers really *live into* their stage rôles, I always feel impelled to reply I hope they do not, for the bigotted Annas and cruel Caiaphas, the traitorous disciple and Barabbas the Robber, to say nothing of the two thieves who are crucified with the Man of Galilee, would hardly be desirable characters to *live into*, much less comfortable neighbours to have around.

As to the other extreme of surmise in regard to the Oberammergauer there is the accusation that he is a sordid, money-getting creature, in whom the mercantile spirit is uppermost: that he trades upon his stock in hand — his religious play — speculating upon the credulity of visitors in posing as a religious enthusiast, while in reality amassing the wealth that is supposed to accrue to him from the production of the Passion Play.

It is safe to say that neither of these suppositions is wholly true. As a matter of fact the Oberammergauer is neither thoroughly devout, nor absolutely

mercantile, though to this latter aspect of his character we must come again in the next pages, under another heading.

A village of artisans, with their Passion Play, and the other dramatic representations to which for centuries they have been accustomed, it is also a village of actors. The dramatic spirit is as all pervading as the love of the artistic, as manifested in the figures that are fashioned out of wood.

Wood carving and play acting, therefore, are the two great factors in the lives of the Oberammergauers. In fact there are no more engrossing pleasures than their work at carving, and their rehearsals for a play. With the *religio-artistic* note in the dominant chord of their lives, a state of being has been attained that is at least in the neighbourhood of the desirable.

Imagine a people whose everyday life is neither a toil nor a burden, but permeated with the joy of the artist as he sits at his wood carving table; whose recreation is the gratification of a love for the histrionic; whose religious observances are the natural expression of a soul in harmony with its early teachings, and then we have the outlines of an Oberammergauer's picture.

This would seem a near approach to the ideal, at least so thought a distinguished woman, a writer of note, whose restless wanderings after a great sorrow, when tired of the world and its emptiness, once brought her to this village to see the Passion Play.

Deeply impressed with the production, and her sympathetic nature touched by the unique character of the people, among whom she lingered many months,

she wrote here the book embodying her fanciful impressions, entitled *On the Cross.* Feeling that here at last was the peace, the rest she had longed for elsewhere, she resolved to pitch her tent here with these people, to abide with them.

On an eminence opposite the Kofel, that overlooks the old Medieval road to Ettal, she built a villa. To this charming spot she brought her household gods, and retiring from the busy world, founded a home near the banks of the Ammer. This was twenty seven years ago, and the handsome, brilliant Frau Wilhelmina von Hillern has now grown white-haired, but she is still the interesting woman of yore.

Living apart from the active world, she seldom leaves her Oberammergau home, or seeks the distractions of society abroad, of which she used to be a prominent factor. With no more worldly cares, but with her books, her music, and her literary occupations, she has tasted the sweets of an untrammelled life among a simple folk.

One day I found her at the grand piano where she and the village school master were executing some of the most difficult of classical music, both of these extraordinary people being highly accomplished musicians. She told me she always gave one afternoon in the week to this pleasure with the school master, when the music of Bach and Beethoven, together with compositions of other masters were their special study. From her beautiful home and hospitable board there was always borne away the reflection of that content that marks the lives of those unencumbered with the ambitions and competitions of the outer world.

At the foot of Frau von Hillern's villa,* is the home of Andreas Lang, the apostle Peter of the present Passion Play. Here in 1905 I often sat in the work room of this genial wood carver, watching him carve the exquisite figures which are his specialty — watching and studying the secret of his life.

By special permission of Oberammergau official Photographer Traut, Munich

Andreas Lang at his wood carving bench — 1910

At another bench the elder son was accustomed to carve the figures of religious design, while at still another table there sometimes sat the fifteen year

* Since the above was written Frau von Hillern has decided to give up her home in Oberammergau for a residence in Munich.

old daughter carving statuettes of the Good Shepherd from the father's model. In the long winter evenings the entire family of six — father, mother, and four children — surrounded a table at which they all carved the objects suited to their several tastes and abilities.

One afternoon while sitting in this happy home the grandmother came in bringing the crucifix I had ordered, and which she had carved. She was the oldest woman carver in Oberammergau, being then sixty four. She began to carve when she was twelve. Now in 1900 at nearly seventy, she has laid aside her carving tools, and in the home of her son is awaiting the call of the Good Shepherd whose image has always been before her.

Another day I sat beside the work table of this happy-hearted wood carver, in whose handsome face there always glowed the joyousness of a light heart, which made him one of the most delightful companions of all the congenial spirits in Oberammergau. He had suggested that I give him a subject for a wood carving sketch — a subject which he had never thought of nor attempted, but whose outlines and general form he proposed to execute for me within half an hour.

I proposed he carve the young David, which rôle his son had played that summer in the *School of the Cross,* while he himself had the rôle of the elder King David. First he sawed off a section from the pear tree limb which lay beside him, and out of which sprang the smaller figures of his fashioning.

Then rapidly he commenced to cut and chisel, with a dash here, and a shred there, seemingly digging into the very heart of the wood, but with the unerring precision of a trained hand. In a few moments there began to peep out of the rough block a little human form and face. Unfolding like a budding flower, as he rounded and softened the outside lines, there gradually took shape under his skillful fingers, a graceful little figure.

Little Granddaughter
of Bürgermeister Lang
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

It seemed as though I had been present at a creation when a human form was made to grow before my eyes. It was just thirty minutes from the time the section was cut from the piece of wood until a beautiful sketch of the young shepherd David with his harp was put into my hands.

I had always been so impressed with this man's manifest joy in the work of his hands, and the complete satisfaction which his vocation of wood carving had brought him, that I once put to him this question:

"If you had all this world's goods that you could

desire, and no material wants to satisfy, what of all things would you prefer to do?"

With the light of perfect happiness and supreme content in his face he glanced up from his work, then out of the window before which he sat, and he gave me this answer:

"If I had everything the world could give I should still be a wood carver, and find my greatest happiness here at my carving bench. If I could not carve I should be most miserable, for of all the things I love most to do, the first on the list it to sit here at my bench, before this window, where I can occasionally glance up and look out upon the Kofel and this beautiful mountain view in front of me, and work at my wood carving.

"The next thing I love best is to act in a play."

During this man's life of little more than forty years, he had played as many as seventy different roles. Then he went on to say:

"The third in my catalogue of joys is the long walks I am accustomed to take, especially in winter, when in a big warm coat I can take tramps through the valley, or with my snow shoes go *skieing* over these mountains, fairly drinking in the cold, crisp air, until my whole body is tingling. After this, the fourth thing I love most to do is to eat; finally the fifth to sleep.

"As to travelling and seeing the world, that is not necessary, for it is good enough here at home. Besides," he laughed, as he threw back his fine head to keep the long curling locks from falling over his face while at work, "the whole world comes to us. Why

then should we want to go out and seek what is already at our doors? As for our every day needs I can always make enough with my carving for the little

Little Oberammergauer actors on the way to the Passion Play

From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

we eat and wear, and what else is there? The rest I can easily do without."

Such was the sweet content of one whose work, whose recreation, whose whole life and ordering was

exactly what he would have it be. This happy-hearted, care-free disposition may be a matter of individual temperament, rather than religious resignation, or any experience of the *peace that passeth all understanding,* at least it is in harmony with the instincts of the right adjusted artisan.

With the artistic sense of the Oberammergauers fed and kept alive through the work of their hands, the histrionic temperament, after centuries of cultivation, is now born and bred into their very blood. Not a child, not a toddling tot in the village, who, as soon as it can walk, cannot hold a pose when once given in a tableau.

Scarce a baby is there, which, as soon as it learns to talk, does not begin rehearsing parts of some rôle in a play. Little children are always enacting some scene out of a play which they have seen their elders perform. In fact one of the most charming phases of life in Oberammergau is this of the children amusing themselves at play acting.

During my sojourn here in 1900, there was found one day in a new mown hay field just outside the village, a company of little boys, each with a shepherd's crook, and each with the name of a disciple, following the Master up to Jerusalem. Thinking themselves unobserved, they then sat down at a make believe table at the right and left of their little Christus, and rehearsed the scene of the Last Supper.

One day in the summer of 1905 I surprised in a side street a troop of little boys who were playing at David and Goliath, improvising on an act from the play of that season. There were several Goliaths,

however, judging from the rude wooden swords of their own make, which they were brandishing, for the rôle of Goliath in his gigantic proportions, his magnificent armour, and with the mighty voice of challenge, was one that appealed strongly to the boy's imagination.

Little Grandson
of Bürgermeister Anton Lang
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

It was a significant fact that only one little boy carried the shepherd's sling with its tiny pebble. After all it was only a boy in the real play who had the rôle of the shepherd boy David, while the role of Goliath was played by the biggest, strongest, tallest man in the village (Hans Mayr). When a boy plays at being somebody else he always wants to be a man, a giant, rather than another boy, though that boy be an embryo king.

One of these young hopefuls could repeat by heart the entire passage from the challenge of the giant of the Philistines as he appeared before the army of Israel. Thus do the children of Oberammergau grow into actors, while the cunning of their hands in their work at the wood carving school, or beside their father's work table,

brings them never ending joy and wholesome pleasure.

With carving as their work-day task, music and play acting their recreation, and no ambitions beyond their own village to trouble their minds, theirs is an existence for which many a one might be willing to exchange the strained and complex life of a more progressive world.

As to the continued observance of that vow, made near three centuries ago, it may be a question how far tradition and the love of the dramatic may have entered into the performance of the Oberammergauer's religious obligations; also whether consciously or unconsciously his piety has not become diluted with material ingredients and worldly admixtures.

From his birth the Oberammergauer has centered his greatest interests and most ardent desires, his deepest joys and highest aspirations in the recurring presentations of the Passion Play. It is now possible that he might not be able to tell for the life of him, if he ever put the question to his conscience, whether in taking up his rôle in the sacred drama he were actuated supremely by motives of piety and religious consecration, or if an absorbing love of acting were not the governing stimulus to the commemoration of the vow of his fathers.

It would be interesting to know perhaps just how many communities, and how many individuals in other parts of the world would stand a similar test of introspective examination as to the motives of their religious observances.

At all events the Oberammergauer of today is as inseparable from his Passion Play as he was two centuries ago. His individual animus or personal spiritual measurements, therefore, do not necessarily add to or detract from the general import of the production.

Thus has the Passion Play come down to the present as a unique remnant of medieval faith, and through a people who have known how to preserve it and to re-present it to the modern world in all the beauty and effectiveness of a work of art as well as as of sacred significance.

A coming actor
From Mrs. Richards's kodak views

Commercialization of the Passion Play.

Financial Speculation in Oberammergau.

HAS the Oberammergauer not degenerated into a mere speculating business man, and has the Passion Play not come to be a means for furthering his money-making schemes? These are questions that are agitating the travelling public, as well as the stay-at-home critics, quite as much as the real significance of the Play itself. In the first place let us see if the Passion Play is a profitable source of individual wealth, and in the second place if the Oberammergauer is a speculator, or even a business man, though just how these questions affect the Play itself, either as an artistic production, or a religious memorial, is not quite clear.

A table of the decennial receipts and expenses will furnish the best data of the Passion Play as a source of income. For the first ninety years there are no records of any financial transactions concerning the performances of the Play. As to the subsequent years the record is as follows, translated into dollars and cents:

Year	Receipts	Expenses	Profit	Deficit	Performers	Public Improvements
	$	$	$	$	$	$
1720	—	—	—	30,80	—	—
1730	—	—	—	35,68	—	—
1750	—	—	—	36,95	—	—
1760	—	—	—	65,80	—	—
1770	—	—	—	66,72	—	—

Year	Receipts	Expenses	Profit	Deficit	Performers	Public Improvements
	$	$	$	$	$	$
1800	—	—	—	5,04	—	—
1801	426	282	144,32	—	—	—
1850	10,080	10,080	—	—	4,200	2,750
1860	23,200	6,300	16,900	—	—	—
1870	1,900	1,846	54	—	—	—
1871	2,664	2,311	352	—	—	—
1880	84,149	20,273	—	—	39,607	24,267
1890	173,681	51,549	—	—	72,142	49,939
1900	267,171	80,208	—	—	102,512	83,686

From the foregoing will be seen, that until more than a hundred years ago there was a deficit to be met by the community every ten years. The first approach to any award for the performers was in 1801 (the interrupted performance of 1800 was continued in 1801) when a free supper was given the actors at a cost of $ 36,12.

Not until sixty years ago did the performers receive any remuneration, when in 1850 the sum of $ 4200 was distributed among them, the principal actors receiving about $ 34 each. In 1880 the receipts justified not only salaries for the performers, but a sum could be set aside for a village improvement fund.

Ten years ago the income was sufficient to allow of a little more than a hundred thousand dollars to be distributed among the villagers, though even then the principal performers, including the Director of the Play, the Christus, Caiaphas, music directors, leader of the chorus and the prologue, received only

$ 375 each for the forty seven performances of that season, which lasted from the middle of May until the end of September.

Aside from the nearly five months of the Play, when all other work is laid aside, there are at least four months of preparation and rehearsal, to say nothing of the months of previous work of committees, so that at least a year's time is always reckoned for the preliminaries and the actual Play itself. Three hundred and seventy five dollars for a year's work, and that only once in ten years, could hardly conduce to any great prosperity among the ten or twelve to whom alone falls this *great* (?) sum.

As to the income from the entertainment of visitors, when that comes to be divided by ten years, then subdivided by four months, counting only the two days of each week that visitors are expected to remain in the village during the Play, the resulting figures could hardly guarantee a competence even if it were all clear gain, with no expenses to be met by the householder.

As little or no food stuffs are raised in Oberammergau, everything must be shipped here from a distance, and that too at advanced cost from outside dealers, who take this occasion to raise their scale of prices on account of the season. It is a notorious fact, which I had ample opportunity to verify while living in the village during the months previous to the Passion Play, that the Oberammergauers are put to an expense in setting their homes in order, and installing modern conveniances for the accommodation of guests, not at all commensurate with the probabilities, even possibilities of returns.

In the beginning of 1900 the total personal indebtedness of the Oberammergauers amounted to 400,000 Marks, while in 1910 their liabilities have reached the respectable sum of 2,000,000 Marks, according to the estimate of an Oberammergauer, who knows the financial status of every villager. To me this man said:

"Should anything happen that our Passion Play was not a success this year, we would all be bankrupt, not only as a community, but as individuals."

In order to accommodate all the people who come to see his play, it is necessary that the Oberammergauer take risks, assume responsibilities, which require the closest calculations to cover in the end. It is some, times only by the strictest economy and most careful management that he is able to balance the debit and credit accounts, making the income cover the entire outlay, at the close of the season.

When he fails to do this, as has happened, the poor unfortunate must stand by and see his household goods, possibly his home, go to satisfy his creditors. It is then he remembers, with more or less bitterness, the accusation that he is a "*money getting Oberammergauer*," who is amassing wealth at a rapid rate from his speculations on his Passion Play.

It is not necessarily a lack of spirituality among the players, that the play has grown from one decennium to another more and more a work of art, a finished production of dramatic skill and power, until it has aroused the attention of the whole civilized world, and become the Mecca, rather Jerusalem, of pilgrimages from all over Christendom.

It is no fault of the Oberammergauer that his village is so small, that to accommodate all the throngs that pour into it each decennium, he turns his home and hay mow into a hostelry, where his wife cooks the food, and the daughters serve it to the strangers who ask for somewhere to lay their heads, and something to still their hunger, that too at a price little above that which would be asked at a summer resort, where not one hundred per cent as many people would be entertained as in this little overcrowded village of 1500 or 1600 inhabitants.

It is also not to the discredit of the villager, according to the law of human progress, that by his thrift and self denial, he should finally be able to remodel his uncomfortable home, add another story, build on new rooms, or even to erect a new house entire for the eldest son or newly married daughter, which could serve as more commodious quarters for the coming visitors to the next Passion Play.

Even at best the Oberammergauers will probably never be able to entertain, without strain and privation, all the guests to their Play, for the increase in attendance, judging from that of the last forty or fifty years, will always exceed the growth of the village, and the proportion of new houses and new accommodations can hardly keep pace with the demand.

As to the business enterprise of the Oberammergauer, and the commercializing of his Passion Play, facts furnish little to bear out such assumption. That he has come to look upon the Play as a means of revenue, is naturally and necessarily true, so long as the world continues to pour into the village every

decennium, and that he is not insensible to the material advantages that thus accrue to himself and the village, only means that he is human, and not born with a halo about his head.

When a few years ago I asked the old white haired village priest, who had been the father confessor to many an Oberammergauer, if he had found these people any more pious than the rest of the world, his reply was very significant:

"They are just like other villagers, no better, no worse. They are all very human."

The Oberammergauer, not unlike many an artist of even higher aims, is not characterized by a bent for introspection, nor is he any less life-loving. In fact the thing the Oberammergauer most resents is to be held up as a holy creature. It was the Christus who recently said to me:

"Only say in your book that we do not pose as saints, but that we are just like other people, not a whit better, and I hope no worse."

That the Oberammergauers are the farthest removed of all things possible from adventurous speculation, the refusal of numerous propositions from foreign sources, whereby they might have realized enormous profits from their Passion Play, amply testifies.

During the life of Josef Mayr, many were the offers that came to him from England and America to go abroad and simply appear before the public as the *Christus of Oberammergau*, to each of which there was instant and unqualified refusal. In 1873 a proposition came from Vienna for the transportation of the whole

village to be put on exhibition in the exposition of that year.

At the close of the Passion Play in 1900 a company in America offered to bring over the principal performers to take part in a play in New York at a salary of $ 5000 each. Three years ago Anton Lang received a proposition to appear at Innsbruck in living pictures, where he would not be required to speak a word, before the Austrian Court and Emperor Franz Joseph. To all these proposals there was the same unhesitating reply.

It was about two years before the present Play of 1910, that there appeared one day before the Passion Play Committee in the Rath Haus at Oberammergau a small deputation from New York, with a proposal that was supposed to meet with instant favour. One of the number produced a manuscript of a German translation of the *Servant in the House*, which he proceeded to read before the Committee in the most approved dramatic fashion.

The Oberammergauers listened with deep interest to this remarkable drama, and then it was proposed to them that Anton Lang be taken to America to play the part of the *Servant* in this popular play. The offer included free transportation of himself and entire family, a furnished house in New York, with all expenses paid during the five months engagement, and a salary that would have meant a life competency in Oberammergau, besides which the community was to have received a handsome compensation. As heretofore there was immediate refusal, not only on the part of the committee, but of Anton Lang himself, to whom the

thought of *commercializing himself* as the Christus of Oberammergau would have been as foreign as the commercializing of the Passion Play.

Industrious, and contented with the smallest returns, the Oberammergauers have preserved a simplicity of life that is remarkable, especially in view of the opportunities constantly opened to them for speculative enterprise in connection with their Passion Play.

Modest and frugal in their domestic concerns, their physical wants reduced to the minimum of gratification, yet there is nothing of the impoverished, nor the grovelling dependent in the Oberammergauer. In fact he is always ready to sacrifice both time and money for the general welfare of the village.

No more striking example of the latter could be furnished than that of Johann Lang, who for twenty five years served Oberammergau as Bürgermeister at a salary of 250 Marks ($60) a year, with 200 Marks ($50) additional to his daughter as secretary. He was accustomed to say, that "as long as they had to go in debt for their *school master*, they should not pay the Bürgermeister any more for his services". This man of education and refinement, with the accomplishments of a man of the world, gave up not only his life but his little fortune for the welfare of the community of Oberammergau.

Another instance of this self-sacrificing spirit of the Oberammergauer is that of the father of Bürgermeister Lang, and grandfather of Guido Lang, who, when the village was once partially burned down, borrowed money on his own credit to build new

houses for the unfortunate victims. In 1900 the grandson paid off the last of this debt made more than half a century before.

Frugality is not to be confounded with business ability in its application to the Oberammergauer, who, however anxious he may be to turn an honest penny, is not enough a man of the world to be a business man. Of business methods or commercial shrewdness he has little conception, and when in 1910 he was besieged by foreign tourist agencies to place the business of managing the accommodations for visitors in the experienced hands of travelling managers, who would take upon themselves all expense of advertising, he only saw himself in a measure relieved of the responsibilities to which he hardly felt himself equal.

That the world in turn should charge him with having made a shrewd compact with speculators, with the Passion Play as the drawing card, he could not foresee, especially as it was recommended by the authorities in Munich that he should join hands with these tourist agencies to facilitate the management of the crowds who were to come to Oberammergau. It was not Munich, however, that came to bear the blame of commercializing the Passion Play, but Oberammergau.

It was a foregone conclusion, that to systematize the accommodation of visitors, thus preventing chaos, official management was necessary, and assistance not undesirable, especially from experienced sources. For the stranger, however, the matter seemed to take on another phase, and when he talked of the *commercializing of the Passion Play* the Oberammergauer was naively puzzled.

It should be remembered, however, that the traveller to Oberammergau is by no means dependent upon the intervention of tourist agents for accommodation in Oberammergau, as the subjoined excerpt from the Oberammergau prospectus will explain.

An official Accommodation Committee will be established in Oberammergau for the duration of the Passion Play in 1910 which will have at its disposal about 1500 of the 4500 beds in the place.

This Bureau accepts orders for tickets and rooms, but for the convenience of those who wish to be relieved of the uncertainty, care, and responsibility of making these arrangements on arrival in Oberammergau, Messrs. Thos. Cook & Son have been oppointed the Official Agents for all countries except Germany. Messrs. Schenker & Co. of Munich can also secure seats and make provision for accomodation. Both these Tourist Companies in Munich have arranged tours in the neighbourhood to all the principal points of interest and the sale of tickets for the Wagner Festival at Bayreuth is also in their hands.

Full information and pamphlets giving all particulars will be mailed on application.

Days of Performances:

May:	16. 22. 29.
June:	5. 12. 19. 24. 26. 29.
July:	3. 10. 17. 20. 24. 27. 31.
August:	3. 7. 10. 14. 17. 21. 24. 28. 31.
September:	4. 8. 11. 18. 25.

Oberammergau in Summer.

IN recent years it has been found by visitors who have come to see the village of the Passion Play, that there is no more delightful spot for a resting place than here in the Bavarian Highlands on the banks of the river Ammer.

One of the attractions, aside from the people themselves, is its healthfulness. Dr. Anton Lang, son of the late Bürgermeister, an educated and well trained physician of experience, strikingly and forcefully characterized the conditions in Oberammergau when he assured me that here it was ("*ekelhaft gesund*") disgustingly healthy.

As a proof of this assertion the people attain an exceptional old age, while among children such diseases as scarlet fever and diphtheria are almost unknown. With measles they run about the streets, and rarely does one ever hear of a child being seriously ill. Personally I know of no place that can compare with Oberammergau as a healthful residence, where a weary traveller can find rest and relief from over *strenuosity,* and where exhausted nerves can be brought back into a normal state.

As a final word on this home of the Passion Play, mention should be made of the fact, that through American contributions a fund has been started for the establishment of a library in the village in memory of the late Dr. Corning, U. S. Vice Consul in Munich, and also of the late Rev. John Henry Mc Cracken, Rector of the American Church in the Bavarian Capital.

A man of strong ideality, as well as a sympathetic nature, and acute sensibilities, Mr. Mc Cracken had come to have the deepest interest in Oberammergau and its people, to whom he was greatly attached, having spent much time here during his summer vacations. More than once had he expressed the wish that he might here find his last resting place.

It was a day in July 1907, when a little band of Americans from Munich came to Oberammergau with the body of the Rector to be laid away at the foot of the hill that is surmounted by the Crucifixion Group of King Ludwig II. The little procession was joined by nearly the whole village. Standing by the open grave the *Lieder Kranz* of Oberammergau sang a song of last farewell, then young girls and boys covered the body with flowers cast upon the bier.

One day in a walk over the mountains with an Oberammergau friend, Mr. Mc Cracken had remarked upon a great stone that lay in the way, saying that this would be a worthy monument at the grave of a Nature friend.

Andreas Lang, remembering these words of this gentle-natured soul, himself brought down from the mountain side a stone of many hundred weight, which was placed at the grave. Into the unhewn mass he fitted a cross he had chisselled and carved from another stone. This is now the monument to a sweet-spirited man, who lies under the shadow of the Kofel, and at the foot of Ludwig's gift to the village of Oberammergau.

Photograph by Lorenz Fränzl, Munich

Grave of Rev. Mc Cracken

Pension Villa Daheim

Oberammergau

Anton Lang, proprietor.

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OBERAMMERGAU

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By an American

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