



OBERAMMERGAU

MDCCCXC

·WILLIAM·ALLEN·BUTLER·

Im Schatten erst und bald im Licht
Erscheinet sie.
Die traurigste Geschichte.
Von Gethsemani.

ACT VII.

LAND
H B

Cornell University Library

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME
FROM THE
SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND
THE GIFT OF
Henry W. Sage
1891

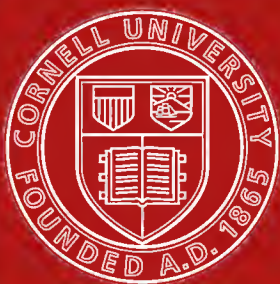
A. 1958.24 . 13 / 9 / 1905

Cornell University Library
PN 3238.B98

Oberammergau.



3 1924 027 190 556 oIn.eve1

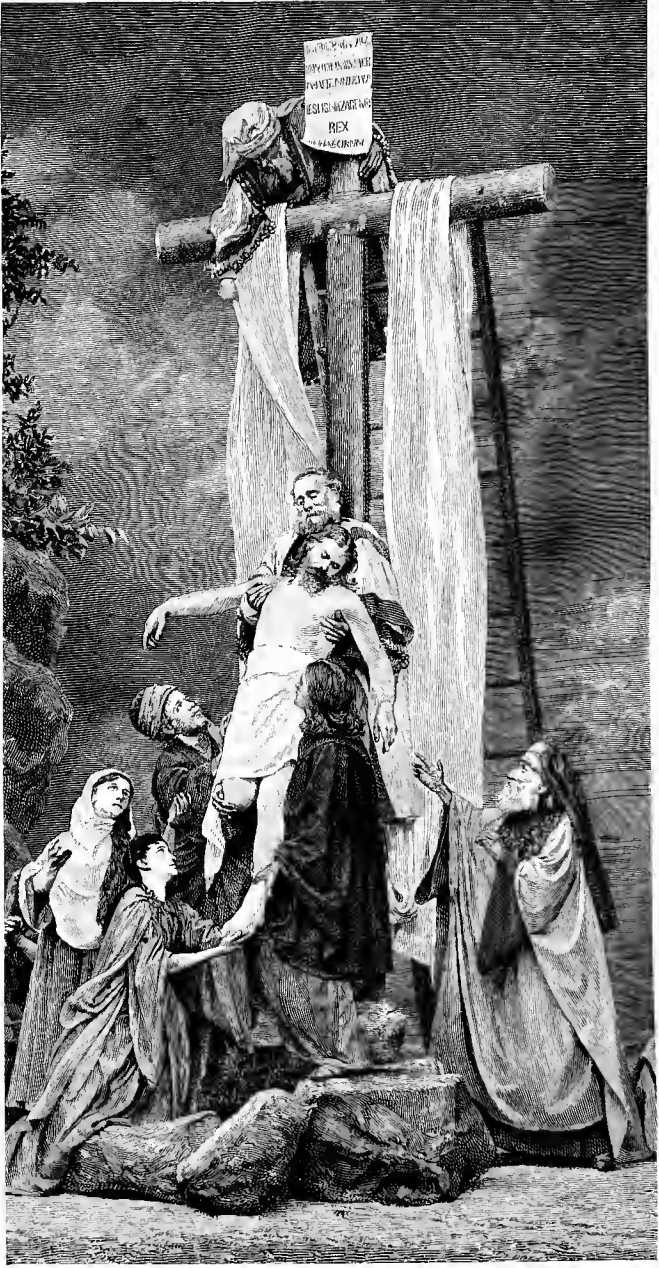


Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

OBERAMMERGAU



Oberammergau

1890

BY

WILLIAM ALLEN BUTLER



NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS

M DCCC XCI

D E

Copyright, 1891, by HARPER & BROTHERS

All rights reserved



PREFACE

THE Passion Play of Oberammergau has its place in Literature as well as in History and Dramatic Art. It passed beyond the stage of the mediæval miracle play when, in 1662, its text was collated and printed. In the early part of the present century, Othmar Weiss, a monk of the Benedictine monastery of Ettal, which stands at the entrance of the Oberammergau Valley, revised the work, and on his death, about 1843, his fellow-priest and cloister companion, Daisenberger, who was soon afterwards called to the church at Oberammergau, undertook the task of perfecting the Play. He gave to it unity of design and of religious doctrine as well as of dramatic action. Speaking of his work, he says, "I undertook the labor with the best will, for the love of my divine Redeemer, and with only one object in view, the edification of the Christian world."

Up to 1830, the Play had been performed in the village church-yard; but it was then fitted for the stage, and afterwards, under the assiduous care of Pastor Daisenberger, which continued until his death, in 1883, it gradually became a source of interest and attraction to the outer world. In 1851 Edward Devrient, a German actor and critic of high repute, introduced it to his countrymen. He wrote that "too much could not be said or written about this remarkable drama of the people to spread a thorough knowledge and just appreciation of its beauty and sublimity." For the English-speaking countries, able writers have

given graphic descriptions of Oberammergau, its people, and the Passion Play. Dean Stanley published in *Macmillan's Magazine* for October, 1860, under the title of *The Ammergau Mystery, or Sacred Drama of 1860*, by a Spectator, a sketch of his visit to the performance of that year, with a careful analysis of the Play itself. Hans Christian Andersen, in his *Pictures of Travel*, describes his visit, in the same year, to Oberammergau, where he was entertained by Pastor Daisenberger. The Baroness Tautphoeus, in her novel of *Quits*, published in 1863, devotes a chapter to Oberammergau and the Play. Archdeacon Farrar, in his recent book, *The Passion Play at Oberammergau, 1890*, gives a charming delineation of the drama and the manner of its representation. He characterizes it as "a beautiful and touching survival from the religious habits and methods of simple and untaught ages;" and in vindication of the peasants who perform it, he says, "It has deepened their religious devotion, increased their knowledge, and marvellously developed all their artistic and intellectual gifts. It has done this without in the least spoiling the simplicity of their character." Extended accounts of the performance of 1880 were published by Mr. John L. Stoddard in *Red Letter Days Abroad*, and by Rev. W. A. Snively, D.D.

Other valuable publications, called forth by the last performance, are the striking article of Mr. W. T. Stead in the *Review of Reviews*, in July, 1890; *The Country Parson at the Passion Play*, on Trinity Sunday, 1890, by Rev. F. A. G. Eichbaum, M.A.; and the very complete *Guide to the Passion Play*, with a translation of the text, by Mr. John P. Jackson of New York. I have availed myself of these works, and also of the interesting article by Mr. D. E. Hervey in the *Christian Union* of June 19, 1890, for some particulars contained in the Notes at the end of this volume.

The writers to whom I have referred all concur in their high estimate of the sincerity and religious devotion of the Oberammergau peasants, the solemnity of the Passion Play itself, and the consummate art with which it is performed. To their testimony I add my own. The prepossession which induces a

natural aversion to the dramatic representation of sacred scenes, such as those exhibited in the theatre at Oberammergau, can only be overcome by mingling with the peasants who take part in the performance, observing their village life, and witnessing their actions on the stage. The Passion Play is phenomenal and unique as the development of the religious sentiment of a community, centred on a single idea. The conditions under which it exists could not find place elsewhere in the world than at Oberammergau. From these conditions it derives its power and the possibility of its perpetuation. In venturing to make another contribution to the Literature of Oberammergau and the Passion Play, I have had regard to these conditions, and have endeavored to give, in simple English verse, with absolute fidelity and in a spirit of reverence kindred to that which animates the sacred drama, the impressions created by witnessing its performance.

W. A. B.

Round Oak, Yonkers, January, 1891.



OBERAMMERGAU

1890

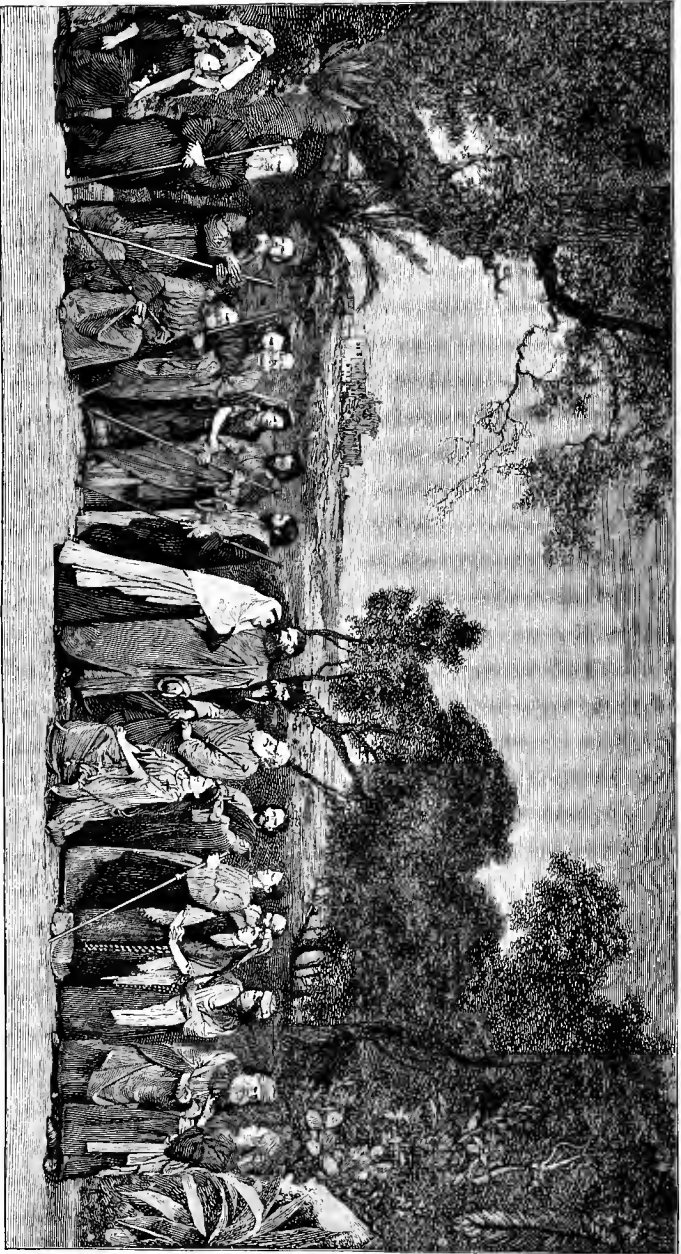
TREMBLING vow breathed in a night of fears ;
A votive offering wet with bitter tears ;
Faith's faltering cry through thickest midnight gloom ;
Hope's last faint signal by the opening tomb ;
Thus, in despair, the stricken peasants prayed :
" O, Father, if this cruel plague be stayed,
We and our children pledge ourselves to Thee,
In every decade of the years to be,
While Ammer's waters through our valley glide,
Or Kofel's summit greets the morning tide,
With all our powers, however scant and rude,
In very act and true similitude,
Before the world and in the light of day,
The Saviour's cross and Passion to portray."

The prayer was heard, so runs the record old ;
Thenceforth no lamb was stricken in the fold,
Nor man nor matron, youth or maiden died,
But healing balm, breathed from the mountain-side,
Brought back new health to wasted forms, and gave
In every home a rescue from the grave.

*Safe in its hill-girt vale the hamlet slept ;
 Through the green dales the gentle Ammer swept,
 New blessings bringing to each peasant's door,
 And all was peace and plenty as of yore ;
 While far above, fit genius of the place,
 Gray Kofel, towering from his massive base,
 Still kept his sentry watch, where, stern and lone,
 Rose to the sky his rugged, cross-tipped cone.*

*The trembling lips which breathed that early vow,
 Long stilled in death, are dust and ashes now ;
 The years have flown, the centuries rolled away,
 Kingdoms and crowns have crumbled to decay,
 Old things have passed away, all things are new,
 But to the fathers' pledge the sons are true.
 No chance of war, nor tidal wave of change
 Has ploughed its furrows past this mountain range.
 While perjured monarchs from their seats were hurled,
 And trusts betrayed with blood have drenched the world,
 On these poor peasants, all untaught, unskilled,
 Fell the rich blessing of a vow fulfilled,
 Till, on the mountain-top, the handful sown
 Of precious grain, to such fair height has grown
 That while, from far, the wondering world looks on,
 Its golden fruitage shakes like Lebanon.*

*We sat in silence, twice two thousand souls,
 Our thoughts together fused, like molten coals ;
 Round the vast theatre, through its open space,*



THE DEPARTURE FROM BETHANY

*The summer sunlight fell and filled the place ;
In the blue sky, fair background for each scene,
Rose the encircling hills with pastures green ;*

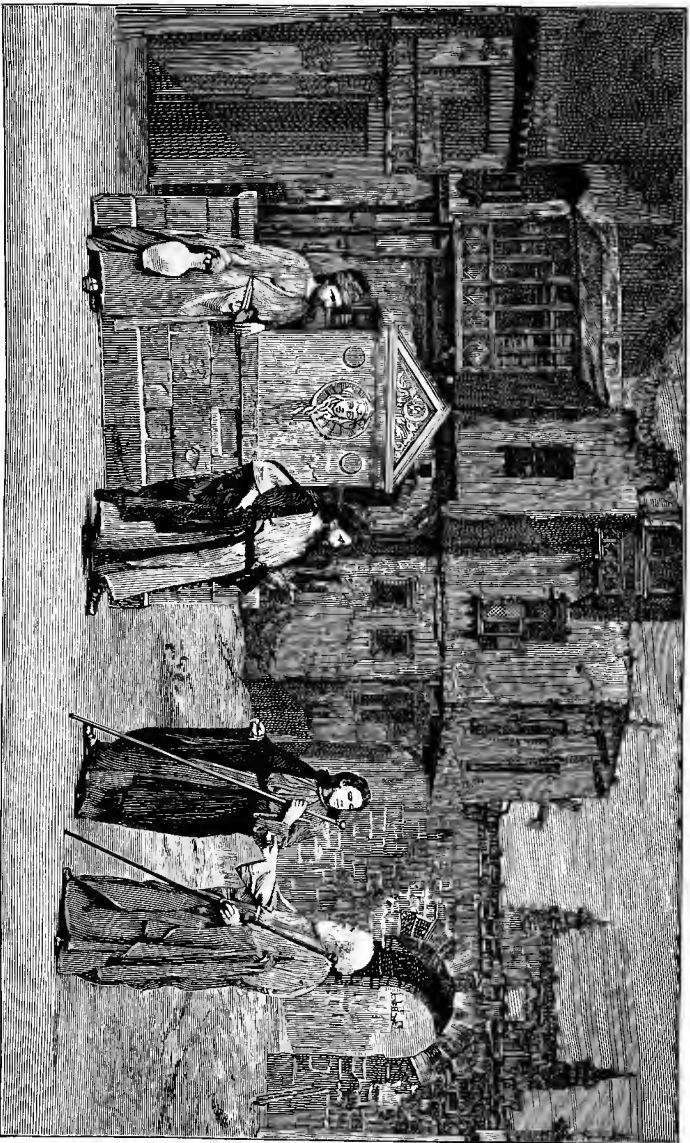


MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

*A Sabbath stillness wrapt us all about,
And overhead the birds flew in and out.
A sudden stir—then, with clear note and strong,
The bright-robed Chorus, bursting into song.*

Broke the deep silence with the measured strain
 Which keeps throughout the play its long refrain,
 To herald each new action and rehearse
 The Scripture story, wrought in stately verse,
 While groups symbolic place before the view
 Those ancient types, the figures of the True,
 Which deep within their mystic lines enfold
 All the New Covenant, blent with all the Old.
 In these rare groupings, posed with wondrous art,
 From every home the peasants take their part,
 For each and all, strong man or tender child,
 An act of worship, pure and undefiled.
 Chorus and symbols both, twin streamlets, glide
 By the main Drama's full majestic tide.

The curtain rises: a tumultuous throng
 Fill the vast stage; with shouting and with song,
 And wealth of waving palms, they bring with them
 The Son of David to Jerusalem.
 He comes—as written in the prophet's roll—
 Meek, lowly, riding on an ass's foal.
 Alighting, now, he stands before our view,
 How strange the semblance and how strangely true;
 The player is a peasant—such was He,
 Working in wood—His trade was carpentry;
 The noble figure, wrapped in simplest robe,
 Might suit a monarch born to rule the globe;
 Beneath the parted locks, the oval face
 Seems a pure type of Judah's lofty race:



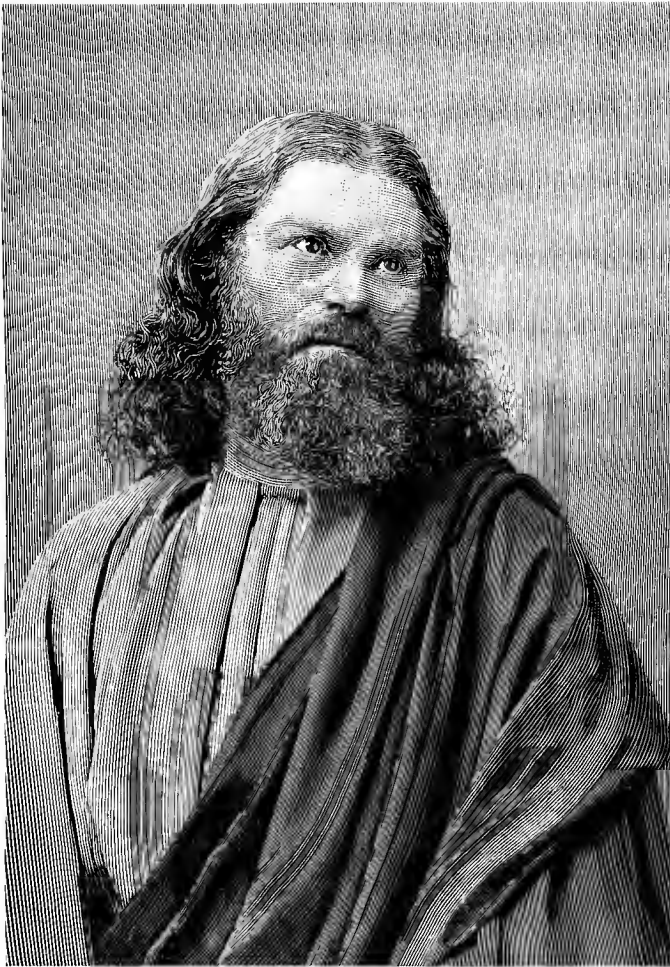
ORDERING THE LAST SUPPER

*That face serenely sad, severely grave,
 With pity tender, with high purpose brave.
 A human Christ, the Son of Man is He;
 Jesus of Nazareth, in Galilee;
 True son of Mary, yet by sin untainted,
 The Man of Sorrows and with grief acquainted;
 John's Lamb of God, unblemished, without spot,
 Who sought His own and they received Him not;
 Judah's fierce Lion, as, with knotted cord,
 He clears the Temple of its sordid horde,
 O'erturns the tables in His righteous wrath,
 Drives the scared usurers from His royal path
 And spurns the caitiff band, whose knavish trade
 His Father's house a den of thieves has made.
 Leader and Lord, true heir of Israel's throne,
 Will He not make this kingly hour His own,
 While loud hosannas, in the market-place,
 Proclaim Him head of David's royal race!*

*Alas! His hour has come, but not the hour
 Of Judah's throne regained, or earthly power;
 Scarce cease the plaudits when the baffled crowd
 Of Temple traders, with their curses loud,
 Smarting with shame and wild with rage and fears,
 Besiege the Sanhedrim. On willing ears
 Their cry for vengeance falls; the plot is laid
 To seize the Nazarene, with Judas' aid;
 The kindled flames by priestly craft are fed,
 Jesus is doomed—a price is on His head.*

*The greed of gold, corroding all the heart,
 Is shown with vivid strokes on Judas' part.
 He bears the bag, at best a slender board,
 And sits a welcome guest at Simon's board;
 There Mary kneels, intent on service meet,
 And pours the spikenard on the Master's feet.
 Then, through the perfumed air, with sudden haste,
 The traitor sneers and chides the needless waste:
 "This ointment sold, three hundred pence had brought
 To feed the poor; what folly she hath wrought."
 In calm rebuke the Master's voice is heard:
 "Let her alone," is His reproving word;
 "Against my burial this good work shall be;
 The poor ye always have—not always Me."*

*For death annointed thus, He fearless goes,
 To face once more His unrelenting foes;
 He turns from Bethany, calm resting-place,
 And towards Jerusalem sets His steadfast face.
 There have the prophets perished, there must He,
 Last of the prophets, die on Calvary.
 But as He passes on the village street,
 Mother and Son for one brief moment meet;
 No scene more tender: while her pierced heart bleeds,
 With sharp foreboding, earnestly she pleads
 To share His coming doom, His opening grave,
 If from His foes Himself He will not save.
 Gently He calms her—must He not fulfil
 To the last bitter end the Father's will?*



CHRIST

*And while, through tears, we gaze, with stifled breath,
He parts from Mary on His way to death.*

*The scene has shifted: in the twilight gloom
The Twelve are with Him in the upper room;*

*This the Real Presence, when the bread He breaks,
 The wine-cup blesses and of both partakes ;
 Then from His heart what wealth of love is poured
 On all the chosen round that Paschal board ;
 While seated nearest, loved beyond the rest,
 John leans his head upon his Master's breast.
 The supper ended, silently He moves,
 With tenderest ministry, to those He loves,
 And meekly stoops—O sacrifice complete!—
 With girded towel, at the traitor's feet.*

*The plot moves swiftly ; from the Master's touch
 The false disciple flies, and with foul clutch
 The thirty pieces grasps—the price of blood ;
 Then, headlong swept upon the surging flood
 Of furious rage, at once, with stealthy tread,
 To Olive's shade the Roman band is led ;
 His whispered signal to the soldiers this :
 "He whom ye seek is He whom I shall kiss."
 There, while each weary, sad disciple sleeps,
 His midnight watch, alone, the Master keeps ;
 An hour of agony. At last, He cries
 "He that betrays Me is at hand. Arise!"
 And as He speaks, that holiest shrine of prayer
 Bristles with Roman spears, and Judas there
 Glides through the garden, and with serpent hiss,
 "Hail, Master!" calls—betrays Him with a kiss!*

The end draws near. In haste the rulers meet ;



THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

*Their hunted victim now is at their feet.
 They speed the trial; set in foul array
 The perjured hirelings; swear His life away,
 And meet His claims divine with taunting cry—
 "What need of proof? Ye bear His blasphemy!"
 Soon the swift sentence falls: His doom must be
 A felon's death, which Pilate shall decree.
 "Not death! Not death!" then Judas wildly cries;
 "Condemn Him not to die. To sacrifice
 The Master's precious life I never meant.
 What have I done? Betrayed the Innocent!"
 "See thou to that," unmoved, the priests exclaim;
 And Judas, stung by guilt, convulsed with shame,
 Flings back the shekels, and with frenzied stride
 Rushes to death—an outcast suicide.*

*At Pilate's bar, the Roman's proud disdain
 Fades into fears he strives to hide in vain.
 In this strange prisoner, friendless and alone,
 He finds a nature nobler than his own;
 No Galilean cast in common mould,
 Kingly as Cæsar, patient, calm, and bold,
 He seeks no earthly crown; His nobler aim
 To witness to the truth. For this He came.
 And "What is truth?" the startled Pagan cries,
 While Truth Incarnate stands before his eyes.
 No fault in Him he finds, but it may be
 That Herod, lately come from Galilee,
 Can best adjudge, and so the soldiers bring*

*The guiltless prisoner to that guilty king.
 Here He stands silent. Herod vainly seeks
 Some word or sign, but not a word He speaks;
 The men of war, like raging beasts of prey,
 Torment the victim whom they dare not slay;
 As long foretold in prophecy and psalm,
 They mock and jeer and smite with open palm,
 While He, as sheep before the shearers dumb,
 Waits, in meek silence, till the end shall come.
 How strange a contrast on the stage is shown:
 The cunning tetrarch on his vassal throne,
 Herod, the "fox," as Jesus named him well,
 Who slew the Baptist in his prison cell,
 Loud with coarse sneers, half jester and half brute;
 The Christ, immaculate, sublimely mute.*

*No judgment Herod gives; with crafty skill,
 He bows obsequious to Pilate's will;
 And now, once more, the weary prisoner stands
 Before his judgment-seat, and in his hands
 Trembles His fate. Feebly the Roman strives
 To save this life, worth all Judean lives,
 But now the priests have roused the people's rage,
 And once again a concourse fills the stage
 And rules the hour; the false and fickle crowd
 That yesterday, with shout and chorus loud,
 Welcomed the coming King; their vengeful cry
 Is not "Hosannah" now, but "Crucify!"
 "What! crucify your King! behold Him there"—*

“We have no king but Cæsar!” rends the air.

A last appeal: “The Paschal feast is nigh,



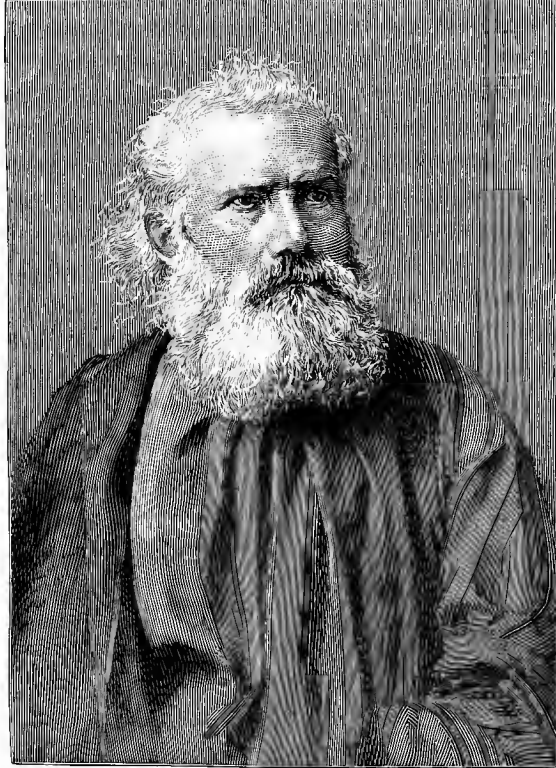
JOHN

*At which one malefactor doomed to die
I must release;” and, as he speaks, they fetch
From prison walls, hard by, a loathsome wretch,
Condemned for many crimes, the Law’s just prey,*

*Who stands before them, in the light of day,
 A hideous sight, whereat all outcries cease,
 While Pilate cries, "Whom will ye I release?"
 Too swiftly comes the answer to his call—
 "Not Jesus, but Barabbas," say they all.
 With coward will, borne down by Jewish hate,
 Meekly he leaves the victim to His fate,
 Washes his hands, vain show, and in one breath
 Declares Christ guiltless; gives Him up to death.*

*So swiftly all has passed, that Mary knows
 Only of Jesus' capture by His foes;
 The Master taken, His disciples fled,
 And in their flight the fatal tidings spread.
 But John and Peter, through the darkness, crept
 Where, in the High Priests' hall, the watch was kept,
 And by the firelight, near their Master's side,
 Waited, in fear, for what might next betide.
 There, as the Lord foretold, to Peter came
 His sudden, craven lapse; his hour of shame.
 Slow waned the night, and ere the cock crew twice,
 Had he, with oaths, denied the Saviour thrice;
 Then the Lord looked on Peter, and he went,
 In outer darkness, to the banishment
 Of bitter tears, his head in anguish bowed,
 Beating his breast, with lamentations loud.
 John hastes to Mary, and we see them next
 In the great city wandering, perplexed
 With doubts and fears, when, suddenly, a cry*

*Breaks on their ears—the multitude is nigh,
Who view their victim, with triumphant hate,
Led to His death outside the city's gate;*



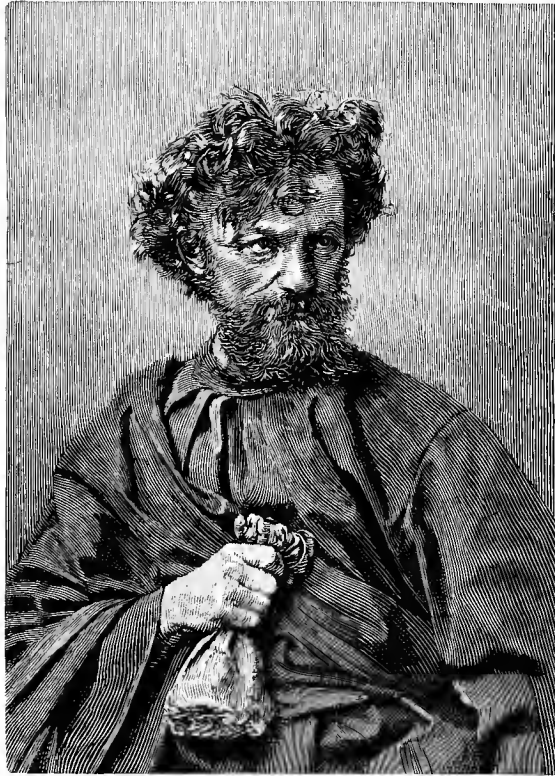
PETER

*He bears His cross, and now as Mary stops,
With looks aghast, beneath its weight He drops;
While, as with lightning stroke, upon her gaze,
The whole truth flashes with consuming blaze—*

*“ Is this the goal His life of love has won,
Death on the cross accurst, My Son! My Son!”*

*We gaze and shrink, and, shrinking, still we gaze,
As with strong hands the middle cross they raise;
All things set down in holy writ are here—
The crown of thorns, the reed, the Roman spear,
The parted garments and the seamless vest,
The foul-mouthed rabble, with coarse jeer and jest,
The wagging heads, the rulers’ boastful cry,
The sudden earthquake and the darkened sky—
Too real all; with horrors so compact
We lose the actors in the awful Act;
The mimic scene recedes, the players’ stage,
Before the Passion of the Gospel page:
Nailed to the cruel wood, in dying pangs,
Between two thieves, the suffering victim hangs.
Supreme in power, to him who faintly cries
“ Remember me,” He opens Paradise.
Supreme in love, that love His murderers share—
“ Father, forgive them,” is His pitying prayer.
Still beats His human heart toward Mary’s breast—
“ Behold thy Mother, Son”—His sole bequest.
In cruel answer to His fainting call,
“ I thirst,” they bring Him vinegar and gall.
The Father’s face withdrawn, in brief eclipse—
“ Forsaken,” trembles from His quivering lips;
Then, “ It is finished,” with loud voice He cries,
Commends His parting soul to God, and dies.*

*Beneath the fatal tree, in thickest gloom,
The faithful few are grouped by Joseph's tomb;
With loving thought he begged, and Pilate gave,*



JUDAS

*The lifeless body for his rock-hewn grave;
Then on the ladder's round his aid he lends,
As from the cross the sacred form descends.
This is the sombre scene by Rubens cast*

*On his famed canvas, in the transept vast
 Of Antwerp's great cathedral, and to-day
 The tragic movement of the Passion Play
 Starts into life the forms his pencil wrought,
 The players' action with the painter's thought.
 Then, for a little space, her Son is laid
 In Mary's arms, for death's long sleep arrayed ;
 With burial rite of tears and fond embrace,
 They bear Him gently to His resting-place.
 Love can avail no more ; the Crucified
 Is dead and buried. In His grave abide
 What vanished visions : Hope with Him has fled,
 The Lord of Israel slain, Messiah dead.
 The mourners pass, and all is over now,
 Only the spectral cross on Calvary's brow,
 Brand of the world's worst shame, stands lone and bare,
 Symbol of Heaven's wrath and man's despair.*

*This is the human ending ; for the rest,
 The sequel is divine and silence best.
 Few scenes and simple mark the drama's close :
 In the gray dawn the Easter sunlight glows ;
 At the grave's mouth, arisen, as He said,
 The Lord appears ; the Living leaves the Dead ;
 And, at the last, His radiant form is shown
 In clouds ascending to the Father's throne.*

*We quit the place, and home returning, say :
 " These are strange things that we have seen to-day."*

*Still while we muse, one thought the most intense—
 How have these men this marvellous power, and whence?
 No classic Roscius taught their earlier age,
 No tragic Talma trod their later stage,
 Nor modern players, versed in all the schools,
 Have hither brought their new dramatic rules;
 And yet these peasant actors, undismayed,
 In loftier parts than Shakespeare drew, have played;
 And not for rustic boors, or mountain swains,
 Or simple herdsmen on Bavarian plains.
 Hither the world is drawn; from all its shores
 Comes the vast throng that through this gateway pours;
 Here sit the critics who, with practised gaze,
 View each fresh triumph won when Irving plays,
 Or as the maddened Moor, Salvini strides,
 Or Booth unlocks the secret Hamlet hides.
 How have these peasants dared this height to scale,
 Where to succeed in part were but to fail,
 With fearless footsteps on the dizzy edge,
 Where less than full success were sacrilege?*

*Twofold the answer. Five times fifty years
 One lofty thought possessed these mountaineers;
 A generation slept, another came,
 And still their purpose kept its steadfast aim,
 Ran in their blood and in their pulses thrilled,
 And all their life with all its spirit filled.
 Nor deem it strange. What altar fires have leapt,
 Where by a chosen few a faith is kept;*

*What deeds heroic ever have been done,
Where one strong impulse swept from sire to son ;
See where, apart, in mountain wilds of Spain,
One lonely tribe, in all the world, retain
Their Orient, alien speech, and dwell alone ;
So here the ancient Mystery claims its own,
And sets apart this far Bavarian clan
To show the Passion of the Son of Man.
Nor is this all. As on the wave, the crest,
One Master spirit shines above the rest,
Whose patient labor, wrought from day to day,
Through thirty years, has made the Passion Play ;
The village pastor, shepherd of his fold,
Simple of heart, but fired with courage bold
To mould the native thought with daring skill,
And with the world its well-won fame to fill ;
His touch has fashioned all ; his plastic art
Shaped every scene and rounded every part ;
His hand has planted on his hamlet's brow
The sparkling diadem which crowns it now.*

*Fair Oberammergau ! to thy pure shrine
How many thoughts to-day revert with mine !
From over distant seas, from every zone,
What countless memories claim thee as their own !
To thee we flocked as birds of passage fly,
Their close-locked pinions darkening all the sky,
To pause an instant on some sunlit height,
Then part forever in their scattered flight ;*

*From North and South, from East and West, we came,
Thy loving welcome still to all the same.
Thanks to each peasant host. And shall it be
This decade ends the Passion Mystery?
Here, as of old, shall sordid greed of gain
The Temple court defile with touch profane?
Shall the world's concourse, like some mountain slide,
Cboke the pure streamlet with its muddy tide?
Perchance it must be so; yet as Time flies,
As the years roll, the waning century dies,
Haply thy sons, with purpose high and true,
In coming decades shall the vow renew;
Witbin the world, yet from the world apart,
And with the blessing of the pure in heart,
Safe in the fastness of their mountain home,
Show forth His Passion till the Saviour come.*



NOTES

“*A trembling vow breathed in a night of fears.*”—p. 15.

“The Oberammergau tradition is as follows: In the year 1633 a fearful pestilence broke out in the neighboring villages; so fearful, indeed, it was thought everybody would die. In Kohlgrub, distant nine miles from Ammergau, so great were the ravages made by the disease that only two married couples were left in the village. Notwithstanding the strict measures taken by the people of Ammergau to prevent the plague being introduced into their village, a day laborer named Caspar Schuchler, who had been working at Eschenlohe, where the plague prevailed, succeeded in entering the village, where he wished to visit his wife and children. In a day or two he was a corpse; he had brought with him the germs of the disease, which spread with such fearful rapidity that, within the following thirty-three days, eighty-four persons belonging to the village died. Then the villagers, in their sad trial, assembled, and solemnly vowed that, if God would take away the pestilence, they would perform the Passion Tragedy in thanksgiving every tenth year. From that time on, although a number of persons were suffering, not one more died of the plague. In 1634, the play was first performed. The decadal period was chosen for 1680, and the Passion Play has been enacted every tenth year, with various interruptions, since that time.”—JOHN P. JACKSON, *Guide to the Passion Play*, 1890.

“*. . . Where, stern and lone,
Rose to the sky his rugged cross-tipped cone.*”—p. 16.

The summit of Kofel is surmounted by a colossal cross.

“‘If they want to remove our play,’ said Joseph Mayer, ‘they must remove with it the Kofelspitze and its guarding cross.’ It is a curious accident that this year the cross was blown down and has just been renewed. Some of the villagers see in this accident an omen that the Play ought no longer to be continued;

and, indeed, it is said that some of them believe that they have had a heavenly intimation that henceforth they are quit of their olden vow, and that with this year the public decennial repetition of the Play should cease forever.”—ARCHDEACON FARRAR, *The Passion Play at Oberammergau*, 1890.

“*Round the vast theatre.*”—p. 16.

The present theatre has been built after a design and under the direction of Karl Lautenschläger, the manager and inventor of the scenery of the Royal Theatre in Munich. It is built in great part of wood, with a solid brick building in the rear, serving for practice during the years in which there is no Passion Play. The auditorium rises, amphitheatrically, one hundred and sixty-eight feet in length, by one hundred and eighteen feet in width, and accommodates four thousand persons. About a third part of this space is under cover. The seats are so arranged that every spectator easily commands a view of the whole stage. Between the amphitheatre and the stage is the space occupied by the orchestra. Only the middle part of the stage is under cover. Within this, the tableaux are given, while the chorus occupies the open stage and the dramatic scenes are enacted on all its parts, which include, on either side of the central stage, a street in Jerusalem; on the extreme right, the house of Pilate, and on the extreme left, the palace of the High Priest. Beyond the theatre, the hills rise on either side, affording glimpses of natural scenery, which, if the day be fair and bright, as was the case on my visit—August 17, 1890—greatly enhance the interest of the Play. Hans Christian Andersen thus narrates his experience in 1860:

“During the entire representation we had had alternate rain and wind, all the while cloudy weather; but by chance, just as Christ was lowered into the grave, the sun broke forth and illumined the stage, the spectators, the whole surrounding. Birds sang and flew, here and there, over us; it was a moment one never forgets.”

“*While groups symbolic place before the view.*”—p. 20.

“The good priest Daisenberger, instead of simply setting forth the Gospel story as it stands in the New Testament, took, as his

fundamental idea, the connection of the Passion, incident by incident, with the types, figures, and prophecies of the Old Testament. The whole of the Old Testament is thus made as it were the massive pedestal for the Cross, and the course of the narrative of the Passion is perpetually interrupted or illustrated by scenes from the older Bible, which are supposed to prefigure the next event to be represented on the stage. Thus, in Daisenberger's words, 'The representation of the Passion is arranged and performed on the basis of the entire Scriptures.'—W. F. STEAD, in the *Review of Reviews*, July, 1890.

The tableaux, of which there are in all twenty-three, begin with "The Fall of Man and the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden," followed by "The Adoration of the Cross." These precede the opening scene of the Play. The tableaux which follow are: "The Conspiracy of Joseph's Brethren"—typical of the plot in the Sanhedrim; "The Departure of Tobias" (the only incident taken from the Apocrypha), and "The Bride in the Song of Solomon lamenting her lost Bridegroom"—both preceding the parting at Bethany; "The Rejection of Vash-ti"—typifying the doom of Jerusalem; "The Gathering of the Manna;" "The Grapes of Eschol"—symbolizing the Bread and Wine; "The Sale of Joseph by his Brethren"—foreshadowing the price paid to Judas for the betrayal; "Adam tilling the Ground in the Sweat of his Brow"—prefiguring the Agony of Geth-semane; "Joab's Assassination of Amasa"—showing forth the treachery of Judas; "Micaiah Rebuking the False Prophet," "Na-both Stoned to Death," "The Sufferings of Job"—all typical of the Saviour's sufferings at the hands of the Chief Priests; "Cain's Remorse after Killing Abel"—preceding the suicide of Judas; "Daniel accused before Darius"—Christ before Pilate; "Samson a Sport to the Philistines"—Christ before Herod. The remaining tableaux, "Joseph's Bloody Coat brought to Jacob," "The Sacrifice of Isaac," "Joseph's Elevation in Egypt," "The Scapegoat in the Wilderness," "Isaac bearing the Wood on Mount Moriah," "Moses Elevating the Brazen Serpent," and "The Healing of those who Looked Upon It," are all typical of the various closing scenes of the Passion and the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Messiah.

“These tableaux call into requisition the services of a multitude of the villagers, so that there are sometimes three or four hundred persons on the stage. There is not one of the scenes which is not effectively set forth, and it is wonderful to observe how absolutely motionless are all the assembled figures, even the youngest children, during the moment or two that each tableaux remains visible. Whatever mind and taste may have presided over these scenes, the grouping of the actors and the harmonious blending of the colors is a triumph of artless art.”—ARCHDEACON FARRAR, *The Passion Play at Oberammergau*, 1890.

“*And yet these peasant actors, undismayed,
In loftier parts than Shakespear drew have played.*”—p. 37.

The cast of performers in 1890 was as follows: Christus, Joseph Mayer; Peter, Jacob Hett (these two took the same characters in 1871 and 1880); John, Peter Rendl; Caiaphas, Johann Lang, Sr.; Nathaniel, Sebastian Lang; Pilate, Thomas Rendl (these three played the same parts in 1880); Mary, Rosa Lang; Mary Magdalene, Amalia Deschler; Martha, Helena Lang; Joseph of Arimathea, Mark Oppenrieder; Nicodemus, Franz Steinbacher; Annas, Franz Rutz, Sr.; Rabbi Archelaus, Sebastian Bauer; Judas, Johann Zwink; Herod, Johann Diemer (he was the Choragus of 1880); Prologus, Jacob Rutz. “In 1870 and 1880 the Judas was played by Gregor Lechner, whose performance was considered masterly. It resulted in an unconscious shrinking from him on the part of the villagers after the performances—a tribute to his powers which was very unwelcome to him. Johann Zwink, the new impersonator of this part, is, as was also his predecessor, a wood-carver. Mayer, Hett, and Lechner are, or were, all wood-carvers. Johann Lang is a village merchant and its burgomaster. He is also the stage-manager.”—J. H. HERVEY, in the *Christian Union*, New York, June 19, 1890.

“*One master spirit shines above the rest.*”—p. 38.

Daisenberger, whose name is indissolubly linked with the Passion Play, was the son of a peasant of Oberau, and for more than thirty-five years the pastor and “Geistlicher Rath” of Oberammergau. His published works include a volume of sermons,

entitled, *The Fruits of Observations on the Passion*, and numerous Biblical and historical plays, and a translation of *Antigone* from the Greek for the Ammergau actors. He modelled the chorus of the *Passion Play* after the Greek drama. The results of his patient instruction of the people are apparent throughout their performance of the play. A monument to his memory, surmounted by his bust, stands in the church-yard at the eastern entrance to the church.

*“See where, apart, in mountain wilds of Spain,
One lonely tribe in all the world retain.”*—p. 38.

The Basques, a people inhabiting the northern provinces of Spain, adjacent to the Bay of Biscay, peculiar in manners and customs, enjoying political privileges entirely distinct from the other provinces, and speaking a language which differs from all the Indo-European and Semitic tongues.

*“. . . And shall it be
This decade ends the Passion Mystery?”*—p. 39.

The question of the further performance of the *Passion Play* has been much discussed. The making of Oberammergau a world centre has necessarily made it a centre of worldliness. The vast influx of strangers brings with it a crowd of dealers in merchandise and keepers of booths, as at the great fairs held in Continental capitals, and it is a serious question whether these conditions will not impair the religious character of the performance. As yet they have not perceptibly lowered the high standard of religious feeling which has been successfully maintained.

“If the *Passion Play* is given up, it will be the subject of considerable regret, both to the dramatist and the antiquarian, and it will be a distinct loss to the Church. If each time we say the Creed we are witnessing to Jesus Christ in the face of an unbelieving world, how much more is such a laborious and elaborate undertaking as this play a testimony to the saving truths of the Gospel? When the love of many is ‘waxing cold,’ it is a great stimulus to faith to know that in one spot in the world the great joy of the inhabitants for generations has centred round

the central fact of Christianity. We can hardly conceive what would be the effect on these people if they were forbidden to act. Their religious life has adopted this peculiar form for the expression of its devotion, and there may be dangers even greater than those of covetousness and want of simplicity, if it is rudely torn from them."—Rev. F. A. G. EICHBAUM, The Country Parson at Oberammergau, 1890.

A recent publication of the official report of the Burgomaster of Oberammergau states the financial results of the year 1890 as follows. The reckoning is in German marks:

RECEIPTS

1. Received from tickets of admission	665,719.50
2. Received from the sale of photographs	27,000.00
3. Received from other sources	2,004.57
	<u>694,724.07</u>

EXPENDITURES

1. Interest on acquired funds	6,527.60
2. Building expenses, including material	199,668.85
3. Paid those assisting in the play	242,830.00
4. Distributed to 238 householders, 180 M each	42,840.00
5. Distributed to 29 families, 100 M each	2,900.00
6. Applied to communal purposes, as follows: For building a new hospital; sewers; water supply, etc.	99,397.00
7. Reserved for other communal purposes, as follows: Towards a fund for the hospital; for the purchase of articles necessary for the church; for the poor fund; for the increase of teachers' salaries; protection of the river banks, and other public improvements	100,000.00
Reserve	560.62
	<u>694,724.07</u>

It will be seen that about \$61,000 American money was the sum divided among those taking part in the production of the Play, 747 in number, for 40 or more representations, each of which occupied an entire day. Mayer, the leading character, received \$500; the manager, music-director, leader of the chorus, and chief cashier, \$325 each; while the actors were allotted sums varying from \$225 to \$37.50 apiece, the 269 children being divided into two classes, and paid, respectively, \$20 and \$10.

