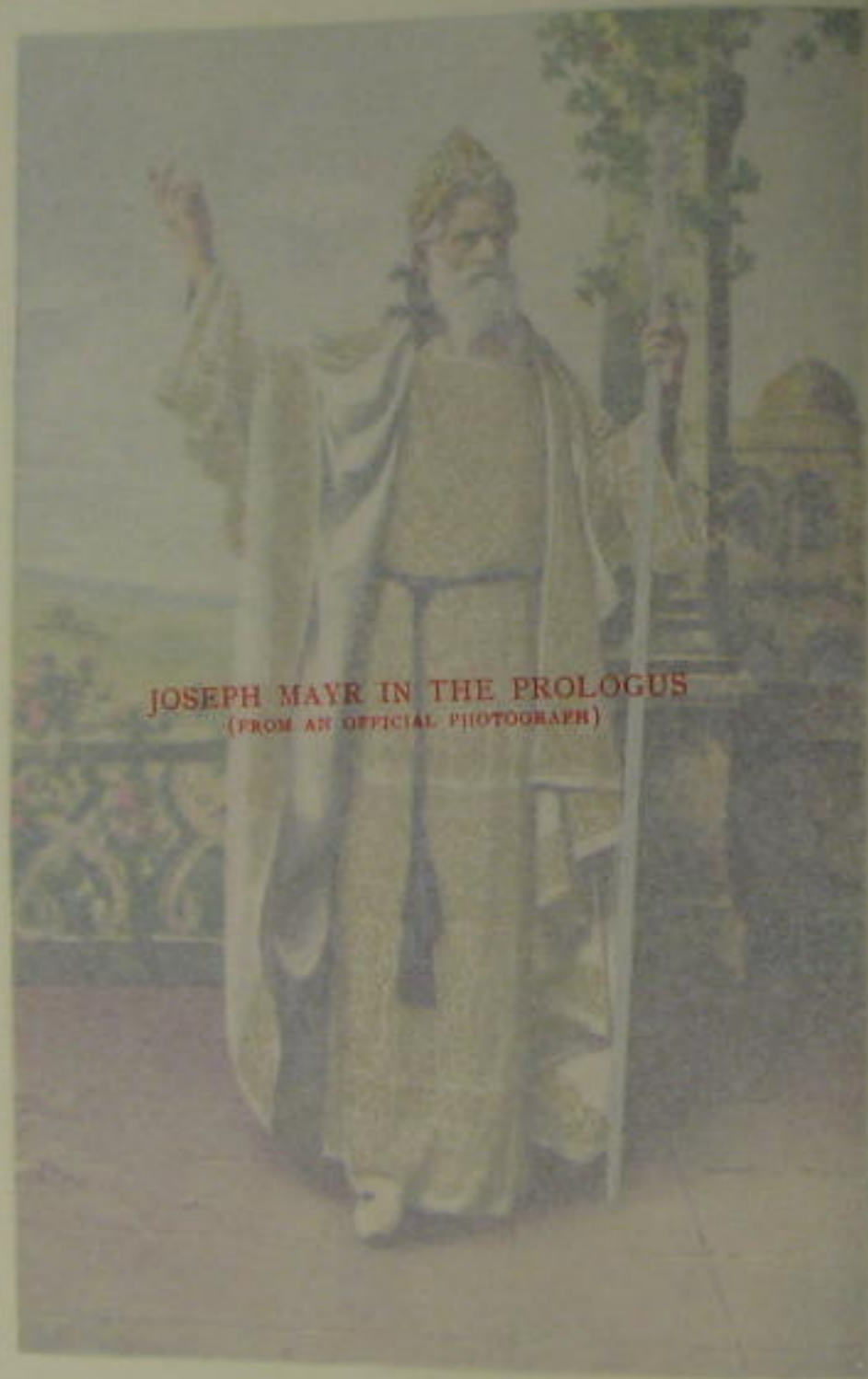
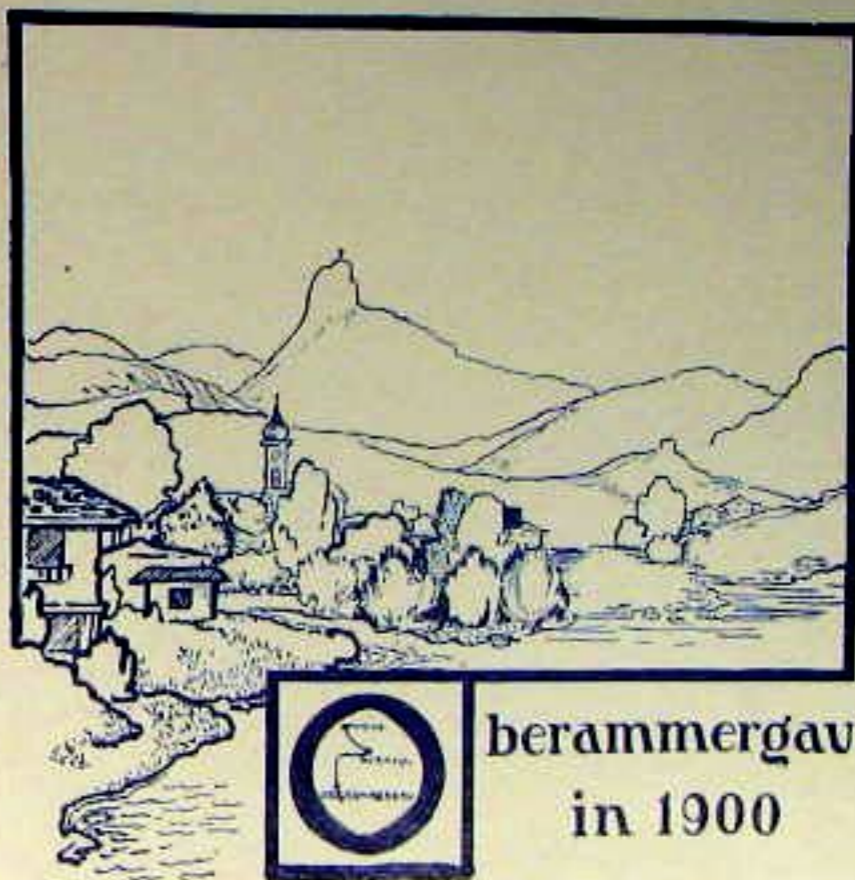


JOSEPH MAYR IN THE PROLOGUE  
(FROM AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH)  
UAGRAMMERGAU



JOSEPH MAYR IN THE PROLOGUS  
(FROM AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH)

OBERAMMERGAU



## Oberammergau in 1900

ONCE more the world has witnessed the fulfilment of the promise made by the people of Oberammergau three hundred and sixty-seven years ago. Once more the reverent or curious thousands have assembled in the sacred theater that lies within the shadow of the cross-crowned Kofel. Once more the village folk have performed their celebrated Passion Play, the most impressive dramatic presentation of modern times.

Despite the material changes of a decade, the spirit of the Play and of the players remains unchanged. Although a

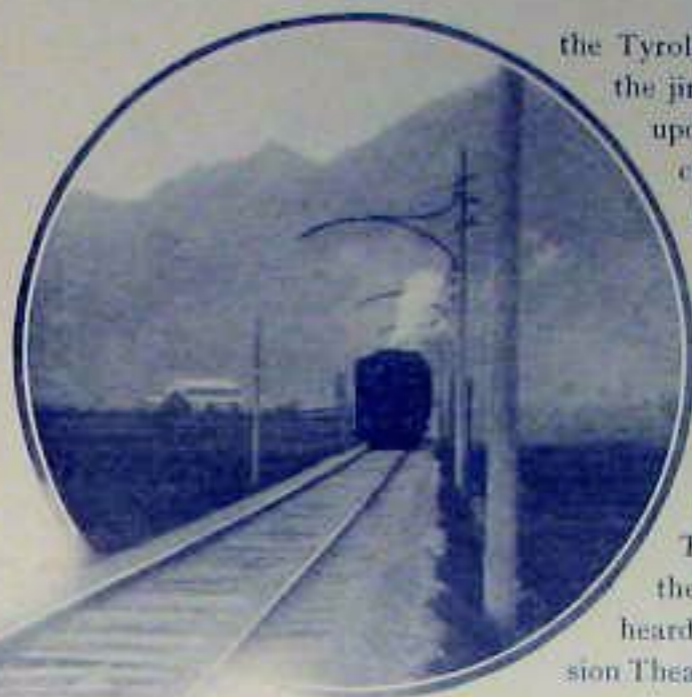
railway now brings worldly crowds to that remote Bavarian hamlet, the drama has not lost its sacred character, the actors have not lost their reverence, nor the people their honesty of purpose. A sojourn among the villagers brings no disillusion to the stranger; instead it brings increased respect and admiration for the unique community of earnest men and women, who, every tenth year, in observance of a



THE NEW APPROACH TO OBERAMMERGAU

time-honored tradition, emerge from a self-imposed obscurity, and offer to the Christian world a marvelous representation of the sublimest tragedy of all time.

The years have wrought great changes in the valley of the Passion Play. In 1880 visitors toiled up a road so steep and rough as to be little better than an alpine trail. In 1890 they rolled swiftly along the mountain-side over a perfect modern highway with easy grades. In 1900 they obtained their first glimpse of the cross-crowned peak of the Kofel from the windows of a railway-train. The cracking whips of



THE INVASION OF THE IRON HORSE

the Tyrolean drivers and the jingle of the bells upon the horses' collars have given place to the rumble of steel wheels and the shrill, piping whistle of the new Continental locomotive. The neighing of the iron horse is heard even in the Passion Theater, for pending the completion of the power-house the electric trolley-line is operated by steam locomotives. The advent of the line is in every sense unfortunate. There is no gain in speed or comfort. The change of cars from the State



THE RAILWAY STATION



WAITING CARRIAGES

Railway at Murnau is a disagreeable incident made, because of the inadequate arrangements, truly serious to travelers

who are encumbered with much luggage; and the remainder of the journey is covered at the rate of less than seven miles an hour, because of new-laid rails and untried curves. Three or four hundred passengers are boxed in every train; and on arrival the crowd, confused and helpless, sweeps down the station platform to overwhelm the waiting agents of the "Accommodation Bureau" and of the tourist companies, who cannot possibly attend to all at once.

The Ammergauers did their best to prepare for the tourist avalanche, which every Saturday rolled down the rails from Munich. Carriages were plentiful, and guides, porters, and the uniformed representatives of Cook and Gaze stood bravely at the station to aid, advise, direct, and pacify the tired troops of travelers. But their task was hopelessly difficult. In former seasons visitors arrived in groups or family parties, coming from Murnau, Oberau, or other points on the State Railway line, in coaches, carts, and carriages, and thus the members of each party received the personal attention



ARRIVING CROWD

of the Accommodation Committee, and were directed to the house in which they were to lodge, before the next trap brought another lot of folk to be provided for. Thus the visitors were quietly sifted into the bedrooms of the little village.

But last summer, on the eve of every "Play Day," four thousand or more people were rushed into town in lots of several hundred each. The best of organizations could not but go awry under this hitherto unknown pressure; but thanks to the marvelous good-temper of the villagers,



TROOPING INTO TOWN

Oberammergau absorbed with comparative celerity this weekly influx of strangers,—a transient army outnumbering three to one the local population. It was amusing to watch them trooping into town on foot, in two-horse carriages, or in the peculiar rigs called "*ein-spanners*," which appear incomplete because there is but one horse harnessed to a pole apparently intended for a double team.

We arrive the day before the first performance of the 1900 season. The villagers are putting on the finishing touches of preparation. A sign which reads "*zum Wohnungs Bureau*," points the way to the headquarters of the



FINISHING TOUCHES

Renting Committee, which was organized to receive the advance applications for beds and seats, to book prospective visitors in available private houses or improvised hotels, and to assign the rooms remaining to those who at the last moment found no place to lay their heads. The Wohnungs Bureau labored long and very hard at its thankless, self-appointed task. If ever there were professing Christians sorely tried for a long season, they were the officials of that admirable bureau.

Upon their heads rested the reproach for every room that was too small, too large, too hot, too cold, too far away, or too near the theater. They became sponsors for every



AN EARLY ARRIVAL

cook in the town; they answered for the sins of every servant, and were held accountable for the shortcomings of every washstand, chair, or feather-bed in all the village.

Multi-colored feather-beds are airing at every window. The houses seem to exude bulging bags of feathers. At first sight there comes the startling thought that possibly the village is so full that late arrivals are condemned to sleep on windowsills. Very reassuring is the knowledge that Oberammergau



FEATHER BEDS

is fully prepared to cope with an extraordinary demand for lodgings. There are about 276 houses in the village, there are only about 1200 regular inhabitants, yet it has been announced that during the Passion Summer there will be available for visitors 3200 beds and 300 sofas; and when all these are occupied, there yet remain, as final resorts for the improvident, no fewer than 1500 clean straw mattresses to lay upon the floors in kitchens or in corridors. As for the



ONE OF THE THIRTY-TWO HUNDRED



ANOTHER BAVARIAN BED

natives, those who have time to sleep at all, retire to the haylofts or the cellars. We are among those fortunate enough to secure one of those 3200 beds. It was squeezed into a drawing-room, where a fine old cabinet and an array of drawings, carved wooden figures,



and well-worn, serious books, suggest that those who live here are more than simple peasants; that they are people of refinement and of taste. The bed is of the usual type, a hard foundation and a soft feathery superstructure—a buoyant bag which lightly refuses to remain balanced on the prostrate body of the sleeper, unless he be a somnambulistic equilibrist. A



THE MAID-OF-ALL-WORK

certain rotund visitor, after a vain all-night struggle to obtain a wink of restful sleep between the stiff mattress and the fluffy comforter, declared that during his rare moments of unconsciousness he dreamed that he was a sardine, lying upon a piece of hardtack and covered over with an omelet soufflé! The dream was not far from the fact.



Our baggage has been carried in, not by a sturdy porter but by the willing little Mädchen who presides over the kettles and the cookstove. We did not understand the title "maid-of-all-work," until it was made clear by the daily



THE PRINCIPAL HOTEL

round of multifarious toil of this sweet-tempered, ever-smiling damsel. Up with the early bird whose song wakes the lark, she does a full day's work before the breakfast hour; she cooks, she carries trunks, she sweeps and cleans and sews all day; and when at night we, after a long evening with the local owls at the old inn, come home through the silent streets, we find her still on duty, ready to open the door for us and greet us with a cheery "*gruss Gott!*" before she finally spreads her straw mattress on the floor to snatch an hour's rest till the morning duties call her to another day of cheery, helpful labor. We hope that at some season of the year she finds time to rest.

Not to add to her burdens, we arrange to take our meals at a pension in the central square. We could not have chosen better in the way of bed and board. We lodge with Ludwig Lang, the drawing master, the man who designs and arranges the stage-settings and the tableaux of the Passion Play. We eat at the bounteous board of Guido Lang, Postmaster of



HOUSE OF GEORG LANG SEL. ERBEN

Oberammergau, owner of the finest dwelling in the village, and chief proprietor of the wood-carving factory and store which flourishes under the title of "Georg Lang sel. Erben," which means "Heirs of Georg Lang, the Ancestor."

The visitor meets many Langs in Oberammergau. They are all influential, artistic, and in every way an admirable

race. Our introduction to the clan could not be more propitious, for Guido Lang, the postmaster, speaks English fluently and is a power in the village. His brother, Hugo, who makes his home in Liverpool, where he acts as agent for the wood-carvings of the villagers, has come with his pretty daughters, two young women and a little girl of twelve, speaking perfect English, to assist their relatives during the invasion of Anglo-Saxon tourists. The venerable "Aunt Teresa" is now the oldest member of the clan, and little Herta, with her yellow hair, is the youngest, freshest blossom upon this sturdy family-tree. They are all indefatigable in looking after the comfort of their guests, whom they treat rather as members of the household. And during the busy days preceding and following the Passion Play, they take turns at the counters in the store, answering the myriad questions of the hurried strangers, selling photographs and crucifixes, carven saints, or miniature "Last Suppers."

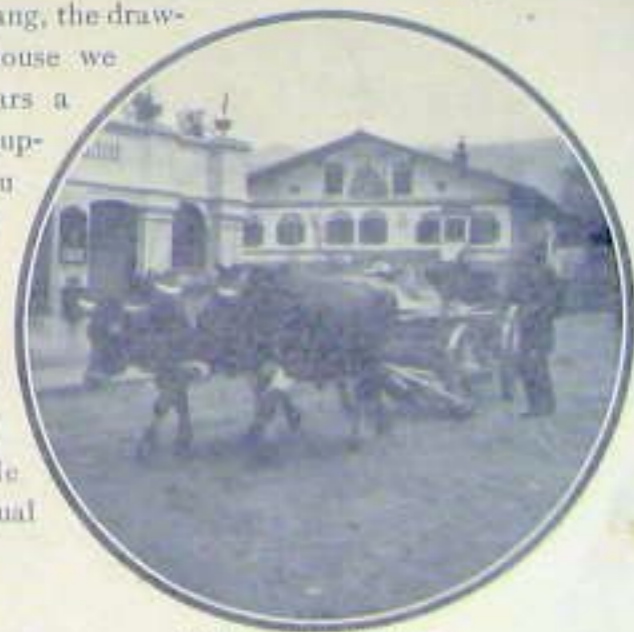


OUR HOSTS, THE LANGS



WOOD-CARVINGS

But in spite of large weekly sales, the forest of crucifixes is not thinned, for the store-rooms are packed with the products of the Ammergauers' chisels. Many hard-times seasons in the town have been tided over, thanks to the very generous firm of Georg Lang's Heirs, who stood ever ready to buy for cash the handiwork of their hard-pressed fellow-citizens. But they took no advantage. They always paid full price, and were content to wait until the Passion Year for their reward. The improved style of all the carvings is due to the teachings and efforts of Ludwig Lang, the drawing-master, in whose house we sleep. For twenty years a school of art has been supported in Oberammergau by the government; but the school was in existence before that, for during the ten preceding years it was conducted by Ludwig Lang in his own home. He was content with an annual



PASSING THE POST-OFFICE

salary of \$300, proud to be able to keep the school alive until at last a subsidy was granted to perpetuate it. It is to-day a monument to the self-sacrifice and art-enthusiasm of the drawing-master, and its influence upon the taste and craftsmanship of the local carvers has enabled them to hold their own in competition with outside rivals, and has preserved the local industry which at one time was threatened with utter ruin, artistic and commercial.

In the schoolrooms we find exhibits of the last year's work in modeling, wood-sculpture, and drawing.

The youth in charge points to an architectural design for a German stove; the sketch is signed in a firm hand "Anton Lang."



IN THE LANG'S GARDEN

Lang." He is to be the Christ in the play this year. This was the last work he did in the drawing-class. We had been told by some that the new Christ was a potter, while still others affirmed he was a stove-maker. We are now prepared to reconcile these apparently irreconcilable statements, for the Bavarian stove is made of tiles, and tiles are made by

pottery. In many a house they proudly show us stoves erected by *the* Anton Lang, yesterday the potter's son, to-morrow the Christ upon whose acting depends the success or failure of the Passion Play. Although we frequently passed the home of Lang during the two days spent in town



IN THE ART SCHOOL

before the public rehearsal on the 20th of May, we did not see the Christ until we beheld him in his violet robe riding amid the Jewish multitudes on the great stage; and so it was with nearly all the other characters.

One exception, however, must be made in the case of the docile donkey cast for a conspicuous part in the first act. We did meet him, on his way to the village photographer's to have his portrait taken. But in the natural order of events the traveler sees the players first upon the stage. Then later, when he meets them in the streets, he knows them first by their stage-names. This one is "Peter," such another, "John," or "Judas"; and thus we come to regard as

natural and proper the local custom that gives in private life to every man the name he bears upon the stage. We feel no shock to hear them speak of "Christus" Lang, or of "Maria" Flunger. A villager, for instance, without the slightest lack of reverence exclaimed: "See, here comes 'Matthew' with a new



DESIGNS BY VILLAGE PUPILS

'Pontius Pilate' from the shop." We look, and see the honest porter of our pension, wheeling a life-size wooden figure in a barrow. The man on Sundays plays the part of the Disciple Matthew; the effigy of the Roman Governor is a belated piece of decoration for the theater.

Nor should strangers be scandalized by



A BAVARIAN STOVE



"ST. MATTHEW"

propriety than do such words as "tea" and "coffee."

But we confess to a slight shock of surprise at the levity, not to say hilarity, of the mural decorations which are hung in the *wein-stube* of the *Wittelsbacher-Hof*, the gift of a young Munich artist to the tavern. One picture represents a damsel dancing.

Commenting upon this incongruous discovery we



THE ONLY IMPORTED ACTOR

the frequency with which the words "Wein" and "Bier" appear above the doors of the hotels and pensions of the village. We are in Germany, where the frequent words "wine" or "beer" convey no more a suggestion of any kind of im-



MURAL DECORATIONS BEFORE THE PRIEST'S VISIT

come with friends an hour later to pass a final judgment on that work of art. But judgment has been already passed.



MURAL DECORATIONS AFTER THE PRIEST'S VISIT

The parish priest meantime, quite by chance, has viewed the bacchante, and at his suggestion the landlord has veiled the obstreperous young woman with a hotel poster and a time-card. The priest had reminded the manager that no dancing is permitted during the summer of the Play. A fine sense of propriety distinguishes the Ammergauers. This enables them to play their parts both on the stage and in their daily life without offending any save the supersensitive stranger.



THE HOME OF "CHRISTUS" LANG

Possibly there are people who will hold up their hands in horror at the spectacle of a little girl bringing her father's midday beer from the neighboring tavern. But we are in Bavaria—the people would not be Bavarians did they not drink the rich, delicious brew of Munich. Here in this village is a community of thirteen hundred people, all good, industrious, intelligent, and temperate; and it is doubtful if there be a single person in that number who ever dreamed



MUNICH BEER

that in drinking wine or beer they could be accused of wrongdoing. Tell them of our prohibitory laws, they stand aghast, and with admirable self-control courteously refrain from asking if the majority of our citizens are really creatures so weak and so imbecile as to require measures seemingly so preposterous to save them from themselves.

But each nation has its peculiarities. The German prohibitory laws deal with a thing we hold in high esteem, our fat, famous, and profitable pig. But the German porker is not frowned upon; he has the freedom of every table d'hôte, and he appears in sausage-form in every lunch-box opened by the peasants who have been steadily flocking into town all day.

Hundreds of late arrivals, unable to secure accommodations, camp in the outskirts of the village, eating and sleeping in their carriages or omnibuses. In fact, it seems as if there were to be a country fair to-morrow, rather than a sacred play. The village wears an almost festal aspect, the costume of the Tyrolean peasants, the carriages dashing from station to hotel, from the renting-bureau to private houses, the frantic rush of new-comers in search of rooms, interpreters, or information, give to the central square unwonted animation. The holiday spirit begins to be rampant



A BAVARIAN BOY



MUNICH BEER

in the streets. But be it said that in all this frivolity the players of to-morrow are not conspicuously concerned. The swarming strangers are making all the noise; the village for the moment belongs to the invaders; the natives are quietly and cheerfully attending to complaints, answering questions, giving information, cooking dinners, spreading tables, and finding space for extra beds. Their quiet little homes are temporarily transformed into hotels or pensions. In a word,



"KÖSTLICH"

the townspeople are become servants of their guests; even men of property do not hesitate to lend a hand if there are trunks to move, or gripsacks to carry, and their wives and daughters gladly don their aprons to serve at the overpopulated dining-tables and to help wash dishes. Every inhabitant regards the comfort of the stranger as his or her personal concern.

Even the children do their best to make the stranger feel at home. A group of little girls takes us in hand, leading



IN THE SUBURBS



FOLLOWING AN APOSTLE

us through the village, pointing out the dwellings of those who are to play the leading parts in the Passion drama.

We pause before the home of the Flunger family. The father is a postman; one of the daughters, Anna, is to be the Virgin Mary in the play, the proudest task that ever falls to a village girl in Oberammergau. She, like other little girls of



SACRED FRINCOS

this community, has dreamed from childhood of the great day when she should be deemed worthy to enact that sacred part.

The boys of to-day are already looking forward to the plays of 1910 and 1920, when they, no longer merely "among the people" in the great tableaux, shall be entrusted with important parts. Few of them are strangers



## OBERAMMERGAU



HIGH NOON

to the stage. Nearly all have been rehearsed *en masse*, in the mimic streets of Jerusalem, and already many have begun to cherish the fond hope that some day they may speak before the whole world the lines of John, of Peter, or even the sublime phrases of the Son of Man. We see many faces that are rich in promise of the divine expression; and there is an innate



THE HOME OF "MARY"



AFTER SCHOOL



"MARY'S" FATHER

nobility and gentleness in this Ammergau folk, born of generations of religious training and example. It is an interesting



THE WELCOME COMMITTEE



THE BIRING GENERATION

study to observe these long-haired children, to seek in them signs of latent talent, to divine the potential capabilities of this one or that for the great task which some day may be his.

It is not difficult to pick out from the boys our ideals for various parts, but with the little girls this

is more difficult. Naturally; for

what man ever fully understood that most fascinating of all mysteries, a woman's soul, although it shines forth in all the simplicity and sweetness of an unaffected child!



PROSPECTIVE PLAYERS



A VILLAGER

"How old are you, and what's your name?" a stranger asked one of the little girls he met in the village street.

"I'm nine years old, sir," she replied; "my name is Frieda Lang."

"Well, Frieda, when I come again, ten years from now, I hope to find that you are the 'Maria' in the Passion Play. Do you not hope so too?"

Frieda smiled, and looking up she answered simply, "Who can tell what will be?"

She has already dreamed of it. She will be nineteen years of age in 1910; she is of the dramatic race of the Langs; well may we say in parting,

"Good-by, little Frieda; who can

tell what will be?" and Frieda joins her playmates, while we

resume our studies of future possibilities for the parts of disciples, high priests, rabbis, and centurions.

Although the children are carefully drilled and taught to pose in *tableaux vivants*, or to march and shout with the Jewish rabble in the big scenes of the play, they do not rest content with what they learn from their elders; they supplement instruction with practice on their own initiative. One day as I sat in my room I heard out in the corridor joyful measured shouts, followed by loud, high-pitched cries, fierce childish mutterings; all these repeated and reiterated many



A PRANKY

THE  
TOWN-CRIER

times with varying emphasis and stress and intonation. Being curious, I opened the door and looked into the corridor. There, striding up and down, play-book in hand, was Herbert Lang, the young son of the house, in the gabardine dress of old Jerusalem. Showing no trace whatever of self-consciousness, he



S. FIVOLKAN APOLLO



PEASANT WOMEN

was practicing at the top of his full, ringing voice, the cries and shouts uttered in unison by all the Jewish populace on the stage. "Hosanna! hosanna!" he would cry in triumph; then in an altered tone, with boyish simulation of frenzy and fanatic hate, voice the unreasoning



TIRED PILGRIMS



GASTROU ZUR ALTEN POST

judgment of the mob, "*Ans Kreuz mit Ihm! Den Barabbas los! Den Galilaer ans Kreuz!*" "To the cross with Him! Release Barabbas! Crucify the Galilean!" And then in still another tone, "His blood be upon us and upon our children!" And this over and over. Regardless of my presence, the earnest boy was intent on doing his part in the great shouting of the rabble to the best of his ability, his strong little lungs and splendid natural voice being in every utterance controlled and guided by an innate dramatic instinct.

Henry Ward Beecher, who often confessed that he envied the newsboys of New York their clear untiring voices, might have transferred his envy to the children of this village, who know by instinct how to use their natural gifts and



A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY



SUNSET

to produce effects unrivaled even by trained actors upon the modern stage. Even the town-crier makes his prosaic announcements with a dramatic unction that appeals to every ear. Many times every day he passes through the streets, halting at fixed places to announce in big clear tones some trifling bit of news or to promulgate some petty regulation.



THE FOUNTAIN IN THE SQUARE

And if fine voices signify fine men, then are the men of Oberammergau among the finest men in Europe. But the admirable physical attribute of the Ammergauers is shared by the men of the neighboring valleys of the Bavarian and Austrian Tyrol. The costumed mountaineers who come tramping into town on stout legs encased in gray and green Tyrolese leggings, are splendid types of hale and hearty men, with honesty in the direct glance of the clear eyes, and good-nature stamped on every feature. Even the bare knees add



WRITING HOME

a sympathetic something to the make-up of these men who represent the race whence springs the more refined, but equally self-reliant people who have made the Passion Play the marvel of the century. The peasant women are not quite so sympathetic as the men; but they are sturdy, homely, religious, and courageous, meeting the hard lot of the rustic poor with a simple faith in the goodness of this world and the next, content if for years of toil they may enjoy as compensation a visit to the village of the "Passion Spiel"—which means a long pedestrian journey, rough, frugal fare on the way, and back seats in the big theater.

On the eve of a performance the town is always filled, the beds are all engaged, the streets are crowded, the central square vying with Broadway in animation. New Yorkers are greeting friends from San Francisco, world-famous actors are chatting with preachers whose names are no less celebrated. The "schoolmarm" from New England may have as her

room-companion a German baroness. The unexpected is a normal element in all these meetings. Personally, I met the "last man that I expected to see" at least a hundred times, and every time he was a different man. One greeted me in Japanese, recalling a chance meeting seven years ago in old Kyoto. At the next turning another wanderer seized my arm and murmured, "*Salaam Aleikum!* what a splendid time we had in Morocco!"



THE FAVORITE LOUNGE



A LUGGAGE-LABEL.

I asked permission to remove the outer label. The lady, puzzled by my strange request, assented. I tear it off, and this is what was underneath: Puzzled in turn, I present my card, and beg to be enlightened concerning the towns of Burton and Holme. I learn that they are situated in Westmoreland, on the London and Northwestern Railway. Being only a mile or two apart, they are served by a single station.

Every hour brings its amusing or keenly interesting incident. Photographers go about the streets seeking whom they may portray. The fountain in the square becomes a favorite background for groups of children who never dream of asking pay for posing. They are content with the uncertain promise of a print to be sent at some future time, a promise which nine times in ten is not fulfilled. The hopes of many enthusiastic amateurs were



But strangest among the strange happenings I count a little incident which I beg leave to interpolate just here. While trying to assist an unknown English lady burdened with innumerable bags and bundles, my eye fell on a railway-label pasted on one of her belongings. You will not fail to see why that half covered-over label interested me. Impelled by curiosity

dashed to earth by words upon a signboard near the theater: "Photographing in the Passion Theater is forbidden. Offenders will be ejected."

Despite this serious hindrance to our work, I could not but applaud the wisdom of this rule. Were it not rigidly enforced, at least one third of the audience would be on foot throughout the play; the click of a thousand shutters would drown the actor's voices, and the winding-up of film would play an accompaniment to every number chanted by the chorus. Moreover, there is a practical pecuniary side to every proposition, and in dealing with the practical side of the photographic question, the villagers sold to a German firm the sole right to make and sell pictures of the scenes and the tableaux and portraits of the actors in costume. This contract did not cover motion-pictures, toward which the Ammergauers held a decided and eminently hostile prejudice. Unworthy frauds had several times been practiced in the name of Oberammergau. Passion Plays, petty



THE SIGN OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC TRUERY.





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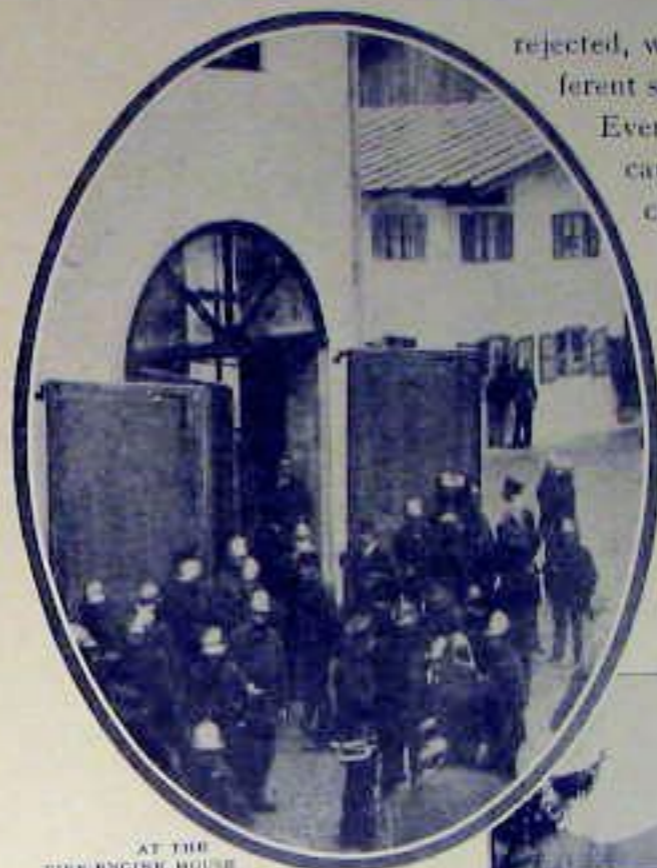


OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC BATTERY

and inartistic, acted by supernumeraries in New York or by clumsy Bohemian peasants, had been cinematographed and shown as faithful reproductions of the Bavarian play. These pictures had left a false and damaging impression in the minds of all who were not cognizant of the fraud perpetrated on the public. Hence the prejudice of the villagers and their prompt refusals of all money-offers from companies who were eager to exploit the play by means of motion-pictures. The propositions we made, although immediately



OUR ASSISTANT

AT THE  
FIRE ENGINE HOUSE

only that in the future we should prove by means of genuine views how utterly unworthy were the pictures foisted upon the American public without the consent or knowledge of the people living in the village of Oberammergau.



SIGNS OF THE TIMES

rejected, were considered in a very different spirit by the leading villagers. Even Josef Mayr pleaded our cause before the village council. But the more conservative element prevailed, and the cinematographing of the play was officially prohibited. As consolation we were assured that had the thing been deemed expedient and proper, the task should have been ours; and that the community would have asked in compensation

And then to prove the sincerity of their professions of good-will they offer to assist us in every possible way. They even order out the local fire-brigade that we may show in far-away America how well the village is prepared to cope with conflagrations. A splendid lot of firemen, these long-haired, helmeted Bavarians. All, or nearly all, are actors too. The Commandant Bauer, who wears a white tassel on his helmet, will to-morrow wear the armor of "Pontius



THE VILLAGE FIRE-BRIGADE

Pilate." Behind him is the second in command, a stocky little man who in private life is a photographer and on the stage a member of the antique chorus. But he proves that he can run as well as he can sing, as a moment later the department dashes past our instruments. But seldom are these firemen compelled to run; fires are of rare occurrence. Occasionally a chimney burns out, causing a flutter of excitement, but the last real conflagration, according to the recollections of the chief, took place in 1863. Nevertheless, the



MAKING MOTION PICTURES

helmeted brigade sweeps through the streets and around the quiet corners to-day, as if the village were actually in flames. Then to convince us that they know how to use the ladders in case of an emergency, the chief designates a house, and gives the order for the ladders to be raised; the hose run up, the pump brought into action. The celerity with which this maneuver is executed shows the influence of the same thorough drill and discipline, the same painstaking accuracy that is manifested by the Ammergauers on the mimic stage.



THE FIRE-LADDER

There is a military precision shown in everything these people do. The members of the drum-corps and the village band carry themselves like soldiers, as they march the streets preceded by a small company of firemen. This musical parade takes place at sunset on the eve of each performance. Formerly the band marched through the streets at sunrise, to rouse the people on the morning of the play; but as the same musicians must also play for eight long hours in the



THE FIRE-DRILL

theater orchestra, this picturesque but fatiguing march now takes place the night before, a more merciful arrangement.

After the band has passed, twilight comes on apace, and with it a quietude and peace descend upon the village. The little Ammer River murmurs its evening prayer, the village seems to listen and respond, the tower of the village church lifts on high the symbol of the glorious faith that animates the dwellers in this happy valley, and from the misty mountain-

tops descends a radiant benediction. All nature is hushed as if in expectation of the drama of the morrow.

And when the dawn comes stealing over the surrounding heights, it first lights up the Cross, upon the summit of the cloud-enveloped peak of the old Kofel. The Kofel top floats there in the vapory heavens like an aerial high altar, bearing



THE VILLAGE BAND

aloft the triumphant Cross of Christianity. We actually behold, like Constantine, a cross set in the heavens. The very skies speak to us of the resurrection and the ascension. Later, the dawn creeps down the Kofel walls, disperses the gray mists, and, following the descending light, our gaze drops from the simple cross a thousand feet above to the marble crucifixion-group set on a hillside near the village.

The dawn has drawn behind the monumental crucifix a curtain radiant with the glow of early day. The spectacle is impressive, and it prepares us for the tragic spectacle to follow.

But presently the calm of coming day is broken by the boom of cannon recalling us to the ceremonies of the day. The same old cannoneer is at his post of duty. Ten years



THE CROSS OF THE KOPEL

ago I found him there at sunrise ready to announce by the time-honored boom of his obsolete artillery the hour of early mass and the hour of the beginning of the play.

Below in the village all is animation. Innumerable masses have been read in the church since the small hours of the morning, for there are scores of foreign priests among

the visitors, and all deem it a privilege to celebrate at the altar of the church of Oberammergau. Congregations come and go at frequent intervals, until at eight o'clock the cannon sounds again, and all direct their steps to the Passion Theater.



THE CRUCIFIXION GROUP

The auditorium of 1900 is the most conspicuous innovation. The roof is supported by six steel arches, the span of which is one hundred and forty feet. There are four thousand seats and fourteen entrances. An engineer from Munich designed the building, and superintended the construction, that



THE GUARDIAN KOPEL



THE OLD GINNICK

spectators were exposed to sun and rain. It was my privilege to see the play in 1890, the occasion being doubly memorable because of all the seats in the vast auditorium the one to be assigned to me, was next to that of the same man whose eloquent words, nine years before had

occupied three months and a half. The lower building with a gable is the permanent stage, which ten years ago was by far the most prominent feature of the Passion Theater. Then only the extreme rear of the auditorium was under the roof, and a large majority of the



THE VILLAGE CHURCH



THE PERMANENT STAGE

roused my interest in this decennial presentation.— John L. Stoddard. It was as fellow-spectators of the Passion Play in



ASSEMBLING SPECTATORS

## OBERAMMERGAU



other respects it is the ten years ago. On hind it are the ry structures the dressing- the restau- players, for lasts all day. performance, rectly, what is public rehearsal, the 20th of May.



twenty-seven regular pres- CHILDREN entations, eighteen on Sundays, nine on holy days. There were many extra performances to accommodate the overflowing audiences. The season ended early in October. At eight o'clock streams of spectators began to flow toward the theater, filtering in through the entrances and trickling down the broad isles. The seats were made



1890 that our acquaintance was begun, and I recall the pride I felt when Mr. Stoddard, in his lecture on the play, given the following winter, spoke of his meeting with the "young man from Chicago, who had come to Oberammergau because he heard about it in a Stoddard lecture in the year 1881."

The old stage has a new glass roof and is surrounded by a concrete wall instead of wooden palings, but in same as it appeared the left and be- crude tempora- in which are rooms and rant for the the drama The first or more cor- known as the was given on

Then followed the

THE PASSION THEATER



for spectators of Spartan fortitude, for they are built of wooden slats, unusually hard, with interstices just broad enough to realize the acme of discomfort, and with backs so low that it is preferable to sit up straight rather than rest



From an official photograph

THE 1900 AUDITORIUM IN CONSTRUCTION

against them. But the line of sight from every seat is direct and free ; there are no pillars or supports. The peasants who pay fifty cents for places are nearly as well placed as city folks who pay two dollars and a half for the best center seats. In spite of the fact that there are four thousand



seats, there are not too many, for it is not often that we find any empty seats after the doors are closed.

There were no ticket-speculators. They would have found it useless to attempt to operate, thanks to a wise regulation, which was, however, criticized by persons ignorant of the conditions. To prevent the possibility of extortion, it was arranged that to every householder should be given a ticket for every bed his house contained. The ten-



THE TICKET-OFFICE

mark seats were allotted to the better houses where the price for beds was seven marks. The cheaper seats were given to those who offered simpler accommodations and lower prices to less exacting guests. Thus to obtain a good seat, we must sleep in a high-priced bed. If we insist upon a cheap bed, we must be content with a cheap ticket. Literally, visitors found a ticket under every pillow, and those who have no bed can buy no ticket until at the last moment the few seats thrown upon the market because of the non-arrival



STANDING ROOM ONLY

of persons for whom beds had been reserved, are placed on sale by the committee at the ticket-office of the theater. It is now too late for the speculator to begin. Very often there are no seats left to sell, and scores or even hundreds of peasants who came to town by early trains are told gently but firmly that the only "standing room" is

outside on the steps, where they glue their eyes to cracks and crevices, and strain their ears to catch the swelling choruses or the fierce shouting of the



COMING FROM THE THEATER

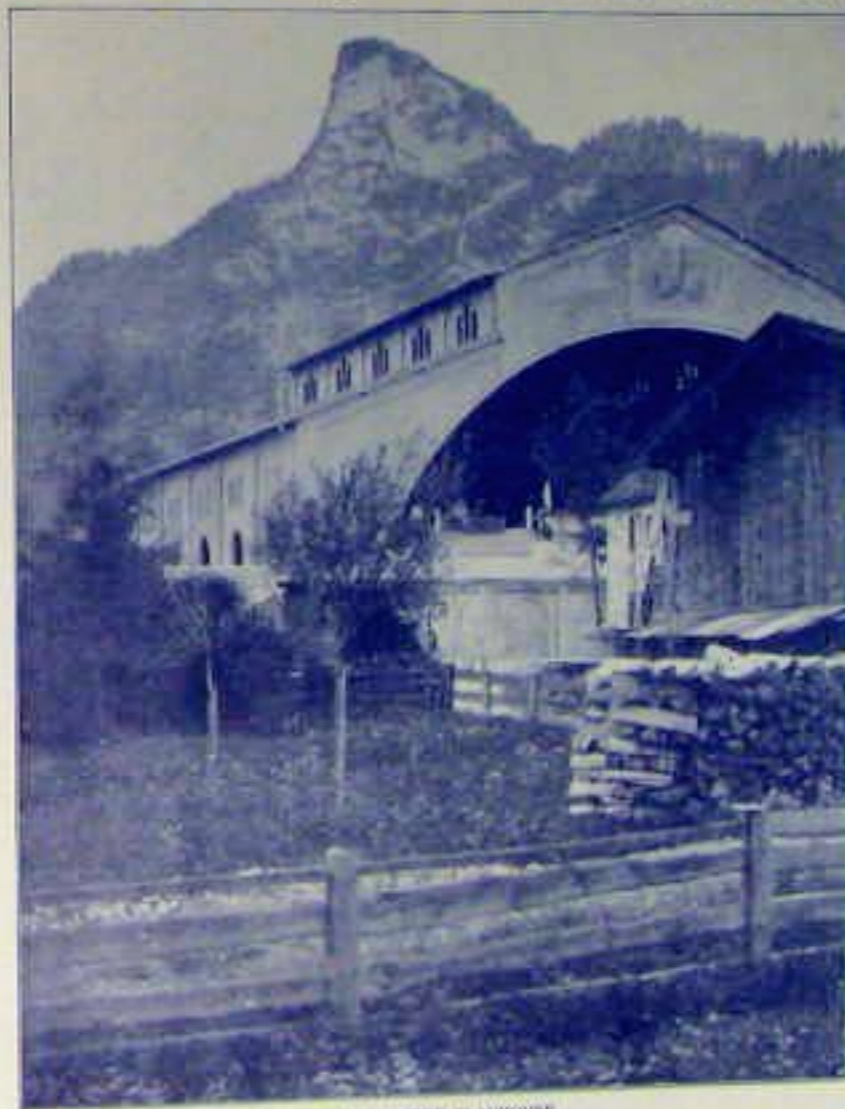


RETURNING TO THE THEATER

Jewish populace. But no strangers, however humble, can complain that they have come in vain to Oberammergau, for all the disappointed ones will have the first choice of seats for an extra performance of the play upon the morrow. Whenever the seating capacity of the theater is overtaxed, the play is very willingly repeated on the following day. Telegrams announcing these extra performances are sent to all the cities within a day's ride of the village, and thus hundreds of would-be visitors waiting at Munich or at Innsbruck are notified and hasten thither. Naturally the receipts for the season are large—amounting in 1900 to about one million marks, \$250,000. Nearly half of that amount was spent in building the theater and staging the play. The profit is given to certain public purposes,—to the village-improvement fund, to the church, and to the poor. The pay of the actors is scarcely more than nominal.

At twelve o'clock comes an intermission lasting an hour and a half. The four thousand men and women who for

four hours have sat in reverent silence, watching the impressive tableaux and the soul-stirring scenes enacted on the stage, come bursting forth from the wide-open doors to seek a respite from the intense strain imposed upon them by the long performance. All manner of moods and of expressions are reflected in the faces of those spectators. It is an interesting study to watch the passing of these cosmopolitan crowds, ever the same, yet ever different from week to week.



THE SACRED PLAYHOUSE

Through the narrow streets surges this undisciplined procession; across the central square sweep the invading multitudes, each individual bringing from the theater a different impression, according to the mental or the spiritual attitude.



From an official photograph

THE CHORUS

Some are pensive, some are overwhelmed. Fainting women are sometimes carried through the crowds, unimpressionable people feel merely a sense of relief after a long tension, and, remembering that the longer portion of the play is still to follow, they seek the crowded table d'hôtes and restaurants to fortify themselves for the four-hour séance of the afternoon. Again at half-past one the thousands gather to sit till half-past five, as witnesses of the most pathetic and most tragic scenes of the sublimest drama ever given to the world.

This was the outer routine of the day, as seen by the few who loitered in the streets. Far different the point of view of those who form the individual factors of the mighty audiences. Let us become, then, for a time, spectators of the play. Let us sit in the midst of the hushed multitude, waiting to catch the first words spoken from the sacred stage.

Promptly at eight o'clock, the thirty-four singers of the chorus led by the Prologus, march in from right and left, and form a brilliant line across the widest, deepest, and most imposing stage ever constructed as the background for dramatic presentation. The central proscenium is crowned by a pediment, the inner stage is veiled by a painted curtain upon which are figures of Moses and the prophets. On either side are antique arches, through which are seen vistas

of streets in the Jerusalem of Biblical days. Adjacent to the arches are the façades of classic palaces, and on the extreme right and left are the arcades, through which the chorus enters and goes out. The long-robed singers are superb in bearing, but towering above even the noblest of them, one figure in the center stands forth, colossal even against a background that will dwarf ordinary



From an official photograph

JOSEF MAYR

forms, a god among men, the highest type of human nobility and dignity we have ever seen. The man is Josef Mayr, in bearing, gesture, glance, and voice the kingliest man I have ever looked upon. There is no man upon the modern stage, no sovereign upon a modern throne, whose brow so well befits a crown. Mayr for thirty years has been called "Christus." In 1870 and 1871, in 1880 and 1890, it was he who spoke the words that fell from Jesus' lips; it was he who bore the cross and pictured all the sufferings of Him



From an official photograph.

ADAM TOLLING

who died on Calvary. His portrayal of the Christ entitles him to a place among the greatest tragic actors of the century,—a place unique because of the unique and sacred nature of the part so reverently played. Yet the same man who, at the age of forty-five, realized the ideal of a virile Christ, with all the meekness and tenderness that should be found in the Savior's personality, reappears before us ten years later at the age of fifty-five, with whitened hair and beard, with sterner brow, with eye more eloquent of intelligence and power,—almost a realization of the type painted



From an official photograph.

JOSEF MAYR AS THE PROLOGUS

by medieval artists when representing on canvas the face and form of the Almighty. It is not strange that forty years of Christlike life should give to him who strives to be in act and thought worthy of his sacred task, a dignity that is not of the earth and a suggestion of power surpassing that of ordinary men. Too old to play again the part of the Son of Man, a new rôle has been created for Mayr. As the "Prologus" he speaks the words of greeting to the assembled multitudes. His voice recalls our conception of the voice that spake



FROM AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH

DETAIL OF ONE OF THE TABLEAUX

from out the burning bush—its tones can never be forgotten; and though another, younger, sweeter voice will utter the Savior's words, Mayr remains the most commanding personality of this historic stage, the very incarnation of the sacred Spirit of the Passion Play. The lines he speaks as Prologus were originally allotted to the Choragus, who intones the introduction to each scene and leads the singing of that tireless host of stately men and women. The chorus makes no fewer than seventeen appearances; each of the

seventeen-acts is preceded by a spoken or chanted explanation of its significance. The words of the songs or prologues make clear the relation of the imposing Old Testament tableaux to the dramatic scenes which illustrate in speech and action the chief events in the earthly life of the Redeemer.

The leader of the Chorus, Jacob Rutz, has in emergencies sung the bass and the tenor solos. Two of his daughters are in the Chorus. He is one

of the best educated and most intellectual men living in Oberammergau.

But the Chorus has disappeared, the curtain has risen twice to disclose tableaux-vivants, symbolic of the scene which is to follow. It is the Entry into Jerusalem and the Casting out of the Dealers from the Temple. Multitudes come singing down the streets; apparently the entire population of the ancient city advances in compact masses of humanity. The roar of many voices grows and swells into a song of triumph. "Hosanna!" is the cry that rings above the song as the palm branches wave above the



HERBERT LANG, ONE OF THE "MULTITUDE"  
From an official photograph



From an official photograph  
"CHRISTUS" LANG

heads of the singers. A man seated upon an ass is seen to be the center of the confused throngs. He dismounts and lifts his hand in blessing. The crowd is hushed. The Man enters the Temple, and his first words are, "What do I see? Is this God's house, or is it but a market-place?" Then with calmness, more in sorrow than in anger, he overturns the tables of the money-changers, and drives the traders from the sacred place. But there is no need to tell the story of the play; the gospel-story needs no retelling here; we know the scenes by

heart; we are come to see the play-

ers, rather than to listen to a reading of the

play. Our interest is centered in Anton Lang, the new Christus of 1900.

His face is the ideal face of Christ, as conceived by the Italian Masters, gentle and meek and beautiful, but with no trace of weakness or of effeminacy. A face that had not great strength and character would suffer from the softening influence of this frame of wavy



"CHRISTUS" LANG



From an official photograph  
MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

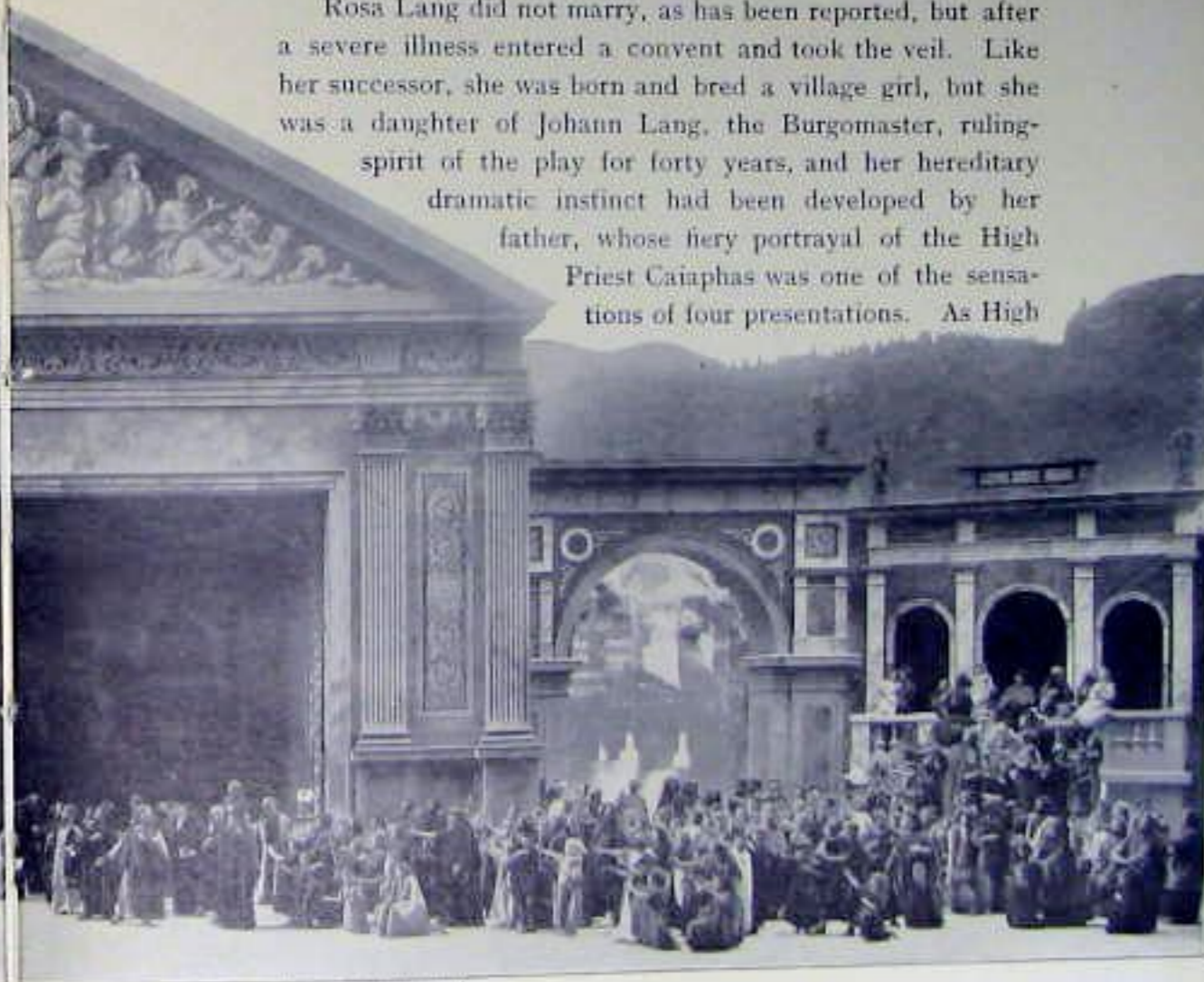
hair and beard, beautifully blonde and silken, yet absolutely natural. There is no trace of make-up; no wigs, no paints, are ever used by any of the actors who must appear in the full truth-revealing glare of day. Nor do even the women rely upon the aid of pencilings or powders. Anna Flunger, the "Mary" of the Play, appears with face unaltered by art, her dress and veil draped with Biblical simplicity. She is a granddaughter of Tobias Flunger, the man who was the Christ in the play of 1850. Her father is the postman; she acts in daily life as his assistant. She brings to the sacred part, youth, beauty, earnestness, but, unfortunately, no inspiration. Anna Flunger does not erase the wonderful impression made by her predecessor of ten years ago. Indeed, though it be prophecy, it is not too much to say that it will be long before the Passion stage will see a Mary so innately worthy of the part as Rosa Lang, who uplifted the few scenes in which she spoke, in 1890, and made



CASTING OUT THE TRADERS FROM THE TEMPLE

them pathetically and tragically memorable. Never shall I forget the thrill that swept over the vast audience ten years ago, during the scene where Mary, watching the passing of condemned men bearing their crosses, recognizes in one of them her son. Rosa Lang's utterance of the cry, "It is my son! — my Jesus!" was the very voice of nature, and touched a note of tragic pathos surpassing in its simple earnestness any dramatic utterance I have heard.

Rosa Lang did not marry, as has been reported, but after a severe illness entered a convent and took the veil. Like her successor, she was born and bred a village girl, but she was a daughter of Johann Lang, the Burgomaster, ruling-spirit of the play for forty years, and her hereditary dramatic instinct had been developed by her father, whose fiery portrayal of the High Priest Caiaphas was one of the sensations of four presentations. As High



From an official photograph



MARY



JOHN



CHRIST



FYKER



JUDAS

Priest he displayed the same indomitable temperament that made him an ideal Burgomaster for a community of strong-willed, self-reliant men. In 1900, for the first time in sixty years, Johann Lang played no part in the drama to which he gave his life. In 1840 he first appeared, as the child of

Adam in a tableau; in 1900 he appeared on the stage for a moment at the first performance merely to make a brief announcement.

This was his last public utterance. Already broken in health by the arduous labors of preparation, he died a few weeks later. He had been mayor of the village, except for one brief interval, since 1863.

He was called the "Bismarck of Oberammergau." His office has now been assumed by Josef Mayr, who for years had shared with him vast responsibilities brought on the village administration by the increasing importance of the Passion Play.

The visitor familiar with the cast of 1890 finds a great many new faces

From an official photograph



CHRIST BEFORE CAIAPHAS





"PETER" — THOMAS RENDL  
From an official photograph

in familiar parts. Peter is played by Thomas Rendl, who ten years ago was seen as Pontius Pilate. He is as admirable in the robes of the white-bearded saint as formerly in the armor of the black-bearded Roman governor. The new Pilate is Sebastian Bauer, who gives to the part a forcefulness and power which is suggestive of the soldier who has fought his way to the vice-regal throne of Judea.

Young Peter Rendl, son of the venerable portrayer of St. Peter, plays for the second time the sympathetic part of St. John.

Those who saw him at the age of nineteen as St. John in the play

of the last decade, prophesied that he would be the Christ of 1900. His face and manner then gave promise that he would well befit the greater rôle, but stubborn nature robbed him of the honor for which his face, his figure, and his voice, as well as his blameless life, so eminently qualified him. All these things went for naught because his beard refused to grow! For



"CATAPHRAS" — SEBASTIAN LANG  
From an official photograph



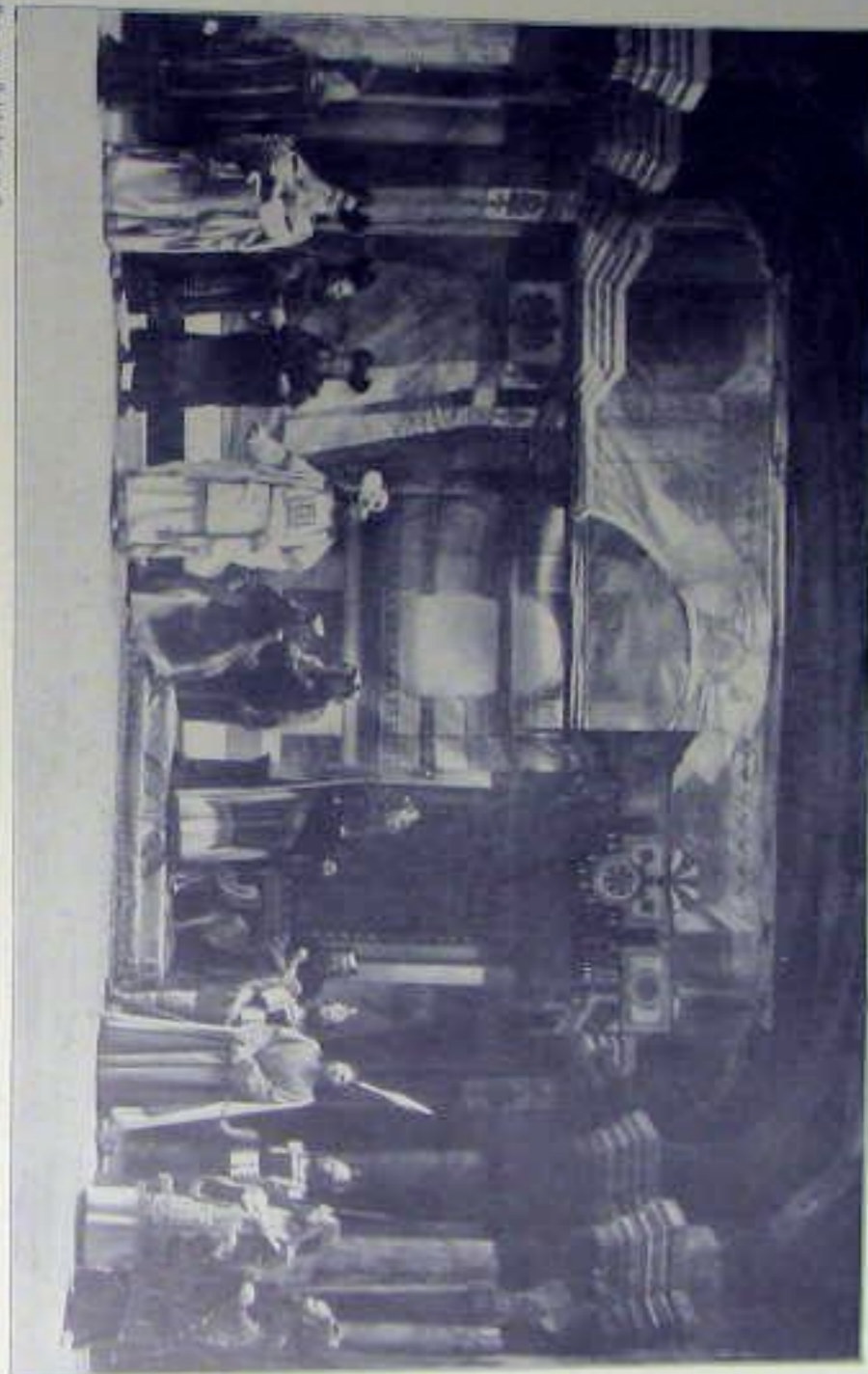
years he tried every legitimate means to coax the timid down upon his chin to grow and wax abundant, but the results were as disappointing to the villagers as to "St. John" himself, and for a season there was much dismay because there was no other man in the village who seemed possible as a candidate for the great part. His disappointment was intense; nor can he look forward to the possibility of playing any of the greater parts. He may not even succeed to the part of Judas, now played by Johann Zwink. Zwink was the John of 1880, but as we see him in the traitor's



"PILATE"—CHRISTIAN RAUER  
From an official photograph

robes, it is difficult for us to picture him as the calm-faced "disciple whom Jesus loved." Opinions differ concerning his acting in the part of Judas. By some he is regarded as a melodramatic ranter, by others as a man possessed of splendid tragic powers. His rôle is the most thankless of all, for he who plays the Judas must contend with the inherited

From an official photograph



CHRIST BEFORE HEROD

tendency on the part of the peasant audience to laugh at everything the betrayer does. Judas, in the medieval form of play, was a low comedy character, and the people from the Tyrol persist in finding all his actions ludicrous although the part has been rewritten in a tragic vein.

His work in the scene of the Last Supper is most effective—the haunted look, the guilty twitching of the face, the effort to assume the loving attitude common to all the rest, are admirably done. But the whole scene is so impressive that the details of the acting escape

the spectator who sees the play only once. This scene is perhaps the supreme test of these sincere



From an official photograph  
THE KING



"JUDAS"—JOHANN ZWIRK  
From an official photograph

and reverent actors. One false intonation, one careless gesture, one lapse from reverence,—if merely in thought, and the scene becomes blasphemy. But let no sensitive spectator tremble. No priest before a high altar ever blessed the bread and wine



From an official photograph

## THE LAST SUPPER

more solemnly, no worshipers ever showed any deeper reverence in partaking of the Holy Sacrament. The audience now breathes a sigh of relief, and awaits without misgivings the scenes that are to follow. We see the Christ in prayer upon the Mount of Olives; we witness the betrayal and the capture, and then we follow the high priests and the rabble to the palace of the Roman governor. "Christ before Pilate" has given inspiration to many a painter, but never



"ARHAN" — MARTIN OPPENHEIMER

From an official photograph

From an official photograph



THE BETRAYAL



A HARB—  
ANDREAS LASS.  
From an official photograph.

have we looked upon a grander conception of the scene than is realized on the broad stage of Oberammergau.

The most ambitious efforts of Sir Henry Irving or Richard Mansfield, or Augustin Daly pale into insignificance before this impressive spectacle. We see five hundred actors, not five hundred supernumeraries,—every man, woman, and child as earnestly concerned in the



From an official photograph.

AT THE PALACE OF PILATE

successful issue of the scene as the principals and the stage manager. Five hundred brains are upon the stage, not merely five hundred costumed persons. We cannot show them all; some scores are lost in the shadow of the covered stage, others did not appear at the performance given exclusively for the photographers, and thus the full effect of this grand picture cannot be revealed. Pilate stands upon the



From an official photograph

THE CROWN OF THORNS

balcony surrounded by his officers and attendants. Christ is in the street below, in charge of Roman legionaries. The High Priest fights his verbal duel with Pilate; the rabble, obedient to every sign from Caiaphas, demands the blood of the Galilean, and bids the governor release unto them not Jesus, but Barabbas. And the voice of the people sounds in Pilate's ears, and in our own, like a mandate that no man dares to disobey.

Another great scene shows the condemned men bearing their heavy crosses through the city-streets. The long-robed

From an official photograph



HE WAS MOCKED

populace, excited to the pitch of frenzy by Caiaphas and other priests, follows the staggering prisoners, with gestures of insult, shouts of derision, and cries of hate. Then suddenly, from a group of women on the left, comes the most pitiful cry the world has ever heard, the cry of the mother, who sees her child about to suffer death, a death of ignominy.



From an official photograph.

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE.

Then the scene changes and we are on Calvary. The crosses stand there in the light of actual day, and we see *living men* nailed there upon those crosses. And as we look upon this scene, the intervening centuries roll away, and for a moment we — like Mary and like John and like all who have loved the Son of Man — are bowed in grief and awe at the foot of the cross, — the cross upon which the Perfect Man is crucified. Four thousand people are around us, but we

forget their presence, and they, too, are far away in the first century, witnesses of this sublimest sacrifice. What their impressions are we cannot tell. We see the tears in many eyes, some sobs are heard; we see faces pale and drawn, and other faces quite unmoved. But even those who see in the picture there revealed nothing but a spectacle, a play, recognize the solemnity and the intensity of its import; there is no



From an official photograph

CARRYING THE CROSS TO CALVARY

stiffing save from the Priests and Pharisees of the stage, while the tears of Mary and of Martha are shared by many women, and the expressed agony of St. John is but an echo of that which tortures many strong men in the audience.

We need not dwell upon the painful features of the scene, the wounding with the spear, the blood-stained hands and feet, nor on the suspense attending the taking of the body

from the cross. Suffice it that at last the weary head is at rest upon the knee of her who knows the fullness of the sorrows of a mother. The form of Christ has hung for more than twenty minutes on the cross. Human endurance has been



From an official photograph

THE CRUCIFIXION

taxed to its last limit. Surely some supernatural strength must animate the man who can thus re-enact the sufferings of Christ week after week from early May till late October. This final strain comes, too, it must not be forgotten, when the mind and body have been exhausted by nearly seven



hours of the physical and nervous strain incident to the preceding scenes of an all-day performance.

The scenes of the Resurrection and Ascension follow, each brief and neither convincing, even in a theatrical sense; it would be better were these events left to the imagination

of the faithful. Then the chorus breaks forth in a song of hope and triumph, and in conclusion the great voice of Mayr utters a final "Halleluiah" and the Passion Play is ended.

As we leave the theater, finding ourselves again in the crowded but silent streets, we wonder what manner of men are these, who in this remote village have appeared before us and held us with breathless attention throughout the long, hot day. By what art have they accomplished that which no actor on the secular stage would dare attempt? Why have these so-called

"peasants" succeeded where the best dramatic artists of a metropolis would be sure to meet nothing but failure?

The answer must be sought in the lives of the Ammergauers, and in the traditions of their village. Why do they perform the play every ten years? Because in 1633 they



THE ASCENSION  
From an official photograph



From an official photograph

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS



From an official photograph

"BRING LITTLE CHILDREN TO ME UNTO ME."



From an official photograph

THE RESURRECTION





ON THE ROAD TO ETTAL

silk purse out of a sow's ear; nor will this homely metaphor appear any too strong to those who know the deep strain of coarseness that ran through the sacred dramas of the Middle Ages.

Another man to whom the Passion Play owes

much of its present dignity and literary merit is the well-known Pastor Daisenberger, pupil of Othmar Weiss. In 1845 he became priest of Oberammergau, and thenceforward devoted his life to the place, the people, and the play.



THE INN AT ETTAL

He died in 1883; his tomb is in the churchyard of Oberammergau. Even though a peasant's son he was a man of rare attainments. He read the Bible in seven languages. He studied in the original the dramas and poems of Calderon and Dante and Shakespeare and Molière. He was the author of a number of historical novels and of



HAPPY CHILDREN



THE GRAVE OF PASTOR DAISENBERGER

a Passion text which he wrote in iambic verse merely as an exercise.

He refused a bishopric in order that he might still continue his work among the people of the valley that he loved. The play as

we now see it has been playfully called the "Gospel according to St. Daisenberger."

His life-work has borne splendid fruit; his people, naturally religious, had long been given to ceremonies and to pilgrimages such as the traveler sees to-day on the Bavarian

highways. He was the ideal priest. His people loved, feared, and respected him, just as they loved, feared, and respected Johann Lang, the Burgomaster; and to these two men, their spiritual and temporal guides, the Ammergauers are glad to confess that they owe a lasting debt of gratitude.

Another debt recognized by them, is to the man who in 1811 wrote the plaintive music for the Play. He was a



From an official photograph

IN THE VILLAGE CHURCH

young schoolmaster, Rochus Dedler, who died at the age of twenty-two, leaving a musical monument of masses and sacred compositions, crowned by the score which now, in slightly altered form, accompanies the Passion Play. These are the four men who may be called the fathers of the modern Play — Weiss, the author; Daisenberger, the reviser; Lang, the director; and Dedler, the composer.



THE HOME OF  
THE BURGOMASTER

And now our thoughts return to the living men to whom the play owes much.

Foremost among them is the present Burgomaster, Josef Mayr, whom we saw as the Christus of 1899 and as the Prologus of 1900.

It has been widely published that he is by trade a wood-carver. This is true only in part. He has in earlier years devoted himself to the local art, but never attained great prominence therein. He was a man too broad of mind, too capable of greater things to spend his days at the wood-carving bench. To the



THE LAST PICTURE OF BURGOMASTER LANG

villagers he was best known as Deputy Mayor, sharing the administrative burdens of the Burgomaster whom he has now succeeded. It is related of him that, some years ago, there being considerable local opposition to the policy of Burgomaster Lang, Mayr was nominated for the office so long held by his old friend. Mayr, much against his will, was compelled to run, as the opposition candidate. But he conducted his campaign on unique lines, advocating in all his speeches the election of his opponent, and by his tremendous



MAYR'S HOUSE

eloquence he insured the re-election of the Burgomaster Lang. So much for Mayr as a politician. Nor is he less unusual as a business man. The house in which he lives with a widowed daughter, her children, and his son, is regarded as the most desirable in town. All visitors are eager to secure rooms here that they may tell of having lodged with "Christus" Mayr. Recognizing large probabilities of profit, a tourist-agency long ago offered to lease all

Mayr's beds at six dollars and a quarter each, per night, throughout the summer. This meant a fortune to him; all he had to do was to play the host and let the agent do the rest. Without a moment's hesitation he refused. "My beds," he said, "shall go to any stranger who applies in time, at the rate fixed by the official renting-bureau, one dollar and seventy-five cents per night, and not one pfennig more." And our



"CHRISTUS" MAYR



JOSEF MAYR, THE NEW BURGOMASTER



JOSEF MAYR

friends who spent three weeks in Mayr's house paid, in the interval between performances, only three marks, or seventy-five cents a day. So much for Mayr as a landlord. And the same spirit animates "Christus" Mayr, the dramatic artist, who, without even a sign of

jealousy or bitterness, resigned the part of Christus, which he had held for thirty years. When the choice fell upon Anton Lang, it was Mayr who encouraged, trained, and cheered his young successor in the great rôle.

Anton Lang had no premonition of his sudden elevation to the part. In the play of 1890 he had been "among the people" a mere figure in the crowd. Shortly before the long-looked-for election held in December, 1899, some one



THE TWO MAYRS AND ANTON LANG

advised him to go out on the hillsides and shout and sing aloud, that his sweet voice might gain strength. This was the only preparation made by him until the regular rehearsals were begun. Of his success there was no doubt after the early trials, and Mayr was the first to say, "Young man, you'll do." After the close of the season, Lang made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he was cordially received by the Holy Father. Returning he married Matilda Rutz, whose soprano solos were the most notable musical feature of the play.



"FILATE" AND A FRIEND

Two other characters we find at home, "St. Peter" and "St. John," the Rendls, a father and his son. Peter is *concierge* at the villa of the Baroness von Hillern. John is by



THE RENDLS



"PILATE'S" WIFE AND CHILDREN

trade a carver in wood; his wife is Mayr's daughter. These men, too, carry with them even in daily life a dignity and poise born of long hours on the stage before hushed multitudes.



ANDREAS BRAUN

"Pilate" we first met coming from his duties at the renting-bureau where he directs the assignment of rooms for the arriving visitors, a task which calls for a nature far sturdier than that of the less vicious than vacillating Roman governor. A man of few words, capable and kindly, such is Sebastian Bauer, who leads us to his home, where we meet "Pilate's" wife and two delightful little "Romans." As a rule, the villagers avoided the cameras of visitors, especially toward the close of the long arduous summer, but early in the spring a few words in transatlantic German were enough to tempt them to their thresholds.

Above a modest door we read the name "Andreas Braun, Crucifixion Carver." Shall we not enter and see Andreas



THE CRUCIFIXION CARVER





AN OBERAMMERGAU GARDEN

Braun at work? He is the type of citizen of which the village is most proud—strong, honest, simple, artistic, and industrious. We see a worthy man performing patiently a worthy task; but not perfunctorily does he carve these figures of the Crucified. He puts into his work that same reverence and

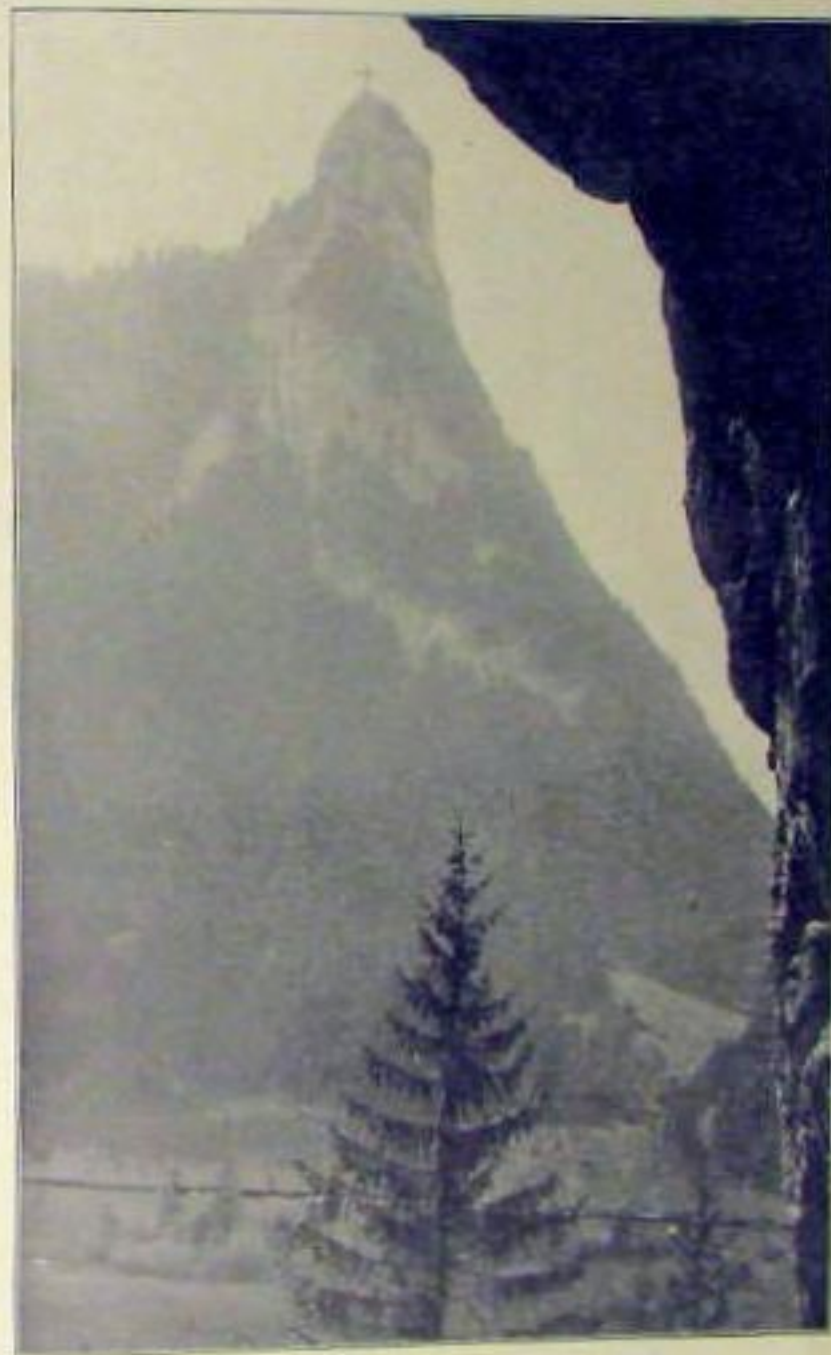
love which on the stage are manifested in the touching scene where Braun as "Joseph of Arimathea" plays the chief part in taking down the body of the Savior from the cross.

For ten years it is his task to sit at this humble bench and fix the images he carves upon the crosses put together by his son; but during the brief season of the Passion Summer, it is he who in the robes of the rich merchant of Arimathea helps to withdraw the nails from hands and feet and with infinite loving



FROM AN OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH

"JOSEPH OF ARIMATEA" — JOSEPH BRAUN



THE KOPEL FROM THE CAVE



OBERAMMERGAU  
FROM THE KOFEL TOP

tenderness receives the sacred body on his shoulders and bears it to the weeping Mary. Does this man look a simple peasant? Yet he is an ordinary Ammergaufer. He has never enjoyed other advantages than those which fall to the lot of every dweller in the shadow of the cross-crowned Kofel. It would almost seem as if the cross which has

locked down upon the valley for so many generations must shed upon the village a benign influence, making all who dwell in it good men and true. And as from the high Kofel top we view the village, we seem to see the branching nerves spread and reach and climb the mountain-sides as if to meet



THE BAVARIAN ALPS

and to convey the heavenly influence that descends toward this abode of simple faith. What a small thing is Oberammergau!—a mere cluster of modest houses between a little church and a theater which in outer aspect is as simple as a shed, the whole confined in an obscure vale and shut off from the great world by snow-capped mountains, the names of which are scarcely known to us. And yet last summer to this little dot upon the map of the huge earth, there came in pilgrimages people from the farthest corners of the world. Two hundred and fifty thousand eager pilgrims came across broad seas and continents to penetrate by various and devious routes into this quiet valley and here they sat, listened, and marveled for a day, and then went forth again, beyond the mountains of Bavaria, to tell the world that Faith still burns in Oberammergau; that a tradition of the Middle Ages—purified, uplifted, and ennobled by the piety of modern men—is still dominant in Oberammergau; that while the Kofel stands, the vow of Oberammergau will stand; that while the cross gleams in the sunlight of a Faith that knows no darkness, the promise to God by the forefathers in their day of bitter trial will never fail of reverent fulfilment by the sons.



A PILGRIMAGE