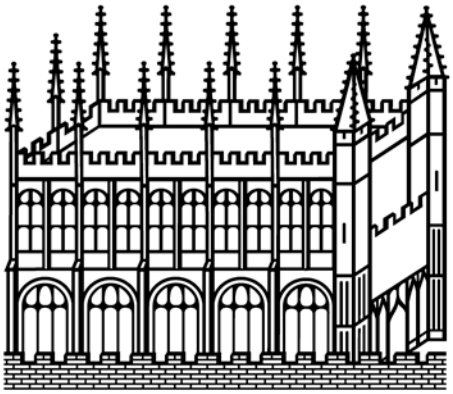


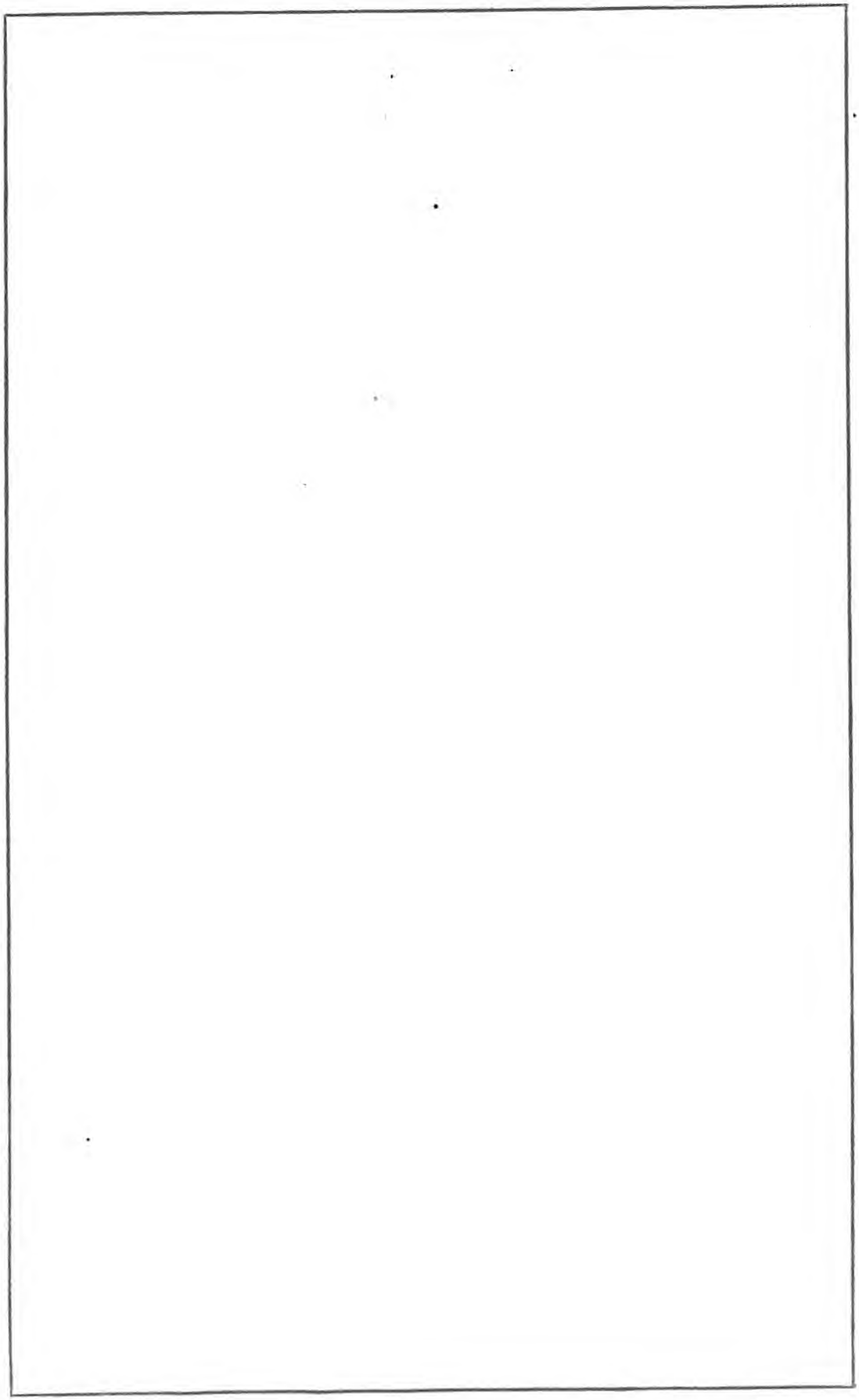
A GLANCE
AT THE
PASSION PLAY

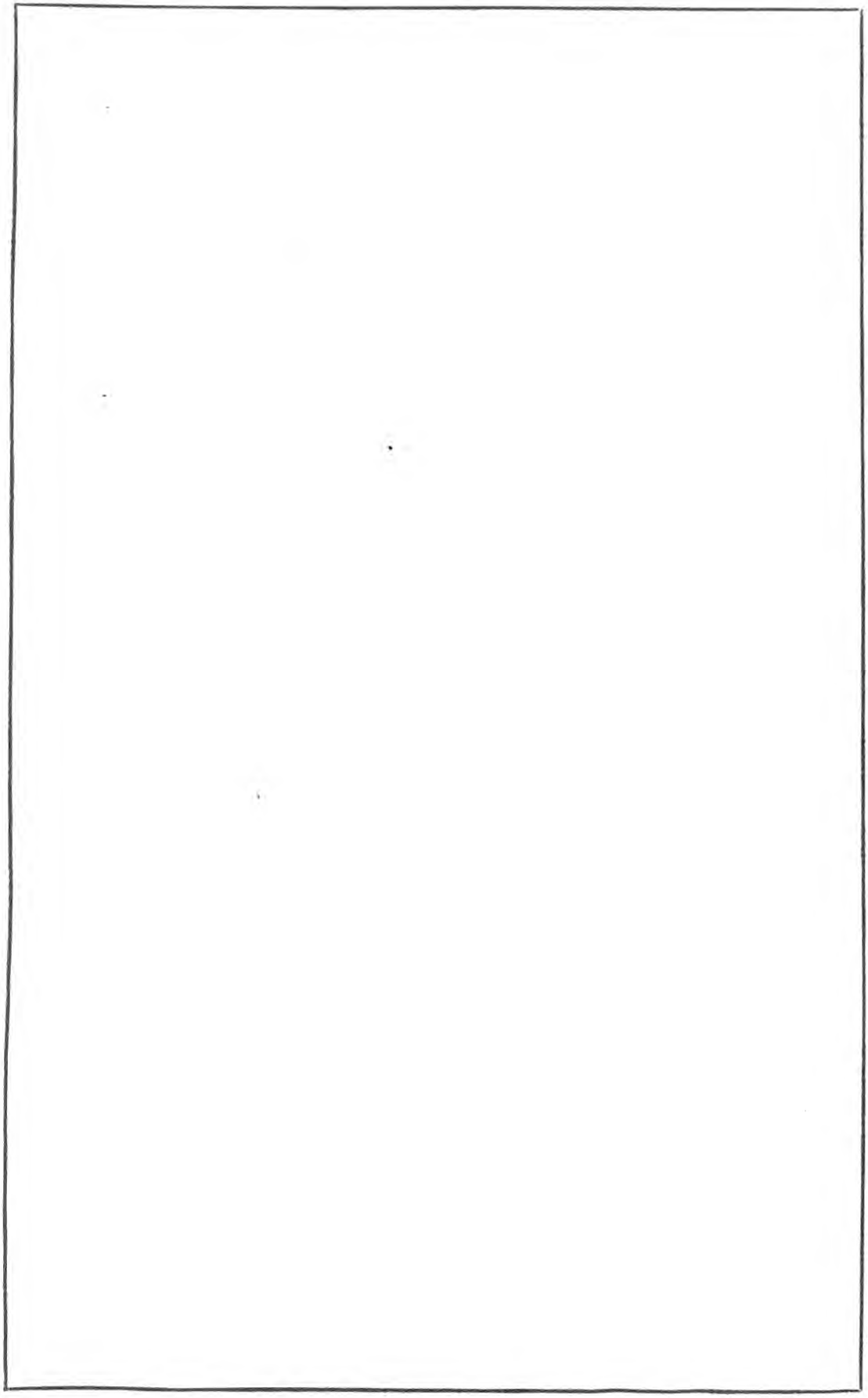
CAPT. R. F. BURTON

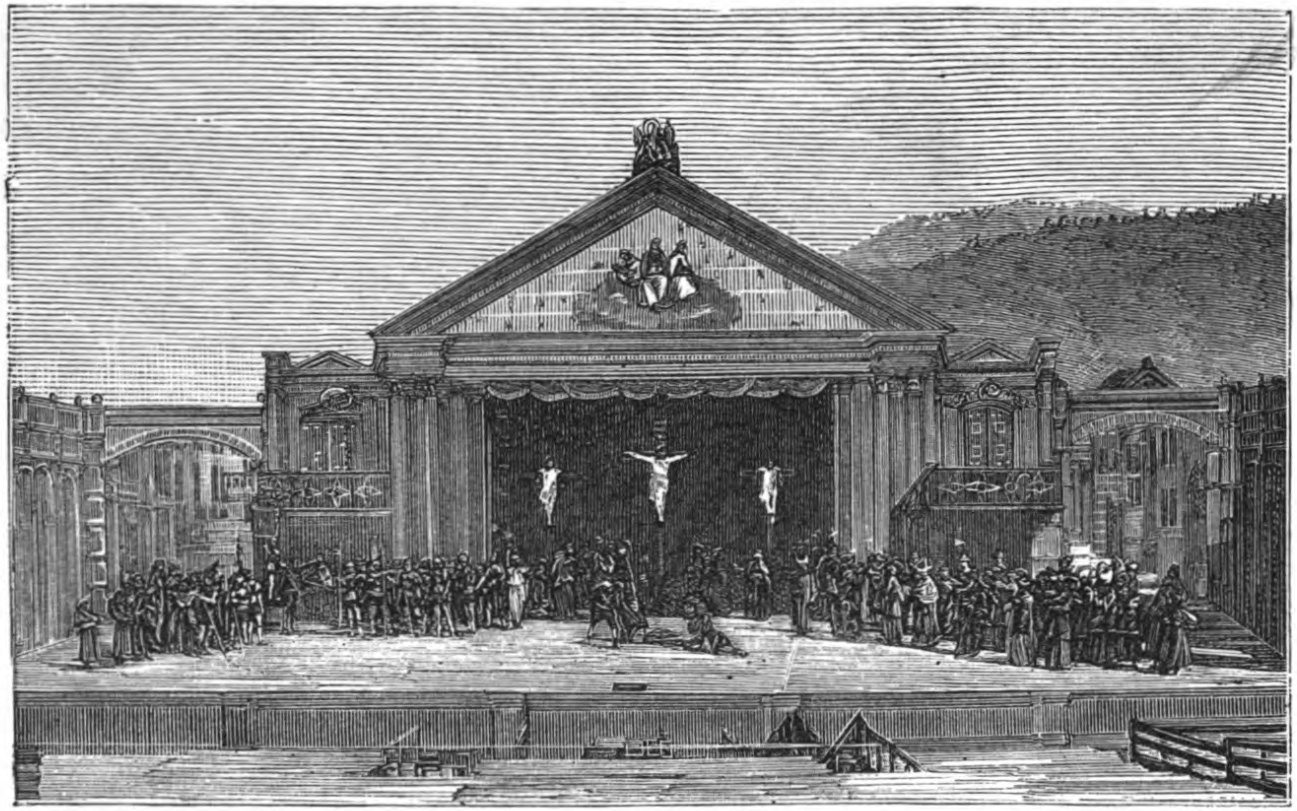
A GLANCE

AT

THE "PASSION-PLAY."







THE CRUCIFIXION SCENE AT THE PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU.

A GLANCE

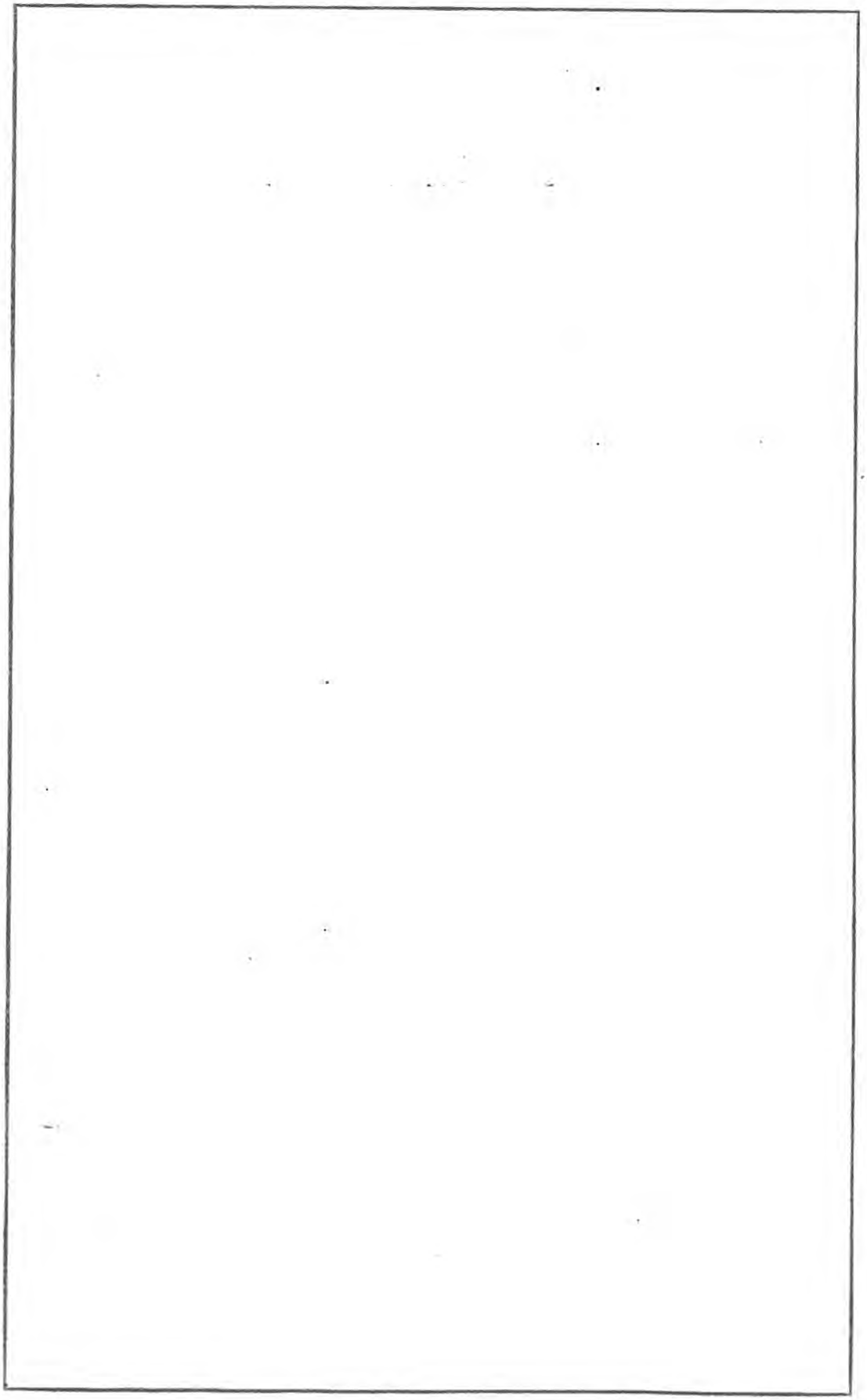
AT

THE "PASSION-PLAY."

BY

RICHARD F. BURTON.

LONDON:
W. H. HARRISON, 33 MUSEUM STREET.
1881.



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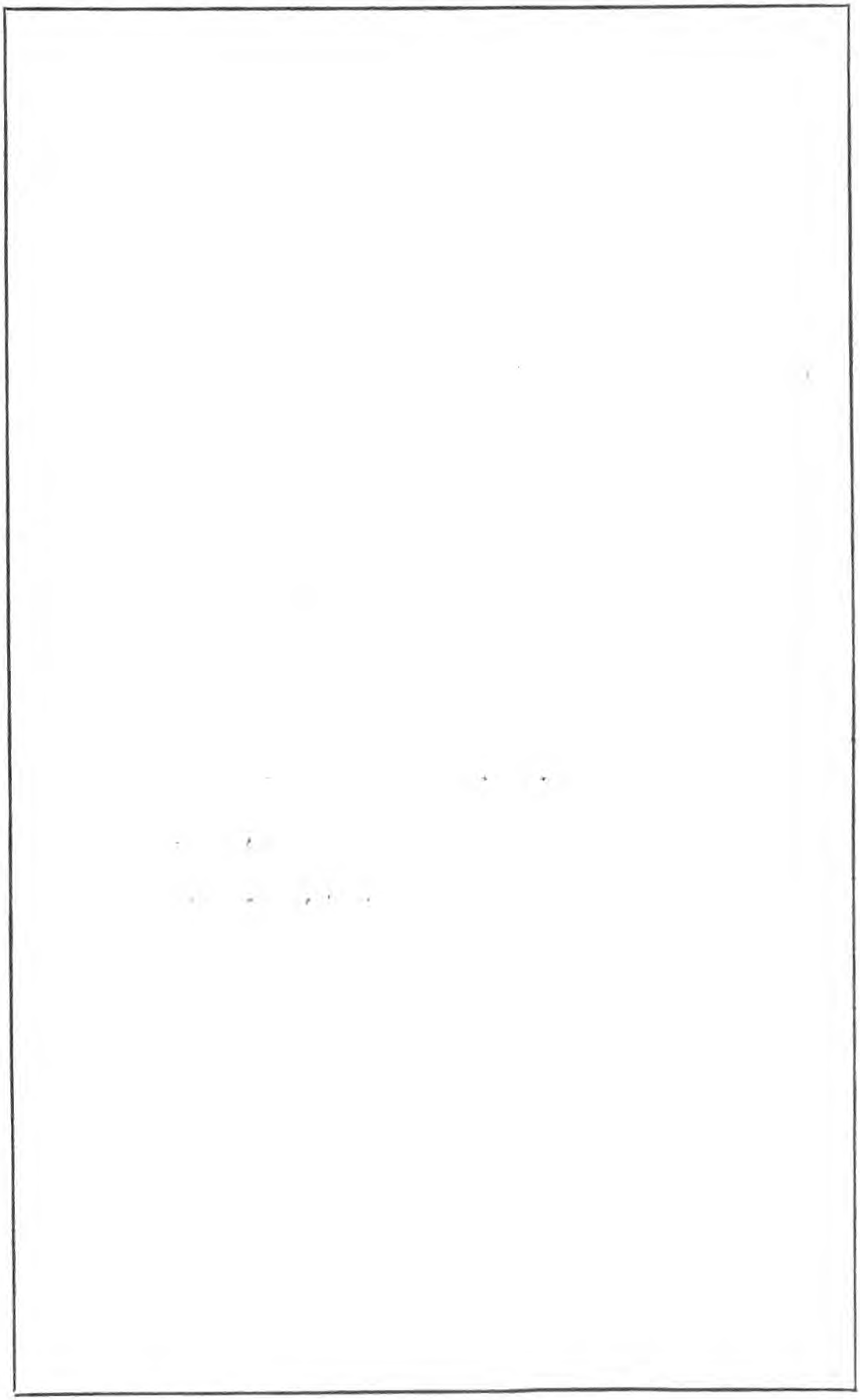
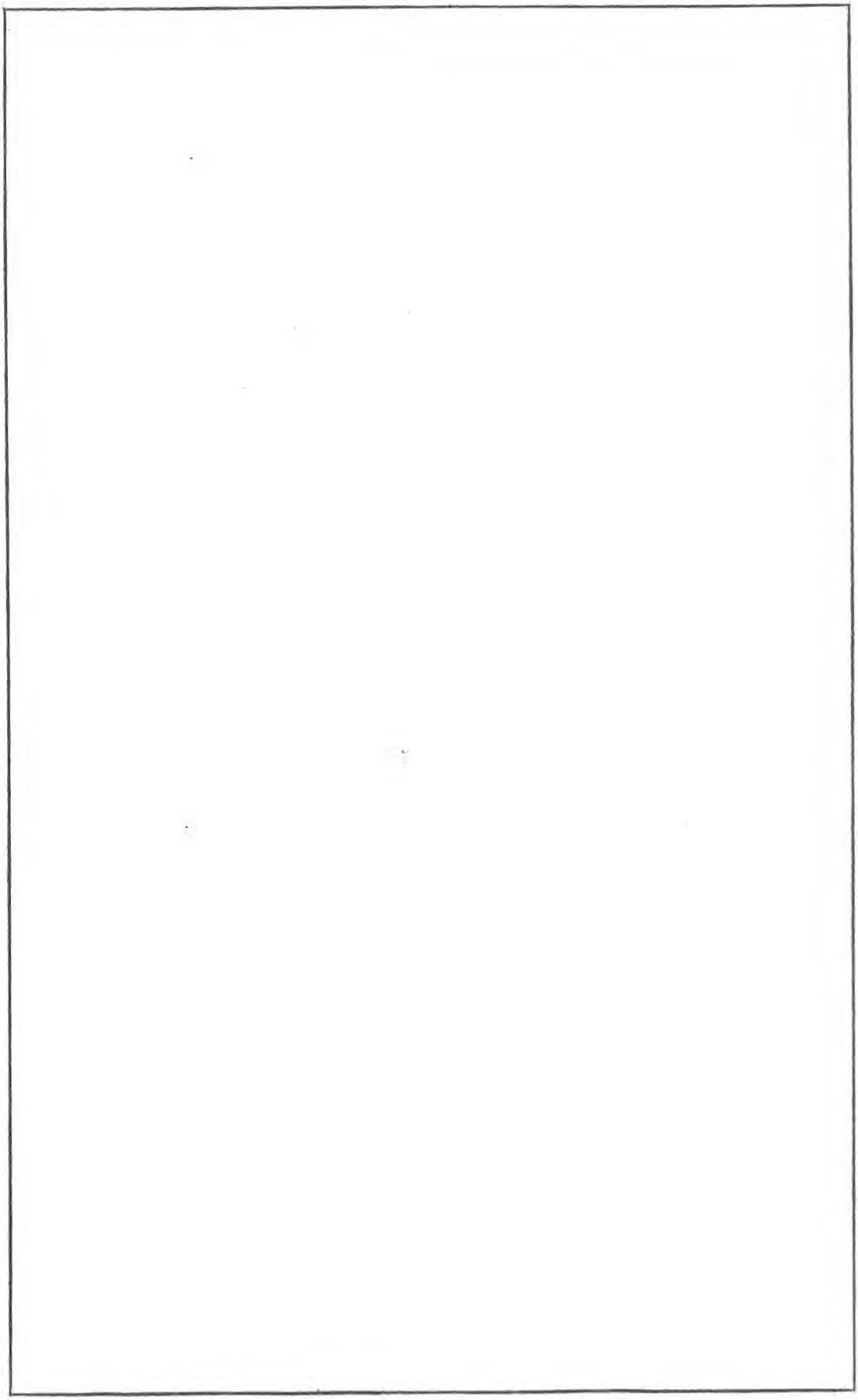


A Glance at the Passion-Play.



A GLANCE AT THE PASSION-PLAY.

I WENT to the "great religious drama in the beautiful Highlands of Bavaria" neither to scoff nor to pray, nor to swell the list of some thirty books and brochures which the mountain-play has already produced. My object was artistic and critical, with an Orientalistic and anthropological side; the wish to compare, haply to trace, some affinity between this survival of the Christian "Mystery" and the living scenes of El-Islam at Meccah.

The following realistic remarks may be interesting to some who have had a trifle too much of gush and fancy; and to all who would see "Oberammergau with the varnish off."

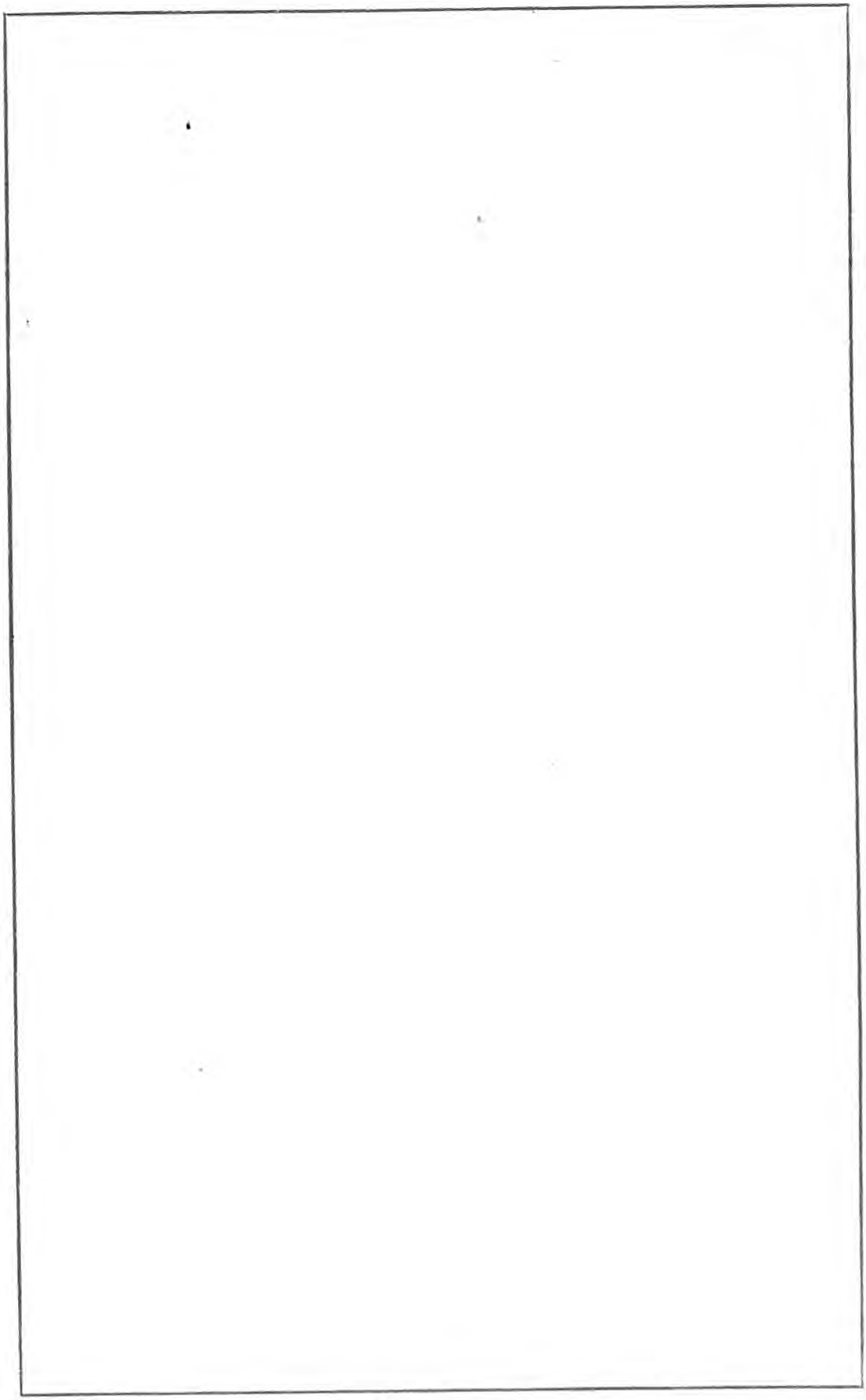
I have done my utmost to give a fair judgment and to praise where praise is due;

but I, like others, found the village a pandemonium of noise and confusion; and my conclusions are: If you must "do" the *Passionsspiel*, do it and leave the place as fast as you can, with all the "edification" you may. A "recuperative sojourn," prescribed by the guide-books, a week amid the "homes of Ammergau," would, I opine, be likely

"To breed a madness in the brooding brain."

Be prepared for general discomfort: for a bad climate of raw cold or heavy rain, of close heat or stifling sun, breeding deep mud and light dust; for bad lodgings and worse feeding, unless you take shelter under the Hotel Gaze; and, finally, for great roughness, some incivility, and no civility whatever except for what you pay, and pay highly. I left it with a general feeling that place and people are not interesting; and that the latter, like the Icelanders, have been praised and petted till thoroughly spoilt.

Munich to Murnau.



MUNICH TO MURNAU.

THE "golden saddle on the lean horse" (Munich), the old-old city with its new-new art and modern-classical decorations, is the general point of departure for the *Schauspiel*. Twenty years ago the rail reached only to Starnberg station; ten years afterwards it crept on to Seehaupt, Weilheim, and Murnau; and two years hence it will probably end at the base of the Ettalerberg. On common days, the forty-six miles (Munich–Murnau) waste three hours thirty minutes, halting at every station. For the Oberammergoers (no pun) there is a so-called "express," which flies over the ground in only two hours—1.55–3 P.M. The train is long, and we have but five tenants to eight seats; there is no crowding nor excitement, save that caused by the presence

of a crown-prince. All is very Bavarian, official, uniformy, slow, and "fussy." Thus the *Eilzug* follows in its deliberate pace the tradition of the *Schnellpost*, which our fathers called the "snail-post." The sole commendable feature is roofing the station-lamps with tin-plates: in London we still allow half our light to enlighten the clouds.

It is indeed a sorry land over which we fare, a few inches of brown soil overlying water-rolled pebbles hostile to taproots. This poverty begins at Hamburg, passes through North Germany, and ends with the Austrian frontier, where also, about Kufstein, you again unhat to the sun. Such is, perhaps, the reason why so many North Germans, and, comparatively speaking, so few Austrians, scatter over the world beyond their bounds. The monotonous surface of gently rolling plain is England, but England with a poor soil; yet the children of Attila cried, "To Bavaria! to Bavaria! where dwells God Himself!" Tracts of thin grass, poor tilth,

and peat-soil are broken by clumps, lines, and scatters of stunted trees, pine and the oak, which gave Germany her name, "Oak-land."

The halting-places somewhat relieve our tedium. Pasing Junction is an old Roman *statio* near the Würmbäder—we are now in the land of worms or dragons. Planegg, where *Sommerfrischers* stroll among the glades, is famous for the *Maria-Eich.* The chapel owes existence to a pious shepherd-boy; who, in 1710, bought a clay Madonna and placed her in a hollow tree. Gauting, the Guitinga of the fourth and fifth centuries, was the meeting-place of two Roman roads; coins are here found, and, at the neighbouring Buchendorf, there are traces of a Roman fort. The name of Karlsberg preserves the tradition that at Mühlthal was born Carolus Magnus, miscalled "Charlemagne."

The sameness is pleasantly broken by "beautiful Starnberg," whose lake should be called the Würmsee. Here, as in Bohemia, we are in the land of "Sees." The long

and leech-shaped water, twenty-one kilometres by five to six, on maps resembles a dwarf Tanganyika. The banks are much like those of the Thames about Greenwich; only they are backed by purple and blue Alps. Two small paddle-wheelers and many boats are plying about; and the western shore shows the apparatus of a watering-place—planks and piers leading to the "see"-baths, sheds, booths, single boxes and floating lumber-closets. Starnberg is the favourite family and Cockney trip; and it will be crowded on Jubiläum-day, August 25, 1880, which commemorates Bavaria's seven-hundredth nativity. Picnics and jovial artists' parties are of everyday occurrence; and visitors affect the seaside by mounting sun-bonnets and summer parasols, which this August has converted to umbrellas. In the hotels and inns—

"Teller klappern, Gläser klingen,
Zungen plappern, Kellner springen
Müssiggänger steh'n am Strande,
Kinder tummeln sich am Lande."

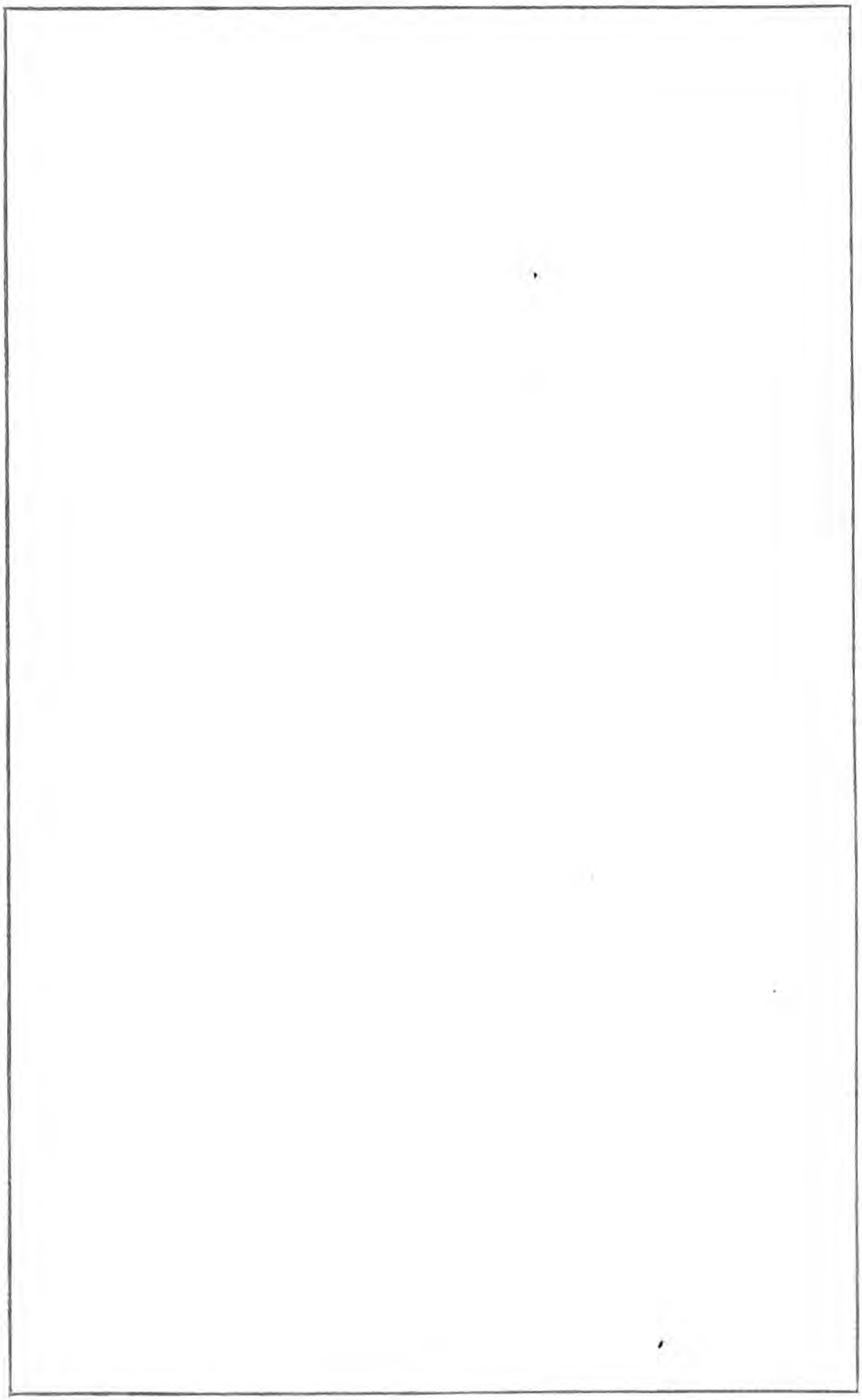
"Dishes clatter, glasses ring,
Chatter tongues and waiters spring;
Tourists saunter o'er the strand,
Brats are tumbling on the sand."

The Weilheim station, an ex-terminus still large and important, shows a notable change, which all remark at Uffing. Both soil and view improve as we approach the Highlands of Bavaria. The outline of the Ober-Bayern chain is eminently picturesque, and height gives it the necessary variety. The skyline is bald and stony, with new white snow overlaying the last year's brown: the foothills bristle with black-green pine; and throw out detached masses which look like wooded islands rising from a sea of grass. We note the Kistenkopf with its "box" of naked rock, the "Sandúk" of the Arabs. Beyond towers a natural pillar of limestone, which, seen from another angle, seems two; hence the people call it Ettaler Mandl und Weiberl (little wife). Add to these the Kohlgruber und Körnle, the Aufacher and the Krottenkopf, all more or less remarkable;

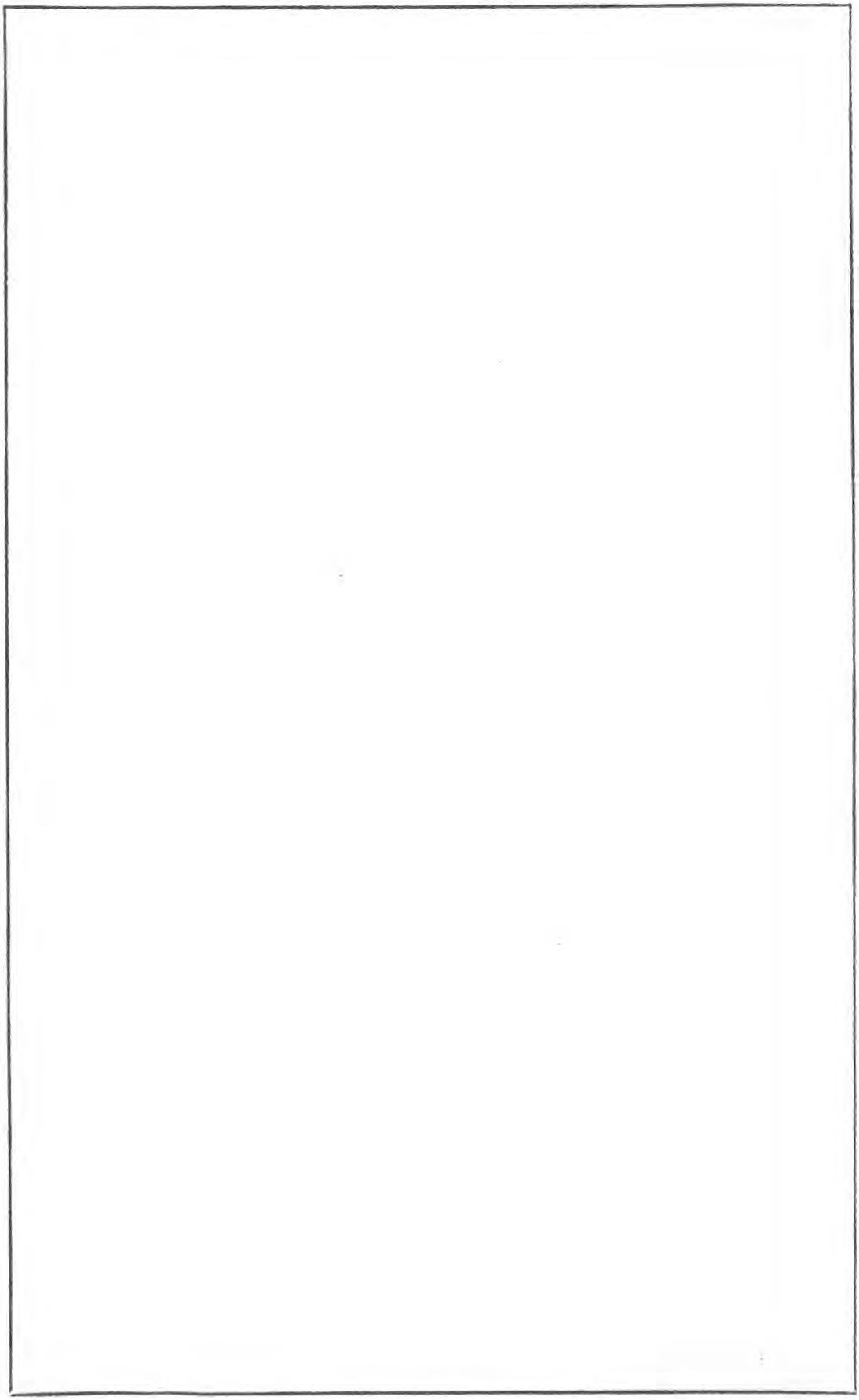
and in the rear, overlooking the rest, the stony Wettersteingebirge and the Zugspitze.

And now we near the end. Polling, founded by Thassilo II. (A.D. 800), boasts a huge desolate pile, at first a nunnery and then an Augustine convent. After a thousand years of life it was secularised (A.D. 1803); the church, however, is preserved with its Christus figure, eight feet high, on a fish-skin. The railway runs between the little Riegsee to the left or east and the triangular Staffelsee on the other hand. The latter has three islets, the largest containing a giant linden and a small kapelle, said to have been consecrated by St. Boniface, "apostle of the Germans." Its smooth natural lawns are brightly green; its tree-mottes are tall and luxuriant, and its fair blue waters are dotted with white sails. It has baths, it has picnics, and it has illuminations; and here, at the Murnau station, abruptly ends the safe and well-laid railway. Those who would make Innsbruck, to which they are half way from

Munich, must take carriage and cross the great mountain wall to the south. The scenery is described as "too fine for description:"—it is the vulgar Alpine of this part of Europe.



A Night at Murnau.



A NIGHT AT MURNAU.

THE first look of the "Dragon Mead"—for Murnau is properly Würmau—is decidedly characteristic. The road along the station is crowded with a confusion of carriages: this is Saturday (Aug. 21st, 1880), and sight-seers are flocking to the *ludus scenicus*. Hung to the palings appear in big black letters on white cloths, "Gray," "Gaze," and "Cook." Behind the station a tall brick "Restauration" lifts its head and promises liquor, while under its wing snuggles a brand-new lumber Bierhalle, where a warm business is carrying on. The general absence of "repose," and a pronounced tone of roisterous and reckless jollity, make us think silently and reverently of Epsom.

A *Zweispänner* of prodigiously fat and plump-quartered horses took us to the village—I beg its pardon, to "Markt Murnau." The Worm Valley has not been happy enough to have no history. It has suffered severely in the wars; and, needless to say, it has (being in Germany) its *Geschichte*, the abstract and brief chronicles of the time, in the normal shape of an octavo brochure. A large "market" on the king's highway from Munich to Innsbruck, it is composed of a single high street, that swells into an oblong "square." The *Place* is warted, in true Bavarian fashion, with wounding stones, and broken by three monumental, not ornamental, pillars and fountains. Sundry offsets from the main line sprawl up and down the southern slope of a grassy land-wave. Besides sundry chapels it has a large church, exhibiting grotesque *ex votos;* and attached to it is a graveyard, each of whose handsome monuments has its own pot of holy water. The houses are of many colours, brown,

neutral tinted, pinkish, reddish, greenish, bluish, blue-green, and lined to resemble brickwork. The immense gables, some of them six storeys high, are plain, stepped, or battlemented,—which is extra absurd. Among the shoplets is a library, where we buy a load of German guide-books, of which the best, Woerl's, is inferior to Jackson's. There is a good deal of passage-trade, as shown by the frequent "spediteur." Ribbon-making was once a local industry; now, however, we find nothing but wood-carving. The people are civility itself, and never neglect the courteous *Guten Abend.*

The market is rich in hostelries;—the Zacharlbraü (Zacharia's Brewery ?), the Meingandbraü, the Greisbraü, and the Post, considered the best, and big enough to lodge a brigade. Under the kind and careful conduct of "Herr Gray"[1] we

[1] "To Oberammergau and Back," by Edward Mac-Queen Gray. Somerset Chambers, 142 Strand, London. Very useful for the routes.

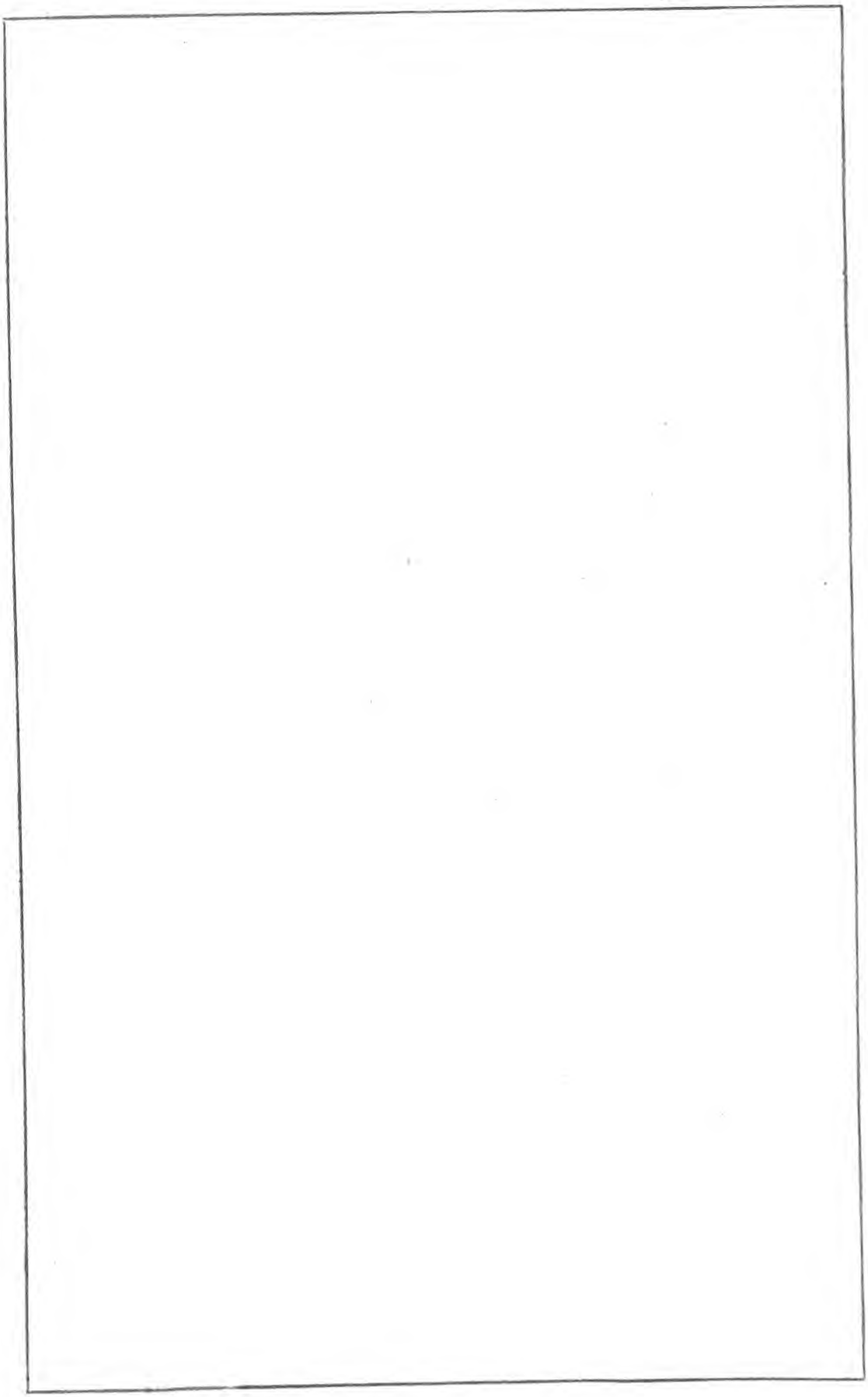
found rooms at the Pantelbraü—Brewery of St. Pantaloon. It is a good old Bavarian Gasthaus—an inn, not a hotel—with a beamy staircase, large rooms, and oil instead of gas. *Mem.*—In Bavaria do not forget a hard pillow, unless you would rest your head upon a down bag which appears to have the consistency of custard. The housefather (Herr Kottmüller) is a warm and wealthy man, who keeps up the honest and industrious ways of Germany in the days gone by; he brews the best beer; his Frau, who smokes a *puro* with great gusto, superintends the kitchen; and his blonde and handsome Fräuleins assist the waitresses. Yet they have been brought up at good "Institutes," and add English, French, and German to their vernacular.

We enjoyed our night at Murnau. The cooking was good, the Forelles (trout) excellent, the white Herrgott was choice, and the red Zeller (both from the Rheinpfalz) was ruby to look at and very pleasant to the papillæ. The outer room, where the

coachmen sit over enormous mugs of beer, was as good as a theatre. One sang Tyrolese jödels to a guitar, and sang very well; another turned a splinter of pinewood into a flute; a third made impromptu verses upon his friends; and a fourth, who combined all the talents from ventriloquism (bauchreden) to standing on his head, was a born buffoon. By all means go to the Pantelbraü, and let the twang of Yankeydom be heard at the Post. Our cousins have lately developed a very unpleasant breed of traveller. His father was probably in the "mercanteel;"—he is certainly in the "genteel;"—and so much so, that he cannot hand you a *menu* save ungraciously. He speaks to nobody, and he communes with himself, inanely smiling at his German neighbour who uses a toothpick or mistakes a knife for a fork. This thing is a reaction from that pure and unadulterated British growth, "Yours bloomingly, 'Arry;" but he is the worse of the two,—more affected, more self-conscious, and, *ergo*, more

snobbish. In the Tyrol Highlands, Austrian Alpine Clubs avoid Englishmen as much as possible; of course, all who speak English, be it through the mouth or through the nose, are Englanders; and I cannot but suspect that much of our unpopularity comes from that triumph of art, the Anglo-American *freluquet*.

Murnau to Oberammergau.



MURNAU TO OBERAMMERGAU.

NEXT morning (Sunday), when we should have been at the play, we set out *en route* for it. Mr. Gray had no trouble in finding us a carriage with stout horses and a civil coachman. Difficulties about lodgings and conveyance are apparently made to give the trip importance: with money in pouch, you get all you want at a moment's notice. The only precaution is to telegraph a fortnight before to the Hotel Gaze; but, if circumstances made it necessary, I should set out without preparation, and feel certain of a seat, board, and lodging.

We began at once to descend by the Innsbruck highroad the land-wave which carries Murnau, and at Höhendorf we crossed the wooden bridge of the Ramsau brook:

thence into the valley of the Loisach river, which receives the branchlet. The basin is half flooded, and the grazing horses are knee-deep in mud and water. Wooden sheds with pent-roofs defend hay and corn from wind and weather. In Styria these become "harps," covered clothes-horses with many horizontal bars, and in Carinthia we find both "harps" and huts. I described the "harpfen" in "The Athenæum," some such protection being much wanted in rainy England. Eschenlöhe, on the left bank of the Loisach, here also bridged, is a green-shuttered village, with its bulb-headed steeple and its queer top-heavy houses, stone and mortar below and timber above: the gables, balconies, and eaves projecting and overhanging in ponderous masses, suggest prosperity to sharers in fire insurances. Here, say the guide-books, a great pestilence in 1633–34 produced the first great Passion-Play, which effected a cure. This, however, is a "pious fraud" *in honorem.* Unfortunately for the legend and its miracle, there are older text-

books, and the origin of the *ludus scenicus* may be senior by three hundred years.[1] Possibly, however, the representation affected the decade period in consequence of this pest. The Oberau village, a little beyond it, is a replica of Eschenlöhe, also a post and telegraph station.

After two hours going south, with a little westing, we left the highroad at Oberau, turned abruptly north-westwards, and cut across country, as it were, to the foot of "The hill," the "Kienberg," as this flank of the Ettalerberg is called. Here, of course, there is a pothouse (Unterm Berg), "under-hill." At this period it is rank with beer-swilling coachmen and peasants, one only being very drunk and musical: between the plays it is quiet as the grave. The scenery above us was a fine study of clouds and mist clinging like wool-flocks to the

[1] After the Ettal convent had been founded. The rst English miracle-play is said to have been "Saint Catherine," performed at Dunstable, in part by scholars, A.D 1119–20. So says M. Ernest Boysse, *Le Théâtre des Jésuites.*

bristling forest. Yesterday, on the plains, we had bursts of semi-tropical sunshine, alternating with violent showers and occasional thunderings. To-day we enjoy a persistent drizzle, which would do honour to a late November in London; but August, in the year of grace 1880, has been uncommonly like "Miss Juliar."

The views are diluted Brenner. Mostly bald, the sky-line is here grey or rusty lime: in the finer regions it is a mixture of red porphyry, argent slate and sandstone, and neutral tinted calcaire. Below, the Highlands are shagged with pines of sorts, dark-green and light-green, the latter, when lit with the sun-rays, look like green feathers washed with gold. They and the white-trunked birches fall into long smooth slopes of leek-green grass, kept ever clean by daily showers, and furrowed by snow-run and rain-gutter. Lowest is the cultivated land, potatoes, cabbages, and corn crops, rather pinchbeck than golden, drained by a brawling slate-coloured torrent going somewhere.

The foothills and lower levels are scattered with cots and hovels, lean-tos and shanties, hamlets and church-villages: in favoured places appear towers and castles, whole or ruined. Such is the ever-changing and yet monotonous scenery of these Alps and their "happy valleys."

We secured a *vorspann* of two huge brutes like draymen's horses, fattened upon, or rather filled out with, water-grass. The general direction of the Kienberg ascent is north along the left bank of the violent Giessenbach, a surface-drain which absorbs a hundred threads of torrent. The road is muddy and badly laid out, wanting zigzags; hence the terrible tales of accidents by drunken jehus driving down at full and furious speed in the hurry from the play. Still mishaps do occur. A rude picture surmounted by a Madonna shows where Aloys Pfansler died of apoplexy when climbing the hill in July 1866. Higher up a dark marble slab with gold letters denotes the place where Hauser and his

companion Koselenz were killed (August 15, 1874) by the fall of St. John jerked off a cart. In El-Islam these men would be Shahíd (martyrs). The hill is held to be a kind of Scala Santa, as such places are called near the Adriatic. Toiling up them on foot is "meritorious;" and hence, perhaps, the very cross faces of the good folk bound Excelsior.

As you reach the summit "Industry" appears. A rough plank-shed sells ugly photos, and two blind men make unmusic with harmoniums. The top, reached in an easy half-hour's walk, shows a signpost commanding the use of the Radschuh (clog or drag), and the inevitable beerhouse and beer-shed. The only marking object lying ahead and below is the metal-revetted dome of our Lady of Ettal, which somewhat resembles that of the Mosque of Omar (Jerusalem).

Sending back the *vorspann*, you now begin the descent towards the dome. "Ettal" is supposed to mean "Desert-dale" (Oede-thal).

The general effect of the huge pile, once a place of pilgrimage, is that of the churches built in the Brazilian *sertâo* (interior) by the Jesuits. You come upon them suddenly, and they startle you. I need hardly speak of its organ, its frescoes by Knollen, and its miraculous Madonna, still preserved by the priest; nor of its founder, Ludwig der Bayer. This good king, bound by a vow, laid the first stone in 1332, after three falls with his horse, and after finding that the image, like a Moslem Santon's corpse, became so heavy that no might of man could move it. The house, which lost part of its sanctity by being burnt down (1744), has been desecrated to utility. Count Pappenheim, the resident owner, and his two popular sons, are brewers on a large scale.

Travellers have "gushed" about the position of this convent, and the skill of the Benedictines in choosing "eligible sites," Fountain Abbey, &c. To me it would be a jail without the happy chance of being drowned. It lies upon the slope of the

Ettaler Mandl, a peak 5000 feet high, whose head is here invisible, and it looks upon a dwarf basin of grass rimmed with a *chevaux-de-frise* of sombre fir. Lying some 2500 feet above sea-level, it has a year half-winter; three seasons, four months' snow, five months' rain, and the rest of stifling heat. Let us call for a *schoppe* of beer and hasten away.

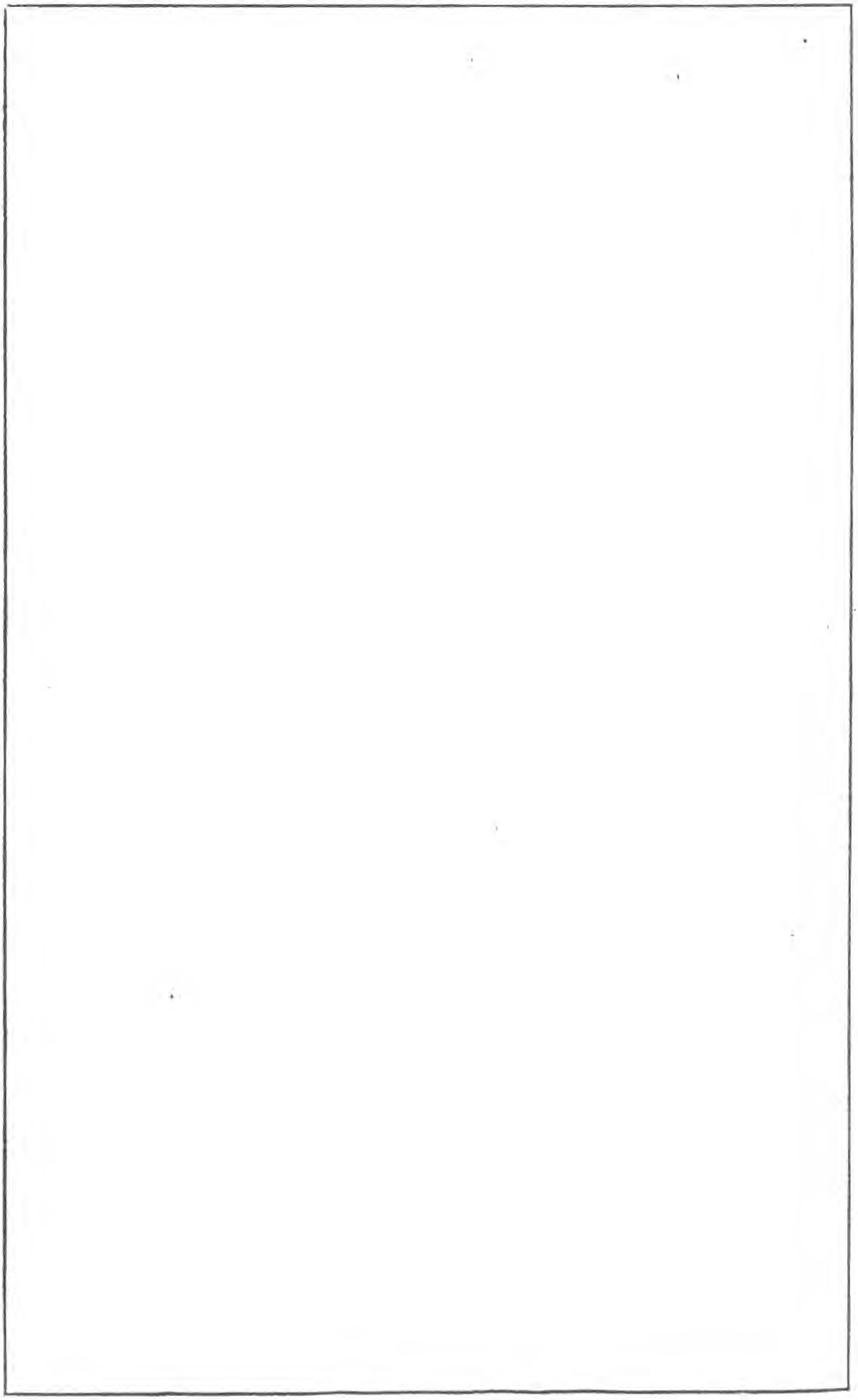
From the Ettalerkloster you fall into the Grasswangthal, and strike the right bank of the Ammer Water, which names the theatrical village. The "pellucid stream," a brook of sulphurous hue, rises (*alias*, "gushes forth with gladness from its earth-bound prison to the light and liberty of field and forest") in seven springs near the Grasswang village. It waters the valley, and, lastly, falls into the Ammersee lakelet, whence it issues as Amper to feed the Iser of Munich. The road then runs through a "gate" formed on the right by the Kapellenwand, a serrated hogsback of stone and tree. The yawning cavern, which we sight from the carriage,

bears the name of Bärenloch (bear-hole), and is said to tunnel the whole mountain. To the left rises the Sonnberg-Kofel, a name supposed to be derived from the Roman station Coveliacæ. Standing stiffly up from the plain, and 2000 feet above it, this rock is a kind of Corcovado, but at a humble distance behind him of Rio de Janeiro. The summit is crowned by a lank cross, barked trees with a pair of stays; and we stare in vain for "the two young pines which look in the distance like pendant weights." The Kofel is a familiar form; and when the villagers were invited to take their play to London or Paris, they replied, *on dit*, that they must also take their Kofel. We then strike an avenue which shows the only bit of colour in the country,—mountain ash hung with flaming berries. They are, however, mere shrubs, little larger than those of Icelandic Reykjavik.

Twenty minutes' drive from the hill-top carries us to Oberammergau. The sixteen muddy, sloppy miles have taken three

mortal hours. We find lodgings, not board, at No. 43, Frau Hauser, a good old body, who does nothing save privily examine our belongings. The only English *entrepreneur* who has had the courage to set up a hotel, accommodating eighty guests, is Messrs. H. Gaze & Son. I should hardly think that it pays, but it must be a grand advertisement. Mr. Cook quarters his clients like soldiers in the village, and they feed where they can. Very great people lodge with "Christus Mayer," as the Germans call him; with Caiaphas Lang, Judas Lechner, Peter Hett, or other of the performers. For the benefit of 1890 they would do better to patronise the hotel.

The Village



THE VILLAGE.

THE village contains 1260 souls, of whom 120 are artists in wood. Built about 2500 feet above sea-level, it is not unpleasantly situated on the right bank of its stream, which is trained to flow down the street drains. The mountains, high to the south, droop northwards, and show a gap which is the river valley. In this direction lies Unter-ammergau, a brother village, whose lot in life has not been brilliant; and farther on lies Kohlgrub. The lane-like streets, of which the longest may measure one-third of a mile, are unpaved and unclean lines of pools, mud, or dust. They are not named, but the tenements are carefully numbered. Like "Margit" in the season, all are lodging-houses. The châlet-like tenements, neat

and clean outside, with crêpé walls and the normal leek-green shutters, stand in dwarf pottage gardens, and an air of comfort shows the effects of the decennial raid. The aspect is not improved by the work of a certain Lüftelmaler or Freskomaler, Franz Zwinck, a curious character who, at the end of the last century, treated sacred subjects in the most artless and incongruous fashion. He is the Paolo Veronese (say German handbooks) of the village. The present year has contributed large yellow posters, upon upon which we read:—

"MOST HIGHLY RECOMMENDABLE IS THE PASSION-PLAY OF OBERAMMERGAU, WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS MUSICAL BEAUTIES."

It is difficult to say which is the more peculiar, the frescoes or the German-English. The guide-books of the Fatherland are developing a Teuton "pidgin" English, which

makes the hair stand on end. The only noteworthy point of the church about mid-village is, that the tall and onion-headed steeple is attached to the western gable where the entrance should be. The interior contains rude pictures, oils and frescoes, and an interesting list of departed villagers, especially those who fell in the wars of 1870–71. A gravelled road, the only one hereabouts, leads past the tall and pretentious house of Herr Choragus Deimler to the saluting battery of three brass guns,—the normal article of Bavarian villages,—and the Kreuzigungsgruppe, which occupied Meister Hallig (nat. 1814) four years. The Crucifixion-group has been too copiously photoed to bear description; suffice it to say, that it is of Kehlheim sandstone, of double life size (4 metres), and in parts intensely classical. Such is St. John who killed the men, he on the spectator's right. The little eminence, Osterbichel or Kreuzhügel, affords a fair view of the valley plain, which is utterly uninteresting; yet visitors have

found a "Benedicite Domine permeating the atmosphere." I suspect that the climate is feverish, and the yellow skins seen here and there suggest jaundice. In the village, of course, there is consumption.

At this season the Passionsday hamlet has the false air of a holy site like Lourdes or Loretto, but with a difference. Here it assumes the histrionic phase, the theatrical form. In the Munich hotels you hear nothing spoken of save the Oberammergau play, till you are weary of the word. At the village the interest is concentrated in the players. You are seated in the garden Zum Stern (Herr Grom), where dialogues take this form:—

Q. Is that Pilate?
A. No, that's Nicodemus.
Or,—
Q. What is that broad-waisted "party"?
A. A guardian spirit.
Q. And her snub-nosed *moutard?*
A. An angel.

Or,—

Q. What will become of that boy?

A. He may rise to be a Caiaphas, a Pilate, or even a Christus.

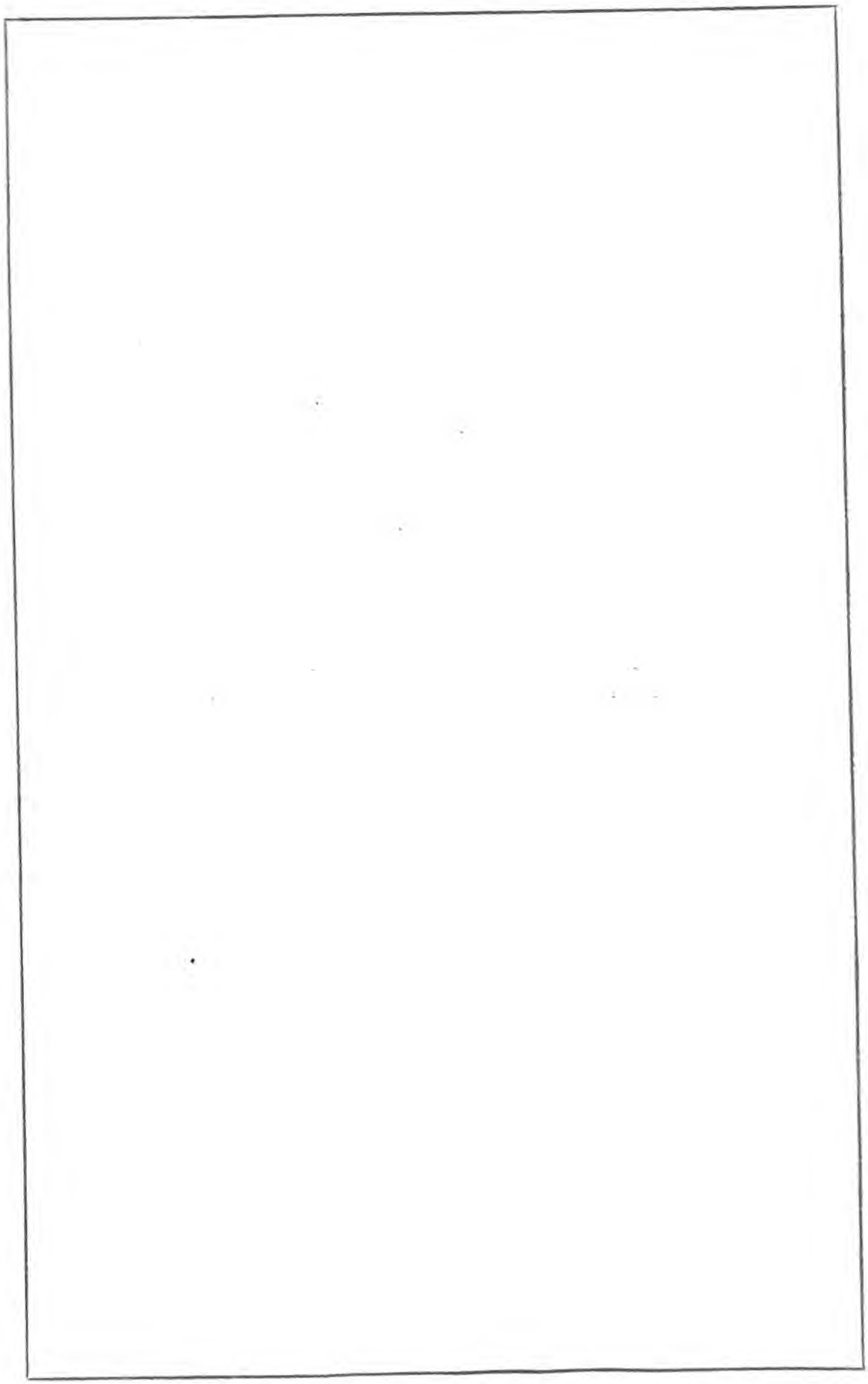
Q. And that girl?

A. A Martha, a Mary Magdalen, or even a Muttergottes.

"Ah!" says the dying man to his friends, "shall I live to see next spring?"

"Yes, of course, and take your part in the play."

The Sortie du Theatre.



THE SORTIE DU THEATRE.

THIS took place at 5.20 on Sunday afternoon, and was grey and dull as the world around. The weather was detestable, and the streets were less cleanly than those of Paris, or even of London, in drizzling rain. The approach to the *ludus scenicus* was blocked by a jostle of coaches, "stages," and carts, carelessly driven by over-beery men. The number of beggars surprised me—old women and sturdy lads in the *wunderjahr*. These take no denial, and are a severe tax upon the villagers. The entrances to the *Logen* (boxes) and to the four ranks of places disgorged, by tall and narrow wooden staircases, a motley multitude. I hope that better arrangements for *vomitoria* will be made in 1890: it is fearful to think of

the number of deaths which a moment of popular terror or excitement would cause. My wife and her maid, who had entered without a pass, were grumbled at and turned out by a grumpy old "Tudesque." She was also told to mind her own business by a carter, with whom she remonstrated for cruelly ill-treating his beast. I waited till all was over, slipped in quietly, sketched and took notes. You are summarily and arbitrarily ejected for so doing during the performance. In fact, here, as in Germany generally, everything is more or less *verboten.*

I was surprised to see in the audience so few foreigners and so little of costume. The Britisher was known mostly by his billycock hat and briar-root pipe. The Anglo-American, betrayed by his tongue, was disguised by his dress,—neither English nor Continental. There was a fair proportion of Israelite families, mixed with priests in black and big, burly, blowsy Capuchins in brown. The heavy wet accounted, perhaps, for the paucity of costume. The peasant women

did not even wear their big fur busbies, which seem to be of Slav origin; their heads were tied in rusty black silk kerchiefs, with the ends hanging behind. The men, Bavarians, Tyrolese, and Austrians, were in national toilette, of which, perhaps, the best specimen was Mr. Gray's—green felt hat and black ribbon holding that unhappy Edelweiss, and the curled tail-feather of the wood-grouse (Auerhahn, Gallo del bosco, Coq des bois, Tetrao urogallus); grey felt jacket, almost waterproof, with green cuffs and collar; waistcoat with large silver buttons; flapped breeches of black-dyed doeskin, ending above the knee; gaiters of grey worsted, touched up with green, and shoes apparently stockingless. The North Germans wore no marking article of dress save huge jackboots — a most sensible article. The large, surly-faced, coarse women required nothing but beards to make full-grown grenadiers.

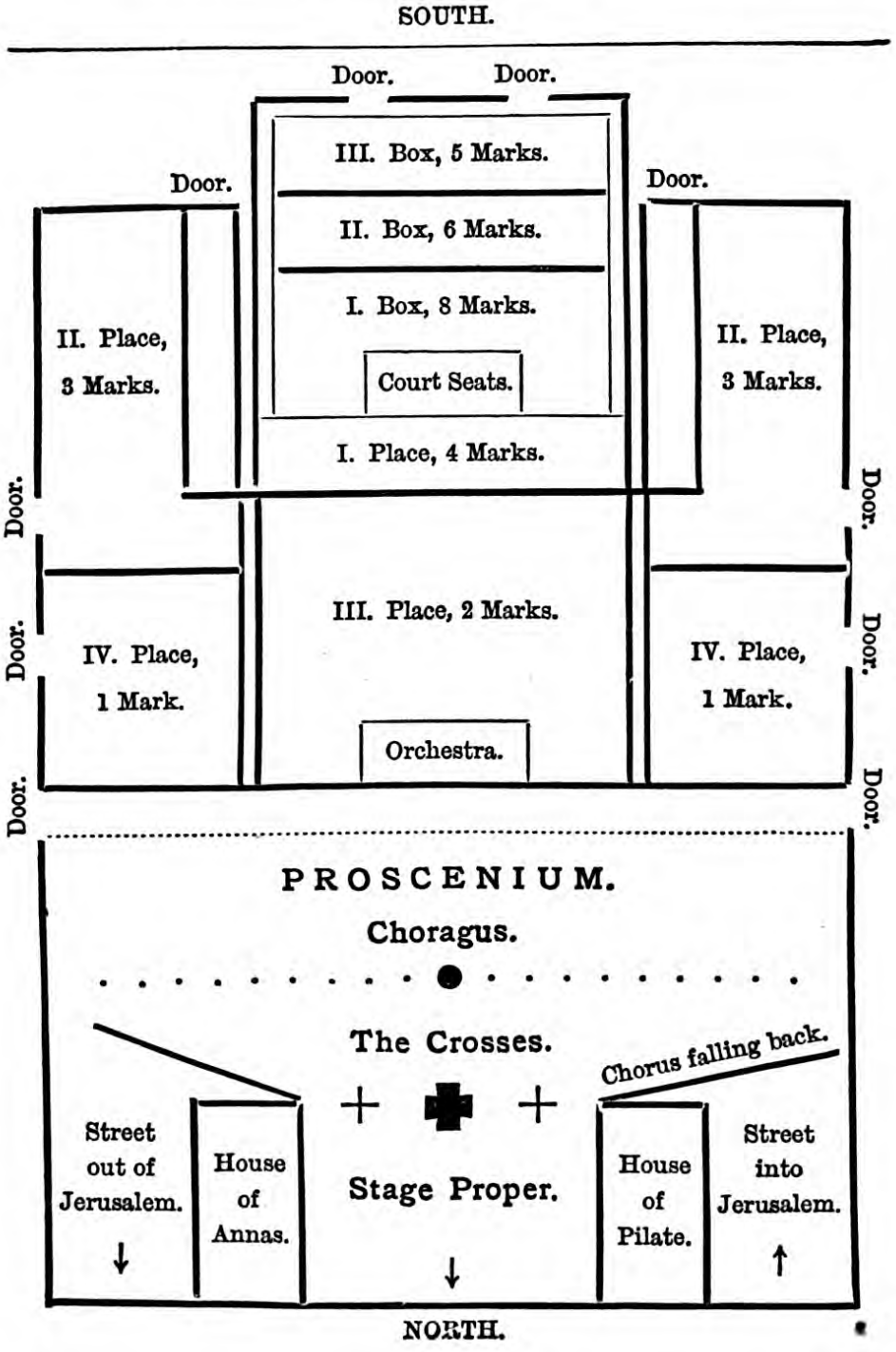
Did they ever read Mrs. Pfeiffer's charming ode?

"Rise, Teuton women! . . .
And on Germania's mighty forehead place
The *absent touch* of glory and of grace."

The section now Prussians and last century Brandenburgers shows all the manners of a parvenue nation, the "latest beggar on horseback;" they almost make us *revanchistes.*

The Theatre.

PLAN OF PASSION THEATRE.



THE THEATRE

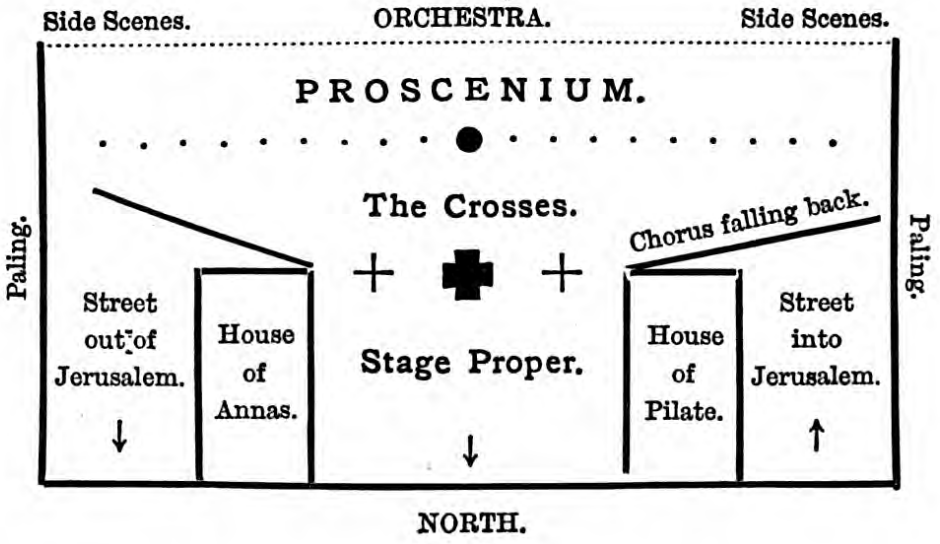
STANDS at the extreme north of the village, surrounded, like a water-cure establishment, by pothouses, *bier-kneipes*, and drinking shops. Four wretched, stunted, ragged poplars to the east and west denote the "avenue" of which we read. The oblong rectangle of rude planks planted perpendicularly has not even a draining ditch and a decent gravelled path around it; a slough of despond surges up to the building. The expense of the decennial structure is calculated at 40,000 marks, say £2000. It is supposed to contain 6000 spectators, but I should think 4000 would be nearer the number. The long walls (north to south) measure 100 paces, the short (east to west) 45 paces, and the

northern end is broken by a projection. Seen in profile, the stage looks like a local church, a smaller attached to a larger pent-roof. It is *verboten* (per placard) to smoke within three metres, and we are strongly cautioned against *Taschendiebe*, the ubiquitous pickpocket.

The interior is divided into halves—to the north the stage proper, and to the south the auditorium. The orchestra, in Tyrolese costume, and mostly of stringed instuments, is ranged below a kind of classical proscenium of boarding, 120 feet long by 20 deep. All seem to do pretty much as they like in the matter of going, coming, and beer-drinking. The leader, in black hammerclaw and chimneypot of civilisation, props his score against the prompter's box, which is apparently empty of *souffleur*. Behind the proscenium is the stage, only ten metres in width, and, looking from the farthest seats, much like that of Mr. Punch. To the right and left of this toy article are the houses of Pilate, who lived in Herod's

palace, and of Annas, who lodged in the Temple. This maldisposition is, perhaps, scenically necessary. Both are slips of two-storied houses; the brass-knobbed folding-doors open, and each has a strong balcony in modern shape, three metres broad by only one deep. The gilt iron railings might come from Birmingham; and the arrangement suggestive of Romeo is hardly admissible in Jerusalem. The governor's quarters are known by the painted shield and weapons over the balcony. To the right, ending the scene and proscenium, is the street which leads into Jerusalem; that which leads out of it being on the extreme left, also touching the wooden paling. Both show under archways long vistas of streets in decent perspective. Being generally desert, they suggested a city of the dead, whereas there are performers enough to make them look lively. Moreover, the houses are crowned with modern crenelles and gothic battlements, when the law makes a plain wall running round the

flat terrace imperative. Thus there are six distinct places—the proscenium, the stage proper, the two palace-balconies, and the two arched streets. A bird's-eye view of the fore-stage would be something of this kind:—



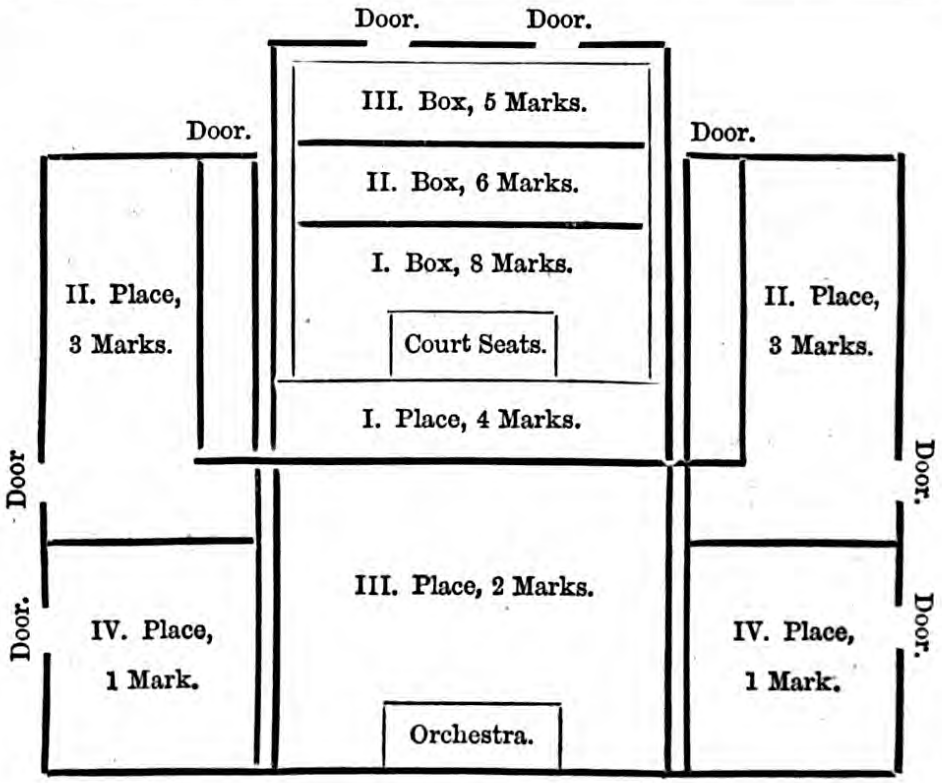
Returning to the stage, we find a classical pediment, with guttæ and other ornaments, supported by composite columns, painted and very boardy, marble turned to wood. The pediment has stars *or* on a champ *azur*, and a group sitting upon a solid cloud

which sheds a shade. It means Faith, Hope, and Charity, and it is so unconventionally expressed, that strangers mistake it for Mother and Child, Jesus (central), and St. John. The triangle is capped by an ecclesiastic and heraldic "Pelican in her piety," head facing dexterwards, feeding three chicks and impaled upon a lightning-rod. After representations it is planked up. During them it has the normal curtain decorated with an Oberammergau Jerusalem, adapted from some photograph. The foreground is a dwarf-green mound representing stony and rugged Olivet: it wants only pines to be utterly Bavarian. The grisly ravine—we absurdly call it the "brook Kedron"—makes way for a gentle grassy slope which leads to Hierosolyma, situated on a similar plain; the profile is carefully provided with the minarets of Mohammed and the dome of Omar's Mosque. The whole is a fair specimen of the utter absence of local colour, so indifferent to the many and so grating to the few. The mechanism of the stage is

simple. The coulisses and side scenes are painted with palms and fancy-tropical productions by Gastl and other Munich artists. A few visitors are admitted, under protest, and as a favour—to see nothing.

The southern third of the paling-oblong is occupied by the auditorium, of which the following is a plan:—

SOUTH.



The three tiers of *logen* (boxes) are of narrow cane-bottomed seats with folding backs. The depth is unpleasantly narrow, and the few unfortunates who have to move during the performance excite an amount of rudeness and ill-will that it was a caution to see. The *fauteuils* are under a shed of strong timber-work tied with iron bands; the rest of the seats, including orchestra and proscenium, are exposed to the weather. Amongst the rough Northern peasants who compose "Das Publikum," an opened umbrella or a parasol would at once be clubbed down; men and women defend their heads with broad-brims, shawls, or as they best can. They had snow in the July of 1880. The platform is well put up, but the weight makes it shaky, unpleasantly affecting the nervous, and suggesting ugly contingencies. The entrances are not *vomitoria*, and a stampede would, I repeat, be terrible. I should not be unwilling to try places Nos. 3 and 4 closest to the proscenium.

On either side of the stage, to east and

to west, appear the spinach-green Highlands, which converge and decline northwards. Set and framed in the archways of a classical Coliseum, the bits of grassy slope, dotted and clumped with pines; here and there bearing a hut or cot, and streaked with white lines of pathway, would add greatly to the general effect. Here nature only "swears" with the meanness of art: the contrast may point a moral, but it certainly does not add to pleasure. The open walls, however, allow the pretty intrusion of swallows, doves, and butterflies: they also admit swarms of house-flies and big meat-flies.

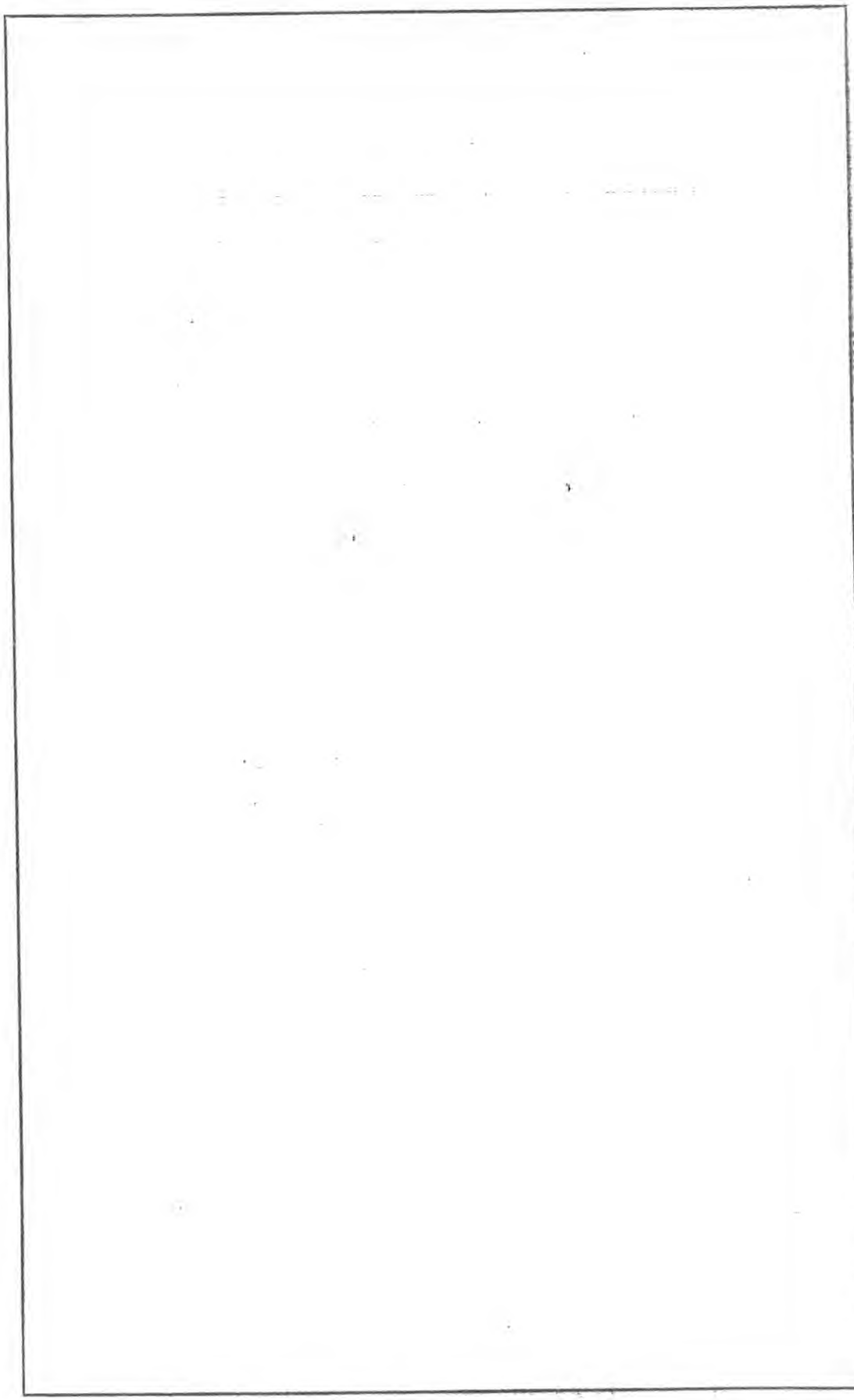
At the end of the Passion-Play all the lumber-building is taken down except the stage: this serves for frequent rehearsals, practice for the old hands and training for the young—in fact, preparation for the next decade. In place of the old Garderobe called "Passionsstadel," a purely Bavaro-Austrian name, they have built a roomy lumber-house, which also serves for stage-schooling. Here are kept the costumes for some

five hundred actors; they represent a value of 24,000 marks. The toilettes in the several chambers hang to nails, and are duly numbered thus. In room *No.* 5, *Maria, women,* we find:—

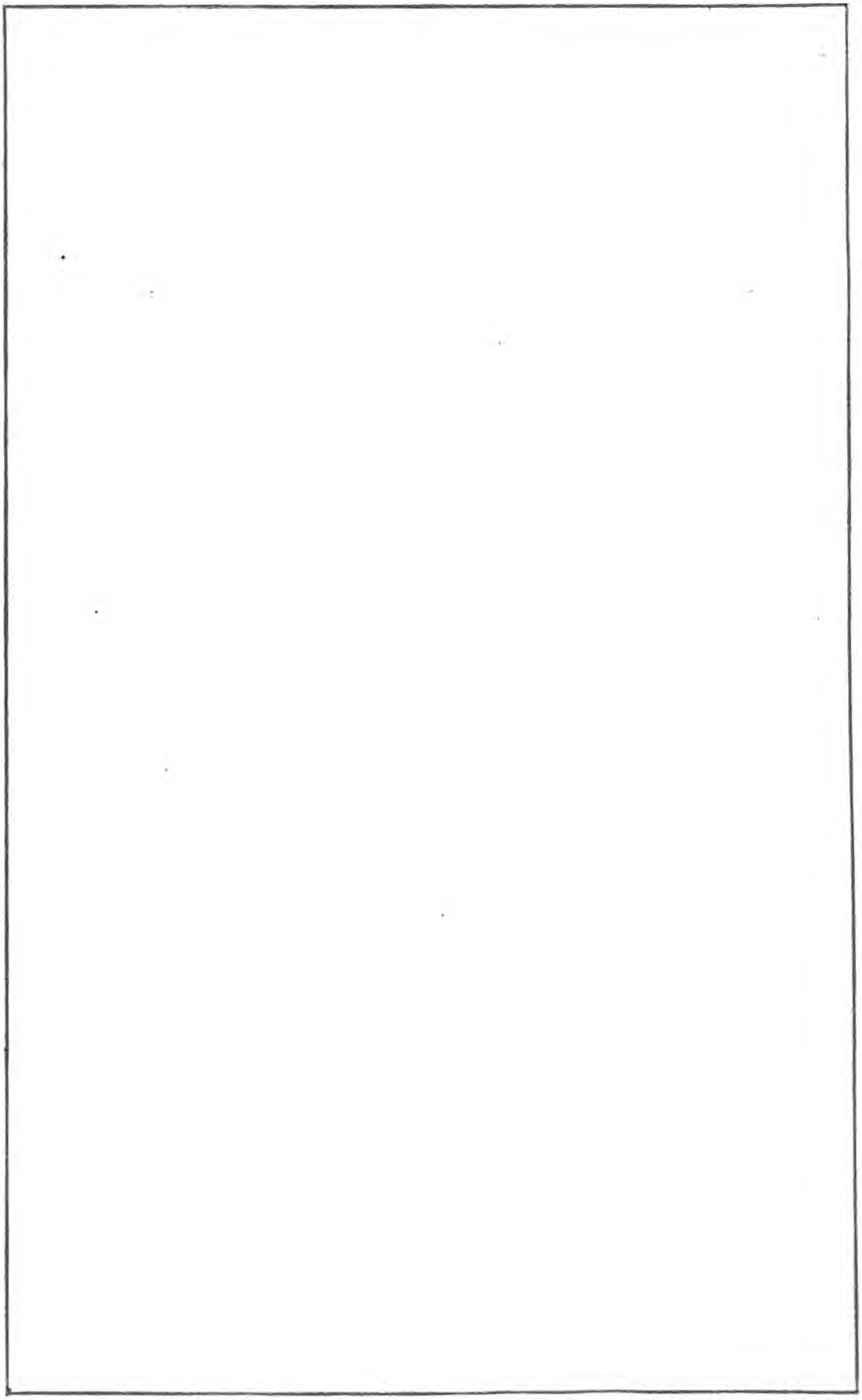
"Mother Maria.
Anastasia Krach.

1 Amaranth-red under-garment.
1 Veil (light blue).
1 Mantle (middle blue).
1 Pair sandals.
1 Scarf (blue)."

With the wardrobe are stored the stage properties, of which the list must be imposing.



Preparation for the Play.



PREPARATION FOR THE PLAY.

ENGLISH writers add to the wonders of the Passion-Play by representing it as the work of unlettered peasants in a remote mountain village. And the Gushington family enlarges upon the piety of the villagers, and finds no "dichotomy," no dualism of life, the secular and daily contrasted with the religious and the Sundayly. The latter is partially true; the former is utterly incorrect. The case, indeed, is quite the reverse. Starveling the tailor and Quince the carpenter had no share in producing the drama. It began in the days when Ettal and Rothenbuch had learned monks, who distributed the parts and wrote the dialogues. The present music is ascribed to a village schoolmaster; but this "Dorfmusi-

kus" evidently adapted to it the "pious chansons" and the popular church music, as any Missa Cantata at Murnau will show. Both words and airs have been changed, polished, and improved (in the music) by successive generations since 1640, and the present arrangements date from 1850. So far from being peasants, the performers are mechanics, intelligent, and, after a fashion, educated men. I might also call them artists. They have been wood-carvers for generations; their works have travelled over Europe to North America, and their village has its School of Design, &c.

When the Passions-Play decade comes round, the stage-stricken village is in a state of excitement. Meetings begin on St. Nicholas Day, before Christmas-time, of the year before, and the piece is duly cast or recast. Some keep their parts for many decennia; others are ousted by promising novices. In the case of the actresses, who must not be married, nor, indeed, engaged, private character is carefully discussed by

the Wahlskomité of twenty-four, including the reverend men. The smallest irregularity is a bar to the stage; and the deprivation is a kind of disgrace. Thus many a pretty blondine has been rejected, and hence probably this section is not remarkable for beauty or talent. All, men and women, must be Oberammergauers. At the same season also arrangements are made touching salaries (*Fixum und Spiel-Honorar*). This ought to be a fair item in 1880, when the clear profits were estimated up to August at £12,000. According to Wyl and the German papers, the expenses of the play exceeded the profits by 73 flor. in 1720; 87 flor. in 1730; 88 flor. in 1750; 156 flor. in 1760, and 157 flor. in 1770. But in 1850 the income was 24,000 to 7000 outlay; in 1860 the figures were 54,000 to 15,000; in 1871 they rose to 117,000 and 15,000; and in 1880 they will be 300,000, while the expenses may be from 70,000 to 80,000 marks. This means that the pious villagers have monopolised the most prac-

tical and profitable of theatrical "specs," now known to the civilised world.

The receipts are divided into quarters. One is applied to the expenses of representation, and another is kept as a reserve fund for the next play: a third is made over to the poor and the school-funds, the "Small Academy" (drawing, carving, and design), together with the waterworks, which suffer from flooding. The fourth, or rather the remainder, goes to the actors, who are divided into ten classes. Class I. receives 100 flor., and Class X. 8 flor. Altogether some 697 people, about seven out of every twelve villagers, find employment.

The play consists of four elements—chorus, *vorstellungen* (tableaux-vivants), the *handlung* or dramatic incident, and the actors. The Divina Commedia, an opera rather than a drama, is divided into three acts, like Dante's poem, and probably for the same reason. After a proemium of two tableaux, act i. opens (8 A.M.) with the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, and

ends (11.30 A.M.) with the betrayal upon the Mount of Olives. It contains nine tableaux and seven scenes. Act ii. (1 P.M.) begins with Jesus before Annas, and concludes with scene 14, "Jesus condemned to death:" it consists of ten tableaux and seven scenes. Act iii. commences, without intermission, with the road to Calvary, and concludes with the burial, the proper close of the drama, when many leave the theatre: it embraces three tableaux and two scenes. The epilogue follows, also without intermission, and contains two tableaux and the two final scenes—the Resurrection and the triumph of the Christus. This, the worst and weakest part, is a kind of balance to the proemium. Thus we have a grand whole of twenty-four tableaux and eighteen scenes, each complete, forming a unity of eighteen unities. All is over at 5.20 P.M.; a total of eight hours, which gives the scenes some twenty-five minutes, more or less. As will appear, many parts might be profitably abridged, whilst others as profitably extended.

Each scene, as I have said, is entire in its action. It begins with a prologue, an exposition in recitative by the choragus; follows one or more *vorbild* (tableaux-vivants) from Old Testament history, which are supposed to be typical of the New Covenant, and songs, soli as well as choral. All the scenes end with a *handlung*, an episode in the life of Jesus. The pictures might be shortened from five to four minutes for the benefit of the performers as well as the spectators.

The chorus is classical only in name, the idea is distinctly mediæval; and the dresses,—which cost some 4000 marks,—the gilt "diadems" and the many-coloured and gold-edged robes, puzzle us till we learn that they represent *Jenes* (genii), popularly called *Schutzgeister* or guardian spirits. This also explains the monotonous actions, the seesaw, the regular rise and fall of the hands. It is thus directly opposed to the Satanic chorus of the Basque mysteries, whose devils, at Garindein, for instance,

appear in the shape of "three middle-aged men in buff breeches and white stockings."

The idea is pretty and poetic; the only difficulty is its realisation. Bottom the weaver with a valanced face, and Snout the tinker with whiskers and scraped chin, and both copiously and inartistically illuminated with common rouge, do not come up to the conception. And, if it is hard to see one's glorified attendant in the shape of a short squat man attached to a long thick beard, we recoil from a plain woman of a certain age and powerful physique, whose hair—the villagers' only good point—streams down her back as if after a sea bath. Beauty is rare in Bavaria, where the coarse Northern features begin; and the feminine mechanics and peasants appear to one coming from the south hard-favoured as they are hard-handed and hard-headed.

The chorus, as we see it, consists of eighteen—eight men in the centre flanked by ten women in fives. They introduce

the eighteen scenes by marching in semi-chorus from the theatre-sides to form a military line fronting the auditorium. After the prologue has been spoken they divide into semi-chorus by falling back in halves, the two actresses at the end of the line being the pivots, while the two men in the centre take their stand near the stage sides, from which they form two radiating spokes. Monotony is avoided by solos and choruses, strophes and anti-strophes, chants and antiphones; but the people yawn and say, "It's only the chorus." At the end of each scene the centre man, right shoulder forwards, paces towards the theatre-side, and is followed by the rest; the tail being feminine. They walk well and gracefully, but their sandals (alas !) are worn over stockings.

The choragus (Herr Diemler), known by his red mantle and a toilette worth 800 marks, has a good half-tenor and a fair presence and demeanour. This proclamator or argumentator should be made more important, so as to have greater freedom of

action while announcing the subject of the scene; and this could be done by balancing the halves with an extra man, making a total of nineteen instead of eighteen. I am told that such has been the general arrangement; but we did not see it. The tenor, Pius Abele, No. 3 right from the centre, is very plain, but has the most sympathetic organ. The best woman voice is No. 5, right from the centre (Maria Josephine Kirschenhofer? or Crescenz Schallhammer?), a tall, well-proportioned figure, whose soprano, till it becomes worn and weary, is strong and good. The actress to the extreme left also sang well. It must be borne in mind that the unfortunates perform in the open air, exposed to sun, wind, and rain: their endurance for eight hours a day, and often for two days together, is remarkable. The men are like badly-sized soldiers, long and short mixed: in past times there was more uniformity; and all the faces were clean shaven. The monotonous seesaw of the hands is a venerable trick, which probably dates from the days "when Roscius was an actor in Rome."

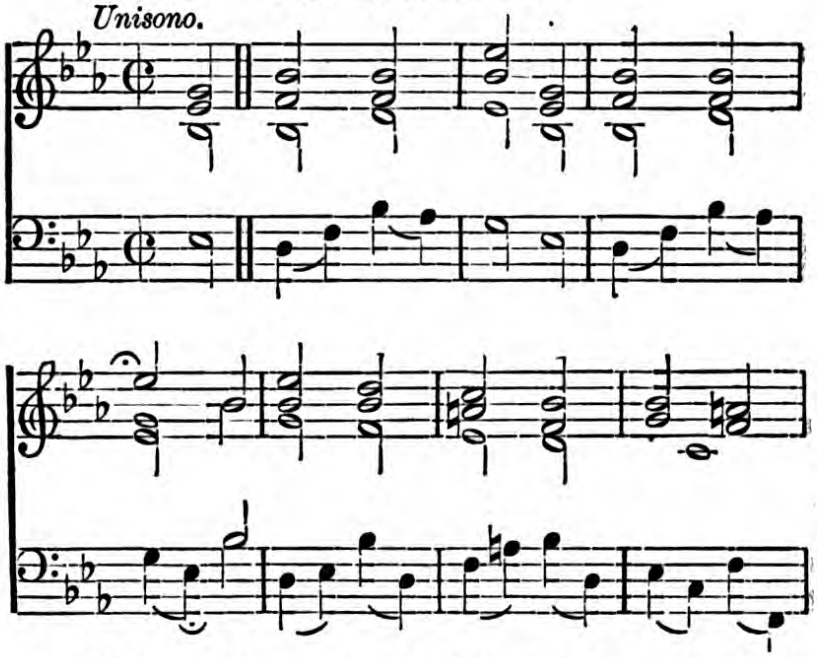
We both expected an anticipation of Wagnerian music, and were pleasantly disappointed by its absence. The general tone, I have said, is ecclesiastical, evidently modified by Rochus Dedler, the local Sebastian Bach (nat. 1779; began to compose in 1814, and died 1822), from psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, many of them doubtless old. The composer is described as an excellent musician, who produced many other pieces. His daughter lived at Munich, and in 1871 received her share of 300 florins. There is a legend that an Englishman offered him 3000 florins in vain for his aria "Wo ist er hin" accompanying the tableau of the Canticle Bride. Dedler's music has two characteristics. The first is the minor key, the major being seldom used except when the action calls for its excitement: this gives it softness, sweetness, and a shade of sadness. The second is a refrain, a ritornella, a repetition of the leading motive, which so charmed me in the Spanish Zarzuela or buffa-opera.

Formerly the music was kept profoundly

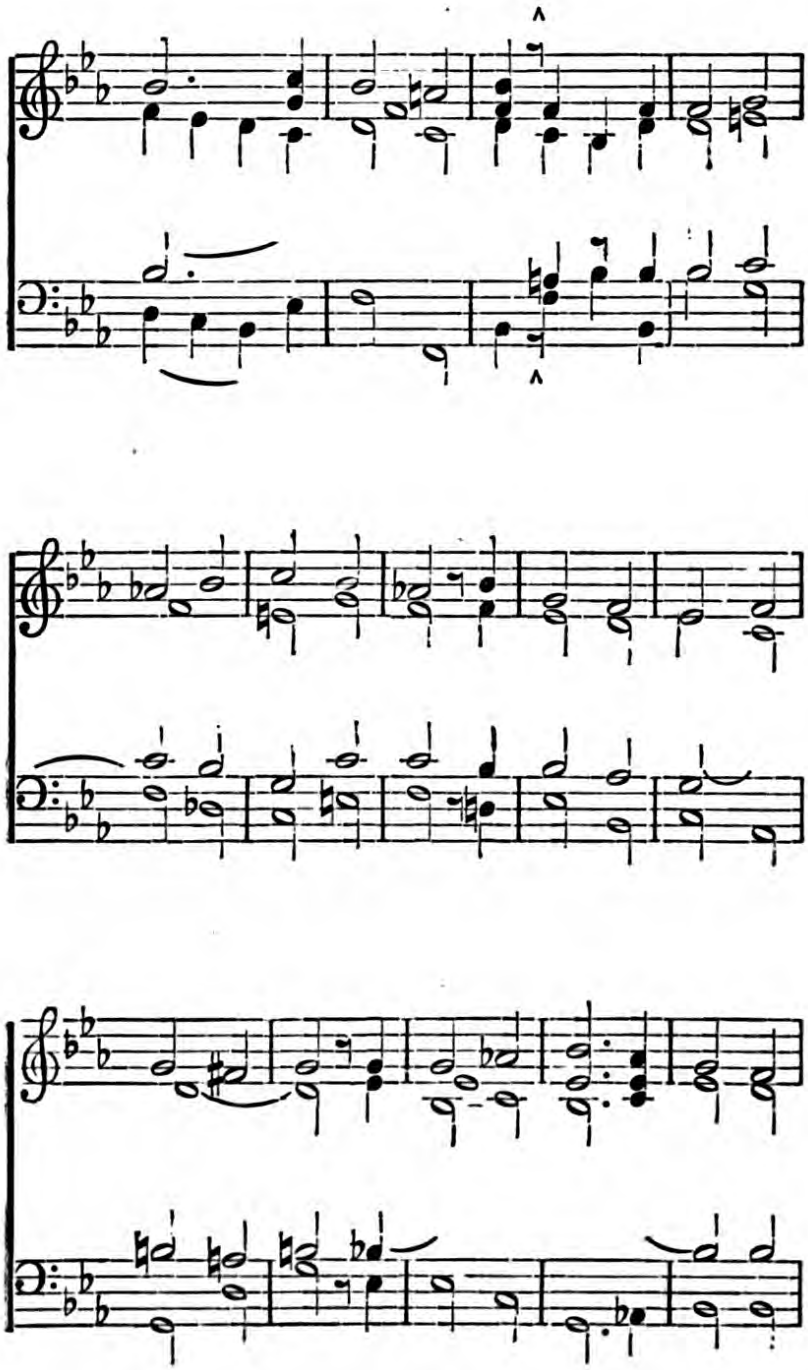
secret, and even the performers declared—probably a "taradiddle"—that they never saw the score. Herr Wyl, however, was allowed to make use of a stenograph, and his volume, remarkable for dull jokes about "Englanders," enables us to present the following specimen.*

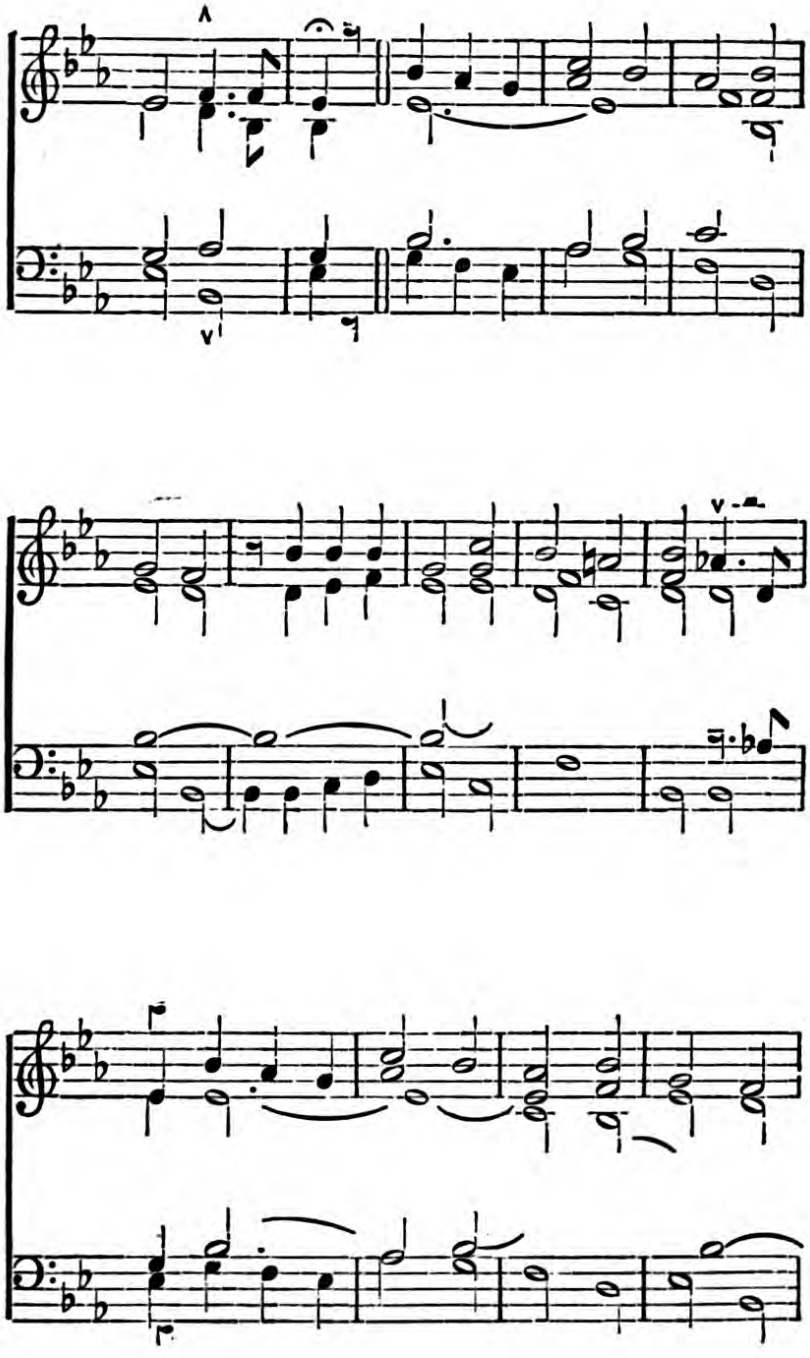
No. 1.—ENTERING CHORUS.

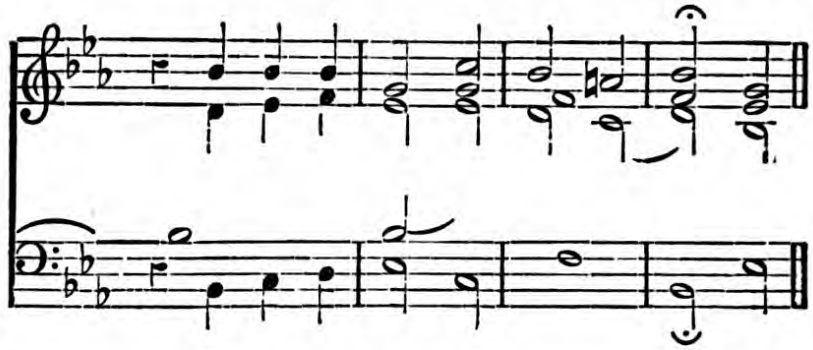
ACT I. SCENE I.



*"Maitage in Oberammergau" (Zurich Schmidt, 1880), has also the merit of giving the prologues, &c., verbatim. The octavo ends with the oldest text, dating from 1622, and in the possession of Herr Guido Lang,—an interesting comparison with its lineal descendant of 1880.



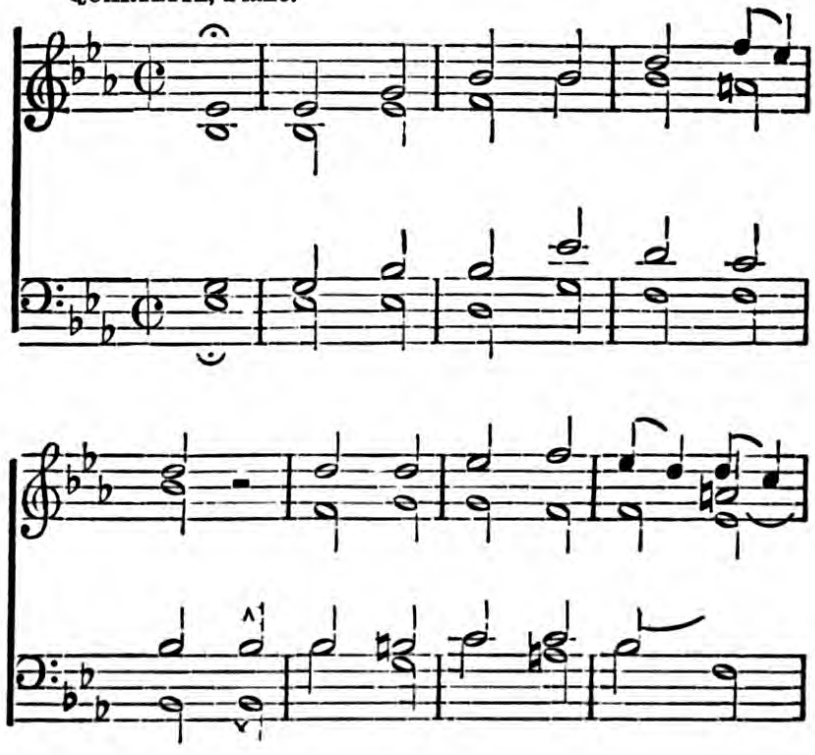


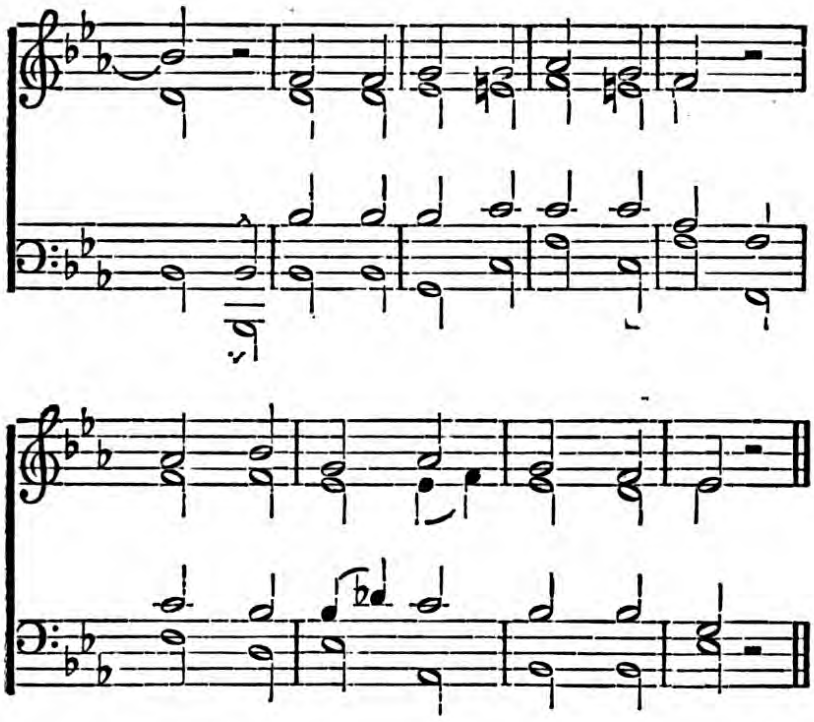


No. 2.—PRAYER-CHORUS ON WAY TO GOLGOTHA.

Act III.

QUARTETTE, Piano.

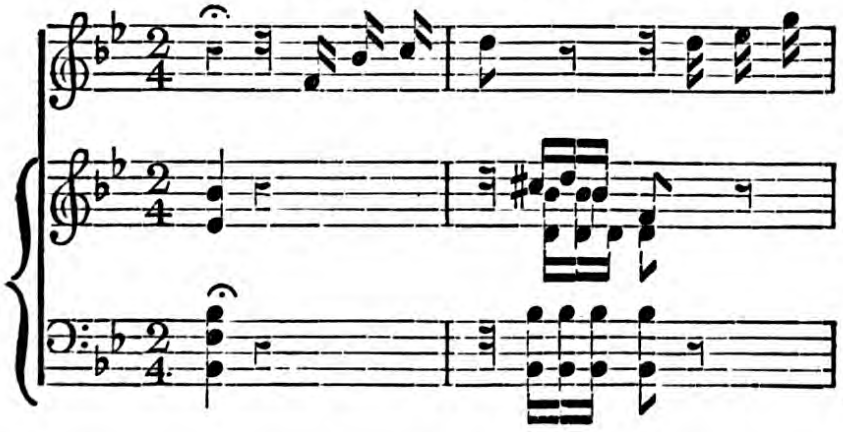


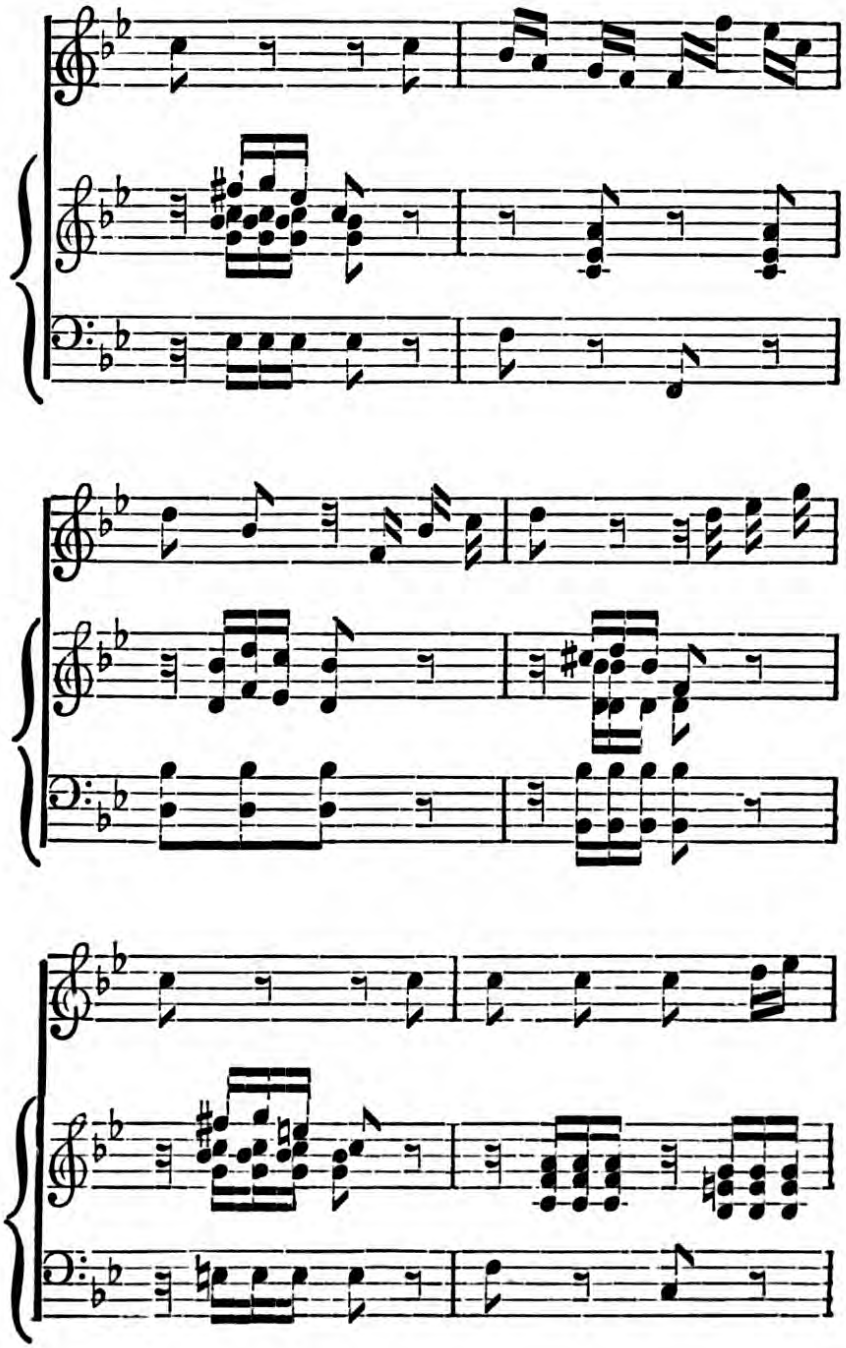


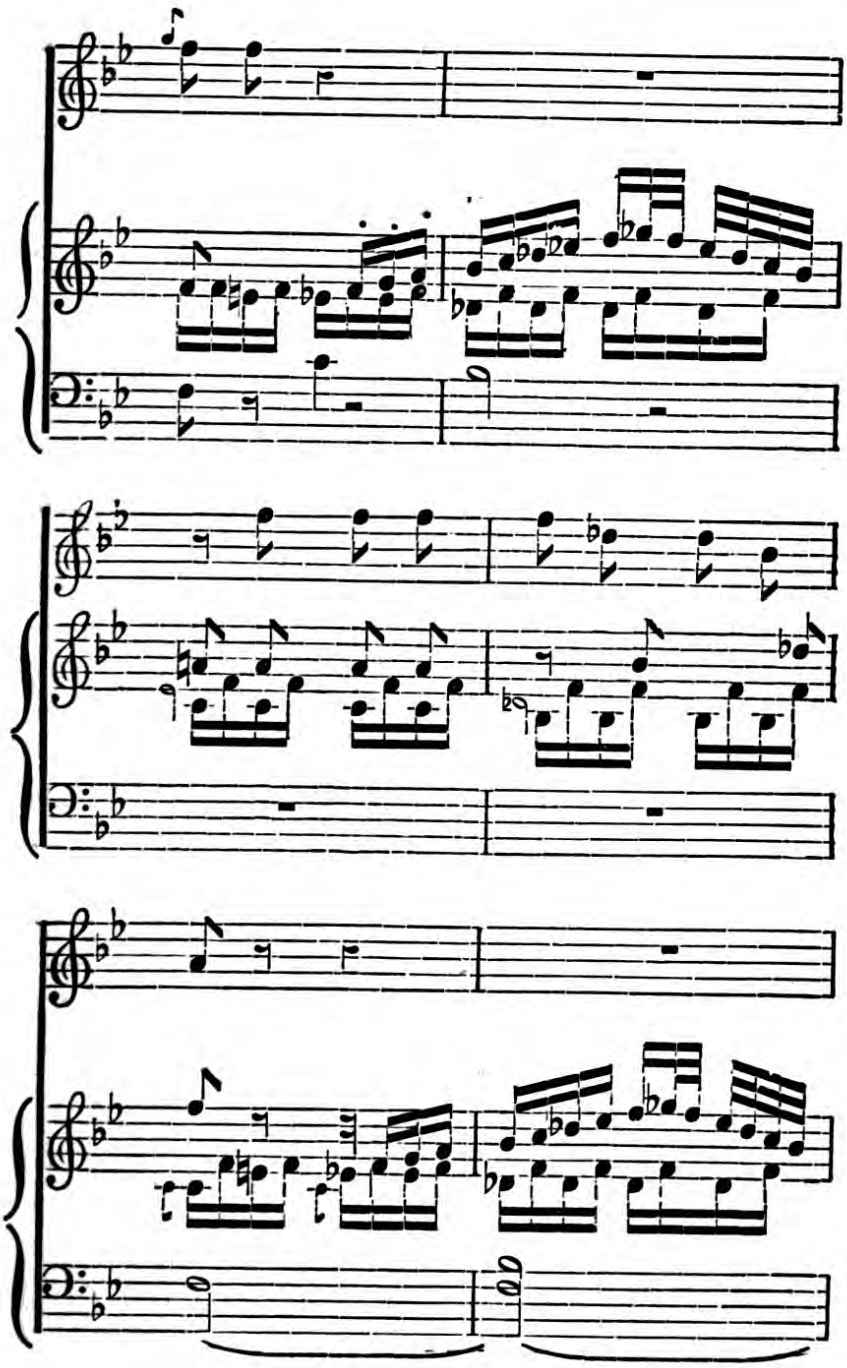
No. 3.—COMPLAINT OF THE BRIDE.

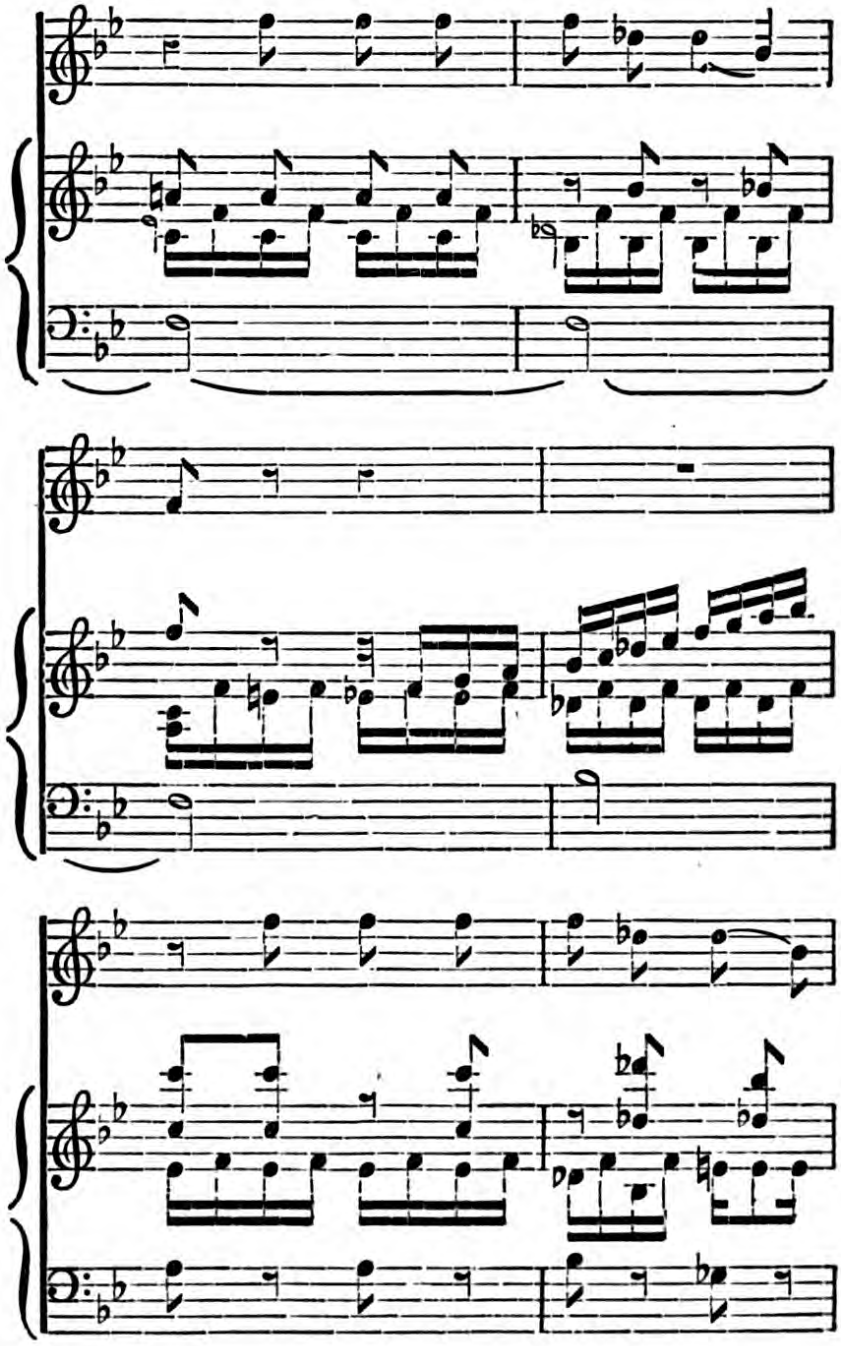
(*Soprano Air.*)

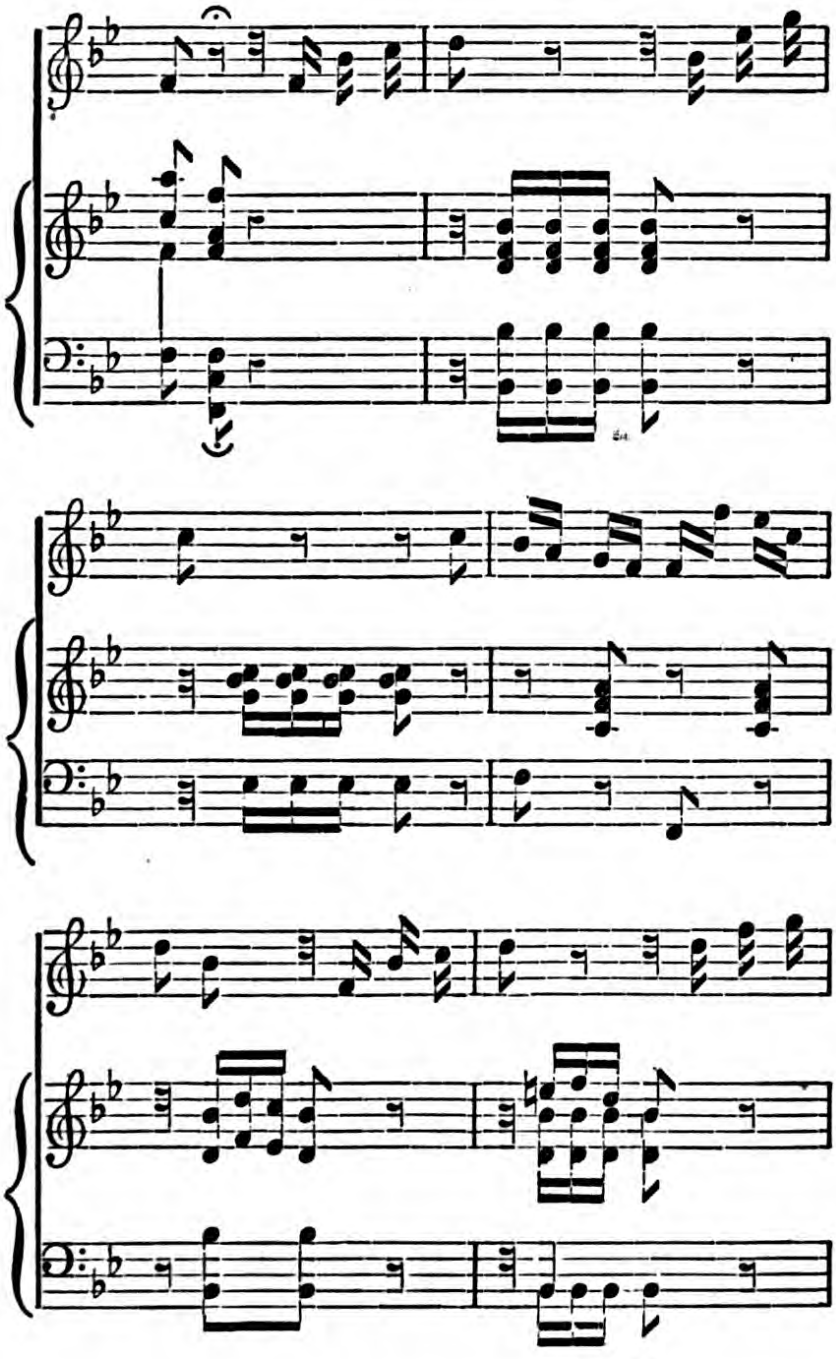
ACT I. TABLEAU II.

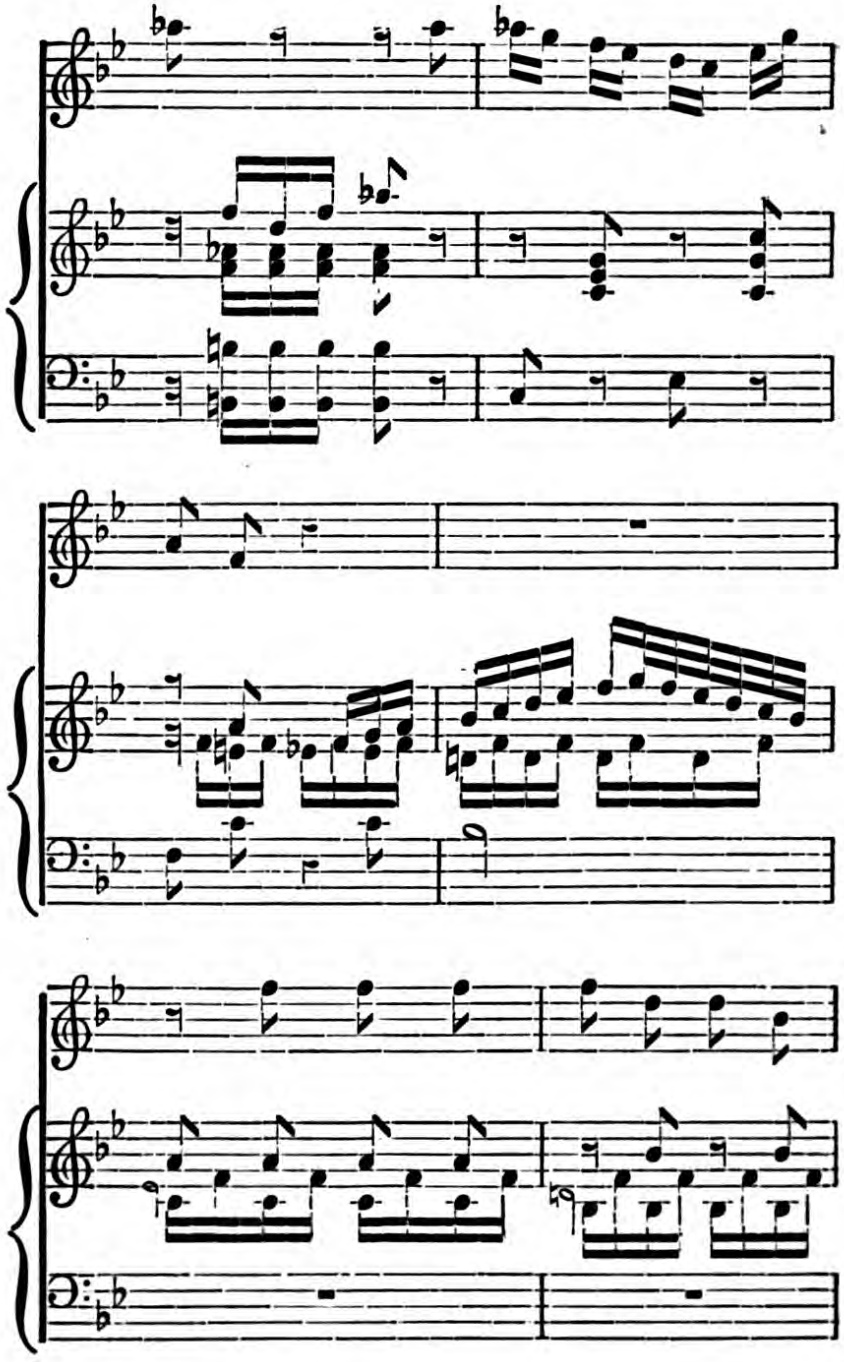


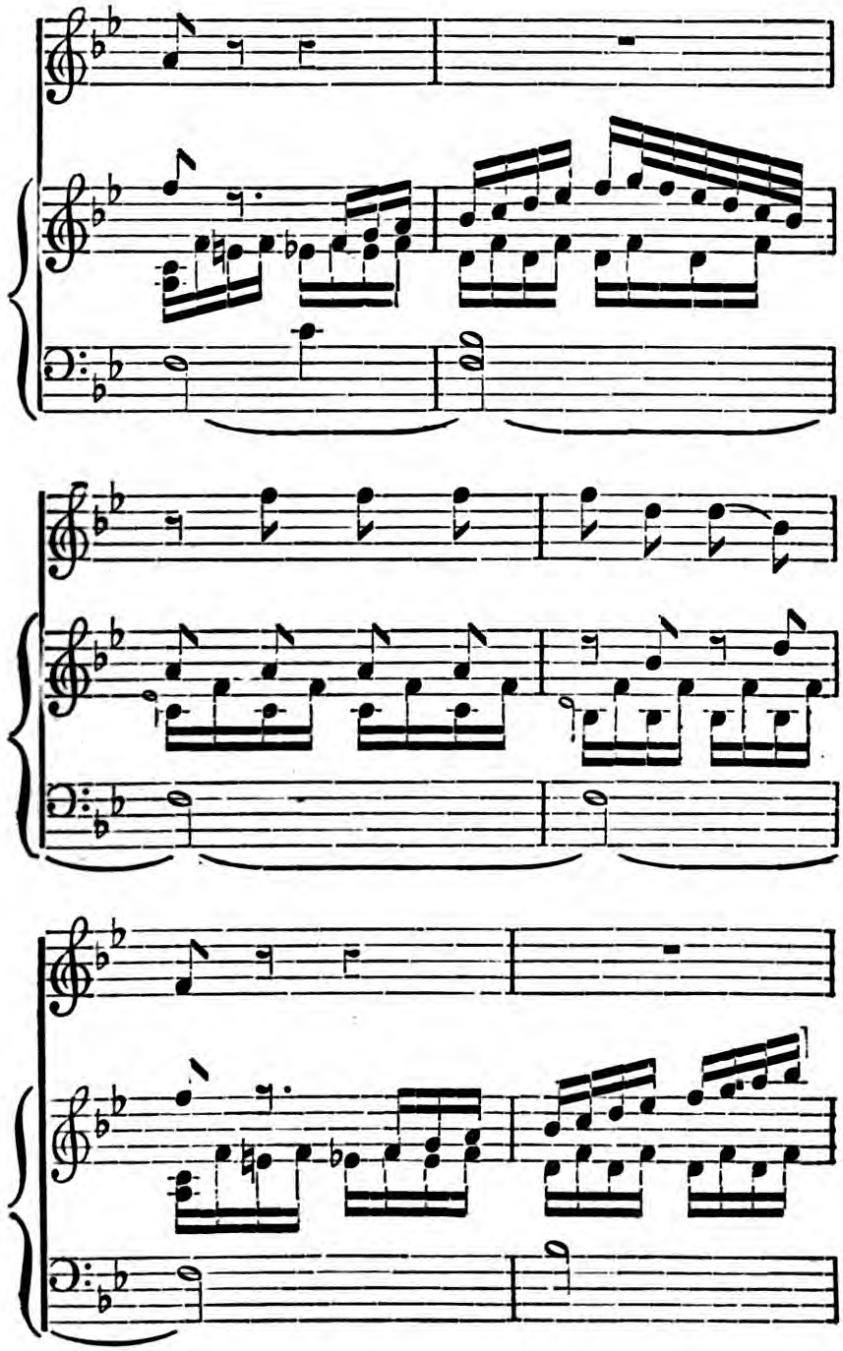


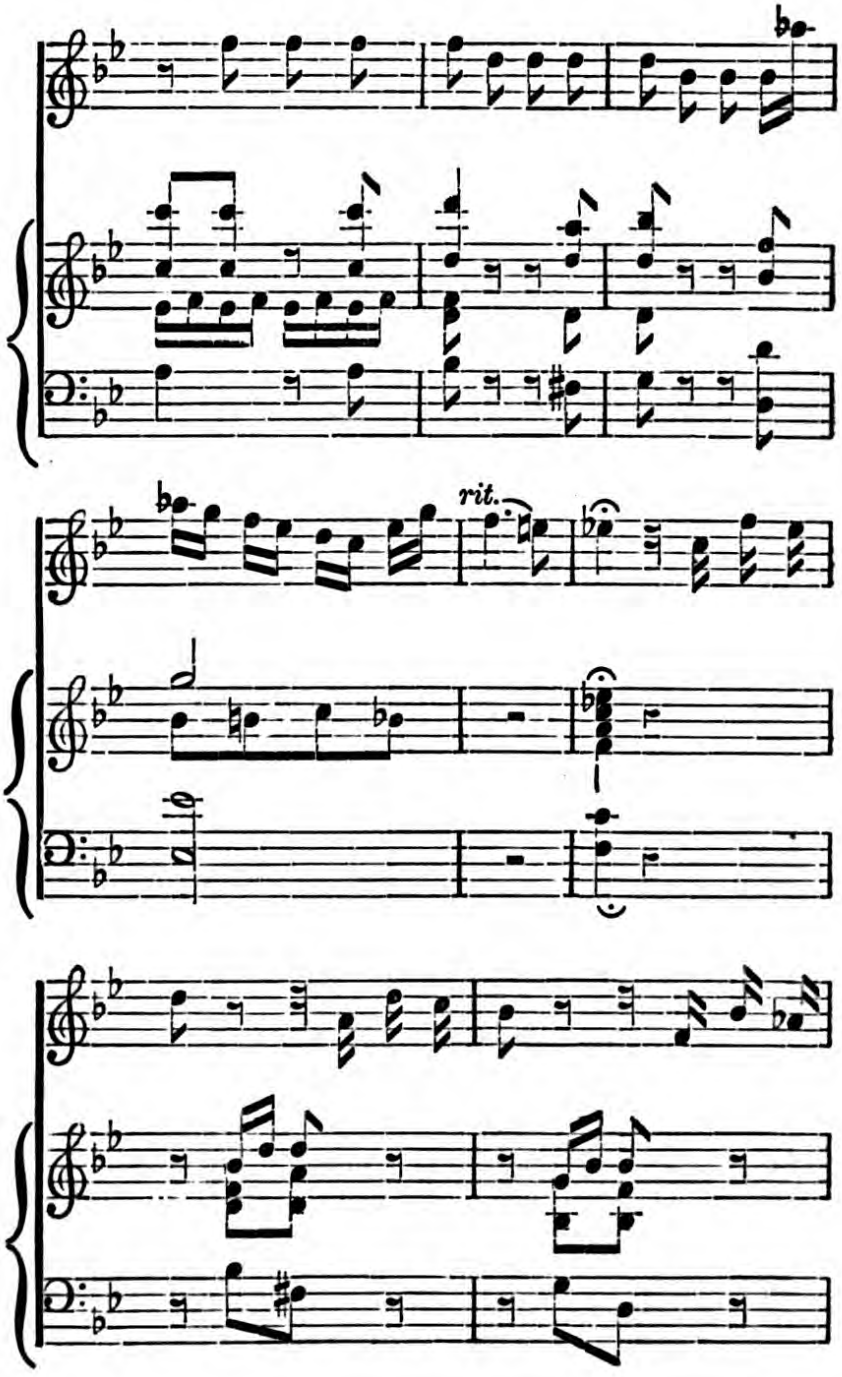








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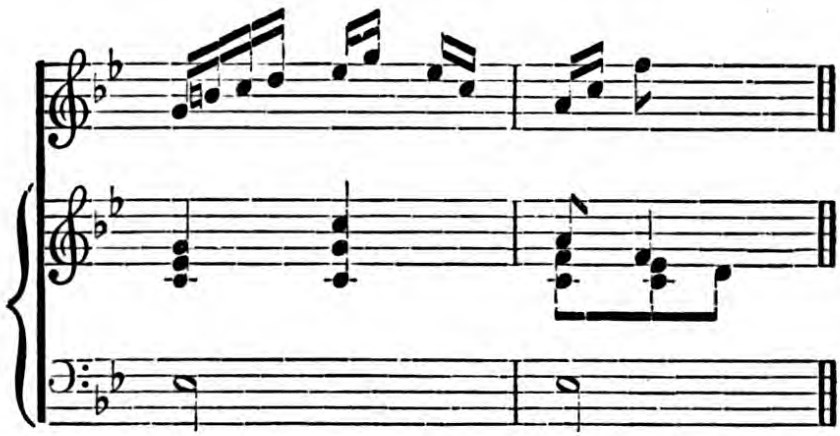


The tableaux-vivants, which show the "typical developments" of the Old Testament by the New, are sometimes, as will appear, rather fanciful and puerile than interesting or appropriate. The performers have unhappily been praised for their "iron nerves," and mountaineer-like steadfastness and endurance: this they have exaggerated into a kind of gymnastic, painful to practise, and not pleasant to behold. The men and women stand firm enough; the children's extended arms shake and their small legs tremble. I should also here suggest that the main object of the picture, when it has one, should be carried into action: Micaiah,

for instance, should receive a veritable slap in the face.

Of the actors, three distinguished themselves. The first was Christus, Herr Josef Mayr, commandant of the firemen, and a kind of vice-burgomaster: a man nearly six feet high, remarkably well made, he is advancing towards the forties, hence they say this must be his last appearance. What a terrible fall! Worse than a *coquette*, aged to a *dévote*. His forehead is low and his squeezed-up features are against him; they altogether want the length and the fineness of outline which we expect; his hands are huge and coarse, and his complexion is sallow; he uses no colour till the crucifixion scene. His expression is gentle and modest. He wears the beard forked, and his fine dark-brown hair streams down his back; but it is thinning (as the barbers say) behind. Here, again, we want the traditional auburn. Like Sampson, his strength is in his locks, which he was allowed to retain in 1871 when he joined the artillery

ranks (Corps No. 1, 3rd field-battery). There is a legend that an Englander (of the green eye and scarlet whisker type), who had vainly offered £1000 for a crop, dogged him for months with furtive scissors. His voice is good, reaching to the very end of the auditorium, and he has little of the rough Bavarian accent. His action is graceful, except at the beginning, when it smacks of the stage, and he affects to stand with the right knee inwards: he walks well, and he falls well, and he has a quiet dignity which is very effective. The only fault I found in him was an exaggeration of the much-cited meek and lowly type; his helplessness and hopelessness amount to a want of manliness. By trade he is a wood-carver, and his work is characterised by the peculiarity attached to the carpentering of St. Joseph. In private life his manner is rather shy and retiring, and "the Christus," as he is freely called, seldom appears during the "season," in the village ale-house. As might be expected, he is a

favourite with the fair sex, who follow him like a young curate, and take up as much of his time as they can. His cottage is small, though neat, and he must have had trouble with his guests, especially the "miladis," who want a dozen pairs of bottines cleaned every morning. He has a wife and four pretty children, and the good *Hausmutter* declares that she is *not* jealous.

Next in merit, if lower at all, comes Judas Iscariot (Herr Lechner). The Passionsspiel preserves the Catholic idea that the betrayal was not a sudden, malignant inspiration of a soul naturally wicked (!); the traitor was a victim to the sin of avarice, the worship of Mammon, against which the Church so vehemently inveighs. This man is a born actor, and he shows a shade of the comic side which the old mysteries attached to their hate of Judas. His lank hair is brushed forward from behind the ears, so as to hide a poll "bald as a bat;" his beard is parti-coloured, white

(once red) at the roots, and brown-dyed at the tips. His hooked fingers clutch like tiger's claws,—the "silberlings," by the by, bearing the head of H.M. Ludwig II.;—and his dress is "devil's livery," red and yellow. Judas' only fault is being too "Judasy." At first, this "Iago of the Twelve" threatens to be a bore, and he speaks too trippingly on the tongue; but in the passionate scenes he becomes excellent, and his repentance draws tears.

Peter (Herr Hett) is also a good *actores* —here the plural is used for the singular. His appearance is in his favour, an aged and venerable look, bald head and grey beard; glance alternately sharp and weak, and manner now determined then vacillating, while his action has that change from boldness to sneaking which suits the very Hibernian apostle. He is remarkable in the denial-scene, which the Church considers a mystery; and his sobs and tears of a repentance, which is almost despair, are re-echoed by the audience. He is

generally accompanied by St. John, a lean youth with sharp foxy features, a shock head of red hair, and a generally mechanical aspect; neither presence, voice, nor manner are anything but "antipathetic."

Another unpleasant actor is Caiaphas (Johann, alias Hansel Lang), known by the breastplate inscribed with tribal names. His loudness and violence, his undignified look, and his general bearing of a fussy bourgeois, hardly suggest the dignified high-priest of the Hebrews, who could impress even Alexander the Great. This *actores* is also Bürgermeister; he is not prepossessing as a North German, and he carries Caiaphas into private life. The public, after understanding that Mr. Gray was to have the distribution of the tickets, was somewhat surprised by a letter from Caiaphas to Mr. MacColl, giving the unexpected information that "nobody had been authorised by him or the village commune to make arrangements in England or elsewhere for intending visitors." He was very uncivil to an

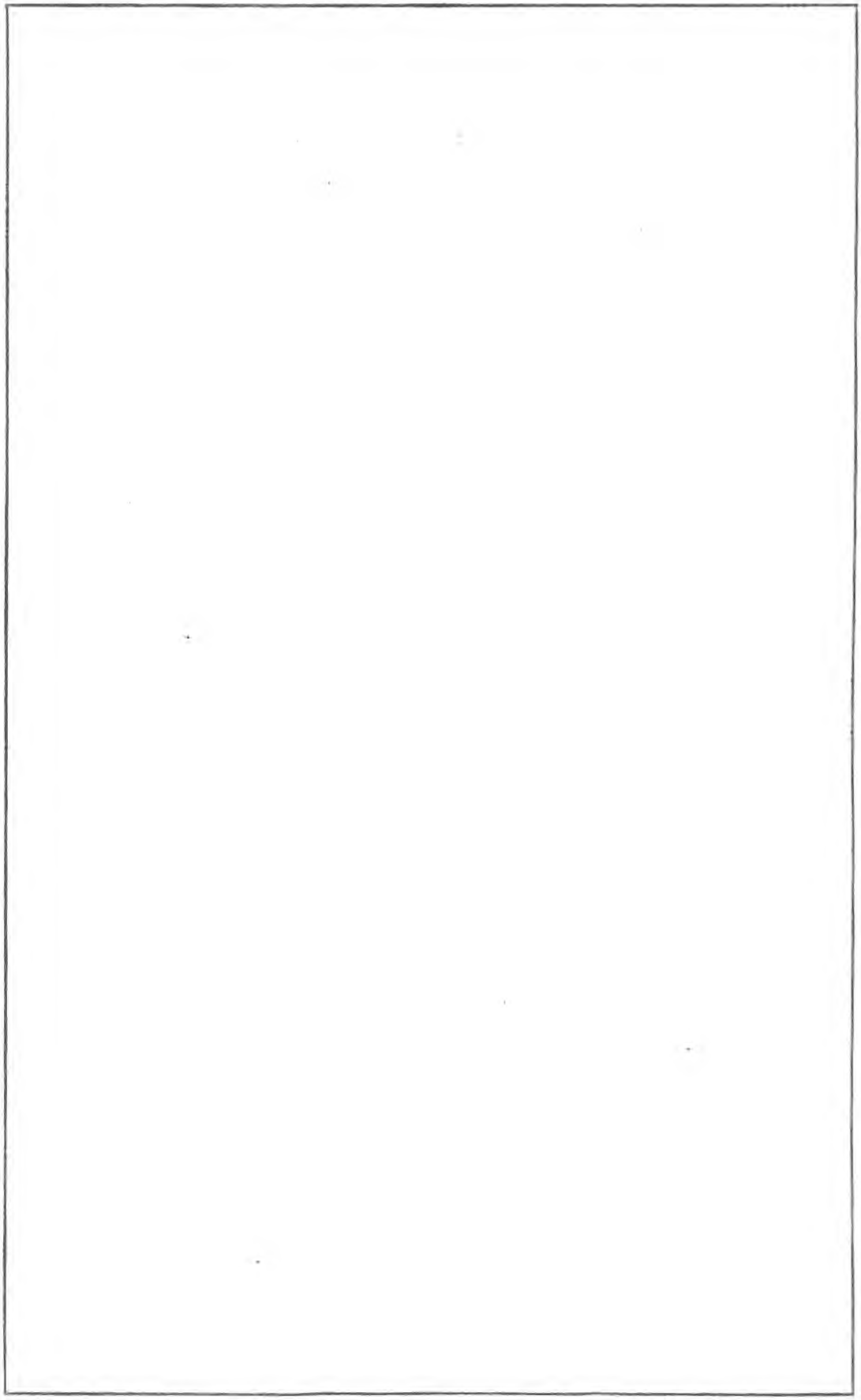
English friend who called at his private house for a lost direction. The Britisher found him counting out his money with a plain girl, his daughter, and a theatrical angel. Nothing was to be had except a churl-stare, a shrug of the shoulders, and a grumbling, "*I weiss nit*"—don't know—when he probably knew quite well. The "Oil-hill (Olivet) Angel," too, looked as cross as two sticks, the reverse of angelic.

Mem.—Never call upon Ammergauers except to buy something or with an introduction; at this time especially, when they are worried almost out of their five rural wits. Caiaphas, besides the trouble of selling salt, pepper, and paper, dry goods and wet goods, is daily bullied by his German countrymen. The English and the Anglo-Americans send telegrams, order their wants beforehand, and get the best of everything. The Teutons, who have frugal minds, neglect all costly precautions, and complain loudly of what results from the parsimony proper to the Pays des Milliards.

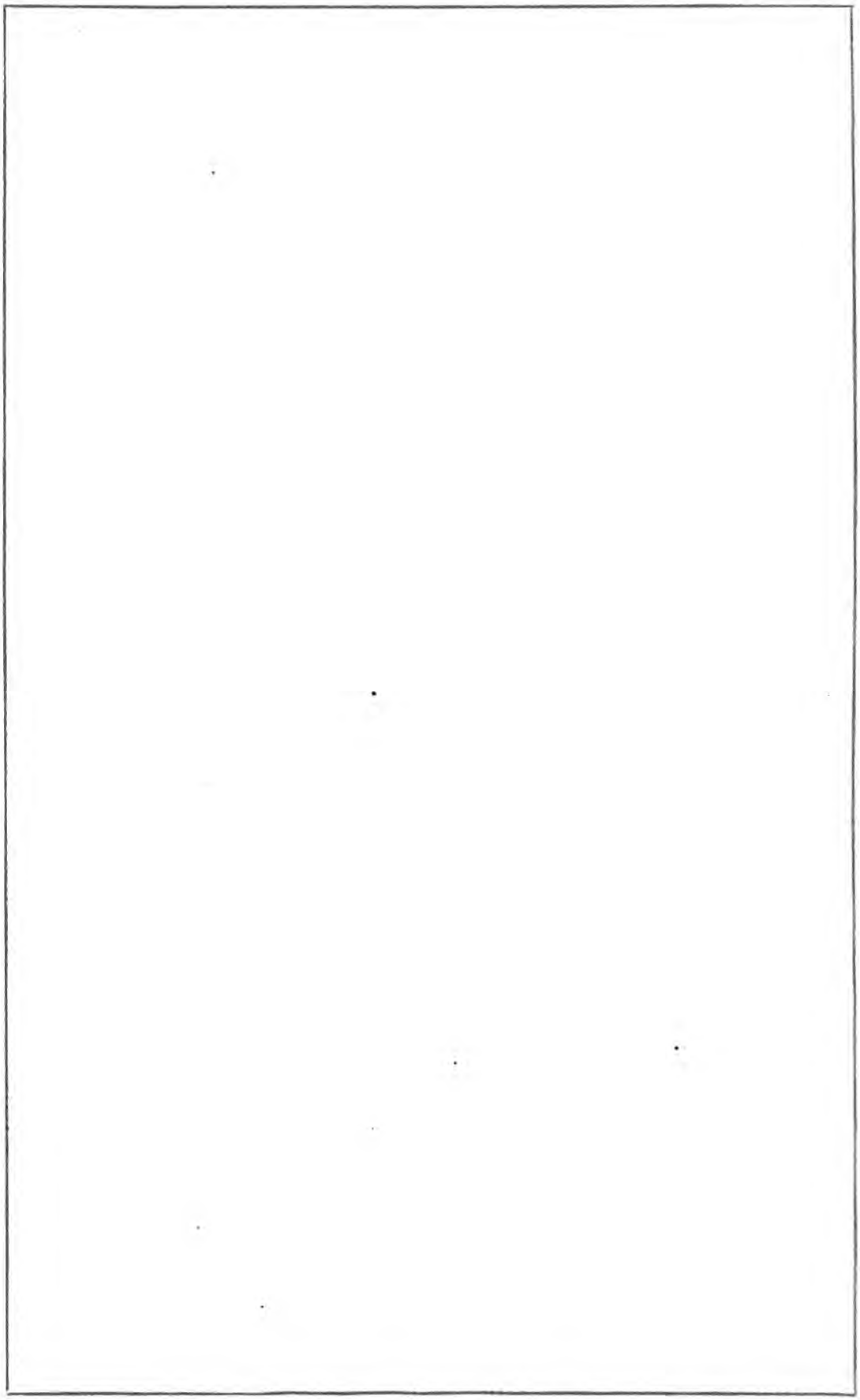
The rest of the troupe is fairly good, but there is none of that general excellence of which the guide-books speak. The stars stand out very sharply as stars; and the difference between the mechanics and the peasants, who take the lowest rôles, is clearly marked. I carefully watched the feet of the performers as the curtain descended upon the tableaux, and saw none of that indecent haste to be up and off which mostly animates the secular theatre.

The principal defects of the play are three—tameness, want of realism, and incorrectness of historic details. In this rose-water affair we miss the rough, nervous energy to be expected from a company of mountaineers, and which would add, by contrast with civilisation, so much power to the piece. The utter absence of local colour and of chronological truth—for instance, the Jerusalem of the old Jews (B.C. 0) being that of the new Jews (A.D. 1800)—revolts the traveller. Surely it would not cost more time, trouble, and

money to be right than to be wrong. The play, we must bear in mind, has been seen and criticised by professional actors, artists, and travellers, yet no concession is made to the modern preference for accurate illustration; nor are these the manner of men to take advice. The trivial historical errors will be noticed as they occur. The "expansion of the Gospel narrative" has *not* been carried out with "perfect fidelity, in beautiful harmony with the tone and spirit of the sacred text." Of the generally false idea which pervades the representation I shall speak in a later page.



To the Theatre.



TO THE THEATRE.

SUNDAY had been so full that many could not see the piece, and the consequence was a Monday *Nachspiel*, or overflow meeting. On the eventful day (August 23) the gun fired for rag-mass at 5 A.M., and was followed by sundry others. Shortly after seven, when the village band had made the normal promenade, streets and mud-roads were puddled and paddled by boots and bottines; the thoroughfares reminded me only of the old Sussex highways, whose morasses were useful by keeping off foot-pads. The theatre, which had opened at 6.30, presently began to fill, and work began with the last gun exactly at 8 A.M.

It would be supererogatory to give detailed descriptions of the tableaux and

actions, which have appeared in a host of guide-books; I shall therefore offer only a synopsis, and confine myself to remarking what most needs remark—in fact, what most strikes the traveller.

Prologue.

Tableaux.

1. Adam and Eve expelled the Garden.
2. Adoration of the Cross.

ACT I.

SCENE 1.

(Triumphal entrance into Jerusalem.)

Sub-scenes.

1. Cleansing of Temple.
2. Priests and people.
3. Dathan and the money-changers.

SCENE 2.

(Assembly of the High Council.)

Tableau.

Joseph's brethren plot his death.

Sub-scenes.

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

SCENE 3.

(Leave-taking at Bethany.)

Tableaux.

1. Tobias quits home.
2. Forlorn bride of Canticles.

Sub-scenes.

1. The Christus and the Twelve.
2. The same with Simon, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalen.
3. Simon's supper-chamber.
4. Christ with Martha and Mary; the anointing.
5. Christ with the Virgin; farewell.

SCENE 4.

(Last visit to Jerusalem.)

Tableau.

Ahasuerus puts away Vashti for Esther.

Sub-scenes.

1. The Christus laments over Jerusalem, and sends on Peter and John.
2. The Christus and Judas.
3. Judas solo.
4. Judas tempted by the trader Dathan.
5. The same and other money-changers.
6. Judas solo.

SCENE 5.

(The Last Supper.)

Tableaux.

1. Israelites fed with manna.
2. The spies and the grape-bunch.

Sub-scenes.

1. The supper-chamber, the Master, and the Twelve; Magdalen washes and anoints the feet of Christus.
2. Christus rebukes Peter.

SCENE 6.

(The Betrayer.)

Tableau.

Joseph sold by his brethren.

Sub-scenes.

1. The High Council.
2. The High Council with Nathan and Judas.
3. The High Council with Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.
4. The High Council again.

SCENE 7.

(Jesus on Olivet.)

Tableaux.

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

Sub-scenes.

1. Judas and his tempters, Silpha, Malchus, and others.

2. Agony in the garden.
3. The angel appears.
4. The kiss of Judas.
5. Peter and John issue from their hiding-place.

ACT II.

Scene 8.

(Jesus before Annas.)

Tableau.

Micaiah struck for prophesying.

Sub-scenes.

1. Annas and three priests on his balcony.
2. Annas joined by four deputies of the Sanhedrim and Judas.
3. The Christus before Annas.
4. The Christus amongst his enemies.
5. Peter and John with a priest before Annas's house.

Scene 9.

(Jesus before Caiaphas.)

Tableaux.

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

Sub-scenes.

1. The Christus led away by his enemies.
2. Caiaphas (in sleeping dress), priests, and Pharisees.
3. The Christus before Caiaphas.
4. Caiaphas and the priests.

5. Judas solo.
6. The denial of Peter.
7. The repentance of Peter.
8. Christ mocked.

SCENE 10.

(Repentance of Judas.)

Tableau.

The despair of Cain.

Sub-scenes.

1. Judas solo.
2. The Sanhedrim dooms the Christus to death.
3. Judas throws down the purse.
4. The High Council resolves to buy the Field of Blood.
5. The Christus before the High Council.
6. Three delegates of the Sanhedrim before Pilate's house.
7. Agony of Judas, who prepares to hang himself.

SCENE 11.

(The Christus before Pilate.)

Tableau.

Daniel accused before the king.

Sub-scenes.

1. Sanhedrim, money-changers, witnesses, and the Christus before Pilate's house.
2. Pilate and suite appear on the balcony.
3. The Christus on the balcony announcing himself as king, and Pilate asks, What is truth ?

4. Pilate's servant reports the wife's dream.
5. Pilate's dialogue with his suite.
6. Pilate with Sanhedrim under the balcony.

SCENE 12.

(The Christus before Herod.)

Tableau.

Sampson in the Dagon-temple.

Sub-scenes.

1. Herod and court.
2. Enter Caiaphas, Annas, and priests, with Christus led in bound by the soldiers.
3. Dialogue of Caiaphas and Herod.
4. Dialogue of Herod and courtier.

SCENE 13.

(Scourging, crowning, and *Ecce Homo.*)

Tableaux.

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

Sub-scenes.

1. Sanhedrim, traders, witnesses, soldiers, and Christus before Pilate's house.
2. Pilate and suite on balcony.
3. Dialogue of priests, &c., under the empty balcony.
4. Christus scourged, burned, and mocked.

SCENE 14.

(Jesus condemned to death.)

Sub-scenes.

1. The priests appear before Pilate's house.
2. Christus brought in with the crown of thorns.

SCENE 14.

(Jesus condemned to death.)

Tableaux.

1. Joseph's triumph.
2. The scapegoat.

Sub-scenes.

1. Dialogue of priests and people.
2. Dialogue of Pilate and suite; Christus led in by two soldiers; Pilate again proposes to execute Barabbas, and washes his hands of the affair.

ACT III.

SCENE 15.

(The Road to Calvary.)

Tableaux.

1. Abraham and Isaac on Mount Moriah.
2. The fiery serpents.
3. Moses raises the brazen serpent.

Sub-scenes.

1. The holy women, with John and Joseph of Arimathea, come from Bethany.
2. The procession of the cross.
3. Veronica and the women of Jerusalem.
4. Pilate's messenger stops the procession.

SCENE 16.

(Jesus in Golgotha.)

Sub-scenes.

1. The crucifixion.
2. The piercing of the side.
3. The priests depart.
4. Descent from the cross and burial.

Epilogue.

SCENE 17.

(The Resurrection.)

Tableaux.

1. Jonah and the whale.
2. Passage of the Red Sea.

Sub-scenes.

1. The guard at the grave.
2. The holy women at the grave.
3. The priests and the grave-guard.
4. John, Peter, Magdalen, Christus, and the angel.

SCENE 18.

(The Ascension.)

Nunc Dimittis.

The Coryphæus speaks the prologue in recitative; and this is repeated after almost

every tableau, in order to apply them to the scene or scenes. The curtain rises for the two *vorbilds*, which form the prologue. The first is the expulsion of Adam and Eve by the angel; in the distance appears an imitation,—

> "Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world."

The curtain then falls, rises again, and shows the Adoration of the Cross, the Tree of Life opposed to the Tree of Death. In the first our common ancestors appear, not clad, as usual, in two sheepskins, one before and one behind, but looking as if they were fresh from the polar regions. In Eve's case—

> "The downy swathes combine,
> Conglobe, the smothery, coy-caressing stuff
> Curdles about her;"

and looks very queer upon her fleshings, whose terminations are painfully like stockings. The angel stands in an oval of converging golden rays, which will again

appear upon the sepulchre door. He holds, bolt-upright, a queer weapon, gilt and of wavy form, supposed to be the "flaming sword;" in fact, the old German *flamberge.* This was originally the lightning. It finds its analogue in the revolving disc, surrounded by fiery points, which armed the Babylonian god, Merodach, and which in an old Accadian hymn is called *littu,* letter for letter the Hebrew word which we render "flaming." In the Adoration, the Cross is not Roman and classical, but Latin and mediæval—too tall and too thin. The children, "heavenly genii," and the women-angels are of the earth, earthy. Here and elsewhere the celestial messengers are wingless; and, though wings hung on statues should be forbidden by Act of Parliament, they are necessary for a romantic drama. Few of the audience could distinguish between angels and mortals. In this part the only thing to be admired is the pathetic kneeling of the *Schutzgeister.* Altogether the proemium is good, and a

few slight changes would make it excellent. Perhaps the Satan of 1662 might profitably be reintroduced.

After this introduction, act 1, scene 1, displays the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, a procession which calls loudly for the intervention of Professor Makart. The stage, now a street, shows a level not to be found in the "Holy City," and the architecture is from the artist's "inner consciousness." About five hundred of all ages hurry about, "waving palm branches and crying Hosannah;" yet they manage to look few. Now begin the outrageous costumes, to which I should prefer the fanciful old frescoes in the village church. Christus Mayr passes across the stage, and gains the proscenium, *viâ* the street entering the city (right hand). As in the well-known picture of Albrecht Dürer (nat. Nürnburg, 1471: ob. 1528), he is literally sitting upon, not riding, a diminutive ass, without bridle, and with blue saddle-cloth. From this time every eye is

fixed upon "Der Heiland:" the men criticise, the women eye him and point their lorgnettes. He wears a robe of dull lilac, and over it a red mantle. His disciples are also dressed in bright colours, when darker robes would be better fitted for wandering men without the means of buying finery. Characteristically enough, all carry alpenstocks, which appear throughout the piece. The cleansing of the Temple now follows, and a number of priests and scribes approach through the opposite street. This is a failure from the tameness of the acting. The Christus pushes over only a single table, and the lambs and pigeons are too few. He takes, not a "string of small cords," but a hank of twine hanging from a kind of clothes-horse, and ostentatiously but mildly flogs the air instead of the traders' backs. Involuntarily we think how admirably our Irving would have done this. "Dathan," the "Oberhändler" of the money-changers, a short, thin, pale, nervous man, with a small and projecting goat's beard, is

an excellent second part. His violent gesture and his evident malignity are what they should be, and he will frequently reappear. The cry of "Rache! Rache!" (revenge) sounds well.

In scene 2 (the meeting of the High Council), after the return of the chorus and the explanations of the Coryphæus, the curtain rises upon a meaningless tableau — the brothers plotting to sell Joseph. The latter is not a youth, but a small and very fair boy. The scenery gives no idea of the desert; here as elsewhere the fair green land is Bavaria, not Syria. The "pit in Dathan" is a European draw-well, surmounted by the normal wooden gallows for the pulley, and the sheep are stuffed—very unlike sheep.

After a long recitative, two duets, and a chorus, the curtain rises, and the Sanhedrim is seen in council. Tame Annas in white, and bumptious Caiaphas in red, are sitting upon raised chairs behind an ornamental screen at the bottom of the stage; and the dignitaries are ranged in horseshoe along the

walls. They wear "gold-embroidered tiaras," which suggest only cows' or buffalos' horns. This gear is taken from A. Dürer, who probably founded it upon the symbolical horn being exalted—the text which gave rise to the modern Tephillin. This scene is a failure. The stage is too small, and the columns, which should be of the simplest Doric, are of the complicated and "bastard nothing" order. The numbers are too few, and there are only two scribes sitting in dark raiment at dwarf tables before the box of the chief priests. The dialogues between Annas, Caiaphas, and Nathanael, priests and Pharisees, might with advantage be shortened by half; some of the spectators yawn, and others compose themselves for a pleasant nap, as at a sermon.

Scene 3 (leave-taking at Bethany) has for first tableau the youth Tobias quitting home. No one recognises the Archangel Raphael in white and blue, because he lacks the wherewithal to fly, and an irre-

verent person suggested that he had lately moulted. At the extreme right of the stage stands a weeping young "party"—a deserted village belle—whose presence is suggestive as it is uncalled for. The dog should be either an Arab greyhound or a long-coated hound of the Libanus. It is a curly cur with a curved tail; and it has been a stuffed specimen since the day when an intelligent animal caused a scandalous burst of laughter by bolting from his master off the stage. Sub-scene No. 2 is the disconsolate Spouse of the Canticles. Alas! she is very, very plain; and we do not wonder at the absence of the Bridegroom. So are the daughters of Jerusalem, and so are the sweet singers of Israel.

The action begins with the appearance of the Christus and disciples at Bethany, the "home of misery." After a good deal of dialogue, they reach the house of "Symon Leprossus" (Simon the Pharisee), where Lazarus, Martha, and Mary are added. Martha is not even an "untiring hostess."

Mary, who washes and dries the Master's hair with more aplomb than usual, but without the required emphasis, is assumed with scant reason, to be Mary Magdalen, so called from the little village Migdol, Magdala, or Majdal, on the Lake of Tiberias. Consequently her long brown hair is worn horse-tail fashion down her back; and her eyes are perpetually fixed in repentance upon the ground. In fact, Magdalen (Maria Lang), who wears Peter's colours, is too Magdalenish, and gives us "crispations." The third sub-scene in Simon's chamber, with the table to be used for the Last Supper, displays the anointment, which is made the beginning of the Judas-plot. The fifth contains the *Maria-urlaub*, or parting of the Christus from the Mater Dolorosa. The Virgin (Anastasia Krach) wears a red robe with blue mantle and white head veil. She looks this part well from afar, but her voice is Bavarian,—harsh and unmusical, and she has no idea of acting. They say that Franziska Flunger, the Virgin of 1871, was

better. How we wish Miss Ellen Terry were here! The scene is well acted by the Christus, without any show of over-affection, which would be unscriptural. But a complete success in such a situation is not to be expected.

The next tableau (scene 4), shows the repudiation of Vashti in favour of Esther; this, and the elevation of Mordecai, being the two servile triumphs of Israel during the Babylonian captivity. There is no attempt accurately to represent the splendid Assyrian court. Ahasuerus is a coarse-looking monarch without a trace of the "curled and oiled Assyrian bull;" and the "Publikum" asks which is the first and which is the second wife. Here again we want movement, and Vashti, who stands looking spiteful on the right, should be bodily thrust down the steps. The last visit to Jerusalem and the beginning of the Judas-temptation are good; but, as Herr Polonius says, "This is too long."

The supply of manna (tab. 1, scene 5)

rains in the shape of scraps and flakes of snowy note-paper—too "palpable gross." It would be better to gather it from the ground. Moses is not what he should be. We have the (golden) horns of Michael Angelo, but we miss the grand presence and appropriate dress, the huge beard, and the mighty hand. Some 300 persons are on the stage, and the 150 children look well: they monopolise all the beauty of Oberammergau. The second tableau is the first with the change of a huge cluster of badly painted grapes borne on a pole by two spies. I remember seeing this at Hebron: the fruit was carried, not on account of its weight, but in order not to spoil the beauty of the bunch. How full of local colour that picture was!

Of the Last Supper there is more to say than I have room for. The scene is from Leonardo da Vinci, who probably never heard of the "pedantry of accurate illustration." Yet it is uncomfortable to see European chairs set before a European

table, mounted on trestles and spread with cloth, knives, tumblers, and other European gear. Jews would certainly not use a Roman *triclinium;* most probably they sat on their knees round a *sufrah* (bag-cloth) spread upon the ground, and they probably reclined backwards upon cushions. This would explain the action of St. John, who here, as in A. Dürer, looks very awkward leaning from his chair upon the Master's breast. The great mistake, however, is the treatment of the meal: the Last Supper was a real supper, which should be really eaten. Here there is no dipping of hands in the (one central) dish: it becomes simply and purely a sacrament. Catholics are much affected by what Protestants do not notice,—the conduct of Judas when he receives the sop: he trembles visibly, spits it out, and disappears to the right. In the older play his glory was summarily removed and a "devil" entered bodily into him.

One woman managed hysterics, but the general effect of the sight of eating was to

cause appetite. The English, whose tourist class, we are told by the Rev. Dr. G. Molloy,* "is not generally remarkable for good behaviour in Catholic churches abroad," conducted themselves much more decorously than their hungry German cousinhood. *Butterbrod,* hard-boiled eggs (eaten with a pocket-knife), and garlicky sausage were the favourites in the boxes. The most refined preferred "goodies," chocolate and bonbons; and the "gods" in the fourth places were liberally supplied with beer in big mugs. I was astonished that this should be allowed.

The washing of the feet is well done; the ewer is the right article—the basin is not: it would be easy to bring one from Egypt. Here Christus Mayer distinguishes himself; his manner in doing menial service is simple and dignified.

There is little to say about the sale of Joseph (tab. scene 6), which typifies the sale of the Christus by Judas. The Midianite

* Who published a "Visit to Louise Lateau."

merchants are palpable Bavarians; and we have seen the European, not desert, landscape. Judas receives his money with a little too much dumb-show. In 1662 a "devil" danced behind him as he counted the price of blood, and a queer doggrel was recited like the *Kugelspruch* in "Der Freischütz." Finally, there was a dialogue between Satan and Belial, the latter apparently acting for Mammon.

The tableau prefixed to "Jesus on the Oil-mountain," returns to the days

"When Adam dalf and Evè span."

But the grand old Gardener presses his stockinged right foot upon a spade of the most modern type, handle and all. If the work was ever done, it was probably with a pointed stick. Eve, also, who looks rather nice in her furs, has too many children; besides the baby, three cluster about her, two play with a stuffed lamb, and three appear to be removing a thorn-bush. Far better one at the breast and another at her

knee. The second tableau, Joab murdering Amasa with a kiss, shows only a queer-dressed man with a short silvered blade standing in front of (not slaying) another. (Parenthetically, I may here say that not a single warlike implement of old Jewish times has ever been dug up in Palestine, and we are quite ignorant of the Hebrew sword.) The third tableau, Samson betrayed by Delilah, has been suppressed; perhaps Mrs. Grundy found it not "strictly proper." The Agony in the Garden again is impossible. There is no attempt to realise Gethsemane (the "oil-press"), which, indeed, would be difficult, as the moderns have turned it into three, and *le Getsemán Français* is very like a tea-garden. The angel, apparently clad in white tissue-paper, stands solid on earth facing the Christus: A. Dürer makes him carry a cross in the sky. I could see no sign of "blood coursing over the countenance;" perhaps rose-water has abolished it. The Roman soldiers are triumphs of "anachronistic impropriety."

Is the noble and characteristic uniform of the legionary unknown to men, that we find him in a tin-pot helmet, with broad ditto plates for epaulets, and belt? Why are his legs in stockings, ribboned, moreover, like a stage-brigand? And why, worst of all, is he armed, not with shield, spear, sword, dart, and bow, but with the *halbert*, German and mediæval? The presence of these men is a perpetual offence.

The mob of priests and soldiers, the latter far too many, now appears bearing lanterns, to show that it is night when the sun scorches you. This is somewhat like "Moonshine and Lion in dumb-show;" but the swinging cressets are the right Eastern things. More than one Apostle carries a weapon in his belt. Peter draws a silvered blade and makes a cat's-claw at the side-face of a man who is dressed like a soldier, not a servant. Thereupon Malchus claps his hand to the place where some pink stuff, neither red nor blood, spreads in a patch. Here once more we expect violent

action—to see the "Prince of the Apostles" roused to a civilian fury and—

> "With a hideous crash,
> Take prisoner Malchus' ear."

A. Dürer throws the wounded man on the ground. In 1662, also, Malchus drops and is raised up by "two knights of Herr Annas." *Now* next to nothing is made of the healing miracle, as if miracles were daily occurrences. *Then* there was a long dialogue, Malchus persisting that his ear was made whole "without any plaister or any bandage."

At 11.30, after scene 7, sub-scene 5, which ends act 1; and after three hours and thirty minutes, which might perhaps be reduced to three, the audience rises, and, with the noise of frightened wildfowl, goes forth to dine. Many who are in the unnumbered lower seats feed *in situ.* We found an excellent *déjêuner à la fourchette* in the Hôtel Gaze: it has been described as the only vulgarity in the village; but with

all its faults we love it still. On our return we avoided the narrow crowded chairs amongst the glum-faced Teutons; and persuaded a civil Einlässer (ticket-taker) to let us occupy the doorkeeper's little bench on the left of the Logen-entrance. We had brought binoculars, which were quite necessary—not to speak of French grey goggles, which were utterly useless—and the increased distance made no matter. The stage shows well from every part of the house, and the voices deserve high praise for making themselves heard.

Exactly at 1 P.M. a popgun announces the beginning of part 2:

> "That you should here repent you,
> The actors are at hand; and by their show
> You shall know all that you are like to know."

The first tableau shows Zedekiah supposed to strike, but not striking, Prophet Micaiah's cheek. In mediæval fashion the votary of Baal is a small deformity—the vulgarest mode of contrasting evil with good. Jesus, who has been brought in for trial before Annas, with

mockery, and hands tied behind, stands on the proscenium; and thus he must either turn his back upon the judge in the balcony or upon the auditorium. The rôle of Annas is one of mere bloodthirstiness; not a single noble sentiment relieves his Hibernian ferocity. Balbus, a soldier, not a servant, strikes the Christus on the face without the required apparatus. Judas has good qualms of conscience; Peter sneaks about the streets in too cowardly a way, and John waxes perhaps stiffer than usual.

In tableau 1 (scene 9), Naboth is being done to death before Ahab and Jezebel (Isabel). There are a few stones upon the ground, but the scene is not striking. Tableau 2 displays Job in long, combed, and very white hair, and a pretty new blue robe, which effectually hides wounds and sores; he reclines comfortably upon what no one would conceive to be an ash-heap or a dunghill; while a *Frauensperson,* of masculine aspect and "bould" presence, stands by his side, suggesting something highly

blamable. Ingenuity is required for adapting this to the *Ecce Homo;* but there are men who can explain everything. The stage now becomes the house of Caiaphas, which is easily mistaken for the Sanhedrim. The Christus, "divinely beautiful," says a gushing Teutoness, is led in by Selpha (Silpha, Sylpha?) and two soldiers; here again he stands with his back to the judge and his face to the public. The priest Samuel and his five witnesses prove the hard saying, "Destroy this temple," &c.; nor indeed is the utterance denied. The Temple amongst the Jews was, we must remember, literally speaking, the "House of God," although Pompey, as might be expected, found the Holy of Holies empty. Learned Jews still maintain the perfect legality of the trial and sentence; for instance, M. Salvador, in his *Jugement et Condamnation de Jésus.* Christians, on the other hand, represent it to be a formal murder, soiled by violence and perfidy; hence the French lawyer M. Dupin pub-

lished, in 1828 (reprinted in 1864), *Jésus devant Caïphe et Pilate, ou Procès de Jésus.* At Oberammergau there is no idea of fair play, and the whole procedure is converted into a legal farce.

The sixth sub-scene is the denial of Peter, which goes home to the audience; it is well done, save and except that the fire is lighted in, not under, the pot, and the cock crows after each repetition. The look of the Christus and bitter weeping of Peter are excellent; the feminine Publikum follows suit. The mockery of the victim is of the stage, stagey; and the brutal treatment, including the pushing off the seat, is pigeon-livered, and lacks gall.

The despair of Judas (scene 10) again draws tears. The tableau shows the remorse of Cain, who, in his fleshings, assumes a uselessly painful position. The death-doom by the Sanhedrim is hardly solemn enough; but Judas rushes into the hall and dashes down the purse in an effective way. A committee of the council

knocks at Pilate's door; the porter comes out with fillet-bound head but no toga, in fact, very unlike a Roman; and he quotes Scripture about swallowing a camel and straining at a gnat.

Judas now appears upon the "field of blood," where an unreal tree, about the size of a conservatory orange—are there no pines in Oberammergau?—grows handy upon a very artificial mound. "Why does he not pray for pardon?" asks Das Publikum; but he cannot. He tears off his waist-shawl; and the curtain falls before he suspends himself to a branch hardly five feet high. In days "less pleasant and more ferocious," Judas suicided himself before the High Council, and was solemnly addressed by Satan, who led the "devils;" moreover, he carried, either in his mouth or in his clothes, a black bird, showing that the fiend had lodged in him; when "sus. per coll.," the bird flew off to its proper place. In the older plays the traitor's bowels were made to gush out. Lucifer and his imps

rushing in, a disorderly mob, tore open the victim's belly and devoured, *coram publico*, the contents, which were sausages and saveloys. So in Tenerife, during the sixties, when our nation was unpopular, Judas was habited like an English sergeant of infantry; a fire was lit under the stuffed figure, and the dozen cats in the inside, finding the temperature unpleasant, tore open the stomach, and poured out in a feline stream.

Daniel before Darius (tab. scene 11) is un-Assyrian and without merit. And now, at 2.30 P.M., a new *dramatis personæ* comes on the stage, or rather on the balcony. His suite consists of two "courtiers," two soldiers, two watchmen, and three servants. Pilate Rendl is a good-looking man, who has, they say, performed the Christus. His dress (costing 200 marks) is not too ridiculous; his delivery is somewhat stiff, and his action would be good, did he not saw the air too much with a field-marshal's baton, red painted, and gilt at one end. He utters his world-famous question with a

Bavaro-Tyrolese twang—"*Was ist Warrheit?*" for Wahrheit (war for w' ah! r); and, considering the subsequent use of that interrogation, it should be done with more emphasis.*

The part of Pilate is too feeble and vacillating: his rôle is mere and pure *opportunismus.* A person sitting near me muttered, "Wretched fellow!" and highly approved of the saying of an English non-commissioned officer on hearing the story for the first time: "I wish I and my men had been there!" The gallant *sous-officier* could hardly have realised what wild work a rescue would have made in the scheme of salvation.

It must be borne in mind that, according to history, Pilate was eventually recalled

* Let us try to answer Pilate after the light of the nineteenth century. Each lobe of the brain has its own truth. One is intellectual (perceptive and reflective), ever and everywhere the same; *e.g.*, $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$, all the world over. The other is sentimental or moral, the result of the middle lobe; and this changes with time, place, and even person; hence there is no sin, no crime, that has not been a virtue.

from his post for executing an unknown "Prophet" in Samaria. I cannot but think that the poor "Pagan" did exactly what would have been done by an Anglo-Indian officer of the last generation in a violent religious quarrel amongst the mild Hindus, with their atrocious accusations against one another. Utterly unable to appreciate the merits and demerits of the case, he would have said, "There'll be an awful row if I interfere. Old Charley (the commander-in-chief) doesn't like me, and I don't want to lose my appointment. After all, what matter? Let the nigs. do as they please!" He would not have allowed torture nor the violent taking of life; but, with that exception, caused by our change of manners, his proceeding would have been that of the feeble and unfortunate sixth Procurator.

The next tableau (scene 12) shows Samson, the Hebrew Hercules, the sun-god, apparently standing on tiptoes, a strong man without the appearance of strength. Herod, to whom, being king of

Galilee, the Galilæan was sent by the hapless governor, has none of the regal presence, despite sceptre and spiky crown, red velvet, gold, and white robes. The garment of ridicule ordered by the fat monarch is a common white burnous like an opera-cloak; it should have been a purple and gold robe, which would have contrasted with the ordinary dress of the Christus.

Two tableaux precede the scourging and the thorn-crowning (scene 13), which open the sensational part of the drama. Joseph's coat, a cloth very neatly dyed in crimson stripes, is held up by two of the brethren before Father Jacob;* and the arm of the latter is supported by an attendant. In No. 2 (the offering of Isaac), the stuffed ram is confined in a kind of cage; and Abra-

* As I write this poor misused word, the familiar Eastern Ya'kúb sounds in my ears. The old translators intended "Job" to be pronounced *Yob* (Ayyúb), and "Jerusalem" *Yerusalem*. Evidently they were right. Hitherto I have been unable to discover the date when and the reason why the change, which stultifies every Hebrew word in which it occurs, made its way into English.

ham's uplifted right hand holds perpendicularly, and much too near the angel's head, an old Turkish scimitar. This form of weapon, I need hardly say, was peculiar to the Osmanli; it is now so rare that few collections contain a specimen.

The scourging is altogether without realism; yet an English critic opines that the "rude treatment is carried perhaps too far for a modern audience." The Christus is tied by the hands to a kind of pedestal, a mere stump, not a tall column, as in A. Dürer. The soft cords are like horse-tails, capable of drawing only the mauve-coloured stains which appear on back and breast, and take the place of the "curious juice." Formerly real whips were dipped in real blood; and we are told that the wounds numbered 6666, without including the 300 of the crown of thorns. The Catholic idea of fixing on the latter is carried out. A. Dürer makes a soldier press it down with a pitchfork. Four legionaries, holding the ends of two thin rods passed over the head, drive

the spikes into the flesh. Is this historical? The crowning was for mockery, not for torture; and the thornlets of the legendary plant, which grows everywhere about Jerusalem, would never draw blood. The modern painters, French especially, have exaggerated the growth to frightful spikes like tenpenny nails. The sceptre is a water-reed not easily found in the Highlands of Judea: the most natural would be a holcus-cane. The *Ecce Homo* scene is not performed as it deserves. Here we think of Guido Reni. The soldiers, who have fancy names, Caspius, Milo, Sabinus, and Ruspinus, sing mediæval doggrel, which is good.

The first tableau, introducing scene 14 (the Christus sentenced to death), shows the triumph of "Land-father Joseph" in Egypt. The horses are badly stuffed, and the shabby old toga is Roman, not Egyptian. There is a trifle too much of Joseph, who now makes his fourth appearance. Nor is the type one of sound morality. For the Hebrews it was sufficient that Joseph, a

Jew of patriarchal days, spoiled the Gentile Egyptians. But the nineteenth century Christian should be more reasonable. What would he say of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who, making use of a famine in Ireland, managed to transfer the whole landed property, the birthright of a nation, into the hands of his government? It is the practice of relating such immoral acts as this without a word of blame that justifies the superseding of the older volume. But perhaps the whole account was "typical" or "metaphysical," or something not real. Certainly the copious annals of the Egyptians make no allusion to it; indeed, they nowhere mention the word Hebrew.

The second tableau is the scapegoat, which here appears in the shape of a stuffed sheep propped upon a wooden fork. The two animals are emphatically referred to Jesus and Barabbas. The action shows a street-tumult, and Pontius Pilate, in his best array, with a "splendid retinue," consisting of a doorkeeper, a soldier, and four

or five others. Barabbas, well known to photographs, is now led out, "the picture of depravity, a man grown grey in sin." Evidently there is such a thing as "Passions-Play upon the brain." Poor old Joh. Allinger, who, off the boards, is an ex-gendarme, and who lost two sons in 1870, is a picturesque figure, very hairy, with eyebrows thick as a man's finger, but small, mean, and decrepit (ætat. 72); in fact, exactly what the terrible Barabbas, the bloodthirsty and ferocious ruffian who frightened the whole country-side, was not. In 1662 he was not led across the proscenium in dumb-show as he now is; he gave a taste of his quality in an address to Pilate. The Jewish rabble is good, but the costumes are not old Jewish. The two condemned thieves, who are duly cuffed and buffeted, are thievish-looking enough. It is hard to induce respectable villagers to take the part of *Schähers;* consequently droll stories are told of their mistakes. The "bon Larron" once began his address with "*Auch wir sind*

Lumpen" (we also are ragamuffins). This suggests the ghastly misprint in the A. V., "two other malefactors," for "two others, malefactors."

Here ends act 2, which is followed, without interval, by No. 3. Some writers, however—Woerl, for instance—would commence the third Abtheilung two scenes later (17th instead of 15th).

The second and third tableaux of scene 15 (the "Cross-way," or road to Calvary) display the brazen serpent, which looks as if made of anything but brass. The cross, however, is a T, much more like that used by the Romans than either the Greek or the Latin form. In the action the Christus heads the procession bearing his cross along the proscenium boards, *alias*, "up the rugged road to Golgotha." The latter, I need hardly note, should be marked by the traditional *skull* (the Arab. Jaljalah), which should also lie at the foot of the Cross. The legend is, that under Calvary was buried Adam's head, whose feet extended

to Hebron; and that the blood of the God-man fell upon the head of the First Man. The cross, painted chocolate, is a solid and heavy machine twenty feet tall, requiring a tolerably strong *kerl* to raise it from the ground. The Man of Sorrows falls very naturally, and supports himself by the left cross-arm.

The procession is commanded by the centurion Longinus, who is generally mistaken for Pilate. The presence of the high-priests and other dignitaries is here uncalled for. In the middle of the hurlyburly rides the standard-bearer, with his colours inscribed S.P.Q.R.: it is hard to say which is the more awkward, man or horse. The executioners are four mediæval *henkers* (hangmen), shaggy-headed ruffians in yellow jackets and red knee-breeches: even their stockings are down at heel—sign of unmitigated depravity. Ahasuerus (what a name for the Wandering Jew!) suddenly issues from his door, a "small deformed specimen of humanity;" I prefer the grand

conception of Eugene Sue. The holy women and the *Marienklage* (lament of the Virgin) affect the audience; but the Veronica episode is made tame by abolishing the apocryphal miraculous face which is so effective in A. Dürer.

Scene 16, which has no tableau, forms the gem of the piece. The *Schutzgeister* have exchanged their bright dresses for the black robes of mourning. Two crosses are seen at the Podium as the curtain rises; the thieves, with bare heads and wild hair, hang on by their arms being passed over the cross-piece. The central Cross, slowly raised from the ground by the hangman, drops into its socket, and the tall white figure, apparently only nailed on, hangs before us. The idea is new—a live crucifix. We have seen them in thousands, artistic and inartistic; but we never yet felt the reality of a man upon a cross. The glamour of the legend is over us; and we look upon, for the first time, what we shall not forget to the last.

The idea makes us excuse all defects. The holy women are insufficient. The thieves are merely mechanical. St. John is painfully below par. The Cross is a kind of academy affair; the real instrument of servile punishment was a stumpy perpendicular, to which the sufferer was bound; he stood upon his feet and died of cramp and nervous exhaustion.

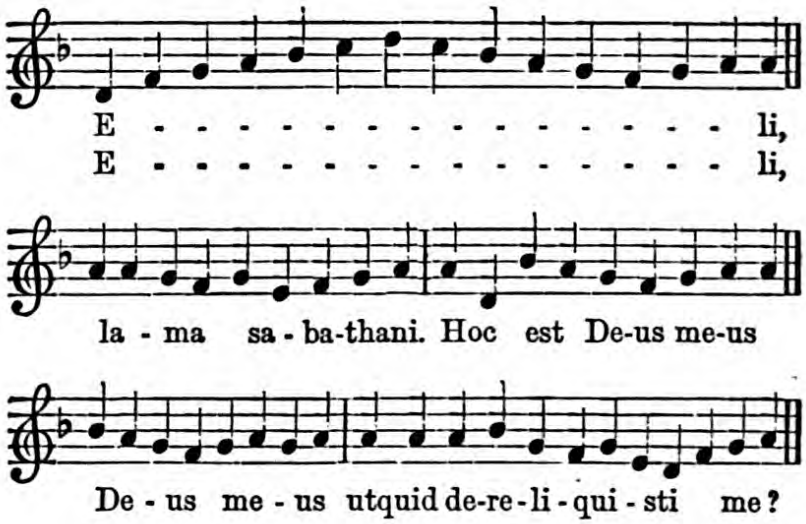
Mayr looks exceptionally well; his fine form makes us forget, as Lady Mary W. Montagu said, his face. A fall would be fatal to him; and some mystery is made about the way in which he is attached. In 1662 the victim was fastened on by ropes passed through bored holes. Now they follow the tradition of the Church, which asserts that nails were used only on this occasion. It is easy to see from the auditorium that the wrists rest upon something, probably hooks; and that the fingers pass through the nails, not the nails through the palms. Under the waistcloth are signs of a corset or swathe. My wife, admitted behind the

scenes to see the new cross being built, can explain the simple way in which it is made fast; but that would hardly be fair. According to books, the heels stand upon a small semicircular plate of tin. Mayr holds on for eighteen minutes—*a tour de force.*

The piercing of the side is badly done. It looks like a surgical operation, opening a tumour; and as if Longinus were feeling with his spear for a hidden bladder or bag of mauve-coloured fluid, the same unreal article which patches the hands and feet. The stuff, I believe, is contained in the hollow caoutchouc point of the lance, and the groping is for a plate under the tricot. A straightforward stab with the weapon and a gush of real blood would be very effective. In deference to the legend, Longinus should be blinded by the blood and water.

The death is without shudder or convulsive movement. In the "seven words," Sabaktáni is pronounced after English

fashion for Sabaktăni; and Wyl gives as follows the older recitative music:—



The play of 1662 preserved the earthquake; this *erdtpidem* was represented by rolling sacks of stones and firing a few *pixen* (carbines). The soldiers do not content themselves with breaking the thieves' legs; they also strike each side of the body with a huge caoutchouc club. When they approach the Christus, Mary Magdalen starts up and pushes away the executioner, because the Master is already dead. This is not scriptural, but very effective and

affecting; unhappily it is poorly and tamely done. Oh, for Miss Bateman!

The descent of the Dominica Persona is after Rubens and Dürer, with some differences; and it is well and artistically done. Joseph of Arimathea in front, and Nicodemus behind, mount the ladders, and hide the artifice of the hands and feet, drawing out the nails with great show of force. The body is carefully and lovingly treated; the arms, now stiff with death, being tenderly folded down the bearer's back. It is a feat of strength to carry so heavy a man with perfect ease. In the old play the good thief, Demas, was borne off by angels to Paradise, and the other by a "Teifl" in the contrary direction; Satan delivering a notable speech with good action and with good discretion. There is little to praise in what the Italians call the *Pietà*, the placing of the corpse in the mother's lap; and the washing and anointing were mere failures.

This ends the drama proper. The decorum and the evident religious feeling

of the crucifixion make this part worthy of Gregory Nazianzen's *Χριστὸς πάσχων*. An extreme modesty and propriety distinguish it from all I have yet witnessed. As a boy I saw in a village near Perugia one of the popular miracle-plays; but the whole was spoilt by grotesque changes, which had no intention of being irreverent, and yet which were highly so. For instance, instead of the Dove, a large turkey-cock was thrown upon the stage, and the noise of the "bubblyjock" was greeted with shouts of laughter. At Tenerife they persuaded one of the half-Guanche peasants to take the rôle of the Crucified. He consented upon condition of being well paid and liberally supplied with spirits to dull the pain of his part. The Church consented, but for decency's sake, stipulated that the rum should be called "vinagre." The man's head was soon turned, and his loud and angry cries of "*Mas vinagre! carai*" (more forcible), '*Mas vinagre!*" caused a scandal.

I should be disposed to place the two following two divisions—Resurrection and Triumph—in an epilogue, balancing the proemium, although they are generally distributed into act 3. The first begins with the tableau of Jonah, in nice sky-blue robe, vomited by a whale—very unlike a whale. It is a shocking monster with a distant tail, and the round head of a sea-lion, saucer eyes, and flaming red mouth; the "ship," also, with its crew of three, gives the idea of marine matters among hard-handed men that work in Bayern here. In the second tableau, the destruction of Pharaoh's army, we remark only that the host of Israel consists mainly of women and children.

The sepulchre—a marvellous instance of how *not* to do it—is a cavern in a tall rock projecting from a hill-ridge, and showing a pretty pastoral landscape behind it. No round stone is rolled before it, after the well-known Jewish fashion; and the door, a parallelogrammic slab, is simply pushed down

to make the four guards jump. The angel is, as usual, wingless, in white and blue. The Christus, in everyday dress, approaches Mary Magdalen from behind; and his simple address, "Maria!" would satisfy M. Rénan. But his appearance forcibly brings out the Jewish theory that the body was taken down before life was extinct and revived by friends. A slight change of costume would perhaps be better.

Now, and lastly, comes the triumph of the Christus, which must no longer be called the Ascension. In 1871 the latter was effected by means of a windlass, but this has been changed. Here we have Christus triumphans. Viciste Galilee![1] The allegory explains itself; the destruction of Judaism and Paganism, and the victory of Christianity. The Christus, robed in white, stands upon a dwarf mound, which may be Tabor, Olivet, or anything else. He is

[1] Perhaps Julian spoke Arabic or Syriac; in those tongues the double-entendre, lost in Latin, is remarkable. Nasarta (thou hast conquered), Yá Nasráni (O Man of Nazareth, Nazarene, Conqueror)!

backed by an angel, and he holds the "banner of victory," which, curious to say, is a cross argent on a field gules—the flag of Savoy. Prostrate in the dust at His feet, prone as if dead, lie Pilate and Herod, the high-priests, scribes, and Pharisees. On both sides of the stage sit in glory patriarchs, prophets, and saints; Adam and Eve in their furs; Moses with the law-tables, David and his harp, Micaiah, Naboth, Jonah, and others.

. . . . . .

The curtain fell; we all rose and went our ways, and the Passions-Play of 1880 became a memory to us. The heavens were hung with black, threatening the usual cold mountain rain. Earth was clad in brown, with muddy pools and small quagmires, through which we were to wade for the last time. I felt weary, with a brain oppressed, by the manifold scenes of eight hours,—notes not allowed,—and, as all know, nothing fatigues so much as sight-seeing, especially as picture-seeing. Yet both were pleased

with having sat through the play, and we found a restful end to a toilsome day, the very painfulness of pleasure, at the Hôtel Gaze.

The Passions-Play which has been accepted by the Western and Christian world shows the nineteenth-century view of the origin and early scenes of Christianity in cut-and-dry incident; and, as Time changes all things, we may be certain that it shows them as they never happened.

The general impression left by the play is, that it gives, and must give, an importance, a splendour, to incidents, in fact, to an event, whose contemporary fame could not extend beyond the wild and rugged Highlands of remote Judea. I need hardly say that neither the person of the Founder, nor the details of His career, nor the Star of Bethlehem, nor the earthquake that rent the veil, nor the three days' darkness, are mentioned by any writer of the time, Jewish, Greek, or Roman; while the number of forged notices proves that the hiatus was greatly

regretted. We are thus unable to hear *alteram partem;* and we are absolutely dependent for all our information upon a volume written within the first century, probably not by those whose names it bears.

If the Gospel of travel benefit man, it will be by inducing him to appreciate and to do justice to, by entering into the feelings of, his brother-man. We have been shown the chief priests and Pharisees, the flower of their nation, in the basest light, blood-thirstiness, insane violence, and wicked treachery. But is there nothing to be said on their side? Disregarding the temporal injuries threatened to those sturdy old conservatives by the school of Galilee (Manchester), the communism and the spiritual tyranny which would almost bar heaven to the rich, had they not cause to complain that their noblest doctrines were being changed, and changed for the worse? They held the grand vivifying principle of antiquity—Do right because it is right. This, too, maugre Moses, who virtually said,

Do right because you will benefit by it on earth. But then came another doctrine: Do right in order to save your souls, in order to win a reward in heaven. What profits it? &c. Surely these Stoics of Judaism, whatever they may have practised, held in theory the true principle, the Higher Law.

How mysterious are matters of pure belief! Whilst Christians universally hold that the total destruction * of Jerusalem, the dispersion and the dolours of the Jews, arise from a judicial murder, "the greatest crime which has been committed since the world began;" the Israelites reply, "No! it is for the propagation of the terrible

* I have elsewhere contended that, as the first and other destructions of Jerusalem were so complete as to obliterate the streets, with the exception of the landmarks left by Titus (*e.g.*, the foundations of the tower of David near the Jaffa Gate, &c.); and that there is not a single identification of ancient Jewish buildings upon which we can have the least reliance. Even in Helena's day it required a miracle to find the Sepulchre. Most of the modern sites were fixed by the Crusaders; and some are much more modern; for instance, the stations of the Passion, invented by the Franciscan monks, and uncompromisingly rejected by the Greek Church.

delusion (which identifies Jesus with the Almighty) that the Jewish race (Jews having been the first delinquents) still suffers at the hands of God." Whilst Christians trace a dreadful effect of the imprecation, "His blood be upon us and our children!" history shows that the curse, which has been fulfilled and unfulfilled, is now, like the words of Balaam, turned into a blessing. Had the Israelites remained on the grim hill-tops of Palestine, they might have been, like the Chaldæans and Druzes of our days, a fine race of semi-barbarous mountaineers, cut off from contact with civilisation, and conserving in A.D. 1880 the manners and customs of A.D. 1. But the compulsory exodus has raised them to the height of prosperity. When were they more numerous, more powerful, more respected, more feared? At no period of their history did their exceptional vitality show such miracles of success. It is, indeed, a curious question which shall outlive the other, mother or daughter, Judaism or its issue Christianity?

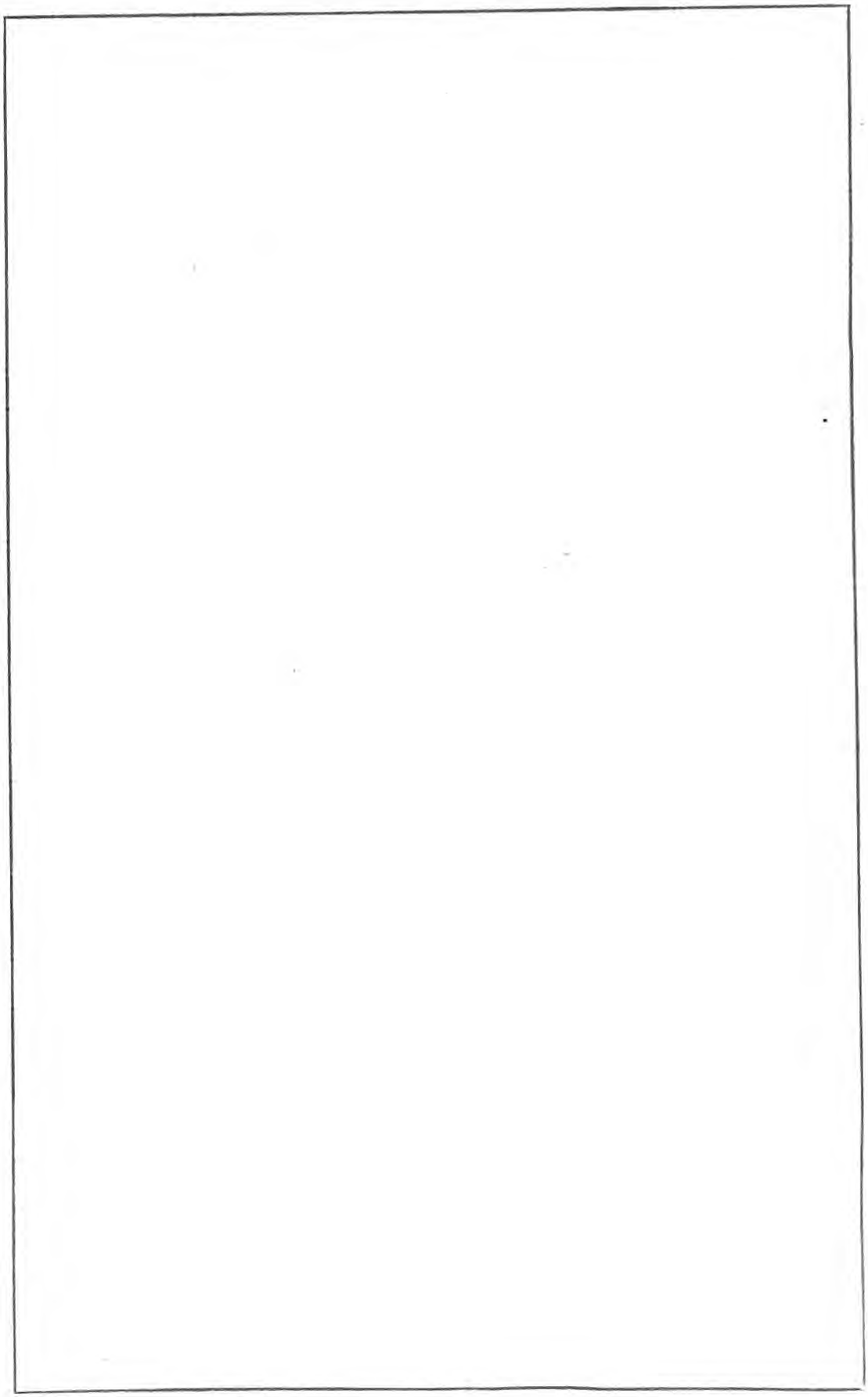
Already in the Middle Ages Freemasonry, the religion of the Templars, a reversion to the old monotheistic schools of the East, made a wide breach in the more modern edifice. Other clefts have been continually opening; and even in our times the Latter-day Saints (Mormons), to quote no others, are reverting to the older law. Finally, Spiritualism, which, despite ridicule and fraud, numbers millions of converts, is virtually a new religion; it cuts itself loose from all former connection, freely accepts any cosmogony or history offered to it by science, and aspires to become the Faith of the Future.

I found it impossible to draw any parallel between the Passions-Play and the three days' pilgrimage at Meccah: the ideas are totally disconnected; there is not even a rope of sand to join them. The former is performed by a company of hereditary and professional players; the latter by a moving multitude of devotees. Oberammergau runs through the holy history of the Judæo-

Christian world. Meccah touches only upon the legend of Adam and Eve at Arafat, the tradition of Abraham and Ishmael at Muna and the Ka'abah, and finally absorbs itself in the life and career of Mohammed. The former is unreal, at best imitative realism. The latter is the living and breathing representation of what has changed but little for the last twelve centuries. In one point only city and village meet: both thrive upon the contributions of the pious.

The general bruit is that 1880 has seen the last of the Passions-Plays; moreover, that the Church is determined to abolish them. I do not believe this, which has been repeated every decade; nor do I think that it would be wise to drive the drama from Oberammergau to London and Paris. I will end my paper with wishing good-luck to the "Passions-village," and a bountiful harvest of marks in 1890.

FINIS.



NOTE.

THE *raison d'être* of Spiritualism as a religion is simple, though not self-evident. It satisfies a want—the craving to realise the existence of another world. Man's belief in his future is by no means universal; it is unknown to many tribes of savages, and doubtless it was undreamt of by the cave-dweller. It is deliberately rejected, as detrimental to sound morality, by the Confucians, Chinese, Turanians; and some such conviction must have influenced Moses when, unlike all legislators who cleave to the compensation-tenet, he made rewards and punishments temporal, without reference to futurity. Yet, with the Aryan and the Semite, the aspiration to "another and a better" state of existence has become an "innate idea," if such things be,—a part and parcel of his thinking system, an instinct, as it were. Even the last of the Sadducees, the learned Conservatives in the days of early Christianity, has died out of Judaism.

But this belief in a life to come has become a mere belief, a blind trust to, and faith in, the Unknown, the "Great Secret." It has never struck the believer's senses: were this the case, human life would

be changed. In the face of an eternity of ecstasy or torture—for this, modify it as we may, is the doctrine preached by the "Glad Tidings"—who could possibly give a moment's thought to the miseries, the wretchedness, the unutterable meanness of our mundane surroundings?

No man in his right senses!

But what proof has the believer? What does he *know* of a future life? Kosmos teaches him absolutely nothing: man cannot agree upon a single detail. The Hindu holds to his "Swerga" and "Narak," but scorns the Christian idea. The Christian accepts a paradise, purgatory, and hell (the "hidden"), but rejects the Hindu programme. Why should this be right? and why should that be wrong? Practically men do not believe; and if they do believe, it is in a hearsay, half-hearted style. They only "believe they believe;" they listen and they go their ways. They keep the prospect for the last, without the least regard to reason. Even the wretch who is hanged out of this world as unfit to live in it, repents and steps, according to his preposterous notion, out of Newgate into heaven.

Now Spiritualism claims—truly or untruly, I will not debate—the power of proving a future life. It makes its votaries touch, hear, and see the "next world." It

ignores all the contradictions and difficulties that beset the conception and the description of a future state, of an impossible paradise like Dante's, or an abominable hell like Mohammed's. It upsets the fantastic idea that seventy years or so—a mere speck of time—spent in doing good or evil, by a creature that did not make itself, and for which every action was predetermined, should lead to an everlasting reward or to an everlasting punishment; to a reward it did not merit, to a punishment it did not deserve. Spiritualism allows fair play to Reason by factually making the next a sequel, a continuation of the present world; and, if there be a next world, thinking men must accept the theory till a better is found.

Hence the live force of Spiritualism: it satisfies a real want, a crave which is to millions—a part only of our kind, but numbering millions—the bread of moral life. Were I compelled to formulate a creed for the Spiritualist pure and simple, the Decalogue would be as follows:—

I.

Intellectual truth is eternally one: moral or sentimental truth is a geographical and chronological accident, that varies even with the individual.

II.

The religions self-styled "revealed" consist of three several parts, all more or less true and untrue: (1.) A cosmogony more or less scientific and unscientific; (2.) An historical sketch more or less fanciful and factful; and (3.) A system of morality more or less pure and impure.

III.

The "higher law of humanity" bids us cast off the slough and dross of old creeds, especially such debateable doctrines as: (1.) The fall and degradation of man; (2.) Original sin; (3.) Redemption; (4.) Salvation, and so forth.

IV.

Reason, *beyond* which we may believe, but *contrary* to which we may not believe, while suggesting the idea of a First Cause, rejects a personal Deity, and does not encourage us, in the present stage of human progress, to make farther inquiry.

V.

The account of heaven, purgatory, and hell, with the "Devil and his angels," given by so-called "revealed religions," is equally dishonouring to the Creator and debasing to the creature, if the latter be the work of the former.

VI.

Death, physically considered, dissolves a certain organic unity; it is not, however, annihilation, but change.

VII.*

Man's individuality, his "Ego," popularly called "soul" and "spirit," survives the death of his body.

VIII.

To most races of civilised men the idea of utter annihilation is painful, while that of eternal parting is a burden too heavy to be borne.

IX.

A next world, a continuation of this world, is not proven: Reason (perception and reflection) is silent upon the subject; but sentiment and our later traditions, of both the Aryan and the Semitic races, suggest its reality.

X.

The only idea of continuation acceptable to a reasoning man is that the future world may be a copy of the present; whilst the law of progress demands that it should be

* The reader will observe that this is speaking as a "Spiritualist."

of a higher nature, and not subject to change or to death.

This doctrine has appeared in a multitude of forms; and, doubtless, will assume as many more. It has a vitality of its own which neither force nor fraud can destroy. It is essentially materialistic; and this is one of the main elements of its power; for matter can be modified, but not destroyed. The Spiritualist hears, feels, and sees that in which the non-Spiritualist, instinctively or not instinctively, "believes," meaning "accepts on trust." Here I end with the old Persian tent-maker, who says in poetry what I have said in prose:—

ST. LXIV.

"STRANGE, is it not, that, of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the road,
Which, to discover, we must travel too?"

ST. LXXVIII.

"WHAT! out of senseless nothing to provoke
A conscious something, to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
Of everlasting penalties, if broke!"

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON