

THE OBER-AMMERGAU PASSION PLAY.

[From the *Daily News*' Special Correspondent.]

AT three o'clock this morning a solemn service was held in the village church, and it continued with slight intermissions till nearly seven. At six High Mass was celebrated, when all the performers in the Passion Play were present. The village has been crowded since day-break. In fact rich and poor have been arriving all night long, and the crush is so great that all tickets for the first day's performance were sold by five o'clock on Sunday, and at seven the public crier went round the village with the announcement that in order not to disappoint those who had travelled far, and been unable to get places, there would be a second representation on Tuesday. The unreserved seats, which number close on 3,000 were full at a very early hour in the morning, although the play did not begin until eight o'clock. One could not help noticing the preponderance of English and Americans in the reserved seats. English was almost the only language spoken. I hardly think that there were ten per cent. of Germans. Shortly after eight o'clock the loud booms of a cannon fired from a neighbouring elevation announced that the play was about to commence. All eyes were turned towards the stage, and the chorus, attired in splendid robes, advanced in a grave and stately manner, singing in very fair voices three or four verses beginning with the words, "Though the anger of God is just, still he does not wish the death of the sinner." While the chorus are singing the last verse they divide in the middle, falling back on either side and disclosing the central stage. As the last note is heard the curtain rises, showing a fine tableau, representing the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. When the curtain drops on the first tableau the chorus resume their original position, and continue singing until another tableau is shown in the same way. Then comes the first scene, the chorus of course retiring. It is the entry of Christ into Jerusalem. The effect is very fine indeed. Our Saviour, riding on an ass, sits sideways, followed by his disciples and people and children with flowers. Joseph Maier, who represents Christ, filled his part admirably, so that the eyes of the audience of nearly 5,000 people were riveted on him. The sun was shining brightly at the time, lighting up the beautiful robes of the performers, and rendering the scene charming in the extreme. The Saviour then dismounts, drives out the money changers from the temple, and overturns their tables. Then follows a tableau, also well set, representing the conspiracy of Joseph's brothers. I may remark that all the subjects of the tableaux vivants are taken from the Old Testament, and each time are followed by a fulfilment from the New Testament. The second scene remarkable for its gorgeoussness, was the Council of High Priests and others of their Order, discussing what punishment should be dealt to the Man of Galilee. The scenes which followed were striking representations of the acts and sufferings of our Lord up to the crucifixion. This last scene was very effective and beautiful, and was performed in a really wonderful manner. The audience was almost breathless with the seeming reality of the representation. The figure looked as if it was actually nailed on the cross. Blood was on both hands and feet, and even with a good opera glass one could not possibly detect how Joseph Maier could remain so long in this position. The crucifixion scene lasted 21 minutes, and was carried out in every detail, even to the piercing of the breast with a spear, blood rushing out of the wound. The actions of the performers were represented on the one hand with such earnestness, and on the other with such intense simplicity and devotion, that one's eyes were fixed to the spot. After the body was taken down and buried in the sepulchre a short time elapsed, when the entrance stone fell and Christ appeared clad in silver gauze for but a moment.

ST. COLUMBKILLES CONVENT SCHOOLS,
HOKITIKA.

A VERY pleasant afternoon was spent at the convent schools on Friday last, on the occasion of the midwinter concert. A very lengthy programme was submitted to the audience, a large one, comprising the parents of the children and other visitors from the outlying districts. The entertainment consisted of glees and songs by the singing and infant classes, recitations, selections on the piano and the harmonium, French dialogues, &c.

The following is the programme:—"Music and her Sister Song," Singing Class; "Spirits Summoned by Manfred," G. Gallop, T. Myers, J. Mandl, M. Ward, M. Farrell, and F. Farrell; "Fairy Queen" (piano solo), M. Eastgate; "Thames" (piano solo), L. Lalor; "The Soldier's Dream" (recitation), N. Atkinson; "Nelly Bly" (piano solo), C. Dyson; "Long, Long Ago" (piano solo), B. Atkinson; "Home to our Mountains" (piano duet and harmonium solo), M. and J. Mandl and B. Churches; "The Mother of the Maccabees" (recitation), N. Gribben; "La Sympathie" (piano solo), K. Cassidy; "What are the Wild Waves Saying" (piano solo), M. Atkinson; "Il Trovatore" (piano duet and harmonium solo), M. Rae, N. Gribben, and P. Gouldstein; Glee, Infant Class; French Dialogue, A. Mandl and N. Gribben; "Irish Diamonds" (piano solo), P. Gouldstein; "Beautiful Isle of the Sea," Singing Class; "Flower Gatherers" (piano solo), A. Cleary; "The Death of De Boune" (recitation), B. Churches; "Far Away" (piano solo), A. Mandl; "La Traviata" (piano solo), B. Myers; "So Early in the Morning" (song), D. Clarke; "Lay of the Last Minstrel" (recitation), A. Mandl; "The Mountain Bell Schottische," M. Atkinson; "Martha" (piano solo), M. Rae; "The Babies in the Wood," Infant Class; "Lucrezia Borgia" (piano and harmonium solo), N. Gribben and P. Gouldstein; "Mother take me Home Again" (vocal duet), S. and N. Dolan; "Savournaeha Dhechuil" (harmonium solo), B. Myers; "The Leper" (recitation), M. Mandl; "Beautiful Isle of the Sea" (piano duet and harmonium solo), K. Cassidy, A. Cleary, and M. Rae; "The Signal March" (piano solo), L. Walker; "Marie Stuart dans sa Prison" (recitation), M. Mandl; "The Gipsy Countess" (piano solo), B. Churches; "The

Minstrel Boy" (piano solo), P. Gouldstein; "The Bridal of Malabide" (recitation), M. Rae; "Qui Vive" (piano duet), N. Gribben and B. Myers; "The Flowers Dissatisfied," (Bean Blossom) J. Farrell, (Daffodil) K. Cassidy, (Tulip) M. Rae, (Orange Blossom) L. Dowling, (Daisy) L. Holmes, (Lilac) L. Walker, (Wallflower) C. Dyson, (Hyacinth) K. Holmes, (Hedge Rose) M. Gribben, (Rose) N. Gribben, (Lady Flora) A. Cleary, (Violet) B. Clapcott, (Lily of the Valley) A. Lynch, (Mignonette) K. Riely, (Primrose) B. Gosson; "Last Rose of Summer," Singing Class.

Owing to the length of this programme, I fear that you will neither find space nor I time for detailed and minute criticism. Dividing its various items into literary and musical recitals, among the former we may notice the recitations of Misses G. Gallop, N. Atkinson, N. Gribben, B. Churches, A. Mandl, M. Mandl, and M. Rae, all of which were delivered with clear and distinct enunciation and fair elocution. The French dialogue between Misses A. Mandl and N. Gribben, and "Marie Stuart dans sa Prison," by Miss M. Mandl, were well rendered, and proved that these young ladies have acquired a very fair proficiency in the French language. "The Flowers Dissatisfied," which concluded the entertainment, was another feature in the concert. Each of the young performers held in her hand the flower of which she was the representative, and the allotment of the various parts seemed suited to their different characters. Among the musical recitals we may select the "Fairy Queen," by Miss M. Eastgate, the piano duet and harmonium solo of Misses M. and J. Mandl and B. Churches, "Irish Diamonds" and "The Minstrel Boy" by Miss Gouldstein, "Martha" by Miss M. Rae, as worthy of special praise. Amongst the junior performers we may mention "La Sympathie" by Miss K. Cassidy, "Nelly Bly" by Miss C. Dyson, "Flower Gatherers" by Miss A. Cleary, "The Mountain Bell Schottische" by Miss N. Atkinson, and "The Gipsy Countess" by Miss B. Churches, which were executed correctly and with good taste. Miss N. Gribben and Miss B. Myers, in the renderings both on piano and harmonium, contributed materially to the success of the concert. We must not neglect the vocal duet of Misses S. and N. Dolan, "The Signal March" by Miss L. Walker, and "What are the Wild Waves Saying" by Miss M. Atkinson, all of which deserve more than a passing notice.

At the conclusion of the programme, Mr. R. O'G. Lalor addressed the audience in a long and able speech.

Mr. H. R. Rae, in a humorous and witty speech, remarked "that Mr. Lalor had jumped his claim"—(laughter)—and that he considered very unfair and bad taste on Mr. Lalor's part, as he was not a parent—(loud laughter)—and, therefore, he should not have a right to speak at least until parents had had their say. A great feature of the system of education followed in those schools was the spirit of gentleness and kindness actuating the Sisters. It was rarely that a cane was used in these schoolrooms, and when it was used, it was used with regret. After slapping a child with sorrow, the Sister said, "Now go and sit down and be a good child, dear," and he thought when she said "Now go and sit down dear," she meant it. (Laughter.) He wished to remind parents, however, that they must not expect that the whole of what was comprised in the word "education" was included in what was taught in the schoolroom. Many parents thought that if they sent their children regularly to a first-class school like that, they did all that was required and performed their whole duty. But a large and very important part of education devolved upon parents altogether, and could not be imparted in any schoolroom whatever. Here a gentleman plucked Mr. Rae by the arm, and in answer to this appeal, Mr. Rae informed them that somebody was pulling his coat-tails—(laughter)—and telling him that he was detaining the children too long. Well perhaps he thought, perhaps they thought he (Mr. Rae) was talking rubbish. (Laughter and ironic cheers.) Well, now he'd stop, and he was afraid, in conclusion, that he had said well what he meant to say badly. (Laughter.) He didn't mean that, he meant to say that he had said badly what he had meant to say well. (Loud laughter and applause.) With a few words from Father Martin, the proceedings then terminated.

Hokitika, 19th July.

ARCHBISHOP JAMES SHARPE.

(By *Pentecote* in the *Melbourne Advocate*.)

On the 2nd of May, 1679, the Most Rev. James Sharpe, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland, left Edinburgh in his carriage in order to visit his cathedral and clergy before going up to London to an interview with the King, Charles II. Dr. Sharpe was a native of Banff, professor of theology in the College of St. Andrews, a man of great learning, and even praised by Oliver Cromwell for his talents and statesman capacity. He signed the Solemn League and Covenant in 1638, but subsequently adhered to the Episcopal party, and was appointed to the See of St. Andrews. He was a man of mild temper, firmness of purpose and discretion. He held the See of St. Andrews nearly 20 years with great credit, but his adhesion to Episcopacy was held to be an unpardonable crime against Christ and the gospel, and the Presbyterians resolved that he should die as an enemy to the cause of Christ. "The Word of God" commanded false prophets to be killed. The archbishop was a false prophet, and the Covenant Presbyterians held that the slaying of Sharpe was an act inspired by the Spirit of God. Two or three attempts were made upon his life, and Mitchell, a man in good position, was tried and executed for an unsuccessful effort to murder Dr. Sharpe. The trial lasted four days, and the offender died glorying in the deed, and regretting that he had failed in his design. After his execution his friends conveyed the body in a kind of triumphal procession to the grave, and erected a stone to his memory. St. Andrews lies about 38 or 40 miles north-east of Edinburgh, and could be reached in two easy journeys. On Friday, 2nd May, the archbishop reached the village of Kennaway, and stopped at the house of his friend Captain Seatou. All the evening it was observed that he ate and drank very sparingly, and was longer than usual at his private devotions. Lawson's narrative, founded on Miss Sharpe's account,