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HE SAW THE PASSION PLAY

Mr. A. Mackintosh
Writes of The
Scene.

GREAT TRAGEDY OF OBER-AMMERGAU

Honolulu Divine's Interesting Let-
ter in the Church
Chronicle.

It was quite cheering to get letters from home and to find our sick recover-
ing and our people generally doing
well. Then we were shocked to hear
of the death of our old friends, Miss
Gray and Mr. Bolster, whom we left
in good health, and also to learn of the
domestic troubles of some others.
These calamities seem to fall heavily
upon us when we are absent from the
scene. This year seems to have been
especially marked out for great events
to happen while we are in the old
world. From the first day of our land-
ing one thing after another has greatly
moved the people and us with them.
The death of the Duke of Edinburgh,
the assassination of the King of Italy,
the daily accounts of the wars, with
their gains and reverses, the Paris Ex-
position, the Passion Play at Ober-
ammergau, and lately, the dissolution
of Parliament, the general election and
the church congress at Newcastle on
Tyne.

The speed at which we move forbids
any extended or very careful account
of these great events, but you shall
have some of our general impressions
now and more exact renderings anon.
I think I left off my travels in Lon-
don just after hearing Canon Gore in
Westminster Abbey, where I went with
John Kauahale, the secretary of
Prince Cupid. His "Pehea oe, o Maki-
nikoke?" in that ancient temple will
not soon be forgotten. It was no little
proof of the success of Christianity in
Hawaii that a young full Hawaiian
should of his own accord go to worship
the true God in the grandest Christian
church in the world, 8,000 miles from
his native land, and moreover to ex-
press his awe and admiration of all he
saw and heard.

The service was indeed awe-inspir-
ing, to be surrounded by a dense crowd
in that historic fane, now lifting up
their voices and no doubt their hearts,
too, in high and sonorous praise to the
living God, "for all the wonders that
He hath done for the children of men"
—then, hanging on the words of a
preacher in thrilling silence, while he
unfolded the mysteries of the grace of
this God and Father of all, one felt
the sublimity of the means by which
human beings can be brought nearer to
their Creator—His church, the evolution
of ages, the result of the inspira-
tion of God to men, to develop the in-
tegrity of the Creator and Redeemer
of mankind.

In mixing with the inhabitants of
Great Britain one cannot fail to discern
the reasons for the great variety and
even for the great differences one ob-
serves in the interpretation of the
church's laws and intentions. While
the Latin races are all of one type,
with very few exceptions, there are
scarcely two Saxons alike. It is just as
futile to attempt to make a rigid uni-
formity in the conduct of church ser-
vices as it would be to make trees of
one genus all grow to the same height.
What true religion ought to do is to
make men tolerant. The whole com-
bined effort of clergy and laity should
be devoted to this one aim non to the
peace and prosperity of the church on
earth. When a man truly righteous in
heart has devoted himself to the ser-
vice of his fellow men, especially when
that service is the priesthood and that
man is of Saxon blood, he is likely to
prove as brave or as obstinate as a
Roberts, a Buller or a Baden-Powell.
So those of the same flesh and blood
may just as well learn to tolerate him
in his differences from their opinions,
and especially to refrain from imputing
false or erroneous notions to him, for
in spite of persecutions, persecutions,
inhibitions and imprisonment, his spirit
will not be conquered and he will con-
quer in the end if he is in the right.
Besides we are sure that toleration can
exist together with action. Mr. Kensit
and his followers are certainly not
right in the way they are pursuing
their ends. But he is a plucky, obstin-
ate Saxon and if he is not convinced
how utterly misguided he is, by his re-
ception at the church congress, when
between three and four thousand
church people roared him down, he will
very shortly find himself in a very pec-
uliar position, very much like that of
the Boers at the present moment.

But the variety in the Sunday ser-
vices of the churches we have visited
is very remarkable. Some rubrics are
woefully infringed or neglected. It is
well for the parish priests that they
are not in one diocese we know of, or
there would be much application to
bell, book and candle. Still through all
there is such manifest devotion, such
love for the church, such kindness be-
tween pastor and flock, that one's
whole being glows with satisfaction
and enjoyment. Of course we know
that but for the climate, and perhaps
for one other cause, the same enthu-
siasm would exist and prevail with our
own people. And we know also that
the wave will reach us some day.
Every other wave does. Now to con-
tinue our travels.

We commit ourselves to the care of
Messrs. Gaze & Sons, who provide us
with a book of tickets for Ober-Am-
mergau and the Paris Exposition. At
8:30 p. m. a very happy party of four,
three Hawaiians and one who has vis-
ited and who loves the Isles, leave Lon-
don from the Liverpool street station
for Harwich Parkston Quay, the port
of departure for the "Continong." The
rapid train dashed through the journey

without a stop and we were on board
the steamer by 10:15. The "Vienna"
was a clever if not a sumptuous vessel
and the sea was like a mill-pond, so
our voyage to the Hook (Hookinbutch)
of Holland, was uneventful. We land-
ed at 5 a. m. the next morning. The
sensation on being on that land so
pregnant with history was a singular
mixture. We thought of old Van
Tromp and his broom and his relatives
in South Africa. It was reported that
English people were receiving scant
courtesy in Holland since the attempt-
ed assassination and the lenient treat-
ment of the would-be assassin of the
Prince of Wales. But nothing could
have exceeded the civility of the offi-
cers, customs and railways, with whom
we had to do. At 5:45 we started on
our journey south. We had to pay two
marks extra for our Platz karte. This
was to preserve our places on the D
or express train. Not that any of us
intended to move about, or that any
one could turn us out, so we hardly
saw the justice of the charge. It might
be useful to mention another extra ex-
pense which we incurred: the sleeping
berth on the steamer had to be tele-
graphed for or the chances were that
you would sit up all night. Fortunately
for us, the boat was not overcrowd-
ed, so we obtained places. Farther on
we had other unforeseen sums to pay
not advised of by Gaze & Sons, so it
is prudent to go prepared with a con-
siderable amount of the needful more
than the estimated expenses. In our
innocence we presented our Platz karte
in return for the breakfast, which we
had greedily demolished, but of course
without avail, for our provider in a
polite mixture of Dutch, German and
English invited us to give him two
marks each. At Naburgh on the bor-
ders of Germany our luggage was ex-
amined again, and now we were free
from any more trouble on that score.
The officials are as eager to find to-
bacco in all its forms as our Hawai-
ians are to find opium. We leave flat
Holland with its windmills and green
fields and run through beautiful Ger-
many. Hurrying through large towns,
past castles and over rivers, we come
to Cologne. Here we alighted and
stayed several hours during which we
"did" the city. Before everything we
visited the renowned Cathedral which
took six hundred years in building and
wandered over the majestic pile. Then
we hired a cab and drove around the
city, viewing its principal attractions.
On going to the railway station we met
the two brothers, Johannes and Bernard
Ehlers, once of Honolulu, which gave
us great pleasure. They remained with
us until our train left. Their parents,
whose name still lives in their Fort
street place of business, reside in Mu-
nich, or Munchen, as the Germans call
that city. We saw them on our ar-
rival there next day and our meeting
was a revival of old times in Honolulu.
Time has dealt very gently with Mr.
and Mrs. Ehlers and they retain very
pleasant reminiscences of their resi-
dence in Hawaii.

Munich is a lovely city, well and
substantially built, very ornamental in
appearance, full of means of instruc-
tion and recreation, fine museums, art
galleries, gardens, parks, fountains,
theatres, everything which conduces to
the comfort and luxury of life. The
Hotel Russe, where we put up, was a
place which deserves all praise. Its
charges were moderate and the civility
of the attendants was highly gratify-
ing. We heard Tannhauser at Mu-
nchen. Words fail to express our de-
light. In the street, on our way to an
art gallery, we met Elsie Renjes, who
lifted up her eyes in utter amazement
when she saw us. "Where did you
come from?" she gasped. Then we met
her father and mother, and you may
imagine this meeting of old and at-
tached friends so far from home. We
spent much of our time together, and
they saw us off to our destination,
Ober-Ammergau. On the train we had
again to pay for our Platz-karte. This
time to pay for the new railway be-
tween Murnau and Ober-Ammergau.
Until this year the journey from Mur-
nau had to be made by coach over a
rough road at much inconvenience.
Now D or fast trains, pour people into
the village three or four times a day.
The sun was still high when we ar-
rived at Ober-Ammergau. When we
had secured our tickets for rooms and
meals from our uniformed Gaze man,
we engaged a porter to carry our im-
pedimenta to our respective lodgings,
for we were separated. Arthur and I
were quartered with one of the musi-
cians of the Passion Play, and Marie
and Miss Benson with some of the An-
gels. You know that all guests are
disposed among those who take part in
the performance. This is part of their
recompense. They have to make hay
while the sun shines, for he is only
bright once in ten years. Rumor has it
that an interdict has gone forth from
the Pope against further performances
of the Passion Play, on account of vice
and avarice, engendered by the gains.
This we hardly believe, because so
many alterations and improvements
involving great expenditure have tak-
en place lately, and it would be cruel to
do away suddenly which would in-
volve the ruin of the whole village. To
us there seemed an air of prosperity
and order, throughout the place, which
denoted anything but a vicious life. But
the question lies more in the perform-
ance itself of the Passion Play and its
effect not only on the inhabitants of the
village, but on all who go to witness it.
The attraction is certainly great. Four
thousand persons assemble twice a
week and sometimes more, to see it.
There were three performances in suc-
cession during our stay in the village.
The scheme is vast. To think of carry-
ing out the events of the Atonement,
personating the very beings who took
part in the tragic scenes in the Re-
demption of mankind, even the cruci-
fixion of the Lord of life, is overwhelm-
ing, but to see these things with our
living eyes, is truly awful. There was
a feeling of relief when the rather
strained tones of the woman, who re-
presents the Virgin Mary, removed the
emotion, which was causing the tears
to flow involuntarily down our cheeks.
If the stupendous sacrifice made by our
Blessed Lord is more deeply realized by
this representation and the people who
witness it feel determined not to be of
those who crucify the Lord of life,
afresh and put Him to an open shame,"
then the Passion Play will continue.
But if it be only a fashion, or a material
form of sensuous pleasure, it will soon
come to an end of itself.
My lodgings were situated in a pic-
turesque part of the village. The win-
dows looked out upon the mountains to-
wards Switzerland, reminding me of
Kaalaea on Oahu, on first seeing them

(Continued on Page 6.)

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