

been in existence since the half-century began. The structure and movement of the piece, with its simple scenes and its Biblical diction and spirit—more or less modernized and filled out within a generation or so, but still becomingly naïve and devout—have received voluminous attention. It is to-day, in spite of all changes and original infelicities, a strong and complex and interesting survival of the mediæval Passion Play of Germany and Austria, a strong vehicle in its textual in-

“To-day it is neither edifying nor attractive. To-day it is neither religion nor aesthetics. To-day it is false and common-place or harsh throughout; except where, now and then, the older actors of the best grade can show themselves in their best lights, or where the new generation of Oberammergau Passion-Players are young men of the better artificial instincts and have been able to profit by teaching of their seniors or by being trained for stage-work by regular actors



PASSION PLAY—MARY MAGDALENE (MISS BERTHA WOLF).

dividuality for the peasant-actor's temperament, and even for the peasant-auditor's emotion. Scene succeeds well to scene, tableau knits logically to tableau, between the Prologue and the entry of Christ into Jerusalem, and the Crucifixion and Resurrection. And the general effect as read or fancied, while often tedious, is sincerely religious. Doubtless, as the Play was formerly given, the Passion Drama must have been deeply appealing; both spiritually and as that paradox in aesthetics, *natural art* from unlearned men.

from cities. Only these two things make the Play endurable now. And at least one-half of the excuse, you observe, is purely artificial, and has no more to do with the Ammerthal than if the garish Passion Theatre were on Madison Square Garden or Earl's Court! Piety, devotion, simplicity, a custom kept for gratitude to God's good pleasure and man's reminder—nothing of the sort. That is met only in vestiges. But a play must be kept up. For the village likes money; and all the world knows of its ten-yearly