

HE HATH MADE EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL

He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also He hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.—Eccles. iii. : 11.

Are you looking for a sermon from me this week, my dear Canadian friends? Do you know, I feel rather too small and insignificant to stand in a pulpit—even this home-like pulpit of the Quiet Hour—and talk "down" to anybody. For I have been permitted to walk through some of the galleries where God has stored His great works of beauty and majesty, and I am filled with wonder at the loving care our Father has shown in fitting up a home for His children.

Words are poor things to describe what I have seen—and yet I can't bear to enjoy glorious sights all alone.

Before I left Canada a friend said to me: "You must write an account of your travels." I laughed at the notion, saying that such writing was "not in my line"—and it isn't. I don't know where to begin. This is not a guide-book. If you expect to hear all about the trip from Toronto, through the Thousand Islands, across the Atlantic, through Scotland, and across the North Sea to Norway and Denmark, then you will certainly be disappointed. I shall plunge in anywhere and jump about as I please, regardless of geography.

At this moment I am sitting in a room fairly shining with cleanliness, high up in a Copenhagen hotel, trying to write a Quiet Hour while listening subconsciously to the rushing of electric cars and the tooting of automobiles in the busy street below.

Having begun at this end, perhaps we had better talk about Copenhagen for a few minutes.

Three days ago the trim little steamship, "Rona," reached her dock, and my brother and I received a very friendly welcome from a young Dane, who greeted us in English and presented us to a sweet-faced lady, who smiled her welcome as plainly as if she had been able to express it in our language. In a few minutes we were whirling along in a taxi-motor, feeling quite overwhelmed with the appearance of this fine city. The buildings are evidently intended to last for centuries; the streets and squares, the parks and fountains, show that time and money have been spent unstintingly for the public good. The people, too, are kindness itself—if we may judge from the royal welcome we have received from friends of our friends in Canada. Will you go with us to the Tivoli Gardens? There are garlands of colored lights everywhere, making the whole place—with its trees and flowers, its fairy fountain of rainbow light and its gay music—like a corner of fairyland. See the crowds of people—thousands of them!—all intending to have a good time. Over there is a pantomime in an open-air theatre. It is for the children, but everybody is ready to laugh at it. Here is a rope stretched above the heads of the crowd, with men walking on it or riding bicycles along it. Here is a Moorish palace, covered all over its walls and pinnacles with colored lights, flashing like brilliant gems. On all sides are groups of people, sitting at little tables enjoying their supper in the open air and listening to the music of the band. This custom of eating one's meals out-of-doors seems to be almost universal in Copenhagen, and a very sensible custom it is in this delightful climate.

But you will think that I have strayed from my text, and have been talking about the works of man rather than the works of God. Well, perhaps you are right. Let us go back a week.

We are on a little steamboat now, on Loch Lomond. The guide-book informs us that Wordsworth was disappointed with Loch Lomond, and suggests that he could not have been well. Disappointed! It lies like a jewel in its setting of mighty hills, towering one behind the other in silent majesty. No wonder my heart turns instinctively to the familiar words: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh even from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth."

the Lord Himself is thy keeper; the Lord is my defence."

I am sure God rejoiced when He set the hills round about Loch Lomond, telling the world in tenderest fashion

that so He will stand "round about His people, from this time forth for evermore." Gazing up from the beautiful lake to the serene glory of those mighty hills, we lean back instinctively on the Heart of our Father in childlike confidence. He has shown His love for us by making our home so lovely, and we feel His power as we look at the everlasting hills.

"He will not suffer that thy foot be moved:

Safe shalt thou be.

No careless slumber shall His eyelids close,

Who keepeth thee.

Behold our God, the Lord, He slumbereth ne'er.

Who keepeth Israel in His holy care."

As we passed the little pier at Luss I exclaimed: "If I ever have nervous prostration I want to come here, live with a dear old Scotch couple in one of those cottages, and lean back against the hills until my nerves are healed by their quiet strength." Then I glanced at my guide-book and read: "Luss is simply the village that Providence has framed as a complete example of what a charmingly restful holiday retreat ought to be."

But here we are at the end of the "Bonnie banks of Loch Lomond," and here is our coach. We are fortunate enough to be perched up on the front seat beside the coachman, who is an animated guide-book, telling us all the history of the neighborhood—ancient and modern—as he cracks his long whip over the four great horses who are pulling a heavy load round the hills and through the wooded glens. Higher and higher we climb, with the beauty of many cascades shining through screens of green trees and pink and purple heather. More and more hills are above us, looking more majestic than ever as the heavy clouds veil them and the Scotch mist wraps them in mystery. Still we wind around more and more hills, always climbing higher, until we find ourselves at the picturesque summer hotel beside Loch Katrine, and suddenly discover that it is three o'clock and we have had nothing to eat since our early breakfast in Glasgow. How could we miss any of the beauty for the sake of eating?

Soon we are steaming along Loch Katrine in the "Sir Walter Scott," wondering what we should have thought of its wild beauty if we had not been spoiled by Loch Lomond.

Now we are in a coach again, passing through the wonderful Trossach's glen, with Ben Venue towering on one side and Ben A'an on the other. Now the horses are climbing again around and around the hills in serpentine coils, higher and higher. A passenger in the back seat exclaims, indignantly: "We could get to Aberfoyle very soon, coachman, if you would only go straight ahead." The coachman only smiles as he looks across the deep ravines and up the steep precipices ahead of us. We wrap ourselves in rugs and cloaks to keep off the cold wind and the driving rain, and look down at Loch Achray and Loch Vennachar, sleeping among the hills like diamonds set in green. It is lovely up here. There are only a few black-faced sheep and goats and some wild-looking Highland cattle, with their sharp horns, almost hidden among heather and bracken.

But they also whisper a message from God: "All the beasts of the forest are Mine; and so are the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls upon the mountains." There they are! Young grouse, running beside the coach, as tame as chickens. If God knows each one of these living creatures on the lonely Highland hills, then He knows all the hopes and fears of His dear children, who are worth more—each one of them—than all the cattle upon a thousand hills.

But it is very late, and I must stop talking and go to bed.

God be with all my dear friends in far Canada.

DORA FARNCOMB.

Hope's Quiet Hour

Good, once put in action or in thought, Like a strong oak, doth from its boughs shed down

The ripe germs of a forest.

—J. RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE PASSION PLAY AT OBERAMMERGAU

In writing of the Passion Play of Oberammergau I write as a convert. I did not care to go. It seemed to me that all this talk of simple village folk keeping a centuries old vow, and so devoting themselves to the production of their decennial play that they had created one of the wonders of the world, had been a trifle overdone. They composed the play, we were told; they wrote the music, they planned and made the costumes, they supplied all the actors, they trained themselves, and they entertained the visitors in their village homes. I thought I knew just how it would be—a very crude amateur performance, with makeshift costumes, either ludicrous or pathetic, as your mood was, some stolen music, a presentation which might be "very good for mountain villagers," but very bad, judged by any other standard, a straw bed in a swept-out haymow, and a seat at a peasant's frugal table.

Let me say at once that the costuming and the stage grouping could not be beaten on Broadway; that the music was written by a real native village genius long ago, and takes rank as a classic even under the shadow of Munich; that the theatre is a splendid building, which holds 4,000 people without giving one a really bad seat; and that the accommodation is astonishingly good. You do not sit at the peasant's frugal table—you are treated as a hotel guest, and the peasant's wife cooks for you, and his daughters or a neighbor's wait on you quite in hotel style.

The first impression created on me as we walked out of the railway station and up the main street was a World's Fair. It is customary to paint pictures on the facades of Tyrolean houses, and the village of Oberammergau is always fully repainted for the Passion Play year. This gives the German fronts of their houses a temporary appearance and makes the whole street look like a plaster sham produced for a "midway." The illusion is helped out by the numerous booths for the sale of fruit that line the sides of the street, and the motley mob of tourists from every nation under the sun which crowds it from end to end. One of the "sights" of Oberammergau is undoubtedly the people who go there to see the play. Germans and Americans predominate—the Germans in mountaineering costume because Oberammergau is in the mountains and the Americans in Atlantic City "boardwalk" dress, because going to Europe is a holiday.

We stayed at "Oberammergau, No. 2." The houses of Oberammergau are numbered as if they were all of one street, which they are not by a considerable majority, as visitors find out when they try to discover where they have been billeted. "No. 2" is right opposite the front of the theatre, so we were exceedingly lucky for the noon-tide rest. Our host did not take part in the play, but we had "Judas" for our next-door neighbor. "Judas" has a fine house, and took a lot of boarders, most of them seeming to be English clergymen. "Judas'" daughter played "Maria," so the character of the house was well balanced.

Many people are very anxious to stay with Anton Lang, who plays the "Christus," but they get little more than the satisfaction of sleeping under his roof, for they do not dine at the family table. Still, even the smallest share of his hospitality is greatly coveted. I know two ladies who had written Frau Lang away back in the winter, and had succeeded in getting the promise of a meal or two at his house; and they were quite set up over it. Anyway, I bought postal cards at his store, and he put his

autograph on them for four or five cents extra. Autograph-hunting is a very fierce occupation at Oberammergau. Ladies chase up Judas, Peter, John and the rest of them with two-cent picture cards to be autographed. I was standing in the post office the evening after the play, when a long-haired youth came to mail a letter. Long hair usually means that the wearer is in the cast, as wigs are not allowed. An American lady scribbling a card home at one of the desks caught sight of him. Hurrying up to him, she said:

"You were in the play to-day?" After she had repeated this several times, with a few German words inserted, he understood her.

"Yah, yah," he admitted, phlegmatically.

"I thought so. I saw you. You were in the chorus. Yes. Let me see—the third from the middle—no, the fifth—"

He understanding nothing, grinned amiably.

"Yes," she went on, "now write your name here," and she thrust out one of her cards before him.

He understood this. He had met her kind before. So he wrote his name, and thus created another invaluable souvenir of Oberammergau.

But all this has nothing to do with the Passion Play. The villagers are not to blame for the sort of people their magnificent spectacle attracts. Whatever may have been one's impressions before reaching Oberammergau, his respect for these people rises hourly he is amongst them. For instance, his notion as to their possible mercenary spirit undergoes a great change. In Munich when confronted with a charge of four or five dollars a day for peasant board, and the fact that he could not get tickets at all unless, he took two days of this board, he may have entertained cynical thoughts. But when he gets to Oberammergau he realizes that this plan of dividing the tickets up among the villagers to be sold along with their living accommodation, is the only way they could have been kept out of the hands of speculators. Then the tickets are cheap, and the price is never raised, as it might easily be, no matter how great the demand. These peasants could often get twice or three times the face value for their tickets, but there is not an instance on record of their doing so. As for the board, it is not "peasant," but city, and not dear under the circumstances.

The play begins at 8 o'clock in the morning, and moves steadily on until noon, when there is a recess of two hours, after which the action is resumed and lasts until 6 o'clock. We had a perfect day for our visit—a rare thing in a rainy summer—and hundreds stood throughout the whole performance, every seat being taken.

The stage is uncovered to the heavens, though there is a sort of stage within the stage which is covered. In the "chamber"—as it were—the tableaux were posed, the Last Supper was eaten, the Hebrew Council met, and other interior scenes took place. Before it, and disappearing toward the background on each side of it, were streets down which, for example, Christ made his first entry into Jerusalem and his last tragic journey under the Cross. Then on the outer sides of these streets were two houses—one the house of Pilate and the other the house of Annas.

Most of the audience were seated before 8 o'clock, at which hour promptly the chorus filed on to the stage from the two wings. They made a splendid spectacle in their flowing robes of gold and blue and crimson, and constantly reminded me throughout the day of the most gorgeous scenes in the Champlain pageant at Quebec two summers before. It was their business to sing the majestic hymns that preluded each act, and one of them recited the explanatory verses that accompanied every tableau. The tableaux were, as I presume you know, chosen from Old Testament scenes, and were intended to foreshadow the New Testament action which immediately followed. Even if regarded solely from a coldly artistic point of view, these tableaux were superb. Nothing had been spared in the way of costuming; the poses were perfect; and every figure stood as rigid as marble during the frequently