

THE PASSION PLAY

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The Passion Play by William Watkins Old

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WILLIAM WATKINS OLD

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PASSION PLAY**

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BY

WILLIAM WATKINS OLD.



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TO
H. G.,
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS DEDICATED,
IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF MANY
YEARS OF CONSTANT FRIENDSHIP.





PREFACE.



“ IF ever there were sights and sounds to ‘make deep silence in the heart for thought to do her part,’ they are the visions and voices which, throughout all their after-life, must surely haunt the memory of those who have witnessed the *Passions Spiel* at Ober Ammergau.” Such is the judgment of an able critic; and the following pages will, I think, be found to support the truth of his assertion and to afford fresh evidence of the

profound impression which this remarkable spectacle has produced upon all who have had the privilege of beholding it.

There is little probability of so interesting a performance of the Passion Play at Ober Ammergau as that of last year ever again occurring. The changes which education and increased means of locomotion are rapidly introducing throughout the district, will inevitably destroy that artlessness and child-like confidence which gave the main charm to this representation. In another decade (should the Play be again allowed) the players will have changed. Already, I am told, they are more theatrical than in former years, and are losing that provincial accent which is most appropriate for the

representatives of the poor fishermen of the sea of Tiberias. In future there might be more intelligent acting, but infinitely less life in the Play. A variety of incidents also added to the interest of this occasion. The English press had called universal attention to the subject, and lent it a fresh importance in the eyes of the world. The atmospheric conditions were more than once peculiarly favourable in adding great solemnity to the show. Even the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales gave a special *prestige* to the spectacle: at all events, to Englishmen, accustomed as we are to respond to the pleasures as well as the sorrows of our own well beloved royal family. Again, the performer who took the leading character, was