Bere Regis
AND
Winterborne Kingston
Parish Magazine.

AUGUST, 1900.

Dorchester:
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Bere Regis and Kingston.

Sundays, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.
St. Bartholomew, August 24th, Service at 8 a.m.
Holy Communion, August 5th, at Mid-day.
" " August 19th, at 8 a.m.

From the Vicar.

As promised last month I am glad to write a few lines about the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play at which we were present on the 24th June last. This performance which has become now so famous is interesting for a number of reasons, though in these days of publicity some of the charm has probably been lost; however the wonder is that the simplicity of the whole proceedings and the devoutness of the people remain as real as they undoubtedly do. I am aware that lectures on this Play have been given at Bere and in the neighbourhood; many of our readers do not need to be told how it originated. I will therefore only remind you that near 300 years ago the inhabitants of this mountain village in the Bavarian Tyrol, being visited with a terrible pestilence, registered a vow that if the pestilence was stayed they would every ten years give a series of dramatic representations of the last events of our Lord's earthly life, which vow has been faithfully observed all these years, though once or twice the actual year has had to be altered. As performed to day, the actual scenes are interspersed with tableaux in which are portrayed a number of Old Testament scenes illustrating the correspondence of type and anti-type through the sacred history, and the whole is described in musical recitative and sacred songs by a chorus of the villagers.

It was in 1860 that English people began to hear of the excellence and the really devout character of this "Passion Play," and came to see it for themselves. At that time Ammergau was miles from the railway; and the somewhat difficult journey and meagre accommodation for visitors in the village no doubt added to the impressiveness of the affair. To find a large company between 200 and 300 of really excellent actors in so remote a mountain village must have been very astonishing. I saw the performance in 1890, but the day was wet, and I was most anxious to see it again in more favourable conditions; accordingly Mrs. Sotheby and I determined to go this year. Ten years ago the nearest station was two hours off; this year you go by train to within 5 minutes of the theatre, in some respects no doubt a gain, but one cannot but fear a dangerous innovation. However on arriving at the station one is struck at once by the simple and gentle manners of all the natives, even of the boy who carries your bag from the station to your lodging, quite unlike what one meets with anywhere else, and the invasion of the railway seems not to have affected the ways of the people at all. It is strange to see so many of the men and boys wearing their hair long,—this practice being necessitated by the fact that of the 1300 inhabitants some 300 are required for the Play and the Tableaux and no one is allowed to wear any wig or false hair.
As to our accommodation I will only say that this is now admirably but quite simply arranged for by various travelling agencies.

On the Saturday evening it rained in torrents and we feared we were in for another wet day; nor were the early hours of Sunday very reassuring. At 6 a.m. on that day we tramped through rain and mud to a room in the village where a short English Service was held, and we saw many of the performers in the Play on their way to and from the Parish Church, for it is a rule that those who take part in the acting receive the Sacrament in the early hours of the Sunday. At 7 we had breakfast, and before 8 o'clock when the play commences the clouds had broken, and happily for the rest of the day the sun shone out gloriously. This is a great gain, for though the audience is all under cover, two thirds of the actors are entirely in the open air, and as no artificial light is allowed, the beauty of many of the scenes is much impaired by the failure of sunshine.

The actual play consists of a number of scenes of our Lord's last days on earth, beginning with the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, going on through the Cleansing of the Temple, the Scenes at Bethany, the Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, the Apprehension, the Betrayal by Judas, the various Trial Scenes before Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate and Herod, the Mocking, Buffeting, and Scourging, the Via Crucis, the Crucifixion, and the Descent from the Cross. You would fear some familiarity or irreverence in dealing with such sacred things, but there is none; you feel at once that all the actors know they are engaged in a religious observance; this result being in some measure secured by the introduction of the numerous tableaux of typical events from the Old Testament, and by the musical discourse of a large chorus, which last was to me perhaps the most attractive and impressive part of all. The Old Testament scenes were such as the Fall of Man, the Sale of Joseph into Egypt, the Giving of the Manna, the Return of the Spies, the Brazen Serpent, the Affliction of Job, the Departure of Tobias; in some of these 300 persons took part, including many children, and the perfection of the grouping and steadiness was extraordinary; and all was expounded by the dignified chorus, who, some 24 in number, advance to the front, and leave the stage after each tableau in solemn movement, and sing delightfully.

(To be continued.)

BERE REGIS SCHOOL REPORT.

Boys.—"It would be very desirable in order that the existing Classroom may be utilized, that the stone floor should be replaced by a wooden one. The instruction in the Elementary Subjects continues to go on steadily, and on the whole successfully. Spelling, though it may still reach a more intelligent level, is improving. Handwriting is good, and so is Arithmetic, though in a few cases rather more accuracy may be aimed at. Reading is taught with care. Singing by Note is pretty good. Geography is going on well. It is desirable that this subject should be taught by means of oral class lessons from Notes prepared in the Teacher's Book, in addition to the Geography Reading Lessons. There has been careful preparation of the Elementary Science Lessons. Drawing appears to be progressing fairly satisfactorily. Freehand in Standard II.
appears to have been neglected, in III. it requires more attention, in IV. and upwards it is good. Ruler Work must be regularly taken in Standard III. In Drawing to Scale more is required. Oral Work should have attention. A New Black Board “T” Square should be provided. Improvement is to be expected in Drawing next year.”

**GIRLS.**—“The Girls School has rather suffered from previous defects of instruction, and from slack attendance owing to sickness, and the present Mistress has not been long enough in charge to bring the attainments up to the highest level. The instruction, however, now seems to promise well for the future. Reading and Recitation are very good in the highest Standards, but the meanings of the words require care in the lower ones. Spelling is not yet a strong point, but Writing is well taught. In Standard II. there may be more practice on paper. More accuracy may be reached in Arithmetic. Geography is good. In Elementary Science, the answering may be more general. Note Singing should be further advanced next year. A Piano would be the very useful addition to the Girls’ School, in view of the Physical and Class Drills, as well as for the Music. The discipline of the Girls’ School is very pleasing.”

**INFANTS’ CLASS.**—“The discipline continues to be rather a weak point in the Infants’ Room, but it is desirable that the Head Teacher should be assisted by a competent Monitor. By a little judicious firmness, this important point may easily be improved. The Infants are on the whole well taught in their elementary work, especially in Handwriting. Object Lessons, Needlework by means of Drills, and Varied Occupations are each taught with care and attention. The Songs are pretty good, and the Notes are good. Unless the order improves, it will not be possible to recommend the Grant on the higher scale next year.

**BERE REGIS BOYS’ SCHOOL.**

Open 421 Times.

The following have been presented with Prizes:—

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attended</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frank Barnes</td>
<td>417</td>
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<td>Alfred Barnes</td>
<td>417</td>
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<td>Herbert Barnes</td>
<td>416</td>
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<td>Joseph Vincent</td>
<td>416</td>
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<td>Bertie Lucas</td>
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<td>Cecil Lucas</td>
<td>415</td>
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<td>Ross Poore</td>
<td>413</td>
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<td>Frank Applin</td>
<td>411</td>
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<td>Herbert Farr</td>
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<td>Bertie Ames</td>
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<td>Cecil George...</td>
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<td>Harold Day...</td>
<td>377</td>
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<td>Arthur Grant...</td>
<td>275</td>
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The boys away through illness; otherwise would have qualified.

The Names of Girls and Infants who had Prizes will be given next Month.

**KINGSTON CHOIR OUTING.**

The yearly Choir outing took place on July 20th, and a visit was paid to Bournemouth. Luckily the weather was lovely, though on the way down by train, we came in for torrents of rain and heavy thunder at Bailey Gate and Wimborne; Kingston maintained its reputation for drought, and hardly a drop fell there.

Bournemouth was reached about 10, and a very pleasant day was spent. The chief attractions were the Motor Cars and an Ice Cream stall. In fact, so much did some of the party appreciate the latter, that they had no appetite for tea.

In spite of the fears of some of the parents, no one got lost. One boy did lose his purse, and after a fruitless search of the sands, extending nearly to Boscombe on one side, and Poole on the other, the purse was found amid great rejoicings in his pocket, where it must have been all the time.

The journey home was enlivened by “tunes,” as a fine assortment of bugs which had been purchased to supply a want felt on the way down. Home was reached about 8-30, but the bugs sounded far into the night, and the cows mistaking them for friends in distress, blared wildly in answer.

**THE BOYS’ ALLOTMENTS.**

Mr. Huntley has again been over to inspect the Allotments, and is extremely pleased with the tidiness of the plots, and the way in which they have been planted. The crops are rather disappointing, but we hope that a liberal dressing of manure in the Autumn will give better results next year.

The Annual Flower Show is announced for the 23rd inst.

**BERE REGIS & KINGSTON.**

**BAPTISMS.**—July 1, Ada Adelaide Andrews.

15, Athole Breadalbane Gregor Menzies.

15, Clement Frank Miller.

29, Reginald Frank Ames.

29, Maurice George Jeffers.

We regret to have to record the death of Mr. Frederick Radclyffe, of Culzean; also that of Mr. Harvey House, both very familiar figures at Bere Regis.