



"Nevertheless -- Not What I Will ----"

Letters

20, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1.
29th May, 1922.

From LORD ISLINGTON.

DEAR CAPTAIN BLAND,

I am grateful to you for enabling me to see the film "From Manger to Cross" on Saturday evening. I was deeply impressed by the rendering of the story -- its dignity and reverence throughout were quite remarkable. I hope an opportunity will be given to people in all parts of the world to see it.

Believe me,
Yours truly,
ISLINGTON.

CAPT. R. HENDERSON BLAND.
From YEEND KING, V.P.R.I., the famous artist.
219, MAIDA VALE, W.
April 15th, 1922.

MY DEAR HENDERSON BLAND,

I had but small opportunity of speaking to you yesterday afternoon, so should like to give you my opinion of "From Manger to Cross." I must admit that I went with very mixed feelings to see it; having great regard for you as a friend, and respect for your long experience of the stage, I still felt that the subject of which the film treated was one of insuperable difficulty, and that, despite the fact of your being an earnest worker, capable of carrying out any task entrusted to you, this sacred subject was too complex.

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As an artist, I thought of the Great Masters of Painting in the past. How they were hampered by tradition, and bound by convention, and how in the present day film producers were only too likely to crowd the scene with superfluous and distracting crowds, and to spoil by over-ornamenting. My position in the audience was that of a friendly critic hoping almost against hope that you personally would get through a difficult task with moderate success, and that the whole thing would be passable and not give offence. I was astounded!

The production was a marvel that disarmed all criticism -- everything was in proportion, and beautiful; never for a moment was there loss of dignity or the slightest fear of approaching the line that separates the sublime from the ridiculous; the wonderful reserve and direct simplicity of treatment marked the master mind throughout, but more notably in three of the important scenes, viz., "The Marriage Feast," "The Last Supper," and the great and final scene of all, "The Crucifixion."

I am sure, my dear Henderson Bland, that you will value this my sincere assurance that the work was absolutely flawless, reflecting the greatest credit upon everyone associated with it, and calculated to do lasting good.

Ever yours sincerely,
YEEND KING.

From DR. J. CATO WORSFOLD, M.P., the greatest authority on the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play in this country.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.
23rd May, 1922.

DEAR SIR,

On Saturday last I attended a presentation of the Film "From the Manger to the Cross" at 7 o'clock, and think it is only right that I should now place on record my keen appreciation of the representation from beginning to end. Everything was done in perfect taste and in a most reverent spirit. I have specialised to some considerable extent in the study of Mystery Plays, particularly with regard to the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau (as you will see from the enclosed pamphlet). This latter, however, is of course the traditional representation of the life and passion of Our Lord, whilst yours must of necessity approximate far more closely to what actually took place as so many of your scenes are taken in the actual surroundings of Our Lord's Ministry.

Trusting that this wonderful Film will receive from the public the attention it deserves,

I am,
Yours very truly,
J. CATO WORSFOLD.

LETTERS

SIR TRUSTRAM EVE, K.B.E.,
2, The Sanctuary,
Westminster, S.W.

From GERALD MAXWELL, the well-known dramatic critic, late of The Daily Mail.

60, KING'S ROAD,
RICHMOND, SURREY.
24th June, 1922.

MY DEAR HENDERSON BLAND,

I was so much impressed by the beauty of your picture that I must write to congratulate you on so artistic and noble an effort. It was with more than the usual hesitation one feels where sacred subjects are concerned that I came to the Clergy House to see "From the Manger to the Cross," while there was yet time. The fear that this picture might seem irreverent to those who are more religious than oneself, however, vanished almost as soon as the solemn organ prelude began in that dim-lit hall. And one was quickly carried far beyond the timid, personal point of view by the wave of universal sympathy this marvellous spectacle created. For the onlookers were absolutely spellbound by the touching story, so picturesquely unfolded and pictorially richer than the most brilliantly illuminated Bible, even when illustrated by a Doré or a Tissot.

The passion of the Saviour, indeed, did not appear so much to be enacted as to be lived again before one's eyes. To the enrapt spectators, perhaps for the first time, the exalted purpose as well as the divine love of Christ became clear. Thus the supreme sacrifice seemed inevitable and the triumph over death likewise.

The mystery and simple grandeur of the East gave the true atmosphere, while the minor personages, no less than the commanding central figure, had a natural dignity. All this actually happened, one tells oneself, and in exactly this setting. Then only the untrammelled screen could embrace the vast and varied scenes that here depict the childhood and ministry and betrayal of Our Lord. Even the fierce enmity of Mosaic priestcraft is not made so ugly as to be ludicrous; nor does the remorse of Judas here evoke laughter, as it does at Ober-Ammergau. But, like the cathedral of Milan, this picture surpasses the imagination. To be appreciated, therefore, in however small a degree, it must be seen; and it may be seen many times before it has been completely comprehended.

With all good wishes, I am,
Ever sincerely yours,
GERALD MAXWELL.

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From GILBERT FRANKAU, the well-known novelist.
9, LANCASTER GATE TERRACE,
HYDE PARK.
21st June, 1922.

MY DEAR HENDERSON BLAND,

I feel I must write and congratulate not only you personally but your producer and your fellow-actors and actresses on the extraordinary results achieved in "From Manger to Cross." Quite apart from the technical excellence of the production, it seems to me imbued with a spirit of reverence which lifts it altogether out of the ruck.

If only the average motion-picture could live up to the standard which you have set, the cinema should become the greatest educative force in all history.

Sincerely yours,
GILBERT FRANKAU.
CAPTAIN R. HENDERSON BLAND.