

Thos Cook Perfins - Part 2

By Tarn Llewellyn-Edwards and Dick Scheper

Thomas Conk Perfins on non-GB issues

CHINA (Die 16 & 17)

Die 16 is identified by its 8 hole 'C' and is known used in Shanghai between 1914 and 1919. Die 17 has a type Iliia ampersand, with it centred directly below the 'T' and has a 7 hole 'C'. It was used in China between 1933 and 1941 with postmarks of Shanghai and Peking. These dies are also known on Hong Kong stamps overprinted 'CHINA' for use in the British Post Offices in China.

EGYPT (Dies 18, 19 & 20)

Three dies were used in Egypt. **Die 18** has a 'S' with the upper curve significantly smaller than the lower and is quite common. **Die 19 & 20** are rare. They can be separated from each other by the angle of the 'C'. **Die 18** is first seen on "Piastre" issues (SG 71) so must have been used prior to 1888 making it the earliest non-GB die. It was used up to the 2nd World War. Thos Cook & Sons were active in Egypt from 1868 and had offices at the Shepherd's Hotel in Cairo and later in Luxor and Port Said. Stamps are known with Alexandria and Cairo postmarks, as well as with the private "Cook's Office" mark.

INDIA (Dies 21, 22 & 23)

Die 21 is a three line (TC/&/S) die as used in Bombay and is known on Edward VII issues, in 1906 and 1907.

Dies 22 & 23 are two line dies and can be separated quite easily as the lines are closer on die 23. **Die 22** is known only on George VI issues postmarked Calcutta, whereas **Die 23** is known throughout the reigns of both George V & George VI and usually postmarked Bombay.

Thos Cook & Sons had offices in Bombay and Calcutta from 1883.

CEYLON (Die 24)

Die 24 is indistinguishable from the India die 21 and they may be the same. If this is the case it has a very long life as it is known in Ceylon from the issues of Edward VII until after independence as it is known on SG 426 which was issued in 1951. Its use in Ceylon follows the period of use in India of die 21. These stamps are usually postmarked "Colombo".

HONG KONG (Dies 25, 26 & 27)

Die 25 is a three line die indistinguishable from dies 21 and 24. Die 26 is identical to die 17 of China and may be the same machine. Both these dies are known used from 1929 to 1941. **Die 27** is indistinguishable from die 16 (of China) and is probably the same die. It came into use in 1909 (the same year as die 16) and is known used until 1921.

FRANCE (Dies 28 & 29)

Two dies were used on French issues of the 1904-1934 period with "Paris" postmarks. The two dies can be separated by the shape of the ampersand. They are also known on fiscal issues.

JAPAN (Die 30)

This die seems to have only been used for a short period from 1913 to 1915 with Yokohama postmarks. The die is identical with die 16 of China and die 27 of Hong Kong so they may be the same machine.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS/MALAYA (Dies 31 & 32)

These dies were introduced during the reign of George V and continued in use on stamps of Malaya into the reign of George VI. Both dies were in use at the same time and can be separated from each other by the head of the ampersand and the base of the 'C'. Thos Cook perfins have been reported on stamps of Malaya but the authors have only seen usage of Malaya-Straits Settlements issues so it is not recorded separately here.

SOUTH AFRICA (Die 33)

This die was used on George V issues up to about 1928. This die is similar to die 17 (which was used in Asia), but the ampersands are different as are the bases of the 'C'. There were Thos Cook & Son offices in Capetown from 1900. Postmarks are known from both Capetown and Johannesburg.

TRANSVAAL (Die 34)

This die appears identical to die 33 and is probably the same machine as is found on Edward VII issues that were superseded by those of South Africa in 1910.

ORANGE RIVER (Die 35)

This, too, is probably an earlier use of die 33 before the use of South African stamps in the Orange Free State. These are known with Durban and Johannesburg postmarks.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Dies 36, 37 & 38)

Die 36 has an ampersand type I, **Die 37** has no ampersand and **Die 38** has an ampersand type Ia. **Die 36** was used in New York and Boston in the period 1915 to 1934 and its use included airmail, parcel postage and pre-cancels. **Die 37** was used in New York and Philadelphia from 1936 to 1939. **Die 38** has only been seen on Stock Transfer and Documentary Stamps.

BURMA (Dies 40 & 41)

The use of Thos Cook & Son perfins have been noted on India issues of George V overprinted "BURMA" of 1937 and on Burmese issue of George VI. The die is similar to die 31 of Straits Settlements, but the distance between the upper and lower dies is significant. The two dies can be separated by the size of the 'S'. There was a Thos Cook & Son office in Rangoon before 1900. It is known on un-overprinted Indian stamp (SG 38) with the postmark "Rangoon".

LEVANT (Die 42)

The use of the perfin 'TC/&S' in Levant has been reported on a un-overprinted Edward VII Id issue (SG Z59) postmarked "Bayrout". The details of the die are not known.

SWITZERLAND (Die 43)

This is another POKO die with the letters TC/B, which was used in Berne between 1922 and 1927.

AUSTRIA (Dies 44 to 47)

An unusual set of perfins - 'COOK/11', 'COOK/12', 'COOK/13' & 'COOK/14' on Austrian issues have been identified with Thos. Cook & Son. All are postmarked 'Wien'. The numeral on the perfin relates to the year of use.

Multiple Die Machines

Thos Cook & Son perfins are rare on multiple pieces and large format stamps so it is difficult to study the die layout of the machines used. Careful inspection of multiple pieces and large format stamps does not provide any evidence of the use of multi-die machines in the UK where their use may be expected.

Nevertheless such machines seem to have been used on non-GB issues. Die 18 (used in Egypt) does appear to be a multi-headed die. As shown on figure 2, the inspection of its use on large format stamps suggest that the machine had at least four separate heads.

Die 23 (used in India) is clearly a multi-headed machine, as parts of four different strikes of the perfin can be seen on figure 3. Careful measurement will show that the upper pair are pitched 20mm apart while the lower two are pitched at 12mm. This variation is proved constant by the existence of a number of other pairs of perfins on large format stamps some with 20mm pitch and others with 21mm. This would suggest that it is another machine with at least four heads.

The pair of stamps with die 33 (used in South Africa) shown in figure 4 suggests that the four perfins were produced by two different strikes of a machine with at least two heads. The upper and lower pairs are both pitched at 21mm, but are not aligned with each other.

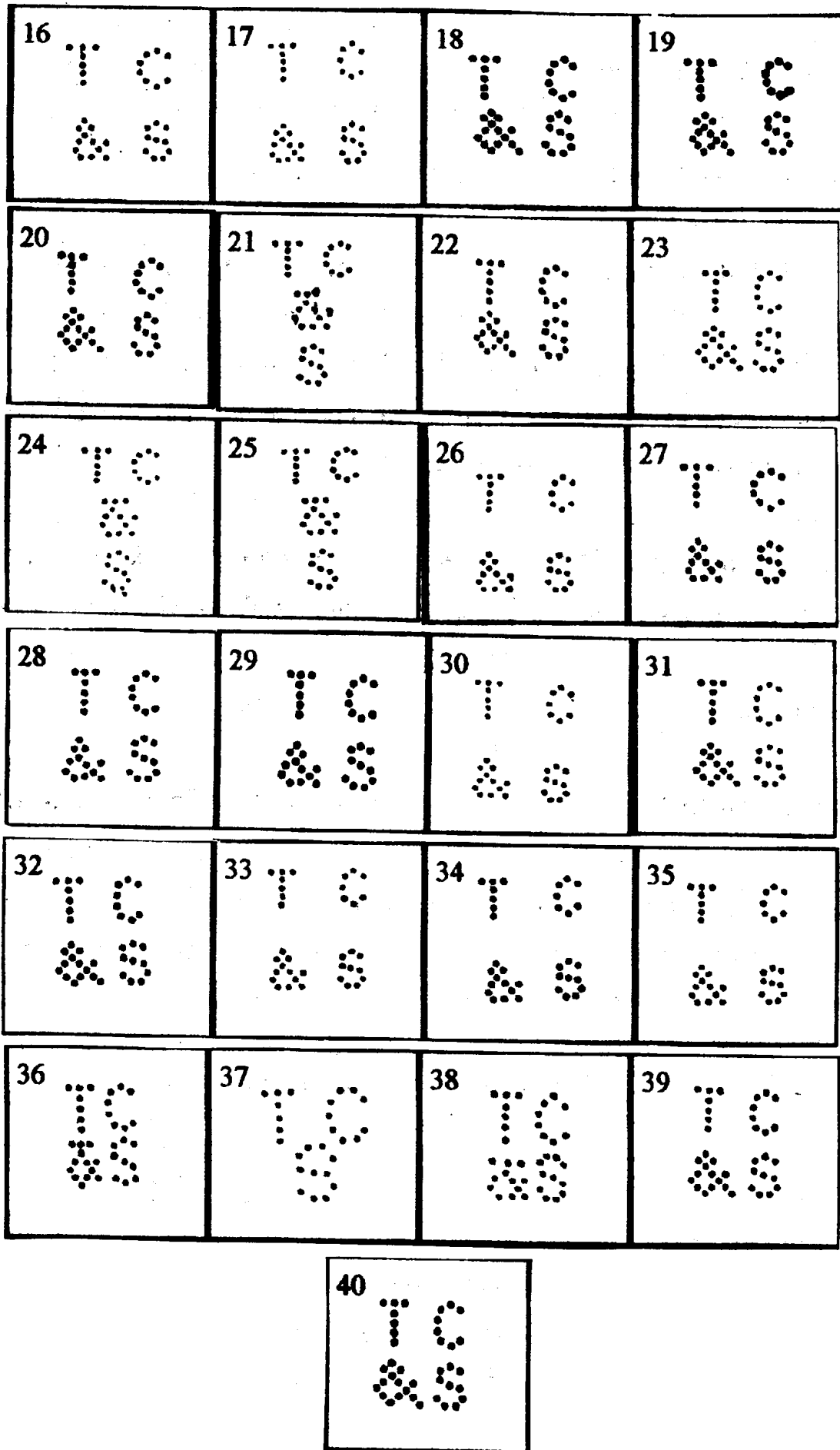
Dies 28 and 29 (used in France) are from the same machine as witnessed by the block shown in figure 5. Similarly dies 31 & 32 (figure 6) and 40 & 41 (figure 7) are from double headed machines. It also appears probable that dies 18 & 19 are from a double headed machine but no pieces are available to confirm this.

Sufficient multiple pieces and large format stamps are known to lead the authors to believe that dies 21,24 & 25 are single headed machines.

Conclusion

That concludes the list of perfins linked with Thos Cook & Son, which are known to the authors. Some countries are notable by their absence - particularly Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Thos Cook & Son were known to have offices in these countries during the period they were using perfins world-wide and while perfins were common in these countries, but no such perfins are known. Any additions or corrections to the information in this article will be welcomed by the authors.

We would not like to finish without leaving a little problem for our readers. Has anyone any ideas about the examples shown in figure 8? The perfins are on Straits Settlements issue and it shows the dies 31 & 32 - but what is the other perfin?



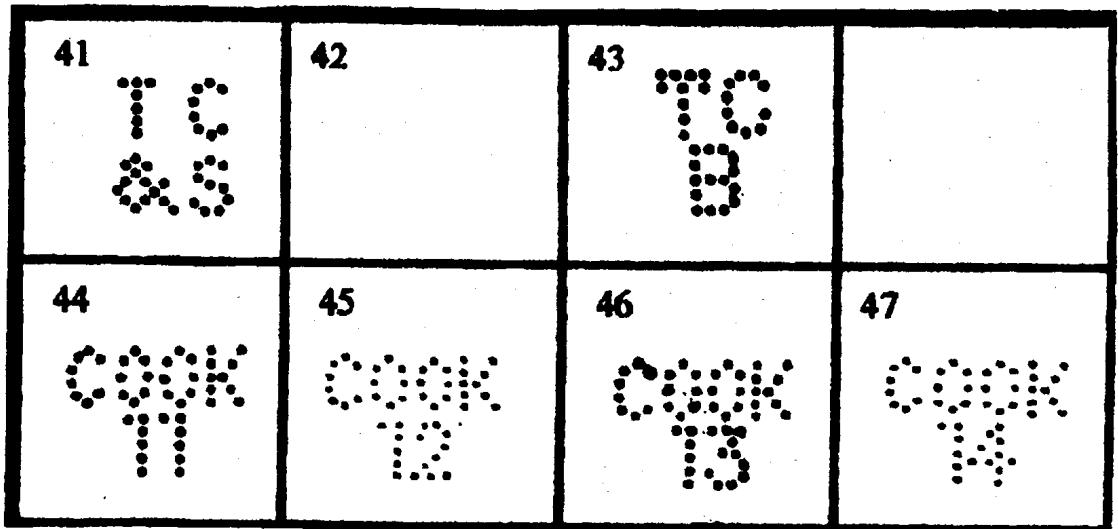


Figure 1b

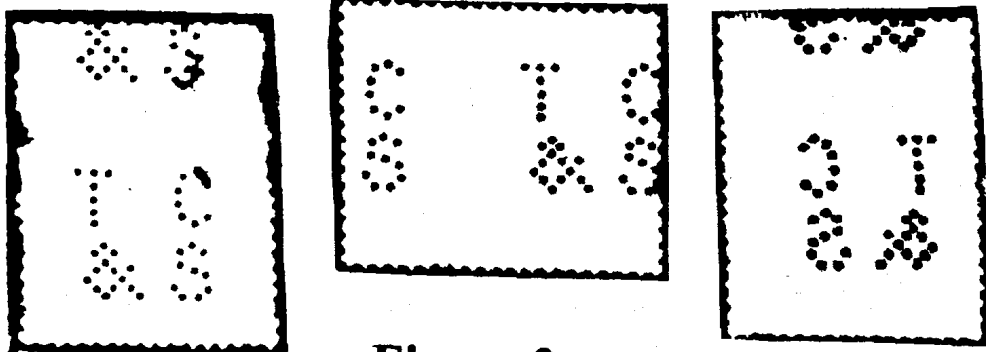


Figure 2

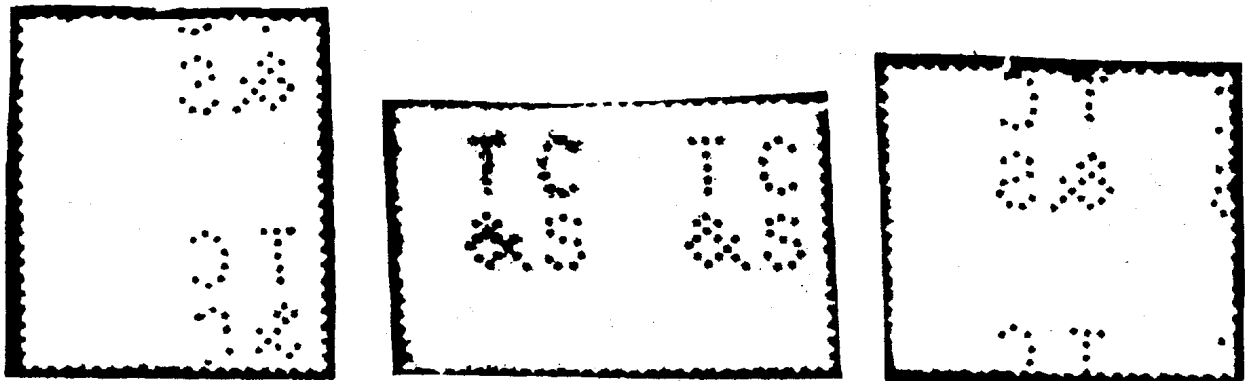


Figure 3

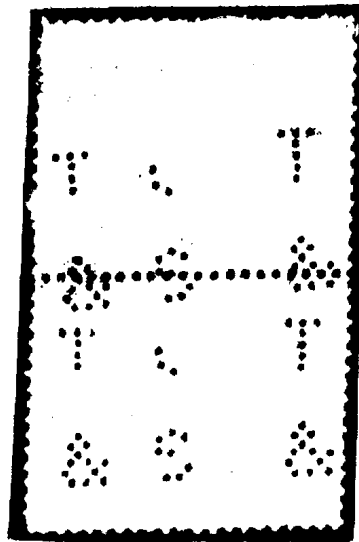


Figure 4

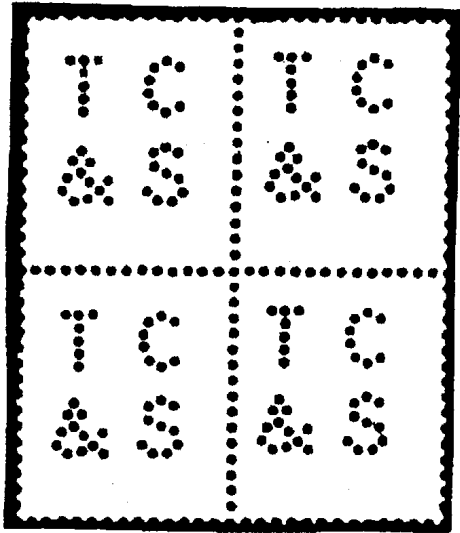


Figure 5

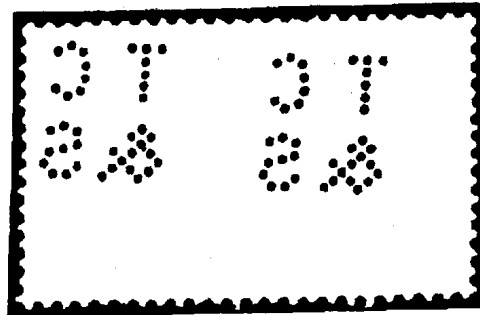


Figure 6

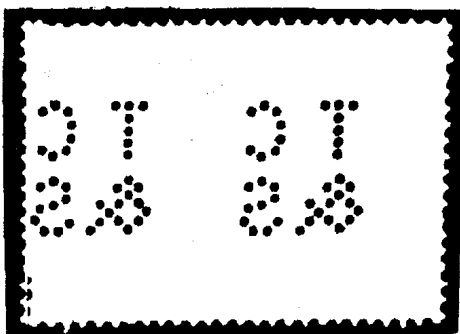


Figure 7

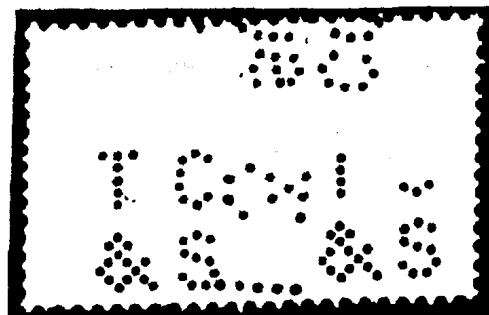
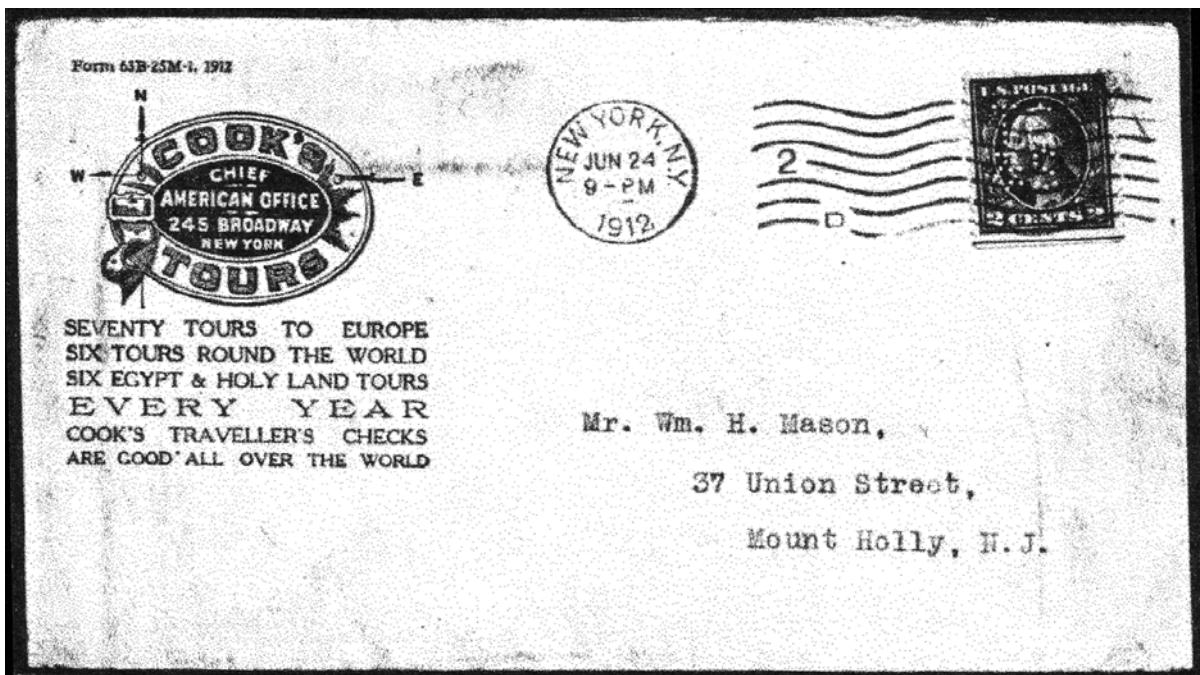
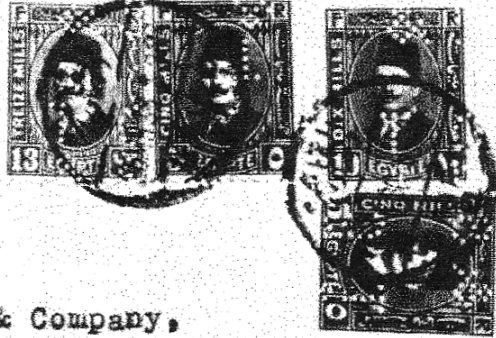


Figure 8



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LONDON - E.C.3.

THOS. COOK & SON,
LUDGATE CIRCUS, LONDON.
Official Agents of the
Passion Plays at Oberammergau, 1910.



The Direction,

Schwedisches Reisebureau,

Berlin.

