

and the pathos of their lives consists in the peculiar idiosyncrasies of all the various individuals which prevents their having any practical sympathy and understanding of each other's lives and troubles. English people had an opportunity of judging of Hauptmann's work a few months ago, for "Hannele" was rendered into English in two or three consecutive numbers of the *New Review*; but "Hannele" was at best a fantastic, half-allegorical story, that would only appeal to a few people, and would certainly not find favour with the general British public, in spite of its marvellous insight into a poor child's dreams and desires and its clever representation of that child's innate vanity, poverty and piety. Yet the best critics decided, and it is to be suspected decided wisely, that "Hannele" would never draw an audience at an English theatre, although it is constantly played in Germany. But "Lonely People" (*Einsame Menschen*) must appeal to all humanity, whatever language they may clothe their thoughts in.

Hauptmann's dedication is very characteristic. He says on the first page:—"I place this drama in the hands of all those who have lived through it." The drama is in five acts; I had the pleasure of seeing it admirably played by the great actor, Emil Drachs, in Germany, last week, and so I thought I would make it my book of the week, in the hope that it may interest some of the readers of the NURSING RECORD to read something about this very remarkable play, which is being so much talked about in Germany. It is fully to be expected that before long we shall hear more about it in England. Shortly told, this is the story. Johannes Vockerat is married to a nice, affectionate, domestic little wife; his parents are very good pious people, deeply religious and very old-fashioned. The play opens at the christening of Johannes' first-born child. The old people are full of complacent rejoicing. The clergyman talks pious platitudes, and Johannes, full of new thoughts about religion (for he would fain be a religious man, though he cannot be an orthodox believer), becomes irritated and quotes Darwin and Virchow; everybody is distressed and shocked, and treats him with affectionate solicitude, as if he were suffering from some complaint. All the time Johannes' soul is in the book that he is trying to write, but in which no one, not even his old comrade, Braun, will be interested. In despair, finding that no one understands or sympathises with him, he thrusts the MS. back into the drawer, and says with tragic pathos, "If only one human being in the wide world had something to spare for me—I do not need much—not much; only a little good will—only a little understanding of my life's work!" Frau Käthe adores her husband, but is frightened of him and cannot understand him, while his parents, with quite pathetic stupidity, are always telling him that all his troubles are sent to him because he has no religion, and does not believe in their conception of God. This is the trouble of their family life, when Fraulein Anna Mahr arrives. She is a beautiful and fascinating woman, a student at the University of Zurich; she is clever and quick. In her early youth she has also been misunderstood. Without a thought of evil, she and Johannes delight in each other's companionship. Poor Frau Käthe is a loyal little wife; though her tender heart is nearly broken she refuses to suspect evil; but her step-father and mother and her friend Braun, are full of small-minded anxieties. They watch Johannes and Anne, who in spite of their

superior brain power and sympathy for each other, are terribly egotistic people. These innuendoes and suspicions draw Johannes and the beautiful Russian nearer to each other. Terrible scenes follow, and pressed upon by remorse and despair, Anne returns to Zurich, and Johannes, feeling that he never again can live the life that he endured before her arrival, when no one understood or felt with him, flies from his parents' presence and drowns himself in the lake.

Emil Drachs' acting of this terrible play gave a realistic impression of a man who lived only for himself and without God in the world, and who, in consequence, felt endurance impossible. The whole play is a logical conception of the character of such a God-forsaken being, and it is the most moral play I have ever seen. Frau Käthe's loyal suffering of her husband's moods, and the old clergyman's tiresome sing-song platitudes, and friend Braun's cross yet affectionate behaviour to his friend, are all admirably human; but the best thing in the drama is the pious old couple, and their deep affection for each other and their children, and the blind faith they have in the righteousness of their own particular form of religious belief. One scene between Herr Vockerat and his loving old wife, draw tears from all readers, and for the time being the reader's whole sympathy goes out to them and away from their uncomfortable son. It speaks highly for the genius of the writer that the following scene transfers everyone's sympathy to the bewildered, over-strained Johannes, forced to live under a law which has become no real law to him, so that, to save himself from madness or sin, he at last seeks refuge from himself beneath the water of the lake.

A. M. G.

---

## Bookland.

---

"Almayer's Folly, the Story of an Eastern River," by Joseph Conrad (London: J. Fisher Unwin), is a remarkable book, which as yet has been little reviewed, but will leap into popularity so soon as the public have the opportunity of reading it. It is original, the scene of the story being laid in a land little known to us, the land which lies on the borderland of the Dutch in Asia, a bit of the Malay Archipelago. "Almayer's Folly" is the work of a genius and the name of Joseph Conrad will not long remain unknown to fame. We hope shortly to review this work at length.

---

## Coming Events.

---

June 14th.—Princess Mary Adelaide opens a three days' Bazaar in aid of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Clouesley Square, at Myddleton Hall, Upper Street, Islington, 2.45.

The Press Band plays daily (Saturdays excepted) for two hours, beginning at 12.30 each morning.

June 18th.—Mr. R. K. Causton, M.P., takes the chair at the Banquet of the Royal Eye Hospital, at the Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole, 7.

June 19th.—North London Hospital for Consumption—Festival Dinner, Hôtel Métropole, 7.

June 21st.—The Army Veterinary Department Annual Dinner, Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)