

so impressed were they by the outward and visible excellence of the bacon, fresh eggs, and other edibles, which may, to the great advantage of the consumers, be served up at the first and most important meal of the day. We suggest it would be a practical step were some of our housewives, in patriotic spirit, to inaugurate "British Produce" breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners, and in this pleasant way introduce to their friends the admirable provender supplied by Lord Winchilsea's Association.

We are all more or less vaguely interested in the farmer, and sympathetic with him in the disadvantages he suffers under, from so much foreign competition. But our sympathy is of little value unless it take practical form. One recalls the story of a man who "had seen better days," but was, under stress of circumstances, reduced to selling jam and other pies at a street corner. A man who knew him in his palmy days happening to pass, wrung his hand and, bitterly regretting that his friend had been brought so low, was about to pass on, when the practical pie-man exclaimed "Hang your pity. Buy a pie!" And this we might imagine to represent the farmer's feelings. Therefore, let us try the pies, the poultry, and the provisions generally, comforting ourselves with the reflection that, while we are getting admirable articles at a very reasonable rate, the British farmer will be enabled to "pay the rent," keep his land under cultivation, and maintain his family respectably.

"Hannele."

As I have been travelling abroad during the last few weeks I have not read any new English books; now that I have returned to England I hope to peruse all the new publications and write weekly hints as to what appears to be worth reading among the new books of the autumn and winter season. This week, however, I thought it might possibly interest the readers of the NURSING RECORD to hear something about Hauptmann's powerful tragedy called "Hannele," as they are never likely to see it on an English stage, and as I went to Berlin on purpose to see it acted.

About two years ago this play was translated and freely commented upon in two or three consecutive numbers of the *New Review*. I read these numbers, and was much attracted by their perusal, but rather bewildered, because, reading it in an English translation, it was difficult to grasp the author's intention; nevertheless, Hannele dwelt in my mind, and when I saw from the German newspapers that it was being acted in Berlin, I at once determined to go there and see and judge of this great realistic tragedy for myself.—This is the story briefly related.

"Hannele" is a poor little girl of 14 or 15 years of age, who has been so ill-treated and cruelly used by her step-father that she jumps into the river to escape from his beatings, and persecutions. She is saved from drowning by a passing bargee, and the first scene of the play opens when the poor child is carried half-dead into the casual ward of the poorhouse. She is laid on the bed, and the toothless old workhouse women and the dirty old shuffling men paupers babble over the little iron bedstead, where the poor child

moans, and in her delirium implores her step-father again and again, in the most piteous accents, not to beat her. The poorhouse doctor and the Sunday-school teacher examine her, and strive in vain to comprehend her incoherent exclamations, and at last they depart for the night, leaving "Hannele" in charge of a mild-eyed, sweet-voiced deaconess. After a while the stage grows misty, and through a weird veil we are shown the dream imaginations of this half-starved, neglected, little pauper maiden. One by one all her aspirations, beliefs and fears appear embodied beside her bedside, and these strange imaginations are marvellously conceived by Gerhart Hauptmann, the author of this absorbingly interesting play.

The figures on the stage are the creations of her brain as conceived by this poor, miserable, vain, conceited, neglected child of 15, and in each little drama acted by her workhouse bed *she herself* is the heroine, the princess, the central figure of attention. The angels of her dreams are the angels with goose-wings of cheap German Christmas cards; their speech is in stilted, sententious phrases, like the head-lines of old-fashioned copybooks, and all the action is a mixture of fairy-tale lore and Sunday-school teaching, interwoven with a romance, in which the handsome school-teacher is the bridegroom, and "Hannele" herself the bride, clad, servanted, and attended by angels and cupids. An amazing jumble of ideas as varied as a kaleidoscope—but revealing that in spite of her beatings and starvation Hannele had great compensation in her imagination. In the dream the teacher appears with all the school companions, kneels by her side, and tells the other pauper children how good and pious she was, and how they must be exactly like her if they would win a crown of glory. He sobs with sorrow, and wonders how he shall live without his dear and favourite pupil. The wicked step-father appears and repents his cruelty with remorse, and all beholders cry, "A miracle! Hannele is indeed a saint!" for out of her heart grows a flower and a light. Then appears a celestial shoemaker with a pair of glass slippers for *Princess Hannele*; music and light floods the bare room, and a troupe of angels bring flowers and bridal garments; they deck the little pauper with soft words of praise and, be it noticed, of approval and admiration, and finally a white-clad figure appears with the conventional form and hair usually given to Christ the Saviour, and with the robes and attitude of German sacred prints, but with the features and voice of the school-teacher, and, supported by his arm, conducted and surrounded by the angels, and doves, and walking upon blue satin strewn with roses, the beaming-faced child is conducted on her heavenward way. Then suddenly the stage darkens again, and when the mists clear away, there in the cold morning light the little pauper child lies on the workhouse bed, and the doctor says to the deaconess, in a cold, hard voice, "You are right, Sister—she is dead."

A truly wonderful play, that leaves a most powerful, though painful, impression on all who behold it. A play of genius and of almost superhuman insight into vain girlish human nature. Since I saw it I have thought constantly of Hannele and her visions, but I cannot yet make up my mind if I like this play or dislike it, nor if its influence is for good or evil. One thing, however, is certain, having once seen it, it can never be forgotten.

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