

## The Herb Soup.

A SKETCH FROM THE GERMAN OF SISTER ELSA FELGENBAUER IN UNTERM LAZARUSKREUZ.

(Note by Translator: Tea is practically unknown amongst the poor in most parts of Germany.)

The district nurse of the little mountain village has just come in from her evening round. The fire in her little stove is quickly lighted; the lamp stands on her round table, and with a sigh of relief she sits down and looks round on her cosy domain. How she will enjoy her rare free evening. Her patients in the village are all safely tucked in bed. She can stay at home.

The comfort of her room rests her so thoroughly. She loves the four walls that enclose her home. Everywhere her eye meets a memory, a book, a picture, needlework. It is her life that greets her in all these trifles.

For every year, for every step of her thorny nursing career a memory—joyful or sad. She has watched this many-coloured pot form under the hands of the peasant potter of the Odenwald, when she was stationed there. Her eye rests gently on the carved frame as if she recalled the hand that fashioned it. Yes, the little crippled lad was one of her favourite charges.

Her thoughts travel far. She has been much about, and has seen much, but it has always been the same old fight with sickness, poverty, ignorance, always the same, whether in the South of the German Fatherland, in the great centres of industry, or here in Saxon Switzerland. If one could only really help—if only one had more money. Among these mountains they are so terribly poor. For instance: and now she begins to reckon—and out of the sum arise wonderful air castles. Oh, if she could only give freely, all her patients should be happy. In her day dream she gives with both hands—like a good fairy who fulfils every wish—and she falls asleep in her chair—smiling in her sleep at this boundless liberality. Outside the snow is falling. In her little room it is cosy and warm. Roughly her dream is broken. Alas! a call for night duty in the other village. The husband of the woman has to go on night-shift at the copper foundry. "We have a very old grandmother at home, but the doctor thinks the nurse had better come." Well, if it must be. The nurse takes her bag, and her lantern, and prepares to go out in the winter evening to the other village. Then she remembers that her day dreams have made her forget

her supper. Hastily she makes up a parcel of tea and bread, and sets out.

Nurse has already sat some hours by the bedside. The patient is sleeping soundly. Granny, who cannot be induced to go to bed, pops her head in every quarter of an hour. Can she do nothing at all for nurse?

Yes. Nurse would like a pot of tea. Hopelessly the old woman gazes at the tea leaves. What, nothing but boiling water, no salt, no lard?

"No, Granny, nothing but water." Shaking her head she departs only to poke her head in again. Now, may she put in just a little tiny wheeny bit of butter? The Nurse begs her to refrain. "Well, Nurse, this won't make you fat," and she departs.

When Granny brings the tea later with a beaming face, she says with a happy twinkle in her eye, "Nurse, you are already almost a ghost and herb soup without salt or lard will never put you on your legs again. I have boiled a beautiful fresh sausage in your herb soup!" Nurse laughs. What else can she do? Her tea is lost. But she eats the well meant boiled sausage with a good appetite.

## Legal Matters.

### DAMAGES FOR BURNS BY HOT WATER BOTTLE.

In Edinburgh Sheriff Court recently, Mrs. Margaret Smith, or Edwardson, was awarded £25 damages against the Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children for injury from burns on the leg by a hot water bottle while under the influence of an anæsthetic in the hospital. Sheriff Guy stated that it was regrettable that the defenders should have allowed the case to go to judgment. They seemed to have taken an erroneous view of the pursuer's legal position, and to have endeavoured to clear the hospital from blame at all costs. They were forced to admit that the patient was burned by the hot water bottle, and confined their defence to showing that there was no negligence on the part of anyone for whom they were responsible. But all the witnesses for the defence were driven to account for the burns by a theory of special susceptibility on the part of the patient, of which there was absolutely no proof. The defenders produced a hot water bottle cover as showing the kind used in the hospital. If this was a sample of the covers in actual use he did not wonder the patient was burned. He was not proceeding on the condition of this wretched sample, but if those responsible were careless enough to produce such a sample in a Court of Law, it was presumable they would be careless enough to use one in as bad condition.

The frequent occurrence of cases of hot water bottle burns, as reported by the daily press from time to time, should point the lesson of great care in their application.

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