

be used in the morning for sweeping the ward floor; on to this the big man emptied his teapot, washed it and passed it to the little man to be dried. The tea-cloth was folded up and pocketed by the sugar man, the little man taking the table-cloth; the big man lowered the light, then they left in the same order as they came, the last man carrying the empty bun plate clasped to his breast.

I never saw the tea party again, though I watched for them several nights.

The other day I met one of the nurses and after a talk about things in general, I asked if the resident doctors still had midnight teas in the ward kitchens. She laughed and said: "Oh, no; that was done on purpose to make the Board give them the means of having supper if they wanted it. They dine at 7 p.m., and after that they could have biscuits, cheese, and bottled beer, but they wanted something warm, and had no means of getting it, so they started the tea parties. They went to a different ward every night, and, as you know, there is always plenty of boiling water in the ward kitchens, so they had no difficulty in making the tea. The nurse, of course, had to report them to the Night Sister. The first night she tried to persuade them to go away, but they pretended they did not hear or even see her. The second night she got angry with them and reported them to the Matron in the morning, who said 'it was not to occur again,' but it did, so she reported them to the Chairman.

"At the next meeting of the Board they were sent for. Mr. Grant was spokesman; he is about 6 ft. 4 in., a great footballer and boxer. He said they had done no harm; they had taken nothing belonging to the hospital excepting a little boiling water; they had used their own china; they had made no noise or mess; they had not spoken to the nurses, no, not even to the Sister.

"The Chairman asked why they did not make the tea and take it to their own rooms?

"Mr. Grant said they always understood that tea should be drunk as soon as it was made, or it was apt to weaken the nervous system, and they did not think it right to run such a fearful risk.

"This was too much for the Chairman, coming from Grant, too; he roared with laughter and dismissed them. The next day they had a gas ring, a kettle and saucepan, and, of course, did not have to buy their own tea or do the washing-up."

M. H.

#### WOMEN'S INSURANCE BLUNDER.

Speaking at an insurance conference at the Central Hall, Westminster, on Saturday, Mr. H. Kingsley Wood, vice-chairman of the London Insurance Committee, said a colossal actuarial blunder had been made with regard to the insurance of women, especially married women, and £500,000 was a conservative estimate of the annual deficiency. On the present contribution for sickness benefit only 6s. instead of 7s. 6d. per week could properly be paid to women.

#### THE PEOPLE WHO RUN.

Miss Violetta Thurstan's new book, "The People Who Run," will be issued by Putnam's Sons at an early date. It will be in a uniform edition with her former popular work "With Field Hospital and Flying Column," and is to be published at 2s. 6d. We have had a privileged peep at the MS. of the new book, and predict a great success for it.

The Russian word for refugees is *Béjentez*. The word means "the people who run," and Miss Thurstan says "it would be difficult to find a more appropriate title for those five and half million dazed and terrified people who fled away from their homes in the summer and autumn of 1915 before the great German advance into Russia. From the farms and homesteads of Poland, the peaceful plains of Lithuania, the seaports of the Baltic provinces, from the mountains of Galicia and Ruthenia they fled, in order to escape the roaring cannon and the devastating fire of the enemy. . . ." The Russian journalist Kasiunine describes the scenes he witnessed in the refugee trains as a 'terrific nightmare.' The sketches are the result of Miss Thurstan's recent visit to Russia to enquire into the conditions under which the refugees are living. The difficulty has been not to gather the material, but to sift from the great mass of reports, statistics and facts what seems to be most worth telling.

The refugee problem will not be over with the end of the War. Miss Thurstan describes with a vivid pen her journey to Russia, the strangers and pilgrims she met on the way, Christmas Day at Gatchina, which is such a beautiful festival in Russia, how it fares with the refugees at Petrograd, at Moscow (which claims to be the most progressive city in the Russian Empire), in Kiev, which the guide book tells you is the Jerusalem of Russia, and the mother of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Kiev is the gate of the west, and being comparatively near the front, had to stem the torrent of the eastward-bound fugitives. By rail, by road, by water they came pouring into the city. The Tatiana Committee did wonders. A visit was paid to the charming hospital arranged for refugee children. Everything here was beautifully white, clean and pure. The walls, the cots, the furniture, the Sisters' dresses were all white. Even the stray visitor was not allowed to pass into this White City without first donning a white overall. It was a great joy to see half a dozen convalescent boys tucking into their dinner with great zest; and such a fine dinner, too! Minced cutlet, fried a delicate golden brown, creamy mashed potatoes, followed by beautiful pink translucent Kiesel, a sweet dish made of potato flour and cranberry juice, which all Russian children love, and which is very easily digested. Down in the basement "A little drop of milk depôt" (where pure sterilised milk could be

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