

REFUGEES IN RUSSIA.

In connection with the Bath branch of the National Union of Trained Nurses, an interesting lecture on "The Refugees in Russia" was recently given by Miss Violetta Thurstan at the Abbey Church House. Dr. Edith Martin presided.

Miss Thurstan said, during the great retreat the first care was the safety of the Army. The first trains were, therefore, taken up by men, munitions, and horses, the next were for the wounded, then, if any were left, they were for the refugees. The first people to get those were the rich people who could afford to pay, and last of all were those dazed and terrified people who had nothing at all with them. Very often they were weeks on the journey; trains arriving at Moscow were seven, eight, or even nine weeks on the way. The trains were often shunted on to sidings for want of fuel, and often no food was obtainable. Some of the people ate perhaps only three times a week. When the trains started they were as full as they could possibly hold, but at every station there were women and children waiting. Even those who were dying had no room to lie down. One man who helped to clear the carriages at Kieff told her he had taken out no less than forty dead bodies of people who had died of cholera on the way. Though the sufferings of the railway passengers were bad, they were nothing to those of the people who had to walk. The latter were even months before they arrived at their final destinations. Fortunately, at the beginning of the great flight the weather was warm. The first great difficulty was the feeding of the refugees. Already the big towns were very much over-full, and they could not go into the houses as nearly everybody lived in flats, and consequently people had no spare room. Owing to her vast army, Russia had to keep a million beds going for the wounded, and these had to be crowded into the large towns. In the interior there were an enormous number of prisoners, too. Feeding stations were set up at the railway stations for the refugees. Turning to the housing problem, the lecturer said that in the summer tents were put up everywhere, but later the people were housed in large sheds, doss houses, etc., where they were crowded together. But worst of all were the tenement houses. When she (Miss Thurstan) was in Petrograd she was at the Embassy, where every week clothes were distributed to the refugees. While she was there a most beautiful bundle arrived, strangely enough, which she had helped to do up herself. The bundle contained the garments sent out by the Bath branch of the N.U.T.N., which had been sent off some months ago, but had been delayed. The gifts were very much appreciated. The lecturer was heartily thanked at the close.

"The People Who Run," Miss Thurstan's new book on Russian refugees, should make its appearance this week. It is a book to read.

THE NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

THE GLORY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE.

(Concluded from p. 448.)

The evening session of the Annual Meetings on May 16th began with the adoption of the annual report, proposed by the Chairman, Major W. McAdam Eccles, R.A.M.C. (T.). Miss Ruth Massey, M.B., Ch.B., then spoke on "The Glory of the Impossible." She said that much of a medical missionary's work is very commonplace and very sordid, but time after time at Wuchang in China they had seen wonderful results. She gave two instances, one an old woman, utterly poor, chronic, ungracious, unloving, the other a beggar girl, more wild animal than child, partly blind, deaf and dumb. Both had seemed "impossible," yet gradually they had changed, and one had become the loved and revered "Grannie" of the hospital and the other a useful member of the staff as assistant washerwoman. After speaking of the exceedingly septic nature of many of the cases brought in, Dr. Massey spoke of her Chinese nurses. She had had no European nurse to train them, and there had been many difficulties. The girls had little idea of discipline or punctuality, and were very noisy, shouting from end to end of hospital. Gradually, however, work among them told, and one was now an absolutely reliable and dependable nurse, able to prepare for any operation, and even giving anaesthetics. In closing, Miss Massey spoke of the great need of the steady, uplifting influence of the European nurse and pleaded for more workers. The closing devotional address was given by the Rev. J. Steele, D.D., from the text, "She hath done what she could."

THE ASYLUM WORKERS' ASSOCIATION.

The Annual Meeting of the Asylum Workers' Association was held on May 17th, at the Medical Society's Rooms, 11, Chandos Street, W. The meeting was presided over by the President, Sir John Jardine, Bart., K.C.I.E., M.P., LL.D.

In his opening remarks the President stated that out of a comparatively small population in May last 2,000 asylum attendants had joined the colours, and many more had followed their example since then. Naturally fewer nurses than male officers had taken up war work, but a good many had done so, and many more had accommodated themselves to circumstances and responded to increased work promptly and well.

Lieut.-Col. Thompson said he considered it deplorable that the Executive had been obliged to limit their periodical to a quarterly issue. He was not quite satisfied with the membership, and thought that with more local enterprise it might be much improved. All classes of asylum workers were welcomed.

Mr. Goodrich, President of the L.C.C. Asylum Board, said he was much in favour of improving

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)