

Annotations.

HUNGER BREAD.

How true it is that one half of the world we live in does not know how the other half lives. Dr. Louis Klopsch, of New York, head of the *Christian Herald* Famine Relief Work in Finland, Sweden, and Norway, had an audience lasting an hour, last Saturday, with King Christian, Queen Alexandra, and the Dowager Empress of Russia. Dr. Klopsch moved to tears both the Queen and the Dowager Empress by his description of the suffering in Finland. He showed their Majesties a large piece of "hunger bread," which has been the only food of the people of Finland since last October to the present time. There is no meat and no vegetables. The bread is made of chopped straw, pine bark, and a little rye flour. The people give this bread dipped in salt water to their babies. They have no milk, because the cows have had to be killed for food.

THE WORKHOUSE NURSING ASSOCIATION.

The Workhouse Nursing Association has for nearly a quarter of a century done useful work in raising the standard of nursing in workhouse infirmaries and wards, and though of recent years the nature of its efforts have altered, and the training and supply of nurses is not now carried out by the Association, it still has a sphere of influence in the education of public opinion, and as a link between Boards of Guardians, the public, and the nursing profession as a whole. We are glad, therefore, that the suggestion made at one time to dissolve the Association has not been carried out, and that the Committee have decided to continue the organisation, so long as they feel assured that their work is of practical service in furthering the objects they have at heart.

The twenty-third annual report deals at length with the Report of the Departmental Committee appointed by the President of the Local Government Board to inquire into the nursing of the sick poor in workhouses. As is well known, the recommendation of this Committee, that the name of "Qualified Nurse," and a formal certificate, should be conferred on nurses who have received one year's training in a minor training-school, caused a chorus of protest, and a memorial organised by the Association, and influentially signed, was presented to the President of the Local Govern-

ment Board. A supplementary memorial, dealing with the proposed reduction in the number of Superintendent Nurses, the appointment of Trained Nurses as Matrons of Workhouses, and the efficient nursing of workhouse wards, was also presented. In our view the Matron of a workhouse to which sick wards are attached should certainly be a trained nurse, not in order that she should take a more active part in the details of nursing than she does at present, but that she may be able to superintend effectively instead of ineffectively this important department of her work. The nurses in charge of the wards, who should, of course, be fully trained, would then bear the same relation to her as the Ward Sisters do to the Matron in a well-ordered civil hospital. If the Workhouse Matron were a trained nurse, not only would many of the difficulties which now beset workhouse nurses be removed, but the Guardians would feel confidence that they had a valuable officer in a woman who had been trained in habits of discipline, order, and professional etiquette. At the present time the sole qualification of a Workhouse Matron is often that she is the wife of the Master.

WOODEN HOSPITALS.

Considering the inevitable risks connected with hospitals constructed mainly of wood, and with the object-lesson of Colney Hatch Asylum before them, the Hospitals Committee of the Metropolitan Asylums Board are certainly wise in recommending that in view of possible risks of fire eight temporary wards at the Northern Hospital, which were erected in 1892, and constructed almost entirely of wood, should be removed and replaced by permanent buildings. In view of the fact that the erection of permanent buildings would involve an expenditure of £80,000 or £90,000, and that since the Colney Hatch fire the Board has been "demolishing temporary buildings in all directions," the matter has been referred back to the Hospitals Committee for further consideration. While the wards of temporary hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board as a rule communicate directly with the open grounds, and the doors are never locked, so that such a holocaust as took place at Colney Hatch is unlikely to occur, still the risks of wooden buildings for sick and helpless patients are, under any conditions, considerable, and we consider the recommendation of the Hospital Committee of the Asylums Board a wise one.

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