

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

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ENGLISH NEWS

The English news in the *British Journal* for October 11 is really new, or will be to many, though to others it does not come as a surprise. Those in nursing politics who have learned to know the deeper meanings of labor organization and to regard the labor movement as the great basic source of social life, have long regretted the lack of understanding on the part of many nurses of their kinship with this world movement, and a certain attitude of holding aside their skirts from it. But one's opinions are not new, therefore have been until now withheld.

A Trade-Union for Trained Nurses is now under way in Great Britain, of which the following very interesting details are taken from the *British Journal of Nursing* for October 11, 1919:

The movement is initiated by working nurses who have not heretofore been active in nursing organization. It has been spurred into being by the numerous oppressive and intolerable conditions to which large sections of British nurses have long been subjected, and it will work for State Registration, a minimum wage, and regulated working hours. It will not necessarily use the weapon of the "strike," which is, in all trades-unions, the least prominent part of their coöperation for social progress, but it will, of course, have the direct and powerful support of the great Labor Party of Great Britain, which, unlike ours, is a part of the Government and political structure of the realm. The *British Journal of Nursing* enumerates the various "offensives" against nurses which have driven them to this action in defense.

1. The enforcement by the Army Nursing Board of the so-called "Serf Clause," which gave dismissed nurses no power of appeal.

2. The indignity suffered by nurses during the war in being placed under the control of untrained volunteer commandants, who often had the title of "Matron" (head of a hospital and directress of nurses).

3. The many instances of Volunteer Aides being placed, through social influence, above trained women in actual nursing work.

4. The insult offered to the whole profession by the appeals for a "Nation's Fund for Nurses," which was conducted on lines of most offensive charity.

5. The effort to remove the representative of the Royal British

Nurses' Association from the Central Midwives Board, though many trained nurses hold a midwifery certificate.

6. The complete exclusion of the nursing profession from the Consultative Councils appointed by the Ministry of Health.

7. The way in which the Nurse's Registration Act was wrecked in the House of Commons by the influence of employers working through the College of Nursing, Ltd., (Limited).

We agree with English leaders in holding that these grievances have logically and inevitably forced British nurses to ally themselves with Labor in self-defense, and we offer them our sympathy and good wishes.

FAMINE THREATENS MILLIONS IN THE NEAR EAST

The desperate situation of the remnant of the Armenians which has survived Turkish cruelties is described in a cablegram sent to the Near East Relief Headquarters by C. V. Vickrey, executive secretary of that organization, who has just concluded a tour of Western Asia. His cablegram says:

"Have just returned from interior of Caucasus where million christian refugees and other Armenians have reached state of destitution that beggars all description. Most of able bodied men have already perished fighting for Allied cause. Remnant chiefly women and children are surrounded by hostile Turks, Kurds and Tartars and face almost certain extermination this winter unless help on a large scale comes from America. These people universally recognized in normal times as the most thrifty, industrious and prosperous people of Western Asia have now been for four years exiled or fugitive from their ancestral homes. Their last vestage of negotiable property has been sacrificed for food and protection. Repatriation this year is utterly impossible. Turks still hold their homes. Attempted return means death. Thousands of women and children have but a single garment to cover their nakedness and to protect them from the bitterly cold winter on the high plateaus around Mount Ararat. Empty flour sacks bearing names of well known American firms are improvised as clothing for children. Rags are used as shoes. All flour and food staples now come through Armenian relief but total supply in prospect will last only few weeks at most. Hundreds of tons of cast off clothing from America could be used immediately. Thirty thousand tons of foodstuffs in addition to present supply must be provided or this winter will bring the greatest harvest of death from famine that has yet been known by this martyr nation."