

THE PASSING BELL.

A GREAT TRAGEDY.

Miss Nettie Penham Arnold.

The tragedy of the death of Miss Nettie Penham Arnold (Matron of St. Helen's Maternity Home, Wellington, New Zealand), was revealed at an inquest, at Paddington, when a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind was recorded.

Miss Arnold was fatally injured on the Underground Railway between St. James' Park and Victoria stations, and Miss Gladys Hopkins, with whom she was staying, as a friend, at St. George's Road, Westminster, said in evidence that Miss Arnold came over from New Zealand to attend the Nurses' Congress, but while in this country was commissioned by the New Zealand Government to inspect hospitals on the Continent and make a report on conditions and working. In the course of her survey, Miss Arnold paid visits to Holland, Denmark, Norway and Finland, and it was while she was in Finland that Miss Hopkins met her. She was worried because she was not satisfied with her report, and, in consequence, she suffered from sleeplessness and was nervous.

Evidence having been given of Miss Arnold's fall from the train, and by the resident medical officer at Westminster Hospital, where she was taken, the Coroner, recording his verdict, said the report Miss Arnold was preparing was a very important one, and the tragic sequel was evidently the result of an over-strained brain.

Nurses in this country will sympathise deeply with colleagues in New Zealand, to whom we offer sincere sympathy.

On January 4th, the burial of Miss Arnold took place at Brookwood Cemetery, preceded by a short service in a chapel of the London Necropolis Company at 121, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. Miss Margaret Breay attended the service to represent the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain. The simple oak coffin stood in the centre of the chapel and on it lay beautiful wreaths mostly sent by relatives and friends in New Zealand. From her father, brother, and sisters was a wreath of lovely spring flowers; from the New Zealand Registered Nurses' Association one of carnations, tulips and tiger lilies; from the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain a beautiful chaplet of chrysanthemums, inscribed: "From the President and Council with deepest sympathy" and signed Ethel Gordon Fenwick, President. Other wreaths were sent by the New Zealand Nurses' Christian Association, by Audrey Irons, N.Z., Edith Paynter, Wellington Hospital, N.Z., by Dr. Mary Black, and, one of the most lovely, composed entirely of mimosa, by Miss Hopkins, of 40, St. George's Square, London.

The short service was beautifully and most sympathetically conducted by the Rev. G. T. Bellhouse, of Regent Square Presbyterian Church, and "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" seemed to rest upon the still form so recently agonising in this troublous world, and fell with a power which could be felt upon those present who mourned her.

Then many New Zealand Nurses entrained for Brookwood, where the burial took place.

"Father, in Thy holy keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping."

Great Nature clothes the soul, which is but there
With fleshly garments which the fates do spin
And when these garments are grown old and bare,
With sickness torn, Death takes them off with care
And folds them up in peace and quiet rest.

Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle.

NURSES FOR THE WILDS.

Ever since Mrs. Mary Breckinridge founded the Kentucky Frontier Nursing Service to safeguard the lives and health of mothers and children by providing and preparing trained nurse-midwives for rural areas in Kentucky and elsewhere, we have followed its steady development with keen interest, and through the publicity given to its work in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, it has been our privilege to help to bring this fine pioneer work to the notice both of nurses and the public.

It was therefore with very great interest that we found, a few days since, in *The Times*, under the above heading, in a conspicuous position, a most interesting and informative article by Dr. Harley Williams, which will no doubt have the result of acquainting many of its readers with the good work going on in far-away Kentucky, the result of which will, we hope, be to bring an increase of gifts to this wonderful Service, the objects of which are primarily to give skilled care to women in childbirth, and to give nursing care to the sick of both sexes and all ages.

Dr. Harley Williams has visited the centres and seen the work carried on by the Service, and in his article in *The Times* graphically describes his visit. He writes:

"Inspiration for a unique Service in the Highlands of Kentucky came to its Foundress (Mrs. Mary Breckinridge) from the Highlands of Scotland. Twelve years ago she started with two trained nurses, a committee, and indomitable energy. To-day the Service covers nearly 1,000 square miles of beautiful country, romantically inaccessible as parts of Scotland, but with the special perils of 20 deg. nearer the Equator.

"We drove 120 miles from Lexington, Kentucky, from a plain famous for its 'blue grass' and miraculous race-horses, to a range of thickly wooded mountains about 5,000 ft. high. We came at last along a dirt road to Hyden, a small county seat in a crevice in the hills.

"A man with a pair of fine horses stood outside the drug store. The frontier has to have its own service of women couriers, with stables and blacksmiths, because most of the patients live far off the road. But we missed these charming Valkyrie as they were all on the road. . . . It was a warm, still evening as we reached the log cabin headquarters, high up above the trees, like Tarzan's fantastic abode on the cinema screen.

The Principal Business.

"The principle of Frontier nursing is to make of midwifery the key which opens the family to preventive medicine. The people are of homogeneous stock, the 'Uncle Sam' type, but the mothers have bad teeth, which favours toxæmia and chronic hookworm infestations which drain them of blood. Enteric and dysentery present problems in sick nursing, and vaccination against diphtheria falls among the routine duties of the service.

"Midwifery forms the principal business of these nurses. Their first 2,000 cases have been analysed by an eminent statistician, and a third 1,000 is under examination. The results are remarkable. In the first two sets, covering a period of nearly 10 years, no mother lost her life through childbirth. The average number of deaths from this cause in the United States is 5 per 1,000; in England it is slightly less.

"After a night at the comfortable headquarters in Wendover we rode up Hurricane Creek on a glowing autumn day. The nurse who led the way on a white dappled horse was Scottish, educated in Edinburgh. . . . The muddy river ran down the creek, carrying away soil from the denuded hillside. In the warmth and perfect calm it was hard to picture that sluggish stream crackling in an ice jam, and the nurse's dappled horse plunging across frozen earth. But in winter, wind and flood make

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)