

The prison system of Los Angeles would compare favourably with that of other countries, and might well serve as a model in some respects. I rejoiced to find that solitary confinement—that cruel punishment—is not the custom here. The prisoners sleep in cubicles, and associate with one another during the day. The ventilation everywhere was excellent—an example England might well copy.

The "Juvenile Bureau" was the Department which interested me most. It deals with young people under the age of twenty-one, "particularly with children under the age of eighteen years." It is significant that they are regarded as *children* at that age. Five out of the nine policewomen are appointed to work in this department, and in the words of the Chief of Police "their work has been a great success." In the most recent annual report which is before me, I read: "The investigation of many juvenile cases leads to embarrassing situations when young girls have to be questioned. *It is a rule of the Department that no young girl can be questioned by male officers concerning sexual wrongs.* Such work is delegated solely to women officers, who, by their womanly sympathy and intuition, are enabled to gain the confidence of their younger sisters. . . . Policewomen also do valuable work in preventing delinquency among young girls, by inspecting dance halls, cafés, picture shows, and other public amusement places—particularly in the late afternoon and night hours; by escorting those, who, by their conduct or that of others, are in danger of becoming delinquent, to their homes, and making reports to their parents, with a proper warning." N.B.—The italics are mine. Among the many interesting facts that I learned about the Police Department (Juvenile Bureau), I was particularly impressed by the fact that no juvenile under twenty-one is kept in prison for more than one night—and that, in the case of girls, is frequently as a means of protection from

moral danger; the girl can apply for admission as to a place of refuge, without attaching to herself the stigma of imprisonment. No juvenile under eighteen is allowed to undergo the punishment of imprisonment at all; they are sent to Detention Homes.

Women magistrates try the cases of women and children! Policewomen have been established in Los Angeles five years; the Californian women have had the parliamentary suffrage four years. We may confidently assume therefore that some at least of these excellent reforms have been due

to the pressure of their vote. There is a well-equipped emergency hospital in the jail; the nurses—male and female—are required to pass the Civil Service examination to qualify for which they must prove that they have had "five years' experience in a hospital." Last, but not least, there is the "*City Mother*." This is a new and separate Bureau of the Police Department, known by that attractive term. The Bureau is kept in other quarters than the police station houses, and "it will be the duty of the policewomen detailed to command this Bureau to receive in confidence the statements of parents concerning their children and to assist them in every way possible consistent with police duties." The head of the juvenile department is Mr. Leo Marden, to whom we (Miss Hulme was with me) had the pleasure of an introduction. He is held in the greatest respect and affection by the policewomen, merited by his kindly and sympathetic



MRS. ALICE STEBBENS WELLS,
FIRST POLICEWOMAN APPOINTED IN THE UNITED
STATES OF AMERICA.

nature. His devotion to children and their devotion to him is apparent. It was due to Mr. Marden that a clinic for the curative treatment of the cigarette habit—the only one in the United States—has been opened in Los Angeles. A large number of young men and boys put themselves under the treatment, which has had splendid results. Their grateful thanks are due to Dr. Trenwith, the discoverer.

BEATRICE KENT.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)