

### THE PASSING BELL.

Sister Lena Crowther who we regret to record, passed away on Sunday, the 22nd ult., after a long and very painful illness, received her training at the Edmonton Infirmary and left to proceed to India under the Colonial Nursing Association. When illness overtook her the Board of Guardians of the Edmonton Infirmary showed her the greatest kindness and she was nursed by her old colleagues. A memorial service was held in the Military Chapel, attended by the Board of Guardians, the medical and nursing staff, and a large body of wounded soldiers. She was interred at Tottenham Cemetery.

## PRISONS AND PENAL REFORM.

### PART III.

#### PIONEER REFORMERS.

By MISS BEATRICE KENT.

(Continued from page 340.)

The great and beautiful city of Los Angeles, California, is in the van of progress in respect of Social Service. It was the first to adopt the reform of Women Police, and the first woman to be appointed was Mrs. Alice Stebbens Wells. The work of these civil servants—there are nine of them in the city—is considered indispensable. I should just like to recall one or two facts of the Police Department that I have mentioned on a previous occasion, because they are well worth remembering, and are worthy of imitation.

The "Juvenile Bureau" is what might be called a preventive agency. It deals with young people under the age of twenty-one, but more especially under the age of eighteen. No juvenile under the age of eighteen is allowed to undergo imprisonment at all; they are sent to Detention Homes. No juvenile under twenty-one is kept in prison for more than one night. Any girl in moral danger can be admitted to the prison as to a place of refuge, without the stigma of imprisonment. It is the rule in the Department that no young girl can be questioned by male officials concerning sexual wrongs. Women magistrates try the cases of women and children. The finest thing of all, perhaps, is the "City Mother." This is a new and separate bureau of the Police Department. 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." This is a general prison. The treatment seemed humane enough, but not precisely revolutionary, as in the case of the Ontario Reformatory and the Sing-Sing Prison. There is no solitary confinement. It does not appear that reform in women's prisons is going on as rapidly on the American Continent as in those of men. It would be a grave omission to leave the

Los Angeles prison without reference to the honoured name of Mr. Leo Martin, the head of the Juvenile Department. It was our privilege to meet and talk with him. He is the right man in the right place; he loves and understands the children; his attitude towards them is that of the tenderest father. He loves to get the children round him and give them fatherly talks. He says: "Police officials should make children their friends: children should not fear the officers." There is a well-equipped Emergency Hospital in the prison; the nurses—female and male—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.

Judging from information to hand, there does not appear to be much crime among women in Canada. According to the Report for 1912, in seven prisons, the total number of prisoners was only twenty! In our own country the prison system is still very bad. We know far more about it than formerly, thanks in the first place to the Prison Reform League, and also to Lady Constance Lytton, who has given us her experiences in "Prisons and Prisoners," and Elizabeth Sloan Chesser, M.B., in the chapter on "Women Prisoners" of her book "Women, Marriage and Motherhood." She recommends—what all will applaud—namely, that there shall be a qualified medical woman attached to every woman's prison, trained nurses, women to direct women's prisons, and a woman on the Prisons Commission. We are greatly indebted to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for her interest in nursing in prisons, especially for her paper on "The Training of Prison Staffs," and the suggestion made at the International Congress of Nurses in 1909 that trained nurses should associate themselves in an "Elizabeth Fry League," and dedicate to her memory some definite scheme whereby their skill could benefit "those in prison," as in her fine philosophy she would have applied it. Mrs. Fenwick considers that the Matrons of all prisons should be highly trained nurses with a wide experience of social service. We are also indebted to Mrs. St. John, wife of the Hon. Secretary of the Penal Reform League, for her interesting paper on "Nursing in Prisons," read at the Congress of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, held in Birmingham in 1914. She suggests similar reforms. We have plenty of helpful material to work upon when the day comes when we shall do something more than *talk* about reform, or, rather, I should say, when the Government realises better the urgency of it, and gives facilities for legislative enactment. The ancients have taught us a great deal; we have much to learn from them still through their immortal works. Aristotle tells us in his "Athenian Constitution" that before the Archons (or magistrates) were appointed, they had to appear before the Council and undergo a strict examination. Witnesses were present and were invited to bring accusations against them if there was any justification for this. Upon their appointment they were required to swear solemnly that they would "*ad-*

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