



Brooklyn.—It was a quiet day in the police station. Brownsville was behaving itself and the matron of the station had a whole hour to talk, with only one interruption to wipe the tears from the eyes of a small, dirty boy, induce him to tell the address of his home and send him on his way under the guidance of a big, strong bluecoat. And the matron, when she talks, has a few things to tell. In fact, Mrs. Cox says, with her good Irish chuckle, that she thinks she will write a book of her experiences to make her rich after she retires from the job of matron. The "boys" have suggested it to her. The "boys" are the bluecoats, every one of whom in Brooklyn, knows Mrs. Cox and has a joke for her or a word of guying when he meets her.

**Duties of a Police Matron.**

Intoxication is the usual charge upon which the woman prisoner is committed, with occasional charges of theft, of assault, an attempted suicide and now and then a woman whose hands have committed some bigger crime, homicide or infanticide. Whatever the charge, they all pass through the station house on their way to the jail or the penitentiary, and the matron has them in her care. She gets them fresh from their misdemeanors and with the stain of their crimes new upon them. She is the first and often the only ministering angel they know, for it is to the task of ministering that most of the matrons, womenlike, give themselves, with more heartiness than to the technical tasks of their office.

As I sat in the comfortable little apartment of the matron, flooded with morning sunshine, each of the homely objects in the room, and even the pictures on the walls, seemed to have something to whisper of the stories that have been told in those rooms, of the depravity they have looked upon, of the pitiable wrecks of womanhood they have seen pass through this room to the iron-barred cells beyond. Of some of these crippled creatures and their stories the matron told me. Fourteen years of the life has not calloused her sensibilities but, instead, sharpened her sympathies, and for all the endless stream that comes her way she can listen to each of their stories, pity them and hold out a hand to help if they have not gone too far to be beyond helping. Sometimes the judicious, quick intercession of the matron can do a great deal to check a young offender in the downward course; at any rate, a kind word never hurts even the most lowly.

**Young Girls Saved.**

One night two young girls were brought into the station house for intoxication, fresh, dainty girls, dressed in the finest of evening gowns, covered with long coats. It was New Year's eve and a bitter cold night. The matron was used to the unusual, but the presence of girls such as these in her lodging house made her stop and wonder. It was only a little while before the sleep of intoxication wore off and the girls woke to the realization of their surroundings and the horror of it. Finally, they were calm enough to tell the matron how it all happened. They had been over to Manhattan to a dance with two boy friends. It was so icy cold that the escorts suggested before they crossed the bridge to take something to warm them, and they stopped in a cafe and drank what the men ordered for them. Unused to taking stimulants, as soon as they struck the cold air out of doors the drinks went to their heads and they knew very little else of what happened until they waked to find themselves in the police station. What had happened was that the two escorts, finding themselves burdened with girls too much intoxicated to know what was happening to them, had opened the door of a tenement house, shoved them in and left them there. The girls had fallen immediately to sleep and one of the occupants of the house stumbling over them, had reported to the police and had them taken to the station. It was a hideous night for those girls, used only to the niceties and refinements of life.

When the next morning came, with its inevitable appearance at court, they pleaded not to be taken in the patrol wagon with the other prisoners and the matron secured the permission of the sergeant to take them to court herself in the car, and arranged for a private hearing before the judge. The circumstances related,

the judge let them off with some strong words of admonition. Then the matron took the girls to their home, where they found a mother almost frantic. The matron put in a plea for them and saved them the upbraiding that most parents would have poured forth for such an indiscretion. Now, every Christmas since the happening there comes to the station a gift from those two girls, a bit of their own handiwork, and now and then a letter from their mother, reiterating her appreciation for the saving of her girls.

**Maggie a Regular Lodger.**

With some of the prisoners the matrons become old friends, for they regularly make the station house their regular dwelling place. One of Mrs. Cox's old-timers is an Irish woman, named Maggie, whom everybody in the station house knows. She has been a habitue of station houses for 15 years, and the matrons and sergeants get so they look for her and almost miss her when she doesn't come. She is one of the cheerful drinkers and always comes in with a swagger and a laugh. The matron will greet her with a sort of despairing smile: "Well, Maggie, are you back again?" "Sure, and ain't you glad to see me? I keep you alive, give you something to live for."

And she does keep things alive, Mrs. Cox admits. She sings her Irish

her the chance, threatening dire consequences if she appeared before him again soon. The very next night Maggie was brought into the station house with her usual hilarity, but gorgeously arrayed. She made no apologies for her downfall, but explained that when she went from the station house the day before she had found a letter from her sister containing \$15. She took \$7 of it and bought a new skirt, a new shirt waist and an enormous brass chain; with the other \$8 she went to a saloon to come out minus the money and in the custody of a policeman. Once during one of her visits to the station Maggie grew despondent. She thought of her two daughters who are placed in a Catholic home, safe from her influence, and she began to brood. She got hold of a string and decided to choke herself with it. To make the thing more effective she called to Mrs. Cox to tell her what she was going to do. The matron was used to Maggie, however, and to threats of suicide, so she answered carelessly: "Go ahead, Maggie, you've no idea how quickly we would get you out of here; get you out much quicker dead than alive, because we don't want any dead ones around here." Whereupon Maggie burst into one of her peals of laughter and declared it was no use committing suicide in the face of such discouragement.

There are only a few that take the



songs at the top of her great Irish voice, and keeps everybody in the station awake with her song. She makes herself perfectly at home in the tiny cubby-hole of a cell and sinks into a sleep as peaceful as a child's when she has exhausted herself with singing. It takes a vigorous effort to make her get up in time for court.

**Enlivens Station with Song.**

Remonstrance with her is useless, the matrons have learned her long ago. Sometimes they ask her if she isn't ashamed to come so often to the station house, and she always makes the same answer. "No; the city's willing for me to stay here and I'll come as often as I like. It's much more comfortable than home. It's cleaner and I like the electric lights."

She has such a ready good humor and such a spirit of fun that in spite of her waywardness Maggie is rather a favorite in the station and with the judges. After one of her last visits to the police station Maggie pleaded penitence to the judge and promised to walk the straight and narrow path in the future if the judge would let her go. So the magistrate did give

world so cheerfully under the influence of drink. Many of the cases that come under the eye of the police matron are of women who have been led to the passion for drink to drown some sorrow, and many of them women used to better ways of living. One day a frail bit of a woman—a mere girl—was brought to the station. Her husband had got out a warrant for her and wanted to have her committed to some institution. Drink had made terrible ravages in the woman's appearance, and when the effects of the whiskey began to wear off she sat in her cell clinging with her thin hands to the bars and begging pitifully for drink. Toward dawn the woman collapsed and a hurry call was sent to the hospital. The ambulance surgeon on his arrival had only time to kneel at her side and begin his work before death closed upon her.

**Woman's Pitiful Story.**

While the woman lay trembling in the cell during the night she had told her story to the woman outside the bars, of how the craving had grown upon her little by little until she lost

all power over herself. At 23 she was a hopeless wreck. The closing act of the little tragedy was when the mother came from her home in the country, near New York, and insisted on seeing the place where her girl had died. The matron begged and pleaded with her not to look at the cell; that it would be something she could never forget, but the mother demanded to see it, and as soon as she looked into the bare place, fell in a collapse, and an ambulance had to be called to care for her.

"The lady" was once a figure well known in all the police stations, but "the lady" is one of the figures that has passed, whose life hurried her to a pitiful end before she reached what should have been her prime. The matrons all called her "the lady," because even in her worst days she never looked anything but the lady, was always well dressed and never came to the police station without her well-fitting gloves carefully buttoned, though sometimes she was picked out of the gutter in an almost hopelessly deadened condition. Her story is one that might have been the thread of some of the stories one used to read in the Sunday school libraries, though it comes with much more force to hear the police matron who saw her in the last days of her degradation tell it.

She had spent her girlhood in the country at her father's home upon the Hudson, where they took city boarders in the summer time. The girl was as pretty as a picture, had been carefully reared and well educated. One summer there came the inevitable man from the city who won the heart of the country girl, and they were married and came to Brooklyn to live. All went as happy as a marriage bell for a while. There was a little girl baby after whose coming the young wife was not very strong, and the doctor ordered milk punches every day. The young woman began to like the punches and wanted two instead of one a day, then after a while she began to take the brandy without the milk and soon she found the habit fixed on her strongly. The husband bore with her and did everything that could be done, but things went from bad to worse until the habit fastened itself so that there was first a visit to the police station, and after the first a second and a third.

The woman, whose life had been guarded as carefully as any girl's could be, who had been used in her young days to take nothing stronger than milk or sweet cider, began to become used to the walls of a cell and to bow in abject slavery to the taste of whiskey. Sometimes she would plead with the matron to go and intercede with her husband and promise better things, and many a time has Mrs. Cox gone with the plea. Always it was granted and the same result would follow and "the lady" would be back in the station house crazed with drink. The baby girl grew up into a beautiful young woman, who would come after dark to visit her mother in the cell and plead with her. It was like trying to check the north wind. The passion swept down everything in its path. One day Mrs. Cox was sent for to come to a consumptive home, and there she found "the lady" in the last stages of the disease. She wanted to say goodby and to offer thanks for the little kindnesses of the old days.

**Made Nursery of Station.**

One day not long ago a 14-year old girl brought in a dirty little baby and said the child was lost. The baby spent the afternoon peacefully sleeping on the big quilt the matrons keep for the purpose, and about five o'clock a man came in and asked the matron: "Have you got for me a baby?"

The matron assured him that she hoped it was for him, as she was anxious to turn the infant over to somebody. The baby was properly identified and the man started off with it, complacently, when the matron asked where his wife was that she had left the child uncaared for all afternoon. She had gone out, the man answered, and she had telephoned to him at his place of work over in Manhattan to call at the police station on his way home to get the babe. The man was told very plainly that the next time his wife wanted to go shopping she was not to send her baby to the police stations as a nursery.

**"Shoplifter" a Puzzle.**

The shoplifter is often the puzzle to the matron of the Adams street station. They come in great numbers from the poor, shabby woman, who has stolen a few pairs of socks, or a little frock for her baby, whom she longs to have dressed like the babies of her well-to-do neighbors, to the woman of apparent wealth, who has secreted some seemingly useless trifle. One woman, faultlessly gowned and of undoubted culture and good breeding, who offered \$500 not to be made to sleep in a cell had been arrested for taking three pairs of 69-cent gloves. She was indignant at her arrest, but she didn't deny the theft, merely offered to pay for the gloves. That was a case of many such that Mrs. Boylan recalls from her experiences at the Adams street station, one of the things no one can explain. They call it kleptomania with the rich and thievery with the poor, who, at least, have the prick of necessity to lend palliation to their guilt.

These are the ordinary happenings in the life of the police matron. Their days and nights are a ceaseless round of watching the intoxicated, of standing by to keep the suicide from her intention, of dressing the woman with delirium tremens, who tears her clothes to shreds in the night, of hearing over and over the stories of wretchedness and misery and depravity.



**HE RAIDS A "FENCE."**

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(Copyright, 1906, by Joseph B. Bowles.)  
Great was the day that Policeman Barney Flynn raided a "fence." But, of course, he never would have done it if he had not been properly prompted by his wife. Like many another man, Policeman Flynn does not go out hunting for trouble and work, and it takes a certain amount of feminine sarcasm and criticism to make him even reasonably ambitious. But once roused to action, there is no man on "th' force" who can surpass him in either resourcefulness or nerve.

"Oho! I've found a fence," he announced joyously to his wife one night. "What'll ye do with it?" demanded Mrs. Flynn.

"What'll I do with it?" repeated Policeman Flynn. "What'd ye suppose? Is it ye-er idee that I'll give it ye fr to put r-round ye-er ga-ar-den?" It is a strange conception ye ha-ave iv me official juries an' th' worries iv me daily toll. I pray-sume ye think I is a shone fence with flagree wor-rk on th' fr'n gate, but ye're wr-rong. This fence is a pla-ace where stolen goods is nego-shated fr' ha-ard cash.

"Did ye l'ave thim at th' station?" asked Mrs. Flynn.  
"L'ave what?" inquired Policeman Flynn. "Th' goods?"  
"No; th' min. They's min that r-runs th' fence, iv course. Did ye get thim?"  
"Ye'd like fr to be a widdy, w'd ye?" retorted Policeman Flynn, somewhat warmly. "Ye'd like to ha-ave me go fernist tin or twilve despr't min an' come home lukkin' like a Fourth-iv-July ta-arget in a shootin'-gal'ry, so's ye c'd put on ye-er black dress an' ha-ave l'very wan ca-astin' eyes at ye an' sayin', 'There goes th' widdy iv th' bra-ave po-lis-man that was plantid awa-ay with sivin pounds iv lead in him.' But I'll not give ye th' chanst. I'll rap-poor't th' fae's at r-roll call an' l'ave th' capt'in plan th' raid."

"Ha-and over th' gun ye're carryin', Barney," said Mrs. Flynn, with decision.  
"Fr why?" asked Policeman Flynn.  
"Ye don't need it," answered his wife, with infinite sarcasm. "T is you

investigations. In this he was violating a rule of the department, but what is a rule of the department compared with a rule of the household? He wanted to learn the habits and methods of the gang and do the planning himself, well knowing this assumption of responsibility would be overlooked if he were successful. When everything was in readiness, he outlined his plan to his captain, and asked for aid in making the raid.

"Tis a despr't cr-rord," he said, "an' maybe they'll try to break awa-ay."

"You want two men at each entrance, you say?" queried the captain.

Policeman Flynn nodded.  
"And how many to go in?"  
"Wan. 'T is a nice inj'yable bit iv spoor't I ha-ave pickid out fr' meself."

"You'll be killed," asserted the captain. "As I understand it, the stolen goods are left in the basement at odd times, and then the gang gathers there quietly some night, meets the 'fence,' and the business is cleaned up and the money paid. The only way to do is to overwhelm them."

"Not fr an injane-yus ma-an," answered Policeman Flynn, confidently.  
"Tis me pur-rose to drop in on thim, but 't is no; me night fr dyin'. I'll tell ye why." Here he leaned over and whispered in the captain's ear.

The latter immediately began to laugh. Then he slapped Policeman Flynn on the back, and cried: "Go ahead, Barney. You can have all the men you want."

So it happened that when Policeman Flynn next appeared at his home his coat was split up the back, his trousers were torn, his collar was off, and he was covered with dirt and dust.

"I got thim," he announced, briefly.  
"Ye luk it," replied Mrs. Flynn, surveying him critically.

"I suppr-ised thim."  
"If ye lukked like ye do now ye'd surpr-rise anny wan."

"T was this wa-ay," went on Policeman Flynn. "Th' gazabo that pinches th' goods takes thim to th' alley an' drops thim into a chute, so's he can ma-ake his getaway quick if they's



that knows too well; how to ta-ake care iv ye-erself iver to ha-ave call fr a gun."

Policeman Flynn winced, but he too well knew the danger and difficulties of such a raid to be readily brought to his wife's view of the matter.  
"T w'd be like takin' wan's own life fr to go in there alone," he protested.

"Surpr-rise thim," advised Mrs. Flynn. "Ye know they's a fence there, ye know they's min comes there to l'ave goods, ye know th' ma-an that la-and thim behind th' ba-ars 'll be mentioned in th' po-lis orders an' 'll be a gr-eat ma-an at th' station, an' ye know ye'll never be heard if ye let some wan lise do th' wor-rk. 'T is fr you to ma-ake a showin' fr ye-erself."

"Tis a post-mortim showin' I'd be ma-akin' fr meself," returned the patrolman, ruefully. "Ye don't under-sha-and th' case. 'T is not th' fence alone, but th' gang that l'aves th' goods there, that's to be r-round-up, an' 't is a despr't cr-rord. 'T is only me juty to me scooper-ye-er officer to rap-poor't in a case like this."

"T is ye-er juty to ye-erself to show ye're a po-lis-man with a head on ye," insisted Mrs. Flynn.

"To prove I ha-ave a head on me 't is necessary fr to ha-ave it blowed off," commented Policeman Flynn, lugubriously.

"If ye ha-aven't th' injinoo-ity to save it, 'tis better so," asserted Mrs. Flynn. "Don't ye iver let thim sma-art day-tictives get th' cr-redit fr ye-er wor-rk, Barney Flynn, or I'll believe ye're not Irish at all, but only a Polack or some other furriner."

With this the subject was temporarily dropped; but Policeman Flynn knew that he had to do that particular job himself in order to have peace in the family, and Mrs. Flynn knew that he would do it and do it well. He did not report his discovery at the station, but devoted his spare time to further

anny wan followin' him. Oho! but 'tis well arra-anged. Niver a wan iv thim that steals th' goods takes thim into th' place at all, an' they never goes there only when the time comes fr th' fence to squire up with thim, an' thim they goes in th' front wa-ay. But 'tis me that found th' chute all hidden awa-ay nice where a windy widdy fr to be so. I puts two min at th' front door an' two min at th' side door, an' thim I drops in on thim an' ma-akes thim think a bit iv th' judgment da-ay has come. Oho! it ma-akes me laugh to think iv it. They like to have did iv heart failure."

"How'd ye go in, Barney?" asked Mrs. Flynn.

"I wint down the chute like a hod iv brick, an' l'anded on th' table where they was sittin'. I had thim ma-archin' out before they knew what was doin'."

"Ha-ave ye thim all at th' station?" inquired Mrs. Flynn.  
"All but wan," answered the patrolman.

"Did he get awa-ay?"  
"M-m-m, well, ye may sa-ay he did—after a fashion; but 'tis me that knows where to find him."

"Where?"  
"At th' hospitt'e," said Policeman Flynn. "He br-roke me fah as I come down th' chute, an' he got awa-ay in an amblyance."

**Not Extravagant.**

The Mother.—But I'm afraid that young man is extravagant.

The Girl.—Ridiculous, mother! Why, he was here four hours last night, and he only kissed me three times!

—Yonkers Statesman.

**Like an Ostrich.**

Mr. B.—I wish I was an ostrich.

Mrs. B.—Why so, dearie?

"Then I could do as they do—stick my bill in the sand."—Magazine of Fun