



A Plea for the Appointment
OF
POLICE MATRONS
AT POLICE STATIONS.

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Y attention was first drawn to the subject of Police Matrons during the year of the Queen's Jubilee, when amidst the prolonged season of national festivity, public thought was for a moment arrested by certain scandalous proceedings in our metropolitan police department, as its administration was brought to light in connection with the notorious Cass case. The recollection of this may have faded from the memory of most people, therefore let me recapitulate in brief. A young dressmaker, by name Miss Cass, when walking down Oxford Street about nine o'clock in the evening, was arrested by Police Constable Endacott, despite her earnest protests of innocence, was then carried off to a police station, and having been charged with solicitation on the streets, was locked up for the night. Investigation proved the charge to be absolutely groundless, and that Miss Cass was not only innocent of the specified offence, but was a girl of spotless reputation. The excitement caused by this occurrence lasted for more than a midsummer day, and while many of the leading newspapers dwelt at no considerable length upon it, it occurred to some to enquire

into the nature of the conditions of supervision under which Miss Cass must have spent the night at the police-station. Investigation made it evident, that she, like all other women under arrest in the metropolis, had been left to the care of officials and was unattended by anyone of her own sex.

The London *Echo* was, however, the only newspaper which took any trouble to enquire if a better state of things existed elsewhere, which might be copied with advantage in the Metropolis. Acting on its behalf, I interviewed Mr. Police-Constable Boyd, who has since been appointed Head of the Police in Glasgow, and under his kind guidance, I went over the central police-station in that city, finding there, as also in some other parts of Scotland, that the women prisoners were guarded for the night by police matrons, or "turnkeys" as they are called. Nothing further was done, however, and but for the persistent efforts of Miss Louisa Twining, Poor Law Guardian, discussion of the question might have immediately ceased. Her repeated letters to the *Times* drew public attention to the subject, particularly as she could support her position by such instances as the following:—

"WEST LONDON POLICE COURT—TUESDAY.—Mary Ann Frost, a laundress, was charged with being drunk and incapable in St. Clement's Road, and with attempting to commit suicide in the cells at Notting Dale Station. Police-constable Sayer said he found the prisoner in the cell with an apron string tied tightly round her neck and black in the face. She pulled off her clothes and tried to strangle herself with her chemise. She was so violent that two constables had to remain with her during the night. The Doctor said she would be all right when sober. Mr. Plowden said it was an act of drunken stupidity, and committed her to prison for seven days."

A similar case was revealed early in the year 1889, when a poor victim who was locked up for drunkenness previous to her last and fatal offence, was inspected by a policeman every half-hour during the night.

In the House of Commons the Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews, was questioned on the subject by Mr. Pickersgill, who—complaining that women who were arrested and detained at police-stations in London, often from Saturday night to Monday morning, had not the protection of a female attendant, but were left entirely to the care of men—urged on the ground of public decency and decorum that the present condition of

things was indefensible. He was told in reply that if there were sufficient funds he—the Home Secretary—would introduce female warders or custodians in every police-station; as, however, there were over 200 police-stations in London, he led the public to believe that the reform was utterly impracticable. But when pressed a little further, he made a more important admission, inasmuch as he said that the great obstacle in the way of employing women as matrons or warders to be permanently in attendance, was that the structural arrangements of the various police-stations did not afford accommodation for a decent woman to live on the premises.

Miss Twining was not to be baffled, and the Vigilance Society having looked into the matter, the question was again raised in Parliament, and resulted in the appointment of a special committee to enquire into “the accommodation provided for prisoners in the police-courts of the Metropolis, and all buildings in England and Wales in which Courts of Summary Jurisdiction are held.”

This enquiry into the *police-court*, however, did not include an investigation into the *police-station*, the one being the place where prisoners are tried during the morning hours, the other being the place of detention over night. To the un-biassed outsider, an enquiry into the nocturnal conditions would have seemed more to the point than one concerning the briefer hours by day. But those interested in the question were grateful for even small concessions, and the Report, signed by Sir Alfred Wills and four other Commissioners, attracted considerable attention at the time it was issued in 1888, for it revealed a state of things hardly credible in our nineteenth century civilisation.

Amongst many other statements made by the Commissioners occurs the following: “In our opinion it is utterly wrong that women prisoners should have no women about them at the places of detention, and should be obliged to appeal to a man when they want to make use of water-closet accommodation. There ought to be, at each court, a female officer to take charge, under the gaoler or constables, of the women—a provision which by law has to be made for women in custody in a prison.”

Then amongst fifteen “recommendations” we find: “Besides the male officer or officers in charge of the prisoners, there should be a female officer in charge, under him, of the female prisoners.”

And again, in this same Report by Sir Alfred Wills and the other Commissioners, we read: "In no case, and in no place is there a female warder or gaoler. People often have to wait several hours in the waiting-room, and any woman wanting to perform any of the offices of nature must ask a policeman's help. He will take her across the yard, and generally she must go for the purpose to one of the cells which may or may not be tenanted by other women. If it be so, she must relieve herself in their presence, if at all."

A desire to spare the feelings of those who may be willing to enter with me into a consideration of this painful subject prevents me from quoting at full from the report issued by these gentlemen; but so impressed had they evidently become by the facts laid before them that, even unbiassed and judicial as their proceedings were supposed to be, they were compelled to protest in the strongest words of indignation and denunciation against the existing state of things. "What, however," they continued, "shall we say of the imprisonment under such circumstances of persons of respectability? Of those who enter into prison life for the first time, perhaps for trivial offences? Of the innocent? Of children? Of women who have made some step which brings them within the grasp of criminal law, but who are novices in the ways of prostitution or theft? Of a young girl arrested, for instance, on a charge of concealment of birth? Of persons (and there are some amongst those who pass through this horrible mill) as to whom a mistake has been made, and who never ought to have been detained, much less shut up with thieves and burglars, with tramps, vagrants and prostitutes? Whose ears are assailed, perhaps for the first time, with language too foul to think of, much less to repeat, and who are brought from a decent and comfortable home into companionship and associations of indescribable degradation? Of persons (of whom there are many) who have committed offences abundantly serious, who have, for instance, robbed an employer or abused positions of trust, but who are startled and horrified at the consequences of their crime, and who neither belong to the criminal classes nor, with any help to come right again, are likely to do so?

"I am satisfied that the gaolers in such cases do what little they can to minimise the inevitable cruelty. I have seen myself children locked up by themselves, and the remaining cells proportionately over-crowded, and I have seen the policeman in the waiting-room who had brought up three little people

whose united ages cannot have made up five and twenty years guarding them in a corner where they could look out of the window, and standing between them and older misdoings ; and I must say that, with scarcely an exception, the gaolers appeared to me to be persons of humanity and good sense. But one and all admitted that all these feeble attempts at classification break down utterly on a busy day, and that to young people the companionship must be mischievous in the extreme, whilst to the really respectable, or to the slightly fallen or the tottering, the circumstances of their confinement must be absolutely intolerable. I think it can be no exaggeration to say that at present thousands of persons every year pass through this discipline, to whom it is calculated either to give infinite pain or to do infinite mischief, or both. Thoroughly respectable women have from time to time to go through this misery and degradation, and to submit to the necessity of asking a constable or a gaoler to conduct them to a place of retirement, which may turn out to be a cell in which half a dozen obscene and noisy prostitutes are already shut up. At the assizes no woman is ever brought down to the court without a female warder to look after those of her sex. Is it asking too much of the civilisation of the nineteenth century to suggest that, at courts where many women are brought up every day in the year, there should be some provision for effectual separation of the sexes, and for the custody of women by a warder of their own sex, as well as some possible escape for respectable women, who may be innocent, from intolerable humiliation and torture?"

As a result of this report the Home Secretary at once gave orders that all new stations should be built on improved models, and that the old ones should be improved as far as possible. Thus gradually the system was slightly reformed, until, at least in the metropolis, at every one of the fifteen police-courts there is during the day a female warder, who is appointed to be on duty all day in the women prisoners' waiting rooms or cells at the court, and to have sole charge of the women and children, who, under the new rules, are kept separate from the men prisoners.

So far so good ; but the suggestion could only be carried out by the Home Secretary in the Metropolitan area, and the municipal corporation of each town is still left to carry out, to enforce or not, as it pleases, these decent, humane, and enlightened arrangements. But the agitation which, since the days of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, has secured matronly supervision

for the women prisoners in prisons, and now in the metropolitan area and in a few towns for the few hours during which the police-court is sitting, should, I am of opinion, be extended until similar matronly supervision has been secured for the whole of the long night watches, as well as during the day at all places where women and children may be under detention.

The Home Secretary, however, on being questioned again, stated that it had not been found possible to have matrons at the police stations, and, although the women are locked up in cells apart from the men, they are still entirely under the supervision of policemen. The absolute absurdity of the position thus taken up must be apparent to everyone. In the light of day, when the drunken woman has come to her sober senses, when the raving, half-naked girl from the street has been decently clothed, and has been calmed down by long waiting, or the timid first offender, or falsely accused victim, has lived through the awful first night under custody, there would comparatively speaking be little need for matronly succour and supervision. What is most urgently needed is that women attendants shall be always ready at the police stations when the girls or women are brought in, particularly during the hours of the night; for it is a well-known fact that by far the greater number of arrests take place after five o'clock in the evening. But "want of funds" and "defects of structure" are allowed to stand in the way of a reform which affects, it is regrettable to think, tens of thousands of our fellow country-women every year. To say that a woman under arrest may be placed in a different category to an ordinary human being is to assume that arrest necessarily involves guilt; and further, it is hopeless to talk of raising those of criminal inclination from degradation if we assume that the State recognises and endorses degradation by submitting offenders to humiliations which can only tend to aggravate their natural tendencies instead of diminishing them.

During a visit to America I had seen something of the beneficent working of a police matron system, and on my return home in order to ascertain the exact condition of things as they exist at the present moment in this country, Lady Henry Somerset asked me to institute special and careful enquiries. In pursuance of this request I have visited many Police Stations and Courts in England and Wales; at Leeds alone have I found the police-matron *station* system enforced in any practical degree, and in Liverpool, as it seemed to

me, under very imperfect conditions ; while in only very few towns have I found any attempt to enforce the better state of things recommended by the Commissioners and now carried out at the *police courts* of the Metropolis.

At the outset I was for a considerable time put off my guard by the replies given to me at New Scotland Yard and at several police stations to the effect that police-matrons had already been appointed. But on prosecuting enquiries further, I found that the so-called *police-matron* is nothing more than the *woman-searcher* who generally lives away from the premises and who, even if a resident sergeant's wife, is called in or not on the judgment of the officer in charge, and has in fact no real standing of any kind.

THE METROPOLIS.

Compared with America, where access to police stations was afforded to me both by day and night, investigation of existing conditions in this country is fraught with great difficulties, and if any of the statements which I may make should be disputed, inaccuracy is not due to want of care on my part, but simply because the obstacles to verification are so great that one has to gain information often at second-hand. Some of the statements made to me by apparently reliable witnesses, or which have been gathered from newspapers of good-standing, have on investigation fallen to the ground ; but I now give, so far as in my power lies, evidence which I believe to be absolutely true.

Anxious to find out for myself how the so-called police matron-system worked in London, I made application at a police station to be allowed to spend the night amongst the prisoners as I had done in various cities of America. For this permit I was referred to New Scotland Yard, where I succeeded in obtaining an interview with Mr. Howard, the Assistant Commissioner of Police of the Administrative Department.

In order to save his time and my own, I had jotted down about twelve questions, asking whether matrons were employed at police stations? what their duties were? if they accompanied women prisoners into court? if they were upon the regular police staff? whom they were responsible to? if the matrons retained the key of the cells? and so forth. These questions I based upon the assertion which had been made to me on official authority that matrons were now in attendance at all the stations.

But the Assistant Commissioner declined to have any such question put to him seriatim, and would only allow me to indulge in desultory conversation after I had put my pencil on one side. Thus his remarks had to be entrusted to memory. Like everyone else he persisted in the statement that a matron was connected with each station, but on pressing the enquiry I found that his idea of matronship is limited to summoning some woman from a neighbouring street, when it is thought necessary to search a woman arrested on a suspicion of theft ; or should the Inspector be resident at the station his wife would be called in. But in no sense of the word is this woman called in to perform more than a temporary duty, or has she any control whatever over those who are under arrest ; she has in short merely to carry out the one task of search, and then she is supposed to retire. Mr. Howard seemed somewhat astonished when I informed him that in the city of Chicago for example, twenty-seven duly appointed women are on duty night and day, on from eight to twelve hours shifts, and that no woman is for a moment left under the charge of any policeman. I gave my actual experiences of a night spent in a Chicago police station, and asked for permission to undergo the experience in London.

But the Commissioner gravely assured me that there were (compared with Chicago) few women arrested in London, that it would be quite superfluous to have matrons on regular duty, and that he could grant me no such permit. As I have not yet seen my way to commit petty larceny, or get drunk upon the streets, I am still denied the privilege of practically seeing for myself what the existing state of things is. On enquiring what was done for the many lost children who are picked up every day in the streets of London, and who, I should have supposed, would need a woman's care, I was informed that they were kept at the station for only a very brief period, and if not claimed were sent to the workhouse.

Previous to my visit to New Scotland Yard I had had interviews with several women and girls who had in the course of their lives been arrested and taken to one or other of the police stations in the metropolis ; and I repeated to the Commissioner statements made by two of them. It is only fair to say that he expressed willingness to investigate any case of complaint, but it was obviously beyond my power to do more than repeat the statements which had been made to me, and which I can only give to the public as I gave them to him, for what they may be worth.

A. At a Reformatory Home in North London. Post-office clerk had been arrested at 10.30 in the evening. Taken to a police-station, where she waited for a long time while a woman was sent for as searcher. The girl declared to me that it was only after a third attempt that the Searcher was found, and then it was at a public house from whence she was brought to make the search, which duty having been performed, she vanished. The next morning a policeman brought the girl water for the purposes of ablution. At intervals during the night he had looked through the loop-hole in the door to see how she was getting on. The only place for washing was outside the cell, in the presence of the policeman. The so-called "Matron" was not seen again.

B. At the same Home. A girl stated that she was supervised by the policemen all night. She had no complaint to make of them, as they were very kind, and went their round, looking in upon her at intervals. The woman Searcher was only on duty while the process of searching lasted; and, but for the kindness of one of the men, who took considerable trouble next morning to find a comb, she would have had to go into court her hair dishevelled, as it had been pulled down in the search over-night.

THE CITY.

As most people are aware, while the Metropolitan Police Force is under the Home Secretary, the City Police Force is under the Lord Mayor, and having heard that some new plans had there been adopted, I addressed a letter to his Lordship, begging the favor of information concerning the care of women under arrest at Police Stations under his jurisdiction, and requested that I might be allowed to put my enquires categorically as follows:

1. How many City Stations are there, and is there a Matron at each Station?
2. Does the Matron merely search the women, or is she on duty all night to go the rounds?
3. May I ask what the Matron's salary is?
4. By whom is she appointed?
5. The number of women arrested during the year?
6. The proportion of women to men arrested for drunkenness?
7. Have you also a Matron on duty at the Courts during the day?

By answering these questions you would render a great service, for our object is to endeavour to ensure the appointment of Matrons at Police Stations and Courts all over the country, and any appointments already made furnish powerful arguments towards the accomplishment of this end.

The following is a copy of the reply :—

“ 26, OLD JEWRY, E.C.

“ 12th January, 1893.

“ MY LORD MAYOR,

“ According to your Lordship’s request, I beg to furnish herewith categorical replies to certain questions, addressed to your Lordship by Miss F. Balgarnie, on behalf of the ‘ World’s Woman’s Christian Temperance Union.’

“ 1. There are six Police Stations in the City, at each of which a Matron is resident.

“ 2. *The Matron is principally employed as Searcher, and is not required to exercise any supervision over female prisoners.* Her services are, however, available at any time in case of illness or other emergency.

“ 3. The Matrons are paid as housekeepers, their salary varying according to the number of residents in the Station House. They receive in addition an allowance for each person searched, viz., 4d. during the day, and 6d. during the night. When a Matron is required, as in cases of attempted suicide, or for other special reasons, to watch a prisoner continuously, she is paid at the rate of 8d. per hour.

“ 4. Matrons are appointed by the Commissioner.

“ 5 & 6. This information will be found in the yearly return of crime furnished to your Lordship. I may observe that persons detained for drunkenness only, and who are not taken before a magistrate, are not included in the return, which therefore only shows a small proportion of the number of persons taken into custody as drunk and incapable.

“ 7. There are no Matrons on duty at Police Courts.

“ Miss Balgarnie’s letter is herewith returned.

“ I have the honour to be,

“ My Lord Mayor,

“ Your obedient Servant,

(Signed)

“ HENRY SMITH,

“ *Lieut.-Col. Commissioner.*”

It will be seen from the above statement that so-called matrons are resident at each of the six police-stations in the City; but what can the system be worth when we find that their duties are those merely of housekeepers and occasional searchers.

A further illustration of the insufficiency of this system was soon after furnished. A certain occurrence in May, 1893, may still be in the recollection of some, when a poor old woman was carried from a tailor's sweating den near the Barbican to a City police-station, and although too helpless to speak and answer the charge of drunkenness, was locked up in a cell and left alone all night. The next morning she was found dying, not from alcoholism, but from apoplexy. Had there been any proper system of matronly supervision, the real state of things must have been discovered, for it would have been the duty of the matron to visit the woman at frequent intervals and call in the doctor, if what appeared to be a drunken stupor was unusually prolonged. I made careful personal enquiries at the sweating shop, from the tailor, his wife, and the other workers; at the police-station from the constable on duty; and at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, whither the poor creature had been taken, from the doctor who had received her. But all I could learn was that the woman had *appeared* to be drunk, the young constable who, contrary to rules, had locked her up in a condition which unfitted her to answer the charge, had been reprimanded, and that the doctor had failed to detect the cause of death until a *post mortem* had been made.

THE PROVINCES.

Previous to this, in July, 1892, I had addressed a letter to the Home Secretary, Mr. Matthews, making the following enquiries:—

1. In how many towns in England and Wales are police matrons employed at the police-stations, to take charge of women under arrest?

2. Is it the duty of these matrons to remain at the station in rotation both by day and night?

3. Are the matrons sworn in upon the regular police staff? and is there any regulation pay and pension system which at all approximates to that in force for policemen?

4. If not, to whom are the matrons responsible?

5. Do you find middle-class women anxious for these posts? or are the matrons drawn from the same class of society as the policemen?

6. In those cases where there may be no police matrons, who searches the women under arrest, or looks after them in case of illness or insubordination ?

Receiving no answer to these enquiries, I repeated my application when the new Government came in ; and on the 11th of January, 1893, I was furnished, through the Home Secretary, Mr. Asquith, with the following returns :—

“WHITEHALL.

“ 11th *January*, 1893.

“MADAM,

“ With reference to your letters of the 29th of July and 26th of September last, I am directed by the Secretary of State to transmit to you the enclosed summary of the information obtained with respect to the employment of women to attend to females in the custody of the Police in Borough and County Police Stations.

“ The Secretary of State is unable to supply you with a list of all Police Stations, and of the arrangements made at each, but he hopes that the summary will be sufficient for the purposes of the Association, on behalf of which you applied for the information.

“ I am, Madam,

“ Your obedient Servant,

“ E. LEIGH PEMBERTON.”

Supplied by request through the kindness of The Right Hon. H. H. Asquith, Secretary of State for the Home Department.

SUMMARY

Information furnished by Inspectors of Constabulary as to the arrangements in force for providing female attendance to females in the custody of the Police.

TABLE A.

1. Towns in which Matrons are employed. (The term "Matron" is in this Table applied to persons <i>resident</i> at the Station.	2. Number of such Matrons,	3. Are these Matrons sworn in upon the Police staff, and are they entitled to pension.	4. Authority to whom the Matrons are responsible.	5. Arrangement as to their attendance.	6. Remuneration.	7. Social position.
NORTHERN DISTRICT Manchester ...	1. Employed at the City Police Court to take charge of prisoners until they are discharged or consigned to goal.	No	The Chief or Head Constable.	In attendance as required during the day only.		
Liverpool ...	(a) Employed at the Main Bridewell. (b) At the District Bridewells, the wife of the sergeant in charge acts as Matron and Searcher.	No No	Do. Do.	No. 1 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. 2 2 " " 10 " 3 2 p.m. to 6 a.m. When required.	12/6 per week, 2 suits of uniform, and an annual gratuity of £5 5/.	Usually the widows of police officers. See col. 2.

TABLE A.—Continued.

1. Towns in which Matrons are employed. (The term "Matron" is in this Table applied to persons resident at the Station.	2. Number of such Matrons.	3. Are these Matrons sworn in upon the police staff, and are they entitled to pension.	4. Authority to whom the Matrons are responsible.	5. Arrangement as to their attendance.	6. Remuneration.	7. Social position.
Newcastle-on-Tyne	2. At head-quarters.	No	The Chief or Head Constable.	When required.	9/6 per week.	Wife of police officers.
Bradford 1. At central station (Town Hall). 7. At other stations.	No	Do.	When required.	7/6 Free quarters.	I. Wife of curator.
Leeds 16. One at each station.	No	Do.	When required.	The resident officer in charge pays 2/- rent, and is allowed fuel and cleaning utensils, etc. 10/- a week.	7 wives of resident inspectors. Wives of the resident officers.
Sheffield ...	At headquarters there is a night Matron. At each station.	No	Do.	When required.	The resident officer is allowed quarters, fuel, gas, &c.	Wife or daughter of resident inspector or constable.
Blackpool ... Clitheroe ...	" " " "	No No	Do. Do.	When required. When required.	Nil.	Wife of constable.
MIDLAND DISTRICT.						
Wolverhampton ...	1	No	The Chief Officer	When required.	£12 a year and free quarters.	Wife of a police sergeant.
SOUTH OF ENGLAND AND SOUTH WALES DISTRICT.						
Plymouth ...	1	No	The Police Authority,	When required.	£7 10/- a year.	Same class as that from which policemen are drawn.

TABLE B.

Arrangements in Towns other than those specified in Table A.

1. Where no "Matron" is employed, to whom is the duty of searching and attending to females entrusted?	2. Arrangement made for their attendance.	3. Remuneration.	4. Social Position.
To women employed as Female Searchers, who are responsible as a general rule to the Police Authority, but are not sworn in, or otherwise formally appointed members of the staff, or entitled to pension.	The Female Searcher is called in when required, unless as is frequently the case, she happens to be the wife of the Resident Officer, when she is of course, on the spot.	In Birmingham : 4 <i>d.</i> for each prisoner searched. 2/6 per day or night when in charge of a prisoner. Responsible in this case to the Chief Officer. Elsewhere the remuneration is a fixed sum, varying in amount from 3 <i>d.</i> , 4 <i>d.</i> , 6 <i>d.</i> , or 1/- for each person searched.	In most cases the Female Searcher is the wife, widow, or other relative of a Police-Sergeant or Constable; if not a woman of similar social position.

NOTE.—In the Police Stations in the smaller country towns and in villages, provided by County Police Authorities, the arrangements described in Table B. prevail. In these cases, however, it is the general, if not the universal, practice for the Station to be in charge of a Married Officer, whose wife would search females in his custody, or otherwise attend to them if occasion required.

According to the information given in Table A, it would seem that in the towns of Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Blackpool, Clitheroe, Wolverhampton, &c., matrons are in attendance; but the explanation given in column 5, "when required," together with the rate of remuneration mentioned, in Table 6, shows that these so-called matrons have no more definite position than that of woman searcher—that is, *although they may be resident on the spot as wives of station sergeants, they are no more actually present than if they were living off the premises.*

A few weeks after this table was furnished by Mr. Asquith, an illustration of its working was afforded in the *Daily News* of February 25, 1893:—

"The Wolverhampton police, like their brethren elsewhere, appear to be under the impression that people who are suffering from any failure of the bodily powers must of necessity be people who are drunk. A poor woman named Brown, who was discovered the other day by the roadside at Pennfields in a very helpless and enfeebled condition, was examined by a medical man, who ascertained that she was suffering from paralysis of the side, resulting from an attack of apoplexy, and had her placed in an omnibus, with instructions to the driver to inform the first policeman they met in order that the sufferer might be conveyed to a hospital. From the evidence given in the Coroner's Court, it appears that when the vehicle arrived at its destination two policemen were called in, but instead of conveying Mrs. Brown to the hospital, they dragged her out of the omnibus, took her to the station, and charged her with being drunk and incapable. Incredible as it may seem, the unfortunate woman was thereupon locked up all night in a cell, with the result that she was found the next morning in so pitiable a condition that she was removed to the hospital, where she died the same evening. It was stated that Mrs. Brown was a sober woman, and the surgeon who had conducted the *post mortem* deposed that no traces of alcohol had been found in the stomach, and that the cause of death was apoplexy. Commenting on the evidence, the Coroner observed that there seemed little doubt that one of the two constables was at the time of the arrest under the influence of drink."

I at once went down to the House of Commons, and obtained the promise of Mr. Albert Spicer to address a question to the Home Secretary on the matter. By some strange misfortune the reply did not reach the ears of the Reporters in the Press

Gallery, but the following extract is taken from the Hansard Report :—

DYING, NOT DRUNK.

“Mr. Spicer (Monmouth, &c.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the case of the late Mrs. Brown, whom it is reported, in spite of a doctor’s injunctions that she should be conveyed to the hospital because she was suffering from apoplexy, was dragged to the Wolverhampton Police Station by two policemen and locked up all night on the charge of being drunk and incapable, with the results that she was found dying next morning, and was dead by the evening ; and whether there are no police matrons at this and other stations, whose duty it is to attend to women when under arrest ?

“Mr. Asquith: The conduct of the two policemen is now under investigation by the Watch Committee ; in the meantime, they have been suspended without pay. The facts appear from the evidence at the inquest to be as stated, except that there was medical evidence to show that the woman’s removal to the police station could not have affected her life, as it is stated that she could not have lived in any case. There is a police matron attached to the station ; but by a most regrettable mistake she was not called in in this case, as both the sergeant and constable on reserve duty considered that Mrs. Brown was simply drunk and incapable.”—*Hansard, March 3, 1893.*

Further attention was drawn to the matter in the following way :—

To the Editor of the DAILY NEWS.

“SIR,—Never was a more pitiable story told than the one appearing in your issue of this morning, and certainly none that reflects less credit upon the police system of this country. Picked up by the roadside near Wolverhampton, in a paralysed condition, Mrs. Brown is placed by a medical man in an omnibus, with the injunction that she is to be conveyed to a hospital, but a drunken constable intervening, she is dragged off to the station, is charged with being drunk and incapable, is locked up for the night, found dying in the morning, and is a corpse before the evening. May I inquire where was the matron who is supposed to attend to female prisoners ; and how was it that she failed to note the true state of affairs ; for as the *post mortem* revealed no traces of alcohol in the stomach, it is fair to assume that there could be no trace of alcohol in the

breath? I ask this question because I have been informed by the Home Office that there is a "police matron" duly appointed in Wolverhampton. For months I have been making inquiries as to the condition under which women are placed under arrest in police-stations, and I find that Wolverhampton is one of the very few towns where a "matron" is employed. In the returns from eleven of the principal cities of England, with which only last month the Home Secretary was good enough to furnish me, Wolverhampton appears as a town which employs "the wife of a police-sergeant at a salary of £12 a year and free quarters to come on duty when required by the chief officer." Now, it is important that the point should be cleared up, Was the matron summoned, or was she not; and what are the duties of this official? If I mistake not, it will be found that the "coming on duty when required" renders the so-called "matron" little more than a "searcher" in cases of supposed theft. Indeed, the term "matron" as employed in the metropolis and, so far as I can discover, in every town in England except two, is totally misleading. In Liverpool there is a matron at the central station, and likewise in Leeds, on regular night duty; but I believe in all other cases the provision "to be called when required" renders the "matron" system little better than a snare and a delusion. What we ought to have, what I trust every true-hearted Englishman will demand that we shall have, is a capable, middle-aged, and properly remunerated matron placed on duty for the whole night, and made as responsible for the custody of the female prisoners as the inspector is for the male prisoners. We in England are lamentably behindhand in this matter. In Scotland it is far otherwise. In Edinburgh all women under arrest are immediately transferred to the central station, where three matrons are employed, each taking duty for eight hours at a stretch. In Glasgow and most of the important towns in Scotland a similar system is in force. In the United States of America, in nearly every large town, and in many smaller ones, from New York to San Francisco, matrons are on duty day and night. In Chicago alone 23 are employed*. I recently spent two nights in American police-stations, and the sights I there witnessed convinced me that to have placed women and girls under arrest unattended by a matron would have been nothing less than an outrage upon the most elementary principles of decency and humanity. My application to spend a night in some London police-station has been refused by the authorities at

* Since increased to 27.

New Scotland Yard, and I can therefore not speak from personal experience of the condition of things in this country. But human nature is much the same on both sides of the Atlantic and of the Scottish border, and I fail to see that responsible matrons, who by the common consent of mayors, magistrates, and chief constables of Scotland and the United States are an absolute necessity, can any longer be dispensed with in this country.

“Yours, etc.,

“FLORENCE BALGARNIE.”

The death of poor Mrs. Brown was made the subject of exhaustive enquiry under the Borough Coroner in Wolverhampton; and the whole matter ended by a censure of the two policemen, and entire exculpation of the other officers from blame. *But the point of the argument remains, namely, that had a properly qualified woman been in attendance to watch over women under arrest, the true condition of this woman must have been discovered, and the doctor would have been called in.*

It may be said, however, that the cases just quoted, both from Wolverhampton and the City of London, are exceptional, and that such isolated instances in no sense of the word warrant the appointment of a special body of women to obviate instances as occasional as they are tragic. To this I would reply that it should be the honour as well as the duty of a civilised nation to make it possible that no one coming within the clutches of the law should thereby be placed in greater peril than when in a state of freedom; and secondly, these cases quoted may quite fairly be regarded as but bubbles on the surface of a seething cauldron of misery, injustice, and hardship of which we, the general public, know but little. The recent revelations given by the *Chronicle* of our much vaunted Prison System, have convinced the most sceptical that even in our civilised country much goes on in the dark which it is time was brought to light.

Only few women may die in the police-cells for lack of proper attention; but those with any shred of modesty or decency left must have it irreparably deadened by being subjected to a condition of things which in no prison, workhouse, reformatory, hospital, public or state institution of any kind would be tolerated. The most elementary idea of civilisation demands a certain degree of separation of the sexes. At every railway station, theatre, concert-hall, we have “ladies’ waiting-rooms,” with a woman in attendance; in every workhouse there are women’s apartments

under the sole charge of women ; in every infirmary, women's and children's wards. But when we come to deal with those quarters where many unhappy women are compelled to spend not merely one night, but not infrequently from Saturday to Monday, it is evidently taken for granted that they may be rightfully deprived of the direct supervision of one of their own sex. Is a crime supposed to banish all sense of propriety from the human breast ? This can hardly be the theory upon which the practice is based ; otherwise, why have we any female warders in prisons ? But even if it were based upon so hateful an assumption, if one act or more of wickedness placed a woman for ever outside the pale of ordinary conventionalities, then may we indeed abandon our system of matron wardership in gaols, but should surely establish it in the police-station, where guilty and innocent are indiscriminately mixed, some being there for no crime, but simply in consequence of an over-zealous officialism !

In considering this subject we must remember that, according to English law, everyone under arrest is supposed to be innocent until guilt is proved, and that out of the total number arrested at our police-stations many are discharged, and more than 20 per cent. on the average of those who are sent for trial at sessions or assizes are proved to be wholly innocent of the offences with which they have been charged. But if, for a moment, we could suppose that these women who, on the very night on which I am writing these words, will be gathered together in the police-stations of this land were absolutely and irretrievably degraded, I would venture to say that such an assumption affords a stronger argument perhaps than any other for the appointment of someone of their own sex ; for not only have we the interests of the women at heart, but also of the men, many of whom, perhaps, by very reason of the fine qualities which lend glory to their manhood, are peculiarly susceptible to the damnable influences of an utterly debased woman. Again women are, when arrested, often in a state of drunkenness, unconsciousness, or devoid of all self-control and ordinary delicacy of feeling ; obscene sometimes to an indescribable degree in speech or gesture, and wild with excitement and rage ; and it would seem only obvious that in common fairness to the police force as a whole, some respectable women should be placed at each station as an intermediary between the accused and the man by whom she is arrested.

The Rev. J. W. Horsley, late Chaplain of H.M.'s prison, Clerkenwell, in his book entitled "Jottings from Jail," says

“The perfect and secure separation of the sexes, and the provision that females should only be guarded and attended by female warders, is a comparatively modern improvement for which there was undoubted need, and now no male officer has a key that would admit him into a female cell; and when the Governor, or doctor, or chaplain are paying their visits they must be accompanied by a female officer. But where is this carefulness to be found in our police cells? Some very unpleasant charges are occasionally brought against the police (often, no doubt, without the least truth), which could never have been thought of in a prison.” He goes on to give many instances of disorderly proceedings in police cells, where women are locked up, two and three together, without proper supervision, and he argues that police cells should be placed under the same womanly surveillance as session cells.

I hesitate to reveal to the readers of this paper many of the terrible statements made to me when, somewhat in the character of a mother-confessor, I visited reformatories and penitentiaries in different parts of the country in order to glean from the inmates themselves their own experiences at police-stations. The difficulty in writing a paper such as this is not lack of material, but rather a superfluity of horrible detail, a repetition of which would be a sin against the most elementary ideas of good taste.

While attending the Police Court at Salford on August 20th, 1892, I saw a woman placed in the dock on the charge of “solicitation.” She declared her innocence, that the man she was speaking to was her affianced husband, and that the banns were already up. She was remanded until enquiries could be made. In Manchester and Salford, where the utmost stringency is exercised over female prostitutes (not so far as I could gather over male prostitutes) it stands to reason that the case cited will be no exceptional one, and that such women should most certainly be under the charge of a matron for every hour out of the twenty-four. Said Inspector McGuckin after his eighteen years’ experience, as he subsequently took me over the Salford Station, “It’s a shame, women prostitutes would not be there, but for the men.”

In Plymouth I visited the lowest haunts of vice, and although I invariably heavily discount statements made by prostitutes and criminals, I came to the conclusion that here as elsewhere, the appointment of matrons is an urgent and imperative necessity, if for nothing more than to guard the reputation of the police against, we will hope, baseless charges.

At Salford, for example, I was informed by a woman who had been forty-three times in Strangeways Gaol, of some of the horrible altercations which go on in the still hours of the night between the police and the women, when some such request, as for water, is made. After a night under the personal control of these men the women seem to have no sense of modesty, and she informed me that, as a matter of course, the women will take off their dresses and wash in the presence of the policemen, who may be walking up and down the corridor at the time. This is not very surprising when one calls to mind the fact that the system of "frog-marching" desperate women, who often struggle until bereft of nearly all their clothing, is still resorted to in some towns; that is to say, if a woman is violent, instead of having some system of carrying her in an ambulance, or driving her to the station, she is carried face downwards one or more constables taking her by the arms, the others by the legs. I have heard many men say they would rather arrest six men than one drunken or violent woman, and there is no doubt that what the casual passer-by may term "rough-handling," is inevitable under our present system. In fact, it is undoubtedly true that many of these women, especially those known as "gay girls" simply vie with each other to do everything they can of the most disgusting character; and the height of their pleasure is to bring a blush of shame, if possible, to the face of a policeman.

I was not surprised to hear from Mr. Passmore, Secretary of the Salford Home for Women, his expression of opinion in the following words: "I am in favour of the police matron movement, because I feel that the policemen need some protection from the abandoned women with whom they have constantly to deal. This has forced itself on me often during my eight years' work amongst the most depraved classes in Manchester and Salford."

A woman who had often been an inmate of Strangeways Gaol, while admitting that things were improved since she first began her evil career, insinuated in the broadest way that the policemen were actually known to abuse the trust imposed upon them by endeavouring to incite to positive acts of immorality.

Another woman from Bacup told me she had on one occasion spent three nights in the police station, and the whole time had been waited upon by policemen. Others complained bitterly to me of the treatment they had received at the hands of policemen, while some spoke of the "jolly times" they had had, and

of being allowed to come out of their cells to be treated to drink. It is only fair to say however, that amidst the complaints made to me, many of the women expressed a feeling of life-long gratitude for the kindness which they had received from the police when discovered cold, hungry, and shelterless upon the streets. But even those who were warmest in their expressions of gratitude, told me of others where the initial kindness had developed into a practical abuse of confidence.

Mrs. Catherine J. Carmichael, Lady Superintendent of the Oakhill Home, Cheetham Hall, Manchester, writes to me:—"From statements made to me by women who have been under arrest, I deem it of the utmost importance that women should be appointed as matrons, to be on regular duty both day and night at our police-stations, so as to have entire charge of the women's cells." While Miss H. W. Partridge, Lady Superintendent of the Magdala Asylum, Edgbaston, Birmingham, states:—"I am in favour of matrons being placed in police-stations as a protection to the women who are so often there for one or two nights. If these women had the kindly advice and sympathy of a matron, much good might be done."

Miss Katherine Macfarlane, for eleven years Principal of the Carlton House certificated Industrial School, Bristol, was for nearly a year in the Female Refuge for Discharged Prisoners in Winchester, and also in Walter Crofton's Refuge, and as a result of conversations which she has accidentally overheard in the course of her duties of supervision, she has come to the conclusion, that if the statements made by the women concerning what goes on during the night at certain police-stations are not false, it would be impossible not to see that the present state of things is pernicious in the extreme, both to the female prisoners, and to the policeman told off to control them.

The evidence of women of experience who have for years come in daily contact with those of the criminal class, is to my mind of more value than any I have been able to obtain through direct interviews with former criminals; for it is essential to be most guarded in seeking and obtaining evidence from depraved members of the community, many of whom, even when under reformatory influences in Penitentiaries or Homes, have little sense of the sin of prevarication or exaggeration.

I have gleaned, however, enough during months of painstaking investigation to force me to the conclusion that the present system of police supervision of women under arrest is

pernicious to prisoner and custodian alike. and it is as much in the interests of manhood as of womanhood that I make this plea for the appointment of police matrons.

As to the police force themselves, opinion is divided on the matter ; probably seven out of every ten police officials are as yet opposed to the appointment of matrons.

The official mind is proverbially slow to move, and questions of accommodation, funds, suitable women for the posts, are allowed to weigh like lead in the scale against the ideas of justice, modesty, and general well-being. I detect, moreover, in many places a distinct jealousy as regards the intrusion of women into this new sphere of work. And this feeling, as a rule, proceeds from those who are most prone to iterate the familiar statement, that the duty of women is pre-eminently to care for children, and those of their own sex. Striking examples to the contrary I found, however, in Leeds, where the Chief Constable, after most courteously conducting me over the Central Station, expressed his unqualified approval of the way in which the matron system worked in so far as it had been tried ; while in Bradford* Mr. Paul, Police Superintendent, expressed to me his earnest desire for the speedy appointment of women, who might relieve the policemen of what is to them a most onerous and disagreeable duty. He informed me that in the more aggravated cases of drunkenness and prostitution the women under arrest not unfrequently cast off their clothing, and that he has had to take off his own coat to cover women in an absolute state of nudity. The women off the streets look upon the police as their enemies—they love to defy, taunt them, and outrage their feelings in every possible way. He agreed that towards a matron they would not exhibit these hostile feelings, and that greater order and decency would be preserved. Indeed, he did not hesitate to say that he not merely believed in, but was most anxious to see them appointed.

These theories of Mr. Paul are amply confirmed by experience wherever the system has been tried, and for the encouragement of those who will, it is to be hoped, set to work to secure the co-operation of Town Councils in this matter, a few instances of the manner in which the system has worked, when tried, may be quoted :—

* Bradford, it should be remembered, is one of the towns mentioned in the Home Secretary's returns as provided with a matron—*so-called!*

SCOTLAND.

Matrons have for years been on duty in the larger, and to some extent in the smaller towns. In reply to enquiries addressed to the Secretary of State for Scotland, the following reply was received :—

“OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND,
“WHITEHALL, S.W.

“*12th August, 1892.*

“MADAM,

“With reference to your letter of the 29th ultimo, I am directed by the Marquess of Lothian to inform you in reply to your various queries :—

“1. That in addition to the number of Police Matrons, shown under the head, ‘Remarks,’ on page 17 (table 15) of the Report of Her Majesty’s Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland, of which a copy is enclosed, a number of women are employed at the Police Stations in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Greenock, Paisley, and other large towns as Matrons or female turnkeys. At every Burgh Station there is a female ‘Searcher,’ or rather ‘Cleaner.’ And at every County Station with cells, the wife of the officer in charge, or other suitable person, is appointed to look after female prisoners. In some instances a separate allowance is paid, but as a rule the Constable receives a free house, coal, and light as remuneration for this duty, though there are several instances where nothing is paid and no free house is given.

“2. At the large towns there are, day and night, female turnkeys or Matrons. At the legalised cells, and at the County Station, the same woman attends night and day to the female prisoners.

“3. His Lordship understands that as a rule Matrons and female turnkeys are not sworn in, but in Edinburgh and Glasgow they are borne on the police staff. There is, however, no Government contribution to their pay, and they have no statutory title to pension. In some of the larger towns pensions and gratuities have been given on retirement by the local authorities.

“4. The Matrons or female turnkeys are appointed by, and under the orders of, the Chief Officer of Police.

“5. The Matrons are of the same class of people as the constables.

"6. Answered in (1) and (2).

" I am, Madam,

" Your obedient Servant,

" WM. C. DUNBAR."

For more than twenty-seven years the police matron or " Turnkey " system has been in force in Glasgow ; there are now two at the central station, one on day the other on night duty, and one on duty for the night at each of the six district stations, while the " cleaners " who are always about by day assume the duties of turnkeys when needed. At the central office one flat is set apart for women under arrest, and here the Turnkey has a private room at her disposal where she may rest if she pleases until called for by the superintendent, and the women prisoners are never left a moment alone with a policeman. Arrests for drunkenness are terribly frequent amongst women in Glasgow, and the " Turnkey's " duties are by no means light. As a rule the Turnkeys are persons of a rather uneducated type, and I am assured by women who take a deep interest in prison and police court work, that improvement might be effected by paying higher salaries, thereby securing the services of those who would be able to bring more intelligence to the work.

The system as it exists in Edinburgh seemed so far as I could gather, almost ideal, and it is one which I should recommend as a model to all women who may be inspired to set to work to improve the conditions of their own town stations.

Mr. William Henderson, who for upwards of sixteen years has held the important post of Chief Constable of the City of Edinburgh, with great kindness conducted me over the station, and answered my every enquiry. He has had some thirty-one years' experience of police matters in Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Edinburgh, and when he was appointed to the Chief Constableness sixteen years ago, he found two " female turnkeys " on duty, and in order to carry out the system more effectively, he has since appointed a third.

He subsequently wrote to me, that in those places where there are no " female turnkeys " or matrons, he has received complaints from women under arrest who have charged the policemen with roughness, and rudeness, and improper behaviour, and although very few cases of direct assault by policemen upon women in custody in lock-ups had come under his notice, and the accuracy of the charges was doubtful, he is nevertheless of opinion that

women under arrest should, whenever practicable, be placed in charge of those of their own sex from the moment they are placed under restraint. This course, he says, is of benefit, not only to the women, but to the policemen who at the present moment are liable to be placed under false and malicious insinuations at the hands of abandoned women. As if to lend greater emphasis to his opinion, Mr. Henderson added "whenever the arrangements of the force will permit (and they should be made to permit as far as possible), female prisoners should be placed directly in charge of matrons or female turnkeys."

The Edinburgh matrons are middle-aged, motherly-looking women, dressed in neat brown uniforms, each with a bunch of keys hanging by her side. They are indeed absolutely indispensable, and are under as stringent orders as the policemen. A nice little sitting-room, with kitchen range and comfortable sofa, is provided for the matrons, where they take their meals and rest during their scanty leisure moments. "Women are so handy," said Mr. Henderson; and indeed they seemed to be "universal providers," and now and again acted nurse to some man prisoner, whose illness was not acute enough to justify the calling in of the doctor, but to whom a cup of tea and a little kindly attention might be a priceless boon. Mr. Henderson laid great stress on the age of his matrons. "No flighty young things" will he have, but sedate, elderly women between forty and fifty years of age. They are supposed to work in eight hour shifts; but as one must always be on duty when the Court sits, their hours overlap into nine or ten. The waiting-rooms are excellent; arranged with high-backed, high-sided seats like the stalls of a cathedral choir, and each prisoner may thus hide her own shame and identity from her neighbour, while the matron sitting near the door is ready to usher each in her turn into Court. There are "out stations" in various parts of the City; but all women under arrest are brought as speedily as possible to the Central Station that they may be placed under the care of women.

A fourth matron has a little post of her own at another station. She superintends the Receiving-Home for lost children, and from her Police Nursery anxious parents are communicated with by telephone as speedily as possible, while the little ones remain in perfect content. And all these blessings to poor women and children, to say nothing of ailing men, are provided at the modest salary of from fifteen to eighteen shillings a week for each

matron. The salaries are unquestionably too low, and should be the same as those given to policemen for similar work.

One objection frequently raised against the appointment of matrons is that they have not the physical strength to control the more violent women. But experience has proved that an old offender who has had to be carried or held down by four policemen in paroxysms of rage or drunkenness, will submit without a murmur to the moral force of one matron. The more depraved a woman is, the more does she take advantage of her sex. She will kick, scratch, and aim blows at a man, confident that he will not dare to retaliate upon a woman; and wonderful indeed is the patience with which some of these men bear most wretched ill-treatment. On the other hand, if young or pretty, she will try the power of attraction. Both these difficulties are eliminated when a man is replaced by a woman. The offenders do not resent being handled by one of their own sex, and they find neither violence or flattery of the least avail. Cowed in the first instance, in many cases a softer chord is touched, and the woman who has spent the night long in cursing, shouting, and singing low songs at the top of her voice, becomes tractable and subject to reasonable motherly discipline.

To awaken self-respect in those lost to all such feeling, one must begin by showing respect for the potential goodness in their nature. To admit in practice that matronly supervision is necessary for workhouse and infirmary, but not necessary for police-cell inmate is to assume that even one crime, or alleged crime, unsexes the offender. *This unsexing influence of our present police system is distinctly demoralising, and instead of furnishing a reformatory influence tends to develop that which is pernicious to the individual and dangerous to the State.*

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA.

Of experimental police station investigation in the British Isles I have had none, but in America, where by an unwritten law every national, state, or municipal building is open to all citizens alike, I had little difficulty in obtaining the desired information. It would doubtless have been better to have given actual police station experience of this country, but, as the opportunity has, so far, been denied to me at home, I will state what I have seen for myself elsewhere.

The organised national effort on behalf of the Police Matron movement is undoubtedly due to the National Women's Christian Temperance Union, under Mrs. J. K. Barney, for so many years the active superintendent of prison and jail work ; but local success has, as a rule, been attained by the co-operation of most if not all the leading women's organisations of any State or city.

Police matrons have long been on duty among other States, in certain cities in Maine, New York State,* Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, New Hampshire, Illinois, Indiana, Colorado, the district of Columbia, and even in California, as well as in Montreal and other cities in Canada. Portland, in Maine, was the first, Chigago, in Illinois, the second city to adopt the system.

In Boston, Massachusetts, a fine new station was opened some three years ago, and by a State Law similar regulations are in force in at least nine other towns of that State. The initiative was here taken by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, Women's Christian Temperance Union, The Moral Educational Association, &c. It is devoted exclusively to the custody of women, and is under the charge of a capable and superior matron, who is paid a good salary, and has two or three policewomen assistants under her. Every woman arrested in any part of the city is at once, after being charged at a local station, conveyed in a covered waggonette to this central station.

In Philadelphia, on the contrary, the district system is in vogue. There are eleven matrons at eleven different stations. They live on the premises, and have nice little suites of two or three rooms. They are well paid, and, indeed, they deserve to be, for their work is never done, and they are practically on duty for twenty-four hours every day, as they are liable to be called out of bed at any hour of the night whenever a woman may be brought in. But they seem well content with their posts, and one and all cherish a real enthusiasm for their work. Hours have I spent with Police Matrons Sibley, Gilbert, Fletcher, and others, listening to the stories of many girls they have been able to restore to their parents, or save from entering houses of ill fame ; of homeless babes they have succoured until adopted into a family ; bewildered emigrant women who have come in search of some long-lost husband, whom they vainly imagined they would meet directly they landed on American soil. They

* See Appendix I.

always attend the court when any special case is on, otherwise they remain in their apartments. "*The bad cases prefer to be searched by a man,*" remarked Mrs. Sibley, a police matron of four years' experience. Can any testimony afford more eloquent proof of the need for a woman to undertake the duty? "Yes," added Mrs. Sibley, "our first duty is to search the women, and while doing so we try to win their confidence." On the other hand, women of a superior type not infrequently express the warmest gratitude for the presence of matrons—*e.g.*, a woman of good character, who had been brought in on a mistaken charge of drunkenness, was wild with horror at finding herself brought in by men, and had thrown herself upon her cell floor in a paroxysm of agony. But the matron soon appeared, and so relieved was the prisoner that she impulsively drew the matron's hand through hers and kissed it.

I was much struck with the type of matrons at the various Philadelphia stations. They are invariably women of superior parts, some of whom have been trained in rescue homes. One and all seemed to have won the confidence of the officers and men, and they received a respectful salute from each man in the force wherever and whenever they might meet them.

The appointment of these matrons was due to a united agitation carried on by the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Club, the Women's Christian Union, the Society for Organised Charity, the Prison Society of that city, and the matrons are permitted to issue monthly reports to a committee of women, who thus materially aid the police authorities by rendering their work reformatory as well as punitive. The romance of a Philadelphian police station might easily be written, with "Harry Wallace," the "police baby," as its hero—the little waif, so named after the officer who brought him in, and the street where he was found.

In New York State I visited the matrons in both Rochester and Buffalo, and found them in similar fashion living at the stations and on duty at all hours. In these smaller towns their duties are not arduous. But how all important! At Buffalo the matron is allowed one extra room next to her own where she may care for any sick prisoner or anyone detained for special purposes. A notable case I met with was a little fifteen-year old Polish servant girl, who was the victim, not the offender. She could not speak a single word of English, and was kept in kindly ward until the trial of nine brutes could be effected who, having tracked her down the canal side three

days after she had landed, had dragged her into a lonely shed, and had there criminally assaulted her. The various women's associations of that town, learning the disgusting character of the case, womanfully came into court, and stood by the side of matron and child during a trial which roused the whole community, and ended in severe punishment of the miscreants. The poor little creature was full of affectionate gratitude, and was doing her best to learn some English from the matron before the day of trial. Strange it seemed that the victim should be under surveillance, but it was a merciful provision rendered possible by the presence of a matron to prevent the child coming under outside influence, and being bribed or frightened into denying the facts.

All who may follow the reports of similar cases in this country will have noted how frequently a weak woman or young girl will turn right round and deny the charge she has previously made against some man. The reason for this is doubtless, in a majority of cases, because she has been wheedled into a promise to screen the offender. In Indianapolis* I visited the station many times, and spent a whole night on duty with the matron, Mrs. Annie Buchanan. She lives on the premises on the second floor, and, as the town is not very large, and the arrests of women comparatively few, a room next to her own is set apart for the women's cell, and a second for a sick prisoner or other incidental cases. These two rooms, as a rule, furnish all the accommodation that is required. This station, together with the one at Boston, seemed to me superior to any others I had seen, because the women's departments are kept exclusively apart from the men's. The need for this separation is, indeed, far more apparent in America than in England, by reason of the system peculiar to that country of having everything open to public view. Public houses, barbers' shops, are all open to the view of each passer-by, and this system is found also in the police stations, where, instead of being confined in closed cells, as in England, the prisoners are in little rooms with the fourth side protected only by bars, much on the same plan as the cages in a menagerie. These cages open out as a rule on to a corridor furnished with windows and heating appliances, and, in a country subject to excess of heat and cold, the plan, which strikes one at first sight as unpleasant, is really humane.

* See Appendix II.

In the upstairs room, when I arrived for the night, I found a woman had just been brought in on the charge of loitering about for purposes of prostitution. My indignation was aroused, for there was no man other than the police who had accused her. She was, however, an old and well-known offender who had previously been released after promising to leave the town. In desperation at her re-arrest the woman had taken laudanum, and for many hours the matron and I watched over her until she awoke from her stupefied sleep. Meantime there came a summons through the speaking tube, and on the matron enquiring what was wanted there came the laconic reply "a lady." The new comer, as we found on descending to the Inspector's office, was a well-dressed woman, with a basket in her hand, who had been brought in on a charge of theft. After some time of anxious watching the laudanum taker came round and we left the two under lock and key, and went ourselves to bed in the adjoining room, where although Mrs. Buchanan retired in a neat wrapper ready for action the moment the bell over her head tinkled, we were not disturbed all night. Next morning after providing the prisoners with water for washing, and with breakfast, and seeing that they both made a respectable appearance, we set off to the court-house, Mrs. Buchanan looking quite official in her blue cloth ulster with metal badge on her breast. We were shown into the waiting room set apart for women, and presently one of the officials came to summon the first on the list, and mistaking me for an offender bade me follow him. This I promptly declined to do to the no small amusement of the rest.

Another day I found three young girls, varying in age from twelve to fourteen, who had run away bareheaded and bare-footed from some Reformatory, and after having had their "little spree" were clustered together in rather downcast mood, awaiting the arrival of their proper guardians. While on another occasion I found Mrs. Buchanan in charge of a young girl, whose partner in flight was in custody in a neighbouring cell, on a charge of decoying away a girl still under the age of protection.

In Chicago the system has been developed on a large scale, and I found no fewer than twenty-seven matrons on duty. Thanks are here especially due to the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Members of which being in the first instance baffled on financial grounds, volunteered the matron's salary for the first six months, if the Corporation would take one on trial. The offer was accepted, the experiment made,

and with such success that the numbers have been increased year by year. Through the courtesy of the Inspector and the influence of Mrs. J. B. Hobbs,* who is more especially identified with police matron work, I was allowed to spend a Saturday night at Harrison Police Station, in the heart of the very worst part of Chicago. It is impossible that I could ever descend deeper into hell than I did that night. The courage of the women in undertaking police matronship is more marked here than in any other city, but it will never accomplish all it is well fitted to do until the whole police system of Chicago is cleansed from top to bottom. All night through a professional "Bailer-out" (a publican) was in almost constant attendance, and the evil effects are so great that I saw a girl arrested at 10 p.m., bailed out half an hour later, and brought in a second time that same night, about 2 a.m. Humanity, however, demands this bailing out, for the accommodation provided was so limited that the three or four women's cages would have been completely crowded out had not many been allowed to depart; and as for the sanitary arrangements, all that was provided was one open sewer with running water passing through the line of cells. In the midst of these horrible surroundings, a positive scandal to the Corporation of Chicago† these matrons do not hesitate in the performance of their duty to spend eight hours, and at all the other stations twelve hours, out of the twenty-four. The work is so arduous that they are compelled at this station to work on eight hour shifts. The matron sits at a desk, to her right an iron gate leading into a corridor where the Women's quarters are, while an Inspector sits at a similar desk, to the left of him the men's corridor. The men and women are thus kept quite distinct. There had been a raid made that night upon a house of ill-fame, and a large party of "gay women" headed by their "madame" were brought in, and filled one of the cells; but they were very soon bailed out. Many who came were hardened offenders, evidently well-known to the matrons although passing under a number of aliases. Two or three young girls were brought in on a charge of robbing in the street. They were taken by the matron each in turn into her private room and completely undressed, but nothing was found on them, the probability being that their confederates had made off with the booty. One girl who appeared of somewhat better character than the rest came in

* See Appendix III.

† See Appendix IV.

bleeding, having been struck by a man in a public house. The matron plastered up the arm and showed her other little attentions which she seemed much to appreciate. I found on talking to her that she was an English girl, who had been emigrated to a charitable home as a child, had gone out into a good place as a cook, had taken to drink and come upon the streets. But for this girl I was full of hope, and it was evident that the solicitude shown on her behalf by the matron had made a deep impression upon her. In a cell apart lay a young beautiful girl of an Italian type, with long gold earrings, and crimson silk dress, the bodice open at the neck, and a dainty white petticoat just peeping above her tiny feet. She was a girl from the streets, but as she lay on the rude hard bench in the unconscious grace of profound slumber, she looked as if she might have been of royal lineage. Mercifully this girl slept through the whole night, for the matron informed me that she was one of the most hardened offenders, who in her wildest moods would cast off all her clothing, climb up on to the bars and make the whole station resound with her yells and oaths. But even she was becoming more amenable to matronly influence. Mrs. S. J. Littell, the first matron appointed, with whom I spent this awful night, has stuck to her post for nearly thirteen years, and has retained a large, warm, generous heart through it all. I report with admiration and thankfulness that only one or two of the matrons whom I met with in America seemed to have become somewhat hardened and demoralised by contact with vice; the vast majority seemed actuated in their duties by the highest motives. I would here urge upon all who may seek to make similar appointments in this country that in approaching their municipal authorities they shall lay great stress upon choice being made of women who *practice* the golden rule of loving God with all their heart *and their sisters as themselves*.

In San Francisco I found matronship in name only. The cages for men and women alike were grouped round a square hall. All were full at noon on a Sunday, but the sole privacy granted the women was a screen placed in front of their cage, while the matron, so-called, was in a room some distance off, quite apart from the degraded women, and in charge only of a well-dressed "superior" prisoner. I should have doubted the reliability of my own eyes and ears, so outrageous did such a state of things seem, had not my evidence been confirmed in the September issue of "Lend a Hand," by Mrs. Caroline A. Kennard, who in her article entitled "Progress in the Employ-

ment of Police Matrons," stated "There is a matron in San Francisco, but she never attends to the most degraded. The Chief of Police there says that he will allow no woman to be humiliated by such association."

So much for personal observation, which in the case of a traveller can at best be but cursory and superficial.

In order to test my own impressions I addressed a series of enquiries to the heads of police in the cities of Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Detroit, etc., and in all cases, except from Albany, New York State, received detailed replies to my enquiries. To elucidate the replies I append a copy of the letter sent by me, and in some cases I give the letters received in full, in others the more important statements.

"August 4th, 1892.

"SIR,—When recently travelling in your country, I visited several police stations where police matrons were in charge of women under arrest.

"I am endeavouring to stir up public opinion, with a view to their appointment in Britain, but before doing so I should be extremely glad of your valuable opinion on various points, and I therefore venture to ask you to do me the great favour of answering the following questions:—

"1. How many police matrons have you in your city; when were they appointed, and do you consider their appointment of public value or not?

"2. Is there any law concerning the appointment of police matrons for the whole of your State? and, if so, what population makes the appointment compulsory?

"3. Do you or the Mayor appoint the matrons?

"4. Are they sworn in like policemen; what are their hours and salaries, and do you find rooms for them at the stations?

"5. Who searched the women, and attended to them in case of illness, before matrons were appointed?

"6. Do the matrons keep the keys of the women's cells, and accompany them into court?

"7. What is the population of your city; the number of men arrested annually, also the number of women?

"8. Are women arrested *on suspicion* of being common prostitutes on the streets, or must they be found soliciting?

"9. Can a policeman arrest these supposed prostitutes of his own accord, or must some man make a charge of solicitation against them ?

"10. Are men arrested who walk the streets for immoral purposes ?

"11. Do the police matrons report their duties to any body of ladies, as well as to you ?

"12. Had the Women's Christian Temperance Union, or any other body of ladies, anything to do with the appointment of matrons in the first instance ?

"13. Are matrons selected from women who have been previously trained in any way for the work ?

"My only excuse for troubling you with so many questions is my exceeding anxiety to see things in England improved on what I believe to be your superior American plan in this matter. I met with so much kindness in your country travelling from New York to San Francisco, that I appeal with confidence for your kind advice.

"Yours faithfully,

"FLORENCE BALGARNIE.

"To the Chief of Police."

REPLIES.

"HEADQUARTERS OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE,

"DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,

"WASHINGTON,

"August 16th, 1892.

From Major Wm. G. Moore, Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police.

"MADAM,—In reply to the series of questions propounded in your favour of the 4th instant, I have to state as follows:—

"1, 2, and 3. On February 6th, 1889, an appropriation therefore having been made by Congress, three matrons were appointed by the Commissioners of the district of Columbia for duty in this department, and their services have been of public value.

"4. The matrons take the same oath of office required of policemen; are supposed to be on duty all the time; and receive 600 dollars per annum.

"5. Previous to the passage of the Act authorising the employment of matrons, when it was necessary to search a female, one of her sex was called in for that purpose; and in case of illness she was sent to a hospital.

"6. They do not keep the keys of the cells where female prisoners are incarcerated; nor do they accompany them to court.

"7. The population of the district of Columbia, according to census recently taken, is 258,431; 21,052 males and 5,054 females were arrested between July 1st, 1890, and June 30th, 1891.

"8. Prostitutes walking on the public streets, if not soliciting, are not molested, unless there are circumstances connected with a case which necessitate such action.

"9. Any policeman can arrest prostitutes when there is a violation of law in his presence.

"10. See answer to section 8.

"11. Matrons are only required to make reports to the officials of the police department.

"12. I am unable to state whether the Women's Christian Temperance Union, or any other body of ladies, secured the passage of the bill authorising the employment of matrons.

"13. There are no rules in force in this department governing the selection of matrons, but in making appointments care is taken to secure persons who are supposed to be especially fitted for the position."

"CITY OF CHICAGO,

"DEPARTMENT OF POLICE,

"'ANNEX,' HARRISON STREET,

"*September 10th, 1882.*

"MISS BALGARNIE,

"DEAR MADAM,

"Your letter to the Chief of Police has been referred to me. In reply I would state that a matron was first appointed in 1892 at Harrison, St.-Italion, by the W.C.T.U., after repeated interviews with the Mayor and Chief of Police.

"The experiment proved a success, so much so that the commanding officers in the station were very emphatic in their commendations, and very soon the good resulting from the

matron's work attracted the attention of other philanthropic organisations who urged the appointment of matrons for other police stations. The work has increased to such an extent that at this present time we have twenty-seven matrons. We consider their appointment of great public value.

" 2. There is no law concerning the appointment of matrons for this State. The appointment as regards the population of a city has never been made compulsory yet.

" 3. The matrons are appointed by the Chief and his Board—a Board composed of about twelve ladies.

" 4. They are not sworn in like policemen, but have to make application, with doctor's certificate attached. A set of written questions is prepared which they must answer (in writing) intelligently, and then a verbal examination is had. Each applicant must have some vouchers, three women and two men, who are residents of the city, and who have been acquainted with them at least a year.

" They work twelve hours. Two matrons are appointed in each station, and given to the care of the matron on duty. The salaries are 50 dollars per month, or 600 dollars per annum. We try in almost every station to have a room for the matron.

" 5. The women are always searched by the matrons. Before matrons were appointed, the officers did the best they knew how in searching them and waiting upon them in cases of illness and intoxication.

" 6. The matrons have duplicate keys of the women's cells, and always accompany them into court. We have also been able to secure separate pens in many of the stations.

" 7. The population of this city is over a million. Number of men arrested annually over 70,000; number of women 13,000.

" 8. Women are often arrested on suspicion of being prostitutes, and for the first time invariably discharged with a solemn warning.

" 9. But the rule is, when a woman is found soliciting, she is brought in and a complaint lodged against her. I have never yet known of a case where a man would make a charge of soliciting against a woman.

" 10. Men are never arrested who walk the streets for immoral purposes, nor are they ever arrested for soliciting.

" 11. The police matrons report their duties, complaints, etc., to the Inspector of Matrons (or agent of Advisory Board), and she in her turn reports to 'The Advisory Board' every two

weeks. The matrons all send in weekly reports to the Inspector of Matrons, from which she sends a statistical detailed report (monthly) to the Chief of Police.

" 12. I understand that the W.C.T.U. had the appointing of a matron in the first instance. This same first-appointed matron is still on the force and on duty.

" 13. We prefer women who have been trained as nurses, but above all women of patience, kindness, and intelligence. . . .

" The beginning has only been made, there is much still to do, and more to think of well and wisely.

" Yours very sincerely,

" (Mrs.) JANE LOGAN,

" Inspector of Matrons."

" METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT,

" SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

" DETROIT, MICHIGAN,

" *August 18th, 1892.*

" MISS FLORENCE BALGARNIE,

" DEAR MADAM,

" Your favour dated August 4th was duly received containing enquiries numbered 1 to 13, both inclusive, relating to police matron, etc. In reply, I take pleasure in forwarding you answers to same, in accordance with the facts in this city, viz. :

" 1. We have two matrons and will soon appoint another ; first appointment, April, 1888. We consider them of public value.

" 2. There is no law, but necessity, for appointment of matrons

" 3. They are appointed by the Board of Police Commissioners.

" 4. They are not sworn in ; their hours are twelve each day, one on duty nights, the other days ; salaries 50 dollars per month. We find them with apartments at the stations.

" 5. Before the appointment of a matron a neighbouring woman would be employed as the occasion required.

" 6. In this city the women who come under the charge of the matron are not locked in a cell, and are not accompanied into court by the matron.

"7. The population of Detroit is 257,000; number of arrests for year 1891, 8,693; males, 7,437; females, 1,206.

"8. Women are not arrested on suspicion of being common prostitutes; street walkers soliciting on the streets are arrested and tried in our police-court, charged with disturbing the peace.

"9. They are also arrested when a charge is made against them for soliciting by the person thus solicited.

"10. If a man is suspected of walking about for immoral purposes he may be arrested and held on suspicion for 36 hours, pending investigation.

"11. Police matrons do not report to any body of ladies.

"12. The Women's Christian Temperance Union had a decided influence in the appointment of matron in this department.

"13. In this city matrons were not selected from persons previously trained for the work.

"Trusting the above answers will aid you in the manner sought, I remain,

"Very respectfully,

(Signed) "C. C. STARKWEATHER,
"Supt. of Police."

From Mr. L. Harrigan, Chief of Police, St. Louis, Missouri, dated August 25th, 1892.

"1. This department has two matrons.

"2. Police matrons, one in each of the two principal police districts of the city. I consider the appointment of good, common-sense matronly or motherly women as police matrons essential to their success in the business. Gossiping, hard-hearted old hags, when appointed matrons, tend to make matrons obnoxious. In my opinion there is always room in every large police department for good, effective work of a reformatory, Christian character by one or several good matrons, but it all depends on the women.

"3. Our matrons are paid £100 a year, or 500 dollars, are furnished with rooms, gas, fuel and furniture at the station

"5. Before matrons were appointed policemen roughly searched women when arrested. Our matrons search shop-lifters and others of that class. *They do not pay any attention to*

prostitutes or drunkards. That class is still searched by policemen, but the officer in charge can at any time order the matron to search a female prisoner.

"6. Matrons do not have the keys of female cells, but have access to them.

"The Women's Christian Temperance Union, or some ladies belonging to it and other societies akin to it, took the initial step in leaving the police board appoint the matron (the first) for this department.

"In conclusion, I desire to say that a good, womanly woman makes a good police matron. The searching of women is a small thing compared with taking care of young girls stranded, enticed from home, and seduced. A good police matron can do a vast amount of good, but a poor one is worse than useless. It all depends on the woman."

From Mr. R. F. Linden, Superintendent of Police, Philadelphia, August 15th, 1892.

"Yours of August 4th, 1892, received, and contents noted. In reply to the questions relative to police matrons, I will endeavour to answer in the order numbered and named. Before doing so I would state the law which compels us to appoint matrons was not gotten up by the police departments, but through the instrumentality of humane ladies. We have

"1. Thirteen matrons appointed from time to time, as occasion may warrant, and as soon as accommodation can be made for them. Their services are of great value, not only from a moral point of view, but they relieve the police from many perplexing and arduous duties.

"2. Police matrons are appointed by the Director of Public Safety, after the applicant has passed a Civil Service examination, and character found satisfactory.

"4. Are sworn to perform their duties faithfully.

"6. When a woman is brought in suspected of having money concealed on her person, the matron must be specially careful that the prisoner has no opportunity to throw such money into closet or sewer before she is searched. In conducting such search, every article of clothing worn by her must be carefully examined,

"7. *Girl prisoners under eighteen years of age must be taken into court by a matron, and remain under her protection until the case is disposed of.*

"8. The matrons must invariably extend every possible kindness to the prisoners in their charge. In cases of severe illness the city physician or his assistant may be called; but when doubt exists as to the necessity of so doing the matron should consult with the officer in charge of the station.

"9. Matrons must not accept gifts of any description for services rendered. In this respect they should seek to place themselves above suspicion.

"10. The weekly reports of matrons will be submitted at ten o'clock Saturday morning of each week for examination and approval, after which they will be forwarded to the office of the General Superintendent.

From the foregoing evidence gathered from England, Scotland, and America, we are, I venture to think, justified in coming to the following conclusions:—

(1.) That the presence of police matrons is not merely advisable, but absolutely and urgently necessary at all police stations, where women and girls are placed under arrest, and where lost or deserted children may be detained.

(2.) That the absence of matrons is a blot upon our civilization, and contrary to both the common instincts of modesty humanity and justice.

(3.) That their appointment should be secured in the interests of both the women under arrest and of the police themselves.

(4.) That it is most important to secure matrons actuated by high, humane and generous principles, and possessed of intelligence and a fair education. Women animated by the same spirit as Matron Annie Buchanan of Indianapolis, who when asked "What made you choose the work?" replied, "I did not choose it, it chose me!"

(5.) That no woman should be appointed who, as in some of the cases cited, is considered by her officers, or considers herself, unfitted to deal with the most degraded or drunken of her sister women.

(6.) That the wages paid should be adequate to the degree of responsibility involved, and should not be based on the standard of the charwoman, or other unskilled labourer,

(7.) That as women contribute to the rates, out of which, as a rule, the police expenses are paid, they have a right to expect that their wish shall be considered by the municipal authorities of their respective towns.

It is hoped that sufficient has been said, not merely to secure the assent of the public to these seven propositions, but also to rouse women themselves to an invincible determination to secure this much needed reform on behalf of their drunken, prostitute, or criminal sisters, as well as of those wrongfully accused, or charged with a first offence.

As at present constituted, not alone our police stations, but the whole prison system tends rather to still further degrade than to reform the criminal.

HOW TO EFFECT THE REFORM.

Many women, I doubt not, will feel at once inspired to set about to secure the reform, and for their guidance I now append a suggested course of action, *which may be found practicable in at least some cases.*

(1.) Through the medium of the Local Branch of the British Women's Temperance Association if possible, call a conference of women, asking all the associations, clubs, or organisations of women of any kind which may exist in the town to appoint delegates, and if possible hold it at the house of some influential woman, and secure the presence of newspaper reporters.

(2.) Prepare a brief outline of the case to be laid before the meeting, and then move a resolution somewhat to this effect:—

“We women, representing the (fill in the names of all societies represented) being of opinion that the appointment of police matrons for the care of women under arrest, as well as of lost children, is both urgent and necessary, do hereby resolve to take all possible measures to induce our Watch Committee to make such appointment.”

(3.) It has been found well as the next step to resolve to write to the Head of Police asking him to receive a deputation from the conference, and it will be wise to take down the names of all women willing to serve. The deputation should be as large and representative as possible.

(4.) After seeing the Head of Police and hearing his opinion, which may be favourable or the reverse, the Watch Committee of the Town Council should be asked to receive a deputation.

It may be well either to supply each member of the Watch Committee with a copy of this pamphlet before waiting upon them, or with other information at your command.

(5.) If the Authorities assent, the matter is easy, but probably they will not at first. In which case one need not be in the least daunted, but obtaining a copy of the Municipal Register, divide the town into districts and canvass each *woman ratepayer* asking her to sign a memorial, which should then be presented to the Watch Committee by as large a deputation of women and *women ratepayers* as can be secured.

(6.) The following is a suggested form of memorial:—

“To the Worshipful the Mayor and to the Chairman and members of the Watch Committee of the Corporation of

“The memorial of the undersigned women ratepayers of
respectfully showeth that your memorialists believe that it is a public and a pressing need that a police matron should be on regular duty night and day at all the police stations where women and children are under arrest.

“That this opinion is based upon the evidence collected, and the contrast afforded between stations where they have been appointed—as in Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c.—and those stations where a woman searcher, too often misnamed ‘matron,’ is only occasionally called for. Your memorialists desire to impress upon your Worship, the Chairman and members of the Watch Committee their most earnest desire for this reform, and they respectfully beg that such portion of the rates as may be requisite for the salary of such matron or matrons may be set apart for this special purpose.

And your memorialists will ever pray (here follows list of signatures, with addresses in full).”

(7.) Possibly the Watch Committee may be hard to move, and the question of expense or of structural difficulties may be held by them to be an all-sufficient reply. In this case it may be well to adopt the plan of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union of America, by offering to guarantee the salary of a matron for half-a-year, if the experiment may be tried. If this offer be accepted, one should try, by all means, to *secure the appointment of a suitable woman, for everything turns upon that.*

(8.) If this fails, the question should be kept to the front by resolutions at meetings and letters in the newspapers,

as has been done by Plymouth* women, who were not in the least baffled because two or three attempts had failed.

London and the City of London must necessarily be dealt with apart; but it is not too much to expect that a Home Secretary who has already appointed women factory inspectors will readily give our proposals his best consideration. It is a reform which logically and of necessity results from what has already been carried into effect in many police courts, waiting rooms, and in all prisons.

The expense of appointing a matron at each of the 178 police stations of the metropolis would doubtless be immense, but it would be comparatively trifling if a centralised system for women prisoners, such as is in vogue in Edinburgh, Boston (Mass.), and to some degree in Leeds, were adopted, by either drafting them immediately after arrest to a central station in each of the twenty-three divisions, or to premises adjacent to the fifteen police courts. It is obvious that no general rule can be laid down for the attainment of this end. Each city and town has its own special characteristics. But once admitting that this plea for the appointment of "Police Matrons" is based upon the principles of righteousness and justice, it remains for women throughout the country to acquaint themselves with the existing conditions of their own city or town, and by patient, persistent effort, of a certainty they will eventually succeed in convincing the authorities that what is right must also be expedient.

* See Appendix V.

APPENDIX I.

LAWS OF NEW YORK.—By Authority.

[Every law, unless a different time shall be prescribed therein, shall commence and take effect throughout the State, on and not before the twentieth day after the day of its final passage, as certified by the Secretary of State. Sec. 12, title 4, chap. 7. part 1, Revised Statutes].

CHAP. 420.

AN ACT to provide for police matrons in cities.

Approved by the Governor, May, 28, 1888. Passed, three-fifths being present.

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows :—

Section 1. The mayor of every city of the State, which according to the last State or National census contained a population of twenty-five thousand or over, excepting the cities of New York and Brooklyn, and in the cities of New York and Brooklyn the boards of commissioners of police of said cities respectively shall, within three months after the passage of this act and all other cities in this State may designate one or more station houses within their respective cities for the detention and confinement of all women under arrest in said cities. Such mayor or board of commissioners of police may at any time designate for such purpose any additional station house or houses, or may revoke the designation of any station house or houses theretofore designated, provided that at least one such station house shall at all times be so designated for such purpose in each city.

Section 2. Whenever the local authorities charged with the duty of making appropriations of money to be raised by taxation and expended for public purposes shall make a sufficient appropriation of funds therefor, the mayors of all cities in this State, excepting New York and Brooklyn, and in those cities the boards of commissioners of police, shall appoint for each station house designated as in the last section provided not more than two respectable women who shall be known as police matrons in the same manner and under the restrictions governing the appointment of patrolmen, so far as the same may be applicable, except that any rule or regulation as to the age of a person appointed patrolmen, shall not apply to matrons appointed under this act. No woman shall be appointed a police matron unless suitable for the position and recommended therefor

in writing by at least twenty women of good standing, residents of the city in which the appointment is made.

Section 3. Police matrons shall, upon appointment, hold office until removal, and they may be removed at any time, by the authority appointing them, by written order stating the cause of such removal. Upon the death, resignation or removal of a police matron, her successor shall be appointed as soon as may be, in the manner hereinbefore provided. A police matron shall receive a compensation or salary, to be fixed by the common council in the several cities where such matrons shall be provided, except in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, where the rate of compensation shall be fixed by the boards of police, respectively, not exceeding in any case the minimum salary paid to patrolmen in the city in which * matron is appointed.

Section 4. When only one police matron is attached to a police station, she shall reside there, or within a reasonable distance therefrom, and shall hold herself in readiness to respond to any call therefrom at any hour, day or night; and each matron shall, during such hours as may be fixed by the head of the police department, remain in such station, and hold herself in readiness to respond to any call therefrom. So long as any woman is detained or held under arrest in a police station to which a police matron is attached, it shall be the duty of such matron to remain constantly thereat ready for service; or, if there be more than one matron attached to such station, then one of them shall be constantly ready for service. A police matron shall, subject to the officer in charge of such station house, have the immediate care and charge of all women held under arrest in the station to which she is attached, and she may at any time call upon the officer in command of such station for assistance. She shall be subject to to* the authority of the board of police, or, if there be no such board, then to the chief of police in the city where she may be appointed, and to the rules and regulations prescribed by such authority; but at the station, where she may be on duty, she shall be subject only to the authority of the officer in command thereof.

Section 5. Whenever the local authorities of any city shall make an appropriation therefor, it shall be the duty of the board of police in such city, or if there be no board of police, then of the mayor of such city, to provide out of such appropriation sufficient accommodation for women held under arrest to keep

* So in the original.

them separate and apart from the cells, corridors and apartments provided for males under arrest, and to so arrange each station house that no communication can be had between the men and women therein confined, except with the consent of the matron or the officer in command of said station.

Section 6. Whenever a woman* is arrested and taken to a police station to which a matron is attached, it shall be the duty of the officer in command of such station to cause such matron to be summoned forthwith, and whenever, in any city in which a police matron has been appointed a woman is arrested and taken to a station house to which no matron is attached, it shall be the duty of such officer to cause such woman to be removed as soon as possible to the nearest station house to which a police matron is attached. No such separate confinement, nor any such removal of any woman, shall operate to take from any court any jurisdiction which it would have had. The term "woman" whenever used in this act, shall include any female minor.

Section 7. The local authorities of all cities which according to the last State or National census contained a population of twenty-five thousand or over, except the city of New York, as said local authorities are specified in the second section of this act, shall, and the board of estimate and apportionment of the city of New York, and the local authorities of all other cities, may appropriate annually such sum as may be necessary for the separate care and confinement in station houses of all women arrested in each of said cities, and for the appointment, salary and maintenance of police matrons for the purposes of this act.

Section 8. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATE OF NEW YORK,
Office of the Secretary of State, } ss. :

I have compared the preceding with the original law on file in this office, and do hereby certify that the same is a correct transcript therefrom and of the whole of said original law.

FREDERICK COOK,
Secretary of State.

APPENDIX II.

Department of Public Safety (Indianapolis) respecting creating the office of Police Matron. Whereas the President and 14 other officers of the Meridian W.C.T.U., under date of March 10, petitioned this Board to create the office of Police Matron, and

* So in the original.

arrange a room for her occupancy at the Police Station, to be a regular member of the Police Force, and,

Whereas the officers of the Women's Club of Indianapolis petitioned this Board that the prayer of the Meridian Union be granted. Therefore—

1. Resolved: That there shall be appointed by this Board a Police Matron, who shall be a regular member of the Indianapolis Force; and her name shall appear on the monthly pay roll, at a salary to be fixed by the Common Council.

2. She shall have charge of the women and children who may be brought to the Station House, and see to their comfort and safety, and no person shall have access to them, after they have been put under her charge, unless by order of the Superintendent of Police.

3. She shall accompany them to the Police-court, and shall have charge until they are delivered to the proper officer after trial.

4. She shall be held responsible for their appearance for trial, unless proper bonds have been given, or released by written order of the Superintendent of Police.

5. She shall be ready at all times, day or night, to receive a prisoner, and not be absent, without permission of the Superintendent of Police, over thirty minutes between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

6. She shall wear a badge when on duty, marked "Police Matron, Indianapolis Police Force."

7. She shall be responsible to this Board, and subject to the directions of the Superintendent of Police, and this Board reserves the right to remove any one appointed to this office at their pleasure.

APPENDIX III.

ANNUAL REPORT OF POLICE MATRON WORK

For the year beginning with Mar. 1, 1890, ending Mar. 1, 1891.

MRS. J. B. HOBBS, CHAIRMAN COMMITTEE, CHICAGO.

In connection with our annual report we wish to briefly review the history of the Police Matron work. No doubt every one

interested in philanthropic work has learned of the work and its good results ; yet many are not so familiar with its origin, and to answer the frequent enquiries we have prepared the following statement. It was after repeated interviews with the Mayor and Chief of Police that permission was given to place a matron with the Harrison Street Police Station, and then only as an *experiment* provided the W. C. T. U. would defray all expenses, which they did for nearly one year, and at the same time they furnished nearly all the medicine and food for the sick women prisoners. So confident were we of ultimate success that we at once employed Mrs. Sarah J. Littel, who entered upon her duties as matron in the above-named station, March 9th, 1882—to which position she was subsequently appointed by the Mayor. To quote from a former report: “The *experiment* proved a success, so much so, that the officers in the station were very emphatic in their commendations, while the prisoners were profuse in their expressions of gratitude and appreciation for the aid and attention cheerfully given by a kind-hearted Christian woman.” She so patiently listened to their tales of woe, and so tenderly nursed the sick that she was frequently called the “good angel of the station.” From the beginning we had indulged the hope that the W. C. T. U. might be able to secure sufficient funds to pay the matrons as they from time to time might be appointed. This, however, was found to be impossible, for very soon the good resulting from the matron’s work attracted the attention of other philanthropic organisations who urged the appointment of matrons for other police-stations at once. And it was through the solicitations of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Moral Educational Society, and Prisoners’ Aid Association, that two additional matrons were appointed by the mayor in January, 1883. The salaries of the three were then to be paid by the city. These were followed by two more in February, 1885. The city also provided “Police Matron stars” for all the matrons, and has continued to do so as fast as appointments were made.

By this time it had become apparent to all that more matrons were needed, and should be placed in the five principal stations—and at the request of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Prisoners’ Aid Association, and the Chicago Woman’s Club, five more were appointed May 1st, 1885, making ten in all on duty : two in each of the principal police-stations alternating day and night. Those appointed were recommended by a joint committee of the W. C. T. U. and Prisoner’s Aid Association.

At this time an order was issued by the chief requiring that all females arrested must be placed in one of these five stations. The work gave good satisfaction, and there were very few changes until 1890, when the city limits were extended, and more matrons needed, then eight more were appointed. Later on, more territory was added, and two more were appointed. January 15th, 1891, still another was added, so they now number twenty-one. In July, 1890, Mrs. Helen J. Stannard was appointed chief matron—her duty being to have an oversight of the matrons and their work. Her kind heart prompts her to render every assistance to young girls, and as far as possible, to all in trouble. In case of sickness among the matrons her visits are frequent, and she sees that they are kindly cared for. Some needed improvements have come about through her influence. In the Harrison Street and Desplaines Street Stations she has placed an extra matron, as they receive by far the largest number of prisoners. There are at present ten stations provided with matrons. Namely :

Harrison Street.
 35th Street, near Halsted Street.
 Halsted and Root Streets (Lake) or (47th).
 53rd Street and Lake Avenue (Hyde Park).
 64th Street and Wentworth Avenue (Englewood).
 Morgan and Maxwell Streets (Maxwell Street).
 Desplaines Street and Waldo Place (Desplaines Street).
 West Chicago Avenue.
 East Chicago Avenue.
 Lake View—Diversey and Sheffield Avenues.

All of these stations have one or more matrons, as they are required. In giving the statistical report it must be remembered that matrons have been in some of the stations only a part of the year, consequently our report can cover only that time.

Number of female arrests from March 1st, 1890, to March 1st, 1891.

Harrison St.	5,615	Desplaines St.	2,237
East Chicago Ave.	773	West Chicago Ave.	465
Maxwell St.	530	Thirty-fifth St.	377
Lake View	78	Hyde Park	78
Lake, no report.		Englewood, no report.	
Total			10,133

No. lost children taken to the police stations.

Harrison, S.	57	Desplaines St.	202
East Chicago Ave.	245	West Chicago Ave.	465
Maxwell St.	530	Thirty-fifth St.	377
Lake View	78	Hyde Park	68
Lake, no report.		Englewood, no report.	
Total			1,121

Destitute women in the police stations.

Harrison St.	35	Desplaines St.	264
East Chicago Ave.	167	Thirty-fifth St.	98
Hyde Park	7	Lake View	3
Total			574

Destitute children in police stations.

Harrison St.	27	Desplaines St.	136
East Chicago Ave.	42	West Chicago Ave.	1
Lake View	5	Hyde Park	2
Total			213

Abandoned children taken to the stations.	45
Runaway girls	21
„ and boys in one station.	68
Children adopted from the station	2

No. sent to the following Institutions.

Martha Washington Home	57
Erring Woman's Home	57
Good Shepherd	85
Industrial School	33
Home for the Friendless	104
Foundlings' Home	12
Anchorage Mission	59
Catholic Asylum	35
St. Vincent's Hospital.	69
County Agent	57
Almshouse	93
County Hospital.	43
Insane Asylum	59
Passes obtained	5
Protective Agency	10
Girls sent to their homes.	161
Humane Society	197
Waifs' Mission	34
Children's Aid Society) CHILDREN	31

Employment found for	42
Girls under seventeen years taken to Harrison St. Station .	79
Attempted suicide in all stations	32
Special attention given to prisoners	712
Died in the station	1
Married in court	14
Took the Temperance Pledge	11
Boys from 12 to 19 taken to Hyde Park Station in 5 months	106
Colored women arrested	27
In three stations, prisoners sixty and over	37
" " from ten to twenty	283

Has not this question come into the minds of some readers, What is the cause of all this sin and wretchedness? we can only reply that the principal cause is the love of strong drink, which seems to drown every other love—love of home and all its means—love of *character* with all that means in this life, and, above all, the hope of the life to come.

In view of all this, what is our duty? Should we not individually do all we can to help drive from the face of the earth this chief cause of human suffering and woe?

In closing our report, we wish to thank every one who has extended a helping hand, or given a word of cheer to the work—especially do we wish to bear testimony to the members of the Police Department for their uniform kindness and courtesy extended to our committee in the discharge of their duties.

APPENDIX IV.

CHICAGO RULES GOVERNING POLICE MATRONS.

1. Each Matron must report promptly at designated times.
2. Matrons must not leave the Station while on duty, day or night, except on business connected with the department, and then only by consent of the officer in command.
3. If from illness, or any unavoidable cause, a Matron is unable to report for duty, a message to that effect must be sent to the Captain of the Station, so that the Principal Matron may be immediately informed.
4. Constant vigilance is demanded from the Matrons at all hours of the day and night. It must therefore be clearly understood that no Matron while on duty should retire to a room to

rest, or recline on a couch or bed, except in case of sudden illness. The fact that there may not be women prisoners under arrest should not cause the Matron to swerve from her duty. She must always be at her post, and ready for an emergency.

5. Female prisoners once booked pass directly into the care of the Matron, whose first duty is to carefully search all such prisoners for drugs and liquors. Money, jewellery, knives, or other weapons found on prisoners must be delivered to the Turnkey, who will give receipt for same. Respect the laws, obey orders, etc.; in fact, are part and parcel of Bureau of Police. They are allotted a room in the Station House, where they must reside and subject to calls at any hour. Salary 50 dollars (£10) per month.

6. Keys of cells are in possession of the Turnkey, who is held responsible for all prisoners under his charge, as soon as a female is brought into the Station House.

APPENDIX V.

About a year and a half since Miss Florence Baggart visited Plymouth and addressed a drawing-room meeting, at the house of Miss Spearman, one of the lady Guardians of that town, in advocacy of the adoption of police matrons for the guardianship of women and children prisoners.

Her arguments were so forcible, and she awakened such interest in the subject, that it was decided to endeavour to obtain a couple of matrons to be officially attached to the central police station; and some ladies consented to take up the matter, and try to carry it through.

The following morning Miss Baggart, Miss Spearman and Miss Latimer, President of the Plymouth Women's Liberal Association, sought the Chief Constable, Mr. J. D. Sowerby, and found that he had knowledge of the working of the system adopted in Leeds, from whence he had come, and viewed it with favor; but thought that there would be some difficulty in getting it accepted by the Plymouth Watch Committee, to whom are confided the police regulations,—owing to cost, and the novelty of the idea to most of the men constituting the Committee.

A deputation of local ladies, representative of the varied political and religious thought, next waited upon the Watch Committee, made their request, and gave the reasons for its advisability.

They were well received, attentively listened to, and eventually, after a delay of about two months, were informed that the Watch Committee did not see their way to placing women in that position, nor the need that there should be an alteration of the old plan of men only, which, in their estimation, had worked well.

It was determined to wait until, with the changes of the Council by the yearly election, there would be a partially new Committee, and then to try again.

Miss Latimer was re-commencing the campaign, when the visit of Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Hood gave the needed impetus to the movement, by its introduction and advocacy on their platform, and their support by their speeches.

Public opinion was against women being handed over to the sole charge of men, when it was pointed out the reasons against such a course, and the universal exclamation was: "how is it we have never thought of this before."

Now their attention was drawn to the anomaly, it was found easy to gather together a second deputation, consisting this time of representative ministers, and leading men citizens, as well as ladies; and Miss Latimer, who had hitherto had the conduct of the effort, willingly accepted the offer that it should become a movement of the N. B. W. F. Association, and get the assistance of their organisation.

The feeling which had been kept alive by meetings, explanatory interviews with members of the Watch Committee, and perseverance, bore fruit.

The second deputation were conscious that there was a more sympathetic entertainment of their views than heretofore.

Before the question for discussion came on for final decision, it reached Miss Latimer's ears that the application was likely to be rejected, on account of lack of accommodation for even two women to properly carry on their duties.

By the courtesy of the police officials, she was allowed to go over all the premises and judge of the obstacles herself, and on the strength of what she saw, as immediate action had to be taken, wrote to the Mayor, the Chairman of the Watch Committee, to ask that the principle conceding the two women be adopted, and the mode of working be wrought out afterwards.

The subject was fully gone into, and it was decided that in extensive structural alterations that will be undertaken for the

extension of the police premises, this want of new and better cells for the women prisoners and a room for police matrons shall be dealt with, and, unless the unforeseen arises, be provided.

The resolution sent to Miss Latimer, the Hon, Secretary, reads :

“That when practicable, the Committee hope that arrangements may be made with a view to engaging police matrons to take charge of female prisoners.”

Owing to plans, buildings, &c., it must necessarily be a matter of time ; but that Plymouth will adopt the system is now believed to be a settled fact.

The Chief Constable proposes to isolate the women's part, having the matrons responsible to him, as his own force, and giving the entire surveillance of female prisoners to the matrons, from the time of their entering the station to quitting it.

S. FRANCES LATIMER,

3, *Glen Side*,
Plymouth, 20th April, 1894.