

A NIGHT AT A POLICE STATION.

Precisely What Happened at the Eldridge Street Station Before Sergeant McSweeney.

A GOOD DEAL MORE COMEDY THAN TRAGEDY.

Queer People and Extraordinary Questions That Presented Themselves for the Sergeant's Attention.

"It's going to be a busy night," said Sergt. John McSweeney, of the Eldridge street police station, when THE WORLD reporter entered at 6 o'clock last night. "I've got lots of writing to do to-night, and whenever I'm busy the rush comes. Here's the first."

The sergeants as a rule take great pains to ascertain the name and residence of a prisoner, and especially if the person is drunk, for something is liable to occur, in which case relatives can be notified. This particular prisoner was in a singing mood and he sang:

"This little pig went to market"—
"That will do," interrupted the Sergeant.
"What is your name?"
"You're not going to get it, do you see. What do you take me for? Jack Roberts ain't such a fool."
"Where do you live?" continued the Sergeant, who marked him down as John Roberts.
"I say," he ejaculated, with a drunken leer. "what do you want to know for?"
"I want to take you home. There's a good fellow."
"I live—darn it, where do I live? I don't

know it," sadly replied the woman. "I'm drunk, and I'm glad of it. Come out and have something with me."
"Search him, and lock him up," said the Sergeant curtly.
"Hello! what's this?" ejaculated the policeman, as he took something bulky out of the man's pocket. A revolver, eh? It's loaded, too."
"See if he has a permit," remarked the Sergeant.
None could be found, and the additional charge of carrying a loaded revolver without a permit was preferred against him.
The station-house lodgers soon make their appearance. Many are respectable-looking women, but they do not earn enough during the day to afford the luxury of a bed at night. How their faces light up with joy when granted the privilege to rest their tired bodies on the hard boards in the sleeping-room. They come in droves, and as the custom is "first come first served," the place is soon filled and the late ones are turned away.
"Here, come back," exclaimed the Sergeant as he caught sight of a woman through the door leading to the lodging-room without his permission.
"It's all right, Sergeant," ejaculated the doorman; "she helps me to clean the stoves and clean the windows."
"That I do, sir," respectfully said the woman.
"All right," replied the Sergeant.
Here comes another. She is a careworn looking little woman, and she looked offitally at the doorman as she asked:
"Am I too late?"
"It's an hour behind the time," he made answer.

"I know it," sadly replied the woman. "but I came down all the way from Harlem. I'm tired out and I can't walk another step. Please let me stay."
"Why didn't you apply for lodgings up in Harlem?"
"Because I was promised work in Norfolk street to-morrow and I want to be there bright and early."
"Let her stay," remarked the Sergeant, as he looked up from his desk, at which he was busy writing.
"I've got a black eye," said an excited-looking individual, who looked to be an Anarchist, about half an hour later, and said his name was Karl Schmidt. "A man broke into my room and struck me with a club."
"Why did he do that?" asked the Sergeant.
"Because my wife shouted for help."
"Why did your wife shout for help?"
"I don't know."
"Did you beat her?"
"I did not."
"Now don't tell me that. You must have done something to your wife."
"I only pushed her."
"And the man responded to her cries and beat you."
"That's it."
"What do you want me to do?"
"I want the detectives to go with me and arrest him."
"I'll arrest you if you don't get out of here pretty quick, and get your wife to come here and make a complaint against you. Hello, he's gone."
"Ding-dong, ding-dong," next rattled the telegraph instrument in the corner of

the police station and the police reserves were started out to a little fire in Essex street.
"I want to ask a question," said a laboring man, who gave the name of Thomas McGinnis, an hour later.
"What is it you want to know?"
"I pawned my watch two days ago and when I went there this evening to get it out they overcharged me. Guess how much?"
"I have no idea."
"Ten cents on \$2. They overcharged me four cents, and I want satisfaction. Where shall I go?"
"To the Mayor's Marshal's office to-morrow."
"What time to-morrow? Will I have to wait long?"
"I don't know that my good man."
"Well," said the man, as he scratched his head, "I think if I go down there I will lose \$3—a day's work—for four cents. I'll pocket the loss, I guess. Good-day, Sergeant."
More prisoners are brought in, and then came a dejected-looking man, who said his name was Johnson and confidentially that "Susan and I are out."
"Out where?" queried the Sergeant.
"We don't love each other any more. She threw me over for another. I want my presents back."
"You will have to go to a civil court for that."
"I was told to come here."
"Where do you live?"
"At the corner of Stanton and Norfolk streets."
"That is the Fifth District Court, in Clinton street. Ask for Judge Goldfoyle. He'll give you justice."

"That's all I want," replied the man, and he went away.
The wife of one of the prisoners locked up applies for the keys found in the husband's possession.
"I left him in the house to-night," she said. "while I went uptown to see my mother. He doesn't speak to her and doesn't want me to speak to her. I told him I was going somewhere else, but he learned where I had gone from the children and he went out and got drunk. I don't blame him. I shouldn't have lied to him."
"How did you know he was here?" asked the Sergeant.
"The neighbors recognized him in the handcuffs in which he was carried here. I'll be in court in the morning and get him out."
A small larceny case is then brought in and the prisoner is locked up. Next comes a man who mistakes the station-house for a hotel.
"We keep boarders," ejaculated the Sergeant, "only when they are drunk."
"I'm a temperance man," replied the man.
"You don't show it. Good-day. He'll be a prisoner for two hours," said the Sergeant.
And so he was. He visited a saloon again after he left the station-house and he was brought in under arrest before midnight.
"Let's see how badly you are injured," said Sergt. McSweeney to a man who pretended to be badly injured.
Not a scratch was found on him.
"I won't arrest the man," said the Sergeant. "Go to court to-morrow morning and get a warrant."

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to know is this: I have an offer to marry again, and I want to know if I can do so legally. I don't want to commit bigamy, you know."
"No, that would be awful," sympathizingly remarked the sergeant.
"I want to know what I can do," continued the woman.
"You must advertise for your husband and wait six months. If at the end of that period he fails to make any appearance you can marry again."
"Without a divorce?"
"No, you must first get a divorce, but that would be plain sailing."
"Ernest will be sorry."
"What has he to do with it?"
"He is my betrothed. He has everything arranged to get married in a month. Some one told me that I could get married without a divorce, or else I would have brought proceedings before."
"And so the night wore on and the reporter made his adieu.
This is a faithful transcript of what he heard and saw at the Eldridge police station. And it is not a typical night.
It is a popular error to think that only matters of crime come to the attention of a sergeant in charge of a police station. It seems to be regarded by many people as a bureau of information or the headquarters for all sorts of complaints, and as the source of advice on almost every conceivable topic.
The tact and good nature of the average police-sergeant in dealing with the queer and misanthropic questions and the peculiar specimens of humanity that come before him in a night at a station-house are something phenomenal.