

TRUE STORIES OF THE NEWS.

A NIGHT ON "POST THIRTEEN."

Forty Wretches Gathered in from the State Beer Dives in Mulberry Bend by Policeman Peterman.

But the Witness Who Promised to Tell the Story of the Dens Weakens Before His Companions and Refuses to Betray Them.

Forty prisoners from the "state beer" dives of the historic old "Mulberry Bend." That was what Policeman William Peterman had to show at the Tombs Police Court yesterday for his night's vigil on "Post Thirteen" of the Elizabeth street police district. Forty human beings confronted by one of

side, and a long file of blue-coated policemen, with regular and heavy tread, marched in and took their stand before the Sergeant at the desk. He will remember the glittering buttons, the military walk and bearing, the powdered hats, and, more than all else, the deep, firm voices as they answer "Here."

He will remember the special instructions, if any there are, which the Sergeant reads in his dry, monotonous tones. Then come the assignments for duty, the opening ranks and the inspection of the Roundman. Then the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of the men as they march past the desk and out the double front doors, each man pausing for just a second as he inhales the first long breath of the evening air.

Perhaps he nods to an incoming officer who, with slightly wearied step but with still as much complacency in his eye, passes him on the steps the dreaded "Post Thirteen."

William Peterman, of Capt. Brocks's Elizabeth street station, left the station-house on Thursday in just such a way.

"Post Thirteen" had been assigned to him by the Sergeant. To the ordinary hearer the words "Post Thirteen" convey no more meaning than any other assignment for the night. To Peterman, however, and to his brother officers the number of unlucky women meant a vast deal. Indeed Peterman been other than a fearful man his check might have paled a trifle when he heard the order.

But Officer Peterman was too watching over "Post Thirteen" for many a weary night, and if his heart itched it's chargeable more to what he has and sees nightly than to any unkindness of heart. "Post Thirteen" is common known as "Mulberry Bend."

"Mulberry Bend" is a pretty name, and covers of green fields of country life; but the reality is very, very different. No fashionable "slumming" party misses Mulberry street between Park and Bayard in its searches for vicissitudes tattered and torn. "Mulberry Bend" is the haunt of the Italian laborer, the staid fakir, the fallen of all conditions, realigned latitudes, who

seek misery for sympathy and vice because it is congenial.

One of the many curious and distinguishing features of "Mulberry Bend" has been for years its "state beer" dives. Hidden in back rooms at the end of long, dark hallways, up creaking and greasy stairways, or in attics with low, blackened ceilings, or in cellars which would be but a mean habitation to dogs, this curious trade holds its sway.

How any one can drink the concoction which is dispensed here and live is a mystery. The beer is collected by Italians. It is the dregs of almost empty kegs and the leavings of the troughs under the beer faucets. It comes to the dives in broken-necked pitchers, tin cans and other household utensils which apparently have yet to feel the luxury of the dishwasher's attention.

Young Capt. McLaughlin once sent an officer to gather evidence against the dives. The policeman accepted the task manfully, well understanding that to make a "case" he would have to drink some of the liquor.

He did so, but never made a case. For six months he lay bedridden in his home, and since that time no policeman has been asked to gather evidence by actually patronizing the dives.

EVIDENCE VERY HARD TO GET.

Every few months an outcast is found who is willing to appear as prosecuting witness in the police courts, but generally when brought face to face with the prisoner or prisoners the "bum," as the police call him, will go back on his promise.

This was what happened yesterday. The man who was arrested was a cadaverous individual, clothed in rags, who was, when taken to the station-house, drunk enough to be overruled into appearing against his friends. But when questioned by Justice Taintor he made a pointblank denial of what he had confessed on Thursday night and so the forty prisoners shambled back to their old haunts.

VERY RATHER THEN IN.

On various other charges—as suspicious characters, vagrants or other miscreants,

scores of these people are gathered in by the police every week from "Post Thirteen." There is an endless chain of prisoners going to and from Blackwell's Island, and as fast as they reach their homes at the "Bend" their habits are resumed.

Some very extraordinary examples of variegated human nature are picked up about the dives by Officer Peterman and his companions from time to time. Occasionally there is a romance, some ever-varying phase of the old story of blighted hopes and lost ambitions.

A short time ago an English detective came to New York. He was in search of an important witness, a woman, whom he had located within the boundaries of the "Bend." With the aid of Policeman Peterman he succeeded in finding her in one of the dives. After untiring persuasion she agreed to go back with him to England, there to act as a most important factor in the conviction of a young man with whom she had formerly lived on terms of intimacy.

BACK TO HER OLD HAUNT.

The detective took her to a hotel and fancied

her safely and comfortably ensconced until such time as he could begin the voyage. But in the morning she was gone. She had fallen a victim to the state-beer habit, and the prospect of a life of comfort could not lure her from what seemed to be her destiny.

A few weeks ago one of the weather-beaten specimens of humanity who make the dives their home told the story of his life to one of the Tombs Court clerks. He had been a mining stockbroker in St. Louis, trusted by dozens of investors and men of means, but drink had taken out a lion on his time and energy. He lost heavily and the confidence of his friends was withdrawn. Then he took to dealing in grain, was up and down a dozen times, and finally drifted a wreck to New York. His efforts to obtain employment failed, and, like many faint-hearted men of his class, the descent to "Mulberry Bend" state-beer dives was an easy matter.

If Policeman Peterman would write the history of what he has seen and heard on his beat "Post Thirteen" would be famous.