

A New Idea in "Police" Work



COMPLETE GROUP OF OPERATORS OF WOMEN'S PROTECTIVE DIVISION.

By Earl C. Brownlee

GIVEN the "smart" boy and his automobile, the average public dance hall and public swimming place, add the average jazz music and you have, if you are mathematician enough to figure with the souls of little girls and foolish women, nine tenths of the great problem the women's protective division of the department of public safety of the city of Portland is fighting day and night to solve.

That idealized condition in modern law enforcement which upholds the principle that accused persons are innocent until proved guilty; that human doctrine that prevention of crime is the valorous part of law enforcement—these are the foundation stones upon which the division has been built, so that last year it was capable of dealing with 2033 cases of female delinquency in one form or another.

There are four primary causes for the delinquency of Portland girls, Mrs. J. G. Frankel, superintendent of the division, will tell you if you probe the workings of the department at whose head she has been for the last two and a half years. The causes are those mentioned above: the unbridled boy and his automobile, the average dance hall, the average swimming pool and jazz music. The latter, Mrs. Frankel will point out, is the minor cause, and an indirect one, since it is more the "jazzy" environment that accompanies such music than the syncopated strains themselves that lead to evil pathways.

Under the direction of the Travelers' aid of the Y. W. C. A., the first protective and preventive work among Portland women was started in 1905. The basis built by the Y. W. C. A. was absorbed by the city government in 1908 as a part of the department of public safety and Mrs. Lola G. Baldwin was placed in charge. Mrs. Baldwin retains that charge, but on an extended leave of absence, during which she has undertaken very similar work for the federal government. Mrs. Frankel is the active head of the organization.

It is a serious offense to brand one of the 12 members of Mrs. Frankel's force as a "police-woman," for they are not that, in the strict sense of the term. They are "operatives," though they have full police power and wear a concealed star. Their exercise of arresting authority is confined to emergencies and they do not wear uniforms.

Each operative has passed a civil service test and has posted a bond of \$1000 to assure the faithful performance of her duty in protection of women, prevention of crime and education against law violation.

In the "run" of its work the division seeks, first, to prevent crime where possible, or, second, to protect woman against a repetition of her offense against the statutes.

"We are working," Mrs. Frankel points out, "to create a finer, keener conscience—not to punish."

The staff of 12 includes the superintendent, a secretary and 10 operatives, five doing day work and a similar number working at night. The division cooperates fully with every other department in the government of the city and state and does a staggering amount of work on its own behalf. The day oper-



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atives investigate cases, answer emergency calls, prepare court cases, interview women taken to jail and attend them in court, where the average woman has no other friend.

Five night workers make investigations, visit all places of amusement, cover street "beats," observe the meanderings of dapper youths and keep a weather eye always open for the boys and men who drive about town "picking up young girls for joy rides," as Mrs. Frankel says.

Some of the cases the division operatives report from sources where such things would seem least probable, make cool blood boil and make the Bolsheviks seem a trifling trouble by comparison. That may best be indicated, perhaps, by extracts from Mrs. Frankel's report for last year, which, in the absence of a complete report for 1920, is representative: The division handled 2033 cases

against which complaint had been filed by at least one of 17 agencies which cooperate with the division. Of these cases 129 were incorrigible girls, 237 were immoral, 593 were suspicious persons, 369 were involved in domestic troubles, 39 were insane, 27 were sick, 291 were runaways or "missing from home" cases and the remainder were miscellaneous cases involving the decidedly criminal.

A minimum number of cases were concluded by commitment to jails, and the disposition of cases shows that scores of them were placed in proper corrective "homes" and schools and in employment where the advice of the mothers who compose the division staff could bear fruit in their lives.

In the one year operatives visited 728 dance halls, including, of course, repeat visits; 695 grill rooms, 725 amusement places and spent a total of 806 hours on street

duty. In the same period operatives visited 1060 homes, 1242 offices and hotels and held 3692 interviews with girls and women who needed advice. The division provided lodging in 47 cases and meals in 597 cases, at a total cost to the taxpayers, who are eventually benefited, of \$160.62. Operatives saw 31 of their "clients" married within the year, too.

The division is working in more or less direct opposition to the uniformed police, whose task it is to bring law violators to justice. All of which is perfectly proper in the eyes of the women's division, but it puts a different light on its own duties and seeks, especially in the cases of juvenile girls, to keep as many as possible out of juvenile court. In fact, every possible adjustment of each case is made with this object in view.

Because of their public nature and the difficulty managers find in keeping personal check on every guest, the hotels come into the attention of the division's operatives frequently. Hotel managers will do most anything the division asks before they will submit their houses to the unpleasant publicity that concentrated activity against loose morals and freely flowing liquor would cause.

This condition does exist and to counter it the women of the division, when they find a violation of the normal moral or legal code, discard the bombastic, domineering practices of their contemporary male bluecoats and the case is settled so quietly and thoroughly that perhaps none but the manager and the operatives know what has been done.

"Hotel managers could lessen the need for this division a great deal if they would protect men and women by demanding a high stand-

ard of conduct in each house," Mrs. Frankel declares.

"This division carries two separate and distinct lines of work. First, the good girl who needs our advice, assistance and protection, and, second, the girl who has transgressed the law in some manner and who has a desire to do better.

"For instance, 474 girls applied to us in 1919 voluntarily for advice and help. We advised and aided 440 of them here and the others we referred to the proper agencies.

"Our policy is not to bring girls and women into jail, nor even into court, but to prevent the commitment of the act that would lead to jail and court. Given a first offense to deal with, we try to avoid a second offense.

"Our records here show that a woman falls into evil ways—mentally and morally—through love, to be candid. Therefore, we accept the belief that she can be redeemed by love better than by law and that phase of its application that leads to jail cells and unpleasant, unquenchable notoriety.

"It is a fact apparently well established that a woman falls lower into the mire of lawlessness and sin than does man, because woman is naturally on a higher plane in her ideal.

"Many women feel, when they have once transgressed, that their cases are hopeless. Who ever heard tell of the man who entertains such an idea?

"The division has been scored at times for answering anonymous calls for investigation. While we do not welcome anonymity, we are

Women Whose Task Is Directing the Life of Fellow Beings Into Wholesome Channels Where the Light From Home Firesides Is Bright. Their Measures Are Protective and Preventative.

forced by circumstances to respond and through such calls we have found some of the most flagrant cases we have ever had to deal with.

"But referring back to our policy of prevention and protection as opposed to detection and incarceration, it is not only my own opin-

and where innocence is granted until guilt is proved.

Mrs. Frankel and her associates have not been hardened to the business of correction that they interpret their "police" duties to be, and there is a great deal of sympathy for human frailty and youthful wrongdoing manifested in the little staff that has undertaken the huge job of preventing the degradation of girls whose greatest crime is in having no home, no mother and no care.

"We are seldom, if ever, called upon to redeem the girl who is reared within the glare of the flames of a friendly firelight from

GRACE B. NICKERSON DANCE HALL INSPECTOR WOMEN'S PROTECTIVE DIV.



MRS. W. G. FRANKEL

ion, but that of many others, that our work is fundamentally different from that of the uniformed police department and its branches; that the women's protective division could do much better work if we were not located at police headquarters.

"Many women and girls would come to us voluntarily were it not for the fact that they must come through the man-crowded corridors of the police station, where, usually without cause, she is embarrassed and backward. We want girls and women to solicit our help and we would like a proper environment in which to receive all manner of visitors who would come to us.

"We have found Chief of Police Jenkins an excellent patriot and ally in our work, but the general atmosphere of a police station cannot be overcome by his splendid cooperation alone."

The division is supported entirely by the city through its budget allotment for police work and, aside from its office quarters at police headquarters, maintains two detention rooms where juvenile girls are held, when necessary, overnight.

There is no third degree chamber, no cells with immense iron bars, but an atmosphere as pleasantly wholesome as conditions amid such surroundings will permit.

There are no dignified uniforms to awe the uninitiated and calm the hardened sinner; there are no glittering firearms to brandish in the faces of culprits. Such things are taboo where love supplants punishment, as far as humanly possible,

the home hearth," Mrs. Frankel declares. "We insist that formal pleasures and moral perfection are attainable in the atmosphere of a real home, while it is the slovenly home, guided by a careless, negligent mother and an overindulgent father, that is producing membership for our shoplifting clubs among 12-year-old girls and mental and moral degeneracy among young girls and women old enough to know better on their own accounts.

"Mothers who know where their girls are after school, after dinner and, in fact, all the time, as mothers should, very seldom have serious trouble with their daughters. But woe is the lot of the fond parent who overindulges the daughter's habit of spending the night with a girl friend. Half the time mother doesn't know who the girl friend is, and the rest of the time she doesn't know that the best place for any juvenile, girl or boy, after nightfall, is at home. Joy riding, public dancing and jazzy atmospheres are not the proper sports and environments of young womanhood and they probably never will be.

"I am not giving you extracts from a sermon, but statements on actual conditions as we find them right here in Portland—right here where we can put our fingers on them in absolute substantiation of every charge we may make in our desire to get all Portland girls back within the family circle, in their own homes, where they belong."

The women's protective division comprises the following operatives, as shown in the picture herewith, reading from the left: Mercedes Flint, Martha Rondall, Helen Burntrager, Myrtle Kaiser, Carry S. Turner, Louise H. Blake, Elizabeth Moorad, assistant superintendent; Sophie E. King, Mrs. John F. Carroll and, seated, Mrs. Frankel, Mrs. Grace B. Nickerson, dance hall inspector, and one of 12 operatives, is shown in insert.