

# INFANTICIDE.

## Child-Murder Practiced as One of the Fine Arts in Chicago.

### How the Midwives Look Upon Abortion and with What Ease They Can Be Hired to Perform It.

#### Several of the Well-Known Madams Consent to Commit Brutal Crime for Small Pay.

#### Physicians Called in to Assist When Necessary--One of Them Named by a Midwife.

#### The Preliminary Chapter of a Horrible Story Gives Indications of What May Be Expected to Follow.

Before a neatly painted, two-story frame house, situated back in a yard, was a sign swinging on a post like an old English inn sign. It bore the information, "Mme. Karl, Midwife." The house was 1127 North Halsted street. In answer to a modest ring a lady came to the door and opened it just enough to peep out and inquired, rather harshly: "Who are you and what do you want?"

Being informed that a stranger in the city wished to see Mme. Karl on private and urgent business she opened the door and led the way upstairs to a tastefully furnished sitting-room and motioned her visitor to a seat, closed the doors carefully, and took a seat beside him. She was a stout woman, of medium height, clustering, pretty dark-brown hair, bright, sparkling dark-gray eyes, plump figure, and altogether a good-looking woman. She appeared to be under 40 and was intelligent and disposed to be very cautious until the reporter made known his mission in a straightforward, pathetic manner. He came to secure a place where a young lady relative must be saved from the disgrace that would fall upon her and a proud, happy family if she were permitted to become a mother. She could not remain in the city till nature made her a mother in due time and give birth to the child in the usual way. Nature must be assisted by one of the numerous methods scientific people like the madame know so well.

The young lady was rich and money would be no object. It must be done. There were plenty to do it, but the reputation of Mme. Karl had reached the ears of the reporter and he preferred her.

"Who told you about me away out west?" was the cautious question of the madame. The answer was "a lady friend who had come here and had madame's skillful services." Would madame take the case?

"Well, that is a very risky business. I do not practice such things except in the rarest cases," said madame. "I must know her physical condition and talk with her myself. It will be no trouble to get rid of it."

"But the young lady will not take medicines for it. An operation is the only thing she will undertake."

"She is right. I never use medicines. They are dangerous to the woman and do not always accomplish the purpose. I always employ a doctor who is skilled in this part, and he uses an instrument to accomplish the desired result."

"What doctor do you employ?"

"Well, you bring the lady up here and I'll examine her and the doctor will see her, and after all come to an agreement in the case you'll know who the doctor is. But we can't be too careful about this business. You need not worry about her, though. I'll guarantee that she comes out all right and no harm will be done--if I take the case at all. If she can stand it we'll soon have her as a nice young girl again. You see some die and then there is trouble."

"Mme. O. Sievert, Midwife," was found on a small card tacked to the door of a two-story brick house, 320 Sedgwick street. All was dark and the reporter's ring was answered by a tall, stout looking young man. When it was stated that Mme. Sievert was wanted on professional business the stout young man threw his voice back into a dark hallway and talked something, and immediately a tornado of German came rushing out of the impenetrable blackness in the tones of a woman who talked bass. At first the madame could not understand English and the stout young man acted as interpreter. As soon as the delicate nature of the business together with broad hints of big pay for secret and prompt attention were broached the interpreter was dismissed and the old lady suddenly acquired a knowledge and understanding of English. The case was stated to her.

"How long is she in this fix?" was the blunt way in which she put the main question.

"Oh, between two and three months."

"Well, if she is strong she will have no trouble but I must see her for myself and talk with her first. I can manage to take her here in the house and keep all secret till she is over it."

"But she wishes it understood that she will not take medicines for it."

"Ah, that's no good! Medicine is nothing. I never use it. You bring her to me and I'll see her and talk with her and tell her if I can help her out. I never have trouble if they are all right."

Diagonally across on the east side of Sedgwick from Mme. Sievert's stands a two-story frame, the first floor being used as a store. At the north side swings a tin sign on a rod projecting from the wall. On it is this information in German and English: "Mme. M. Schoenlan, Midwife." Up a narrow, dark stairway a side door bore one of the madame's cards, tacked on it. A knock brought the interrogation in loud brogue: "Who is there?"

The question was answered satisfactorily and the door was opened and the visitor ushered into an unkempt room containing a table, three chairs, and a clock.

"Mme. Schoenlan, midwife," was a stout, very stout, dumpy woman, who was disposed to enter into details, with assurances that "it could be done all right. There will be no trouble. I don't need any doctor. I charge from \$15 to \$30, according to how long it takes." She would take the lady in the house "and make the poor dear all right in two or three weeks. Why, some only takes a few days. I feel so sorry for the poor things and do all I can for them. Of course this kind of business has to be done very carefully. It causes trouble if it gets out."

She appeared to feel proud in her skill in this line and only seemed to have one feeling on the subject--that of sympathy for the "poor girl" who made the "mistake." She appeared to think it a benevolent undertaking and that the necessity for secrecy came from "man's inhumanity to man"--or woman, rather. It was found that this idea, more or less elaborated, was entertained by all. The fear of possible detection in crime made them all cautious, but no scruples about the crime itself were expressed.

PRIVATE HOME FOR LADIES DURING CONFINEMENT. Mrs. SIMON, Doctor, 522 Blue Island

The above advertisement is kept standing in an evening paper and is open and candid enough to deceive almost any one of the least suspicious of any practice heading concealment. Pending from the second story of a yellow, dingy frame house at 522 Blue Island Avenue is a sign bearing this inscription, in English and in German: "Mrs. M. Simon, Midwife." Up a dirty stairway the reporter found the way to a hall that looked

as if it were swept just once in a while, which period had not rolled round in some time. After knocking at several doors a hurrying and shuffling of feet inside told that the visit had caused commotion. An inside door was opened cautiously and a face appeared, followed by an abrupt:

"What's wanted?"

"Is Miss. Simon in?"

"Yes; what do you want with her?"

"I want to see her, on urgent and private professional business."

There was hesitation and an excuse for not being at leisure now, but on being told that the visitor was from the distant west and that her advertisement had brought him there and that there was money in it the door was opened. Going into a plainly furnished room it was noticed that four doors led from it into other rooms, all of which were closed except one, which opened into a bedroom, and this bedroom had a door opening into another bedroom. As soon as the madame saw that her visitor's eyes were taking in these things she rushed into the first bedroom, peeped into the next, said something in a low voice, closed the door quickly, then closed the one leading to where they were sitting, scowled at the reporter, and said, in a gruff manner:

"Tell me what you want with me, I'm busy."

"I want to secure accommodations here for a lady who must have your professional services."

"How far along is she?"

"Between three and four months."

"Oh, I don't like to have anything to do with such cases."

"But some one must attend to it and why not you? She is wealthy and will pay well. The work must be done as quickly as possible and with as little risk as will guarantee a sure remedy. You have a place that is retired and no one would look for such a thing here. That is just what we want."

"Now, see here, I don't know you. This is a very dangerous business and I—"

"Yes; I know that, but I don't know you, either, and it is more to us to keep this secret than it is to you. I must know that you have experience in this line and can bring about an abortion quickly and naturally and without danger."

"Oh, I have never yet had any trouble. You say the lady is nearly 30, and is strong? Well, you needn't be scared; she will come out all right. I employ a skilled and experienced surgeon and he does the work safely and quickly, and I attend to nursing and taking care of the girls. He charges \$50 and I charge \$7.50 per week for board and attention. You send the girl here and I'll talk to her and take her to the doctor and examine her and we can then make a bargain."

"What doctor did you say you employed?" asked the reporter, innocently.

"I never tell his name to any one until I know it is all right. It is a dangerous business and means ten years in prison. Them Springfield men meddled with things they know nothing about and passed a law making it ten years in state's prison to be found guilty of practicing abortion. I'll take the girl to the doctor and he'll talk to her, but I can't tell you who he is until I know the business is going to be done. He doesn't want to be known in this business."

"Well, I'll bring the lady. She'll not come without me, being a relative and very timid. I'll have to go with you to the doctor with her too. She will not go unless I do. And, I want to tell you, if he and you operate in bringing about abortions by drugs and medicines she can't come. It must be some kind of an operation."

"That's all right. We never use medicines. The doctor first makes an examination and then uses an instrument. He waits a few days and if it doesn't come he repeats this until he succeeds and nature brings about the birth without any more trouble. It isn't painful and there is no danger."

"How long will it take?"

"Oh, sometimes only two or three days and sometimes two or three weeks. Not long ago I had a pretty little girl, only 16, from one of the leading hotels here, who had got in a fix and was nearly scared to death, because she was of a good family. She was a beauty and the dearest, sweetest little thing you ever saw. She was about two or three months that way when she came to me. The doctor operated on her twice. It wasn't any trouble at all, and the dear little girl is now well and happy and comes out to see me regularly. She hasn't a better friend than me in the world now. I have had many cases, but no trouble with any. After the birth is the dangerous time; the flow is liable to kill them. It is then that my knowledge and experience come in and my careful and constant attention saves them well and strong."

"But in case a girl goes too long before coming to you and the doctor—you could perform the operation, could you?"

"Ah, that makes no difference. Any age will do. It is more dangerous before three months than any other time. It can be got rid of any time up to a few days before regular time. If a woman does not want to have a live child we can do this at any time. After three months is better."

"But in case you should fail to bring on an abortion isn't there any way to insure that the child shall be born dead, without any marks?"

"Oh, yes; it can be done by the attendant holding its mouth and nose as it is coming into the world. This doesn't kill it, you see, for it never breathes at all then, and, therefore, has never been alive. Some do this. But I never did. I should be afraid. It's best and safest to use the instrument and then there is no risk."

Up stairs at 436 South Halsted a knock brought a tall, well-formed, good-looking woman to the door. She appeared to be about 32 or 33, but said she was 44, and that she had been in the business (of midwife) twenty-one years. "Mrs. Wanda Miller" is the name in the directory. The reporter stated his business. Experience had taught him how to express it so as to disarm suspicion and enlist sympathy. Mrs. Miller entered at once into the matter and exhibited a motherly solicitude for the "poor girl." She showed very plainly that she was honest in her belief in the high morality of this destroying human life in its inception in order to keep from harrowing the feelings of a girl who would disgrace herself by becoming a mother before she became a wife. Mrs. Miller was open and confiding and sat close to her visitor and sympathized with him and with his relative. She assured him, however, that there was no cause for alarm; she had saved many girls. The thing was easily done. She used to have a large house where she kept them and got rid of the child for them and nursed them up for a few weeks and sent them home as well as they were at first. She could get rid of the trouble for the young lady, even if she had been five or six months in that condition, but she had no room. She was tired and gave up her large house and moved into 436 so as to rest, and only went out to attend ladies now. Of course if the girl came from a distant state and got a room convenient she would take her case and get the "poor, dear thing out of her trouble. That will be easy enough," she said.

"Not with drugs?"

"No, don't you let her use drugs. There are three ways of bringing on an abortion that are sure, but if done carelessly may cause death, and then, my God, there will be trouble!"

"Isn't the operation very painful and dangerous?"

"Of course it is painful, but not much. It is better to bear the pain though and not take chloroform, as many women die under chloroform. It causes the heart to stop, and the loss of blood makes them so weak the heart doesn't go again. There is danger of a —"

"Hemorrhage?"

"Yes, a hemorrhage, and there is no possible way to stop a hemorrhage as long as the child is not removed. The poor mother must just flow to death. I could take the case for you, but have no room. "But," she added, "I can send you to a doctor who will take the case and who makes a regular practice of this kind of work. He always succeeds and charges only about \$200 and has a regular house for it and keeps girls to attend them and everything is secret. He has an office on Wabash avenue somewhere and his house is on Indiana avenue. I forget the number, but any directory will tell you. He is well known, but no one suspects him of making a business of this." She then gave the name of a well-known physician. She told of several prominent families in aristocratic circles of Chicago whom she had saved from disgrace by bringing about premature births for young ladies of the families.