

the real malefactor being her husband with the many aliases. Detectives found him in a house at the corner of Twenty-fifth and Clarkson streets. The book which the prisoner used for collecting the money had evidently been stolen or the names carried from the subscription list of the Colored Woman's Aid association as in most cases the men approached acknowledged the amounts when a letter was presented purporting to be from C. L. Francis, secretary of the association and attested by Georgia Francis, president. The couple only commenced operations on Tuesday morning, but secured \$75, from J. Jay Joslin, \$20 from M. J. McNamara, \$10 from Skinner Bros. & Wright and \$25 from C. S. Morey of the Morey Mercantile company. If the couple had not been arrested, J. H. Thatcher, W. L. James and nearly all of the banks would have been victimized.

### THE ANTI-MATERNAL CRIME.

In all our church pews throughout the civilized world there sit devout professors of religion whose souls are stained with crime—women whose bowed heads, bended knees, and earnest responses through Divine service indicate a fervor of faith, yet whose private deeds have shocked high Heaven and broken one of God's most sacred laws.

Should these women be assembled together, arraigned for their crimes, I doubt if there is a court of justice in the land large enough to admit them. I refer to the ever increasing number of women who, for various reasons, object to becoming mothers, and who, facing the probability of such an event, take the matter of life and death into their own hands.

For many of these women my heart aches with pity and sympathy. It is easy to understand their situation and to cast the mantle of charity over their crimes. When public disgrace stares a weak woman in the face as the result of an indiscreet act, or when poverty and hunger and disease seem the inevitable portion that life will bequeath to an undesired child, the temptation must be overwhelming to a sorrowful and burdened woman to prevent the catastrophe of birth.

Only those who have passed through the experience of motherhood can understand what it means to contemplate even under its brightest and best auspices. With health, love, enough of this world's goods to avert financial worry, and with strong maternal desires, yet it needs a brave heart, a steady courage, a spirit of self-sacrifice and infinite patience to pass through the months of ordeals which it involves. What, then, must it mean to the unhappy wife, unloved and neglected, and already so burdened with unwelcome children that she cannot free herself from her galling chains, or to one who is obliged to toil early and late to keep starvation from the door, or to one who feels herself the victim of a hopeless malady, which a helpless child will inherit; and yet the woman who prevents the life of that germ from maturing to birth commits the crime of murder.

I believe the false idea of many so-called Christian women in regard to this matter, is due largely to their literal translation of one of the many figurative scriptural phrases.

It seems to be the impression of such women that a child has no life until it has drawn breath. The science of modern times, however, proves such an idea ridiculous. A devoted church woman of my acquaintance made an unfortunate marriage. She was obliged to return to her parents before six months had elapsed. A dangerous illness which followed her return was not wholly due to mental agitation, nor was her escape from maternity accidental.

She had purchased surgical skill to aid her in counteracting nature's laws and to free her from the responsibility of a fatherless child. It was not difficult to understand her temptation, but with her religious views it was difficult for me to see how she had dared commit the act.

"Oh, but a child has no real being until it has breathed," she said. "It would have been the loss of a soul had the breath of life entered the child; as it is, why, it is merely a misfortune, resulting in pain and misery to me, that is all."

Alas for the narrowness and unholiness of a creed that can be content with such an argument!

The moment a woman knows that motherhood is a probable event for her, that moment she has the soul of her child in her keeping. No matter how soon she escapes from this menacing maternity, no matter how immature the germ of life she prevents from culminating, yet an immortal soul goes into the spirit life which she must sometime meet.

From every pulpit in the land ought this truth to be thundered forth. It ought to form a part of the moral training in every young ladies' seminary.

The sinful, poor, burdened, or diseased women who commit this crime are few in numbers compared with the vast army of selfish, fashionable wives who do not want to be troubled with children. This army is growing rapidly, as medical assistance becomes more plentiful and skillful in this especial line.

I have known women who committed this crime over and over again; and I never yet met such a one who was not hardened in heart and face. There is something about it which destroys the moral fibre of the mind, even when the woman does not believe her embryo child possessed a soul.

A famous physician once said to me: "In the beginning of my practice I used to help women who came to me for such purposes; I used to think that an unhappy wife or a very poor woman was better off and left the world better off by avoiding maternity in this way if she could not in any other; but my experience proved to me that I was committing a double sin; I not only destroyed a life, but I ruined the moral nature of the mother. I have been shocked at the degeneration of good women who escaped bearing offspring in this manner. I believe the repetition of the act several times slays the soul, and fits the woman for almost any depravity."

It is a pity we have not more physicians of this kind. They would be of vast aid to humanity in its growth toward a higher spiritual plane.

I have personally observed many women whom I knew to have perpetrated this crime, and I have remarked that the one of fine instincts and sensitive feelings is made a physical wreck for years by one experience, even though

she may believe herself justified in what she does; but there is an instinctive shock to her higher self which not infrequently unsettles her reason. The lower order of woman, with dulled moral perceptions and coarse fibred feelings, may pass through it again and again without serious physical results. Only the expression of her face grows harder, and her whole appearance is brutalized.

A vast amount of good might be accomplished would our clergymen stop quarrelling over dogmas, musty technicalities, and useless isms, and devote their eloquence to this subject for a while.

It was only a short time ago that a tearful and sad young woman came to me and asked for a private interview. I had known her as a beautiful, ambitious girl, and as a happy bride, and as a disappointed wife. When we were alone together she said to me, between sobs, "I am very wretched, as you know; my marriage has been a disappointment; my husband does not seem to care for me, and complains of his added expenses since his marriage. Now that I am convinced a child is coming to us he is furious with rage and despair. He says he cannot support a child, that it will drag him down and hinder him from any hope of independence. I am so unhappy, I have come to you to ask you how I shall prevent this burden from falling upon me. I would not mind it only for his sake, but he says other women extricate themselves from such troubles, and that I can."

"If you were burdened by a helpless old father," I replied, "would you come to me and ask me to aid you in murdering him? This is just as great a crime. Go and tell your husband I say so."

She left me only to find the assistance she sought elsewhere, and rose from the brink of the grave shortly afterward a wreck of her former self.

She escaped the care and expense of bringing a child into this world, but can she escape meeting that child sometime, somewhere?

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

### TERRIBLE STORMS.

MILWAUKEE, April 20.—Lake Michigan is being swept by one of the worst easterly gales experienced in years. The sea is running very high and it is impossible to venture out of the harbor. A small vessel is ashore at the head of Juneau. The worst feature of the gale is the probable loss of twenty lives by the washing away of a house over the cribs at the terminus of the new waterworks tunnel. No men are in sight and it is believed they were swept away, but they may be in the air lock below.

It is now known that twenty-two men went out to the waterworks crib last night and unless rescued soon all that may be alive at this hour must perish as the crib is submerged by every wave. It is reported that five of the life-saving crew refused to obey the orders to go out in the boat. The tug *Starks* left the harbor at 3:30 but was forced to return. The sea broke in the pilot house windows and cut Captain Chris Miller quite severely. There is talk of manning the revenue cutter *Johnson* and going to the scene. Captain Davis signifies his willingness to make the attempt, if