

Last winter I was called to assist in a tragic drama. A young wife—who had a child a year old; a devoted and adoring husband; was pretty, lively and agreeable, but spoiled, having never had anything denied her; who had everything to live for—in the absence of her doctor, sought my advice, in dreadful distress, because she was pregnant. On his return she asked his counsel, but would not take it, nor listen to argument, preaching or soothing, but said if we could not help her she would go to someone who had the knowledge and means to do it. She kept her word, alas, and in due time my friend was summoned. She had been, six days before, to an abortionist—a woman—who had inserted a bougie, which remained *in situ* three days; a man came out two or three times to see her. She had not been changed nor washed; the chamber reeked with a fetid odor; pain and chills and fever racked her body, while her mind was wrung with remorse and apprehension. Every resource known to modern science was applied, but in vain, and she died, after an illness of three weeks, in wild delirium. Although it is not required by law that we should report the occurrence of any case of criminal abortion, otherwise than by the death-certificate, the medical examiner was at once notified. He came, and tried to find out the names and address of the criminals; but the husband, to whom the wife had confided them, stoutly kept the secret. The examiner reported that the embalmer had already put in his destructive work, that it would be impossible to identify the malefactors, and that further investigation would only make a noisome and useless scandal. Nothing could be done. I was abused for calling in the medical examiner. The murderess, slapping her pocket, if she had one, with ghoulisg glee, rejoiced and was exceeding glad that she had encompassed her reward, and made us her accomplices. Were we not her accomplices?

I do not suppose that I am alone in the experience of epidemics, the symptoms of which occur in matrons (sometimes spinsters) who come to one's office having reason to dread that they are pregnant. It is odd how such cases come in batches. Their fright, in nine cases out of ten, is groundless. Early in my career I used to prescribe for them small doses of aloes and myrrh. The recipe acted in some by their taking the whole prescription at once, or doubling it, or persisting in its use till their *primæ viæ* were raked as by a brush harrow—with the result in some cases of causing, or coinciding with, a return of the menses. Certain exaggerated expressions of gratitude led me to reflect. I next told such patients that what I gave them would not relieve the amenorrhœa of pregnancy, and exhibited iron, or what was really a placebo. Fewer clients were grateful, but now and then one was