

[Keller, Emil & Mary & Anna]

## A WOMAN'S DEED

Shooting Her Husband, Her Child and Herself

BUT THREE SHOTS AND THREE PERSONS DEAD

The Husband Dies, Shot Through the Heart, While Calling For Help.

THE WOMAN, SHOT THROUGH THE HEAD, DIES A FEW HOURS LATER AT THE HOSPITAL.

The Child, Shot Through the Body, Lingers a Day and Died.

THE AWFUL ACT OF AN INSANE WOMAN THURSDAY IN HER BURT AVENUE HOME.

Mary Keller, 29 years old, shot and killed her husband, Emil, 30 years old, and shot their 9 months old babe, Anna, Thursday night about 8:30 at their residence, No. 10 Burt avenue.

Adolph Hickstein, a piano maker, residing at 10½ Burt avenue, was playing games with other members of his family in his cozy home about 8:30 when he heard a report, followed quickly by a cry for help, coming from the Keller residence. Mr. and Mrs. Hickstein immediately went to the Keller residence. The kitchen door was open and prostrate upon the floor, at its very threshold, lay Keller.

Scarcely had this discovery been made when the report of a pistol was heard.

Going into the bed room Mr. Hickstein was horrified to see Mrs. Keller, her lower extremities in the bed and her head in the crib of her infant by her bedside, and blood issuing from her forehead. The clothes of the child were in flames which Mr. Hickstein quickly extinguished. Neither he nor his wife, even at that time, entirely comprehended the horrible spectacle presented.

Both were excited and as soon as he had extinguished the fire in the child's clothing Mr. Hickstein ran to the residence of Ferdinand Sibus, No. 24 Elizabeth street and informed the family that a tragedy had been enacted, but the details he could not tell.

Mrs. Sibus at once went to the Keller house and several of the neighbors arrived at the same time.

Mrs. Keller was still breathing but there was no life in her husband's form when he was raised from the floor. A bullet hole in his left side told only too plainly what had happened.

Strong hands raised Mrs. Keller to the bed. In her right hand she clutched a revolver, a 22 calibre weapon.

Mrs. Sibus grabbed the infant, whose pitiful cries had been neglected until this time. Hastily wrapping it up she carried it to her home. No one had thought that any injury had befallen the child. When Mrs. Sibus reached her home, however, she was horrified to find a bullet hole in the little one's body, in the region of the stomach on the right side. Nor was this all. The bullet had gone clear through the little one's body. Mrs. Sibus immediately took the child back to its home, where in the meantime, Dr. Sheldon Voorhees and J. M. Jenkins had arrived.

The physicians found a wound in Mrs. Keller's head, just over the temple on the right side. They saw at once that there was no chance for her recovery and preparations were at once begun to remove her to the city hospital. A call was sent in for the ambulance and it responded promptly.

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The news of the tragedy had spread like wildfire and a large crowd had gathered at the house, all willing to render any assistance in their power but really impeding the physicians and those who were assisting them in their work. Policemen, however, managed to clear out the crowd.

When the ambulance arrived, Mrs. Keller was placed in it and removed to the hospital. Dr. Voorhees took the little one in his own buggy to the same institution. Coroner Tripp was notified and ordered the body of Keller removed to Gross' undertaking rooms.

Mrs. Keller lingered until midnight when death claimed her.

There is only one explanation advanced as to the woman's motive for the deed. Five weeks ago she was taken to the City hospital for treatment. At that time she did not talk rationally and although she had never made any threats or acted in a violent manner, it was thought best to have her undergo treatment. She was taken from the hospital about two weeks ago to her home.

During the mother's stay at the hospital the little one had been with her, while the husband had boarded in the family of his friend Sibus. The husband seemed overjoyed when his wife came back and the woman seemed to be entirely rational. She, too, was happy at the thought of again being in her own home and it seemed as if the cloud which had hung over them was dispelled. She was bright and cheerful to her husband and to her friends.

The only strange action that was noticed Thursday came to the attention of a caller. Mrs. Keller was seated at the piano, fingering the keys mechanically, and was crying bitterly. The neighbor spoke of this and Mrs. Keller made some remark to change the subject. She cheered up considerably and said she felt well.

Theories only can explain the circumstances of the tragedy. That generally accepted by those who knew the family well is to this effect: Mr. Keller left his home every evening at 8:30 o'clock to go to the residence of Mrs. D. M. Osborne, where he was employed as gardener, and attend to the fires in the greenhouses. Thursday night his wife retired early as was her custom when at home. Mr. Keller started as usual to go to his work. It was his custom to kiss his wife good-bye before leaving home, and, it is thought, he went to her bedside that night and kissed her. It is surmised that she raised up in the bed and fired the shot that cost his life just as he gave evidence of his love. It is known that he made his way to the door and uttered the cry for help from the bedroom, which is about 25 feet from the kitchen door and about 12 feet square.

Mr. and Mrs. Hickstein both say that the cry for help was clear and strong and they lost no time in answering it.

The baby was the second victim of the insane woman's pistol. The little one's crib was within easy reach of the bed. It is thought that Mrs. Keller raised herself to a sitting posture and aimed the pistol at the little one's heart. If she did it was the only one of the three shots in which her aim was not unerring. Then she turned the pistol against her own head and made the wound as described, which resulted in her death.

The shot which killed the woman was undoubtedly the one which the Hicksteins heard when they entered the house in response to Keller's call.

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Mr. and Mrs. Keller were natives of Switzerland, the former being born in Zurich. They came to this country about five years ago and Keller secured employment as gardener in Philadelphia. He afterwards went to Washington, D.C. He was an excellent gardener and his work always attracted attention. Something over two years ago he came to this city to take a position as gardener at the Osborne residence. He had an excellent reputation for sobriety and industry and was highly esteemed by all who knew him. He loved his wife devotedly and was never happier than when in her company. This love was reciprocated and it is said that there has not been a single hindrance to marital blessedness save the illness of his wife, which undoubtedly was responsible for the horrible affair of Thursday evening.

Another child was born to Mrs. Keller some years ago but it only lived 13 days.

Mrs. Keller was a well educated woman and a very fine pianist. The zither, violin and numerous other instruments were completely mastered by her, and as her husband was also a musician of more than ordinary ability, care did not find a resting place on the shoulders of either of them.

The family resided at No. 96 South street until two weeks ago when their effects were moved to the house where the tragedy was enacted. The house was not entirely in order when the lives of husband and wife were sacrificed.

It is not known whether or not Mr. or Mrs. Keller have any relatives living in the United States. Mrs. Keller's father, it is said, is living in Switzerland. He is 83 years old and engaged in teaching music.

Keller was a member of Herman lodge, D.O.H., and had the hearty friendship of every member of the organization.

Coroner Tripp ordered an inquest for Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock at Gross' undertaking rooms.

Mr. and Mrs. Keller, united in life, will be united in death. They were buried in the same casket. The funeral took place Sunday at 3:30 p.m. at the Universalist church. The interment was in Fort Hill.

Dr. Hickey, who attended the woman during her illness at the City hospital, was seen by a reporter Friday morning. She said that Mrs. Keller, when received at the hospital, was all run down, restless and could not sleep. She showed evidence of insanity in that particular but was not violent. She recovered rapidly and after she had been there about four weeks her husband took her home again. She was greatly improved, but her removal to her home was against the best judgment of Dr. Hickey. The doctor said the woman's illness was of the nature of nervous prostration and that she would need several months of quiet and rest to recover fully from her run down condition.

THREE IN ONE CASKET  
*Emil Keller, Wife and Baby United in Death*

Shortly after 6 o'clock Friday night death came to the relief of little Anna Keller at the City hospital. It was found that the bullet from the mother's revolver had penetrated the infant's right lung and come out on the left side.

The body of the child was removed to Gross' undertaking rooms and prepared for burial with its parents.

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Throughout the day Saturday throngs of people visited the undertaking rooms to view the remains.

Father, mother and daughter were buried in the same casket, which was a special order, about 4 inches deeper and 9 inches wider than the ordinary, and covered with gray embossed plush. The plate read:

EMIL KELLER,  
Aged 30 years  
MARY, His Wife,  
Aged 29 years

Another plate was inscribed "Our Darling."

The head of Mrs. Keller rested on the left shoulder of her husband, thus hiding from view the wound in her temple and partly covering a discoloration of the right eye. There were traces of suffering in the woman's face but her husband looks as if he were in slumber. His left arm encircled the body of his wife while his right rested on his hip. Between the mother and father was the infant, a handsome, plump child. Its right hand was clasped by the left of its mother while its left rested on the mother's left arm. The mother and the infant were laid out in plain white shrouds while the husband and father had a coat and vest of plain black and trousers of a dark pattern.

VIEWED BY THOUSANDS

*The Keller Family Funeral Was Attended by a Large Crowd*

The last sad rites over the remains of Emil Keller, his wife Mary, and their baby Annie, were performed at the Universalist church, Sunday afternoon. It seemed as if half of Auburn had turned out, the crowds surrounding Gross' undertaking rooms in Genesee street and about the Universalist church in South street into Lincoln and Exchange streets and numbering several hundred.

Half an hour before the time appointed, the front doors of the Universalist church were opened but it was scarcely three minutes before the church was crowded. Only front seats in the centre of the church were reserved for the members of the D.O.H., who attended the funeral in a body. It required several police to keep the crowds in front from filling in the aisles of the church. It was after 3:30 o'clock before the funeral arrived.

As the funeral procession entered the church the organist, Miss Hattie Chappel played a funeral march. The communion table had been removed from in front of the pulpit and heavy black covered pedestals occupied this central position, and on them rested the casket during the funeral services. On the cover of the casket were a number of beautiful floral designs from Mrs. D. M. Osborne, a wreath from Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wegman and a beautiful wreath of roses from florist Alfred Patrick. The service opened with prayer by Rev. O. M. Hilton, pastor of the church. The Harugari Saengerchoir sang in German "Sweet and Quiet Is Their Sleep" as an opening selection and Rev. Mr. Hilton followed with readings from the Scripture, after which he spoke of the sad event. His remarks were full of Christian love and sympathy and moved a large

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number of those who were present to tears. Mr. Hilton said that on the 25th day of last June he met for the first time the three who lay in the coffin before him, the father, mother and child. They were a happy family and brought their babe for baptism in this church.

“We were glad to welcome them to our church,” said Mr. Hilton, “for we found in Mrs. Keller a woman of rare intelligence. We found that she was a thorough musician when she played at one of our concerts and later at the pastor’s home. We heard encouraging reports from her home, that she was devoted and loving to her husband and child. Always kind words came from all who knew them and they were cheerful and happy. We next heard of her illness and that she was taken to the city hospital for treatment. We feared for her when we heard that her mind was diseased but as she recovered and grew stronger all had hopes of her recovery. The pastor and his wife and others of the church visited her at the hospital and we next hear that she was removed home again and hoped for her recovery. We next heard of this terrible tragedy and ask why God permitted it? When we answer this question we answer all. It was a plan of the infinite God who is full of love. Disease fastened itself on the brain of this poor woman and since God permitted it, no responsibility rested on the woman. At such a time as this there are true friends to sympathize, true friends from the fatherland. The different nationalities are forgotten at such a time as this and there is sadness in the hearts of all here to-day.”

The Saengerchor sang as a closing selection “In Their Graves They Are Resting.”

The bearers were chosen from members of Herman Lodge D.O.H. of which Mr. Keller was a member. They were Fritz Meyer, Herrman Wappler, John Mundt, Fredinand Mundt, Richard Boehme and Otto Volkman.

After the service the casket was removed to the vestibule of the church and the crowds in the church and all those on the outside were given an opportunity to view the remains. It was roughly estimated that upwards of 5,000 persons viewed the remains at the undertaker’s and at the church. It was about 5:30 o’clock when the funeral procession left the church for Fort Hill, where the interment took place.

*Weekly News and Democrat*, Auburn NY, Wed. 31 Jan 1894

Transcribed on 13 Nov 2014 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY