

PART III OF
“EVIL WOMEN”:

AMELIA DYER: BABY KILLER

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For the first 2 lectures in this series:
<https://www.gresham.ac.uk/series/evil-women/>



monster
butcher devil
diabolical malevolent
ghoul
evil
snake
fiendish horror
murderer



Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House" (1854)





Means of giving Physic:

1073^c

TRADE



MARK.

The Universal Household
Medicine

LAUDANUM

Dose—10 to 25 Drops.

As an Anodyne, Sedative hypnotic

POISON,

in Excessive Quantity.

Prepared by

CHAS. HOOPER & SONS,
Chemists and Druggists, London.



Amelia Dyer hastened the deaths of at least 300 infants

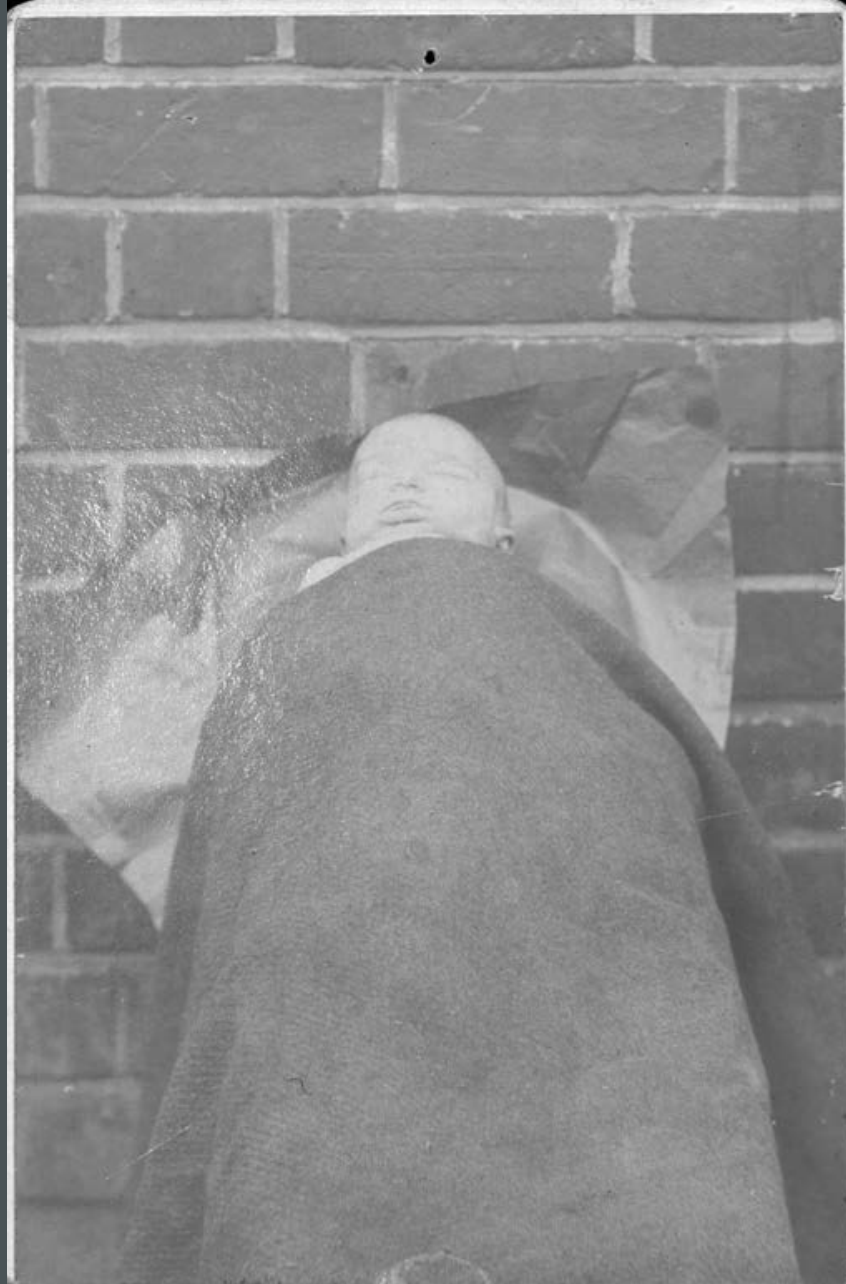
MARRIED couple with no family would adopt healthy child, nice country home. Terms, £10.—Harding, care of Ship's Letter Exchange, Stokes Croft, Bristol. b

HIGHLY - Respectable Married Couple wish to ADOPT CHILD ; good country home ; premium required, very small.—Home, Times and Mirror Office.
9421m27

25-year-old Evelina Edith Marmon







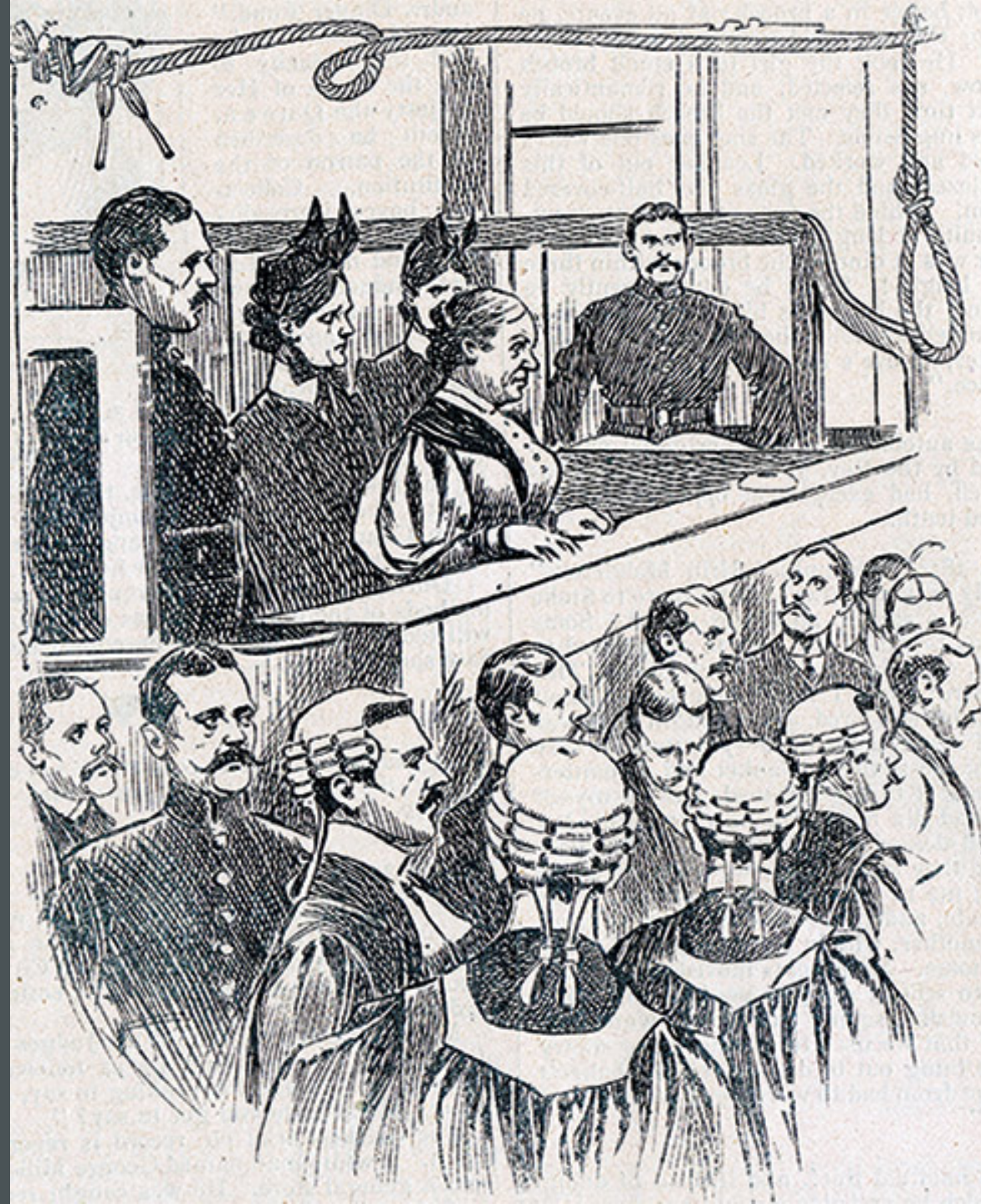
Doris Marmon, found in a carpet bag





Lyttelton Steward Forbes Winslow





Was Dyer Insane?

(Horace Ivory: “If such a defence [of insanity] were to prevail, no murderer would ever again be convicted and lunatic asylums would have to be substituted for gaols”)

McNaughton Rules

- 1) Did not know the nature and quality of the act
- 2) Or, if did, did not know it was wrong.

cruel

wilful

wrong

guilty

treachery

barbarity

cruelty

wickedness

wicked

base cunning

barbarous

“My hope is built on nothing less,
Than Jesus’ blood and
righteousness.”

(Edward Mote’s 1830s hymn)





Executioner James Billington

“What did she think as she stood on the gallers,
Poor little victims in front of ‘er eyes?
‘Er ‘eart if she ‘ad one must have been callous,
The rope round ‘er neck – ‘Ow quickly times flies!”

Metropolitan Police Statistics
for the year ending April 1896:

found the corpses of 225 infants

Killing infants “quickly and cynically”
like Mrs. Dyer

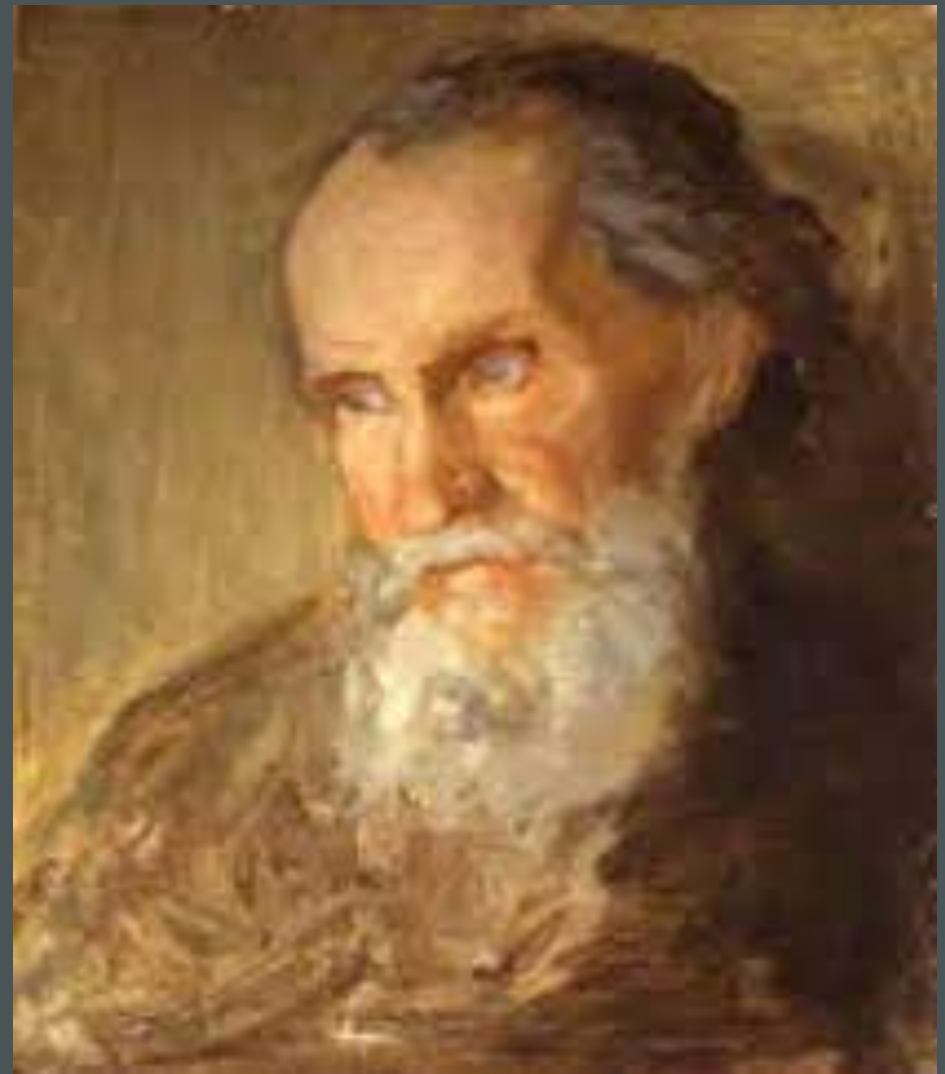
or

the “infinitely more cruel method
of slow starvation”

The rights of children?

1884: London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to **Animals**
was formed in 1823
but it took another 60 years
for a similar organization to be established
to protect **children**.



Catholic Archbishop Henry Edward Manning
and Benjamin Waugh, founder of NSPCC:
“The Child of the English Savage” (1886)

Benjamin Waugh

“The vilest, blackest shame of our land”
was the
“famine and the pain of
tiny staggerers to the grave”



Doris Marmou - found in carpet bag

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THE STORY *of* PAIN

From Prayer to
Painkillers

JOANNA BOURKE

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Are infants truly able to feel pain?

The “great chain of **feeling**”

ran parallel to the “great chain of **being**”

STUDIES OF CHILDHOOD

BY

JAMES SULLY, M. A., LL. D.

GROVE PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND LOGIC,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON
AUTHOR OF OUTLINES OF PSYCHOLOGY, ETC.



NEW YORK
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1896

James Sully and “recapitulation theory”

Hierarchies and political choices

1834 Poor Law Amendment Act

MPs rejected giving women
the vote, property rights, access to divorce, and equal pay

Societies regulated cruelty towards animals (1823)
but not infants (until 1884)



Infant life Protection Bill and Safety of Nurse Children Bill (1897)

Benjamin Waugh

Mrs Dyer was

“actually the most saintly of baby farmers I have come across...

She gives 6 seconds of pain while the others give 6 weeks...”

The **professionalisation** of child murder
could be regulated
but that would not change the
underlying, systemic **causes**
that made unmarried mothers
desperate enough to allow their own infants
to “fade away”.



What are labelled

“sane” and “insane”

are historically mutable





Dyer: “I have no soul: my soul was
hammered out of me in Gloucester Asylum”

THE WOMEN'S PENNY PAPER

EDITED BY HELENA B. TIMPES.

15, BROADWAY, N.Y.C.
Representative of the A.F.A. for circulation abroad.

The only Paper Conducted, Written,
and Published by Women.

"Read every week before that very old maxim."

No. 314. Vol. III.]

DECEMBER 27, 1898.

[FIVE CENTS PER COPY.]

ACCORDING TO LAW.

The attention of the readers of the *Women's Penny Paper* should be called to the lesson the papers have lately read them. We find on one page a flagrant case of immorality on the part of a man and woman, of which the end will be divorce and re-marriage. We turn that page, and we find the case of a betrayed and virtuous wife, who because she is virtuous cannot rid herself of her husband's hated name, or look for any companionship on this side the grave, while he is free to enter on any illicit connection he pleases. What is such a state of things but a premium on vice? What can we women say to the ruling of a judge that the worst cruelty of all, that which treads on the feelings, the affections, and the honour of a woman, and, in the course of years, nearly breaks her spirit or heart, is legally no cruelty, but (women, in his view, being apparently mere animals) kicks and blows would have entitled her to freedom?

Although the “natural instinct” of motherhood was certainly “weaker than the poets have sung, yet they are not extinguished without an anguish that is no less terrible to bear than it is damaging to the moral nature of the unhappy girls who either themselves kill their infants or hand them over to the baby farmer, knowing well that this means their cruel death.”



Two people were responsible
for bringing a child into the world



A word cloud centered around the word "evil". The word "evil" is the largest and most prominent, rendered in a bright pink color. Surrounding it are various words related to evil, horror, and darkness, in different sizes and colors (yellow, orange, and pink). The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central word.

monster
butcher
devil
malevolent
diabolical
ghoul
snake
fiendish
horror
murderer

Easier to point fingers at individual women
than at deliberately constructed systems of
morality (religious dicta),
law (women's lack of rights
over their own bodies and property), and
finance (discriminatory employment practices),
that made women's lives unliveable.

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