

The Louisville Times - November 26, 1900

STABBED HIS WIFE AND ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Rudolph, Sommer Will Recover, But the Woman Is Believed to Be Mortally Wounded.

TEN CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

Enraged because of his wife's refusal to become reconciled to him after repeated quarrels Rudolph Sommer, a tanner, attempted to kill her and take his own life early this morning. He used a butcher knife. The wife, stabbed in the abdomen, is lying at the Gray-street Infirmary. Her recovery is extremely doubtful. Sommer is at the City Hospital. His wound is in the breast. He is expected to recover.

Sommer after wounding his wife placed the handle of the butcher knife, already stained with blood, against the wall and then impaled himself. The deed was witnessed by Annie, the eleven-year-old daughter of the desperate man.

An Unexpected Visit.

The family residence is a pretty two-story brick at Twenty-sixth and Courtney streets. Sommer is said to be a hard drinker and quarrelsome. He and his wife have had repeated quarrels. About one month ago he was fined and bonded for choking his wife. Mrs. Sommer thought her husband was in the workhouse until he reappeared last night.

He was ungraciously received, not only by the wife, but by the ten children, who have always sided with the mother. Sommer spent the night at home.

Deed in the Kitchen.

Shortly before 5 o'clock this morning Mrs. Sommer arose, dressed and descended to the kitchen, where she started a fire and commenced to prepare breakfast. Sommer arose also after his wife had left her bedroom. He followed her to the kitchen and engaged her in conversation. Their loud tones awoke Tony, their son, aged seventeen years, who was sleeping in the room directly over the kitchen. He could not hear what was said, but quickly realized that trouble was brewing. His first thought was to protect his mother. He arose and started to don his clothes when he heard his mother scream: "Murder." Tony

dashed to the head of the stairs and so great was his haste that he fell down the entire flight of steps. Luckily he landed on the lower floor uninjured, but just in time to meet his mother fleeing from her enraged husband; who was close behind bearing aloft the bloody butcher knife, which he had already thrust into her abdomen.

Son To the Rescue.

Quickly the youth leaped for the front door, and, unlocking it with one hand, held back his father with the other, while his mother escaped. The boy then closed and locked the door and turned to face his father. Sommer glared wildly at his son for a moment as though uncertain whether he would demand his life as a substitute for that of the mother. Then he turned and walked slowly into the kitchen. The boy left the room and followed his mother across the street to Peter Woermeister's saloon. The woman was placed on a sofa and Dr. Helm was summoned by telephone. He ordered her removed to the Gray-street Infirmary. Meanwhile, the children, having been awakened, came trooping down the stairs to see what caused it. Single file they descended, and, seeing blood on the floor, they wonderingly approached the door leading into the kitchen.

The Attempt At Suicide.

Little Annie was in front. She saw her father deliberately place the handle of the bloody butcher knife against the wall, and then, holding it so that the blade pointed directly toward his heart, throw his whole weight against the point. The blade was evidently turned from the vital organ or death would have been instantaneous. The little girls notified their brother of what they had seen. Neighbors rushed to the house and found that the man, though weak from loss of blood, was still alive. They notified the City Hospital authorities and the ambulance was sent to the scene. Sommer is fifty-three years old and his wife forty-eight.

ATTEMPTED

To Kill His Wife and Himself.

By Scripps-McGae Press Association.

Louisville, Ky., Nov. 26.—Rudolph Sommers, a tanner, made a barbarous attempt to kill himself and wife this morning. He stabbed her in the side and almost disemboweled her. Then placing the back of the knife against a wall, he threw himself on it, impaling himself. Both were removed to the hospital. Both will probably die. Sommers was mad because he was sent to the workhouse recently for assaulting his wife.

The Louisville Courier-Journal - November 27, 1900

TWO LIVES

Attempted By An Infuriated Husband.

RUDOLPH SOMMERS' RASH ACT

WIFE, STABBED IN THE ABDOMEN, MAY DIE.

THE MAN WILL RECOVER.

Enraged at the futility of his efforts to effect a reconciliation, Rudolph Sommer, a tanner, stabbed his wife in the abdomen at her home, Twenty-sixth street and Courtney avenue, shortly after 5 o'clock yesterday morning, inflicting wounds that will likely prove fatal. A butcher knife, with a long, keen blade, whetted until its edge was as sharp as a razor, was the weapon the man used. After wounding his wife, Sommer thrust the blade into his left side, near the heart, but his attempt at self-destruction was unsuccessful and his recovery is assured. Those most leniently inclined believe that the man, who possessed an ungovernable temper, was under the influence of liquor and committed the deed while crazed from drink. Others claim that Sommer was unable to obtain possession of his wife's property and that so infuriated him that he was willing to take her life.

The Sommer home at Twenty-sixth street and Courtney avenue is one of the prettiest in the neighborhood. It is of brick and stone, two stories, and modern. It was built by the mother of Mrs. Sommer, who came to Louisville from her native home in Germany six months ago. There Mrs. Sommer and her ten children, the oldest of whom is Tony, seventeen years of age, lived. Their lives were quiet, save when the husband, under the influence of liquor, visited them. They were afraid of him, and his visits brought fear and forebodings to the mother and her children.

The father was a hard drinker and spent much of his time at the workhouse, and he had just been liberated when he arrived at the house on Sunday night. His sentence, one month for choking his wife, had just expired, and his reception was not as cordial as he liked. But he was allowed to spend the night in the house. Shortly after 5 o'clock yesterday morning, Mrs. Sommer arose and descended to the kitchen to prepare the morning meal. Tony Sommer is employed at the National Tobacco Works and it is necessary for him to have his breakfast early in order to reach his work on time. The husband evidently heard his wife in the kitchen, for he soon joined her and a few minutes later their loud tones awakened the sleeping children. Tony, who was asleep in the room directly over the kitchen, heard them and knew that trouble was brewing. He hastily dressed with the thought of protecting his mother uppermost in his mind. Before his last garment was on he was startled by the shrieks of his mother. "Help!" "murder!" she cried, and the boy ran to her assistance. He was excited and missed the first step. He fell and rolled down the entire flight. Luckily he was uninjured, and as he arose to his feet his mother ran past him. Blood, from a deep gash in her abdomen, trickled down her dress and stained the carpet. Only a step behind her was her husband, and the bloody butcher knife was raised for another stroke. The plucky boy ran to the front door, unbolted it, allowed his mother to escape and then faced his father. For a moment there was stillness and then the man turned and walked away.

Peter Wermelster, who conducts a grocery and saloon on the other side of the street, heard the screams of the woman and of the frightened children and ran to their rescue. He took Mrs. Sommer to his home and telephoned for Dr. Heim. Then he returned to the Sommer house and found that the man had attempted to commit suicide during his absence. Wermelster found him lying on the floor, the blood gushing from a wound in the left side near the heart.

Annie Sommer saw the attempt of her father. He placed the handle of the knife against the wall and then with all of his might threw himself against it. The blade was turned toward his heart, but the steel turned and the vital organ was missed. The City Hospital ambulance was called for and when the corps of physicians arrived the man was almost dead from the loss of blood. Dr. Helm, who was attending the woman, saw at a glance that she was probably fatally wounded and telephoned for the ambulance from the Gray-street Infirmary. Her condition was so critical that it was feared she would die before the hospital could be reached. All day yesterday her life was despaired of, but at midnight it was said that she would probably live until morning. Sommer rested easy at the City Hospital and it is not thought his condition is even serious. Sommer is fifty-three years of age and his wife is forty-eight.