

A WOMAN'S SUICIDE AT RYDE.

On Tuesday an inquest was held at the Ryde Primitive Methodist Schoolroom on the body of Julia AVERY, aged 56, who was found drowned the same morning on the foreshore. Mr. E. C. LOADER was foreman of the jury. The inquiry was conducted by the Deputy Coroner (Francis A. JOYCE, Esq.).

ELIZABETH AVERY, 50 Warwick-street, half-sister of the deceased, stated that the latter had been employed for three years at Cobden Cottage, Nelson-street, as companion to a widow lady named Mrs. SWARBRICK, who was an invalid. Witness last saw deceased in Nelson-street some weeks ago. She was then out doing her errands. She said she had not been well, and had been taking tonics. Deceased had always complained of her head and of not being well. No one else lived in the house but deceased and her mistress. There was no question that deceased had not had proper treatment. Witness could throw no light on the reason for deceased having committed suicide. She thought deceased was happy enough in her position. She was always very trustworthy and quiet.

The DEPUTY CORONER said that owing to the new facilities on the I.W. Central Railway he did not receive his report until it was too late to make proper inquiries, and he could not consult the police as to their evidence. Otherwise he should have instructed them to see Mrs. SWARBRICK as to whether she was able to give evidence.

At the desire of the jury, P.S. REES was sent to the residence of Mrs. SWARBRICK to ascertain if she could give any information as to the recent movements of the deceased.

GEORGE HENRY LEEK, employed by the Corporation of Ryde, and living at Ninham-road, Binstead, said that on Tuesday morning he was on the Eastern Esplanade shortly after 6, cleaning out the shelters. The third shelter was then empty. Witness went to the end; and on his way back was told by two men that there was a bonnet, scarf, and cloak in the shelter referred to. Witness went to the shelter and found the articles. He called P.C. WARNE, but before he arrived witness saw the body in the water, close to the groyne at the west end of the promenade. With the assistance of a waterman named REEVES they got the body out. It was taken out in a very few minutes after witness saw it. It was nearly dry then, and was being washed up by the incoming tide. P.C. WARNE tried artificial respiration while witness phoned for Dr. TURNER. There was no loss of time in getting the body out of the water.

The DEPUTY CORONER said it only took 4 1/2 minutes to drown a person, and the question of time was a very important one.

In answer to the Foreman, witness said he was certain there was nothing in the shelter when he first passed it.

JAMES PITT, of Town-yard, Monkton-street, a labourer employed by the Ryde Corporation, said that he was at work at the bottom of Dover-street that morning at about 6.15. He was looking over the Gardens towards the sea, and saw a woman in the Gardens. She was a stranger to him and he noticed nothing peculiar about her. He proceeded thence to the Western Esplanade and afterwards returned to the Eastern Gardens, where he found a hat and other garments in a shelter. That would be at about 6.30 a.m. He told the last witness about it, and went on to his work.

P.C. WARNE stated that on Tuesday morning at 6.40 he was walking along the Esplanade when the witness LEEK called to him. About half-way across the Gardens LEEK said there was a body in the water. Witness and REEVES assisted to take the body out, which was done instantly. Deceased was face downward in about 2ft. of water. She had no hat or shawl on. It took no longer than a minute or 1 1/2 minutes to get her out. Dr. TURNER arrived about 7 a.m., but life was then extinct. Witness did not know deceased. He had twice been to the house where she worked, but could get no reply to his knocks.

Dr. Philip Dymock TURNER stated that he was called to see deceased on Tuesday morning at about 6.50. He found P.C. WARNE taking it to the mortuary, where he examined it.

The body presented the usual symptoms of drowning. The slight injuries on the face had nothing to do with the cause of death; they were probably produced by the body being knocked about by the wash of the water. Deceased was a stranger to him.

P.S. REES arrived at this stage, and said he was informed by Mrs. SWARBRICK that deceased went out on Monday morning to do some shopping. In the evening she gave Mrs. SWARBRICK her supper and then went down and had her own. She said to Mrs. SWARBRICK "You will sleep, won't you?" and on receiving a reply in the affirmative, went to bed. She had complained of her head for some time past. P.S. REES added that Mrs. SWARBRICK was 72 years of age, and was unable to leave her room owing to an attack of bronchitis.

The DEPUTY CORONER said that he was afraid that they must come to the conclusion that this poor woman destroyed herself, and the circumstances pointed to aberration of intellect.. In such cases as these they did not want to strain too much at exactitude of evidence.

The FOREMAN said that 12 of the jury were agreed that deceased committed suicide whilst temporarily insane, while the thirteenth would only agree to a verdict "Found drowned."

The DEPUTY CORONER said that, under his powers he would accept the verdict of 12 jurymen.

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