

A YOUNG LADY'S SHOCKING SUICIDE AT RYDE

A inquest was held at the Gem Inn, Hill-street, Ryde, on Wednesday evening, by the Coroner (E. F. BLAKE, Esq.), on the body of Miss Frances Annie HURLOCK, aged 21, a young lady who had for some time been residing with her father and mother, Capt. and Mrs. HURLOCK, at 5 Victoria-terrace, Pier-street, Ryde, and who committed suicide early in the morning of the same day by jumping from her window to the ground below, a distance of 35ft.

The jury elected Mr. George TURNER as their foreman.

Robert George HURLOCK, father of the deceased, said his daughter would have been 22 in September. For the last two months she had been under Dr. MACKENZIE, as she was suffering from hysteria, but they thought she was getting better. She remained in bed all day on Tuesday, but got up and went to bed again at 10, at which time she appeared rational. She had the delusion that some one in the Yacht Club (opposite deceased's residence) wanted to kill her cousin in the Army, and other delusions, which were unfounded, but she had never threatened to kill herself. Witness, his wife, elder daughter, and son lived in the house. Deceased slept in the room next his. One afternoon, a few days ago, deceased got out of the house through the dining-room window, although all the doors were locked. They did not allow her to go out alone. She went over to the Yacht Club and then to Dr. WADHAM's. Witness sent her brother after her. She told them that the doctor was out, and that she had something particular to say to him; it was a secret, and she could only tell the doctor. On Tuesday night, at 12 o'clock, witness went in to see her. She was then quite composed. That morning ran into her room, his wife calling out "Florrie has fallen out of bed." He looked out of the window, which he had previously fastened, and saw her lying on the ground, on her face, in the passage. He went down to her at once, his elder daughter following. Deceased, who was conscious, gasped but did not speak; she was lying in a pool of blood. There was a severe wound on her forehead. Witness took her into the kitchen and went for Dr. DAVIS, but he was away. A policeman fetched Dr. BUCK, and deceased was alive when he arrived. Dr. MACKENZIE also came in a few minutes, and they advised her removal to the Infirmary. She never spoke, but died before getting there. The hysteria was caused through the deceased over taxing her brain by study at the Art School. Her taking up the study of anatomy first caused it. Some years ago her mother's brother shot himself.

By the Jury: The window from which the deceased fell was at the back of the house. She had been very carefully watched, and the doors and windows had been secured. Witness had put two screws in the window in question, as they thought she might try to get out. A policeman could hardly open the window when he came up.

Mr. Thomas Alpheus BUCK, M.B., stated that deceased was a stranger to him. He was sent for at about 20 to 6 by the police, and was there before 6. He found deceased lying on the kitchen table partly dressed. She was quite unconscious. There was extensive fracture of the skull and the brain was protruding from a hole in the roof of the head. Deceased had other injuries, including a fracture of the left arm. Such injuries would have been caused by falling such a distance. Witness and Dr. MACKENZIE both thought she was dying, but that it was better she should be removed to the Infirmary, where, if she had recovered, an operation could have been immediately performed. There was nothing to be done at that time. She was conveyed thither on a stretcher and arrived there before 7, but she was dead before she arrived.---Q. Having heard the evidence, can you form any opinion as to the state of her mind when she committed the act?---A. I should certainly say she was insane. Hysteria did not necessarily turn to insanity, but when delusions were mixed up with it it gave it a worse tendency.

The Coroner said there was no doubt, from the evidence of deceased's father, that she had been in a very unsatisfactory state for the last two months. She had evidently been suffering from hysteria, complicated with delusions, and the jury would have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that she was not in a proper state of mind at the time she committed this act. Her father

appeared to have done everything to prevent that sort of thing occurring---he would not let her go out alone, but kept the doors locked, took the precaution of putting two screws in the window, and of having her sleep in the next room to his. If she had not committed the deed on this occasion, she would probably have taken the first opportunity of doing so.

In reply to the Foreman, Supt. HINKS said Dr. MACKENZIE was not present; he was very busy.

Mr. BUTT, one of the jury, said the Doctor had been attending deceased, and he should like to hear him.

The Coroner said it was not usual to have two medical witnesses. Dr. BUCK first saw the deceased after the accident. He did not think Dr. MACKENZIE's evidence could possibly help them.

The Jury, having declined an adjournment for the attendance of the Doctor, returned a verdict of suicide whilst of unsound mind.

Dr. BUCK said Dr. MACKENZIE told him he had been attending Miss HURLOCK for hysteria.

NB: We note a discrepancy in the name at the beginning of the above report it stated "Frances", whereas it should have been "Florence".