

## RYDE GIRL DIES UNDER CHLOROFORM.

An inquest was held at the I.W. County Hospital yesterday (Friday) morning on the body of Kathleen LEE, aged 18 years, of 18 Nelson-street, who died at the Hospital on Tuesday, while under chloroform pending a dental operation.

The inquiry was conducted by the Acting Deputy Coroner (James ELDRIDGE, Esq.) and Mr. F. W. MUNT was foreman of the jury.

CHARLES HENRY LEE, 18 Nelson-street, Ryde, a railway guard in the employ of the I.W. Railway, said the deceased was his niece. She had lived with him for over 16 years, her parents being dead. She always appeared strong and healthy and had not been ill for eight years, when she had congestion of the lungs. She had not been medically attended recently. She had bad teeth and they thought that if she had them attended to it would be better. She had had nothing done to her teeth previously, and she came to the Hospital about a fortnight previously as an out-patient for the purpose of having them attended to. Mr. GRIFFIN, the dental surgeon, advise her to go into the hospital as an in-patient. Witness understood that she would go inder chloroform and have the top row extracted. Deceased came to the Hospital on Monday night, November 23rd, as an in-patient. it was quite understood that she would have the operation, if she was fit, and she was anxious to have the teeth out. She wanted the lot out at once, instead of two or three at a time. She was quite cheerful and well on leaving home, and went to the Hospital by herself. She had had one or two teeth out previously, but had not been under gas or chloroform. She had never complained of her heart and could walk faster than witness. Some time ago she was overcome by the heat, but it was hardly sufficiently serious to be called a fainting fit.

JAMES ROBERTSON MITCHELL, house surgeon at the I.W. County Hospital, said he first saw deceased on Tuesday morning November 24th. Witness saw that she had many bad teeth. She was properly dieted with a special diet that was used where operations were anticipated. Witness examined her heart just before chloroform was administered. There were no signs of organic disease, and the pulse was quite good. Witness considered that she was quite well enough for the administration of chloroform. The lungs were in good order, and deceased had every appearance of health. Witness administered the anaesthetic in the operating theatre, Mr. GRIFFIN and Nurse FORD were also being present. He administered chloroform because he thought deceased perfectly sound, and as Mr. GRIFFIN extracted these teeth in a very short time the anaesthesia need not be for more than seven or eight minutes. The operation started about 12 minutes to 8. There was plenty of light in the theatre at the time of the operation. He administered the chloroform on a piece of lint, spread on a wire mask. That was the usual way and allowed plenty of air to mix with the chloroform. he held an inhaler ready for use, in case anaesthesia should be prolonged. There was rather less than 1 1/2 drachms used before anaesthesia set in. That was somewhat less than usual. Deceased took it perfectly quietly and naturally. After she became unconscious witness placed the gag in her mouth so that Mr GRIFFIN could operate. Mr. GRIFFIN pulled one tooth. Witness then used the inhaler, and saw deceased pupils dilate suddenly, and her breathing stopped. They at once started artificial respiration. Deceased's heart stopped at the same time as her breathing. They resorted to all the usual remedies in such a case, working for an hour and a quarter, but without avail. Witness considered that deceased died at the moment the pupils dilated, and that the cause of death was syncope. He did not think the teeth had anything to do with the cause of death. He thought the heart might have been affected by the nervous effect of going under an operation. The only alternative to an operation under chloroform would have been three or more operations under gas. Witness had performed similar operations with the dental surgeon some eight or nine times since he had been at the hospital, and they had all been entirely successful.

By the Foreman; Witness had administered anaesthetics in over 600 cases in Ryde and elsewhere.

WILFRED GRIFFIN, dental surgeon at the I.W. County Hospital, said he first saw deceased as an out-patient about three weeks before. He found her teeth in a bad condition. it was advisable that

all the upper teeth should be removed. There were eight teeth in the lower jaw that were sound. Deceased came into the hospital on Monday and was quite willing that the teeth should be extracted, and wished them extracted all at once. Witness came to the hospital at about 7.45 a.m. on Tuesday. The appliances for the operation and the artificial light were perfect. No teeth were extracted, but only one loose root of a decayed molar.

Answering a question by a juryman (Mr. W. E. GALLEY) the HOUSE SURGEON said they could not always tell from a superficial examination whether or not the heart was weak. That was, to his mind, one of the greatest objections to the use of anaesthetics.

THE CORONER, in brief summing up, said deceased had apparently wanted the whole of the teeth extracted at once. it was evidently her wish that this operation should be performed. The points for the jury to consider were whether the patient was perfectly fit for the administration of an anaesthetic, and whether it was properly administered. No one could doubt from the evidence of Mr. LEE, with whom they felt the greatest sympathy, and also from the evidence of the house surgeon, that deceased was quite in a fit state to be operated on. The evidence of the house surgeon and the dental surgeon also showed that the administration of chloroform took place in a proper manner.

DR. TURNER was present to give evidence, if necessary, and especially wished to testify to the efficiency and care with which the house surgeon performed any operations that were necessary.

In answer to the Foreman, Dr. TURNER said he thought everything possible was done. He had never known a more careful anaesthetist than the house surgeon. He did not think it at all necessary for two medical men to examine the heart previous to an operation.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, through syncope, and added a rider that it would be desirable for a second doctor to examine patients prior to an operation. They also gave it as their opinion that everything possible was done for the deceased.

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