

CORONER'S INQUEST.

An inquest was held at the Royal Isle of Wight Infirmary, on Monday evening last, before F. BLAKE, esq., coroner for the Island, on the body of Sarah RICHARDS, 29 years of age, who was well-known as a paralysed person wandering about the streets of Ryde to excite compassion and charity. She was the wife of David RICHARDS, of Oakfield, to whom she had been married about eight years, six years of which she had been paralysed.

It appeared from the evidence of the husband of the deceased, that on Sunday, the 25th of March, she did not get up, having complained of a cold, and there was a fire in the room. There was no guard to the grate. The witness described that the house was occupied by several persons beside himself and the deceased, one of whom was Martha STANLEY, who called her on Sunday afternoon to go and stop a row at her brother's opposite, and some time after that called out to him, saying, "Daff, come in, for I've heard Sarah fall out of bed". He immediately ran over, and Sarah STANLEY said "run up stairs, there's something the matter with Sarah, I heard her fall out of bed," and when he got there his wife was laying on the floor all on fire, with only her night dress, and that was nearly all burnt. She did not speak but was rolling about on the floor. He could not tell whether she had had a fit or fell out of bed. She used to sleep on the floor but had not done so for the last three or four months. They sent for Dr. BEATON who came immediately, and attended to her, and she was the same evening removed to the Infirmary. On a previous occasion she had fallen backwards on the fire, and was much burnt.

Martha STANLEY said she had not seen deceased on Sunday, the 25th till she was burnt. She heard her scream out as well as she could, but did not go up. Being too much frightened. No one had gone up stairs till RICHARDS himself went up.

Jane RICHARDS, wife of Noah RICHARDS, gave evidence as to going up into the room and helping deceased, who was insensible, into bed, and then going for the doctor,

P.S. MITCHELL stated that the room in which deceased was burnt was a very small one, and the width of the fireplace only about 16 inches, and two feet high, the fireplace projecting about three inches from the grate. There were no bed clothes, only a few old rags. It seemed to him that had she fallen out of bed she would have fallen in front of the fire, but not very near to it.

Mary Ann SPRINGER, step-mother of deceased, was also examined, and said she had never known deceased's husband to ill-treat her in any way but she had sometimes, by signs, given her to understand so. She saw her at the Infirmary, and asked her if anyone had pushed her on the fire, and she gave her to understand no. She gave her to understand that she was six or seven months in the family way, and she was confined the next day. The child only lived one day.

Mr. JONES, the house-surgeon, said the deceased was much burnt about the lower part of the body, and was not able to give any account of how it happened. She was delivered of a child on Friday last, which lived a few hours only, and she died the same evening. The burns were the cause of death.

The jury returned a verdict "That deceased died from burns, caused by her clothes taking fire by some means unknown."
