

infant daughter Norgate

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EXTRAORDINARY REVELATIONS AT A NEWPORT INQUEST.

RYDE SERVANT GIRL'S REMARKABLE CASE.

BABY IN A BOX.

Last (Friday) evening the Acting Deputy Coroner for the Island, James Eldridge, Esq., held an inquest at the National-schools, Newport, on the body of the newly-born female child of Jane Norgate, aged 27, single woman, who until the birth of the child was in service at Claremont, The Strand, Ryde. Supt. Ayres (County Constabulary) and the Chief-Constable of Ryde (Mr. Greenstreet) were present.

Mr. N. H. T. Mursell was foreman of the jury.

Theodora Mary Wigston, of Claremont, The Strand, Ryde, said Jane Norgate had been in her service for six years. On Wednesday morning Norgate, who looked ill, arranged to go and see her mother at Alresford. Witness never had the slightest suspicion as to the condition of Norgate, who was a very good servant.

Herbert Mackett, mariner, of The Pitts, Binstead, who said he had known Norgate for about two years, said that about 10 o'clock on Wednesday morning he saw her and she asked him to send his sister round to see her, as she felt bad and was going away for a short holiday. He knew her condition from what she had previously told him. – Q. Are you a single man ? – I cannot say. – Q. You know whether you are or not. Are you a single man ? – No, Sir ; I am married. The only step he took in the matter was to go for his sister. He used to meet the girl once or twice a week. – Q. You had reasons to know she was likely to have a child ? – Certainly not. Q. The jury will draw their own conclusions. Has she already had a child by you ? – That I cannot say. She might have done. She has had two children before, and I might have been the father of the last one.

The Coroner thought there was no doubt about that.

Emily Price, of North End Grove, Portsmouth, who took Norgate's place at Miss Wigston's, said on Wednesday Norgate looked bad and complained of being unwell before she left at 5 p.m. in a bus, but witness knew nothing of her condition and had no idea there was a baby in the house.

Agnes Dibbens, married woman, of Monkton-street, Ryde, sister of the witness Mackett, said about 2 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, from what her brother told her, she went and saw Norgate, who told her that she had had a child and asked witness to take it home and look after it for a while, as she did not want her mistress to know. Witness pointed out the risk she was running and urged that she should let her mistress know ; but Norgate said no, adding that her mistress was out. Witness said she could not think of taking the child away. Norgate showed her the child, which was lying in a tin clothes-box in a room close to the kitchen. Norgate just lifted the lid of the box and witness could see that the baby, which was wrapped in pink material, and alive (sensation). She could not say that the box lid was shut down close before Norgate showed her the baby. Witness went to a doctor, who advised her to get a room for Norgate so that she could be properly attended to, or, if she would not agree

to that, to go to the police. She went back to Norgate and told her what the doctor had said, but she said she should go to Newport in accordance with arrangements she had made. Witness then left her, and her husband afterwards went to the inspector of police. – Q. Did it not occur to you that the child's life was in danger ? – I did not dare touch it.

The Coroner : It is such an astounding story that one can hardly credit it.

Robert Williams, of Oakfield, deposed to driving Norgate from Ryde to Newport in a bus on Wednesday evening, starting at 5 p.m. She was carrying something wrapped up in her arms, and he heard a baby cry when she got out at Newport. At her request he purchased a baby's feeding bottle on the way.

Edith Hunnybun, married woman, of 10, Cross-street, Newport, a previous acquaintance of the mother of the deceased, said that Norgate had arranged to come with her for the birth, and she arrived unexpectedly on Wednesday evening with the child; which was properly wrapped up, but had not otherwise been attended to. Witness sent for a midwife and doctor, and mother and child received every attention, but the child died during the night. The mother said the birth took place unexpectedly in the kitchen when she was alone, and the child was bruised by falling on the floor, when she fainted.

Emily Payne, midwife, of New-street, said when she first saw the child it was very cold and there was little life left in it. She put it in a warm bath and rubbed it in front of the fire for a long time. She afterwards noticed bruising on the back, head, and face. Norgate told her the child was born about midday.

Dr. Thompson said that Norgate made the same statement to him, and the bruising on the child and the blood tumour which he found on the left side of the head, just above and in front of the right ear, were quite consistent with the mother's story of the precipitate birth of the child. He should say that the blow received in the fall, producing the blood tumour was the cause of death. The probabilities were that the child would have died even if it had received proper attention after birth. The only astonishing thing was that the mother had survived, having regard to the circumstances of the birth and her journey to Newport. She now seemed comparatively well.

The Coroner said it was a most unfortunate and extraordinary case. There was no concealment of birth, though the mother of deceased had not been so open about the matter as she should have been to ensure proper treatment for herself and child; but there was nothing to show criminal blame. He thought Mackett was deserving of censure for the way in which he acted.

The Jury returned a verdict to the effect that the child died from injuries received in precipitate birth, and

The Coroner told Mackett that the Jury wished him to say they very much regretted the unsatisfactory way in which he had given his evidence.

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