



CORONERS INQUESTS



Baby Eldridge

Death from Want of Proper and Sufficient Nourishment

An inquest was held at the Swan Inn, on Tuesday morning, before Mr. R. M. Wilson, coroner, on the body of a female illegitimate infant of Emma Eldridge, aged 14 days. From the evidence of the grandmother and the mother of the child, it appeared that the deceased was weakly from its birth. As it would not take the breast, it was fed with milk from a bottle, but it would only take 2/3 spoonful at a time. It did not improve, but died rather suddenly on Sunday morning last. A doctor was called in to see it soon after its birth, but was not sent for afterwards.

Dr. Gowin stated that he was called in on the evening of the 13th April. The child was small, but fairly formed and well-nourished and there seemed to be no reason why it should not live. He saw both the mother and grandmother, and directed that milk should be supplied to the child until the mother had milk for it. He called again the following morning and repeated his directions. He had not seen the child since, until that morning. He found the body very much wasted. There was the appearance of its having had thrush in the mouth. It certainly had not received sufficient and proper nourishment. It was elicited from the mother that she was staying with her grandfather and grandmother (very aged people) her father and mother living on the opposite side of the road in Harnham. She admitted to a juryman that her father had said that if the child lived she should not go back home again, but that if it died, he would have her back.

Charlotte Waters, the midwife deposed, that the child was weak and would not take the breast. It would take a little milk, and always swallowed it when she offered it. Of a morning when she went to dress it, she noticed that it was very empty. The mother was very weak, and not able to do anything for it. Witness had not been sent for since the 18th April. It appeared that the mother slept in the same room as her grandfather and grandmother, but they were unable to do anything for her, as they could hardly get about themselves.

The jury were of the opinion that there was negligence on the part of someone, but they could not fix the blame upon any individual. They returned a verdict that death arose through a want of sufficient and proper nourishment.

Western Gazette Friday, 4 May 1877