



Sad Death – Serious Charge Against A Herbalist

An inquest was held at the Angel Hotel, on Tuesday, before Mr Baker, on the body of Mary Ann Salter, single woman, aged 33 years. Mary Ann Salter, mother of the deceased, deposed that her daughter had been in service in London as a cook, and resided in one place for six years. She came home to Chippenham about five weeks ago, but stated she had left her place a few weeks before. The deceased did not sleep with witness, and she did not know her condition; she knew she was taking medicine, supplied by a Mrs Wigmore, of Calne, though she did not know what it was for. Subsequently, the deceased made known to her that Mrs Wigmore, who is a herbalist residing at Calne, had given her something for a particular purpose. It was on the 21st May that she went with the deceased for the first time to Calne to consult Mrs Wigmore, and they brought back a bottle of medicine and powders, which she understood were for natural causes and biliousness. The last time deceased went to see Mrs Wigmore she was very ill on her return, and vomited, and then went to bed. On Friday, the 8th June, Mrs Wigmore came to Chippenham and was alone with the deceased for three hours. She was there again on the 15th instant, and was with her for an hour on Saturday. Dr Daly was sent for; the deceased died the same night at 11 o'clock. Mrs Guy, a monthly nurse, also Mrs Daniels, a relative, saw the deceased, but neither of them had any suspicion as to the cause of her illness. Mrs Wigmore told Mrs Daniels that the deceased was suffering from a tumour.

Dr Daly stated that he was called to attend the deceased on Saturday. He found her seriously ill, and suffering from internal inflammation. On inquiring the cause, deceased informed him that she had been ill on the previous Wednesday evening, and that the illness had been produced by a woman in Calne, under whose treatment she had been. Late in the afternoon she fell into a sudden collapse, and died soon after eleven the same night. He made a post-mortem examination on Sunday, and described the injuries and bruises he found. His opinion was that death was caused by inflammation of the womb and peritonitis, brought on by drugs and instruments used illegally.

The coroner having summed up, the jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter against Harriet Wigmore."

Western Gazette, 22 June 1883

Charge of Murder

An inquest was held at Chippenham, Wilts., yesterday, on the body of Mary Ann Salter, a servant girl, who died last Saturday. Deceased had been in service several years in London, and returned home énciente. She was attended by Harriet Wigmore, herbalist, who administered drugs to produce abortion. After hearing medical and other evidence, the jury returned a verdict of murder against the woman Wigmore, and the Coroner committed her for trial.

Dundee Courier 20 June 1883

OPC Note

Harriet Wigmore was found guilty of willful murder and using instruments to procure a miscarriage at the Wiltshire Assizes in July 1883. She was sentenced to ten years penal servitude. **Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette 12 July 1883**