



## Ann Taplin - Letter from the Vicar

To the Editor of the Devizes Gazette, Coroner's Inquest Collingbourne Kingston, Tuesday Oct 16.

Sir,

Circumstances connected with the inquest oblige by inserting the real statement of the case demanding the inquest. On Wednesday the 10th ult., I buried the body of Ann Taplin, after having ascertained that her death had been registered ensuing from natural causes. Though there had been rumours that the ill usage of her husband, who, in a state of intoxication, had either knocked or pushed her down, had had something to do with it, there were no outward marks, not the slightest discoloration or abrasion of the skin, to justify such suspicion; consequently I did not hesitate to bury the body. Subsequently, the most exaggerated reports respecting violence that had been used, were circulated far and wide, which I it to duty, in replying to a communication from the coroner on the subject, to make known that gentleman – who, in the first instance, did not think the case one that required inquest; but on being apprised of the great excitement that prevailed respecting the matter, once issued a warrant for the disinterment of the body, and resolved on holding an inquest, in order that all doubt might be cleared up. Agreeably to his instructions post mortem examination the body was made, by three duly-qualified medical practitioners, in the presence of myself and another clergyman. After the most and careful inspection, these *gentlemen r worded* their unanimous opinion that there existed not the slightest grounds for believing the death to have been caused by violence; that it resulted from an obstruction of bile, which would produce the symptoms which exhibited themselves two three days before the poor woman's decease. The unusually emaciated state of the body, and other indication pointed out in the course of the inspection, made it evident that acute disease in any form would render the subject of it an easy prey to death. The verdict of the jury, after most deliberately weighing every available evidence, was in accordance with the medical opinion, that the death was not occasioned by any act of violence on the part of the husband; but was the result of the ailment under which she had been suffering. Reprehensible and unfeeling as the husband's conduct appears to have been, the inquest, in common justice, ought to free him from the grave suspicion of having brought about her death, and I will, I sincerely hope, put an end to the vague and unfounded reports that have placed us, as a parish, in a position of unenviable notoriety. It is only due to the churchwardens, and the other parochial officers acting in concert with myself to say that they evinced the most earnest desire to have the matter fully investigated; and I trust that the result of the inquest, involving much that was painful and distressing, will be satisfactory to the neighbourhood, as to the residents of the locality, who would not willingly or knowingly connive at the perpetration of a guilty deed. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

Charles Harewood Poore,  
Vicar of Collingbourne Kingston

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