



CORONERS INQUESTS



Inquest Report on Samuel Lapham

Overdose of Poppy Syrup Caused Death

Mr. Whitmarsh held an inquest during the past week at Mere on the body of Samuel Thomas Lapham. From the evidence of the mother of the deceased, it appeared that her child was four weeks of age and that she had boiled a white poppy head, mixed the liquor with sugar and given about two large tablespoonfuls of the same to her infant for the purpose of procuring sleep as well for it as for herself.

The medical gentleman who attended the child, found on his arrival in a few hours afterwards, that the child was apparently in a dying state. He discovered that it was labouring under the effects of some narcotic poison and applied the usual remedies for its recovery. For a short time, it got much better but soon relapsed into its former torpor and died. On examining the body, he found no remains of the poison in the stomach, it having passed into the intestines, and emitted a strong smell of opium.

Verdict: "That Samuel Thomas Lapham came by his death in consequence of his mother having given him an overdose of poppy syrup for the purpose of procuring sleep, she not knowing the due quantity required."

Salisbury and Winchester Journal, Monday, 30 June 1834