

Mary Maroney

Rushworth Chronicle

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A magisterial inquiry was held at the court house, Rushworth, on Monday morning last, before Dr Heily, J. P., touching the death of a married woman named Mary Janet Maroney, which occurred suddenly at Rushworth on Sunday afternoon last.

Senior-Constable O'Brien deposed that about 5.30 p.m. on the 22nd of November, Mr Maroney came to the police station and reported to him that his wife had died without medical attendance. Maroney had been to see Dr Christie, who had attended his wife over two years ago, and the doctor had directed him to report the matter to the police. He went to Maroney's residence and saw the body of deceased, which was quite cold, and appeared to have been dead some hours. The body appeared emaciated. From what he heard there appeared to be no suspicious circumstances connected with the case. There were no marks of violence on the body.

Lot Matthew Maroney deposed that he was a laborer working at the Waranga Basin, and he resided at Moora road, Rushworth. He was the husband of the deceased, who had been ailing for about two years. His wife had been away at Cheltenham for a holiday to see if it would improve her health. She returned about six weeks ago, but there was no improvement. As far as he knew she had had no medical attendance during her absence. His wife seemed to be failing all the time. She took to her bed on November 13th. He was away from home at the time. Her daughter, 12 years of age, attended to her during his absence. As far as he knew she had been confined to her bed since the 13th. He arrived home on the 21st and found his wife looking bad and asked her if she would like to see a doctor. She could not answer him but she shook her head. He also asked her if she would like to see the priest. After he left the room his daughter, Theresa, went to her. His daughter understood deceased better than he did, as she was always with her.

He did not see deceased have anything to eat on Saturday. He looked into the room during Saturday afternoon and his wife was asleep. She was alive the last time he saw her on Saturday night. His daughter might have made deceased some bread and milk about tea time on Saturday, but he did not know for certain. He slept on a sofa in another room during Saturday night. He saw his wife again early on Sunday morning and would swear that she was alive then. He spoke to her but she could not answer him. He then went to church without any breakfast. He thought his daughter gave deceased her medicine before he went. He did not give deceased any food before he went. When he came home he again went in to see deceased, and found her looking very bad. She again refused to see a doctor. He did not remember if he had any conversation with his wife on Saturday.

He had met with an accident when working in a mine and it had affected his head. He did not know whether his wife had anything to eat at noon on Sunday. His daughter went away after dinner and he stayed at home with his wife. He looked in several times to see how she was and found her sleeping. The last time he went in he saw a great change had come over her, and he knelt down by the bed to pray for her. Her breath was coming in gasps and she died in about five minutes. This was about three o'clock. He stayed with the body until his daughter came home (about two hours afterwards). When his daughter came home he told her that her mother was dead and sent her for Mrs Hawking. He then went for Dr Christie, who told him to report the matter to the police. Deceased was about 48 years of age and was a strong woman before this sickness took hold of her.

To Dr Heily—His wife would not have any of the neighbors coming to see her. He never refused to allow any of the neighbors to come and see her.

Dr Heily—This poor woman was left to lie for ten days in a neglected state with only a little child to look after her.

Mary Theresa Maroney (a child 12 years of age) deposed that she was the daughter of the last witness. Prior to coming to Rushworth they had resided at Ballarat. Her mother took sick when they shifted from their house to live in a tent, about two years ago, and had been sick ever since. She had often been to the doctor's for medicine for her mother for sciatica. Her mother went away for a holiday in September, but when she came back she said she was no better. Her mother took to bed about the 11th of November and had been in bed ever since. She attended her mother and gave her a cup full of bread and milk sometimes once and sometimes twice a day. She had to do all the housework, washing, etc., since her mother had been ill, and she also attended school regularly. When she went to school her mother was quite alone, and in bed. On Saturday last when she spoke to her mother she could not understand her answer. She knew her mother was sick by the way she was moaning. She used to moan every day and every night. There had been no doctor to see her mother. She went away on Sunday afternoon and when she came home about half-past four her father told her that her mother was dead and that she was much better off. She then went and told Mrs Hawking. Her mother did not like any of the neighbors to come and see her, as she did not want anybody to see their home.

Annie Hawking deposed that she was a married woman residing at Rushworth. On the afternoon of the 22nd inst., about 5.15, the little girl Maroney came and told her that her mother was dead. She went down and found the body lying on a bed. It was perfectly cold and appeared to have been dead some time. She did not know Mrs Maroney to speak to, and did not know she was ill until Mr Maroney told her husband on Saturday that he would be coming home every night next week as he thought his wife was dying. Mr Maroney told her on Sunday that his wife would not go to a hospital.

Dr Christie deposed that he had made a post mortem examination of the body of deceased. She was an elderly woman, about 48 years of age. There were no external marks of violence on the body. The body was much emaciated. The left lung was bound down with a tough adhesion to the lower lobe. The stomach contained only a small quantity of food and the intestines were entirely empty. There was not a particle of fat on any part of the body. In his opinion death was due to exhaustion from the presence of a cancerous growth of the left tube and ovary. Life could have been prolonged a little had deceased received proper nursing and attention.

Dr Heily said the finding would be in accordance with the medical testimony. It was one of the worst cases he had known for a long time. The man had shown absolutely no regard for deceased. Death was due to extreme emaciation, partially caused by the want of proper food and by stupid negligence and callous indifference on behalf of her husband.

A Mary Maroney is on the official Rushworth cemetery list, buried in the Catholic section.