

1847 20 May, Morning Post London

#### Singular case of Suicide

An inquest was held on Tuesday at Ingatestone before CC Lewis, Esq, on the body of Maria Gotts, who destroyed herself under the following circumstances, as detailed in the evidence.

John Gotts, of Ingatestone, deposed:- deceased was my daughter, a single woman, and twenty-seven years of age. Last evening at six she sat down to tea with me at my house; she had poured the tea out and taken half a cup herself, when she said Mr Rolfe and Mr Tweed would come in to me and tell me she was drunk. I told her not to mind that, I would not believe a word about it; then she took the knife off the table and cut herself immediately. I did not see her take the knife off the table; I saw blood running from her throat and I went for assistance. I first found John Lillingstone, who returned with me to the house. We found her lying in the passage, against the pantry, upon her face, and still bleeding from the throat. I then went away, and she died about eight the same evening. John Lillingstone went off directly for medical assistance; Mr Lewis returned with him. Deceased had not been right in her head this week past of more; she was addicted to drinking at times, which no doubt affected her mind. Deceased's mother was not right in her mind, and was once in confinement on that account.

John Lillingstone, of Ingatestone, maltster, stated:- I live next door to where the deceased lived, and had known her about seven years and frequently saw her. I was called to her last evening between six and seven, by her father, who came to me with a knife in his hand, and said his daughter had cut her throat. He asked me to go to her, and I went directly. I found her lying on the bricks by the back door leading into the yard. She lay bleeding from the throat. I did not touch her but went off immediately for the doctor. I left a man of the name of Upson and her father with her. I returned to her in about eight minutes with Mr Lewis; when I got back she lay as I had left her. Mr Lewis and myself lifted her up, and I saw that her throat was cut; both her hands were all over blood. She always appears to me in her right mind. I had not seen her since last Wednesday or Thursday, when I spoke to her, and she seemed well in health and spirits. The knife her father had in his hand when he came was not the one she had used; but when I first went to her I saw one lying in the middle of the passage covered with fresh blood.

Richard Lewis, of Ingatestone, surgeon, stated:- I was called to the deceased between six and seven last evening; I found her lying in the passage on her face near the back door. I lifted her up and found her throat cut. There was one wound through the larynx, but there appeared to have been two gashes. I bound up the wound, and she died in about an hour and a half after I got to her, from the effects of the wound. She was sensible, but could not speak. I told her there was no chance of her recovery. I asked her if she had done it herself, if she had to put up her fingers, and if not to keep them still; she put up one or two fingers. I then said, I think you must have done it more than once; if so to put up one or two fingers; she then put up two fingers, and afterwards three. I found a Bible open in her bedroom, with a pin in a certain verse. I asked her if she had been reading it today, and whether she put the pin in, if so to hold up her finger. There were several other pins in different parts of the Bible, and by signs from her I found she had put them in. I had attended her some time ago, but she was then in a very excited state. I should not say she was of unsound mind, but she was very odd in her manner. When I first got to her I saw both her hands covered with blood. The Bible was open at Isaiah, a pin against the 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> verses of the last chapter; other pins in Jeremiah, 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter, 23<sup>d</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> verses; 31<sup>st</sup> chapter, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> verses, and 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> verses.

Charlotte, wife of James Tweed, of Ingatestone, labourer, deposed:- I had know deceased about eight years, and frequently saw her. I saw her yesterday morning about eleven. Her father asked me to go and speak to her; he said she was not very well. I went directly to her. I went upstairs, and she followed me from the kitchen in her nightdress. She told me to go down and look at the picture of our Saviour hanging over the fire in the kitchen, and that her hour was come and she must go. I said "How can you be so wicked as to talk like that?" She said it was no wickedness at all, it was the truth; she said, "Come to the picture and hear what he says to me." I was at this time standing by the picture with her; she said "Don't you hear him call me now? - my time is come, and it is no use your saying anything about it; they woke me up in the night, and told me I must go, and go I must, and if you go upstairs you will see them there." I went up, she stood on the stairs, and was afraid to go into the room; she said she was afraid. She said, "There is something on the bed - don't you see it?" I said there was nothing, and she told me to lay my hand on the top of the bed, which I did; she then seemed satisfied, and went into the room. I

then asked her to go to prayers with me, and so she did; she prayed fervently for a quarter of an hour. I remained with her about twenty minutes and then left her; before I did so she said she was in trouble. This was about half-past eleven yesterday morning, and I did not see her again. I had seen her several times as if she was quite out of her mind. Many times I had said she was not right in her mind, and I has several times heard her say she would cut her throat; she prayed to God to forgive her, and that she might not have to go; she said she would do all she could to be saved.

The Coroner having commented upon the evidence, the Jury (One dissenting) returned a verdict to the effect that deceased destroyed herself whilst labouring under temporary derangement. - Essex Herald.