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“THE MURDERS AT ESHER
CORONER'S INQUEST
ESHER, MONDAY NIGHT

This afternoon at half-past 4 o'clock, Mr. William Carter, the coroner for the eastern division of Surrey, and a jury, assembled at the Checkers Tavern, West-end, to inquire into the circumstances attending the deaths of Georgina Brough, aged 11; Caroline Brough, aged eight; William Brough aged six; Henry and Harriet Brough (twins), aged two years and six months; and George Brough, aged 21 months, the six unfortunate children who were murdered by their mother, Mary Ann, the wife of George Brough, on Saturday last.

Major-General Sir Edward Cust, Controller of the Household, attended to watch the proceedings.

The jury and coroner having viewed the bodies, the following evidence was taken:-

Henry Woolger said, that he was a labourer in Claremont-gardens, and resided at West-end. On Saturday morning, about a quarter before 6 o'clock, he was going to his work, towards Claremont-park, when, in passing the footpath in front of Mr. Brough's house, he noticed a pillow hanging out of window all over blood. It was hanging from a back window. It appeared to be lying on the sill, but hanging a little over. Witness became alarmed at the sight thereof. He did not see any one at that time in the house, and he heard no noise. He waited and heard a little gate clack, and, on looking round, he saw Mr. Beasley approaching. The gate led from West-end common. Mr. Beasley was coming towards him, and when he reached him, he (witness) said, "Look here, Thomas; here is an awful sight." He also looked up, and said they had better call some one. He rang the bell at Brough's house, but no one answered it. He fancied that he saw a woman move after the bell rang. It looked as if a woman was walking about, but she did not come near enough for him to say positively that it was a woman. An alarm was given, and Mrs. Bergham, his landlady, came, and she rang Brough's bell very violently. He afterwards saw a woman dressed in a half mourning shawl come to the window and wave a towel, as if to beckon them. He said, "There is Mrs. Brough, or some person, beckoning us for assistance." Witness then scaled the wall and entered the premises, when he opened the outer gate to let the others in. Witness scaled the outer door, and found it fastened. Seeing a ladder in the woodhouse, he took it out and placed it against the window where the pillow was. He ascended the ladder, and, on looking over the pillow, he heard some one coming up stairs. In a minute or two he heard Mrs. Brough come to the top of the staircase with her hair hanging down and her body all over blood. As she reached the top of the steps, she turned towards the window, when he saw a wound in her throat, she at the same time making a whistling noise. He immediately slipped down the ladder, and went for the surgeon. He saw nothing else to strike his attention. He knew Mrs. Brough, and had an opportunity of seeing that it was she. He returned from the doctor's, and it was then that he saw her lying on the bed with her throat cut. While on the ladder he saw no second person. There was a front door, but he tried only the back door.

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John Crockford, of West-end, said that on Saturday morning last he was in his own garden, when his attention was called to some persons in front of Mr. Brough's house, which induced him to go to the house. He there saw Mr. Thomas Beasley in the yard, when he saw the pillow spoken of by the last witness. Witness ascended the ladder and looked into the room, when he saw a woman lying on her right side. He went into the room, and found that it was Mrs. Brough. He also saw a little child lying in bed with its throat cut. Did not know the child. It was dead. He passed on into another room (the front), where Mrs. Brough then was lying. Two other children were at the foot of the bed, with their throats cut also. He then left the house. When he came out he saw two men, and he informed them that some children had been murdered. He returned to the house, and in another room he found three other children, with their throats also cut. They were lying on a bed, one with his head almost off the bed, another was on the pillow, and a third in the middle of the bed, and the feet towards the foot. They appeared to be dead. He called to a man named Buchan, but he said that he could not come. The only person that he saw alive in the house was Mrs. Brough, who waved her hand when he got in. The rooms in the house were all over blood. The staircase led from the front door, but he saw no blood on it. He saw nothing nor heard anything to account for the woman's throat and her children's being cut.

Mr. Bedser, parish constable, said that last Saturday morning, from information he received, he went to the house of Mr. George Brough. He proceeded upstairs, and in the right hand room he saw three children, with their throats cut, lying on the bed. In the left hand room, on the same floor, he saw one. He went to another room, further on the right, and found Mrs. Brough alive, with her throat cut, and at her back were two other children. He asked Mrs. Brough if she knew him, and she said "Yes". At the side of the bed he found a razor, which he now produced. It was open, and stained with blood. The blood was quite dry.

Mr. Biddlecombe, chief superintendent of the Surrey constabulary, said that from information he received on Saturday morning last from Inspector Martell, he went to the house of Mrs. Brough. On entering the back door, and going into a room, he found under a table a pair of woman's boots and a pair of bloody stockings. He went to the door, and found that the bolt on the inside was all over blood, as if handled with a bloody hand. There were no other marks of blood below. He went upstairs and found a boy, aged seven years, on the bed, with his face covered in blood. He was dead, and his throat was cut. The wound was extensive and incised. He saw no other wound. There were lying on the foot of the bed Harriet and George. They were both dead. Each had received an incised wound in the throat, and the girl had received a superficial wound on the left shoulder. He passed into another room, and found three other children. They were dead, and had extensive wounds in their throats. Those were two girls and a boy. The latter had also a wound on his chin, and one on the forefinger. In a third bedroom he saw Mrs. Brough, the mother of the children. She was in bed, and had been attended to by a medical man. He gave instructions to the nurse and the police. When he asked her if she had anything to say to him, she replied that she could not speak to him. He was satisfied that the children had been killed by some person, and not by themselves. On Sunday he understood Mrs. Brough had inquired for him, and he went to the house, saw her, and asked her if she wanted Biddlecombe. She replied "Yes; I have been relating to an officer

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all about it, thinking I had been talking to you." She then said, "I should like to tell you all about it." She then went on to say, "On Friday last I was bad all day; I wanted to see Mr. Izod, and waited all day. I wanted him to give me some medicine. In the evening I walked about, and afterwards put the children to bed, and wanted to go to sleep in a chair. About 9 o'clock Georgy (meaning Georgiana) kept calling me to come to bed. I came up to bed, and they kept calling me to bring them some barley-water, and kept calling me till near 12 o'clock. I had one candle lit on the chair. I went and got another, but could not see; there was something like a cloud, and I thought I would go down and get a knife and cut my own throat, but could not see. I groped about in master's room for a razor. I could not find one. At last I found his keys, and then found his razor. I went to Georgy, and cut her first; I did not look at her. I then came to Carry and cut her. Then to Henry. He said, "Don't mother". I said "I must", and did cut him. Then I went to Bill. He was fast asleep. I turned him over. He never woke. I served him the same. I nearly tumbled into this room. The two children here, Harriet and George were awake. They made no resistance at all. Harriet struggled very much, and gurgled. I then laid down and did myself. I can't tell what occurred for some time after that, as I found myself weak and lying on the floor. That nasty great and black cloud was gone then. I was thirsty, and got the water bottle and drank. I fell in a sitting position; got up, and saw the children, and it all came to me again. I wanted to call, but could not speak. I went to the window and put something out to call attention. I went to bed, and remained there till the bell rang. They made such a noise. I crawled on my hands and knees, but could not make them hear. It was Henry Woolger. I went down to unbolt the door. There was only one bolt fastened, and that I undid. That is all I know. They can tell the rest. It was not quite daylight when I put the signal out. It is possible I might have said something more to the other officer. If I have, he can tell you". This statement was signed by the miserable woman. Witness added that he did not believe she had made that statement for the purpose of screening any other person.

James Martell, inspector of the Surrey constabulary, said that on Sunday morning last he was sitting by the bedside of Mrs. Brough, he having her in charge; she began to cry. He said, "Don't cry, it will hurt you." She said, "See what I have done." He asked her what she had done, when she replied, "You know all about it." She then made a statement precisely similar to that made to Mr. Biddlecombe, with this addition, "If there had been 40 I should have served them all the same, but what a pity it was that I did not do myself first!" She requested that what she had stated might be taken down in writing, but preferred it being done after she had had a sleep. Witness heard her make the statement which had been read by Mr. Biddlecombe. He had no doubt but the children were killed by the mother.

Mr. Charles Mott, surgeon, of Walton-on-Thames, said, that on Saturday morning last, in consequence of a message he received, he went to the house of Mr. Brough. He went into the front bed-room and saw a woman lying on the bed. He recognised her as George Brough's wife. Her throat was out, and she was unable to speak, but sensible, and the children were as previously described. The children had each received a deep incised wound in the front of the throat, quite sufficient to and it did cause death. Undoubtedly the injuries were caused by the mother upon the children.

Ann Yates, a widow, said that she resided at Claremont-park. She had seen the deceased children, and knew each of them. Their father was named George Brough, and the mother

was named Mary Ann Brough. They had been lawfully married she was certain, although she was not present at the wedding. The two eldest children had just recovered from measles. The girl Caroline and the boy Henry were labouring under the disease at the time. Harriet was sickening, but the infant seemed well. She had no apprehensions of the death of either. She knew nothing of the tragedy except what she had heard.

Mr. Mott recalled. – He had no doubt the razor produced would be sufficient to cause the injuries he had spoken of.

Emily Forster, a girl aged 11 years, said that she lived at West-end, and knew Mrs. Brough and her family. She had been in the habit of going to her house daily with the milk which her mother sold her. She went as usual on last Friday morning at 8 o'clock. She saw the eldest girl, Georgiana and some of the younger children. She was about to speak on something that Georgiana had told her, but, as she could not say that Mrs. Brough was within hearing, the coroner could not receive her testimony as evidence.

The Jury, after consulting, returned the following verdict: "That the deceased children were wilfully murdered by Mary Ann Brough, their mother."

The proceedings lasted several hours."