

## MRS. CHARLES BERKA

Last Sunday morning about nine o'clock a German named Chas. Berka, in the employ of Robert Kirby, on the old 'Parmenter Farm', three miles northeast of Rochester went fishing in a pond not far from the house, leaving his wife at home. At about 10:30 a party of friends from the German settlement near Utica came to visit the family, but found the doors locked. Learning that the man was fishing near by, they hunted him up and returned with him to the house, where a search was instituted for the wife. Smoke was seen issuing from the hen house, and upon opening it a horrible sight met their gaze. Lying on the floor was the body of the woman, her clothing on fire and the upper portion of her body burned nearly to a crisp, while in her hand was a 32 caliber revolver. Upon examination it was found that she had shot herself through the stomach, a ball passing entirely through her body; she had placed the weapon so close to her body when she fired as to set her clothes on fire. Dr. *Jerry Wilson* was immediately sent for but of course the poor woman was dead. She was discovered about 12 o'clock.

J. C. Vorhes, Esq., empanelled a coroner's jury, consisting of Robert Kirby, Nelson Price, Charles Johnson, Andrew Hilton, \_\_\_\_\_ Hilton, O. A. Lintz.

The woman had become discouraged and disheartened through poverty, and could see no way through her troubles other than death, so she took her life.

The jury rendered a verdict in accordance with the facts: that deceased came to her death by a pistol ball, at her own hands.

The woman was about 35 years of age and leaves a husband and an 8-year-old boy.

The funeral of the unfortunate woman took place at her late residence last Tuesday at 2 ¼ pm. Services were conducted by Rev. Wm. Hollinshed, who chose for a text "There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest". He referred to the uncharitable view entertained which prevented her from having her own pastor take charge, and from being buried in 'sacred ground,' (she being a Catholic and suicide.) He said that although done to deter people from self-destruction it failed, and made man a judge of each case and made no allowance for mental disorder. That except to cheat the law of it's dues and hastened by remorse, each suicide was insane, or at least a monomaniac. He spoke of the virtues of the deceased, of her religious experience, of her unhappy life, of her cup of sorrow, of her being too weak in mind to resist the temptation to get out of a world of sorrow. Urged all to be ore kind, loving and charitable, and thus smoothe the pathway of unfortunates, helping them to overcome, committing all to the tender care of a God who " would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax." The deceased's mother was of a melancholy turn and also committed suicide. A large number of friends and neighbors were present, and the remains were buried in Stony Creek Cemetery.