

### SUICIDE THROUGH DELUSIONS.

Much sympathy is felt with Mr. S. ATTWOOD, of Park-Road, Ryde, who has had the great misfortune to lose his wife under particularly tragic circumstances. Mrs. ATTWOOD had not been in quite her usual health and had apparently harboured fancies that people wished to "out" her in the street, and so forth. She was fairly cheerful, however, and no one had the slightest idea that she would be likely to do herself an injury. Nevertheless when on Friday afternoon, Mrs. WAY and Mrs. ATTWOOD'S daughter entered the house the latter was shocked at seeing her mother hanging from the bannisters. Dr. MACKENZIE was summoned immediately but could do nothing. Her age was 44.

The inquest was held on Mrs. Susan Emma ATTWOOD before Mr. H.A. MATTHEWS, Acting Deputy Coroner, on Saturday afternoon, at the Foresters' Hall, Ryde, Mr. W. DORE was chosen foreman of the jury.

Mr. J. FARDELL appeared for Mr. ATTWOOD.

Mr. ATTWOOD, who was in the employ of Messrs. FARDELL, of Ryde, said he last saw his wife alive at 2.30 on Friday afternoon, when he left for the office. She was physically strong, but at times, since the previous Tuesday, she had said that people were "cutting" her in the street, and that they were talking about her. She could give him no information as to who the people were or what they were saying. In consequence of her having those delusions he called in Dr. PRIDMORE. When he left her for the office on Friday morning she seemed better and she had cooked a hot dinner and had it ready when he got back. At 4 o'clock a note was sent to him at the office.

The Coroner: I must ask you this. Had you any reason to suppose that anything of the sort of thing was going to happen?.

Dr. J.W. PRIDMORE said that Mr. ATTWOOD consulted with him in reference to his wife on Thursday. Witness went and saw the deceased the same evening. When he referred to the delusions of which Mr. ATTWOOD had given him information, she laughed them off. She seemed fairly well although she was certainly suffering from delusions. She acknowledged to him that she thought that people were cutting her on account of some imaginary crime. He prescribed for her.

The Coroner: Can you tell from the nature of the delusions of this kind whether there is likely to be any danger to the person or to others.

Witness: I don't think so.

The Coroner Is there generally ?.

Witness: No.

Mr. FARDELL; From what you saw you did not think it necessary to recommend that she should be placed under restraint.

Witness: No.

Mr. FARDELL: Nor that she should be watched ?.

Witness: No.

Mrs. Elizabeth WAY, wife of Councillor A.F. WAY, High Street, Ryde, said that she called in company with the deceased's young daughter, at Mrs. ATTWOOD'S house, on a visit, at about a quarter to four on Friday afternoon. They went to the back door but not being able to get in they went round to the front, which was open. The child went in first and said "Mother has hung herself." Witness could see the deceased hanging from the bannisters before them. She went to Mrs. MATTHEWS, the next-door neighbour who sent her servant to Mr. LANDER. The latter said they better go for the police. The child was sent to Mr. WAY who sent Mr. ATTWOOD. Chief Constable GREENSTREET mentioned that Mr. LANDER did not go to Ashleigh, and the police were not called at first.

Mrs. WAY continuing, said she called with Mrs. MATTHEWS for Dr. PRIDMORE, but finding him away they went for Dr. MACKENZIE, John Street, Ryde, said Mrs. WAY called for him at his home at 4 o'clock on the day in question. No one was in Mr. ATTWOOD'S house when he arrived with Mrs. WAY, but the deceased who was hanging from the bannisters suspended by a rope, her feet, he should say being between four and five feet from the nearest stair. He saw she was quite dead, and so went and called in two

men, called PEARSON and WOODFORD, to help him get her down. He cut the rope, which was fastened round her throat, whilst PEARSON and WOODFORD held her up. To make sure she was dead he listened to her heart, and found her quite dead. In so doing he found a note (produced) in her dress, he should say she had been dead quite an hour when she was taken down. His opinion was that she died from strangulation due to hanging, and not any fracture of the neck.

The note, written by the deceased was read by Mr. FARDELL. It was as follows:  
“I feel that everybody thinks that I did wrong, and there seems no way to clear oneself. I cannot go through this summer to be slighted, and I know that Muriel will be looked after, and God forgive those that have slandered me. Bury me as quietly as you can. A deeply wronged woman. If I had done any wrong I would have owned up to it. God help my child. I go to meet the Almighty with a clear conscience.”

Dr. MACKENZIE said she was cut down three minutes after he got there. It was problematical how long before she had died, but he should say about an hour.

The Coroner said this was not a matter of which he proposed any summing up. He did not think it necessary. They had two questions to decide. First of all the cause of death and also the state of mind of the deceased at the time. Both those points were clearly before them.

Mr. FARDELL said he could mention, and could testify on oath if they desired, that Mr. ATTWOOD told him of his trouble on Thursday morning. Of course it was a matter for a doctor and not a lawyer and so, on his advice, Mr. ATTWOOD called in Dr. PRIDMORE. He (Mr. FARDELL) had talks with Mr. ATTWOOD, whether it would not be advisable for Mrs. ATTWOOD to have a change of scene, and he quite fell in with that idea. Mr. ATTWOOD told witness of the delusions which had already been mentioned. He was quite satisfied at the moment there were no homicidal tendencies.

The foreman said the jury considered that death was “caused through strangulation by hanging brought about by delusions.” They wished him to add that they expressed great sympathy with Mr. ATTWOOD.

The Coroner said he would like to concur in the vote of sympathy. He had known Mr. ATTWOOD ever since he came to the Isle of Wight and he must say that they were all very sorry for him in this sad affliction.

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