

A RYDE SOMNAMBULIST'S FATAL FALL.

An inquest was held at the Infirmary, Ryde, on Tuesday afternoon on the body of Thomas James ASTINGTON, aged 77, a tailor, of St. Thomas's-square, Ryde, who died in that institution on the previous day as the result of a fall downstairs. Mr. W. H. LONG was the foreman of the jury.

Mrs. Harriett ASTINGTON, widow of the deceased, sad that on the 28th September, at 2 o'clock in the morning, she was a sleep and was awoke by hearing four distinct noises. She thought it was thunder, jumped up in bed and listened, and then thought she heard groaning. She got out of bed directly and heard deceased calling as loudly as he could. When she got to the top of the landing she saw him at the bottom doubled up all of a heap. She dragged him on one side. He was quite conscious and was fearfully cold. She put four coats over him and put on part of his clothes. Then she went and called Mr. EAMES, living opposite, and he came directly he had his clothes on. They got deceased upstairs. deceased said he was hurt all over and that he was sure his arm was broken. Witness went for Dr. BUCK and he came round. It was nearly 12 before deceased was moved to the Infirmary. Deceased said he had been dreaming that he had been to a meeting at the Wesleyan Chapel and had been walking in his sleep. He had walked in his sleep a great many times and he told witness he thought he did the same on this occasion.

Mr. George Richard EAMES, Providence Cottage, High-street, watchmaker, said he knew the deceased by sight. On the 28th inst., after 2 in the morning, the last witness knocked at his back door. Witness went to the door and saw who it was. She said her husband had fallen downstairs. He went at once to the house and found deceased lying on the floor. He was quite conscious. he kept complaining of the cold and with assistance he was got upstairs. Practically he walked up by himself. Deceased's wrist was swollen. Witness was there about three-quarters of an hour. Deceased's wife said she thought he need not stay. He did not think there was anything very serious the matter. Deceased also said he felt hurt at the back of the neck. There were no signs of blood or cuts. Witness advised the calling in of a doctor.

Mr. T. Alphaeus BUCK, M.B., surgeon, deposed that deceased had been a patient of his, with his wife, for about three years. Did not know anything about his walking in his sleep. Witness was sent for between 7 and 8 o'clock on the 28th ult. to go to the deceased's directly. He went straight there and found him upstairs in bed. The room was so small and dark that it was almost impossible to examine him. He found he was most seriously injured in the upper parts of the spine, and one of his arms, he thought the right, was broken. Thought it necessary that he be removed to the Infirmary. Witness looked upon it as a very serious case and deceased was removed immediately. Witness did not see him again, as he came under the doctor of the week. Deceased seemed too ill to tell him how the accident happened.

Mr. Percival James BODINGTON, house surgeon at the Infirmary, said that deceased was admitted on the 28th. Witness examined him and found that one bone of his arm had been broken and his neck and shoulders were much bruised. He was conscious and said he fell downstairs through walking in his sleep. Looked upon the injuries as dangerous to a man of that age. He died on Monday morning at about 8 o'clock.

The jury found that the deceased died from the result of the fall and that no blame was attributable to anyone.
