

ALCOHOLISM AND DEATH.

SHOEMAKER'S SAD END.

An inquiry was held at the Ryde Primitive Methodist Church Schoolroom on Tuesday morning last by the Deputy Coroner, Mr. F. A. JOYCE, into the death of **Frederick Arthur Edward FRY**, a shoemaker, aged 39 years, who died at his residence, No. 39, Church Street, Swanmore, suddenly, on the previous Friday evening.

Henrietta Kate FRY, the widow said for some two years he had been suffering from epilepsy for which he had been attended by Dr. PRIDMORE. He had not been attended during the past twelve or fifteen months. On the previous Friday afternoon she and her husband went up the top of Church Street for a walk. She left him there about 2.15. He was going to Wootton but he returned home about half-past three, when he said he felt bad and that he had had another of his bad turns; meaning by that he had had a fit. He also told her he had had a fit at Binstead and one at the Partlands Hotel. At half-past four he asked her to get him some tea after which, at about half-past six she left him to go to the doctor to get him some medicine. She returned about eight to find her husband gone to bed. She went to him and asked him to take a dose of medicine. He said he felt too sick to take it. He asked her about 9 o'clock to tell the children outside not to make so much noise. He then seemed to have a fit and he died at once. She sent for Dr. PRIDMORE, who attended about half-an-hour later. Her husband of late had been much addicted to drink but when he returned home on the afternoon in question he appeared quite sober. He had no drink, as far as she knew, between that time and when he died. On the previous Tuesday he drank very heavily and indeed during the whole of the week he had drunk more than usual. The drink, she thought, brought on fits.

George HAWKINS, a labourer in the employ of the Corporation, a resident of 43, Preston Place, said he was working at Binstead Road, on Friday afternoon. At about half-past two the deceased came up and entered into conversation with him, and, concluding what he had to say, he suddenly reeled round and would have fallen had not witness caught him. He appeared to be having an epileptic fit which lasted about five minutes. He thanked witness for his help and said he was going to Wootton to do some work but would then go back home. He appeared to be quite sober.

George James PRICE, the licensee of Partlands Hotel, said the deceased called in the bar about 3.20 on Friday afternoon. He said he felt very queer and told them that he had had a fit on the way to Wootton. He had two pennyworth of brandy to revive himself. He just took a sip of it and reeled round in a fit, being altogether about five minutes unconscious. Witness then advised him to go quietly home, offering his assistance, which deceased said he could do without. Before he left witness diluted the brandy with water and gave it to him,.

Dr. J.W. PRIDMORE, of No. 40, George Street, said he had attended the deceased for some time past with epilepsy, although not recently. On Friday evening last, Mrs. FRY called on him, as she had stated, and he gave her a bottle of medicine. Later in the evening, about half-past nine, witness received a message to say that deceased had not come out of the fit and would it matter. Witness decided to go round, and when he arrived he found the man dead. He tried artificial respiration with no result. On the following day he made a post mortem examination and found that deceased had a fatty liver, which feature was usual in people who drank a lot. With the exception that the organs were congested they were all healthy. The brain was very slightly congested (a result of alcohol) but was otherwise quite healthy. There were no bruises on the body. Knowing the man's habits, and from what he had heard, he was of the opinion that deceased died of cardiac failure, resulting from epilepsy conducted by alcoholic poisoning. He had previously warned deceased on his drinking habits.

The Coroner, in summing up, said it was not quite easy for them to come to an immediate decision as the evidence showed that just prior to this particular time the deceased had been drinking heavily and there was internal evidence of it. As the doctor had informed them, he was justified in not signing the certificate of death because he felt he would have to point out that the man died from alcoholic poisoning. It was for the jury to decide whether they would return a verdict that the man died from epilepsy or whether they would add the words that, from the view that the doctor took, death was brought about by super-indulgence in alcohol.

The jury brought in their verdict that deceased died from cardiac failure resulting from epilepsy. They did not think the evidence was sufficient to add those words “brought about by super-indulgence in alcohol.”

The Coroner thought Dr. PRIDMORE was perfectly justified in the view that he adopted in the case.

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