

TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AT COWBRIDGE.

MASON KILLED BY HIS BROTHER.

SUICIDE OF THE MURDERER.

DISTRESSING SCENES.

CORONER'S INQUIRY: VERDICTS OF "WILFUL MURDER" & "SUICIDE."

Cowbridge was the scene of a terrible double tragedy on Friday evening. A labourer named Edward David, having shot his brother Arthur, a mason, with a gun, afterwards took his own life in a most distressing manner. The affair was the culmination of a long-standing feud between them. The brothers were next-door neighbours in East Village, Cowbridge, and had been on bad terms for years. Edward, who was a labourer, was a married man with no children, while Arthur was a mason, aged about 29, who was also married, and had two children. The former was a man of violent and quarrelsome disposition, and had often appeared as defendant at the Police-court on charges of drunkenness. No one appears to know the cause of the long-standing dispute between the men, but the possession of a ferret was a recent cause of disension.

On Friday evening Edward David was sitting by the fire talking to his wife. Soon after eight o'clock there came a knock at the back door, and taking a gun from the mantelpiece Edward went to the back kitchen. He opened the back door and saw his brother Arthur there. Arthur asked "Where is the ferret?" and the reply was "I have lost it." Arthur said "No, don't tell me any of your lies," and his brother replied, "You ask Martin." "I see," said Arthur, "you've got the gun; shoot me if you like." Edward pointed his gun at his brother and shot him in the throat.

Arthur then ran down the street for about a hundred yards to the village pump, and applied water to his throat, then falling down from exhaustion. He was carried to the Druids Hotel, near by, and Dr. Torney was sent for. The doctor soon arrived, but ten minutes later the man expired.

Police-constable Herbert Davies, who had been apprised of the incident by neighbours, went to the house of the aggressor, with the intention of arresting him, but on arrival found that the murderer had turned his weapon upon himself and blown off the roof of his skull. The corpse lay in the back-kitchen, with the man after the breast, his hands still clausng it. A terrible scene was presented, the floor for about two yards being covered with blood. P.C. Davies found two empty cartridges outside the back-door on the step.

WIDOWS INTERVIEWED.

Mr. Edward David, wife of the murderer, in an interview stated that her husband had been out of work since Christmas. On Thursday he spent the whole day in bed, and on Friday he got up late, and in the afternoon sat with her in the kitchen. "We were," she said, "sitting together before the fire soon after eight o'clock in the evening. My husband appeared rather strange in manner. Suddenly there was a knock at the back door. He got up, and took a gun from the mantelpiece. He had some cartridges in his pocket. He went into the back kitchen, and I heard him open the back door. I heard the voice of his brother Arthur say 'Where is that ferret?' and my husband said 'I have lost it.' Arthur said 'No, don't you tell me any of your lies.' I heard Arthur say 'I see you have got a gun; you had better shoot me now.' I then heard a report, and I began to run down the street. I had not gone far when I heard another report. Then I went to Mrs. Thomas Beer."

Mrs. Arthur David, the widow of the murdered man, who had been sitting weeping with the other widow, supplied the other details which helped to make the story complete. She said that last Wednesday, when her husband and his brother had been in a field, which was called Millfield, where their parents lived, a question arose about the lending of some nets to another man. Edward David refused to lend the nets, and had a quarrel with the man who wanted them, but Arthur David took no part in the quarrel. On Wednesday evening, however, Arthur David and his brother seem to have had some words about the nets, and the old ill-feeling between them came out strongly. Edward David said that he would shoot his brother at some time or another; if not that night, then the following night. "On Friday evening," she proceeded, "my husband returned from Miskin on his bicycle about 7.30. Soon after eight o'clock he got up and went out to the back door and into the yard. I followed to the door, and I heard him speaking to his brother Edward at the latter's back door. I asked him to come away, but he would not. I could hear the conversation between them except the last few words. Suddenly I heard the report of a gun, and I was my husband stagger back. Then he rushed past me with a big crash in his throat, from which blood was pouring. He was speechless. I let him to stop, but he went through the kitchen and through the front door out into the street, and ran down for about 100 yards until he was opposite the Druids Hotel, when he fell down."

SERVED IN AFRICA.

The deceased Arthur David was a member of the Active Service Company of Volunteers, Welsh Regiment, that served in the South African War. He was one of the first Volunteers to go to the South African War in the 2nd Welsh, and had two medals and seven bars. He was a man of a very steady and hard-working. His gun was always with him, and he was fond of coursing in annihilating rabbits. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide." The jurymen and doctor gave their fees to the widows at the close of the inquest.

The coroner asked the jury to consider whether the deceased was in his right mind when he shot himself. He pointed out that deceased appeared to be perfectly calm and collected when conversing with his brother just before the tragedy. A jurymen asked the doctor if the shock of seeing that he had killed his brother would be sufficient to turn his mind in a moment before killing himself. Dr. Torney said that such things had happened. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide." The jurymen and doctor gave their fees to the widows at the close of the inquest.

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A Jurymen questioned witness as to the state of her husband when he came home from work on Friday afternoon. She said that he was sober, and did not think he went to his brother's house in a quarrelsome mood, only to ask questions.

Rachel David, the other widow, said: I had heard my husband threaten Arthur on Wednesday. This was when the quarrel started, and it referred to a ferret, which was the joint property of the brothers. My husband had lost it. I was in the house when Arthur came to the door about 8.45 on Friday night. My husband went to the door with the gun in his hand. It was his own gun. I heard a conversation about the ferret, and then the report of a gun. I ran to the front door and saw Arthur run down the street bleeding. I ran into a neighbour's house, and did not see him fall.

The Coroner: When you heard your husband threaten to shoot his brother, did not you remonstrate with him? Witness: He was drunk, and I did not speak to him. He stayed in bed all Thursday. He was also in bed on Friday, and did not get up until the afternoon. He had not been out for two days. I thought that she never thought he meant it when he made the threat.

Questioned by members of the jury, witness said that when Arthur knocked at the door, Edward was sitting down and the gun was on the mantelpiece. He reached it down, but she did not see him load it. It was not his habit to keep it loaded. She thought her husband was afraid of Arthur, who was the stronger man. They had fought in rows, and once Arthur came into the house and beat his brother.

Both the widows gave their evidence very clearly, and showed very little emotion. The scene in High-street, Cowbridge, after the tragedy was described by Edward Cowley, the driver in the employ of Messrs. Jenkins. He said he was walking along the street, when he saw Arthur David fall on the road. He could see that he was bleeding from the neck. A postman ran for the doctor, and by this time a crowd had collected. The body was taken to the Druids Inn. Witness returned with the police to Edward David's house, but did not see the body. A Jurymen: Did Arthur say anything? Witness: No, sir.

Dr. Richard Hastings Torney said he was sent for on Friday night about five minutes past nine. He went up the road, and near the Druids Inn saw Arthur David, supported by a number of men. He was struggling for breath. He was not bleeding much then. When witness saw the wound with the aid of a light which was brought, he ordered him to be taken into the Druids Inn, where he examined him. The front and left side of his throat was shattered. The muscles and a portion of the jaw were blown away. The neck and the trachea were shattered and hanging out of the wound. It was evident that it was a mortal wound. Deceased died in about ten minutes after his arrival. There was a slight scorch in the centre of the throat just below the wound, showing that the gun had been fired at close quarters. It was a wonder the poor fellow lived so long after the shooting.

This was all the evidence in the case of Arthur David, and the Coroner summed up. The jury spent very little time considering their verdict, which was "Wilful murder."

THE SECOND INQUEST.

Mrs. Rachel David was again called as the first witness in the second case. She said her husband was 34 years of age, and he was a labourer. She repeated her statements, and added that she had not until that day returned to the house after the night of the tragedy. Her husband did not carry the cartridges in his pocket. He kept them in a drawer, the gun hanging above the fireplace. She identified the gun produced as her husband's.

The Foreman: Was your husband strange in his manner on Friday?—Yes, I thought so, and he looked very pale. Did he take any food?—No, sir; not on Thursday or Friday. I offered him some, but he would not have it. The Coroner: When you saw him taking the gun down from the mantelpiece, did not you try to stop him?—No, sir; I was frightened.

Thomas Beer was an important witness in the case of Edward David. He said: I went to his house, between 8.30 and nine o'clock. The front door was slammed in, and I had to force it open. I went into the back kitchen, and Edward Lewellyn was with me. We saw Edward David lying on his side on the floor. His gun was lying across him, and the left side of his head had been blown away. I could see that he was dead. I went for the police, and came across Police-constable Davies.

Questioned by the jury, the witness said all the doors in Edward David's house were closed, but not locked. Police-constable Herbert Davies was the next witness. He said the last witness told him what he had seen in Edward's house. He had been in the street assisting in Arthur's case, and proceeded to Edward's house and found the man dead, as described by Beer. Witness examined the back kitchen. There were blood marks on the ceiling, and he found three loaded cartridges in Edward's left-hand trousers pocket and a pipe and tobacco in his waistcoat pocket. Witness fetched Dr. Torney, who was attending to Arthur at the Druids Inn.

Dr. Torney's evidence was that just before Arthur died he went to Edward's house. Edward had a gunshot wound which had taken away the top-end of the skull. Death must have been instantaneous, and there could be no doubt that the wound was self-inflicted.

The Coroner asked the jury to consider whether the deceased was in his right mind when he shot himself. He pointed out that deceased appeared to be perfectly calm and collected when conversing with his brother just before the tragedy. A jurymen asked the doctor if the shock of seeing that he had killed his brother would be sufficient to turn his mind in a moment before killing himself. Dr. Torney said that such things had happened. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide." The jurymen and doctor gave their fees to the widows at the close of the inquest.

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THE CORONER'S INQUIRY.

One of the saddest stories in the history of the Vale was narrated at the Police-station, Cowbridge, on Monday, when Mr. E. B. Rees and a jury investigated the circumstances of the tragedy. Mr. Pickard (mayor of Cowbridge) was foreman of the jury. Mrs. Arthur David, wife of the murdered man, detailed the relations existing between the brothers previous to Friday. She said her husband was 29 years of age last month. Before the tragedy the brothers were not on friendly terms, and on Wednesday last witness heard her brother-in-law threaten to shoot her husband.

"What did he say?" asked the Coroner, and the witness replied that Edward said: "I will shoot him, if I do not shoot him to-night I will shoot him to-morrow night." He was at the back of the house, and Arthur heard the threat. The witness then went on to deal with Friday night's proceedings. She said that about a quarter to nine her husband went to his brother's door and knocked. Her husband spoke to Edward first, and said, "Where's the ferret?" Edward answered, "I have lost it." Arthur then said, "Don't tell me your lies," and Edward replied, "You ask Martin." "I see," said Arthur, "that you've got the gun." "Yes, I've got it," replied Edward. Arthur then said, "Shoot me if you like." In reply to this Edward said nothing, and then, added witness, "I heard a gunshot."

The Coroner: Did you run out? Witness: No, sir. You were frightened, I suppose?—No, sir. My husband came into the house from the back kitchen. Was he bleeding?—Yes, sir, from the neck. Did he say anything to you?—No. What did he do?—I ran out from the back kitchen to the street. I went to the back door. I did not see him alive any more. He was taken to the Druids, and his body was brought home on Saturday night.

Police-constable Herbert Davies, who had been apprised of the incident by neighbours, went to the house of the aggressor, with the intention of arresting him, but on arrival found that the murderer had turned his weapon upon himself and blown off the roof of his skull. The corpse lay in the back-kitchen, with the man after the breast, his hands still clausng it. A terrible scene was presented, the floor for about two yards being covered with blood. P.C. Davies found two empty cartridges outside the back-door on the step.

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PULPIT REFERENCES.

Pulpit references were made to the tragedy in all places of worship in Cowbridge on Sunday. The vicar, the Rev. Isaiah Roberts, at the afternoon service, said they had recently heard of the two men being labored into eternity without a moment's warning, one by the hand of his brother and the other by his own hand. What if those men had lived in the Hope of the Gospel? What if they had attended regularly a place of worship? They would have lived with the certainty of being prepared for the meeting with the Great Judge.

THE FUNERALS.

The remains of Evan Arthur David were interred in the burial ground of the Parish Church on Tuesday. The funeral was one of the largest seen in the town for some time. The greatest sympathy was shown to the mourners, who at times could scarcely control their feelings. The vicar and the Rev. R. J. Lewis officiated. The funeral of Edward David took place on Wednesday morning, the remains being interred in a corner of the Cowbridge Churchyard at nine o'clock. A short committal service was gone through instead of the burial service of the Church of England. The service was read by the vicar and the Rev. R. J. Lewis. All the relatives of the deceased were present, also some of the townspeople. The subscriptions to be found raised by the Mayor (Councillor J. Pickard) will be apportioned equally between the widows.