

THE LATE MR. C. P. MELLY.

INQUEST AND VERDICT.

An inquest was held yesterday at Riverley, Mossley-hill, on the body of Charles Pierre Melly, aged 56, a gentleman connected with a Liverpool firm of merchants, who on Saturday was found dead under circumstances detailed in the following evidence. The inquiry was held before Mr. Samuel Brighthouse, coroner of South-west Lancashire.

The Coroner having briefly stated the facts, one of the sons of the deceased gentleman identified the body as that of his father.

James Robinson, an attendant connected with the Coton Asylum, Staffordshire, stated that deceased had been an inmate of that asylum since October, 1883. He was in the habit of leaving it at intervals for the purpose of visiting friends, on which occasion witness always accompanied him. On Thursday deceased came on a visit to his friends at Riverley, Mossley-hill. Deceased's malady was such that witness was in constant attendance upon him, with the exception of brief intervals for meals and so forth, and he slept in the same room with deceased. On Saturday morning, witness remarked no change in his patient; in fact, he passed the observation to him that he appeared to be somewhat better, and had passed a good night. At seven o'clock witness went downstairs to prepare deceased's breakfast. He was absent about an hour; but the rooms on either side of deceased's were occupied. When he returned and approached the door he detected the smell of powder. Entering the room, he found Mr. Melly lying dead on his bed, with a bullet wound in his head. A pistol was lying on the coverlet at the foot of the bed. Deceased had evidently got out of bed, because the window blind was drawn up. Witness was not aware that there was any weapon of a dangerous character in the room. He took no steps to discover whether there was or not. During the time he was with deceased, witness was not conscious that he was suffering from suicidal mania. He had been away with deceased on fishing excursions, when they were quite alone and miles away from land, without his displaying any such symptoms. Deceased in witness's hearing never threatened to take away his life. He had always been allowed absolute freedom.

Dr. Hewson, of Coton Asylum, stated that he had never known deceased to resort to violence except on one occasion, when he threw a knife at him because he did not want it. He always appeared to witness to have a perfect horror of being left alone. He was very dependant at times, and it was witness's opinion that he took away his life on the impulse of the moment. Robinson had not neglected his duty in leaving him alone. They took every precaution at Coton, and gave deceased blunt knives to eat his food with.

A son of deceased, interpreted with the remark that they took similar precautions when deceased visited them. He did not know how his father obtained the weapon. It was removed from the room a long time ago, and placed in a box along with some cricket things. His father must have been rummaging in the box and found it.

The jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased had taken away his life whilst in a state of unsound mind.

Mr. George Melly said he wished to remark, on behalf of his brother's widow and the family, that no blame could be attached to any one. They were deeply sensible of the kindness and tender care with which Dr. and Mrs. Hewson had watched over his brother for some years, and of whom his brother always spoke in the warmest terms. They also wished to express their confidence in the personal attendant, Robinson, and in his constant care and kindness. Everything that could be done by humane care and medical skill had been done, and what had occurred was beyond the power of any one to prevent.