

SUICIDE OF A GROOM AT WOODHAM WALTER.

Robert Hornell, 30, a groom, of Hoe Mill House, Woodham Walter, committed suicide on Thursday by taking a dose of weed-killing powder. He took the stuff at six a.m., and died six hours later. Mr. Scott, a medical student, who happened to be in the village, was called to the deceased. He administered an emetic, and the deceased was subsequently seen by Dr. Ewens, of Maldon. He was a married man, and he leaves a widow and five young children, with whom much sympathy is felt. Deceased was in the employ of Captain the Hon. C. R. Morton, who resides at Hoe Mill House, and is now away from home. In consequence of his master's absence deceased had not much to occupy his time, and this fact, it is supposed, coupled with the excessive heat, caused him to begin drinking. He was also troubled about some money.

An inquest was held at Hoe Mill Farmhouse on Friday evening by Mr. Coroner Harrison. Mr. Robert Lingo, an ex-F.C., was foreman of the jury.

Mrs. Alice Hornell said deceased, who was her husband, had been in Captain Morton's service for two years. He got up just after six on Thursday morning, and soon afterwards her little girl, aged nine, told her that deceased wanted her. She went into the bedroom, and found him on the bed, where he had been sick. He told her he had been taking poison—weed-killer. She asked him why he had taken it, and he replied that he did not know. He told her to fetch the footman, which she did. He was in great pain. The footman fetched a student, Mr. Scott, of Woodham Mortimer, who advised an emetic of salt and water, which was given, and Dr. Ewens, of Maldon, came about nine o'clock, but her husband gradually got worse, and died about noon. Deceased had enjoyed pretty good health, and had no troubles that she knew of, but he had complained of his head the day previously.

Albert Overington, butler to Captain Morton, said that when he was sent for the deceased told him he had taken poison, and he found it was weed-killer from the potting shed. He had taken about ½-oz. Witness gave deceased a salt and water emetic, which made him a little sick, and sent for Dr. Ewens. Deceased told him he took the poison in a glass, which he threw away in a field. Deceased was a little wrong in his accounts. Witness gave him money to pay out, and he had not done so. The amount which deceased was deficient was about 19s. Deceased had been on the drink about two days.

Dr. Ewens said he went to deceased and found him in bed with his knees drawn up and in great pain, and extremely prostrate. His mind was intact. Witness analysed the contents of the stomach and found large quantities of white arsenical acid, which was very poisonous, about two grains being a fatal dose. The actual cause of death was exhaustion from arsenical poisoning.

The Coroner said the poison was arsenious acid and was found in two forms—a white powder and a solid cake. The latter resembled white enamel. It was used in manufactories for colouring purposes, farmers used it for destroying vermin on sheep, &c., and gardeners used it for destroying weeds.

The jury returned a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind.