

SUDDEN DEATH AT SIMM'S CROSS.**SLEEPING WITH A CORPSE.**

On Wednesday afternoon, Mr. W. T. Husband, deputy coroner, held an inquest at the house of Mr. Deakin, the Simm's Cross Hotel, on the body of Matthew Butler, 62 years of age, who resided with his son at 14, Princess street.—Mr. Alfred Machin was foreman of the jury.

William Butler said: I live at 14, Princess street, and am an iron drum maker. The body seen by the jury is that of my father, who was a labourer in the employ of Mr. Rollason, at the Widnes Alkali Works. He was 62 years of age, and resided with me. I last saw him alive on Monday night, when he was going to bed. That would be about eleven o'clock. He had his supper a little after ten o'clock. About ten minutes to six o'clock the following morning, I went to call him to go to his work, and as I got no reply, I went to his room door at which I knocked, but did not receive any answer. I then went into the room, and found he was dead. He was lying partly on his right side as if asleep. I did not hear any noise in the night. He complained in the afternoon of the same day about being troubled with wind in his stomach. He had also made similar complaints the day previous, but he said nothing of any consequence. I advised him to go to the doctor, but he refused to do so, as he did not think it necessary. He was insured in the Prudential Office, but was not in benefit. He slept with a little boy, a son of mine, ten years of age, named Thomas Butler. He appeared to be in good spirits when he went to bed. When I went into his room on Tuesday morning, my son was sleeping beside him. The body was cold. No one beside my father and my son slept in the same room.

Mrs. Margaret Hughes said: I live at 1, Princess street. My husband's name is Elias Hughes. He is a bricklayer. I have known the deceased for some months. Since the death I have laid the body out. I did not notice anything peculiar in the way of marks of violence on the body.

Thomas Butler said: I am ten years of age. I live with my father, William Butler. I have generally slept with my grandfather. I went to bed alone about nine o'clock on Monday night last, and my grandfather came afterwards—I think about eleven o'clock. I was not awake when he came. He awakened me during the night, and asked me to light the lamp, and I said, "It is too good, as it is not five o'clock yet." He did not say anything else. I did not generally light the lamp. He lit it himself. He appeared to be quite well when he woke me. I got up on Tuesday morning early, all the others in the house being in bed. Deceased just gasped or rattled in his chest. I wanted to get up, but he shoved me back again. Not long afterwards—just as he lay down—I heard the rattling in his throat. He put his hand on my mouth when I about to call out. We both went asleep afterwards, and I did not awake until my father shouted to me. He came into the room and shook me, and it was then I found that my grandfather was dead.

By the jury: Deceased did not complain when he woke me in the night.

By Sergeant McGregor: I only thought it was not five o'clock when I said so to my grandfather.

The Deputy Coroner pointed out that when the deceased asked the boy to light the lamp he might have been in his death agony, and that when he pushed the boy down in the bed it might have been his death struggle. It was just possible that the boy being half asleep took the rattling in the deceased's throat for snoring. There was no suspicion of foul play to be attached to anyone—in fact, there were no grounds for suspicion, and the parties seemed to be very respectable people.

The jury concurred in this view, and returned a verdict of "Natural cause."