

Mr James Shewan

Murchison Advertiser

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Quite a wave of sorrow and regret passed over Rushworth on Friday morning when it became known that James Shewan had taken his life. The deceased, who was a fine upright young fellow, and was respected by everyone that knew him, lived with his brother and sister at Nuggetty Gully, and was in comfortable circumstances, the three residing on the most amicable terms with one another. His relatives had noticed that he had not been himself for some time but it was not thought that he had homicidal tendencies, so that no notice was taken of him.

There was no doubt, however, that he was not responsible for his actions when he committed the deed. The remains were interred in the Rushworth cemetery on Saturday afternoon, a large number of the residents following the remains to their last resting place. The Rev. J. R. Walker officiated at the grave and Mr Anderson had charge of the funeral arrangements.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

An inquiry was held by T. Crothers, Esq., J. P. , at Rushworth on Friday last touching the death of James Shewan, when the following evidence was taken: —

Henry Owen deposed that he was a miner residing at Nuggetty Gully. He had been working with the deceased for about six months. He had not noticed anything strange in his conduct, except on one occasion. About a month ago deceased was down a mine and witness was on top. They had been at work all day and when it came to sending up the last bucket deceased would not put it on the rope. He sang out to him several times and getting no answer he went for assistance, and he and another man went down the mine and got Shewan up and took him home. He seemed a bit queer that day, but went to work next morning and had been working ever since.

Annie Shewan deposed that on the morning of the 22nd inst. James and David had their breakfasts as usual. David went away to work and James retired to his own room. A few minutes after she heard a shot and called out to James and asked if he was alright, and not receiving any answer she thought there must be something wrong, and she went for her brother John, who resided a short distance away. While passing the door of deceased's room she looked in and saw him lying on his back across the bed. He was motionless. She did not notice the gun nor did she go into the room. When she got to her brother's she told him that she thought that James had shot himself. He had been very quiet, but she had not noticed anything very peculiar about him, and he appeared to be enjoying his usual health.

John Shewan deposed that on the morning of the 22nd inst. his sister went to him and told him that James had shot himself. He proceeded to the place and found his brother lying across the bed on his back, with the stock of a double-barrelled gun between his legs and the barrels lying along his body. He noticed blood on deceased's face and blood spattered on the ceiling and walls. Deceased was quite dead. He sent word to Dr Heily and the police. He saw the deceased on the previous evening when the latter was returning from work and talked to him for a few minutes. He appeared to be in his usual health. There was nothing peculiar about him.

David Shewan deposed that he was a miner residing at Nuggetty Gully with his brother and sister. They had their breakfast as usual before 7 a.m. He left about 7 to go to work, leaving James standing in the breakfast room. Deceased had been very despondent of late and

would not speak unless they addressed him. In consequence of information he returned home and found his brother lying dead. He had no reason to deprive himself of his life as far as he knew, as he had plenty of money and was well looked after.

Dr Heily deposed that he had known the deceased all his life. He examined the body and found a wound in the mouth and the top of the head. His right foot was bare. Death resulted from a gun-shot wound.

Constable Draper deposed that on the morning of the 22nd inst. Richard Bell informed him that James Shewan had shot himself. He proceeded to the place and found the deceased in the position described by the previous witnesses. A double barrelled gun was lying along the body, the right-hand barrel of which had been lately discharged. There were powder marks on deceased's right hand. There was a wound in the mouth and on the top of the head. The brains were protruding and the ceiling and walls were disfigured with blood. His right foot was bare and he must have pulled the trigger with his big toe. By appearances he must have been sitting on the bed when the gun went off. He had no doubt but that the deed was committed by deceased's own hand.

The verdict given was that the deceased died from a gunshot wound self-inflicted while in an unsound state of mind.

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