

-SUICIDE OF MR J. H. HARRIS.

A report that Mr J. H. Harris, the well-known solicitor, had committed suicide by shooting himself, was circulated early yesterday morning, and enquiry proved that the shocking intelligence was only too true. It appears that for some time past he had been in indifferent health, and had had recourse to stimulants and sedatives to obtain mental and physical relief. This was well known to the members of the house in which he lived, but it was never anticipated that Mr Harris would lay violent hands upon himself. Yesterday morning at about nine o'clock, Mrs Bosc, the landlady of the house at which Mr Harris was lodging; (No. 33 Errard street), knocked at the door of his bedroom, as was usual, to tell him that his bath was ready. She, however, got no answer to her enquiries, and after waiting for some time, the bedroom was entered and the unfortunate man was discovered lying on his bed, dressed, and quite dead and with a gaping wound across the front of his head, the frontal bone and both eyes having been blown away. Near him upon the bed lay a horse-pistol, which had recently been discharged, and with which he had evidently shot himself, and the bullet, a large one, was lying underneath his head and on the pillow. The deceased was left-handed, and he had evidently held the pistol with that hand when discharging it, for the ball had entered his left temple, coming out at the right eye, and the discharge had carried away the upper part of his face. Dr Bunce was immediately sent for, and the police communicated with, but the medical man, when he arrived could do nothing, as the unfortunate man had apparently been dead about two hours when the doctor saw him, so Senior-constable Crowley took charge of the body. The servant-girl in the house states that she heard a crash, apparently in the room of deceased about seven o'clock, but thinking that it was caused by the breakage of some article in the room, took no notice of it. It is said that the deceased for some time previous to his death had been in a very unsettled state of mind, and had endeavored to purchase certain drugs ostensibly for allaying certain pains, from which he suffered, but on account of the poisonous nature of the drugs he wanted they were not given to him, as he was not considered in a fit condition to be trusted with their use. When he retired on Tuesday evening nothing peculiar was noticed in his appearance or manner, and the first intimation of a deadly purpose on himself was the finding of his dead body as described. An inquest will be held on the remains at twelve o'clock to-day, at the Ship inn. Mr Harris was the oldest solicitor in Ballarat, having commenced his profession twenty-six years ago. He leaves a widow and several children in easy circumstances, and at present residing at Geelong. It is stated that he has a brother now a general in the British army, who gained his laurels in the Crimean war.

John Nobbs, publican, deposed that the deceased came to his house (the Ship inn) at about nine o'clock on Tuesday night. He was perfectly sober, but said that he was cold and miserable. He asked for a glass of hot rum, which witness served him with, and asked him if his rheumatism and gout were painful. He said that they were, and he often had a mind to blow his brains out in consequence. The deceased looked miserable and haggard, though he generally came to the place in a lively humor. He talked in a rambling way, and stayed about twenty minutes. Witness had known him twenty-three years, and thought he looked very wild on the night in question. Irvine Coulter, commercial traveller, living at 26 Errard street, deposed that he had known the deceased intimately for about three years. Up to within the last three months he was extremely sensible and matter of fact, but after that witness noticed a change in him. He was very much troubled in his mind, and for the last six months he often wished he was dead, owing (as he said) to family troubles. Latterly he became worse, and at times his mind was unhinged. On the last occasion the deceased visited witness—ten days ago—he put his head into his hands and wept, and then jumped up and, pressing his head, said he was going out of his mind. On going away he bid witness and his wife a very impressive good-bye. Witness said, "It's good night, not good-bye;" to which the deceased replied, "Oh, you may never see me again," and then went away singing. Whenever his inner feelings were touched he never seemed himself, and he often said that it was hard for him to preserve an outward demeanor to hide his feelings. Witness saw him afterwards in deceased's office, when he complained of pain, and, pressing his breast, said that it could not last much longer. So long as the deceased had any hope of settling family matters he was always cheerful. He had once said that the death of a gentleman was to blow his brains out, and he used this expression some way in connection with himself. Witness believed that the deceased was not right in his mind. Constable Hickey deposed having found the deceased lying in his bed on Wednesday morning with a wound in his left temple. A pistol was lying near deceased's left hand on the bed, at the head of which was a table with a small photograph on it facing the deceased. Dr. Bunce gave the necessary medical evidence, and stated that death had been caused by a wound from a bullet (produced) discharged from the pistol found on the bed, and which he had no doubt had been discharged by the deceased, who, from what he had heard of the evidence, must have been of unsound mind at the time. The photograph was a portrait of Mrs Harris. This concluded the evidence, and the jury returned a verdict that the deceased, John Henry Harris, committed suicide while suffering from temporary insanity.

Some little time after the conclusion of the inquest, Mr Sub-inspector Babington, with Mr J. Hardy, found the key of the patent safe in the office of deceased, and on opening it found within it several letters to his connections and friends. One letter showed that he had fully contemplated suicide, and related that he had tried chloroform on four occasions, by laying a handkerchief sprinkled with it across his face, but he was too strong for the drug to take fatal effect upon him. He then, as the letter ran, tried chlorodyne, but without success, and he said he would, as a last resource, try a pistol. In the safe were also found a bullet-mould containing a bullet the same size as the one with which he shot himself, and two more bullets were found lying alongside the mould.

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FUNERAL NOTICES.

THE Friends of the late Mr THOMAS WLLIS,
Son, are respectfully invited to follow his
remains to the place of interment, the Ballarat New
Cemetery. The funeral to move from his late re-
sidence, corner of East and Victoria streets, on Satur-
day, the 25th instant, at a Quarter past Eleven o'clock
a.m.
JOHN LES, Undertaker.

THE remains of the late Mr J. H. HARRIS will be
removed from his late residence, No. 80 Errard
street south, for interment in the Ballarat Old Ceme-
tery, This Day (Friday, the 25th instant), at Three
o'clock precisely.
CHARLES MORRIS, Undertaker, Gronville street,
near Alfred Hall, Ballarat.

and Co., Bridge st
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