

SAD DEATH OF A MASTER OF HOUNDS

HYDROPHOBIA AFTER A FOX-BITE



(Photo by Mr F. Holmes, Mere)

The death occurred late on Thursday night at his residence, The Cottage, Sutton Veny, near Warminster, under peculiarly sad circumstances, of Mr Richard Bower, the master of the South and West Wilts Hunt. The deceased gentleman, who was a bachelor, and lived with his sister, went to Warminster on Monday to attend a meeting of the Hunt Committee. He was then feeling very ill, and became worse in the evening, and the doctor was sent for. He remained in a feverish condition until Wednesday evening, when he became suddenly worse and developed symptoms which in the course of a few hours manifested themselves as those of hydrophobia.

Dr R. L. Willcox, Dr Hubert Willcox and Dr Kemp, of Salisbury, were attending, and Mr Bower's own medical adviser arrived in the course of Thursday morning. Deceased, however, sank rapidly and passed away. It appeared that the malady must have been conveyed by a bite from a fox some months ago, and it is notable that there have not been any known cases of hydrophobia in the country for some years.

To find a parallel to the death of Mr Bower one has to go back eleven years. It was in 1900 that Mr P. Pryse Pryse, the gentleman huntman of the Gogerddan Foxhounds, succumbed to a bite from a fox, the pack being temporarily abolished in consequence. Prior to going to Wiltshire, Mr Bower very successfully hunted the Newmarket and Thurlow Hounds.

THE CORONER'S ENQUIRY

The inquest was held at Sutton Veny on Friday by Mr F. A. P. Sylvester, the coroner for the district.

The evidence of a relative showed that Mr Bower was bitten on the hand through a thick woollen glove by a hunter fox at the end of a run at the close of last season. Mr Bower dismounted from his horse to break up the fox, and as he drove back the hounds and held the fox he was bitten by the animal. A hunt servant who was present at the time stated that Mr Bower made no complaint then about the bite. Later, however, Mr Bower mentioned the matter casually to friends.

Medical evidence was given by Dr Robert Lewis Willows, who attended during the last illness. Mr Bower, he said, became ill on Monday and died on Thursday night at eleven o'clock. Not until Wednesday evening at six o'clock – 28 hours before death – were any signs of hydrophobia manifest. Then, however, the symptoms showed, and the

patient suffered from fever and great weakness, It was almost impossible for him to swallow, and he had great difficulty breathing. Paralysis of the muscles of the jaw ensued, with paroxysms. The patient suffered terribly. In conjunction with three other medical practitioners Dr Willcox was convinced, after his clinical examination, that the complaint was hydrophobia. During the interval between the time he was bitten and his death Mr Bower had been in excellent health. No signs of hydrophobia have been displayed among the hounds, none of which were bitten by the fox, nor is there as yet reason to believe that other foxes in the district have been infected.

THE FUNERAL

The remains of the late Mr Bower were removed from Sutton Veny to Stradishall-place, near Newmarket, Suffolk, on Saturday morning, and the funeral took place on Monday afternoon at two o'clock. At the same hour there was a memorial service at Sutton Veny, which was very largely attended by hunting people in the district.

(*Western Gazette*, Yeovil, Somerset – 29 September, 1911)