

But jurisprudence hesitated for a long time before reaching this point, and the English authors who have written on this subject contain, generally, the reproductions of decisions emanating from very learned judges who have expressed fairly divergent views.

And then this Statute of Edward I. is so positive! "A Coroner's inquest in all cases of sudden death", it says.

It is by wresting from the words a meaning which they perhaps did not hold, *but should have held*, that a final understanding was reached to say "if the cause of the death is known to have been natural, no inquest". And the Coroner's Act of 1887, accepting this established jurisprudence, declared an inquest obligatory in all cases of sudden death of which the cause is unknown.

It is evidently reason's ruling, since it is homicide which is to be sought for by an inquest.

55. The Statute of Edward I. is, nevertheless, not so far from the truth, when it says that there are grounds for an inquest in all cases of *sudden* death. It lays down as a principle that in sudden death the cause is unknown, and there always is cause to suspect violence or homicide.

Taylor, "Medical Jurisprudence"; Vol. I., p. 162, says that sudden death "simulates the effects of violence".

Wharton, "Medical Jurisprudence", paragraph 513, declares that all cases of sudden death may awaken suspicion of poisoning.

Lacassagne, at page 201 of his Treatise on Medical Jurisprudence, writes:—"In the case of sudden death anything may be suspected."

Devergie, at page 323 of Vol. II of his treatise on Legal Medicine, writes as follows:—

"The material cause of a sudden death can but rarely be known by means of information acquired on the circumstances preceding, accompanying, or following the death."

And these are so many medical writers holding authority