

INQUEST.

**THE TURKISH BATH—ANEURISM—SUDDEN DEATH.**  
 Thursday last an inquest was held in Mr. Howard's public house, Windmill-street, by the city coroner, John Gleeson, Esq., on view of the body of Wm. Thompson, who died on Tuesday last whilst taking a Turkish bath at Dr. Barter's establishment in this city. The deceased was a sober and well conducted man, and was much respected in his rank of life, which was that of a skipper and owner of turf and corn boats plying between Limerick, Askeaton, and Kilrush.

Mr. Joseph Murphy, solicitor, attended upon the part of Dr. Barter, and Thomas J. Gelston, jun., Esq., M.D. was present to give medical evidence on the originating cause of death.

The following were sworn on the jury:—Patrick Murray, Paul Grace, Patrick Flanagan, Henry Thorn, John O'Donnell, John Murray, Thomas Lowe, John Howard, Robert Talbot, James Casey, Thomas Cahill, and Michael Walsh.

The jurors then viewed the body of the deceased and proceeded with the inquiry.

The first witness examined was Mrs. Bridget Thompson, who said—I am the widow of the deceased, Wm. Thompson, who died on Tuesday night last; I saw him last alive on that evening at 6 o'clock, when he left the house after eating his dinner; he then said that he was going to the baths for the purpose of taking one, and he did go there to my grief; he did not take any one with him; he was complaining for a couple of months back of a pain in his left side, and it was to relieve that pain as he thought, that he went to take that bath, but on this point he had no medical advice; I did not see him afterwards until they brought the body out on the door to me.

The coroner said he believed that was all the evidence this poor woman could give them, but if any question arose in their own minds which they thought would throw additional light on the matter they were at liberty to put it; he was glad to see Mr. Joseph Murphy in attendance on the part of Dr. Barter, the proprietor of the Turkish bath, who would put some questions to the witness touching the originating cause of the present inquiry; the witness then in reply to Mr. Murphy, said, that the deceased consulted Dr. Elmes on two or three different times, but I did not hear Dr. Elmes tell the deceased what ailed him, but he thought nothing about it, he thought it would not signify, and ordered him a warm plaster, but did not order him a bath to my knowledge; I was always with him when he went to Dr. Elmes, whom he consulted three times; the warm plaster was applied; I can safely swear that he never went to Dr. Elmes that I was not with him; it was at the dispensary that the doctor was consulted; he took a bath the day before he died, and of course I saw him after he took it, and he told me that he felt very light and could walk better, but had the pain still; and he told me that the man who took his money from him at the door asked him how he felt? and he told him that he had the pain still, when the man said he should get a shampooing, whatever that was, and he said he would take another bath on the following night, but that he did not know anything about the shampooing; the deceased was not weak at all before he took the bath; he was on town every day about his business.

To a Juror—It is two months from this time that Dr. Elmes ordered him the warming plaster until he took the bath; Dr. Elmes examined him in his study in the dispensary, and the deceased told me that the Doctor sounded him, and if he ordered him a Turkish bath the deceased would have told me; nor could the Doctor have ordered him a bath without my hearing him, because I stood at the door which I had half open listening, and heard all that was said.

A discussion here took place about sending for Dr. Elmes, but the jurors were of opinion that it was unnecessary to do so, particularly as young Dr. Gelston was present when the man died, and was also in attendance at the inquest.

Patrick M'Namara—I am in charge of the baths; I remember William Thompson and his wife coming to me on Monday last between one and two o'clock, and his wife said that her husband had been complaining of a pain in his left side and between his shoulders for the last two years, but particularly for the last two months; he said he tried a good many doctors and took a great deal of medicine without doing him any good; he said he had a plaster to his side; and I told him that he might take a bath as I saw nothing to prevent him, as I myself was affected with the same disease, having a violent pain with a spitting of blood, and given over by Dr. Elmes; he went then and took his bath, and I saw no more of him until he came out, and I asked him how he felt after his bath; I feel very well, indeed, said he, and will take another to-morrow evening; he then came on the following evening at 6 o'clock, and I gave him his ticket for the bath; but, said he, here is another 6d. for shampooing, and I gave it, he then went and dressed and took his bath; in half an hour I went into the hot room, and I saw him as usual taking his bath on a couch with other gentlemen who were there; the next time I saw him was in his dressing stall, after his bath; I then went into the divan or cooling room, and I saw the attendant holding him, and the deceased spitting up blood I desired the divan boy to give him a drink of water which he did after taking the water the blood continued; I immediately despatched a boy for Dr. Gelston and Mr. Wormalston the proprietor, and they both arrived at the same time, and as near as I can judge he was dead 3 or 4 minutes before they arrived, and had I known that he had taken his dinner so soon before the bath I would not let him take it as it is against our rule; I did not encourage him to take a second bath which he took wholly on his own account, and the shampooing also; I heard the widow swear that the man who took the money told him that he should get a shampooing bath, but that was not the fact.

To Mr. Murphy—There are printed rules in the establishment, and in every dressing stall in the bath directing parties not to take a bath after eating meals for at least two hours; and I often sent parties away for at least two hours, and the deceased had opportunities of seeing these rules, but yet he went off after dinner; I laboured under the same disease that the deceased complained of, and I went to Blarney, and was in hospital; I took Turkish baths, and they placed me just as you see me; I have known as delicate persons as the deceased appeared to me to have taken Turkish baths, and to be the better of them; I have not required medical certificates before a bath, but I have sent persons away when I thought it necessary that they should have a certificate before taking a bath; the deceased had an opportunity of seeing gentlemen shampooed on Monday, and it was from them he learned it, and he may have told it to his wife, but not to me.

To a Juror—I sent away persons who had aneurism; I did not tell him of my own complaint to encourage him.

A Juror said that the deceased told his wife that Dr. Elmes thought nothing of it.

Another Juror—If a man could not read, would you explain the rules to him as to an illiterate person? I could not put the question to each person as they often come in fives or sixes at times; I can tell the delicate person at once.

Juror—It is very curious that you give a ticket as if a man was going into a theatre, and I suppose if a man was blind you would not give him an explanation?

Witness—I would. The deceased had the appearance of a seafaring man, and looked to be very intelligent.

Patrick M'Carthy said that he was employed in the bath and went in at half past 6 o'clock in the evening and found the deceased in the bath who he knew was to be shampooed by the peculiar apron he had on. The deceased complained to him of having a pain in his side, and saw him lying very uneasy on the couch in the hot air room, and turning from side to side; in the washing room he coughed and threw up blood; while shampooing the deceased told me that he was subject to a great pain in the side, and he told me that he gave up all the doctors as he could get no relief, and particularly for the last three months when the pain attacked him internally; I asked him if it was in his muscles or in his ribs, but he said no, that it was inside altogether; I took him to the washin room, and then back to the hot room to let him get warm; that being the usual course, and I desired him to rest for a few minutes—while in the washing room he coughed a couple of times; he took a great fit of coughing in the hot room while sitting down; he did not spit for some time; he then coughed very hard, and spat blood twice or three times; I came into the first room in the bath, and told a gentleman now present, Mr. McNabb, what had happened, namely that the deceased coughed and threw up blood, and immediately he went to him, and the deceased told him that it was a great relief to him at all, that a lump inside of him got broke, but all through the coughing never ceased, nor the throwing up of the blood; Mr. M'Nabb told me to convey him into the cooling room, and I put his bathing sheet about him and he walked out into the cooling room and I walked after him and he sat down in the dressing room which was in the cooling room, and all this time the cough and throwing up never ceased until he died.

To Mr. Murphy—Every attention that could be paid to the deceased was rendered to him by every one in the establishment.

It was here considered that the jurors had sufficient non-medical evidence as to the manner of the deceased's death, and that they would proceed with the examination of Dr. Gelstone, with the view of ascertaining its cause in a medical point of view, when Mr. M'Nabb said, that as he was present at the death of the deceased it might be necessary for the public interest that he should be examined, and the jurors signifying it to be their wish to hear this gentleman's testimony, he was accordingly sworn—I reside at Osmington-terrace Thomond gate; I was taking a bath in the male portion of the building, and my wife was taking another in the portion set apart for females at the time spoken of on Tuesday night last; I saw the deceased in the bath-room and entered into conversation with him about his complaint; he complained of a pain from his shoulder to his side; he was then being shampooed and I asked him had he medical advice before taking the bath and he said he had not, and I remarked that it was very foolish for him to do so without first having consulted a physician; I heard him groaning some time before that while lying on the couch after passing from the first hot room to where the washing or douching, as it is called is performed, and which room is a portion of the very hot air room being separate from it only by a curtain, and there I heard the usual sound of washing or the dashing of water on a person washing, and I heard a shout which is the frequent result of the application of water to a hot skin; in a few minutes after the sound of the water ceased I heard a person coughing in the room, and this coughing having continued for a minute I asked the attendant, M'Carthy, what was the matter with the man that he coughed so much, and he replied that he did not know, but that he was "bringing up greatly" meaning that he was vomiting; I then passed into the hot room and I saw the spittoon nearly full of blood, and on speaking to the deceased he raised his head and the blood was smeared over his mouth and chin, and I told him that was not a fit place for him and to get out of it as soon as he could; he seemed confused and helpless and I then turned to the attendant, M'Carthy, and directed him to remove the deceased as soon as possible M'Carthy then got a bathing sheet and put it on him, and passed into the outer room followed by the attendant and deceased and from thence into the cooling room still accompanied by M'Carthy; I turned to two other gentlemen who are now present, and who were in the bath then and I said that the deceased was not a fit person to be in any such place alluding to his state of health, and I added what a pity it is there is not a duly qualified and competent medical man in attendance on these baths, in order to determine who is fit to take baths; I then went over to a little wicket—a sort of air wicket which is between the hot room and the outer room—and listened, as I was uneasy about the man who just passed out, and I heard M'Carthy say, "Can't you come over Mr. M'Namara"; and I then hastened out to the stall where the deceased was lying on his couch and I said to M'Carthy Tommy or Johnny what's the matter when he said I believe the man is dead the blood was then flowing out of his mouth; I assisted M'Carthy in turning the deceased on his side in order to allow the blood to flow more freely; I then ordered to the divan boy to have a medical man sent for, and I returned to the deceased when M'Carthy said he was dead; Mr. M'Nabb then said he took a mirror off the wall and placing it before the mouth of the deceased found it unsoiled and the man dead.

To Mr. Murphy—He said that he did not know, but when he heard M'Carthy call out, "Can't you come here M'Namara," he could not say but that the medical man had been sent for; but the person should have said at the time that he had been sent for. Mr. M'Nabb in addition said, that he thought a duly qualified medical man could discover, but not on a cursory examination, whether or not a person had organic disease; he did not consult a medical man himself before taking the bath, because he thought himself qualified to determine in that matter, having studied medicine; he was merely suffering from rheumatism, and took the bath; but if he had not medical knowledge himself he would have felt it necessary to consult a medical man. Mr. M'Nabb then added that if there were a medical man at the baths, and that he did not know sufficient of medicine to guide

himself, he would consult that medical man, and would not hesitate to pay his fee. Mr. M'Nabb said he thought it necessary to consult medical advice before taking either a hot or a cold bath; he saw the greatest attention paid to the deceased by the attendants, who evinced the greatest anxiety towards him.

Thomas J. Gelston, Esq., M.D., examined—I am a medical doctor and surgeon; on Tuesday evening I was coming up George-street, and I met Dean Kirwan, who was just coming from the Turkish bath, and he asked me to go up as quickly as possible there, as he considered there was a man dying there, and I accordingly went up to the bath and found the deceased lying on his left side on the couch with his head supported by one of the attendants, and the floor and couch covered with blood; life was then extinct, which I saw at the time; it is my belief that the man died from the rupture of a diseased vessel situated some place in connexion with the heart; from hæmorrhage resulting from that rupture I believe to be the cause of death; but I will not call it aneurism of the heart, not having made a post mortem examination.

To Mr. Murphy—I can't say it was aneurism of the heart; but the disease of which he died was one likely to result suddenly in death, and one in fact that might result from any active exercise, or anything that would produce over action of the heart; excitement in his own house, or in the street, might result suddenly; I can't swear to the disease of which the man died; but the disease which I assume this man died of is an uncommon one, and is likely to terminate suddenly; I have taken the Turkish bath and approve of it and recommended it; my father who is an eminent physician, takes it and recommends it even to delicate persons, and his recommendations have been attended with good results; I have known an instance in which the attendants had refused to give a bath without a certificate; the patient came to me and I had to give a certificate; the bath was refused to the party in consequence of their delicate appearance; if a duly qualified man, a medical man had been in charge of the baths on the day the deceased took the bath, that medical man might not be able to discover the organic disease, of which the deceased died; I will not say that a regular physician could not discover it.

To a Juror—The application of cold water as described, by Mr. M'Nabb might excite the action of the heart and produce the result which followed; I think a man going into a bath with a full stomach would be more liable to have over action of his heart than a person who went into it with an empty stomach.

To Mr. M'Carthy—Lapid water or any water thrown on the body would have the result described; if a physician was present when the deceased commenced throwing up blood he could not in my opinion, avert death.

Juror—If you were in constant attendance on the bath and examined that man would you let him take the second bath?

Dr. Gelston—If I had examined him, and discovered that he had aneurism I would not allow him to take a bath at all, but if I had not made an examination or discovered that he laboured under disease, and heard that he was relieved by the first one I would have allowed him to take the second bath.

Dr. Gelston—I may mention that my father who had been sent for arrived in about 5 minutes after I had seen the man, and the ideas I have already expressed concur with his upon this matter.

The Coroner said there were other gentlemen present who were in the bath at the time.

A Juror said that they had evidence enough.

Mr. Murphy observed that Dr. Barter was present, and would wish to state why he did not appoint a medical man to attend on the establishment.

Several of the jurors said it would be very desirable that Dr. Barter should be examined.

Dr. Barter was then sworn and stated—I am connected with the Turkish Baths, and was the promoter of them in this city and throughout Ireland; I have very great experience in the system of these Turkish Baths; I heard some suggestions made here to do away about having qualified medical men in attendance at these baths for consultation and advice, but I have many reasons for disapproving of the suggestion of having medical men attached to these institutions, and these reasons grounded on my large experience in baths lead me to assert on my oath that I consider the Turkish bath to be the safest bath that can be taken, and as other baths and establishments of the kind have no medical men attending on them; I cannot see why the Turkish bath should be an exception; I allude to hot and cold, and vapour baths, and wash houses, and all such establishments which have no medical men attending on them; I also consider that it would be unfair and unjust to the physicians of the different towns to arrogate to myself or to any person deputed by me the exclusive medical direction of these baths, nor do I consider such a course would be for the public interest for it must be presumed that the medical men of the city understand their patients' constitutions better than a stranger possibly could. I think the interest of the public would be far better protected by the medical men of the City than by an attendant at the bath whose interest it might be to recommend a bath and promote the interests of such establishments. It is my wish that the medical men in cities and towns like Dr. Gelston here and his respected father, would come and study the bath and then they would find that it was for the interest of the public and promote health to recommend it; I cannot exactly say the amount of baths taken daily in Limerick, but throughout Ireland generally, I can say that upwards of 300 baths are taken daily, and three-fourths of them are taken by invalids, and in no instance have I ever known or heard of such a result as this having taken place, and I may add, that in this city over 9000 baths have been taken since their formation here; I may further add that I am in the daily habit of putting people labouring under every form or shape of organic disease into these baths not only with impunity but with marked benefit, and I make no exception in heart disease; I would put them to-morrow into the bath but I would be sorry to direct any one subject to aneurism to put into the bath, because in that disease the stirring of the arm might be fatal; in several instances of heart disease and in very advanced heart disease I would put them into the bath, but not in aneurism, for that is a different thing.

Mr. M'Nabb repeated that every attention which could be paid to the deceased was rendered to him by the attendants in the bath who evinced great anxiety about him.

This closed the examination and the Coroner having charged the jury they found, without hesitation, that "The deceased came by his death from natural causes, and that no blame could be attached to the attendants nor to the establishment itself."

Doctor Barter returned his thanks to the Coroner and Jury for the patient investigation which the case had received at their hands which was demonstrative of an anxiety to discharge their duty between man and man and also to the public.