

CORONER'S INQUEST ON MR. COLE

The Inquest on the body of Mr. Thomas Frederick COLE, partner in the legal firm of COLE and RATCLIFF, of Ryde, who died suddenly on Monday last, at the house of Captain CHRISTIAN, at No 2, Brigstocke Terrace, in that town, and to which he had fled from a crowd of persons who were chasing and hooting at him, took place on Wednesday. It was fixed to be held at the Thatched House Tavern, but was, thence removed to the Guildhall for greater convenience. Frederick BLAKE, Esq., was the Coroner. John JOHNSON, Esq., attended on behalf of the Committee of Mr. DAWES, and the Jury having viewed the body.

Thomas JONES, waiter at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, was called, and he deposed that on Monday last about five minutes to 1 o'clock p.m. he saw a large mob of persons between Brigstocke Terrace and Saint Thomas's Church, and which was following Mr. COLE. The mob came up with him as he arrived at the corner of Spencer Road. His hat was knocked off by one of the crowd, but witness could not identify the person who did it. The same moment another man grasped deceased by the hair of the head, which caused him to utter something like a groan. Witness did not observe any marks of violence on deceased's face, he did not see any of the crowd with sticks. Deceased's hair was pulled violently but not sufficiently to retard his progress.

George CLEMENS, carman, saw Mr. COLE coming down St. James's Road. When he got to Spencer Road, a crowd was following him. He then began to run and the crowd ran also. His hat was knocked off but witness did not see this done. It was impossible for anyone to have pulled his hair there was no one within ten yards of him. About 300 persons were following deceased. No stone was thrown at him, and witness did not see him struck. The majority of the crowd appeared to be boys from 11 to 18 years of age. He could not identify any of them.

Elizabeth POLSON, cook to Mr. SIMMONDS, No. 1 Bridgestocke Terrace, saw Mr. COLE, with a mob after him, as he turned the corner of Spencer Road into St. Thames' Street; his hat fell off as he was crossing the road towards the Terrace. Witness saw no one knock the hat off or strike him. He never held up his hands, as if to guard himself from a blow. Deceased ran into No. 2, in the Terrace, and some of the crowd followed and knocked at the door. There was only about a dozen who entered the Terrace, and they were more boys than men. The mob called out as they ran after Mr. COLE "Rat." Witness was positive she did not see anyone strike deceased or pull his hair. If any one had done in the Terrace she must have seen it. The hat appeared to fall from his head as he was coming round to the Terrace; and the mob amused themselves by kicking the hat about. There was plenty of time for him to get into the house before they caught up to him.

Eliza BETTS, servant to, Mr. KNYVETT, Marine Villa, saw Mr. COLE being chased by a large crowd of great boys, calling after him "Rat." Could not see whether his hat was knocked off or not; but she saw a boy make a spring and pull deceased's hair. She could not identify the person who pulled it.

Harry AIRS, tailor, deposed, that he saw Mr. COLE coming towards St James' Street, from the back of the market -house. Deceased walked down the street after witness, being about five or six yards, behind him. When they got half-way down St James' Street, witness and Mr. COLE began to run. Witness ran to Devonshire House, and saw Mr. COLE had no hat on, when he looked back. Witness did not see Mr. COLE's hair pulled. At the time the latter entered the Terrace, there was no one within ten yards of him. Saw no stone thrown at all: if any had been thrown they must have passed witness. The crowd appeared to be chiefly country chaps; and there were not more than six Ryde people among them. Witness did not know any of them.

Elizabeth BIDDLECOMBE, ladies' maid, living at No. 2, Bridgestocke Terrace, was in the house on the ground floor, at about a quarter to one, on Monday, when she heard a noise of voices outside. Afterwards heard the noise of the door being shunt or bolted. Looking up, from the area, saw deceased as if in the act of bolting the door. Witness ran to his assistance, when he came down the steps, as witness got to the foot of them. He passed her and she followed him up the kitchen stairs into the hall. When she got to the top she found he had fallen. He was lying on the floor, on his face. His feet were on a mat at the foot of two or three stone steps, and his face was about eight or nine inches beyond the upper step. Witness called a man servant, George FRENCH, who turned deceased over, who was bleeding from the face, appearing to come out from the nose. Witness only heard deceased say, as he ran up the stairs "Bolt the doors." Witness procured a basin

and water, with which she bathed his temples and face. He drew a breath, and witness thought he was coming to; he then drew another, but witness found his eyes fixed. Witness called for the maid servant to go for Mr. BLOXAM. The man servant then laid deceased on his back; witness loosened his things, by which time Mr. BLOXAM and another medical gentleman arrived - Deceased had bolted one door, and witness told the maid servant to bolt the other. 'Witness did not remark any blow's on his person, or any signs of having been given.

By a Juro r- Had Mr. COLE taken refuge at that house at an earlier part of the day?

Witness-No, he, had not. There was blood onl the floor near the deceased's face at the time he was first lifted up. When witness bathed deceased's temples with water, she perceived at wound across the nose, from which a small quantity of blood issued. The blood appeared chiefly to have flowed from the nostrils. 'Witnesses thought that by falling deceased might have made his nose bleed, but she did not see how he could have received the cut across the nose. In running up the stairs from the kitchen he did so very fast and in great agitation. Witness heard some of the house-bells ringing; she did not see any of the" mob".

Mr. BLOXAM, surgeon, was sent for on Monday about one o'clock, to see Mr. COLE, in Brigstocke Terrace he ran through the gardens, and arrived at the house in less than two minutes. Found Mr. COLE laying with his head on the mat, with a slight contused cut across his nose; removed his neckcloth and found he was quite dead assisted in carrying him into a side room ; he looked for other marks of violence but could find none; there was a little blood oozing from one nostril and the cut across the nose bled triflingly ; observed some blood on his hand, and a little by his side. Witness found that he was dead at 10 minutes past one. had made a poste mortem examination of body 42 hours after death, to see if there were any marks of violence on the body, but could find none beyond those that had been observable on the first occasion; proceeded to examine the chest, and found that the lungs were in a healthy state, his with rise exception of some unimportant inflammatory action that had occurred some time before; they consisted of trifling adhesions of the lung to the side. They then proceeded to examine the heart, and found some marks of disease, but not such, as in his opinion, would cause death. He then proceeded to examine the head, and in dividing the scalp, we found a considerable quantity of fluid blood effused between the scalp and the skull, on the right side, and towards the back of the head behind the left ear. The skull was then removed and the brain examined and the membranes wore found to be congested with blood. The cavities in the centre of the brain were found to contain a somewhat larger quantity than usual of fluid, and this fluid instead of being clear was slightly stained with blood. At the base of the brain it was found that the arteries that enter at that part were partially diseased, They then proceeded to examine the abdomen, and found the organs in a healthy state. These were all the facts wittiness was acquainted with.

The Coroner - Have you any opinion as to the cause of death?

Witness - That is a more serious matter than the statement of facts. We found no marks of disease that appeared to have grown naturally to a point that was fatal. I believe the other unnatural appearances of blood effused between the scalp and the cavities of the brain were the result of violence. I do not, however, think them of such a nature as to necessarily cause death of themselves.

The Coroner - Do you consider it possible that death could have been caused by them in conjunction with other causes?

Witness - We have many instances on record of persons dying from violence without any marks of it on them. People sometimes died from a shock without any appearances as to what had produced it. I do not know whether I am called on to express an opinion as to the cause of death.

The Coroner - We should be glad to have your opinion.

Witness - I cannot help saying then that but for his having suffered violence Mr COLE would not have died, and that, therefore, his death has resulted from violence and from the treatment to which I hear he was exposed.

Coroner - Do you suppose the blood between the scalp and the skull to have been caused by the breaking of a blood vessel?

Witness - Probably by the breaking of a minute vessel. This might have been produced by a blow on the pari, or by the scalp being forcibly pulled from the bone, which might have been done by a person pulling the hair. This was unlikely, but not impossible. It was in evidence, however, that a spring had been made at Mr. COLE, and that he was pulled back, and it might have been done by the sudden jerk described by the witness JONES. There was no trace whatever of a blow on the scalp, Did not believe that the mere effusion of blood, independently of a shock to the nervous system, would produce death. The cut on the nose might have have been caused by the fall on the steps.

The Coroner - Do you consider violent excitement acting on the diseased state of the body could have caused death?

Witness - Yes, but there is a total absence of proof to show that it did exist.

The Coroner - Were there any internal appearances, that would show death to have been caused?

Witness - I did not find any thing that could have caused death, irrespective of a shock from violence. A Juror said, he did not think that Mr. BLOXAM had yet clearly stated what was the cause of Mr. COLE's death.

Mr. BLOXAM said, he considered that a shock to the nervous system had been the cause of death. In reply to questions put by Mr. MALDEN, brother-in-law of the deceased, Mr. BLOXAM, further said, that there was not any interruption to the circulation produced by the exertion; the running being only for a short time, and not uphill; the whole distance was not more than 40 or 50 yards. Did not think this running could, even with the disease detected, have been fatal. Mental excitement, bodily injury, and running, would together, cause the appearances discovered.

Mr. MALDEN - Would the pulling of the scalp from the pull be productive of such a shock on the nervous system?

Witness - I believe it might. I cannot tell what was the amount of pain inflicted by such violence or what amount would be necessary to produce such a shock.

The Coroner - But a shock may be produced without a blow being actually struck?

Witness - Certainly. We have had cases of people being frightened to death. Men may be flogged to death without any single blow being in itself of a fatal character.

The Coroner - Suppose death to have resulted from a disease of the heart, would there not have been some indication of the same?

Witness - In all probability, but not certainly.

Mr. Henry PHENEE, medical attendant on Mr COLE, deposed that he had been such for the last 15 years, but he had not had occasion to attend him lately. He had to do so about 10 years ago, in consequence of a concussion of the brain, arising from a fall from his horse. He was a long time recovering from it. He also had to attend him since from a slight attack of the same character from a fall from his gig. Witness saw him on Sunday last, but not professionally; he then appeared in fair health. About one o'clock on Monday witness heard he was dead. Witness went to 2, Brigstocke Terrace, and examined his head and face. On the nose there was a slight wound and blood was issuing from the nostrils. The wound might have arisen from falling on the edge of the stone step or a blow. The wound was only superficial. Witness did not think it was connected in any way with the death. Had assisted Mr. BLOXAM to make a post mortem examination of the body, and agreed mainly in his statement of the facts adduced at it. There was, however, in addition to an effusion on the right side, of the scalp, one on the left. Did not discover any separation of the scalp from the skull, for witness had to divide them with his knife.

The Coroner - Did you come to any conclusion as to the cause of death?

Witness - Yes, but to rather different ones to Mr. BLOXAM. I have known Mr. COLE for many years, and knew him to be a nervous man - a man of a nervous temperament. At his former attacks from concussion of the brain, he was a long time recovering. He was much longer recovering than people generally are. Witness was inclined to attribute his death more to mental violence and a shock to the nervous system, producing a suspension of the heart's action. Did not think the effusion on the scalp or the congestion on the brain - would have produced death so suddenly. Did not think such an amount of injury would have produced death. It was hard to say what was the cause of the effusion of blood. A pull of the hair might certainly rupture some of the vessels and cause such an effusion as that in question. He believed that the shock to the nervous system was the cause of death rather than the injuries to the scalp. In reply to a question from the Coroner, the witness further stated that he did not consider Mr. COLE's health so bad as to warrant him in requiring him to abstain from engaging in electioneering matters. Deceased was busily engaged in those matters, being an agent for Capt. HAMOND's party. Such things were, however, more likely to cause a shock of a serious character to a person like Mr. COLE than to any one else.

The Coroner - Would such a state of excitement and other circumstances as those described produce such a shock as would be likely to result in the present fatal manner?

Witness - Most likely. The treatment he appears to have received would most likely produce such a shock to Mr. COLE's constitution. And but for such treatment he, in witness's opinion, would be alive now.

The Coroner - Do you consider that fear caused by a chase by the people, without any personal

violence, would be sufficient to give to a person of Mr. COLE's temperament, such a shock as to produce fatal results?

Witness - I do. I attribute more to the shock to the nervous system than to a blow. In reply to a Juror the witness further said that a pull of the hair on the right side of the head might not only cause blood to flow from that side, but the blood might spread. He could not, however, say from what part of the head the blood issued.

The Coroner (at the instance of Mr. MALDEN) - Mr. BLOXAM says there were some marks of disease about deceased's heart, and you say that a shock could be calculated to have serious effects on Mr. COLE: do you think that this disease would be more likely to aggravate those effects?

Mr. PHENEE - Yes, I do. I may mention that deceased had several times of late told me that he could not attend to business as he formerly did.

Mr. BLOXAM, to prevent the appearance of contradiction between himself and Mr. PHENEE, explained more fully the appearances as regarded the effused blood.- As to the forcible drawing up of the scalp from the skull, he did not mean by that that there was an absolute separation, but that at parts it had been so stretched, or bruised, as to cause an effusion of blood. He did not mean that there had been any actual separation between the two.

The Coroner, to Mr. PHENEE - Would a fall on the stairs, coupled with deceased's nervous temperament, be calculated to cause any severe shock?

Mr. PHENEE - It probably would.

Lydia COOPER, housemaid at Mr. HEARN's, St. Thomas's Street, deposed that as she was standing in the stable-yard, looking into Spencer Road, she heard a noise and saw quantities of things that were thrown at Mr. COLE. Mr. COLE was just turning the corner of St. James's Street, into Spencer Road: he appeared to be checking himself from running. About 200 persons were following, hooting after him, and throwing different things at him. Saw grass thrown at him, but could not say what else; could not say that stones were thrown, but grass with earth attached to it. He came running past and as he got to Devonshire House, she saw a man knock his hat off, and hit him a blow on his head with his open hand. Mr. COLE ran on to the Terrace. It was a blow struck with the open hand; not a pulling of the hair. Some of the mob stopped in St. Thomas's Street, and some boys followed him into the Terrace. Could not see the house he went into. It was a man who struck Mr. COLE, and knocked his hat off. Witness did not know him, and would not know him again. The mob consisted of women and children and boys of 18 and 19. Saw a carriage pass a short time before Mr. COLE passed. Did not know the driver. Was not sufficiently acquainted with Ryde to know any of the mob. When Mr. COLE was struck he uttered a half-stifled groan. The man who knocked Mr. COLE's hat off gave him one blow which did so, and then struck him again. After he was struck he put his hands up as if to protect himself. Two policemen were near at the time-one was named PRIOR.

A Juror, Mr. Henry COLENUTT, made some remarks on the fact of there being 20 policemen on duty in the town, and still voters could not have protection in recording their votes.

Mr. MARTIN (Inspector of Police), said only ten policemen were on duty at a time.

Some of the Jury expressed a wish to hear the evidence of Mr. HEARN, the Clerk to the Magistrates who was understood to have witnessed some part of the affray in which Mr. COLE had been insulted.

Mr. HEARN was accordingly sworn, and said about a quarter to one o'clock he saw a considerable mob at the corner of St James' Street. Mr. COLE left the polling booth and proceeded to the end of St. James's Street, and before he had gone far, a number of persons called out "rat" several times. Some 200 persons then proceeded from the upper part of the Market House after Mr. COLE down St James' Street. The mob continued shouting and yelling, and various things, such as turf and rotten eggs, were thrown at Mr. COLE. Witness did not, however, believe that any could have reached him, as he was too far in advance. The mob was yelling and shouting for some ten minutes afterwards. Witness, whilst the mob was following Mr. COLE, saw two policemen, one was PRIOR and the other BENNETT, come out of the Market House, and he told them they had better go after Mr. COLE, as the mob might ill treat him, PRIOR replied " we are ordered to the station for bread and cheese." Witness urged them to go after Mr. COLE, on which PRIOR said, "will you call out two other policemen instead?" Witness replied, "no, go immediately." They then did move towards the mob, but with a slow pace; large numbers of people were all this time running down the street after Mr. COLE. Witness also asked another policeman to go down after the mob, but he did not do so, neither did he make witness any reply. Witness could not speak as to who composed the mob.

Mr. COLNUTT - Did not all this occur before the swearing in of the special constables?

Witness - Yes, it did.

Mr. COLNUTT - Then it appears that there were no police to protect people during these attacks?

Witness - People generally did not appear to care much for being followed and hooted at: they generally laughed at it.

A good deal of desultory conversation here took place in regard to the conduct of the above two police constables, in the course of which,

Mr. COLNUTT said this was a very deplorable event.- The deceased gentleman was one they all respected: he was a good neighbour, a kind friend, and an affectionate parent ; his loss was a cause of deep regret and shame to the town. It appeared that the police, in this and other cases, had not been so attentive to the protection of the voters as they ought to have been.

The Coroner said they were not met to enquire into conduct of the police, but into the cause of deceased's death. Mr. COLNUTT said, if, however, they could elicit any evidence of any kind, it would be useful. By the evidence of Mr. HEARN it was proved that the police had not done their duty. As Magistrates' Clerk, his instructions ought to have been followed by the police: but the police do not do as he directs them and death ensues.

Another juror, Mr. A. FOWLES, jun., bore testimony to the generally efficient manner in which the police had performed their duty. He had seen them anxious to do so, and they had stepped out of their rank in order to pacify the people. Some conversation here ensued as to the necessity of having the two policemen mentioned by Mr. HEARN examined, and as to whether the inquest should be adjourned for this purpose.

Mr. JOHNSON strongly urged the desirability of such a course.

The Jury retired to consider whether was expedient, and on their return they gave it in the affirmative. The inquest was then adjourned to the following day.

SECOND DAY.-The adjourned Inquest was held yesterday (Friday), at the Town-Hall, and sat from two to nearly ten o'clock p.m.; but the following are the only facts of import that were advanced:-

Thomas SEACROFT, of St. Helens, deposed to meeting Mr. OAKLEY with a friend on the day in question at about half-past 12 o'clock, and shortly after to seeing Mr. COLE being chased by the mob. No stones or sticks were used at all. He could give no evidence at all in reference to the assault.

Miss ELLIOTT, living at No. 4, Brigstocke Terrace, deposed to seeing deceased run down the area at No. 2; the mob followed him up to the door, and then knocked and walked off. He had no hat on. The crowd continually calling out " Rat, rat." Witness did not observe what took place outside the gates.

Frances CLUITT, widow, saw the crowd following Mr. COLE down St. James's Street. He made a stop as the mob was following him, and said to them "Don't, don't you." Mr. COLE passed witness having his hat off, and the mob was following and throwing clods of earth at him, some of which struck witness. She thought she could identify Alfred PRESSLY as one among the crowd, being within 12 or 14 yards of each other. Believed he pulled Mr. COLE's hair. Did not see any one strike him. On going home she told several friends of having seen PRESSLY pull Mr. COLE's hair.

Mr. George OAKLEY, Railway Carrier, deposed to seeing Mr. COLE coming down St James' Street. Mr. COLE was being chased by a mob, but he smiled at witness. Things, which appeared like rotten eggs, were thrown at Mr. COLE, but witness did not see whether they struck him or not. At Spencer Road he began to run, having apparently received a blow. The mob began running after him, and two men made a rush at him and struck him on the head and shoulders, but not violently. Witness had seen the men during the day, but did not know them. One was dressed in a Guernsey frock and a cap, and had a thin face and a slight figure. Mr. COLE appeared to be greatly alarmed: no one offered to defend him. Many could have done so had they been inclined. Did not observe PRESSLY in the crowd. Did not observe any police at the time Mr. COLE was being chased.

A police constable, named BENNETT, was on duty about 1 o'clock, and then saw Mr. COLE in the street; no one was following him then; met Mr. HEARN shortly after, and he told him to see what the mob was running down the street for. They were at this time assaulting all of Captain HAMOND's party. Witness went down to the Terrace, and found some of she mob coming back.

Thomas HARRIS, another constable, deposed to having is been in the execution of the orders of the Superintendent of Police, when he met Mr. HEARN, who requested him to go and see what the mob was doing to Mr. COLE. In going, he met the mob coming back.

Isaac MARTIN, Inspector of Police, deposed to having, in consequence of information received, apprehended a Thomas GREGORY and Henry GREGORY, on charges of being concerned with the mob respecting the death of Mr. COLE. Thomas GREGORY said he did not know Mr. COLE: he said he saw some one else throw a clod at Mr. COLE. That morning he had also apprehended PRESSLY, took him before the Magistrate, who remanded him till Wednesday next. Witness deposed to having seen PRESSLY in the matter.

This being the conclusion of the evidence, the Coroner called the jury's attention to three points, viz,- who were the persons engaged in the mob by which it was supposed Mr. COLE had come by his death ; secondly, as to whether he came by his death by the visitation of God ; and thirdly, whether deceased came by his death by the unlawful treatment of a mob.

The Jury retired to consider their verdict, and remained upwards of all hour in deliberation, when they wished to consult with the Coroner. Having done this they again retired, and a little before 10 o'clock last night, returned and gave their verdict to be "Manslaughter against divers persons unknown".

The verdict created great sensation in the Inquest room.
