

AWFULLY SUDDEN DEATH OF MR. EDWARD WEEKS

On Saturday morning a considerable amount of interest was excited in the neighbourhood of the Strand, owing to a report having been circulated that Mr. Edward WEEKS, of Leegrove House, had been picked up dead near the Castle. The report proved correct, and on Saturday evening the deputy coroner, E. F. BLAKE, Esq., held an inquest at Leegrove House, Strand. After the jury (of which Mr. SPANNER, of Monkton-street, was the foreman) had viewed the body of the deceased, which was lying in one of the rooms of Leegrove House, the following evidence was taken:

Emily Harriet COTTON deposed – I live at the Simeon Arms, Simeon-street, and am a single woman. Last evening, about 10 o'clock, I was coming along the Esplanade with a young person named Miss ABRAM, when I saw someone lying in the road. I pointed this out to Miss ABRAM, and we both went over to him. We found it was Mr. WEEKS, who was lying on his back. I spoke to him, and tried to wake him. When I found that I could not wake him up, I sent a boy for a fly. Saw blood at the back of his head. Three men at the Simeon Arms came and brought him here. Half-an-hour after was brought here, Dr. WOODWARD came. Deceased did not speak; only made a noise. I had been with deceased all day; and he went out somewhere about dinner time, and came in again. I went out about 9 o'clock and left him lying on the sofa. He was sober then, and very good; and he said he would stop there till I came back. I did not see him again alive.

Ann ABRAMS deposed – I live at Sandown, but have been staying here in the service of Mr. WEEKS as housemaid for the last ten months. I did not see the deceased go out. I went out with the last witness at 9. Deceased was then lying on the sofa, and I did not speak to him. We were all three in the kitchen together about 8. He was quite sober then. I went out with Miss COTTON along the Esplanade, and coming back, just before 10 o'clock, we saw something lying in the road. I said, "Who's that? It's Mr. WEEKS." I crossed over to him, and took him up, but he did not answer. I found blood all over my glove when I lifted him up; and there was a wound in the back of his head. We obtained assistance and got him home, and bathed his head in vinegar and water. His face turned black, and I then went for a doctor. He was dead before the doctor came. I went for the doctor about 11. I think deceased must have had a fit and fallen down. I have heard that the deceased has had fits, but not since I have been with him. His health was generally very good. He was not a sober man, and had been drinking. He commenced drinking a week ago last Wednesday, but yesterday he was sober all day.

By a Juryman. – He did not complain during the past day or so. When I found deceased he was not near the kerb.

Mary ABAALAN deposed – I live at Ryde, at the Esplanade Hotel. I am barmaid there. I knew the deceased, and saw him alive last night at a quarter to 10. He came into the bar of the Esplanade Hotel to see a man upon business, but only stopped a few minutes. He was a little the worse for drink, but not drunk. When he left he did not say where he was going. I did not think it was dangerous for him to go home alone. I did not think him drunk. He left at a quarter to 10; he was not in the house ten minutes.

Mr. A. WOODWARD, surgeon, deposed – Last night, between 10 and 11, I was summoned to attend the deceased. I came at once, and found him lying on a sofa, and quite dead. He was warm, and had not been dead long. I discovered a scalp wound at the back of the head, and a good deal of blood effused. The injury was such as might be occasioned by his falling on a stone, or the hard road. Death might have resulted from two causes – from the wound, or from apoplexy.

A Juryman. – If he had died from apoplexy would he not have died sooner:

Mr. WOODWARD. – No; he might have died from apoplexy or from fracture of the base of the skull, but that I cannot tell without a post mortem examination. The symptoms would have been about the same in both cases. He might have lingered half-an-hour.

In answer to further question from the jury, Mr. WOODWARD said that the falling back with his whole weight and striking his head might have occasioned death; but in the case of an apoplectic fit the symptoms would have been just the same. He thought deceased died from compression of the brain, or from apoplexy, which amounted to just the same thing. Without a post mortem examination it would be impossible to say.

Mr. John HARBOUR (one of the jurymen) said he saw the deceased before either Miss COTTON or Miss ABRAM did, and he thought he could throw some light upon the matter. He was passing along Castle-

street about a quarter to 10, but he could not tell exactly. When he came to where the Strand was he heard a peculiar loud noise (imitated), as if a man was breathing very hard between his teeth. This attracted his attention, and he went to see what it was. He found it was a man lying in the road, and while he was looking to see who it was the noise suddenly ceased. Almost directly the two last witnesses came up, and they got the man up and tried to make him speak, but he could not. He asked who it was, and a boy came up and said, "Tis Mr. WEEKS, of the Strand." He (Mr. HARBOUR) then advised them to send for a carriage, and while they were gone for the carriage the boy came up and told him that the deceased was trying to get on the paving when he fell right backwards with his head right out, and it appeared to the boy that his head struck first. Deceased fell a good distance backward, and when he (Mr. HARBOUR) saw him there was no life in him at all.

P.S. HOLLOWAY explained that he did not know Mr. HARBOUR saw the deceased first or he should have summoned him as a witness.

The Coroner thanked Mr HARBOUR for his explanation, and then pointed out that the evidence was somewhat unsatisfactory, as far as the cause of this poor man's death, because Mr. WOODWARD, without a post mortem examination, was unable to say whether he died from apoplexy or from fracture of the base of the skull from the injury which had been spoken of to the back of the head, though he rather leaned to the idea that death was caused by the accident and the injuries which deceased received. Of the two causes he thought that the severe wound was quite sufficient to cause death. The next question was how he came by this wound, and though there was no actual evidence to show whether it was caused by accident or otherwise, they had heard enough to convince them that he had met with no foul treatment. If they considered that death had resulted from accident they would return a verdict to that effect. If they thought he had died from apoplexy they would return a verdict that he died from a fit of apoplexy.
