

## The Inquest

Yesterday morning Mr. Wynne E. Baxter, the Coroner for the North-Eastern Division of Middlesex, who was accompanied by Mr. George Collier, the Deputy Coroner, opened his inquiry in the Alexandra room of the Working Lads' Institute, Whitechapel Road, respecting the death of Annie Chapman, who was found murdered in the back yard of 29, Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, on Saturday morning.

Detective Inspectors Abberline (Scotland Yard), Helson, and Chandler, and Detective Sergeants Thicke and Leach watched the case on behalf of the Criminal Investigation Department and Commissioners of Police.

The court room was crowded, and, owing to the number of persons assembled outside the building, the approaches had to be guarded by a number of police constables.

The jury having been impanelled, proceeded to the mortuary to view the body of the deceased, which was lying in the same shell as that occupied a short time since by the unfortunate Mary Ann Nichols.

John Davis, a carman, of 29, Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, deposed that he occupied the front room, which was shared by his wife and three sons. About 8 o'clock on Friday night he went to bed, and his sons came in at different times. The last one arrived home about a quarter to 11. Witness was awake from 3 to about 5 o'clock, when he fell off to sleep for about half an hour. He got up about a quarter to 6. Soon afterwards he went across the yard.

The front portion of the house faced Hanbury Street. On the ground floor there was a front door, with a passage running through to the back yard. He was certain of the time, because he heard the bell of Spitalfields Church strike. The front door and the one leading into the yard were never locked, and at times were left open at nights. Since he had lived in the house witness had never known the doors to be locked; and when the doors were shut any person could open them and pass into the yard. When he went into the yard on Saturday morning the back door was shut; but he was unable to say whether it was latched. The front door was wide open, and he was not surprised at finding it so, as it was frequently left open all night. Between the yard of 29, Hanbury-street, and the next house there was a fence about 5ft. high. When witness went down the steps he saw the deceased woman lying flat on her back.

The coroner here observed that in similar inquiries in the country the police always assisted him by preparing a plan of the locality which happened to be the subject of

investigation. He thought the present case was one of sufficient importance for the production of such a plan, and he hoped that in future a plan would be laid before him.

Inspector Chandler told the Coroner a plan would be prepared.

The coroner replied it might then be too late to be of any service.

Witness, continuing, said the deceased was lying between the steps and the fence, with her head towards the house. He could see that her clothes were disarranged. Witness did not go further into the yard, but at once called two men, who worked for Mr. Bailey, a packingcase maker, of Hanbury Street, whose place was three doors off. These men entered the passage and looked at the woman, but did not go into the yard. He was unable to give the names of these two men, but knew them well by sight. Witness had not since seen the men, who went away to fetch the police. Witness also left the house with them.

In answer to the Coroner, Inspector Chandler said these men were not known to the police.

The coroner remarked that they would have to be found, either by the police or by his own officer.

Witness further stated that on leaving the house he went direct to the Commercial Street Police station, and reported what he had seen. Previous to that he had not informed any one living in the house of the discovery. After that he went back to Hanbury Street, but did not enter his house. He had never previously seen the deceased.

In cross-examination, the witness said he was not the first person down that morning, as a man, named Thompson, who also lived in the house, was called about half-past 3. He had never seen woman who did not live in the house in the passage since he had lived there, which was only a fortnight. He did not hear any strange noises before getting up on Saturday morning.

Amelia Farmer stated that she lived at a common lodginghouse at 30, Dorset Street, Spitalfields, and had lived there for the past four years. She had identified the body of the deceased in the mortuary, and was sure it was that of Annie Chapman. The deceased formerly lived at Windsor, and was the widow of Frederick Chapman, a veterinary surgeon, who died about 18 months ago. For four years, or more, the deceased had lived apart from her husband, and during that period had principally resided in common lodginghouses in the neighbourhoods of Whitechapel and Spitalfields.

About two years since the deceased lived at 30, Dorset Street, and was then living with a man who made iron sieves. She was then receiving an allowance of 10s. a week from her husband. Some

18 months since the payments stopped, and it was then that she found her husband was dead. That fact was also ascertained from a relative of the deceased, who used to live in Oxford Street, Whitechapel. The deceased went by the name of Sievey, on account of the man with whom she had cohabited being a sieve maker. This man left her some time ago. During the past week witness had seen the deceased some two or three times.

On Monday, in Dorset Street, she complained of feeling unwell. At that time she had a bruise on one of her temples. Witness inquiring how she got it, the deceased told her to look at her breast, which was also bruised. The deceased said, "You know the woman," and she mentioned a name which witness did not remember. Both the deceased and the woman referred to were acquainted with a man called "Harry the Hawker." In giving an account of the bruises, the deceased told witness that on the 1st inst. she went into a publichouse with a young man named Ted Stanley in Commercial Street. "Harry the Hawker" and the other woman were also there. The former, who was drunk, put down a florin, which was picked up by the latter, who replaced it with a penny. Some words passed between the deceased and the woman, and in the evening the latter struck her and inflicted the bruises. Witness again saw the deceased on Tuesday by the side of Spitalfields Church.

The deceased again complained of feeling unwell, and said she thought she would go into the casual ward for day or two. She mentioned that she had had nothing to eat or drink that day, not even a cup of tea. Witness gave deceased twopence saying, "Here is twopence to have a cup of tea, but don't have rum." She knew that deceased was given to drinking that spirit. The deceased, who frequently got the worse for drink, used at times to earn money by doing crochet work, and at others by selling flowers.

Witness believed she was not very particular what she did to earn a living and at times used to remain out very late at night. She was in the habit of going to Stratford. Witness did not again see the deceased until Friday afternoon, and about 5 o'clock on that day she met her in Dorset Street.

The deceased, who was sober, in answer to a question from witness as to whether she was going to Stratford, said she felt too ill to do anything. A few minutes afterwards witness again saw the deceased, who had not moved, and she said, "It's no use my giving way. I must pull myself together and go out and get some money, or I shall have no lodgings." That was the last time witness saw her. She mentioned that she had been an inmate of the casual ward. Deceased was generally an industrial woman, and witness

considered her clever. For the last five years she had been living an irregular life, more especially since her husband died. She had two children, and on the death of her husband they were sent away to school. The deceased had a sister and mother, but witness believed they were not on friendly terms.

Timothy Donovan stated he was the deputy of a common lodginghouse at 35, Dorset Street, Spitalfields. He had seen the body in the mortuary, and identified it as that of a woman who had lodged at his place. She had been living there for about four months, but was not there any day last week until Friday. About 7 o'clock that day she came to the lodginghouse and asked him to allow her to go down into the kitchen. He asked where she had been all the week, and she replied, "In the infirmary." He then allowed her to go down into the kitchen. She remained there until shortly before 2 o'clock the next morning. When she went out she said, "I have not any money now, but don't let the bed; I will be back soon."

At that time there was a vacant bed, and it was the one she generally occupied. She then left the house, but witness did not see which way she turned. She had had enough to drink when he last saw her, but she was well able to walk straight. The deceased generally got the worse for drink on Saturdays, but not on the other days of the week. He told her that she could find money for drink but not for her bed, and she replied that she had only been to the top of the street as far as the Ringers' publichouse. He did not see her with any one that night. On Saturday night deceased used to stay at the lodginghouse with a man of military appearance, and witness had heard he was a pensioner.

She had brought other men to the lodginghouse. On the 2d inst. Deceased paid 8d. a night for her bed. The pensioner was about 45 years of age and about 5ft. 8in. in height. At times he had the appearance of something better. Witness had never had any trouble with the deceased, who was always very friendly with the other lodgers.

John Evans, night watchman at the lodginghouse, also identified the body of deceased. He saw her leave the house at about a quarter to 2 on Saturday morning. Just before he had asked her whether she had not sufficient, and then told the last witness she would not be long before she got it. Witness saw her enter a court called Paternoster Row and walk in the direction of Brushfield Street.

Witness should say she was the worse for drink. She told him she had that night been to see one of her sisters who lived at Vauxhall. Before he spoke to her about her lodging money she had been out for a pint of beer. He knew that she had

been living a rough life, but only knew one man with whom she associated. That man used to come and see her on Saturdays. He called about half-past 2 on Saturday afternoon to make inquiries about the deceased. He said he had heard of her death. Witness did not know his name or address. After hearing an account of the death of the deceased he went out without saying a word. Witness had never heard any person threaten the deceased, and she had never stated she was afraid of any one. He did not see the deceased leave the lodginghouse with the pensioner on Sunday week.

On Thursday the deceased and a woman called Eliza had a fight in the kitchen, during which she got a blow on the chest and a black eye.

The coroner here intimated that that was as far as he proposed to carry the inquiry at present, and it was adjourned until tomorrow afternoon.

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