

DEATH BY DROWNING.

An inquest was held at the Fremantle Court House, yesterday, before the coroner J. G. Slade, Esq., on the body of a pensioner named Jno. Duthie, who was found drowned in the river.

Thomas Randel, a pensioner of the Enrolled Force, deposed that he saw the deceased leave the Barracks at about a quarter past two, in company with a man who appeared to be a sailor, they were both sober and apparently on friendly terms; he could not say if deceased had any money on him at this time.

Thomas Rankin, stated that the deceased and the sailor who is one William Brotchie, master of the "Arabian" cutter, made some purchases at his store yesterday afternoon—they subsequently left and proceeded up the street, stating they were going across the river to the vessel—they were both the worse for liquor, but not drunk Brotchie paid for the goods purchased which consisted of a pair of socks, two pairs of flannel drawers and three pillow slips.

Frederick Jones, Boat-builder, said he was crossing the river and saw Brotchie sculling across trying evidently, to reach the "Arabian"—the weather was very squally; when the boats were near each other I saw the deceased in the boat lying with his chest across the gunwale of the boat with his head and hands hanging over the side. I saw the man was dead Brotchie replied that he was only drunk and wanted me to help to get him on the beach. I told him to leave him alone and I would report the matter to the police—he saw deceased had been overboard twice, and the first time he swam first rate—this was about five o'clock, deceased could have jumped out without any my seeing him—it was so dark and squally that I could not see across the river, Brotchie was drunk.

By a Juror—I saw no clothes in the boat, there was no coat, hat, nor boots, but this morning there is a cap in the boat.

Sergeant Wisbey, sworn: At a quarter to six last evening Jones reported that a man had been drowned over the river, I got the assistance of the Water Police and proceeded to the spot indicated, when we found Brotchie and the deceased lying side by side on the sea-weed. Brotchie had one arm

be impossible as the witness was only wet about the legs, in fact he gave such a rambling and unsatisfactory statement of the matter that I felt justified in arresting him. I examined the deceased but found no marks of violence, his clothes, coat, trowsers and vest were in the boat and saturated with water as if been overboard.

By a Juror—There were no appearances of a scuffle but Brotchie's statement was so unsatisfactory that I arrested him, I have since been satisfied that it was the consequence of drink alone—when arrested he had 22s. 6d. on him.

William Brotchie, sworn, said—I am Captain of the 'Arabian,' lying in the river; met the deceased, whom I knew, at Herbert's, and we had a glass of ale together; we then went to his quarters, and had something to eat; we returned to Herbert's again, from there either to Rankin's or Senior's, where I paid for some beer, and Duthie fetched it; after making purchases at Rankin's, we went to the boat at Willis's point, when deceased asked to accompany me; we started to pull, but he couldn't row, and I sculled the boat to very near the other side, when looking round I saw deceased overboard, striking out for the shore; he turned again and got hold of the boat, when I asked him to get in, but he swam away on his back; shortly after I heard him cry for help; I went to him quickly; he was lying on the water, face downwards and not moving, I pulled him into the boat but he said nothing; I laid him on his stomach, and water came out of his mouth: I tried to put him in an easy position, when Jones came alongside; I carried him ashore while he was still breathing. I was a little intoxicated, but sensible; had only three glasses; I had £3 when I came ashore about 11 o'clock.

Dr. Barnett, said—I made a *post mortem* examination on the body of deceased; found no marks of violence, except two slight bruises of no importance, one on the left ear, and another on the left hip, which might have been caused by drawing the body into the boat. Opened the thorax and examined the heart and lungs, I am of opinion that death was caused by drowning. In reply to a juror, witness said—a large quantity of air in the lungs might account for the body floating a short period, or the deceased might not have been dead when lifted out of the water.

The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally Drowned."

round the deceased and was rubbing the body with his hand. I asked if he was dead he said not, he thought, as he was warm. I then examined the deceased, who was dead and cold, having been dead no doubt for an hour. Brotchie told me that Duthie had jumped overboard and swam about for some time—when he called out, help! and that he (Brotchie) had got him ashore, I knew this to be impossible as the witness was only wet