

SANDHURST IN MOURNING.

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Sandhurst presented a sadly mournful appearance after the departure of the Duke, the many flags which were flaunting in the breeze on the arrival of his Royal Highness now remaining half mast high as a token of respect to the three youths who had been ushered into another world at so short a notice. The partially-closed business establishments, and the drawn down blinds at private residences marked the feelings of sympathy which pervaded the whole of the community.

INQUEST ON THE CHILDREN.

Dr. Pounds held an inquest at the Metropolitan Hotel, upon the bodies of the deceased children. The jury summoned proceeded to the Harp and Shamrock Hotel to view the bodies of John Langston M'Grath and Sylvester Francis Cahill, which were lying there, and then proceeded to the residence of Mr Henry Walters, in Mollison-street, where his deceased son, Thomas Michael Walters, was lying. Having then returned to the Metropolitan Hotel, the following evidence was taken:—

Dr. Paul Howard Macgillivray, resident surgeon at the hospital, deposed to the three deceased children being received into the hospital about nine o'clock on the night of Wednesday last suffering from burns. That the boy M'Grath suffered great pain during the night, and expired about half past-seven the next morning. That the lad Cahill, although not in such apparent pain, died about four o'clock on the afternoon of Thursday, reaction

after the shock to the system never having properly set in—the heat of the day preventing his recovery. Walters also died at half-past six the same evening, having been in a delirious state during the day. There was no hope from the first of M'Grath recovering, but had it not been for the heated atmosphere the other two would probably have recovered, especial hopes of the recovery of Walters being entertained. Quantities of fruit which had evidently been partaken of by Walters previous to his admission interfered, however, considerably with his chances of recovery. Neither of the youths appeared to have taken beer or other intoxicating liquors, their breath being free from the smell. The burns were principally about the face, hands and legs, the boy M'Grath being also extensively burned about the body, and the cause of death arose from the injuries received. By a juryman: There were 1200 cubic feet of air to each bed in the wards of the hospital.

Michael Meagher, proprietor of the Temple Court Hotel, and Captain of the Sandhurst Volunteer Fire Brigade, gave evidence of a notice representing the Galatea being built upon the framework of the Neptune engine, which passed along in the procession escorting H.R.H. Prince Alfred on Wednesday last, and remained opposite his door until after eight in the evening. From his place there were thirty-

the evening. From his place there were thirty-six Roman candles placed in a slide-box upon the deck; also twenty-four very large rockets were laid openly upon the deck, ready for letting off. About nine o'clock, four horses were attached, and, accompanied by the brigade, the ship proceeded towards the Shamrock Hotel, with a view to let off the rockets and candles from the reserve fence opposite the Prince's rooms, and not from the deck of the Galatea. Witness was on board near the bows, James Hickey was amidships, George Perry having charge of the signal lights on deck, and there being eight or nine boys dressed as sailors, including the three deceased children, also on the ship. When arriving midway between the Shamrock Hotel and the Bank of Australasia he saw a man's hand raised on the Camp Reserve side, and fire coming from that point fell upon the deck igniting the rockets which went off like the shot of a gun. The man had a whitish coat on similar to those worn by plasterers and bricklayers. Witness caught hold of two of the boys, and pushed them over the side of the ship, but could not say if they were either of the deceased children, for at the moment his own head was struck by a rocket, and all was fire around him. Having jumped off and turned round he saw Perry alone on board and the deck on fire. He ordered water to be played on to the ship as it was turned round, the fire being finally extinguished by water obtained from the plug near the late Commercial Hotel. About half-an-hour previous to the accident, and before the start, John Kerr, one of the Fire Brigade, let off a rocket from the stern of the deck, but it did no harm to speak of, and in no way caused the explosion, although a portion of the ship was burnt at that time.

George Perry, a coach trimmer, deposed that he had formerly been a sailor, and had charge of the box of fireworks on board the ship. He corroborated the principal portion of the previous witness's evidence, and further stated that besides himself there were Mr Hickey and eight boys on the deck. He had just previously to the explosion which created the fire, taken out a signal light from a box of fireworks, and almost immediately after closing the box a cracker came on board (others previously thrown being extinguished), and the explosion took place opposite Mr Holdsworth's shop. During the blaze which took place witness jumped off, but seeing a man trying to pull down the foreyard he got again on deck, and attempted to put out the fire, which had caught the ship in two places. He was satisfied that the fire did not arise from a torch, but from a Chinese cracker. There were rockets lying uncovered on the deck, and some Roman candles covered over. By the jury: Could not say by whose orders the fireworks were placed on board, but they were handed to him by some one previous to starting, he being told to place them where he did. He knew that he was sober himself, and believed every one else on board at the time of the explosion was also perfectly sober. Considered it wrong to have left the rockets uncovered on deck.

Isaac Jarvis, senior wardman at the hospital, deposed that about nine o'clock on the morning of Thursday the deceased boy, Cahill, spoke

deposed that about nine o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the deceased boy, Cahill, spoke to him of the accident having arisen from sparks falling amongst the rockets from a Roman candle, which Mr Hickey was letting off at the time.]

John Stewart, who had charge of the horses drawing the ship, deposed that he saw a cracker thrown on board, which caused the explosion, Messrs Meagher and Hickey, with the same children who had been on deck during the morning, being also there.

Joseph Walker, a member of the fire brigade, deposed that he had care of some unlighted torches which were on board, and that the rockets were deposited close to the bulwarks to prevent accident. Crackers were falling on the ship at the same time that sparks were dropping from the signal light in Mr Hickey's hand. He and other members of the brigade were alongside and behind the ship, carrying lighted torches. Immediately before the explosion a cracker passed over his head and fell on the ship. Did not believe that the torch bearers of the brigade or of the miners' procession had anything to do with the explosion. There was no other fire on deck beyond the signal lights being let off. All the members of the brigade were perfectly sober, one who was affected with drink having been ordered to leave previous to the start from Mr Meagher's.

Other witnesses were in attendance prepared to give further corroborative evidence, the only exception being that Mr Brown—the father of one of the children who had been injured, but was in a fair way of recovery—was ready to testify that his son gave a similar account of the cause of the accident as the lad Cahill had done. The jury, however, being perfectly satisfied with the evidence adduced, gave a unanimous verdict that the deaths were caused by injuries arising from the accidental explosion of rockets and Roman candles upon the model of the Galatea. The jury added a rider to the verdict, that they were unanimously of opinion that the Fire Brigade was censurable for so carelessly taking and using fireworks in such a crowd as there was in the streets at the time of the accident.

THE FUNERAL.

The funeral *cortege* moved from the residence of Mr M'Grath (where the three deceased children had been removed), shortly after four o'clock, passing along Mundy-street into Pall Mall, continuing the route to Mitchell-street and thence to the Back Creek Cemetery, being preceded by the members of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. Following the hearse were three mourning vehicles, succeeded by the youthful companions of the poor deceased boys, and who had escaped uninjured from the burning ship. Wearing the same sailor dresses in which they had appeared in the procession of Wednesday, they presented to the minds of the spectators a melancholy reminiscence of the fatal catastrophe. The Volunteer Fire Brigade followed, and then came a string of vehicles numbering in all sixty one, containing the notabilities of the town and large numbers of the citizens, the procession closing with a large body of horsemen. As the melancholy *cortege* moved slowly along the firebell tolled half-minute strokes. In the Mall and in Mitchell-

street, so recently thronged with joyous, cheering crowds, there were gatherings of people with sad faces, silently watching the procession. At the Back Creek Cemetery, where the bodies were to be consigned to their last resting place, the procession stopped, and the coffins—each borne by four members of the Fire Brigade—were carried into the cemetery. M'Grath and Cahill's were carried abreast to the Roman Catholic ground, preceded by the Rev. Dr. Backhaus and the Rev. Father Kavanagh, and that of Walters, preceded by the Rev. W. R. Croxton, to the Church of England ground. The funeral service at each place was impressive, and many sorrowful tears were shed. An impression existed in town that the bodies were to be consigned to one grave, but each was separately interred. A large concourse assembled in the cemetery to testify by their presence their regret for the dead, and their sympathy for the mourning relatives. Among them were the hon. Mr Sullivan, M.P., Mr J. J. Casey, M.P., Mr

Barrowes, M.P., the Mayor of Sandhurst and Councillors. Mr Mollison, P.M., Dr. J. B. Pounds, J.P., Mr Superintendent Chomley, Mr A. Bayne, the Rev. T. Taylor, the Rev. Mr Hill, and many others of the principal citizens. At the termination of the mournful ceremony, the long line of vehicles with their freights, returned rapidly to town. In the course of the afternoon it was rumored that the fourth injured lad, named Brown, was rapidly sinking from the effects of the injuries he had received, but we are enabled to state that the rumor was entirely without foundation, the suffering boy progressing most favorably at the residence of his father, in Williamson-street, under the medical care of Dr. Boyd.