

SENSATION IN ST. THOMAS

Singular Circumstances Attend Joseph Birdsall's Death.

His Skull Was Fractured About Nine Days Ago—Ugly Rumors Afloat—An Inquest To Be Held.

[St. Thomas Journal, Dec. 19.]
Mr. Joseph Birdsall died yesterday in the Amasa Wood Hospital under circumstances which, to say the least, are very suspicious and, if the reports which are in circulation prove true, deceased's own brother will find the charge of murder hanging over his head.
The deceased, who is a son of Mrs. Birdsall, No. 225 Center street, was formerly employed as a brakeman on the M. C. R. and lately on the F. P. and M. R. at Saginaw, Mich. He came to this city with his wife and three children a little over two weeks ago to visit his mother and about nine days ago Dr. Smith was summoned to his mother's house to attend him, and afterwards Dr. Legney had charge of the case. On Friday last he was removed to the hospital, where he died as stated yesterday.
The cause of death was a fracture of the skull, and the reports being circulated are that he and his brother got into an altercation, and then a quarrel, and the brother threw at him and struck him in the head with a heavy plate, causing his death. The mother of deceased states that he came into the house intoxicated and fell on a plate sticking through the floor, and was thus injured. Whatever story is true, there is no doubt of the cause of death.

AN INQUEST.

Dr. Gustin, coroner, and County Attorney Donahue were notified of the circumstances this morning, and the coroner issued instructions that the funeral should not be proceeded with, and an inquest will be held.

DR. SMITH'S STATEMENT.

Dr. Smith said he was called to see the deceased, he thought, a week ago Friday, about 7 or 7:30 p.m. He found Birdsall very drunk with blood all over his face. There was a scalp wound on the right side of the head about the ear about three inches in extent. The deceased was wildly intoxicated, and was swearing and using frightful language, and the doctor found it very difficult to dress the wound. Finally he did succeed in doing so, and put on several stitches.

"The deceased was thoroughly beside himself at the time," said the doctor, "but I thought if he would get a sleep he would be better next day. His wife came to my office next day and said the deceased suffered a great deal of pain and did not sleep. I went and saw him and gave him some powders to quiet him. I have never seen him since. I had, before leaving on the occasion of the second visit, asked the family to let me know how he was getting on, but received no word. Last Friday I started over to see him, it being about time to take the stitches out, but learning that Dr. Lipsey had since been in attendance and that the deceased had been removed to the hospital, I did not go to the house."

"The mother of deceased and the others told me," said the doctor, "that the jury was the result of a quarrel over whiskey. The deceased was drunk and wanted more whiskey and they refused to get it for him, and he threatened to kill his mother and wife. They were all at the supper table, and his brother threw a plate at deceased and struck him on the head, and the deceased then started after his brother Charles and threatened to kill him, but Charles got out of his way."

"No doubt," said the doctor, "if he had caught his brother, he would have killed him as he was in a perfect frenzy."

DR. LIPSEY'S STATEMENT.

Dr. Lipsey, in answer to the question of a representative of the Journal, said that Mr. Birdsall died of inflammation of the brain, the result of an injury received nine days ago. The skull was fractured at the right side for an extent of about three inches. The brain was bruised and torn, and there was intense inflammation of the whole of the brain. The deceased had been taken to the hospital on Friday, and had been unconscious ever since the accident and had made no statement to him as to how the accident occurred.

Mrs. Birdsall, mother of deceased, however, told Dr. Lipsey that her dead son was injured by falling while intoxicated and striking his head on a plate which stuck through a hole in the floor.

MRS. BIRDSALL'S STATEMENT.

Mrs. Birdsall, the mother of the deceased, was seen by a reporter of the Journal. Asked when her son came to his injuries, she said:

"He fell on the floor and struck his head on a piece of dish."

"How did he come to fall? Was he standing on anything?" queried the reporter.

"Well, he had been drinking that evening and he slipped as he came in the door," replied Mrs. Birdsall.

"I suppose you have heard the rumor that there was a scuffle before your son fell? Was there a quarrel?"

"Oh, he was quite quarrelsome when he came in, but no one was near him," she answered.

Mrs. Birdsall did not say how the piece of dish came to be on the floor, and she evaded the question regarding the quarrel.

"Was he rendered unconscious as soon as he fell?" she was asked.

"No," she replied, "he did not lose consciousness for two days."

A POST-MORTEM.

Dr. Lipsey and Dr. Tufford held a post-mortem on the remains of deceased, and found that death was caused as stated, from fracture of the skull.

THE INQUEST.

The inquest will open at 7 p.m., before Dr. Gustin, coroner, at the Wilcox House.

A MARRIED MAN.

The dead man was in his 27th year and leaves a wife and three children. His mother resides at 225 Center street, and he has one sister, Mrs. W. W. Webb, of Memphis, Tenn., and two brothers, Edward, of Chicago, and

Hundreds have been cured without knife or plaster by our pleasant HOME TREATMENT.

Full particulars, 6c (stamp). A. L. Stott & Co., Bowmansville, Ont. (Mention Advertiser.)

CANCER

FOR COUNTY COUNCILORS

Result of Nominations Made in Western Ontario Sections.

MIDDLESEX.

Glenora, Dec. 19.—At the nominations for county councilors for district No. 7, Middlesex, Mr. William Webster and Mr. G. B. Campbell, the former representatives, were elected by acclamation.

Strathroy, Dec. 19.—A very large meeting of the electors of Strathroy, Adelaide and Metcalfe convened in the town hall here today for the purpose of nominating candidates for the county council. Twelve nominations were made, all resigning but Messrs. John Morgan, James Bennett, George Roberts and Henry Owens. The contest so far remains between these gentlemen—two to be elected.

Parkhill, Dec. 19.—The county councilors nominated at Parkhill today for No. 2 district, Middlesex, were: Simon McLeod, Parkhill; S. F. Stewart, Ailsa Craig; Trafford Campbell, East Williams.

HURON.

Exeter, Dec. 19.—Nominations for the county council took place here today. The following were nominated: J. A. Rollins, M.D., Exeter; Donald McInnes, Exeter; John Tebridge, Exeter; and Wm. Bowden, Exeter.

Clinton, Dec. 19.—County councilors nominated for this division are James Connolly, James Snell, S. S. Cooper, John Britton.

Dungannon, Dec. 19.—Nominations of county councilors took place today for No. 1 district, county of Huron. Philip Holt, barrister, Goderich; Hugh Gilling, farmer, Ashfield; T. C. Durbin, farmer, Dungannon; A. Young, farmer, Colborne, and Mr. Jothrip, Alford, were nominated.

Brussels, Dec. 19.—Nominations for county council for district townships of Grey, Morris and Brussels: W. H. Kerr, Brussels; J. Bowman, township of Morris; E. Bryans, township of Grey; Andrew Sloan, township of Morris.

LAMBERTON.

Sarnia, Dec. 19.—Nominations for the position of county councilors for division No. 1 (Sarnia and Point Edward), for the county of Lambton, were received at the town hall, George A. Proctor, Wm. McClester, R. S. Oliver were nominated.

ESSEX.

Amherstburg, Dec. 19.—N. A. Coote and J. S. Patten were elected by acclamation as representatives in the Essex county council today for district No. 1.

WATERLOO.

St. Jacobs, Dec. 19.—A. H. Erb, of Elmira, and Alexander Peterson, of Woodville township, were elected by acclamation as county councilors to represent the seventh division, county of Waterloo.

BRUCE.

Port Elgin, Dec. 19.—At the nomination held here today for North Bruce county councilors, J. Pierson, H. Cummings, G. Leeds, Neil McDougall and John McInnes were nominated.

ELGIN.

Aylmer, Dec. 19.—Nominations for county councilors were held this afternoon. The following were nominated: Richard Locker, Oscar McInnes and Mahlon Edward Lyons.

MRS. VIAU'S COMPANION

Sam Parslow on Trial Charged With Murder of I. Poirier.

St. Scholastique, Dec. 20.—There was a fair attendance at the trial of Sam Parslow, charged with the murder of I. Poirier, husband of Cordelia Viau, when the court met yesterday afternoon. As the jury had been selected in the morning, matters proceeded rapidly. Mr. Ethier, counsel for the defense, asked that he be accorded the privilege of medical experts to inquire into and pronounce upon the mental condition of his client, Parslow. The crown argued that Mr. Ethier should bear the cost. Judge Taschereau said that in his opinion the thing could not be done. He remarked that he had consulted with Chief Justice Lacoste on the subject, and that he (Taschereau) would probably be able to give a decision today.

Mr. F. X. Mathieu presented the case of the crown to the jury in a short, concise speech of half an hour's duration. The prisoner, Sam Parslow, listened intently throughout.

When Mr. Mathieu sat down the first witness was called.
This was Dr. Mignault, the coroner for the district. He testified to having been summoned on the evening of Nov. 22, 1897, to go to St. Canute, as Isidore Poirier, of that place, had on the 21st died suddenly and he had been killed. He had gone and held an inquest. He described the condition of the room as he found it. The medical report of the inquest was read to the jury, and all the blood-stained, greswome relics of the tragedy were shown and explained to them by Coroner Mignault and High Constable Brasseur. The jury inspected all of them carefully.

Dr. Simeon Lemarche and Dr. Henry were the next witnesses. They were the doctors who made the autopsy, and gave their evidence as to the character of the wounds.

The court then adjourned until Tuesday morning.

COST FOUR LIVES

Fatal Frank of an Engineer Who Had Been Drinking.

New York, Dec. 20.—A dispatch to the Herald from Havana says: A terrible explosion shook the little steamer Fantia on Sunday, when some steam pipes in the boiler-room blew out, killing one man and fatally scalding three others. The Fantia was at anchor in the harbor, ready to go out in the morning. Three men were at work upon the machinery, when Chief Engineer A. E. Geer, of Tampa, went into the boiler-room. Geer had been drinking. By mistake or accident he opened a stop-valve, turning the full pressure of steam into pipes that had been found defective. Instantly there came a terrific explosion that wrecked the room, instantly killing Geer. John Wiley, assistant engineer; William Green, a fireman, and Peter Walsh, a machinist, were so scalded that they are all dying at the Reina Mercedes Hospital.

THE LATE WM. BLACK

Principal Dymond, of Brantford, Gave the Novelist His Start

In Literary Life—Met Him in France—Not a Promising Beginning.

[From the Brantford Expositor.]

In connection with the death of William Black, the novelist, Principal Dymond contributes the following reminiscence of the deceased author's first introduction to permanent employment in a literary or journalistic capacity: In the year 1864, I was spending a few days in the city of Paris. It was in the high days of the second empire, and no expense was spared to sustain the popularity of the existing regime. Among the sights most worthy to be seen was the grand display of the fountains at Versailles, a single exhibition of which, on alternate Sunday afternoons, was said to cost 40,000 francs. On returning to Paris I found seated opposite to me in the coupe of the railway carriage, a rather boyish-looking young man in a "Glenarry" cap, and further testifying to his British nationality by the possession of a Bradshaw railway guide. He being a stranger to Paris, and almost a stranger to the French language, the society of a fellow-countryman was not unwelcome, and I soon found that my young companion was not much, if at all, better furnished in those regards than myself. So we naturally came together and spent some pleasant hours seeing people, places and things in one another's company.

Thus it happened that the future successful novelist—the young man whom William Black—confided to me his desire for literary career and I, in return, the contents of editorial waste-paper baskets and the disappointed faces of the contributors thereto constantly in mind, did my best to discourage a dependence on so uncertain a venture. Rather, I advised, should he hold on to the situation—of a man of letters—then filled, and trust to hours of leisure for literary possibilities. After my return to London, however, Mr. Black called upon me at the office of The Morning and Evening Star, and begged me to introduce him to Mr. Samuel Lucas, the managing editor, to whom I was acting as assistant manager. This led to Mr. Black's engagement as assistant sub-editor of the morning paper, his immediate head being Mr. Charles A. Cooper, since, for many years, editor-in-chief of the Edinburgh Standard, and among the foremost of Scotch journalists.

At the selection of clippings from exchanges and such like operations of the scissors and paste-pot, I am bound to say that the "sub" was not a success. He was born, doubtless, to do things, and our war correspondents were not very highly estimate some of his more original efforts. We were in the habit of publishing in the evening edition, light narrative or descriptive sketches on topics real or imaginary, and, entitled, "Readings by Starlight." The managing editor, I remember, in 1865, and Mr. Justin McCarthy and I had succeeded to the management, he taking the editorial and I the business department. And I well remember the light esteem in which we held certain contributions to the "Readings" from the pen of our junior colleague. From the condition in which some of them came to us we were led to imagine that they had already in vain, sought admission to other publications. On the outbreak of the war between Prussia and its allied states and Austria, Mr. Black asked our war correspondents, or rather very honestly and perseveringly tried to act in that capacity. He sought official recognition from the authorities at Berlin in vain, and had to be content with following the Prussian forces at as short a distance as circumstances would permit. His prudence in this regard, however, did not insure absolute safety, for one of his best letters detailed with much humor, of a grim sort, a brief sojourn in prison under the charge of being a spy, w. I am glad to say that the spy's fate awaited him, and his career was speedily established. He was a singularly quiet, unassuming young man, but with a good deal of the business shrewdness of his nation, as his publishers probably discovered when, rather to the surprise of his old friends and associates, he blossomed into one of the most popular and prolific novelists of his time.

POWER OF THE NEW RIFLES

Bullet Passed Through One Man's Foot, Broke the Arm of Another in Room Below and Passed Through Two Two-Inch Oak Floors.

Detroit, Dec. 20.—The power of the Krag-Jorgensen rifle was shown in an accident which took place in the bar-room of a saloon, on the corner of the Privateers Thomas A. Collins, Company E, and Frank L. Sands, Company H, are both in the regimental hospital, suffering from wounds, and they can thank their lucky stars that they were not mortally wounded.

Private Collins has been on detached duty as carpenter for some time, and has not been using his rifle except for inspection once a week. Another member of the same company had borrowed the gun for use on guard duty, and left it in the company's chamber. This morning Collins started to clean up his gun. He was standing near his bed in the barrack-room, which is on the second floor of the building. He leaned over to pick up a gun brush. The trigger, presumably cocked, edged the iron bedstead. The gun which Collins imagined was empty was discharged.

The bullet cut through Collins' foot, passed through the ceiling and plaster and struck Private Sands, who was standing directly below. Company H's barracks, cleaning his gun. The bullet entered Sands' neck, passed close to the bone, went into his arm and passed through, breaking the bone. Even then the velocity of the bullet was not stopped. After leaving Sands' body it glanced downward, passed through another two-inch oak floor, and finally landed in the basement.

Sands and Collins were removed to the hospital where their wounds were dressed. The hole in Collins' foot is as a correlative of a narrow, plenty, maudlin evolutionism, or gloomy superstition, only the fact is that those who run in these directions are hardly likely to choose this food. We are inclined to think that the writer owes something to Prof. Drummond's beautiful book, and the reference to him might have been a little more courteous. This statement is made: "Thus gravitation might be figuratively described as a sort of atomic affection."

Fresh Literary Notes

"Poet Lore" for the last quarter of 1898 (Poet Lore Company, Boston) is an interesting budget of literature and literary criticism. The standpoint of this journal is given in the following statement: "Poet Lore considers literature as an exponent of human evolution rather than as a finished product, and is interested in discerning life and the progress of ideals in letters." This point of view insures a living journal, which pays attention to both past and present. It is needless to say that it is also cosmopolitan in its tone. There are several articles in the present issue which are of interest to the general reader, as well as much material for the student and teacher of English literature. One of the special features is a brief sketch of "A Golden Wedding," from the French of Edouard Rod, which derives additional interest from the fact that this accomplished writer and able critic is about to visit Harvard for the purpose of giving a course of lectures. This is becoming a regular feature of the academic year. The French-Canadians of Montreal also import a distinguished lecturer from France each term.

Among the "Notes and News" we find the "Bergerac," from two or three points of view, a division of "In Memoriam," said to have been given by Tennyson himself, as well as a piece of Shakespeare criticism by Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Here also we have explained why the name of the Spaniards' favorite saint, "Lago," is used by the great English dramatist for the villain in one of his greatest plays.

During the past six months thousands in this country who use the International Lessons have been engaged in studying the history of Israel, and the same class will resume that study in the middle of the coming year. We now acknowledge that history in all its branches is one of the most interesting and important studies. Those who wish to have a neat specimen of the Spauld's favorite saint, "Lago," is used by the great English dramatist for the villain in one of his greatest plays.

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