

Death of Mr. John Gibson.

A very well-known resident of the district, in the person of Mr. John Gibson, of Chitabin, met his death on Monday morning last by falling into a well at his property. The circumstances, so far as they are known, were related to the coroner's jury yesterday. The deceased, who was 50 years of age, leaves a wife and family of seven, three sons and four daughters. Mrs. Gibson has recently resided in Wellington street, Northam, so that the younger children might attend school here, the eldest son and two daughters living with their father at the farm.

The deceased gentleman was a native of Northam, and his parents still reside at Templartown. He had spent the whole of his life in the district, having worked for the late Hon. Geo. Throssell for nine years, and Mr. S. Millington for eleven years. About five years ago he entered into farming pursuits, and had made a most successful farmer. He was of a happy disposition, and his sudden death will be regretted by a large circle of friends throughout the district.

At the inquest, which was held by Mr. S. Solomon (acting-coroner), Dr. Rockett said he saw the body of the deceased on Monday evening. There were no external marks of violence, and the body showed all signs of death from drowning.

James Gibson, eldest son of the deceased, deposed that on Monday morning at about 5 a.m., Mr. Gibson proceeded to the well in order to fill the trough to water the stock. As he did not return, witness rode on to the harvester, expecting to find his father there, but as he was not there, witness, a little before 7 o'clock, went back to the well, where he found that the water had been stirred up, and that deceased's hat was lying close to the well. He did not look to see if the body was in the well, but proceeded to the stables, saddled his pony, and galloped over to Mr. White's, who told him to ride in to Northam and inform the police. He did so, and then returned to the farm, and wait-

then returned to the farm, and waited for the arrival of the constable and in company with Constable Robinson and Mr. Purslowe proceeded to the well, in which the body was discovered. Witness had no reason to suppose that deceased was disturbed in mind. In his opinion the deceased must have slipped off the timber on the bank, and fell into about seven feet of water. Witness assisted in getting the body out of the well. In answer to Sergeant Connor, he said the well was about 16ft deep. There were only three logs of timber across the top, two being together and one lying on top of the others. The well was about 13ft across, and there was seven feet of water in it. The planks were used to stand on in order to haul the water. The deceased could not swim. There was a fence around the well, and the trough was just outside. It was his father's usual practice to fill the troughs each morning. He last spoke to his father on Sunday night, and he was then in the best of health. To the best of witness's knowledge his father had no worries. Their crops were the best they had for years. In answer to the foreman of the jury witness said it was about 7 o'clock when he went to Mr. M. White's, about a mile distant. Mr. White did not go to the well to attempt to rescue the deceased. He asked witness for how long his father had been missing.

Constable Robinson stated that in consequence of a report by James Gibson on Monday last he proceeded to the farm of the deceased at Chitabin. He arrived there at about 10 a.m. He procured a long pole with a hook on it and some ropes, and proceeded to the well. On reaching it he descended to the lowest sets of timber, and located the body and brought it to the surface of the water, and with the assistance of James Gibson and J. W. Purslowe the body was brought to the top of the well with ropes. He felt the bottom of the well with the stick, the greatest depth of water being about 7ft in the centre. There was a gradual rise from the centre of the well to the sides, where there was about 5ft of water. The natural formation surrounding the well was rock. The body was removed to the hospital mortuary. Witness examined the

body was removed to the hospital mortuary. Witness examined the surface of the well to see if there were any signs of the deceased having slipped, but could find none except on the logs on which he would stand a piece of bark had the appearance of having recently been detached. The trough was full, and the bucket was hanging on a post. Witness had known Mr. Gibson for two and a half years, and had found him to be of a cheerful disposition. The rock on the sides of the well would not afford a foothold, and in witness's opinion deceased would have been unable to get out of the well without assistance, even if he could swim.

The jury returned a verdict of "accidentally drowned," and added a rider that Mr. White was deserving of censure for making no attempt to render assistance.

The funeral took place yesterday morning, and was very largely attended by residents from all parts of the district. The cortege proceeded to St. Joseph's Church, and thence to the Northam Cemetery, a number of members of the U.A.O.D. marching in procession, where the burial service was read, the Rev. Fr. McCabe being the officiating clergyman.

The chief mourners were Mrs. Gibson, Maimy and Muriel (daughters), James and Harry (sons), and Mr. O. Gibson (father). The pall-bearers were Messrs. F. Lawson and J. Catten (representing the Druids), and Messrs. J. McManus, S. Millington, Towil, and J. Pilkington.
