

# CIVILIAN SHOT DEAD

## While Saying The Rosary.

Kilmallock, Sunday Night.—A terrible occurrence took place at Hospital, County Limerick, on Saturday night, when soldiers brought a man named Patrick Lynch from his home and shot him dead in the fair green.

Poor Lynch, who was about 40 years of age, was saying the Rosary with his father and sisters in his own home when a knock came at the door. He stood up and went to the door to see what was wanted, and when he opened it he was confronted with a number of soldiers. They asked him to come out, that they wanted him. "Very well," the innocent man replied. "Wait until I get my cap." "You don't want it," said one of the soldiers in a peremptory voice. "We want you only for a few minutes. They then led him away to the fair green, where they shot him dead, the sound of the shots being heard all over the village.

Having killed the poor man they procured a donkey and cart, on which they brought back the corpse and threw it into his father's house. The poor father was grief stricken and the sisters were terrified beyond words.

When Patrick stood up from the Rosary to answer the knock it was expected that he would be back in a minute or two to finish his decade, and little they thought that at that moment he was finishing it in heaven.

Patrick Lynch was a harness maker by trade, and was a most exemplary and inoffensive man.

The deliberate murder of this man in the prime of life, without any reason whatever, and the manner of its execution makes it one of the most dreadful and disgraceful crimes so far on the shoulders of the British Government in Ireland.

Preaching at Mass yesterday (Sunday) Father Ryan, C.C., Hospital, denounced the murder in strong language. He would not be surprised, he said, if the hand of the murderer rotted from the shoulder down.

It appears that before the shooting of Lynch the soldiers brought out a man from another house, but released him after some time. Hospital has been one of the quietest villages in the South, and there was no trouble there until the arrival of the military, who came to enforce the Curfew regulations.

# THE INQUEST.

The inquest was resumed on the body of Mr. Patrick Lynch, aged 48, a saddler, who was shot by the military at Hospital on the 14th August.

An inquest was afterwards opened by Coroner P. J. Cleary, M.D., Kilmallock, at Hospital Courthouse, but following the taking of a deposition from one of deceased's sisters, District Inspector Sweeney, Bruff, applied for an adjournment in order that Mr J. S. Gaffney, Crown Solicitor, might be able to be present to represent the authorities. No objection to that application was made, and the proceedings were adjourned until yesterday afternoon.

Coroner Cleary as well as Mr James H. Moran, solr. (for Mr J. J. Power, solr.) representing the next of kin, a number of witnesses, and the jurors, who had originally been summoned by the police, were in attendance, but there was no appearance made by any of the police or any representative on their behalf. After waiting for about an hour Coroner Cleary telephoned to Bruff barracks and made inquiries regarding the absence of District Inspector Sweeney and police, and he received a reply to the effect that the police were on their way to Hospital Courthouse. It was, however, two and a half hours after the appointed time that a motor car containing District Inspector Sweeney and four or five armed police arrived in Hospital, and half an hour afterwards the inquest proceedings were resumed. No explanation was given regarding the extremely late arrival of the police.

The Coroner read over the deposition made by Miss Lizzie Lynch, sister of the deceased, at the opening day of the inquest. That deposition was as follows: I was in Hospital with my father, brother and two sisters. I have seen the body and identify it as that of my late brother, Patrick Lynch. He was unmarried. Between 10 and 11 o'clock on last Saturday night, 14th August, we were all in the house and preparing to go to bed. A knock came to the front door. My brother answered the knock and opened the door. Four or five of the military, with one officer, came into the kitchen. Immediately after another knock came to the back door. My brother opened the door, and some more military, about three, came in. The officer asked my brother for his correspondence, which he gave. Another soldier searched the kitchen for more correspondence. He found some letters, and read them. One of the soldiers asked me did I know anything about Mr. Moloney. I said I knew nothing about that gentleman. He said "give me all the information you know about him." I said again that I knew nothing about the gentleman. He said "did you ever speak to him," and I said no. He said, "You are a relative of his, are you a sister; he told me you were his sister." I said that must be a mistake, as Lynch is my name, and Moloney is his. "On your honour," he said, "do you know anything about him," and I again said no. He then said, "We won't do you any harm; we came here to protect life and property, and we don't shoot women." One tall soldier kept my brother in conversation for some time in the shop. The officer, after looking over the correspondence, said: "There is nothing here only receipts and things." The tall soldier called the officer out to the shop, and had some conversation outside while my brother came into the kitchen. The officer, after some time, said to his men, "We will go now, and are sorry for troubling ye." My brother said "Can we go to bed now?" and the officer replied "yes." They all went away then, and we shut the door and bolted it. We all then knelt down to say the Rosary. We had just finished when another knock came to the front door. My brother again answered the door. I heard a voice saying, "Come out, the Sergeant wants you." My brother said, "Wait until I get my cap," and the man outside said, "You don't need a cap, come on." My brother got his cap and went out. My sister went to the door, and a voice said: "Get in and shut the door." I did not see my brother alive afterwards. About half an hour after my brother was taken away another knock came to the door. I answered the door, and saw Dr. M. R. Cleary and the officer outside. The doctor said "Is Pat in," and I said "No, he is gone to the barrack, and that he was sent for." The officer then said "Was he sent for," and I said "yes." Dr. Cleary said "Was he alive leaving the house," and I said "yes." The doctor then said "I think we were in a little trouble and to keep quiet." My sister then said, "Tell me, Doctor, what is it, is it anything serious?" The Doctor said he is seriously injured. I said to the doctor, "Has he the priest," and the doctor said "Father Kennedy is with him." They went away, and we shut the door, and went in. Later on Dr. Cleary and Father Kennedy came to the door, and the doctor said, "Do you know anywhere you can get a car, we want to bring your brother in here?" I said "no." The doctor then told me that my brother was dead, and some time afterwards my brother's body was brought into the house.

The Coroner—Could you identify the officer or any of the soldiers who came into your house on that night? I can.

Do you know their names? No.

Do you think you could identify them if they were brought before you? Yes.

Mr. Moran said he would like to know why the proceedings had been adjourned a fortnight ago.

The Coroner—They were adjourned because Mr. Gaffney, Crown Solicitor, was unable to be present at the time.

District-Inspector Sweeney applied for the adjournment owing to Mr. Gaffney's absence.

Mr. Moran—Was there any question with regard to the military being represented?

The Coroner replied in the affirmative, and added that he had sent summonses to District-Inspector Sweeney for the military.

Mr. Moran—And they are not here.

District-Inspector Sweeney said that was so.

Mr. Moran—So Miss Lynch has no opportunity of identifying any of them?

The Coroner—Certainly not.

District-Inspector Sweeney—The military are not here now. They are not in my district at present.

Mr. Moran—Their absence speaks for itself.

In reply to Mr. Moran, witness said deceased was well liked by everybody and had no enemies. She knew nothing about Moloney who had only been a short time in Hospital. It was about ten minutes after the military left her house that another knock came to the door.

The Coroner—Was the officer there on the second occasion? I don't know.

Miss Annie Lynch, sister, corroborated. She did not know who were the persons that came to the house the second time. She could not be sure if they were soldiers as she did not see them.

Dr M. R. Cleary, Hospital, stated that he was in bed a little after 12 o'clock (new time) on the night of the 14th August, and he heard some shots. He thought those shots were fired not far away from his house. That was about a quarter past 12.

He heard five, six or seven shots fired at intervals. Two shots were fired first, and about five more after a short interval.

About twenty-five past 12 witness heard men approach his house and knock. That knock was answered, and he heard the people outside say they were military and wanted the doctor, as a man had been shot on the road. Witness went downstairs and the officer in charge of the party was admitted. He knew that officer by appearance. He was the officer in charge of the military at Hospital at the time, and he told witness that his men had shot a civilian, but that he was not there himself.

The officer added that he was at the barracks, and hearing the shots he came out to where he found the man shot. Witness told him to send for the priest, and he immediately sent two soldiers for the priest.

The Coroner—Did he tell you what he found when he went in the direction of where he heard the shots? He said he found a man shot on the roadside.

What is that officer's name? I don't know, but he was the officer in charge of Hospital at the time. He told me he thought the man was dead, and he asked what was to be done with the body under the circumstances.

I said, "If I recognise him we will remove him to his home," and the officer was satisfied.

Witness added that he went with the officer and at least two soldiers to the place indicated by the officer and saw the body of a man lying on his left side on the public road. Deceased's head was towards Hospital, and there was a large quantity of blood under his head and about it. Witness noticed what appeared to be two bullet wounds on deceased's right poll. He was then quite dead. Witness recognised deceased as Patrick Lynch, harness-maker, Hospital. At that time neither the soldiers nor officer appeared to know or recognise deceased. They made no remark about deceased's identity. Witness expressed surprise that Lynch was out so late.

The Coroner—Did they ask you who deceased was? No; but I told him he was such a man, and none of them made any reply.

Witness next stated that with the officer he went to Lynch's house.

The Coroner—Did you make a remark to the officer about deceased being out so late? I expressed surprise at it, because I know deceased to be the best living man in the town, and was never out after hours to my knowledge.

Witness added that when he reached deceased's house Miss Lizzie Lynch spoke to him and told him that her brother was gone to the barracks. Witness thought she also said that two soldiers had called for him. Miss Lynch then said to the officer: "Were you not here a while ago?" and he said "Yes." Witness then put further questions to Miss Lynch, who said her brother went away to the barracks in good health. After Rev. Father Kennedy had attended to the body of deceased it was removed in a cart to the house. Witness subsequently examined the body after a nurse had cleaned it up. There were no wounds or marks on the body. There were two bullet wounds in the right poll, two on the right side of his face, and two on the left side of his nose. Those were revolver bullet wounds. Death was due to shock and hemorrhage from laceration of the brain caused by those wounds. Death must have been practically instantaneous.

District Inspector Sweeney said he would like to ask witness a few questions.

Mr Moran—Whom do you represent? You don't represent the military.

District Inspector Sweeney—No, I don't.

Mr Moran—I don't see how the Constabulary interests are affected at all.

District Inspector Sweeney (to witness)—

Before you heard the shots fired; did you hear any words of command given? No.

Could shouts of "Stop" or "Halt" have been given without you hearing them? Yes, I was partly asleep when I heard the first two shots fired.

Was there a long interval between the first two shots and the others? About a minute.

During that time did you hear any commands given? No.

No further evidence was tendered.

The Coroner said it was a very sad case, they were all acquainted with the deceased, who was a very respectable, decent man, and it was deplorable he should have lost his life in such a way. He was found dead on the roadside with four or five bullet wounds in his head. His sisters had detailed their evidence in a clear manner and they also had the medical evidence and the jury's duty was to find the verdict on that evidence.

Mr. Moran said he was going to ask them to find a verdict of wilful murder against the military, who did not even attend the inquest. The military were apparently out for blood on that night. It was an appalling outrage to take away life of an innocent man in such a way.

The Coroner repeated that he had issued summonses for the officer and soldiers to be present. District-Inspector Sweeney and I forwarded summonses, but got no reply. The authorities, for reasons best known to themselves, have not put in any appearance, I am sorry to say. I ask jury to find a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

The Coroner asked if there would be any use in again adjourning the inquest for the attendance of the military.

District-Inspector Sweeney—I don't ask for it.

The Coroner—They got a fortnight to come and have not done so.

Mr. Moran—We can get on without them.

District-Inspector Sweeney said the military had adopted another procedure. They were at present holding an inquiry into the matter.

After a short absence, the jury found that the deceased was unlawfully brought from his house on the night of the 14th August by military then stationed in Hospital, and taken about 200 yards from his house to the south side, and there wilfully and brutally murdered by the said military, and death was due to shock and haemorrhage, caused by bullet wounds, and the jury wished to strongly comment on the absence of military officers from the investigation. They also tendered deepest sympathy to the aged father and sorrowing sisters, whose sole support deceased was, in their sad bereavement.

Dr. Cleary said that he had heard that the military implicated in the matter had left the town, and the verdict should not point to the military at present in Hospital.

The Foreman said the verdict specifically mentioned the military in Hospital on the night in question.

The Coroner said that was so.

The verdict was accepted and entered.