The New Orleans Bee.

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NEW ORLEANS DAILY BEE

DUFOUR & LIGET, Proprietors.
No. 73 Chartres Street.

TERMS OF THE BEE.

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TERMS—PER YEAR.....$5.

NEW ORLEANS:

TUESDAY MORNING, MARCH 14, 1871.

Announcements This Evening.

OPERA HOUSE—"El Otario Rol."

ACADEMY OF MUSIC—Gaite Comique Troupe of Specialties.

ST. CHARLES THEATRE—"The Three Guardsmen."

CRESCENT CITY MUSEUM—Nos. 49 and 42 St. Charles street.

THE CASE OF MR. PERKINS.

DISCHARGE OF THE CORONER'S JURY

The Coroner's jury summoned to investigate the cause of the death of Mr. F. W. Perkins have failed to agree and have been discharged without their having rendered a verdict. It is understood that two of the five jurors came to the conclusion that the deceased committed suicide, the other three jurors believing that the evidence pointed to a very different cause of death, that is to say they believed Mr. Perkins came to his death at the hands of a person unknown. It is announced that the Coroner has summoned another jury. The body of the deceased must therefore be disinterred and a second investigation be had. Such a proceeding we think unprecedented, but no one will regret the determination of the Coroner if a new examination of the corpse and a repetition of the evidence in the case, or new evidence, shall result in eliciting the truth and solving the mystery surrounding an event which many persons in this city hold to be unaccountable except on the theory of assasination. It is to be hoped that one or more surgeons of the city will now be called to give their opinion as to the marks of violence said to exist on the back of the head of the deceased.

There seems to be a misconception in the minds of some persons—perhaps in the minds of the discharged jury—with regard to the purpose and object of an investigation of this character. As we understand it, a coroner's jury are not required to pronounce *positively* as to the cause of death, beyond what appears from a view of the corpse and the testimony of witnesses present when the death took place, or able to give information as to the manner thereof. When the cause of death has not been ascertained with certainty, the jury, we believe, carry out the object of the law under which they are summoned by returning a verdict in accordance with the evidence, whatever that may be. In Mr. Perkins case the verdict should have been somewhat to this effect:

"We, the jury, find that a pistol ball penetrated the brain of the deceased. Whether the shot was fired by the deceased or by a person unknown, we are unable from the evidence to say. We also find marks of violence on the back of the head of deceased, but not so manifest as to determine whether those marks were the result of the head striking the floor after his ball had done its work, or were caused by violence inflicted by some weapon in the hands of an unknown person."

Such a verdict would have been in accordance with the testimony as published. As we read the certificate of Dr. Cooper, who held the autopsy, it points to marks of violence on the back of the head which possibly were not caused by the ball from the pistol. This fact, we suppose, is capable of being determined by surgical experts. Dr. Cooper's certificate is as follows:

"At an autopsy held this Seventh day of March, 1871, on the body of Frank W. Perkins, lying in his office, at No. 73 Carondelet street, death was found to have been caused by a pistol shot, the ball entering the head on the right side, about one and a half inches above the ear, passing slightly downward, and was found in the brain at the connection of the two lobes of the brain (the cerebellum and cerebrum.) The skull was badly fractured by blood extravasation while breaking the bone and smashing a part of the bone into the brain.

(Signed) J. B. COOPER, City Physician.

This is the first instance that we ever heard of, in which a Coroner's jury disagreed in their verdict and were discharged, and it seems to us absurd when they had it in their power to conform their verdict to the facts as they were disclosed on view of the body. They are only required to report the apparent cause of death and are not expected to ferret out the real cause, unless the same be disclosed by the testimony of witnesses. The facts not questioned by any member of the jury should have been reported as their verdict. One of the principal objects, if not the principal object of a Coroner's investigation, is, that the dead body may be examined before burial, and before corruption has set in to obliterate marks of violence—that is to say, for the purpose of preserving most important evidence for use in the event of the decease having died by the hand of a murderer, and on the trial of the latter for the crime.

It does not seem to have occurred to the jury that Mr. Perkins may have been experimenting his pistol and fired it off *accidentally*. We merely throw out the idea without professing to be ourselves of that opinion. The suggestion, however, is one not unworthy of attention.

The Debate on Mr. Sumner's Decapitation.

Some passages of the debate in the Senate on Mr. Sumner's decapitation as Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, were exceedingly spicy. For instance:

Mr. Bayard (Dem.) of Delaware, moved an amendment, that the title of the Committee on Foreign Relations be changed to the Committee on Personal Relations. [Laughter.]

Mr. Edmunds (Rep.) of Vermont, moved as a further amendment, that the Chairman of the Committee be Mr. Bayard of Delaware.

Mr. Thurman (Dem.) of Ohio: That is the most sensible suggestion the Senator has ever made.

The allusion to "personal relations" was elicited by the avowal of Senator Hoyle, that Mr. Sumner had been removed because he was not on good terms with Gen. Grant and Secretary Fish.

The friends of Mr. J. H. Gardiner, the courteous and energetic agent in this city of the Grover & Baker Sewing Machine Company, who met with a severe accident some time since, will be pleased to learn that he has recovered therefrom, and is now attending to his business as usual.

Canal Across the Isthmus—Letter from Commander Selfridge.

The following interesting letter from Commander Selfridge, of the United States steamer Nipsic, has been received by Mr. Cyrus Butler, of New York:

Aspinwall, Feb. 9, 1871.—Sir: I am not very well, just recovering from an attack of fever, brought on by exposure and fatigue in my recent explorations. I am quite sanguine that I have found a practicable and profitable route for a canal. The Atrato is navigable for the largest ships. So is the Casarica for twelve miles, which reduces the length of the line to less than fifty miles.

I crossed the watershed at a height, I am confident, of not more than three hundred feet. It was correctly measured by my pocket bar. At one hundred and seventy feet it was not more than 150 feet wide at the crest, and the base not over a mile and a half. The height of the base above level of the sea I have only estimated, and I may be in error. There is plenty water for a lock canal, though my impression is for a through cut, of course, unless our estimates reach too much in figures. The foundation of the [illegible] is very nearly worked. Instead of [illegible] the naked.

The [illegible] of my arrangements for the [illegible] were on my return to [illegible] to start [illegible] the Pacific side.

I consider [illegible] was successful. The [illegible] of the Atrato is [illegible] and other considerations, one [illegible] of depositing [illegible] of the mouth of the Atrato is [illegible].

Tell Mr. Eddy [illegible] to examine the [illegible] Bay, which is [illegible] Bay, Gorgona Bay, Limon Bay, Navy Bay, Chagres River to the Forts, Panama Bay, Panama to Taboga, Taboga to Taboguilla, Taboguilla to Pacific Mail dock, Panama. [illegible] and tell him to [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible]