

GLASBURY.

PAINFUL OCCURRENCE—FIVE LIVES LOST.

It is our painful duty this week to record one of the most melancholy and heart rending scenes that has come under our notice for many years. On Saturday morning last, about nine o'clock, seven persons attempted to cross the River Wye in a ferry-boat, at Glasbury, five of whom met with a watery grave; one boatman, named Henry Biddle, swam ashore, and the other, Charles Hammonds, was rescued by John Donovan and Charles Butcher. The place is known as the Dolphin pool, at the mouth of the Llunvy, and is about 300 feet wide. The following are the names of the unfortunate persons who were drowned:—William. Jones, aged 48, gardener, &c. to Mrs. Papendick, Glasbury House, leaving a wife and family totally unprovided for (the youngest three years old); James Bynon, sawyer, of Glasbury, leaves a wife and two children; James Bynon, 16 years old, son of the above; — Nicholls, labourer, in the service of Henry Allen, Esq., of Oakfield, near-Hay, leaving a wife; a lad about 15, whose name we could not learn, in the service of Mr. Ball, of Almeley, Herefordshire.

On the morning of this melancholy occurrence there was a slight flood, owing to heavy rains on the hills, which caused the river to be nearly bank full. The boat had been towed over the river, just previous to the accident, by Mr. Thos. Morgan, of Trebble Hill, and Mr. Bynon (cousin to the deceased of that name), from the Breconshire to the Radnorshire side, and was very near capsizing in the attempt. Several persons who were waiting on the bank side to go over would not do so as it was considered dangerous. One boat-load had gone part of the way and returned. The seven persons above alluded to, having their daily bread to earn, and it consequently being a case of necessity with them, got into the boat, requesting the boatman to take them over. He stated there was danger; they, however, persisted in going, and, melancholy to relate, the

result was fatal. The particulars will be best gleaned from the subjoined report of the evidence given at the Coroner's inquest. A great number of spectators witnessed the sad occurrence, amongst them the wife and children of Jones, whose anguish was distressing in the extreme. The neighbours, one and all, did all in their power to alleviate the poor creatures' distress. Public thanks are due to the following persons who exerted themselves in pursuit of the bodies in boats, at a great risk:—Capt. Rawson, Mr. E. Fowke, Mr. E. Fowke, jun., Mr. Jno. Nott, Messrs. James Watkins, Thos. Hughes, Benjamin Williams, Jno. Beavan, Thos. Lewis, and others, whose names we could not learn. We hope the hand of charity will not be idle in reference to this sad affair, and that subscriptions for the bereaved and destitute families will be collected throughout the county.

Our readers will remember that (as reported in our paper at the time) on the night of the 9th of August last, the Breconshire end of Glasbury Bridge, which had been for some time in a most dangerous state (owing to the litigation of the two counties, Brecon and Radnor, relative to the right of repair), fell in, fortunately with no loss of life, leaving little but that portion which belonged to Radnorshire, and which is at present standing, having the appearance of a bridge about half way across the river. For a month or more after the falling of the Breconshire end, there was no other mode of communication across the water but by two small fishing boats, which the neighbouring gentry kindly allowed to be used. At length the Breconshire authorities placed a large ferry-boat on the river, which was worked by a rope, suspended by posts from each side of the water. This ferry-boat, instead of being placed to head the water, works longitudinally by means of two perpendicular rollers placed on the side of the boat, through which the suspended rope passes. From what we can learn most of the inhabitants

of Glasbury expressed their decided opinion, that at the first flood there would be an accident. Why was not such opinion conveyed to the proper authorities? Why wait for this awful verification of these misgivings? No doubt the authorities would willingly have adopted any system recommended by practical men.

The inquest was held at the Swan Inn, Glasbury, Radnorshire, on Wednesday last, before Edward Lee James, Esq., of Presteign, one of the coroners for that county, and a respectable jury, upon view of the bodies of William Jones and James Bynon. The following gentlemen were sworn on the jury:—Mr. John Morgan, (foreman), Messrs. Fowke, John Beavan, Edward Gwynne, James Watkins, Edward Evans, Jno. Morgan, jun., John Nott, Wm. Pugh, Thos. Hughes, Nathaniel Bynon, David Davies, and Wm. Willis.

John Donovan, glazier, Sue, Glasbury, deposed as follows:—I went down to the river Wye on the morning of the accident; there being a slight flood in the river, it was my opinion, from the construction and the working of the boat, that there would be an accident; that was my opinion; when I got there I saw Bynon (cousin to the deceased) and Mr. Thos. Morgan, of Treble Hill, and other persons, altering the rope so as to put it higher, and thus keep it out of the water; Mr. Bynon and Mr. Morgan then brought the boat over from the Breconshire to the Radnorshire side of the river, it being very difficult to do so; when the water is high it is more dangerous to bring the boat from the Breconshire side to the Radnorshire side than the contrary way; the boat then returned to the Breconshire side with about 17 or 18 person in it, and landed them safely; there was a number of persons waiting on the Breconshire side to go over, but through fear they would not venture; seven persons did venture and the boat proceeded all well until it got to about the centre of the rope; the boat then stood still and the passengers appeared to be frightened, a high wind and a strong current of water occurring at the same time; all appeared to catch hold of the rope, and from the pressure being all on one

side of the boat, the water ran over its side and filled it; the rope then broke and they were all immersed in the water; I did all in my power to render assistance, and got Hammond to shore alive.

Benjamin Williams, landlord of the Swan Inn, Glasbury, deposed that he was present, having gone down to the river that morning, fearing that there would be an accident. He confirmed the evidence of the previous witness in every particular.

Bedle, the boatman, and Hammon; two of the survivors, gave similar evidence.

Mr. Edw. Beavan said that he considered that the accident was caused by the unskilful and improper manner in which this boat was swung; he crossed in the boat on the day that it was first used, about a month back, and he considered it so dangerous that he stated to the boatman, and to many influential gentlemen in the neighbourhood, and amongst them to several of the jury, that an accident was inevitable on the first flood if the boat were continued to be so attached to the tackle; the rope passed through a stanchion at the bow of the boat, and another at the stern, consequently the rope had to sustain the whole pressure of the water on the side of the boat; the length of the boat was 32 feet; he considered the only safe mode of attaching the boat to the rope was by fixing it at the bow, the mode usually adopted, and that formerly used at the ferry in question.

Nathaniel Bynon, the carpenter who had been employed to attach the rope to the boat, stated that he considered the plan at present adopted was a very unsafe one during the flooding of the river.

Viscount Hereford, as a Magistrate of the county of Brecon, who maintained the ferry, stated that the plan adopted was similar to that formerly used at Eton on the Thames, where no accident had ever occurred.

The Coroner addressed the jury, and stated that he apprehended that the jury would return a verdict that the deceased was accidentally drowned.

One of the jurors said that he wished to express his opinion; that the accident occurred in consequence of the dangerous condition of the boat and tackle.

Viscount Hereford said that if the jury returned such a verdict he as a Magistrate of the county of Brecon would instantly stop the boat from crossing, and so cut off all communication. He was justified in adopting that course, and was so authorised by the Chairman, though the Magistrates would be happy to attend to any suggestion of the jury.

The jury having consulted together, returned the following verdict:—"Accidentally drowned; and we (the jury) give it as our opinion that the ferry boat is at present unsafe, and suggest that the ferry be moved lower down out of the stream, and that the boat be worked across the river in heavy water in a different manner from what it is at present."

The funerals of the deceased took place soon after the inquiry. Bynon was buried in Cwmbach chapel, being a member of the Wesleyan body, and a local preacher; his character is spoken of in the highest terms of praise. Jones was buried at Glasbury church, and he, too, enjoyed the good opinion of the inhabitants as an honest, industrious man: indeed all, we learn, bore excellent diameters. We hope shortly to be able to announce that the other bodies have been found, every exertion being used; but from the continuance of the flood, we fear they may be carried a great way down the river.

Glasbury bridge was built in 1798. At the time of the great flood, there was a ford there for four years, and not a single accident occurred. About fifteen years ago two piers fell in, and the ford was then used for about six months, without an accident. Rollers were at that time put on the boat, so as to face the current of the water. The present boat, which is commodious, and capable of holding sixty persons, is flat bottomed, and about 32 feet long.

The bodies of the other three unfortunate deceased were not found up to yesterday

(Friday) morning.

We beg to correct a false statement in a London contemporary of Wednesday last, that "there is much reason to fear that the rope had been partially cut by some evil-disposed miscreant." We can confidently assert that such was not the case, the rope having been minutely examined by some of the jury and by the clergyman of the parish on the evening of the inquiry. It was then clearly ascertained that it had broken in the tie which fastened it to a large iron ring attached to a post in the ground. From the force of the river as the boat was sinking (perhaps 100 tons of water), no ordinary-sized rope could possibly have resisted. Had the rope been indeed "cut" before the boat sank, probably it would have floated down the river and we might have been spared the painful duty of chronicling this sad accident.

At 1 p.m. yesterday. the body of the boy who was in the employment of Mr. Ball, was found in the Wye, near Hay, by Mr. E. Holsey, and taken to Cliro.