

John Neville Keith

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ISLAND HERBALIST'S DEATH.

OBJECTION TO A QUALIFIED DOCTOR.

Last (Friday) evening the Deputy Coroner (F. A. Joyce, Esq.) held an inquest at 59 Alexandra-terrace, Newport, on the body of John Neville Keith, aged 75, a herbalist, of that address, who was well known in the Island under the name of "Dr. Timothy Jones," and was recognisable by constantly wearing a tall silk hat. His wife said that deceased went to Southampton on the 3rd inst., and on returning complained of having a chill. He remained in, and two or three days afterwards said he had pleurisy, but she did not realise that he was seriously ill, as he persisted in saying that he was going to Southampton again on the following Tuesday. It did not occur to her that he was seriously ill till the last. The night before he died she told him if he did not get better she should fetch a doctor, and he said it was not necessary and that he was going away next day and would not see one. If he had been well enough he would not have elected for a qualified medical man to attend him. She did not realise he was so ill, or she would certainly have had a doctor.---Mr. D. F. Ritchie, chemist, said deceased had been in the habit of coming to his shop to purchase bottles, corks, pill-boxes, and a few drugs. Some time before Christmas he looked in a state of high fever. Witness said "You look very ill, Mr. Jones," and he replied "Yes. I have had double pneumonia, and I have been in bed for a week. I caught a chill." Witness said "Did you have a doctor to attend you?" and deceased said "Oh, no; I cured myself." Witness said "You are very clever, Mr. Jones, if you did that. I don't think you should be out now." Deceased shrugged his shoulders and said he was all right. He thought deceased would object to a qualified medical man being called in to see him. He was a strange man with a strange practice. He was a clever botanist, but knew nothing about chemistry.---Dr. Thompson said that by direction of the Coroner he made a post-mortem, and found deceased had a belladonna plaster over his chest and heart. The right lung was full of pneumonia in the second stage, and the left was a mass of pneumonia from end to end; the chest cavity was cram full of fluid. It seemed almost incredible that he should appear to have suffered so little. Death was due to pleurisy and double pneumonia.---The Coroner said the deceased was one of those individuals, fortunately not frequently met with, who resented, or objected to, the attendance of a qualified medical man, and in justice to the wife they had to remember that environment, as deceased would probably have strongly objected as long as he was able to one being called in.---The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical evidence.

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