

# A Father's Ordeal

## Recent City Drowning

### Inquest Details

One of the saddest and most touching stories it is possible to record was that revealed at the inquest on the body of the little boy, Alexander McConkey, aged 2½ years, who was drowned in the Shannon at Limerick on the 14th June.

The inquest, presided over by Dr Stephen Scanlan, Coroner for East Clare, was held at Setright's licensed premises, Cratloe, on Tuesday.

Superintendent O'Sullivan, Killaloe, represented the authorities.

Thomas O'Halloran, a light keeper, in the employment of the Limerick Harbour Board, gave evidence as to the recovery of the body. He stated he was walking along the Shannon embankment the previous evening when he observed the child's body lying face downward in a marsh some distance from the bank. The body, which was fully clothed, was slightly decomposed. Witness removed it from the reach of the tide and notified the Guards.

Alexander McConkey, St. Lelia street, Limerick, father of the deceased, stated he was cruising down the Shannon on the evening of the 14th June in a motor boat. With him were his two sons and four other young children. The deceased, who was sitting between his knees, became restless after a time and witness placed him on a seat, keeping hold of him by the hand. Shortly after he looked away for a moment, and then felt the child had slipped into the water.

"I immediately dived in after him," continued the father, "and succeeded in reaching him. I kept his head over the water and shouted for help. My son was alive at the time and I continued to struggle and shout for the boat. After a few moments, however, I noticed that the boy was dead. I became very exhausted and went under the water several times. Eventually I had to release the child and I gave myself up for lost. I then heard the engine of the motor boat being restarted and this gave me new hope. I remained struggling until somebody threw me an oar. The boat came closer and I was helped aboard by Thomas Long, one of the occupants. After that I fainted and remembered no more.

Dr J Power, Sixmilebridge, gave evidence that death was due to asphyxia following immersion in water.

The jury returned a verdict in accordance with the medical testimony.

Supt O'Sullivan said the action of Thomas Long, a boy of 10½ years, was extraordinarily plucky. He had shown wonderful presence of mind, and Alexander McConkey (senior) certainly owed his life to the boy.

The coroner concurred with the Supt. and added that the action of the father on the occasion was that of a brave man.

The jury recommended that the action of young Long be brought to the notice of the Royal Humane Society.

Sympathy was expressed with the relatives of deceased.