

2514. It does not necessarily follow. Is it not within your knowledge that many people die without their relatives being aware of the fact until afterwards?—We cannot save clothes in order to give relatives a chance of buying them.

2515. Do you not think, as a matter of fair-play alike to relatives and friends, that publicity of the name and of the effects being sold would be an advantage?—Perhaps it would. It never has been the practice from the beginning to give any names at all. But I am still under the impression that I have seen an advertisement headed, “In the estate of M. Dallon, deceased.”

2516. I have shown you the newspaper, and it is not in the advertisement. You appear to have sold the balance of the jewellery on the 28th March, 1890?—Yes.

2517. Mr. Morrison refers here to certain lace?—That is not sold.

2518. And he refers to a certain bracelet?—That is sold.

2519. There is no bracelet referred to in the auctioneer's inventory. [Auctioneer's account sales produced and shown to witness.] Are there many things yet unsold in this estate?—The lace.

2520. Why was it not sold?—Because I did not think it worth selling; it is crochet-work, and I did not think it worth while to sell it.

2521. Possibly this bracelet has been missed too, and was not worth selling?—No, nothing has been missed. The whole of the things have been sold. I certainly did not think it worth while to send down a bit of crochet-work amongst jewellery.

2522. Then, there is certain lace still left unsold?—A piece of lace.

2523. And you know nothing of the bracelet?—It has all been sent to the sale or given to the boy.

2524. If Mr. Morrison tells us, as he has told us already, that a valuable bracelet was amongst the deceased's effects when handed to you, and that it was not sold at the auction-sale?—If sold, it appears in the account sales.

2525. If it does not appear in the account sales?—Then we did not have it.

2526. You had no inventory of what you had?—I know those account sales are complete.

2527. How?—Of my own knowledge; I had the box through my hands often enough.

2528. Do you mean to tell me you can carry in your head the inventory of a large quantity of effects without having a record of them?—Is there nothing corresponding to a bracelet there. [In the account sales?]

2529. There is a bangle. It cannot be the valuable bracelet such as Mr. Morrison describes?—I am satisfied every article of Mrs. Dallon's has been sold and accounted for in the account sales.

2530. Though there is no inventory to check the fact?—I took them down myself.

2531. You have told us that, and produced a book which does not appear to have a single memorandum in reference to it. Is not that so?—Yes.

2532. And you told me it was in an inventory contained in a book. It is not here in this book. Then we have the statement of an intimate friend of the deceased widow that he was promised by you that he should be advised as to when the sale of these effects would take place. The sale took place without his being so advised. I ask for details which do not appear in the account sales, and yet you tell me the bracelet must have been sold with other things?—It must have been.

2533. Unfortunately, there is no original inventory, and if half of those things have disappeared there is no means of checking them?—They were under my care. I did not conceal them.

2534. There is no accusation of that kind; only it is an extremely unfortunate thing, when a complaint is made, as has been in this case, that no inventory should have existed; and the whole thing appears to have been conducted in rather a slipshod manner. It is an unfortunate omission on the part of the department that the practice which you say existed did not exist in this instance. However, Mr. Morrison proposes to address the Commissioners. I should be glad, however, before we leave this question, to ascertain from you distinctly upon what evidence you assume, in the first place, the absence of legitimacy on the part of the son?—I do not know that I am called upon to answer that question.

2535. *The Chairman.*] Decidedly I think you should answer that question as far as is within your knowledge?—I gathered from the private correspondence of Mrs. Dallon that the boy was an illegitimate son.

2536. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Why was there no record of that put upon the papers?—I have said here, “believed to be illegitimate.”

2537. Do you not think that if you refuse to pay over to the son there ought to be some reference in these papers to justify that refusal?—We do not admit the sonship.

2538. You admit the son by writing to him about his mother's affairs?—We have written, saying, “Your mother's effects.”

2539. *Mr. Loughrey.*] What becomes of the private letters which come in with the effects of deceased persons?—They are burnt.

2540. We were told we should find everything connected with this estate in these papers. What justifies the destruction of private letters?—[No answer.]

2541. Do you think the interests of this young man in the private letters and papers of his mother should have been damaged by the Public Trustee withholding them? Have they been destroyed?—Yes; the letters have been destroyed.

2542. Do you think it right and proper that this young man should have remained under a slur, and that the evidence should have been destroyed by the Public Trustee?—As a rule, we destroy all private letters, unless we return them to the relatives.

2543. *The Chairman.*] Who instructed you to destroy private letters?—The Public Trustee.

2544. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Has that instruction ever been given as a standing instruction to the office in writing?—No; it has not been given in writing.