

3754. Then, taking them as a whole, would you call them, as a body, a reputable body of professional men?—Certainly.

Mrs. C. D. DE CASTRO examined.

3755. *The Chairman.*] My good lady, you are the wife of the Rev. Mr. De Castro?—Yes.

3756. The Commissioners are sorry to have troubled you, but there is a matter that they think you might perhaps desire to throw some light upon. A parcel of lace belonging to a trust estate has been kept at Mr. De Castro's house for some months. Do you know anything about that lace?—I know that Mr. De Castro brought up a piece of lace before last Christmas, and he asked me what the value of it was. I said I did not know anything at all about the value of it, as it would be of very little use to any one who had not a child to put it on her dress. I believe it remained in the pigeon-hole in the study. It was in a piece of paper, and I believe it remained in a pigeon-hole in the study. I remember perfectly his bringing it to me, and showing it to me. He asked me the value, and I said I could not tell the value. It looked to me more like crochet lace.

3757. Now, do you come from Ireland?—I come from Dublin, but do not know anything about the value of lace.

3758. But some Irish lace is valuable, is it not?—I do not know. I did not know that there was any particular value attached to it. That is what took place, and I never heard anything more about it. I remarked that lace used to be fashionable; but that it was too wide for a child's dress.

3759. Did Mr. De Castro say anything to you or make any remark about this lace on any day last week?—He told me you had made a great fuss about it, and that you said it was very valuable. I said I did not think anything of it. It never was touched.

3760. How long have you been married to the Rev. Mr. De Castro?—Just twelve months.

3761. Do you remember any articles of jewellery that he might have taken to his house from time to time?—He never took home a single thing, except one watch on his boy's birthday, this time twelve months. Nothing else ever came into the house—never a single thing, I can swear solemnly, since I have been in it.

3762. Are you aware that Mr. De Castro has purchased a good many articles of jewellery continually for some years past?—Never since I have been married to him. We have no money to spend on anything but common necessities.

3763. Now, did he not give you a wedding-present of jewellery?—Never a wedding-present, never an iota. There was a bracelet missing, he told me. I never knew anything about it. I got a very handsome bracelet as a wedding-present from a gentleman who is inspector of the Loan and Mercantile Company.

3764. Would you be willing to show it to me?—Yes; and give you the gentleman's address who gave it to me. As far as my house is concerned, he never gave me an iota of a wedding-present except himself.

3765. Did you give Mr. De Castro a wedding-present?—No.

3766. You gave him, of course, what was one in yourself?—I was wondering if that could possibly be construed into anything. I kept a boarding-house before I was married, and when I was married the gentleman gave me the bracelet as a wedding present. He bought it in Dunedin.

3767. What day was it that you heard the Commissioners were making very searching inquiry about the lace and the bracelet?—Friday, I think.

3768. On Friday evening?—I really could not tell you. Mr. De Castro was ill. Four weeks ago he could not stand on his feet. It has weakened him altogether, and his head. For eight weeks he was very ill, and I have had a hard tussle to save his life at all. He is very weak, exceedingly weak. But for nursing he never would have been alive. I have had to stay in his room for twenty-two hours. He is weak both in head and body, and has been very much upset by having to come down here. As far as that lace was concerned, there was nothing in it, except that he brought it up, and I never saw it since.

3769. I suppose that Mr. De Castro knew the lace was there all the time?—I suppose he did. We never spoke of it.

3770. Then, directly it was inquired after by the Commissioners, I suppose he knew where to put his hand at once upon it?—I suppose he did. He never gave it to me. He asked me what the value of it was.

3771. Now, how long before Christmas day was it that he took the lace up to his house?—Just before Christmas. It never was opened since.

3772. What sort of parcel was the lace in?—I think a little brown-paper parcel.

3773. Do you remember the writing on the inside of the paper?—I do not. He brought it in, threw it on the table, and I said, "Oh, it is very pretty." He said, "Do you know the value of it?" I said I could not tell, but that it would be of no value except to a person who had a child to put it over a velvet dress.

3774. Then, you have no child?—No; and it was of no value whatever. To my knowledge, it remained in the pigeon-hole in the study ever since—never was touched.

Mr. MCGINIE further examined.

3775. *Mr. Macdonald.*] The ledger you are opening now is folio 194, Maria Dallan, intestate estate. I see here the entry balanced, and a credit at the Bank of New South Wales of £15 19s. 10d.?—Yes.

3776. I see no reference in the original report of the estate to any bank account possessed by her at which any sum of money was lying. There is no record of any application to the bank, or statement as to how this balance arose?—It would be the balance of the current account.

3777. Where is the bank-book?—I suppose the officer in charge would have that.