



CORONERS INQUESTS



Salisbury

Inquest on Charles Wheeler

Death from Starvation

On Friday an inquest was held at the Council House, on the body of Charles Wheeler, aged 72, who was found dead at his lodgings, Block-place, St Edmund's Church-street, on the morning of that day. The inquest having been opened by the coroner, the jury proceeded to view the body. The room in which deceased lay was nearly destitute of furniture; the place was covered with remnants of old baskets and other refuse, and there was not a particle of food to be found, with the exception of a part of a loaf, rotten and mildewed, and a bone. The inquest having been resumed at the Council House, Dr. Gordon stated that he was called that morning to see the deceased, and the cause of death was syncope, which might have been accelerated by want. The body was very thin and emaciated, but not much more so than would be the case in many old men. He was the medical officer of the union, and the deceased had never applied to him. Other evidence was called, and it was proved that deceased had not recently applied for relief to the parish authorities. The jury returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased had died from exhaustion, and that no one but himself was to blame; and appended as a rider that they wished to call attention to the state of the dwellings in the place where deceased lived, they being a disgrace to civilisation, and ought not to be tolerated another week. They did not wonder at the outbreaks of fever and prevalence of crime, when such places were allowed to exist, and they considered that some steps should at once be taken to remove those residing there from them, and that such dwellings should at once be placed under proper sanitary control."

Western Gazette, 8 October 1875