THE INQUEST AT THE TAVERN

"You expected to identify, I am told, sir?"
"Yes."
"Have you identified?"
"No. It's a horrible sight. O! a horrible, horrible sight!"

—Our Mutual Friend

The Manning case was tried in the newspapers from the moment of the grisly discovery at Minver Place. The news accounts of the "facts" of the murder are much more voluminous than the shorthand renderings of the court proceedings that have come down to us. The crime journalists, enjoying their freedom from the restrictions of hearsay rules, requirements of relevance, and the chastening effect of cross-examination, wrote an enormous amount about the Mannings that was never proved in court. Since their versions of the case were often more vivid than the courtroom records, it is not surprising that many of the traditions about the Manning case can be traced back to newspaper columns but not to the witness stand.

From the beginning there was little doubt in the newspapers that the Mannings, or one of them, had perpetrated the crime. The very first Times article on the case (which appeared on 18 August) concluded: "There can hardly be any doubt that Manning or his wife committed the crime, as they sold all their goods to a broker in Bermondsey-street on Tuesday last, and exhibited a great desire to leave the neighborhood. Mrs. Manning was also at the murdered man's lodgings on the day he left and the day after, when she unlocked his drawers." The Observer, one of the most popular of London's sensation-mongering Sunday papers, found no difficulty in condemning
both the Mannings in its first reports on 19 August: "Since the days of Greenacre and Good this isle has not been frightened from its propriety by a more atrocious murder than that perpetrated about ten days since at Bermondsey upon the person of... a Mr. Patrick O'Connor... That Manning and his wife were his murderers there is no present reason to doubt... if his murderers shall pass unpunished it will be a disgrace to civilization."

The Observer was a leading propagator of rumor and surmise. It told its readers in its 19 August issue that the crime was long premeditated, for the quicklime that covered the body had been procured three weeks before the murder and the grave "must have been commenced about the same time inasmuch as not a single morsel of the soil is to be traced in the house, in the offices [outbuildings] or in the yard." Neighbors were cited as witnesses of mysterious happenings at 3 Minver Place, though they were never to appear in court. In the words of a "person who resides next door," the Mannings acted suspiciously almost from the week they took possession; they appeared "to be up all night, there was nearly always a light burning, and there always appeared to be something mysterious going on." On the night of the murder, the tenant of an adjoining house, Mr. Truck, was supposedly awakened around midnight by a sound in the lower part of the Mannings' house and roused his wife, telling her he feared a break-in attempt. When she dismissed his worries as nonsense, he pointed out the shadow of a stooping man on the wall opposite the window of the Mannings' back kitchen. But sleep put an end to their fears.

The Observer discounted a theory it had learned the police held that O'Connor had been murdered in a bedroom on the upper floor; the staircase was so narrow that O'Connor's large body could only have been dragged with difficulty down to the kitchen two floors below. But in recompense for disposing of the upstairs-downstairs theory, the Observer had an explanation of how O'Connor had been overpowered by the Mannings. Reputed to be a teetotaler, he could not have been drunk, but it was reasonable to suppose that a stupefying drug, such as
opium, had been infused in his pipe tobacco. The Observer noted that O'Connor was a constant smoker and reported that a half-filled bottle of laudanum had been found in the house.

The Observer lost no time at all in molding images of O'Connor and the Mannings. It showered the victim with nicknames. When a boy, it reported, he was large for his age, and on account of his size and his somewhat pompous bearing he was given the nickname “the big Nabob.” At the docks he had the reputation of being wealthy and was called “the Customs’ money lender.” Abuse was heaped on the “improper intimacy” between O'Connor and Marie Manning. The Observer had been told that O'Connor and Marie Manning had called with them as late as a week or two before he disappeared. On that occasion the Parkers noticed that Mrs. Manning looked exceedingly pale and “fidgetty.” Mrs. Parker, who apparently had a gift of retrospective prophecy, said that she had never liked Mrs. Manning and had wished, because of her suspicions of her affair with O'Connor, to forbid her the house altogether; indeed, Mrs. Parker “had even strong suspicions that something fatal would occur.” The Observer itself entertained no doubt as to the nature of the relation that existed between O’Connor and “the female Manning,” asserting sententiously that “the ascertained knowledge of the sure existence of this abhorrent intimacy will remove, from the breasts of the public, at least all sympathy for the fate of O’Connor.”

The Observer’s first portrayals of Marie Manning mingled glamor and repulsion. Marie was “an extremely fine woman—handsome and of almost masculine stature. Her manners, at least to the society in which she latterly mixed, appeared those of an accomplished lady.” To this portrait a heavy overlay of horrors was applied. The Observer reported rumors (soon disavowed) that Marie was a cousin of the Swiss valet Courvoisier, who had murdered Lord Russell. Relative or not, Marie, in the Observer’s columns, outdid Courvoisier in nerve and indifference to her crime. To illustrate “the extraordinary nerve of the Mannings, particularly the female,” a corre-
spondent of the *Observer* related the famous "goose story," which can be found, without attribution, in many brief accounts of the Manning case: "[Marie] on Sunday prepared her dinner in the back kitchen, where she roasted a goose over the spot where her murdered paramour was lying, and when the police called at the house on the following Monday to inquire after the deceased, she coolly asked them in, bade them take a seat and answered all questions with the greatest composure." The English public might be expected to admire Marie for her good looks and fashionable dress, but nobody was prepared to like a murderess who cooked a goose over the grave of her victim.

The inquest was opened on Saturday afternoon, 18 August, the day after the discovery of the body, at the New Leather Market Tavern, about a block away from Minver Place. The successor of the tavern still stands on Leather Market Street at the corner of Weston Street. Its windows and door are framed by brightly painted blue posts topped by a horizontal beam in the same color, on which the name of the establishment appears in golden letters: "Leather Exchange Tavern." In 1849 it was customary for inquests to be held at the tavern closest to the scene of the crime. Charles Dickens's journal *Household Words* complained about this practice (in its issue of 27 April 1850) as detracting from the dignity due the coroner's inquiry. The scene described in the article must have been appropriate to the inquest at the Leather Market Tavern: "A human being had been prematurely sent into eternity, and the coroner was called upon—amidst several implements of conviviality, the odour of gin and the smell of tobacco-smoke—[to inquire into the cause of death]." Presiding over the inquest was Mr. Carter, one of the coroners for Surrey, and a jury of "thirteen of the most respectable tradesmen in the neighbourhood." It would have been a less unlucky number except that the fourteenth jurymen who was sworn was Mr. Coleman, owner of the Mannings' house, and the coroner allowed an objection made by O'Connor's friend Meade to Coleman's service on the ground that he would be required as a witness.

The jury was called upon to view O'Connor's body. It was still naked as found, but the legs and thighs had been tied up to the
body with a new rope. The body was partly covered with lime, and such extensive discoloration of the face had taken place that it was only by O'Connor's sharp projecting chin and toothless mouth that identification could be made for the inquest by O'Connor's cousin Flynn. The jury turned away from the body with relief and prepared to hear the testimony.

The first witness sworn was Pierce Walsh, a friend of O'Connor's. Walsh, a former grocer's clerk, presently unemployed, had not the slightest doubt that the body was O'Connor's. He told of his last evening with O'Connor on Wednesday night, 8 August:

"I last saw O'Connor alive at midnight on Wednesday the eighth. We parted after having been at 3 Minver Place. He was then in a good state of health. I spent a great portion of that evening with him at his lodgings and then accompanied him to Minver Place. I had been there with him before, I think four times in all. I know that he and Mrs. Manning were very intimate; he was intimate with both the Mannings. When we arrived at Minver Place, it was about a quarter to ten. The door was opened by Mrs. Manning. I never knew her by any other name for O'Connor had always spoken of her to me as Mrs. Manning. We stayed at her house about an hour and a half."

"What happened then?" the coroner asked.

"We left together."

"During the time you were there did anything particular happen?"

"After we went in and sat down Mrs. Manning said, 'Mr. O'Connor, why did you not come to dinner today? We kept dinner waiting an hour for you.' She then asked, ' Didn't you get my note?' He said, 'No.' Mrs. Manning said, 'I wrote a note to you to the Docks to come to dinner today.' I suggested that it might have been late when she put it into the receiving-office and that it might not have been received at the Docks at 4 o'clock, the time of O'Connor's leaving the office. Mrs. Manning agreed: 'It was 2 o'clock when I mailed it, and he will receive it tomorrow.'"

O'Connor mentioned to Mrs. Manning that Walsh had received that day the balance of a bill of exchange that a Mr. Pitts
THE MURDERED MAN.

Patrick O'Connor,

_Late Guager in her Majesty's Customs._

Portrait of Patrick O'Connor, from _The New Wonderful Magazine._
of Bethnal Green Road owed O'Connor, and for which the witness had taken out execution against Pitts. Walsh was rather surprised that Mrs. Manning appeared to know so much about the transaction, and she went on to speak of three other bills of Mr. Pitts's that O'Connor, the reputed moneylender, held. Marie even gave him legal advice, suggesting that he take proceedings against Pitts for the recovery of the remaining bills, and he replied that he would do so. Walsh then described how the evening wound down:

"O'Connor began to smoke after that, and then growing very weak and faint he laid himself down on the sofa. He smoked a pipe, and Mr. Manning smoked also. Smoking did not lead to drinking—we had nothing to drink. They got some brandy and water for him when he was faint but he refused to take any. While he was on the sofa she had something in a bottle—eau de cologne, I believe—and she kept rubbing his temples with it. We left at about ten minutes past 11 o'clock. He took nothing at the house but water when he was recovering; he was not sick. After he had drunk the water he started smoking again. On leaving the house we passed through Thomas's Street and by Guy's Hospital. It was midnight when we got to the corner of Commercial Street, Whitechapel, and he would not let me go any further with him."

Walsh added that when he had called on O'Connor at his lodging earlier that day, O'Connor was lying on a sofa and seemed to have been drinking, but Mr. Meade, O'Connor's friend, interrupted his testimony, claiming that the witness must be mistaken, for O'Connor had been a teetotaler for upwards of thirteen years.

A juror asked Walsh whether he thought there was any improper connection going on between O'Connor and Mrs. Manning, and he replied, "I do not think it. I have no knowledge of the fact." He also told the coroner that O'Connor had never alluded to any pecuniary transactions with the Mannings.

The coroner announced that it was useless to attempt going further with the case at the present moment without medical testimony. Mr. Odling, the police surgeon who had made a
preliminary examination of O'Connor's body at Minver Place, was ordered to perform an autopsy, and the inquest was adjourned until the following Friday, 24 August. In the meantime the public attention was diverted from the legal proceedings by the spectacular news of the capture of Marie Manning.

The first witness heard on the resumption of the inquest was William Keating, who testified as to the circumstances of his meeting O'Connor on London Bridge on the afternoon of his disappearance. Keating was a clerk in the Examiner's Office of the Customs House and had known O'Connor for about ten years. He had last seen O'Connor alive about a quarter to five on the afternoon of 9 August on London Bridge, walking south to the Surrey side. O'Connor appeared well and in good health and spirits. Keating was accompanied by another customs officer named Graham, to whom O'Connor spoke first. The conversation on the bridge lasted less than two minutes. O'Connor had handed Graham a letter. Keating did not see its contents but caught a glimpse of the signature, which he believed was the name "Maria," penned with some flourish. Graham remarked, "I suppose you are going to dine with Maria"; Keating had the impression that O'Connor had replied, "Yes." The witness supposed that by "Maria" the two men meant Mrs. Manning, whom he had met on occasions walking with O'Connor and at O'Connor's house. He said he would know Mrs. Manning if he saw her again.

Keating's testimony was confirmed by Graham. He also took it for granted that the letter shown by O'Connor on London Bridge was from Mrs. Manning. The letter had said: "We shall be glad to see you" or "We expect you to dinner." Graham had seen Manning once about two years ago and did not know him by name. He had met Marie around the same period in O'Connor's house but did not know what their relationship was. He seemed to hesitate on this point, saying that they did not seem more intimate than ordinary friends when he saw them in O'Connor's house but that (presumably on some subsequent occasion) he had seen them arm in arm and considered them to be intimate.
Another witness, John Younghusband, a gauger who knew O'Connor as a brother officer, also saw him last on Thursday, 9 August. Leaving Gracechurch Street on an omnibus at about a quarter to six in the evening, he saw O'Connor on the London side of London Bridge, near the end of Thames Street. O'Connor was walking very slowly northward toward the city and was looking around him. The omnibus was going fast, and O'Connor did not recognize the witness, who never saw him alive again.

The deferred medical testimony was also introduced. Samuel Lockwood testified as to his preliminary examination of the body at Minver Place and his extraction of a large slug from the frontal bone over O'Connor's right eye. George Odling, the police surgeon, reported the results of the autopsy, which he had conducted with Lockwood's assistance. On his external examination on the head, he had found several severe wounds, as many as eighteen altogether, many of them deeper than the others, in the scalp at the back and on the top. Most of the wounds, but not all, appeared to have been inflicted by a blunt instrument such as a "bricklayer's hammer," a large hammer without a division. He could not discover a distinct bullet hole by which the bullet found over the right eye had penetrated. At the back of the head Dr. Odling saw a dark discoloration that was not the result of decomposition but was an extraneous substance like powder. Since the brain was in a fluid state and completely decomposed, he could not trace the course of the bullet but was certain that the bullet could not have entered at the front, there being no aperture.

Odling had opened the abdomen and found nothing unnatural. He had not made any investigation of the contents of the stomach, but had sent his son off to Guy's Hospital to have the stomach analyzed. The witness proceeded to tell an interesting tale of medical economics. When Odling's son delivered the stomach to Mr. Taylor, the chemical lecturer at Guy's Hospital, that gentleman flatly refused to make the requested analysis. He subsequently informed Odling by letter that his refusal was based on the fact that the counties of Surrey and Middlesex had
never paid him for his trouble in similar matters in the past. Odling told the court that he had not himself made any analysis of the contents of the stomach because he felt incompetent to do so. The coroner intervened:

"Why did you wish the stomach to be analyzed?"

"Because a policeman brought me a bottle of laudanum partly used, which he had found in the house at Minver Place and I was anxious, therefore, to determine whether any laudanum was present in the stomach of the deceased."

"We have heard nothing yet of the discovery of any such bottle," the coroner complained. "How was it forthcoming?"

At this point a police constable stepped forward and informed the court that, in the search of the house, he had found the bottle and had given it to Dr. Odling, who at once pronounced it to contain laudanum.

"What has become of the stomach and its contents?" the coroner asked Odling.

"Finding no analysis could be made of it, it has been thrown away."

And so it was amid a welter of unpaid medical bills and admissions of professional incompetence that O'Connor's stomach and the speculations about laudanum drugging vanished from the case.

Odling concluded his testimony by stating that he was satisfied that the extensive fractures of the skull were sufficient in themselves to account for O'Connor's death, regardless of whether he had been drugged or shot. Under the scalp over the skull was evidence of ecchymosis (blotching caused by the extravasation of blood under the skin), so it was clear that the fractures had been inflicted while O'Connor was still alive.

James Coleman, a builder and the owner of 3 Minver Place, who had been disqualified as a juror, was then heard. On Tuesday evening of the previous week he heard on his arrival home that a gentleman had called who stated that the Mannings had suddenly left. When he went over to 3 Minver Place about two hours later to make inquiries, he saw a man come out. The man, after refusing to give either his name or address, asked who Coleman was and whether the Mannings owed him any
rent. When Coleman replied that they did not, the man replied with satisfaction, "Then you have no claim to the property." His mysterious interlocutor was obviously none other than the dealer, Mr. Bainbridge. Coleman told the jury that he had never been in the Mannings' house since they took occupancy. When they applied for a lease, they gave Mr. O'Connor as a reference.

The next witness to come to the stand produced intriguing testimony. He was William Massey, a medical student who had lodged with the Mannings at 3 Minver Place for about nine or ten weeks and had left about a month before. The Mannings had no servants while he was there, but a woman came in occasionally to assist. He had never seen any visitors there except O'Connor, to whom he had been introduced by Manning. O'Connor had dined there three times during Massey's stay, and Massey had visited him once at his lodgings in the company of the Mannings. It did not appear to the young man that there was any improper intimacy, but the Mannings appeared very friendly with O'Connor. He had heard them mention that O'Connor was a man of property worth twenty thousand pounds.

Manning sometimes talked to Massey about O'Connor, and the conversations seemed to take an uncomfortable medical turn. One evening at about eight o'clock, when the young lodger came upon Manning sitting in his own room, Manning asked him what drug would be most likely to produce stupefaction or partial intoxication so as to cause a person "to put his hand to paper." Manning said that his wife, who was present during the conversation, had been at the docks and had seen the supposed teetotaler O'Connor in a state of intoxication from having taken brandy or port as a preventive against the cholera; when she had gone home with O'Connor, he had shown her his will, in which he made over all or a considerable part of his property to her. Manning proposed to his wife that she lure O'Connor to his house so that the medical student could "frighten him well about the cholera, and persuade him to take large quantities of brandy." Massey thought he was hinting about the possibility of putting a drug in the brandy.
Previous to the conversation about the will, Manning once asked Massey, who was reading a medical work: “Which part of the skull is most dangerous to injure?” Massey said that the most vulnerable place was behind the ear. On another occasion Manning spoke to Massey about the murderer Rush, asking whether the lodger thought a murderer went to heaven. The young man replied, “no,” and had pedantically cited a scriptural text in support of his view.

Manning had told Massey that he and O’Connor hated each other and that O’Connor would “pay him off sometime” for having sued him on the claim that O’Connor had failed to honor his agreement to rent a room at 3 Minver Place. Manning, according to the lodger, had sued in the Whitechapel County Court for thirty shillings—three weeks’ rent for Massey’s room, which O’Connor had allegedly agreed to take before the student moved in. Massey saw the summons lying about the house when he first arrived, and Manning told him that O’Connor had paid the claim rather than have the matter come to trial. Strangely, however, Manning and O’Connor appeared to Massey to be on very good terms when they were together, and he could not believe what Manning had said about their enmity.

But the conversations about weapons and lethal agents did not stop. Once Manning asked him whether air guns made any noise. Massey said he thought not; he had never owned one but had seen one fired off in a course on natural philosophy. During another conversation his landlord asked whether chloroform and laudanum had been employed as stupefying agents. Massey thought little of these questions since they seemed to come up in the natural course of conversation, but he remembered very clearly one pungent maxim of Manning’s: “For God’s sake never marry a foreigner. She will be the ruin of you.” The tenant never noticed any evidence of domestic disharmony between the Mannings, but one morning while he was in bed, he had heard something fall on the floor.

Massey had given up his lodging at Manning’s request, and Mrs. Manning also appeared anxious that he should leave. His
parents thought it was a great pity that he should have to move so near the end of the school term.

The inquest then heard evidence that tied the Mannings to the preparations for the murder. Richard Welsh, who worked for a Mr. Wells in Russell Street, Bermondsey, took the stand. He recalled that on 23 July a man came into Mr. Wells's yard and asked Miss Mary Wells for sixpence worth of stone lime that he said he wanted for his garden. He wrote out his address in the office and, pointing to the witness, said to Miss Mary: "Here is a lad who will take it up to my house." Welsh could not make the delivery that day because he was busy, but on the twenty-fifth of July he carried a bushel of lime to 3 Minver Place. Miss Mary had given him the directions from the note the customer had left, for Welsh could not read. When he arrived at the house, he saw the customer, who told him to go through the house down to the back kitchen, where Welsh shot the lime into the square basket at the left-hand side of the room near the cupboard. The lime was unslaked (unhydrated) and therefore highly caustic.

Welsh testified that the customer's name was not mentioned either at the time he wrote out his address or afterward, but that he thought he would recognize him if he saw him again. There was nobody else present when the lime was delivered. The man paid him three halfpence, the promised tip for the delivery, and had already paid the sixpence for the lime at the time he gave his order.

The next witness, William Cahill, a shopman to George Langley, of 46 Tooley Street, Bermondsey, was the next to testify. He stated that on Wednesday, 8 August (the day before O'Connor's disappearance), a lady came into the shop at about three o'clock in the afternoon and asked for a coal shovel. Cahill showed her some short-handled dust shovels, which were used for coal. He believed that he had asked her whether she preferred a regular or long-handled shovel and that she had replied that "she would make a short one do." He showed her a shovel priced at a shilling and one at fifteen pence. She said she wanted a "strong" one and therefore settled on the fifteen
pence shovel, but not without haggling over the price. The shopman finally conceded a penny, and a deal was struck at fourteen pence. The shovel was of wrought iron without any holes, and the handle was about a foot in length. Although he had never seen the lady before, he would have no difficulty in recognizing her. She wore a rather common-looking black dress with three or four flounces and had a black drawn bonnet. When Cahill asked for her name, she said it was Manning. She spoke with a slight foreign accent. The witness himself made the delivery of the shovel and gave it into Mrs. Manning’s hands the same evening at about seven o’clock at the address she had given—3 Minver Place, Weston Street.

A shovel was produced and identified by the witness as the one he had sold to Mrs. Manning; the private mark of the shop and the selling price had been scratched on it with a brad-awl. Cahill’s examination then terminated.

Had the evidence of the shovel tied Mrs. Manning to the preparations for the burial? The reporter for the Observer was not certain, observing that the shovel identified by Cahill “appeared an implement very unlikely to have been used in digging the pit in which the unfortunate man’s body was concealed after the murder.”

It was now nearly half past five, and since the jury had been sitting since eleven o’clock, the coroner adjourned the inquest until the following Monday morning. When it resumed, Frederick Manning was still at large, and the Times was expressing the concern that “every day that passes diminishes the chance of his arrest, and unless the most strenous exertions are now made a deed of the most extraordinary atrocity may be suffered to go unpunished.”

As the inquest resumed, the jury was given additional testimony about the shovel that Mrs. Manning had purchased. Police Constable William Sopp testified that on 22 August, at Inspector Yates’s instructions, he had called on the dealer Bainbridge at his establishment at 14 Bermondsey Square. He knocked at the door and inquired whether Bainbridge was at home. He waited a few minutes outside until Mrs. Bainbridge let him in. He asked her whether among the household goods
her husband had bought from Manning there was a shovel. She said there was and brought out an iron shovel for Sopp to inspect. The constable observed some marks of mortar on the shovel and, studying it further, found something that had the appearance of "blood and ashes with human hair attached." Calling Mrs. Bainbridge's attention to it, he asked her: "Did you ever notice this before?"

"No."

"Has anyone used the shovel since your husband purchased it?"

"I don't know for certain that anyone has used it, but I believe someone has done so."

The coroner inquired whether Mr. Bainbridge, who had been asked for at the beginning of the inquest, was now present. The summoning officer said that he was not, but that he had been summoned and had promised to be at the inquest today at half past ten, having been informed that he would be taken as the first witness. The elusive Mr. Bainbridge was finally rounded up late in the session. He said he had received a summons to testify on Saturday and knew that the court was adjourned to this morning, but that he had business that detained him at the west end of town. He apologized for any inconvenience to the court and assured them that he had intended to show no disrespect.

He testified that he had first met the Mannings about seven weeks before (early July), having been introduced to them by another Bermondsey resident, Mrs. Hornby, who said they had some furniture to dispose of. The first time he went with her to call on the Mannings no business was done, but he was told to call again the next morning. When he returned, Manning came to the door and told him that he had already sold the goods. Bainbridge said, "I am sorry for it, as I should have given as good a price as another." The other deal cannot have been firm, for Manning asked Bainbridge to come back again, which he did at noon two days after. This time he saw Mrs. Manning, who showed him around the house. She asked sixteen pounds for everything with the exception of the kitchen things, which he did not see. He offered thirteen pounds and was told to call
again. The Mannings seemed to alternate as negotiators, for next time Bainbridge was greeted by Manning, who said he could have the furniture for thirteen pounds fifteen shillings. Bainbridge stuck with his thirteen pound figure, but his persistence did not appear to irritate Manning. He asked the dealer into the back parlor and said: “I have a very respectable young man in my house lodging. He has been rather ‘fast’ and wants to borrow 10 pounds on his medical certificate in the hospital. Could you lend it to him?” Bainbridge said he did not think the certificate was very good security but that he would ascertain what it was worth.

The coroner was irritated by Bainbridge’s ramblings and brought him back to the narrative of the furniture purchase. The long protracted negotiations finally resulted in Bainbridge’s concluding a purchase of the goods on the Monday previous to the discovery of the body (13 August). Manning came to see Bainbridge and said he was going to dispose of the furniture. After a little conversation, Bainbridge paid him a fifteen-shilling deposit and was told to remove the goods next morning at five o’clock. Bainbridge cannily responded that he had better not move them so early because it would look bad. Manning left about 10:15 A.M. and returned about a quarter past four the same day. Again, the plans had apparently changed. He told Bainbridge: “My governor says, I am to stop in town another fortnight. I am come to pay the 15 shilling deposit back again.” He added abruptly, looking about, “You have apartments to let. I suppose I may come and stop a fortnight here. Do you have a large bedroom upstairs?” Bainbridge agreed to rent him an upstairs bedroom and sent a servant to look for Mrs. Manning so that she could inspect the apartment. However, the girl went to the wrong house, and when she returned for fresh instructions, Manning went home himself. On his return after an absence of twenty minutes, Mrs. Manning was not with him. Manning said cryptically that “he had started her off for the country.”

Manning had brought a bottle of brandy with him and he drank a good deal. Bainbridge said that he was out during the greater part of Monday evening. Most of the household goods
the dealer had purchased were removed from Minver Place on Tuesday.

Bainbridge described how he picked up the balance of the goods in the company of Constable Burton. Burton handed some of these goods to him. There was an iron shovel in the house which was not a cinder shovel for it had no holes, but a coal shovel. Bainbridge took all these things and put them away. He did not use the shovel. He was shown the shovel that had been produced in court and said that he believed it was the same shovel.

Bainbridge produced the inventory that he had taken of the Mannings' goods. He testified that he had not received a hammer or any similar implement and that he had found nothing like an air gun at the Mannings' house.

Mary Ann Bainbridge followed her husband to the stand. She had gone with him when he picked up the balance of the goods in the presence of Constable Burton. Among the items they took home on that occasion were the shovel, some crockery, and a few old dresses, which she had at home. The previous Wednesday she had given the shovel to a police officer. Among the clothing she had taken was a dress that looked as if it had been washed out in a hurry and put to the fire to be dried. It had not been ironed and appeared to have been put away before it had been thoroughly dry. She had never looked at the dress before last Wednesday, when she gave it with the shovel to the police. The testimony was interrupted for a statement by Constable Burton that there were several stains of blood on the dress.

Continuing her testimony, Mrs. Bainbridge said she had seen Mrs. Manning and had spoken to her but was not acquainted with her. Mr. Manning had slept at the Bainbridges' house on Monday and Tuesday and had left about a quarter to eight or half past seven on Wednesday morning. On Monday evening, Mrs. Bainbridge testified, he went out several times to the Horns Tavern in Bermondsey Square for brandy and soda. Manning had ordered a lobster for his supper, and Mrs. Bainbridge tried to get one. He seemed very tipsy to her; he lay on the sofa and she had to shake him to wake him up for
supper. She saw him pour brandy in his tea, one cup after the other. Finding him an unappetizing guest, she asked him, "Will you not sleep in your own house?" He replied, "No; I would not sleep in that house for 20 pounds."

The inquest continued to focus on the shovel. The surgeon, Mr. Lockwood, was recalled and asked to examine the shovel. He testified that there did appear to be human hair on it as well as mortar, but that he was satisfied that the injuries to O'Connor's head could not have been inflicted with the shovel. A juror inquired whether Lockwood had looked at O'Connor's neck in his examination of the body. Lockwood said that since O'Connor's tongue had protruded from the mouth they had thought at first that he had been the victim of strangulation, but that the neck showed no signs of the sort. He was then asked by the coroner to examine the stained dress that Mrs. Bainbridge had received from the Manning house, and he expressed the belief that the stains were, in fact, blood.

Evidence of the flight and arrest of Marie Manning was also introduced. The driver, William Kirk, told of picking up Mrs. Manning and taking her to the Euston Square train station. He got one of the few laughs of the day when he told the court that he thought that Mrs. Manning was a country woman, or a woman who came from Essex or Sussex, for she could not speak the English language. A station porter, William Day, told of placing her boxes addressed to "Mrs. Smith" in the station cloakroom. Being a better judge of accents than Mr. Kirk, he had taken her to be a foreigner. Inspector Haynes told about his examination of Mrs. Manning's boxes at the station. In the small box that contained the will of Frederick George Manning he came upon the skirt and body of a dress. Up to the very top, where the skirt had been cut from the body of the dress, there were several marks of blood on the inner lining, but the stains did not appear to go through. A splash also appeared in one place on the upper part of the skirt where it joined the body. The body of the dress seemed to have been very recently washed. Haynes also found two toilette table covers which had marks of blood upon them and a piece of muslin with blood splashes.
Superintendent Richard Moxey of the Edinburgh police then told the exciting story of the arrest of Mrs. Manning, which must have already been familiar to the coroner and jurymen from the newspaper accounts. Moxey detailed the contents of the luggage and purse taken from Mrs. Manning at the time of her arrest: in addition to the railway securities, banknotes, and coin, he had found a ticket dated 14 August, in the name of Smith, for excess luggage on the Edinburgh train; and a baggage room check, dated the previous day, from the London and Brighton Station. As Moxey then set out to list the articles found on her person by female searchers, the coroner interrupted him. A tone of English chauvinism sounded in his voice: "I do not know in what way evidence is taken in Scotland, but in this country the party who searches the person must be the witness to produce whatever may be found."

Moxey replied that he had personally seen these articles in the prisoner's possession before the search was made, and Mrs. Manning had made no remark when they were delivered to him by the female searchers. The coroner permitted him to proceed with his inventory: a gold watch and chain, a gold seal, three split rings with a watch hook, a brooch with the painting of a woman and child and another set with a Scotch pebble, and a small quantity of black thread to mend Mrs. Manning's persistent black apparel.

Moxey stated that, although Marie had generally protested her innocence at the time of her arrest, it was only during her first evening in jail that his captive first acknowledged that she was Mrs. Manning. Subsequently, despite his repeated cautions to her, she made a number of voluntary statements to the following effect: "I left town suddenly. I came off on Monday when my husband was out. I have left him as I have done before. I was afraid of my life. He has maltreated me for a long time past. His threats generally were that he would cut off my head, all of which can be proved by servants who lived with us in Taunton; and he has pursued me with a knife."

A London stockbroker, Francis Warren Stephens, was then put on the stand to identify certain of the securities that Superintendent Moxey had found in Marie's possession.
Stephens said that he had known O'Connor for about three years in matters of business only. He had purchased railway shares for O'Connor several times. Stephens identified the railway shares Moxey had recovered as securities he had purchased for O'Connor in May and early August. The coroner then asked him: "Do they appear to you to have passed from Mr. O'Connor's possession by sale?"

"I can't say by looking at them. They are not registered shares."

Stephens said that about the first of August a lady called upon him at his office at No. 3 Royal Exchange and asked him a number of questions, after stating that he had been recommended to her by Mr. Patrick O'Connor. She said that she had about two hundred pounds that she wanted to invest. She asked what kinds of securities in which she might invest could be sold abroad. Stephens told her that the word "abroad" was too indefinite a term, and that he could not give her advice unless she told him where she was going. After some hesitation the lady said, "Paris." The broker then showed her a list of foreign railway shares, and she particularly pointed out the Sambre and Meuse. Asked for her name and address, she wrote on a slip of paper "Maria Manning," or some such name. Stephens had lost the paper, but he was certain of the name "Manning." He had never seen the lady again. She was a "stout and rather fine-looking woman." The interview lasted about five minutes, as there was a "female waiting for her outside," but the witness thought that he would know her again "if she were dressed in her bonnet."

Stephens was a little suspicious of Marie. It was strange to him that a married woman would want to have some sort of shares that she could sell abroad without her husband's knowledge. For a moment he had even had the unworthy thought that she might be planning to run off with Patrick O'Connor, but his suspicions were allayed when he "reflected on the steady character of Mr. O'Connor."

As the broker left the stand, Superintendent Moxey expressed a desire to add to his prior testimony. Mrs. Manning had told him that she had money of her own "of which her
husband was anxious to obtain possession” and that her refusal to give it to him was the cause of their quarrels. She said that when she asked O’Connor for advice on this matter, he referred her to Stephens. She claimed that the railway securities found in her possession had been purchased for her by O’Connor; the Spanish bond had been “found” by her husband.

The jury was treated to more insight into London stock brokerage practices when John Bassett took the stand. The witness was a clerk in the brokerage firm of Killick & Co. He told the jury that on about 31 July a gentleman came to their office whom he had never seen before. Bassett introduced him to the manager of the firm. Their visitor was considering the sale of some stock, he told them, and wanted to know their terms. He promised to call again the following day but did not appear again until the afternoon of 2 August, when he apologized for missing his appointment. He explained that he would not want to dispose of his stock for a few days, and on Saturday 11 August, he called again in the morning and told Bassett that he had brought the stock with him. Bassett advised him that the manager was home ill but that he could handle the transaction. His customer then produced twenty shares of Eastern Counties Consolidated Stock, and Bassett negotiated him down from an asking price of 120 or 130 pounds to 110 pounds. Bassett paid him with a hundred-pound note, one five-pound note, and five sovereigns in coin. John Hammond, a clerk in the office, wrote down the numbers of the notes.

It is a little hard to believe, but after all the interviews with the new customer, and despite the fact that money had already changed hands, Bassett had never thought of asking the man’s name. He only learned this when the customer, as he was departing after receipt of the money, gave him a stock transfer form. The stock transfer was signed “Patrick O’Connor, 21 Greenwood Street, Mile End Road.” The incredibly cavalier procedure that Bassett and his firm had used in dealing with a stranger was to draw a tart comment in a letter to the Daily News from a broker who was quick to note that Bassett was not, as he was, a member of the Stock Exchange. The writer added: “I am proud to feel that no member of the Stock Exchange would
transact business for a stranger at all; our customs uniformly requiring an introduction from a friend accompanying every new client. But here we have evidently Manning himself personating O'Connor days after the murder; walking a perfect stranger into Killick's office, signing a blank transfer, and carrying off the spoil, all in a few minutes."

But was the mysterious customer in fact Manning? Bassett described him as a man of about forty-four or forty-five, tall, stout made and very round faced, about five feet ten inches tall, with rather light small whiskers and "a complexion that was not sallow." He appeared in excellent spirits and was talkative. A juror asked: "What sort of accent had he?"

"I should have thought him to be an Englishman," Bassett stated. "I should not have taken him for an Irishman. I should say he was an Englishman by his talk."

"Did you witness his signature?" the coroner inquired.

"I cannot speak to his signature."

The coroner went on: "Did you see the body of Patrick O'Connor?"

"Yes at six o'clock on Saturday, when the body was lying dead I saw it. I shall never forget its appearance. I could not swear that it was the same person as our customer, though the build was similar. The body very much resembled the man who described himself to me as Mr. Patrick O'Connor. Mr. O'Connor asked me if I was fond of fishing. I answered, 'Yes, I am.' He said, 'I am off for Exeter to fish, and I'll bring you up a salmon peal of my own catching.'"

Mr. Bassett blundered on. He told the court ruefully that after the customer left his office one of his clerks, Mr. Hammond, asked for a memorandum relating to the transaction. Bassett confessed that he had not obtained his customer's signature to a memorandum, and Hammond, warning him that Mr. Killick would be very angry, instructed him to go to O'Connor's house to obtain the signature. He called at the house on 13 August, at the side door, which was opened by a woman, and was told that O'Connor was away from home and that she did not know when he would return. She said that he had not been home since Thursday and was surprised when the
innocent Mr. Bassett told her that he had seen him in the city as recently as Saturday.

As he concluded his testimony, Bassett tried to regain some of his composure. He now told the court that he could swear to the identity of his customer if he saw him again. He could not swear that the body he had seen was the body of his customer; it was so mangled and decomposed. One thing at least was plain: the five-pound bank note that was included in the payment Bassett had made to his unknown customer was traced into the possession of Mrs. Manning. It had been produced in court by Superintendent Moxey and was identified by Mr. Hammond, the Killick clerk. Hammond, who also thought O'Connor's body was that of their customer, was shown samples of the handwriting of O'Connor and Manning. He said that the signature on the stock transfer bore no resemblance to O'Connor's but was of the same style as Manning's, though not quite so upright. The coroner thereupon ruled that the evidence had completely exonerated Bassett from any imputation with respect to his role in the transaction; it was clear that he had dealt with someone impersonating O'Connor.

On the basis of Mr. Bassett's testimony, the London Examiner struck up a "third man" theme. In an article on 3 September it pointed out that the sale handled by Bassett had taken place on the eleventh of August and that O'Connor must have been murdered by then. It concluded that "the person who sold the stock could not have been Manning, who is 10 years younger than the conjectured age of the man who did business with Bassett, and who is also shorter, and of a very florid complexion; whereas Bassett's account of the self-called Patrick O'Connor is that he was not sallow, which are negative terms that would not be applied to a singularly ruddy man. . . . There is in this case a third criminal implicated, still to be traced out."

On the last day of the inquest, evidence was also heard from Patrick O'Connor's landlady, Ann Armes. She was a single woman and occupied the house in which O'Connor had his lodgings. He had been her lodger for nearly five years and lived on the first floor. His apartment consisted of two adjoining
furnished rooms, a sitting room and a bedroom. The bedroom had no entrance from the sitting room but could only be entered from the landing. The doors of both rooms, by his orders, were always left open for airing. Miss Armes had last seen O'Connor alive on Thursday morning, the ninth of August, when she let him out by the door of her shop, which she maintained on the ground floor of the house. He then appeared to be in good health and was dressed in a black coat and plain black satin stock tied with a bow. His trousers were checked and he wore "Albert shoes" and a black hat. The coroner inquired: "Was he a man regular in his habits?"

"Particular," she replied. "He went out at half past seven in the morning and generally returned at five but not with the same certainty."

The witness usually dined at home, but when he intended to do so he left word with his landlady at what hour dinner was to be ready. He had relatives in to see him and male and female acquaintances. Mr. and Mrs. Manning came together to see him. Miss Armes thought that they had been acquainted with him only about a year. Their visits were frequent, but Mrs. Manning came more often than her husband did; she seemed to be on friendly terms with O'Connor and looked in on him when he was ill. She had visited him with great frequency for the last fortnight or month before he was missing. Miss Armes was struck by the fact that Mrs. Manning regularly arrived at an hour when O'Connor was absent on business, but she showed her up to O'Connor's rooms since he had requested that his friends should be admitted there and should await his return. Mrs. Manning came to his room in his absence more times than the landlady could number and sometimes left without seeing him if he did not return from work early enough. When Mrs. Manning called, she walked upstairs into his sitting room.

Miss Armes did not believe that Mrs. Manning had ever dined alone with O'Connor. Once about a month prior to O'Connor's disappearance the Mannings and their lodger, Mr. Massey, took tea with him, but Mr. Massey had only visited on that one occasion. The Mannings had dined with O'Connor before that day but never again afterward. O'Connor had never talked to
his landlady about his relationship with Mrs. Manning. They seemed to her to be “on particular friendship” but she did not think they were “so friendly.” In fact, both the Mannings appeared particularly attentive to him. Miss Armes had no feeling that there was anything improper going on, but she added: “Might I say this, that they have tried often to borrow money from him. I have heard them attempt to borrow money of him some time back, both Mr. and Mrs. Manning, but I had no knowledge of his having lent them any money. Some time ago, he told me he did not wish to have the ‘vagabonds’ come up any more—they were too troublesome.”

She then described Marie’s visit to O’Connor’s lodging on Thursday, 9 August. Mrs. Manning called at a quarter to six on Thursday evening. Miss Armes’s sister Emily let her in. Miss Armes was standing by and saw Marie go up to O’Connor’s room. Marie left at about a quarter after seven or later, and O’Connor had not returned in the meantime. She had no idea what Mrs. Manning might have been doing in O’Connor’s room, but she made quite plain her suspicion that Marie was looking for O’Connor’s securities. She recalled that on the Friday before, she had gone to O’Connor’s room and found him there with Mrs. Manning. Spread out on the table were some papers, and they were talking about railway shares, in which Marie wished to invest some money. The cautious Miss Armes said that she saw the papers but it was her sister Emily who heard the conversation. The sharp-eyed landlady also noticed that O’Connor’s cash box was out on a table in the room; it was closed. The cash box had usually been kept in his trunk, which stood on a chest of drawers in his bedroom. The witness had very seldom seen Mrs. Manning in his bedroom, but she must have gone there on occasion “to leave her bonnet.”

Miss Armes then told about Mrs. Manning’s return to O’Connor’s lodgings on Friday the tenth, the day after his disappearance:

“Mrs. Manning came also on the Friday at a quarter to six. She was admitted by my sister in my presence. I saw her go to Mr. O’Connor’s room. Until a quarter past seven she was alone there and no other person entered the room during that time.
When she came we still thought that O'Connor would soon follow her. On her leaving she came through the shop, which she dared not do unless she purchased something, as I had forbidden her as well as Mr. Manning to go in or out that way. When she came through the shop I was sitting in the parlour, which is quite open to the front of the shop. Mrs. Manning asked my sister for some kind of plum cake. She had very seldom purchased before and not lately. As I sat I had a view of her face sideways. She seemed all ashake and pale."

The witness then testified as to the inquiries O'Connor's friends had made and confirmed that it was she who spoke to the hapless Bassett when he came in quest of O'Connor's signature. The coroner then asked her: "From the evening of Thursday the 9th until the Monday following, had any person access to this room but you and your sister, and Mrs. Manning?" She replied, "No."

When all the witnesses had been heard, the coroner proceeded to address the jury. He began by calling on them to dismiss from their minds any impression that might have been produced by anything they had heard or read about the case. He asked the jury whether they desired all the evidence to be read over again, and the foreman responded that a summary of the leading points would be sufficient. Nodding his compliance with the jury's wishes, the coroner went on. The first question for them, he explained, was the identification of the corpse; the evidence of Walsh and Flynn was strong in identifying the dead man as O'Connor. The second issue was the means of death. The coroner summed up the medical evidence on O'Connor's death; the jury were to ask themselves whether, although as regards the bullet there was a possibility of a man's inflicting an injury on himself, those wounds on the back side of the head could possibly have been produced without other agency. To the coroner the conclusion seemed inevitable that the head injuries had been caused by some other person or persons; the crucial question for the jury was to name such person or persons. On this point the coroner summarized the evidence pointing to the Mannings. The body was found in their house. O'Connor was seen by two witnesses on London Bridge going, it
would appear, to the house of the Mannings. A bank note was found by Mr. Moxey in the possession of Mrs. Manning which had been paid by a stockbroker's clerk to a person under the name of O'Connor. The coroner then came to the question of motive:

What can have been the inducement leading any party to sacrifice the life of O'Connor? Looking to the circumstances brought out in evidence, it will be for the jury to say whether there can be any doubt that this person's life was sacrificed with the view of obtaining his property. There is reason to believe that the Mannings were acquainted with O'Connor's pecuniary circumstances, and hence a probable motive is suggested for the commission of the crime by these parties, if the jury are satisfied that no others were in the house at the time when the murder was perpetrated.

The coroner addressed himself then to a legal issue that was to become of central importance to the case: to what extent could Mrs. Manning, as a wife, be charged as an active participant in the crime?

With respect to the position in which Mrs. Manning is placed as a wife, although coverture [marriage] may be pleaded as a bar to a charge of felony, yet it is not so where the wife took a very active part. In that view the jury should put their own construction on the circumstances which have been brought out in evidence; to the statements made by Mr. Massey; and to the purchase by Mrs. Manning of the shovel, which would appear to have been used in placing the lime on the body.

The coroner, it is clear, did not want the jury to overlook the short-handled shovel. Lockwood had testified that the shovel could not have been used to inflict O'Connor's head injuries; and the coroner seems to have agreed with the Observer's reporter that it was not much of a tool for digging graves. By his suggestion that it had been used instead to place lime on the body, the coroner attempted to assign it a more plausible role in the crime. It was curious, though. If the Mannings already possessed a shovel they had used to prepare O'Connor's burial place, why had Mrs. Manning made a last-minute purchase of another shovel?
The jury retired at half past nine in the evening. After an absence of about three-quarters of an hour, they returned to announce a verdict. They found that the deceased was Patrick O'Connor and that he had been willfully murdered by Frederick George Manning and Maria, his wife.

When Fred Manning was informed of the verdict of the coroner's jury during his railway journey from Southampton to London in police custody, he appeared very much surprised and sighed. He was charged at Stone's End Station that evening and was so unwell during the night that a doctor was sent to see him. It was reported that he was still allowed to take brandy occasionally.