

Fatal Accident.

A lamentable accident occurred on Thursday last at Bicton, near Fremantle, by which Mr James Duffield and John Luff, a hard working labourer, both lost their lives by the falling in upon them of a well they were engaged in sinking. The accident occurred about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and as soon as information reached Fremantle large numbers of persons hastened to Bicton to assist in getting the bodies out, which owing to the loose nature of the soil was not accomplished until near ten at night. The particulars attending this unfortu-

nate occurrence were very distressing, and have created a general feeling of sympathy for the friends of the sufferers. Luff has, we regret to hear, left a wife and family of eight children. At the Inquest held on the bodies on Friday, before a Jury composed of Messrs. A. Francisco, O. Lodge, J. Harwood, and J. Bobin, the following evidence was given :---

Narley, an Aboriginal—I was helping to sink a well, when the accident happened to J. H. Duffield and John Luff. J. Duffield was at the bottom of the well, and Luff and I were drawing up the sand ; about 3 o'clock some of the sand from the sides of the well fell in upon Duffield ; Luff went down the

well and tried to take the sand from him, when more sand fell down and covered him also up to the middle; J. Duffield asked me to send for Humphries; I did so. I pulled up buckets of sand which Luff filled. Humphries and three others came. J. Duffield said he was all right, and told Luff to come down and help him; the sand kept falling in and covering them.

Joseph Humphries—I was called about 2 or 3 o'clock to assist J. Duffield, who was down the well, up to his middle in sand. I went, and found Duffield completely covered with sand, but I heard his voice calling out for me; a small cask was at that time over his head, which was also covered with sand. Luff at this time was not in the well; he was

on the top along with three natives. James Duffield called out for some one to "come down and take away the sand from his mouth." Luff went down, and three men helped me to draw up the sand which Luff put into a bucket. Duffield could speak and was well, and helped to fill the buckets; in half a minute, a large quantity of sand gave way, and covered him about 5 feet over his head, and covering Luff up to the middle. Chambers then went down with a rope to help Luff; more sand fell in and covered Luff up to the neck. I went to Luff's house to get some casks; when I returned Luff was covered over with sand. I sent for assistance which arrived, and we then dug both bodies out.

James Chambers, corroborated the statement of the foregoing witness. "

Henry Albert—I assisted with others last night in digging the bodies of Duffield and Luff out of the well; they were both quite dead, and found as described by previous witnesses. Luff must have been dead about two hours and Duffield three or four hours before we found them.

Verdict—The Jury are of opinion that the deaths were accidental—caused by the falling in of the well; the Jury also considered that the conduct of James Chambers, was highly praiseworthy, for the strenuous efforts he made to save his fellow creatures, at the eminent peril of his own life.
