



Sad Fatality with a Rifle

Nunton Lad's Unfortunate Accident

A most sad accident, the result of which proved instantly fatal, occurred on Friday evening last, about 7.30, to Harold Victor Smith, 14 years and 9 months, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Smith, who have resided in Nunton for the past nineteen years.

The unfortunate boy was bent on being a cheesemaker, and with this object in view, about three months ago went to reside with Mr. F. H. Francis, of Place Dairy, Mappowder, Dorset. On Friday evening he was in the kitchen attending to an old rook rifle he had bought a fortnight before, and, wishing to find a screw driver either to extract a cartridge that was in the barrel, or to tighten the screw that connects the rifle with the stock, went to the cupboard for the purpose, and stooping moved the rifle which was lying on the table, causing it to explode, as it would with the hammer in some positions on the slightest provocation.

The bullet entered his body at the bone of the left shoulder, glanced off and struck the heart, causing internal haemorrhage. The servant was in the kitchen but did not see how it happened. The lad cried to her, "call Mr. Francis" then walked into the passage and fell. Mrs. Francis and her husband came immediately, and they raised him on to a mattress and tried to restore animation, thinking that he must have fainted or had had a fit. The doctor was sent for and came at once, but upon his arrival found life was extinct, the lad having expired within half an hour of the accident, too late to telegraph the parents that night, but a message was dispatched as early as possible next morning, and that brought members of his family to the scene about midday, not knowing the worst until their arrival. Although he had been at Mappowder only three months, he had made a large number of friends, who felt his death very keenly.

When the sad news was made known in Nunton on Sunday the whole village showed signs of sympathy and sorrow, for Smith was one of the most popular boys. For several years he was in the church choir, and was always at the front of the village sports and games, ever ready to do a kind act for anyone. He was of very active temperament, very finely built and strong for his age.

Salisbury Times, 23 July 1909