

Alfred Smith

Isle of Wight Observer - Saturday 23 May 1885

SAD FATALITY AT CARISBROOKE. - On Monday afternoon the Coroner for the Isle of Wight (Mr. F. Blake) held an inquiry at Carisbrooke House touching the death of Alfred Smith, aged 34 years, a gardener, who met his death under the following circumstances, early that morning: Fanny Smith, wife of the deceased, deposed that her late husband lived at Carisbrooke House during the absence of the Rev. Mr. Corbett. Deceased, who acted as gardener, came into the house about quarter past 7 that morning and asked her what time breakfast would be ready. He said he was going to take a few buckets of water out of the cesspit. About 8 o'clock she sent her two children to call him to breakfast. The little girl came running back with deceased's hat and said, "I can't see daddy. I expect he's gone down into the big hole." Witness immediately went out and put a stick down the cesspit to see if she could touch anything, but as she could not she looked about the garden for the deceased. Not seeing him, she spoke to Mr. Payne, and subsequently saw the body after it had been taken from the well. Deceased was cheerful when he left the house in the morning, and also when he came in to ask about breakfast. He was troubled sometimes about the amount of work he had to do, but she had never any reason to suspect that he would take his own life. She believed the water was once obtained from the well by means of a pump, but lately it had been out of order. - James Cogger, turncock at the Newport Corporation Waterworks at Carisbrooke, stated that a few minutes before 9 o'clock, in consequence of deceased's mother saying that she believed her son must have fallen into the cesspit, he went into the grounds of Carisbrooke House. He there saw Mr. Fry using a grappling iron, but as he failed to find the body, witness fetched a hooked stick, with which he succeeded in bringing the body of the deceased to the surface. The body was quite cold, and the depth of water 10ft., being within 2ft or 3ft of the top of the well. Deceased's head and face were covered with mud. - Dr. Groves deposed that he had known the deceased for the past eight or ten years, but had never attended him professionally. Deceased was of an apparently anxious disposition. About half-past 9 that morning he was sent for to Carisbrooke House. He found the body quite cold. Artificial respiration was tried for over half-an-hour, but without effect. The mouth and nostrils were filled with mud. He might add that if a person fell into mud animation was scarcely ever restored. - A Juror (Mr. Fry) said that he found a piece of rope near the well, and he believed the deceased was in the act of hauling up the bucket from the pit when the rope broke, and in his endeavour to recover the bucket the deceased slipped and fell into the well. - The jury returned a verdict of "Accidental death."

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