

TORGERSON, SI B.  
?-August 20, 1915

King Alcohol added one more to his myriad of victims, left another widow and fatherless babe alone when the bullet pierced the heart of S.B. Torgerson early Friday morning.

Mr. Torgerson was employed as a farm hand on the farm of his uncle, S.O. Simonson. For several days preceding his tragic death, he had been in town on a protracted liquor debauch, returning home sober, but filled with remorse. Friday morning about five o'clock, his wife awakened and found him sitting on the front of the bed with a .22 rifle in his hands. She asked what he was going to do, and he replied he was of no use in the world and he was going to kill himself. Said she, "You had better kill me first". He answered "No, there would be then no one left to care for the baby". She then arose to take the gun away from him, but he assured her it was not loaded and he did not mean to kill himself just then.

As he had often talked about taking his life after recovering from liquor indulgences, Mrs. Torgerson did not think he intended to do it so again lay down in the bed and was nearly asleep when she was awakened by the report of a gun and the husband fell across the bed with a bullet thru his heart.

The conditions indicate that Torgerson's death was more accidental than intentional. He had removed all the shells from the magazine, and it is thought he did not know there was one left in the barrel.

Torgerson was a young man of 32 years. He was married less than a year ago. When sober, he was a good reliable workman, conscientious and kind to his family, but had become a victim of the liquor habit, and when under its' influence, was a much different person. His drinking was periodical and after every indulgence was very remorseful and repentant and repeatedly promised to abstain from further drinking, but was unable to control his appetite whenever he came to town where the poison was obtainable. Periods of despondency and discouragement followed his broken promises, at which times he often proposed to end his life. Mr. Simonson tried to assist the young man in his efforts to overcome the habit, frequently paying the debts created when crazed by rum, and again setting him at work on the farm, but the demon of rum was the master of the situation and took the life.

It was a lamentable affair. Altho death was self-inflicted, either by design or by accident, the man was irresponsible, made so by unwilling indulgences of an appetite which mortal flesh was unable to control-a life sacrificed upon the altar of public greed. While the finger that pressed the trigger was the victim's own, the responsibility and guilt rests upon the community that votes to foster the liquor traffic.

Rev. W.L. Wade conducted a funeral service Saturday morning at the Simonson home and the body was laid to rest in the Wheatland cemetery.