

Elizabeth Brice

Rushworth Chronicle

2 July, 1897

Quite a sensation was caused in Rushworth on Tuesday morning last by a rumour that Miss Elizabeth Brice, youngest daughter of Mr G. G. Brice, had attempted her life, and at first credence was hardly given to the report.

Unfortunately, however, it proved too true. Miss Brice had for some years been a sufferer from neuralgia of the heart, supposed to have been caused in the first instance by scarlet fever. She had been treated at different times by local medical men, being under Dr Eadon's care at first and subsequently she was attended by Drs Heily and Christie. For the past fortnight she had been in great pain and was unable to obtain any sleep.

This, it is believed, unhinged her mind, and led to the committal of the rash act, as from what has since been learned from the unhappy young lady herself, on Tuesday morning a feeling came over her that she should end her pain by taking her life. She tried hard to fight against this weakness, and even went so far as to go to the door of her room and call for someone to come and stay with her until the feeling wore off.

Unfortunately no one heard her cries and being unable to resist the inclination which had come over her she procured a knife, which had been brought up with the breakfast to her room by Mrs Brice a few minutes before, and inflicted a wound on her throat which completely severed the windpipe, but did not touch the jugular vein or any of the principal arteries. Immediately the deed had been committed she came to her senses again, and repenting of what she had done endeavoured to stop the bleeding.

A little later on Mrs Brice went up to take away the breakfast things and finding the door closed against her called Mr H. G. Brice and requested him to go up and see what was the matter. The latter, on entering his sister's room, was horrified to find her standing in the middle of the room with a wound in her throat and trying to stanch the blood with a towel.

Drs Christie and Heily were sent for at once and were quickly on the spot. They stitched up the severed windpipe and inserted a breathing tube, and subsequently advised her removal to the Mooroopna Hospital, to which institution she was conveyed by road on Wednesday by Mr H. G. Brice, accompanied by Dr Christie.

She there received every attention from Dr Florence, and the latest bulletin is that there is an improvement, and Miss Brice's condition, which was at first regarded as very serious, is now more hopeful. We have it on the assurance of both Drs Heily and Christie that there was no cause whatever for the rash act beyond mental depression.

The deepest sympathy is felt for the unfortunate young lady and her relatives in their sad trouble.

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9 July,

A feeling of the deepest regret prevailed in Rushworth when it became known that Miss Elizabeth Brice had succumbed to her injuries in the Mooroopna Hospital on Friday evening last, the circumstances attending her death being particularly sad.

As stated in our last issue, her condition was looked upon as more hopeful on Thursday evening, but it appears that the symptoms became less favourable the following day, and she gradually sank until death released her from her sufferings.

Her remains were conveyed to Rushworth on Sunday and interred in the local cemetery on the same afternoon, the attendance at the funeral being the largest seen here for a long time.

The deceased young lady's amiable disposition and gentle and ladylike behaviour made her a general favorite and her untimely end was greatly felt among her many friends. She was a member of the Church of England and sang in the choir.

The church was draped on Sunday evening out of respect to Miss Brice's memory, and the Rev. J. R. Walker made some touching references to her numerous good qualities.

Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved relatives.

A number of beautiful wreaths were sent by sympathising friends to be placed on the grave of the late Miss Brice. Some of these did not arrive until the day after the funeral, and when the deceased's brother, Mr H. G. Brice, went to the cemetery to place them along with the others he was pained to find that some person or persons had been mean enough to remove all the silk ribbon from the wreaths.

Such a despicable act as the desecration of a grave cannot be too severely censured, and it is a pity that the offence could not be sheeted home to the guilty persons and the punishment meted out to them that such conduct richly deserves.