

DEATH OF MR. H. HICKS.

We have to record with deep regret the death of an old identity in Rushworth, and one whose memory will hold a foremost place for many years in the minds of those who were acquainted with him. We refer to Mr Henry Hicks, who on last Friday morning, at about 9.30, passed away to join that great majority which is so constantly and surely increasing its ranks.

Almost every year brings the loss of some old familiar face, and the pioneers of the district are rapidly losing that place in the councils of the district which they have filled for so long and so honorably.

As is well known, Mr Hicks always took a prominent part in anything which had for its aim the advancement of the district, and many tales could be told of his zealously forwarding such interests.

Although a confirmed invalid and unable to leave his home for fully four years, his faculties retained their brightness to the last, and only a few days before his death he repeated a portion from Tennyson, which gave ample proof that his memory had lost little of its original clearness.

He came to the colony in the year 1851, and to Rushworth in 1857, where he arrived in the company of the late Mr Smith, formerly a chemist in this town. The manner of the meeting was singular. When Mr Smith was on his road here he noticed a man tied to a tree, whom he released. This man proved to be Mr Hicks, who had been stuck up by bushrangers, and left by them in that position.

They journeyed on together after this, but Mr Hicks outlived his friend by many years.

A portion of his time was spent in Heathcote and Sandhurst. In the latter place he owned the first crushing plant, but the latter part of his life was passed in Rushworth, where he acquired a host of friends. He was a saddler by trade, and at one time owned a good business in the West End of London.

His wife, who occupied the position of housekeeper at St. James' Palace, London, where all his children were born, died before he left England. His family consisted of two sons and two daughters, three of whom are living. His eldest daughter holds, or did hold, the position of a public school teacher in England. His youngest daughter, Miss Bessie Hicks, was the prop and mainstay of her father's house for many years, and attended him during his long sickness with all the solicitude of a loving daughter.

Mr Hicks at one time held the position of postmaster in Rushworth, and subsequently the position of electoral registrar and registrar of births, deaths and marriages, the latter vocation being held by him at the time of his death, though in the discharge of its attendant duties he was much assisted by his daughter.

He was interred in the Rushworth cemetery on Sunday last at 4 p.m., the corpse being followed to the grave by a large number of friends and mourners. As the cortege passed the State School the bell was tolled in loving remembrance of one who at all times had evinced a fatherly care for the little ones. This honor was paid only on one occasion prior to this,

and that was on the death of Mrs Phillips, of the Criterion Hotel, a warm supporter of the Rushworth children in all their sports.

The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. J. Swindells, and was most impressive. At the evening service in St. Paul's Church of England the rev. gentleman spoke feelingly of the many good qualities possessed by the deceased, and attributed the present sound basis on which the church is now established to the energy displayed by Mr Hicks at a time when good and true men in the church's cause were scarce.

We trust the bereaved family in their affliction will meet with a return of the kindness so lavishly expended by the deceased gentleman when in health and strength. He was almost 80 years of age at the time of his death.