

Mrs Johnson

Waranga Chronicle

17 September, 1874

If funerals were to continue long at the present rate, our little township would soon be depopulated. After a long and painful illness, Mrs. Johnson succumbed on Sunday evening last, and was buried on Tuesday.

Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved family, who have lost both their parents within the short space of a twelvemonth. We presume that some of them, at least, will have to be supported by the State.

Their neat appearance and reverential demeanour at the funeral were the subject of general remark, and we hope that their future experience will be of a brighter cast than what they have already undergone.

Her husband, James Johnson, with close to 20 years in the district, had attracted sympathy for his plight:

At the termination of the Miners' meeting on Saturday, Mr Hannon stated that James Johnson, a miner who had resided here since the first of the diggings, had been taken to the Sandhurst Hospital, and as he had been unable to work for some time, his wife and family were in very distressed circumstances, and he stated his willingness to receive subscriptions on their behalf.

The invitation was responded to by those present, and in a couple of minutes £1 4s was collected. Some of the amateur minstrels who were present, and others who are ever ready to give their assistance to those in need, promised that a concert should be held to supplement the amount received, and an advertisement in another column will show that they have lost no time, as the concert will be held on the 20th instant; and it need only be said that Mrs Johnson and her eight children have been left totally unprovided for to ensure a full house.

(WC, 12 June, 1873)

There was sustained interest in the welfare of the Johnson family:

The efforts of the Rushworth Minstrels on behalf of Mr Johnson's family, are being liberally responded to by the public, and already a large number of tickets have been disposed of. All those who have promised their assistance are working hard to make the affair a success, and it is only for the public to show its appreciation of their endeavours in the cause of charity by putting in an appearance to-morrow.

(WC, 19 June, 1873)

The concert in aid of Mr J. Johnson and family, in the Shire-hall, on Friday evening last, was very largely attended, and we are happy to say, was (in a pecuniary point of view) an undoubted success.

Mr Benbow's song was happily rendered, and was followed by the comic song, "The rattling boys of the County Down," by Mr Hannan, whose first appearance was a very creditable one. The glee, by Messrs Austin, Johns, Catlin, Hollands and Hicks, was deservedly applauded, as was the flute solo of Mr Smith. Mr Lewis' comic song was very amusing and caused much laughter. Our old friend Mr Hicks sang an old ballad song very sweetly. The flute duet, "I know a Bank," by Messrs Smith and Lambden, was given in beautiful style, and warmly applauded. The comic song and dance, by a Lady Amateur—the lady being a well-known boniface of considerable ability, completed the first part, amidst great applause.

The "Rushworth Christy Minstrels"—Messrs Hollands, Catlin, Austin, Rice, Hicks and anon, (whose fame is known beyond the borders of our district), gave a choice collection of their ballads, in their own brilliant style. The overture and chorus were much applauded. The "Grand Match-box"—Breakdown by Rice, and the "Railway Overture" by the Company, were excellent.

"God Save the Queen," by the company, concluded the concert, which was a most enjoyable one, and reflected great credit on the promoters and the gentlemen who so successfully carried it through.

The Committee of the Concert in aid of Mr Johnson and family, have requested us to publish the balance-sheet, which is as follows:—To sale of tickets, &c., £22; rent of hall, £1 10s.; printing, £1 10s.; music, £1 15s.; incidental expenses, £1 18s. Total expenses, £6 13s.

Balance handed over to Mrs. Johnson, £15 7s. Some smaller amounts are still to come in from Whroo and Murchison. A letter has been received from Mr Johnson, returning his heartfelt thanks to the committee and the public for the sympathy they have expressed towards himself and family.

(WC, 26 June, 1873)

Unfortunately for Mr Johnson and his family, he was not long for this world:

News has reached here that Johnson, who has been suffering for a long time, and has lately been in the Benevolent Asylum, Sandhurst, died on Sunday last. Senior-constable Wilkinson kindly lent his services in aid of the widow and family, and has succeeded in collecting some £5, which will be expended in purchasing things for their benefit. The list will not be closed for some days, so that those who wish to subscribe will have an opportunity to do so.

(WC, 2 October, 1873)

Then Mrs Johnson died, as reported above.

There has been no difficulty in getting foster parents for the late Mr Johnson's family.

Two of them have been taken by the Messrs Furphy, farmers, Wanalta, one by Mr Folan, of Rushworth, and another by Mrs Inwood, of Whroo.

The two eldest still remain, but they have been kept till last to look after the youngest members of the family; those will also be provided, with comfortable homes in a short time.

(WC, 24 September, 1874)

