

[Johnson, Mary Elizabeth Swift]

Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson

The late Rev. S. R. [Samuel] Ward, for fifty years the beloved pastor of the First Universalist church of this village, used to say that the Almighty brought certain persons into this world to preserve the balance between the human and divine. Such an individual was the late Mary Elizabeth Johnson, who passed painlessly into the eternal sleep on Tuesday, Feb. 27th, at the home of her son, Edwin J. Johnson, at Westerleigh, Staten Island, where she had been spending the winter.

Mrs. Johnson was born in the town of Richfield on Sept. 17, 1840, her parents being Aaron Griswold Swift and Mary Johnson Swift, who was a daughter of Eunice Willard and a cousin of the distinguished temperance advocate Francis [Frances] Willard. On Oct. 18th, 1886, she was married to the late Jas. Burgess Johnson. Of this union four children survive, Maud E., who is a librarian in the public library at Newark, N.J., Ernest M., who owns and resides on the homestead farm, Edwin J., of the firm of Johnson & Galston, attorneys, New York city, and Louis E., who owns and resides on the farm once the property of his maternal grandfather. A prayer service conducted on the morning of Feb. 28th by the Rev. Chas. Ransom Kingsley was held at the Staten Island home of Edwin J. Johnson, who with his wife and sister accompanied the body to this village, where the funeral services were held in the Church of the Redeemer (Universalist) on the following day, March 1st, at 11 a.m.

Although no public notice was made, the church was filled with relatives and friends who met to pay a final tribute to this beautiful character, whose life was typified by the wealth of flowers surrounding the casket. The service was conducted by the Rev. Frank O. Hokerk of Middleville, formerly pastor of the Church of the Redeemer here, of which the deceased had been a constant and devoted member. The tribute Mr. Hokerk paid to Mrs. Johnson's memory was eloquent with feeling and found response in the hearts of all present. Mrs. Hugh Owens of Utica rendered three solos during the fitting service, which in all its parts made a solemn benediction to the life and good works of this rare woman, whose body has been placed in the receiving vault of Lakeview to await interment. Her gracious manner, the sweetness of her sympathy, the sweep of her vision and the breadth of her love for family and friends made her a mother to all men [sic] and the shrine of her memory shall long be filled with grateful thoughts.

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