

Twins Born 86 Years Ago, One Widow, One Spinster, Give Views of Wedded Life



Mrs. Elizabeth Hawxhurst Mrs. Maria Hawxhurst-Banks Mrs. Banks Is Glad She Married, but Her Sister, Miss Hawxhurst, Says She "Never Had a Chance" to Try Matrimony.

By Nixola Greeley-Smith.

Two very old ladies stood close together on a sunlit patch in front of a vine wreathed cottage in Sea Cliff, L. I., late yesterday afternoon. They were having their pictures taken, and as they were only eighty-six years old it was inevitable that they should be in a feminine flutter about it.



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It was natural for Miss Elizabeth—Aunt Libby her nieces call her—to stand in front of her smaller, softer, more plastic sister. "I came into the world fifteen minutes before her," Aunt Libby told me. "If we had been born in England,

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that they are birthright members of the sect. They know Whittier, the Quaker poet, well, and they were friends of William Cullen Bryant and lived for many years in a cottage on his estate at Roslyn. Miss Elizabeth once saw Lincoln.

"It was at the Capitol," she told me. "He appeared but did not speak. Andy Johnson made a speech instead. I was enraptured with him, but later he disappointed me. I could not follow him. And I remember one day when our colored man drove the buggy back from Mineola with the mail. He had a newspaper in his hand.

"Abraham Lincoln is shot," he said. And I didn't believe him. I flared up at him. 'It's no such a thing,' I said. 'Give me the paper!' And he gave it to me. 'There's nobody in the world mean enough to kill Abraham Lincoln.'

"She paused. Her bright blue eyes looked back—far back. It was quite evident they were against the simplest, wisest, tenderest American.

"I drove to Mineola once," Mrs. Banks interrupted at this point—her high, plaintive voice registering an octave higher than Miss Elizabeth's. "It was in 1855, when my intended, Mr. Banks came up from Virginia to claim me. I drove the buggy to Mineola to meet him."

"But," interrupted Miss Elizabeth beaming benevolently on her little roly-poly sister, "she was too shy to get out of the buggy to greet him or even to call to him that she was there. So he passed right by without seeing her and took the stage. He beat her home, and when I went to open the door for her he was already here sitting in the parlor.

"Where's your intended, Maria? I asked her as I opened the door. 'He didn't come,' she said, an I thought she was going to cry. And then the young man laughed a great laugh and came out of the parlor and took her in his arms and I said: 'When I have an intended, Maria, and drive all the way to Mineola to meet him, I'll GET HIM!'

But tall, rugged, smiling, Miss Elizabeth never took that drive to Mineola.

"Are you sorry you never married?" I asked her, and then turning to Mrs. Banks, "Are you glad you did?" My question quite frankly bewildered Mrs. Banks. You see, I had forgotten that women married in 1855 accepted matrimony as they did sunlight or religion, war or epidemics, purely and simply as the will of God.

"I'm glad," said the very old lady. "My husband was a good man—all right and kind to me. He was a year younger than I, and I don't see why he had to be taken." Her voice dwindled to a little painful whimper of grief.

"And you?" I said to Miss Elizabeth, facing me with her quiet, courageous smile.

"I never got a chance to find out," she answered. "But," she added proudly, "I've brought up two families of children and Maria has only brought up one. You see, we went to Virginia because my brother lived there. We were both teachers. My sister met her intended, Mr. Banks, there, and married him the next summer. I kept on teaching and then my brother's wife died, leaving a little girl just a few weeks old. I had to give up teaching and take care of his family. There were seven children.

After a while my brother married again and I was not needed any more, but I kept the baby, Lizzie Ella, and brought her up. I took care of her always, and when she married and had four children of her own and I did my best to take care of them. They are all married now and quite happily situated. At times their circumstances were not all that I could have wished. But they are all right now, married and with houses of their own. And of course I am not needed any more. That," remarked Miss Elizabeth brightly, judiciously, "is the great trouble of being aged. You are not needed any more."

"Oh, but you are," I protested, blundering. "You spend the summers here. What a lovely place it is and how always your sister must enjoy having you! And I believe you spend the winters in Brooklyn, do you not?"

"I spend the winters in the Home for the Aged in Greenpoint," replied

the old school teacher who had mothered two families. She said it simply, without interest, without bitterness, as she might have told me the time or the day of the week.

"My sister is poor," she continued. She lives with her two daughters. One teaches and the other keeps house. And the Home lets me come here for the summer months."

Mrs. Banks seated quietly by the window while Aunt Libby talked, woke suddenly to a question of housekeeping.

"My daughter keeps house," she said, "but I do the breakfast dishes and the supper dishes and I help with the ironing and I make all my own clothes."

"I can sew, too," said the twin who had won the race for life by a nose. "I make lace for the Home. Pillow cases without lace are 50 cents a pair, but with lace they are \$1. I make as much lace as I can and the Home sells it. You see, I don't want to be any more dependent than I can help. I add eighty-six-year-old Miss Elizabeth. "I go to lectures too—temperance lectures. Are you for prohibition?" she questioned earnestly. "I hope you are. I hope you will get the men you know to vote the prohibition ticket. I shall try to influence all the voters I know. 'Are you for prohibition?' I asked a gentleman in church the other day. 'Yes,' he said. 'Are you going to vote for the prohibition candidate for President?' I asked. 'No, I think I'll have to vote the Democratic ticket,' he answered. And I answered, 'If you don't vote for salvation you are not for it. A vote for rum is a vote for damnation!'

"Elizabeth, Elizabeth," approved the high plaintive voice of Mrs. Banks. "That is too severe."

"I don't care," replied the eighty-six-year-old crusader with a tomping of her old gray head. "I'll say what I mean."

Dear Miss Elizabeth, I thought, you have always said what you meant. And so you never took that drive to Mineola for your intended.

And so no flowers of your own flesh grew about your tottering feet and guide them.

But you mothered two families not your own. You warmed two alien nests with your love and carried food to the little ones of other women.

You were a mother in the most splendid, the most universal sense. And now you are left alone to knit lace for pillow cases in the Home for the Aged and to bewail the fact that at eighty-six you must be, in some degree, dependent.

When I think about your fate and the fate of other noble women I am quite ready to worship the Chinese for worshipping their ancestors.

GIRL HUNTS JOB AS BOY TO REGAIN LOST HEALTH

Anna Fox, Sixteen, Thought Doing Man's Work Would Make Her Cheeks Rosy, but Cop Nabs Her.

Sixteen-year-old Anna Fox of No. 132 Charleston Street, Newark, N. J., took a plunge into the big world as a boy to better her health, she says. Her adventure lasted over night, including a detention in the care of Miss Rose McQuaid, matron of the Domestic Relations Court. This morning she was turned over to her father after her story had been heard by Magistrate Barlow in the Yorkville Police Court.

The girl was worried over her poor health and envied boys their rosy cheeks and elastic steps. She thought if she could work as one of them she could win back her health and make more money. A barber cut her hair, and putting on a boy's suit she came to New York yesterday morning.

Eight o'clock last night found her hungry and without a place to sleep. She broke down and told her story to a woman on Lexington Avenue near East Thirty-ninth Street, and was arrested for masquerading. She said she had never been so happy in her life as she was when she saw her father this morning.

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