

POWDER POINT
DUXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS
P. O. BOX 52

11 Am. 8/28 '39

Later Bulletin to Lady Sps

Add: "Life after 80". JBP's cousin Mary Selina Beale lives in this village; gross personal income 70 per annum. JBP + brother Dr Rankin share remaining costs. Cousin Mary accepts their fate with dignity; as a sort of tribal right. She was brought down yesterday for a half hour's call on Lady Jane + bringing for use + public view for the first time, the gold headed cane recently presented to her by the Selectmen, as the oldest female resident of the Town of Duxbury. It has a handsome right angled top + so can be properly gripped + used easily for support. She is ~~the~~ 92 yrs old + the first to receive this trophy of age. After her death the cane goes back to the Town + another recipient is selected + so on down. I spoke of a half hour call - that is as long as Mary can stay away from her own bathroom, for she is easily surprised. She doesn't like to use another for she may have to change her diapers; the only childish part of her generally good physical condition. She is the same happy contented person she has always been - only her life is easier

more satisfactory, since her Cousins brought her down
here & got her an ideal place in a charming Cape Cod
Cottage set back from the main village street. Her eyes
are strong; last winter she re-read most of Dickens
novels. And she easily reads papers, magazines & as many of
the good new books as friends loan her or fee for her
at the Duxbury Library, which adds about twice as many
books a year as our Goshen Library does. She keeps up a
correspondence with certain old & scattered friends; writes a
good, always interesting letter - judging from those of B P
receives about twice a month when at Goshen. She
talks well - but is very deaf & declines to admit it.
You shout; sometimes you get an apt response &
again only smiling silence; never asks you to repeat.
This brings me to another characteristic - strange in such
a broad minded intelligent person - a strange & seemingly
perverse obstinacy. We got for many an effective hearing
device; she tried it & she could hear well enough
& flowing conversation was possible. But she just
did not like it or the idea of it & has practically
discontinued the use of it. Also we bought her a widely
use device for women subject to leakage from the bladder.
This makes it possible for the women to go about
comfortably & for reasonable periods of time. Many

Old Age Bulletin

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was tried about it + thought well of the idea of such postage
+ relief. But when she read the instructions in the box

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she said she could not understand them; it was too complicated to. And she never even took it out of the box. There was nothing intricate about the thing, but the detailed particulars of directions made in seem so. And when Mary makes up her mind, that settles it. Like Oliver Herford's wife, she "has a whim of iron". Yet then she is the same old cheery, tolerant, happy Cousin Mary, who was for nearly half a century (?) a devoted traveling agent of the Children Bureau of Mass. (or some such thing) - galloping from one end of the State to the other. A handy trooper - still one in life. Did I ever show you the piece I wrote for The Old Colony Memorial about Eva Hucks, the mother of Marian? She was a grand old party - sketched off at 78. I forgot to say that in many towns in Mass, there a good headed comes bestowed on old men. Knowing this fact + having seen all the old Duxbury ladies in his gathering of historical facts about the Town (he is Tom Historian) Reuben Peterson decided to start a similar plan for the oldest women ("females").

He had one made + turned it over to the Selectman under the same perpetual conditions. He may have suspected that his Cousin Mary Selina (as they called her something) would be the first to receive it, but of course was not certain of it. The Town is widely spread + there might have been ^{any} other older woman in South or West Duxbury or Tinkertown or other settlements back from the Shore. But the Selectman couldn't find one.

What a long palaver - requiring the answer - but to tell the truth I love to talk to you about anything. It will be delightful to have you pick out passages in Cale Rice's Self-appeasing book; you will not ask me to read it I hope. Though I might do that if you pressed the matter strongly.

P.S. to old age note: Remind you have another grumpy old cousin of 91 - a settled + crystalized grump, Ella Chandler. ~~Remind~~ She was grumbling to Rem: + he asked her what would you say if you were like many Bees looking in bed every night? Ella shot back "I'd say I'd be wee!"

And so to lunch; thank you for listening, I mean tending (if you can make it out) your chatting has delighted
JSP