

MILLIE GAMBLE

Prince Edward Island

When I visited Millie Gamble four years ago, she told me that her summers are spent in a small cottage near her home in Prince Edward Island, surrounded by relatives. Each family has its own small cottage. Miss Millie Gamble, then eighty-nine years old, talked with me about her photography and her life. There was no electricity so tea was made on the Coleman camp stove and we began our discussion by chatting about her cottage. Had I ever seen a kerosene refrigerator? Did I think any of their furniture was valuable? 'We've had it ever so many years. That chair is older than Millie.' Mrs. Wood, Millie's sister, was learning to re-cane chairs, and she worked as we talked. Antique collecting magazines lay around the room.

I had the feeling I was on a boat. Sitting at the table, I could see a seemingly endless amount of water from three directions. There is about six feet of land in front of the cottage before it drops straight off into the water. The cottages have belonged to the family for forty-five years. Millie's had to be moved back once. 'We used big cables and hauled it with a tractor.' The site of one relative's cottage has disappeared entirely.

'My uncle gave me a camera and I just had to use it. I don't know why. I had no particular desire for it. That was the only reason. The first summer I took pictures for something to do. I

was teaching school at the time and I would take pictures of the children. There was no photographer nearer than Charlottetown at the time and mothers wanted pictures of the babies and the children at the school too. I used to develop the pictures as well. We used to rig up the pantry as a darkroom. We didn't have running water in the house then. We had a hand pump and we would set a can with a hole in it under the pump and then put another can with a hole in it on top. That was the running water. It was quite an invention but it worked all right. The pictures were fine. We'd let the water run through and wash the prints. It was very primitive. My sisters used to develop prints as well. We had glass plates. They were 4 by 5 inches. We would take the plates and put them on the paper and expose them to light.'

Millie Gamble used a Ray no. 1 camera that was manufactured in Rochester, New York. Her photographs are of a personal nature; they are of her sisters, relatives, friends, neighbours, and the children she taught in school. They are warm, intimate pictures, a document of a segment of Prince Edward Island life from 1905-1920. Miss Gamble took informal portraits as well as photographs of people working.

As Mrs. Wood, Millie's younger sister says, 'She made a history of us as kids. If anything was going on Millie was there.' © *Laura Jones*







AN APPEAL TO ROBBIE BURNS

[On behalf of the sufferers from the granting
of his fatal wish]

Dear Robbie Burns:

Once on a time,
You wished, in smoothly flowing rhyme,
That 'some kind power the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us.'

Ah, had you humbly prayed for this:
'Oh, give us ignorance and bliss,
'Help us to bear our present lot,
'Nor flee to ills that we know not,'
The coming man your name had blessed
Instead **** *
**** (the explanation is suppressed,)

For some ill power your wish o'erheard
And you were taken at your word.
And we can see without disguise,
How we appear to others' eyes,
But 'tis no boon, as you shall see;
It brings, instead, much misery.

Highwaymen bold, that in your day,
Prowled up and down the king's highway,
Were gentlemen—aye Christians, too—
Compared to this malicious crew
That now infests each lane and street,
Whom we in walks abroad must meet.
Those simply asked for watch or purse;
These ask for nothing which is worse.
Those sallied forth with sword or gun;
These are not armed with either one.
They 'press a button,' that is all,
But none escape them, great or small,
And whether we're prepared or not
We're caught by artists on the spot.

I have a portrait—old, 'tis true,
But fine—and, Robert, 'tis of you.
A sweet, attractive comeliness,
Is in your face, and in your dress.
The artist—may he e'er be blessed—
Has shown you at your very best.
Suppose, instead, some wretch accurst
Had caught you at your very worst,
and "fixed" you to be handed down,
In pose, to shame a very clown.

When 'neath the hawthorn's fragrant shade,
You warmly wooed your Highland maid,
'Wi' mony a vow and fond embrace,'
I wonder, when such was the case,
If you'd have blessed the wily fiend,
Who, by the treacherous birk-tree screened,
The button—not the trigger—pressed,
Just as you clasped her to your breast?

Perchance you wished to slyly sip
A friendly social glass. Your lip
Has scarcely touched the beaker's rim—
Snap goes the button—"I've got him!"
And chuckling imp next day displays,
'Proof' of the error of your ways.

When at your Nancy's feet you knelt,
Pray tell us how you would have felt
If you had heard that fatal snap,
Just as you whimpered on her lap.
And she—the jade—about to give

A well developed negative.
Would you have said then, pert and pat:
'A man's a man for all o' that?'
I fear your locks you would have torn,
And groaned, 'Ah! man was made to mourn.'

Yet this and more we've had to bear,
We turn to you in our despair,
And beg you, without ceasing, pray
The gods to take their gift away,
And give us back those halcyon days,
When we pursued our various ways,
Without a thought, or fear, that we
Should see ourselves as others see.

More grievances I could disclose—
For these are not one-half the woes
Your fatal wish has brought to men;
But this is quite enough, I ken,
To show our plight, and why to you
Redress we look for; then, adieu,
Until we meet where are no days.
Yours,

ELIZABETH FLINT WADE

VICTIM OF THE CAMERA CRAZE

There are not many women photographers, nor is there any good reason why women should not be excellent photographers. They must, of course, learn the business, like anyone else, and the posing and lighting, being the finest artistic points, naturally require the greatest artistic aptitude. There are really good photographers in the country. It requires great skill and constant application and must be closely followed.

'It is, of course, conceded that women have a great deal of natural artistic talent, and if they once conclude to start out and become photographers, there is no doubt that they will succeed in it. The business pays well and by its very nature seems to invite women, as there are no unpleasant features about it.'

Napoleon Sarony, *The Canadian Photographic Journal* 4, no. 6 (June 1895).

The Canadian Photographic Journal 3, no. 1
(January 1894), pp. 29-30.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND

Photography is like a magician's charm.

We nurse the absent in affection warm.

Present the distant and retain the dead;

Shadows remaining but the substance fled.

For faces vanish like the dreams of night

But live on in portraits drawn by beams of light.

Anonymous, *The Canadian Photographic Journal* 2 (1893), p. 375.

“Women workers are increasing rapidly among us, and it is only a question of time until they will be generally recognized as mentally fitted to improve the educational opportunities afforded by a club. Amateur photography has the great advantage that its followers are confined to no age, sex, or condition of servitude.

“The question of sex especially is rapidly becoming a past issue. It never should have been raised at all, and those who persist in clinging to it will at no late date find themselves far in the rear of the great army of civilization.”

Catherine Weed Barnes, Editor *American Amateur Photographer* 4, no. 1 (1892).

“In its beginning—as in most of the other good things of this life—there was a man in the case, a brother-in-law, who happened at the time to be in the house and who invested in a camera. He knew nothing about it—I less than nothing; but I immediately became interested. He bought some developer and a small book of instructions, and together we groped about in a dark corner of the butler's pantry, spoiled some dozen plates, and incidently, a large portion of the pantry; sat up half the night with some of our negatives but out of the chaos once in a while rescued a plate that held out a ray of hope and led us to believe there was something in it after all . . . so after a season or so of varying fortunes, mostly adverse, the brother-in-law renounced photography as a recreation, remarking that it was too much like work, and took to whist and billiards instead. But he lent me the camera that winter for a Florida trip, where I, no longer fettered by masculine interference, had some tolerable luck. . . .

“I have seen friends, especially masculine ones, invest hundreds of dollars in cameras of all shapes and sizes—some of them without producing a dozen plates worth keeping. The moral of which is, that the measure of success does not lie in the outfit; it must be good, but it need not be costly, and the amateur who is always experimenting with new lenses or plates never, as a rule, learns the mastery of either.”

Mrs. Charles W. M'Cutchen

“There is no more suitable work for a woman than photography, whether she takes it up with a view of making it a profession, or simply as a delightful pastime to give pleasure to herself and others! She is by nature peculiarly fitted for the work, and photography is becoming more and more recognized as a field of endeavor peculiarly suited to women. There is scarcely a woman who has not some inborn artistic feeling, latent though it may be until brought out by study and training. Nevertheless, it is there, and its presence in greater or less degree, is promise of success in photography. Cleanliness and patience are two of the cardinal virtues necessary to the successful pursuit of photography. The first seems to be a God-given attribute to most women, while, if they have not the latter in sufficient amount, it is a virtue that can be cultivated. The light, delicate touch of a woman, the eye for light and shade, together with her artistic perception, render her peculiarly fitted to succeed in this work.”

Richard Hines Jr., Speech delivered before the Art League of Mobile, Alabama, 19 January 1899, *Wilson's Photographic* 36 (March 1899), pp. 137-41.



THE NOVICE

**Don't go near the mantel, darling,
Papa's plates are there to dry;
Fie! you've nearly spilled the hypo,
Take more care as you go by.**

**No, you cannot speak to papa,
He is in the dark-room now;
Fuming, fretting, at his pastime,
Like a farmer at the plough.**

**Hush! I think I hear him coming,
What is that I heard him say?
'Darn it, I have spoiled that land-
scape!'**

Dear, you'd best run out to play.

Lillian M. Ratcliffe

Photo Era 10, no. 6 (June 1903).

“I know it is difficult to realize in the increasing battle for existence that men can be confronted by a rival. An argument may be brought forward that these smaller, delicate beings, with white hands and long hair, are physically and therefore mentally incapable of taking an equal place with men in the intellectual world. Well, what they

may be I don't know, but I do know this, as regards their intellect in connection with the fascinating art of photography, we shall find a hot competition, and . . . if we don't help them to win a place they will win a place for themselves. If you watch closely you can see women's intellect brought into use day by day in connection with photography.

“So let me impress upon you, the members of the Bath Photographic Society, to encourage ladies to join the Society, and whatever you do don't ignore their work.”

Friese Greene; Speech delivered before the Bath Photographic Society (“Photography in an Age of Movement”), April 1890.