

Anne E. Guild, "Excerpt from "Grandmother Lee's Portfolio," 1857

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Anne E. Guild, *Grandmother Lee's Portfolio* (Boston: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1857): 63–66. The illustration appears opposite page 63.



[caption:] RECEIVING THE DAGUERREOTYPES.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AMY.

LONGMEADOW, January 11, 1837.

DEAR GRANDMOTHER: I'm only going to write you a short letter today, just to put in a package that mamma is to send you by express.

But I must tell you a little about it, for probably you will see what are the contents of the box before you read my letter. Last Friday, mamma dressed Mabel and myself with particular care, putting on our best frocks, merely saying papa would take us all into the city. On our way, she told me that your birthday came next week, and she wished to send you a present, and that she could think of nothing that would be more acceptable than pictures of your granddaughters. She said she should have Frank's taken also, the very next time he came home.

We went to Mr. Shine, who takes the best daguerreotypes; but I certainly thought we should never reach his rooms: we had to go up stairs after stairs, till mamma almost fainted, she was so tired.

When we reached what would be called the attic, but which was beautifully finished off with several large, airy rooms, we were warm enough.

Papa said the light was better about taking pictures to be so high up, where you could have a clear sweep of the sky, than to be lower down, and have only what light could come in through small side windows.

You'd have laughed to see how we became cool; on one side of the room, there was something that looked like a large windmill, and it was twirled round and round, swift as lightning, by machinery, so that it made a great breeze; and all we had to do was just to take some chairs and sit in them before it, and we were fanned down at a rapid rate, I can tell you.

Mamma was afraid Mabel might get weary or sleepy; so she had her sit for her picture first. A man was so kind as to play on the piano, that the music might please her; and papa went off and stood on one side, where he would not be in the way, but in such a position that Mabel could look at him and smile.

They had to try three times before mamma was satisfied; and then we all thought the likeness was perfect, and that Mabel looked as cunning and pretty as possible; so mamma had the man take two or that Mabel could look at him and smile.

They had to try three times before mamma was satisfied; and then we all thought the likeness was perfect, and that Mabel looked as cunning and pretty as possible; so mamma had the man take two or three copies, that we might have one at home for us, after sending one to you.

Then came my turn; and after a great deal of arranging, the very first attempt proved an excellent one. If you should only think so too, grandmother, we shall be delighted.

Papa has put Mabel's and mine into oval velvet cases; and mamma and he hope you will accept them, with their best love.

Your birthday, dear grandmother! The whole world ought to greet you, you are such a treasure. May you be free from every ache and pain, and may our heavenly Father, whom you love so dearly, bless you with all his blessings.

Dear, *dear* grandmother, with a heart running over with love, I am your affectionate

AMY.

CHAPTER XXXIV.
THE PRESENT ACKNOWLEDGED.

WILLIAMSTOWN, February 3, 1837.

DEAR AMY: Though I do not write many letters, yet I must acknowledge your last one, which I found hidden away in one corner of the mysterious box, and which I received very safely.

When I saw the expressman coming here, with a box in his hand, I thought it could not be for me, but might possibly be for Hepzy, containing some present of remembrance from her old Shaker friends.

Imagine my surprise when I saw it was directed wholly to me. I put on my best spectacles, my strongest magnifiers, and opened it in a minute.

Why, Amy, it seemed as if Mabel and you were right before me—had happened in unexpectedly—you seemed so natural and lifelike. I couldn't help calling you my little darlings, and kissing you ever so many times.

I'm *so* happy! I keep them where I can look at them all the time, with the cases open, that your bright faces may be looking upon me constantly; and at night, when I go to bed, I stand them open on the table side of me, where they may be the first things I shall see, as I open my eyes in the morning.

Never could daguerreotypes have given me more pleasure; and I shall wait impatiently for Franky's, that my gallery may be complete.

The darkest and stormiest day they will fill my house with sunshine, and be guardian spirits for me when I slumber at night.

They made by birthday a very happy one; and yet your love, and thoughtfulness, and good wishes, dear Amy, yours and your dear parents', made it still happier.

You know I always tell you that *love* is the best thing in life, and the *affections* the most priceless possession, and that there is nothing this world can give me I value more.

Thus every expression of it renews my youth, and makes me feel that in eternity there can be no "old age;" for we know that "God is love," and that in his home above his children dwell together in holiest love, and that this love is continually redeeming, and renewing, and preserving them *there*, where there is no time and no age.

Anticipating my winter visit to you soon, with renewed thanks for the beautiful present from you all, I am, with unfailing affection,

Your own fond
GRANDMOTHER.

[End of selected text. All content related to photography herein provided.]

The graphic is also available in JPG format:

http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/graphics/B8570001_GRANDMA-LEE-PORT_1857.php

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Although the title was published anonymously, the author is Anne E. (Gore) Guild. See S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors, Living and Deceased, from the Earliest Accounts to the Latter Half of the Nineteenth Century* vol. 3 (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott & Company, 1871): 2701. (The information is provided within the entry for "Whitmarsh, Miss Caroline Snowden.")

The illustrator of the book is the well-known Hammatt Billings. See James F. O’Gorman, *A Billings Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Works Illustrated by Hammatt Billings* (Wellesley College, 3d ed., revised, 1993); James F. O’Gorman, *Accomplished in All Departments of Art: Hammatt Billings of Boston* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998).

While the dates of the letters in this tale are very fictional (two years prior to the Daguerre’s announcement!), the description of “Mr. Shine’s” gallery accurately describes the steam-powered Boston gallery of John Adams Whipple:

Mr. Whipple had, with characteristic and Yankee-like ingenuity, obtained the assistance of a steam engine which not only “drove” all the circular cleaning and buffing wheels, but an immense circular fan which kept the studio and sitters delightfully cool.

—John Werge, *The Evolution of Photography: With a Chronological Record of Discoveries, Inventions, Etc.* (London: Piper & Carter, 1890): 53.

Additional information regarding Whipple’s use of steam is found in J. A. Whipple, “Preparing Plates by Steam,” *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 3:5 (May 1852): 271–72;¹ M. Grant, “John Whipple and the Daguerrean Art,” *Photographic Art-Journal* (New York) 2:2 (August 1851): 94–95.²

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8520001_WHIPPLE-STEAM_PAJ_1852-05.pdf

2. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/P8510015_WHIPPLE_PAJ_1851-08.pdf

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