

## ***Eminent Women* (1884): Twelve Women and the Photograph They Never Took**



Notman Photographic Company. *Eminent Women* (1884). Albumen print cabinet card. Purchased with the Davida T. Deutsch Women's History Fund.

### **SEATED WOMEN FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:**

#### **Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1844-1911)**

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps was the eldest daughter of the Rev. Austin Phelps and his wife, the prolific didactic writer Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1815-1852). They named her Mary Gray Phelps, but after her mother's death, she assumed the name Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in her mother's memory. As a young woman, she attended Abbott Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, where her father taught. Phelps is said to have vowed never to marry after the death of a young man she loved. Her first published story appeared in the magazine *Youth's Companion* at age thirteen, and she continued to write children's stories until 1864, when she published a story for adults in *Harper's*. Her great fame as a writer came in 1868, with the publication of *The Gates Ajar*, a novel featuring lengthy theological discussions about the nature of heaven. Although her other books never reached the same level of success, Phelps continued to write, producing a total of fifty-seven books in her lifetime, as well as numerous magazine pieces. She became involved in the women's rights movement in the 1870s, advocating for voting rights, dress reform (she advised burning corsets), and more job opportunities for women. Going back on her youthful promise to never marry, she married Herbert Dickinson Ward (1861-1932) in 1888. Together they co-authored three books. Phelps died in 1911 from myocardial degeneration.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *What to Wear* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1873).

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### **Louise Chandler Moulton (1835-1908)**

Writer and literary hostess Louise Chandler Moulton was the only child of Lucius and Louise Chandler, farmers in Pomfret, Connecticut. She attended the Rev. Roswell Park's school in Pomfret, where her classmates included the future artist James McNeill Whistler and future writer E. C. Stedman. Her first poem was published when she was fifteen. In 1854, a collection of her poems and narrative sketches appeared as *This, That, and the Other*, selling 20,000 copies. She married the publisher of the story-paper the *True Flag* (where some of her work had appeared), William Upham Moulton, in 1855. As the wife of a prominent member of the Boston literary scene, Moulton established correspondence with many of the leading writers of the day, and began hosting a Friday salon for local literary figures, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Ralph Waldo Emerson. After she began travelling to Europe, her salon grew to include visitors from London and Paris. In the 1870s, Moulton wrote book reviews and criticism for the *New York Tribune* and the *Boston Sunday Herald*, which helped introduce European poets and writers to American readers. For several years, she split her time between Boston and London, holding weekly literary salons in both cities. She wrote sketches of her travels that appeared in multiple volumes in the 1880s. She was acquainted with Julia Ward Howe and Sarah Orne Jewett. Moulton died from Bright's disease, in Boston, in 1908.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

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### **Louisa May Alcott (1832-1888)**

Louisa May Alcott was the second daughter of writer/educator Amos Bronson Alcott and his wife Abigail. As members of the intellectually and politically engaged community in Concord, Massachusetts, the Alcotts knew prominent individuals such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The family was often poor, and it is believed that the financial difficulties that her father faced prompted Louisa to turn to writing as a means of support. Her first published work appeared in September 1851. Known primarily for her stories and poems for children, she also authored sensational stories under various pseudonyms, a fact that only became widely known in the 20th century. In 1862 she went to Washington, D.C., to work as a nurse for the Union Army, but fell ill with typhoid fever and had to return home to Concord. During her convalescence, she wrote *Hospital Sketches*, which appeared as a collected volume in August 1863. The treatment for the typhoid involved mercury, which left her semi-invalid for the rest of her life. In the late 1860s, Alcott began writing *Little Women*, her most popular work. It was published in 1868 to great success, selling 40,000 copies in its first year. She became a literary celebrity. After *Little Women*, Alcott

produced a new work every year, either a novel or a collection of short stories (often previously published in juvenile magazines). Alcott was passionate about women's rights, and was the first woman to register to vote in Concord when Massachusetts gave women school, tax, and bond suffrage in 1879. She was also involved in Concord's temperance society, and joined the New England Women's Club, where she met other women writers. She devoted the end of her life to caring for her orphaned nephew and sick father. Alcott died on the day of her father's funeral in 1888.

For more information, see:

*Bibliography of American Literature* (1955).

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

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### **Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910)**

Writer, lecturer, and suffragist Julia Ward Howe was born in New York City to Samuel Ward, Jr., a banker, and his wife Julia. Although she attended local day schools, she was mostly self-taught. After her brother Samuel married into the prominent Astor family, she became acquainted with New York society and met notable individuals such as Charles Sumner and Margaret Fuller. In 1843, she married Samuel Gridley Howe, head of the Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston. They had six children together, but the marriage was apparently an unhappy one. Essays by Howe had already appeared in the *New York Review*, but once they were married, Samuel attempted to prevent her from writing for publication or participating in social causes. Her first volume of poetry, *Passion-Flowers*, appeared anonymously in 1853. Some of the poems seem to criticize her husband and the state of their marriage. Howe wrote throughout the 1850s, producing two unsuccessful plays and some travelogues for various magazines. True renown did not come until 1862, with the publication of her poem "Battle Hymn of The Republic" in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Soon set to music, the poem became something of a rallying song for the North towards the end of the Civil War. After the war, Howe co-founded both the New England Women's Club and the New England Woman's Suffrage Association. She helped to establish the *Women's Journal*, serving as an editor and contributor for over twenty years. After her husband's death in 1876, Howe published and lectured more, often undertaking speaking tours at women's clubs around the country. She was the first woman elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1908. Howe died of pneumonia in 1910.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Julia Ward Howe, *Passion-Flowers* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1853).

Lilian Whiting, *Women Who Have Ennobled Life* (Philadelphia: The Union Press, 1915).

Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

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### **Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)**

Writer Harriet Beecher Stowe was the seventh of nine children born to Lyman Beecher, a Congregationalist minister, and his wife Roxana. She attended the female seminary run by her older sister Catharine in Hartford starting at age thirteen. The family moved to Cincinnati in 1832 for Lyman's job as president of the Lane Theological Seminary. In 1836, Stowe married Lane professor Calvin Ellis Stowe. She wrote sketches to supplement Calvin's salary. 1843 saw the publication of her first volume, a collection of short stories called *The Mayflower*. The growing Stowe family moved to Maine in 1850 after Calvin was offered a professorship at Bowdoin College. It was at this time that Stowe decided to write what would become known as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and it appeared in over 40 installments in the Washington, D.C. paper the *National Era*. By March 1852, it had appeared in book form. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was a publishing sensation, selling 300,000 copies in the first year. The book's abolitionist message offended many in the South, and when President Lincoln met Stowe in 1862, he allegedly greeted her saying, "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war." Although she produced a new book practically every year between 1862 and 1884, she never again achieved the same level of success. In later years, she wrote mainly to provide for her spinster daughters and alcoholic son. After writing an autobiography in 1889, her output decreased. Historians now believe that Stowe suffered from Alzheimer's Disease towards the end of her life. She died in Hartford in 1896.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

Daniel R. Vollaro, "Lincoln, Stowe, and the 'Little Woman/Great War' Story: The Making, and Breaking, of a Great American Anecdote," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*, Winter 2009, 18-34. Accessed May 23, 2017. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jala/2629860.0030.104/--lincoln-stowe-and-the-little-womangreat-war-story-the-making?rgn=main;view=fulltext#top>

STANDING WOMEN FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

### **Mary Ashton Rice Livermore (1821-1905)**

The fourth of six children born to Timothy and Zebiah Rice, writer and lecturer Mary Ashton Rice Livermore was educated at the Female Seminary in Charlestown, Massachusetts, before becoming a governess to a family on a plantation in Virginia. Apparently as a result of this experience, she became an abolitionist. She also wrote stories for children's temperance groups that were collected under the title *The Children's Army* (1844). She married Universalist minister Daniel Livermore in 1845, and they had three daughters. She wrote throughout the 1840s and 1850s, and when the family

moved to Chicago in 1857, Livermore assisted her husband as editor of the religious publication the *New Covenant*. Some of the short stories that she wrote for the newspaper appeared as *Pen Pictures* in 1863. When the Civil War broke out, she took up organizing with the United States Sanitary Commission, and by 1862 she was head of the Midwest division, responsible for fundraising and training women volunteers as nurses. After the war, she turned to suffrage and was the first president of the Illinois Woman Suffrage Association. She moved back to Boston to edit the *Women's Journal*, but resigned after a few years to go on the lecture circuit. Several of her more famous lectures were printed in book form, and a memoir, *My Story of the War*, was published in 1887. She was president, at various times, of the Association for the Advancement of Women, the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, and the Massachusetts chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. She retired from the lecture circuit in 1895 and wrote *A Story of My Life* in 1897. After her husband's death, Livermore became a follower of Spiritualism to try and contact him. She herself died in 1905.

For more information, see:

Mary A. Gardener Holland, *Our Army Nurses: Interesting Sketches, Addresses, and Photographs of Nearly One Hundred of the Noble Women Who Served in Hospitals and on Battlefields during Our Civil War* (Boston: B. Wilkins & Co., 1895).

<https://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=jFgPAAAAYAAJ&pg=GBS.PA3>

Marilyn Elizabeth Perry, "Livermore, Mary," in *American National Biography Online* (Feb. 2000). Accessed May 22, 2017. <http://www.anb.org/articles/15/15-00415.html>

Doris Weatherford, "Mary Ashton Rice Livermore." In *American Women's History: An A to Z of People, Organizations, Issues, and Events* (Prentice Hall, 1994). Accessed May 22, 2017.

<https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/mary-ashton-rice-livermore/>

Lilian Whiting, *Women Who Have Ennobled Life* (Philadelphia: The Union Press, 1915).

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### **Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909)**

Writer Sarah Orne Jewett was born to Caroline and Theodore Jewett, a doctor in the small town of South Berwick, Maine. As a young girl, Jewett often accompanied her father on his rounds, which seems to have inspired the characters and small-town setting in almost all of her fiction. She graduated from Berwick Academy in 1865. Her first short story was published in the *Flag of Our Union* in 1868. Early in her career, her work appeared under the name "Alice Eliot." It was not until September 1873, with the publication of "The Shore House" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, that Jewett found her niche writing sketches about life in Maine. Her early stories were collected in the episodic novel *Deephaven* (1877), and several more collections followed. Her novel *A Country Doctor* (1884) was based on the life of her father. The novella *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) cemented her status as a well-respected regionalist writer. Jewett never married, although she had an intense friendship with Annie Fields (1834-1915) after the death of Fields' husband, the publisher James T. Fields, in 1881. Jewett and Annie Fields traveled to Europe and lived together in Boston and Maine for several years. In 1902, Jewett suffered a spinal concussion that ended her writing career after

having been thrown from a carriage. One of her friendships was with Willa Cather (1873-1947), who would go on to a successful career as a writer herself. After a series of strokes left Jewett paralyzed, she died in 1909. In 1916, the Merrymount Press issued a volume of her poetry for private distribution to her friends.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Catherine Clinton and Christine Lunardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

Sarah Orne Jewett, "The Shore House," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1873. Accessed at <http://www.public.coe.edu/~theller/soj/dph/shorehouse.htm>

Sarah Orne Jewett, *A Country Doctor* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884).

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### **Grace Atkinson Oliver (1844-1899)**

Grace Atkinson Oliver, a writer and biographer, was born in Boston to a family of merchants. After her husband James Ellis died the year following their marriage in 1869, the Rev. Dr. E. E. Hale recommended that Oliver submit pieces for his magazine *Old and New*. She later contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly*, and was, for several years, a contributor to the *Boston Telegraph*. Her biography of the English writer Anna Barbauld (1743-1825) appeared in 1873. While visiting England the following year, the family of writer Maria Edgeworth (1768-1849) suggested Oliver write a memoir of her as well, and that volume appeared in 1882. She married her second husband, Dr. Joseph Oliver, in 1870 and continued to write for publication. In the mid-1880s, she edited selections from the works of Barbauld and Edgeworth. The Olivers owned a summer home in Salem, Massachusetts, and she was active in the Thought and Work Club there. She was also a member of the New England Women's Club and the New England Woman's Press Association. In *A Woman of the Century*, editors Frances Willard and Mary Livermore describe Oliver as "a kindly public spirited woman." She died in 1899 from complications from diabetes.

For more information, see:

Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds., "Mrs. Grace Atkinson Oliver" in *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches of Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 547-548.

Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915.

"Grace Atkinson Little Oliver (1844-1899)." Find A Grave. Accessed May 23, 2017.

<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=144226575>

### **Helen Hunt Jackson (1830-1885)**

Helen Hunt Jackson was the second of four children born to Deborah and Nathan Fiske, a professor at Amherst College. Both parents died while Jackson was still in her teen years, and she moved to New York City, where she attended the Spingler Institute. She married Lieutenant Edward Hunt in 1853, and they had two sons. Between 1862 and 1865, however, her husband and both sons died. In the aftermath, Jackson started writing verse, and the *New York Evening Post* printed some of her poems under the name “Marah” in the summer of 1865. Her early poems were collected in *Verses* (1870). She apparently disliked the alliteration of “Helen Hunt,” and frequently used pseudonyms. Some of her books, like *Mercy Philbrick’s Choice* (1876), were published anonymously. In 1875, she married her second husband, William Jackson, a banker she met while taking a rest cure in Colorado Springs. They moved to the Western United States, and Jackson became increasingly aware of the plight of Native Americans, whose treaties with the U.S. government were being broken. She wrote to various officials, including Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz, and their subsequent dispute made national news. Jackson’s history of U.S.-Native American relations, *A Century of Dishonor*, appeared in 1881, and she sent a copy to every federal official who dealt with Native American affairs. The commission established to investigate the situation did not prove effective, at which point Jackson decided to write a novel modeled after *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* to spark public outrage. *Ramona* (1884), about a Native American girl in Spanish California, was reprinted more than 300 times. Jackson broke her leg in 1884 and went to California to recover, but died there of cancer the following year. An enlarged edition of *A Century of Dishonor* appeared a few months after her death.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).

Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds., “Mrs. Helen Maria Fiske Jackson” in *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches of Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 414.

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### **Nora Perry (1831-1896)**

Writer Nora Perry was born in Dudley, Massachusetts, to Harvey and Sarah Perry. While she was still young, the family moved to Providence, Rhode Island. Perry’s work first appeared when she was eighteen, with the serial story *Rosalind Newcomb* in *Harper’s Magazine*. She became known for her two poems “Tying Her Bonnet under her Chin” (first published in the *National Era*) and “After the Ball” (first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*), both of which were reprinted many times. The first of four collections of her poems appeared as *After the Ball, and Other Poems* in 1875. Perry primarily became known as a writer of juvenile fiction, especially short stories for girls. These were collected in volumes such as *A Flock of Girls* (1888) and *The Youngest Miss Lorton* (1889). Although Perry worked for several years as the Boston correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, her social life was based in Providence, where she was part of the lively literary circle surrounding Sarah Helen Whitman (1803-1878). Her close friends included the writers John Whittier and Wendell Phillips. Perry died of a stroke while visiting her childhood home in 1896.

For more information, see:

Fennell, DK. "Nora Perry: What outlasts summer's decay." *Hidden Cause, Visible Effects*. September 9, 2010. Accessed May 24, 2017.  
<https://hiddencause.wordpress.com/2010/09/08/poem-of-the-week-perry/>

Harding, Chloe Morse. "Nora Perry." *Boston Athenæum*. July 2012. Accessed May 24, 2017.  
<http://www.bostonathenaeum.org/library/book-recommendations/athenaeum-authors/nora-perry.>

Perry, Nora. *A Flock of Girls, and Their Friends*, (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1888). Accessed May 24, 2017. <https://archive.org/details/aflockgirlsandt00perrgoog>.

Ticknor, Caroline. "A New England Singer." *The Lamp*, June 1903, 363-74. Accessed May 24, 2017.  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=339MAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_su\\_mmary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=339MAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_su_mmary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds., "Miss Nora Perry." In *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches of Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 567.

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### **Lucy Larcom (1824-1893)**

Writer Lucy Larcom was the ninth of ten children born to Lois and Benjamin Larcom. Her father, a merchant and sea captain, died when she was eight, and her mother moved the family to Lowell, Massachusetts, where the textile mills employed women and girls. After briefly attending the local schools, Larcom worked in the mills herself for ten years. This experience informed some of her later writing, including her memoir *A New England Girlhood* (1889) and the narrative poem *An Idyl of Work* (1875). Some of her early poetry appeared in the *Lowell Offering* prior to 1849, when Rufus Griswold reprinted them in his anthology *Female Poets of America*. Larcom left Lowell in 1846 to live with her sister in Illinois, where she taught school and later attended the Monticello Seminary. Her first book, *Similitudes: From the Ocean and the Prairie* (1854), appeared after she returned to Massachusetts. She taught moral philosophy and logic at Wheaton Seminary for several years. She also started the school's newspaper, which is still printed today. Larcom edited the children's magazine *Our Young Folks* from 1865 to 1873. In the late 1870s, she assembled a few poetry anthologies, though rarely under her own name. Her own poetry continued to appear in juvenile magazines and the *Atlantic Monthly*. Her poems were collected in four volumes during her lifetime. Larcom also edited volumes of Christian writings and poems towards the end of her life. She never married, and died in 1893.

For more information, see:  
*Notable American Women* (1971).

Lucy Larcom, *A New England Girlhood*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889).

Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, eds., "Miss Lucy Larcom." In *A Woman of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-Seventy Biographical Sketches of Accompanied by Portraits of Leading American Women in All Walks of Life* (Buffalo: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893), 448-449.



“Wheaton College History: Lucy Larcum.” Accessed May 24, 2017.  
<http://wheatoncollege.edu/college-history/1850s/lucy-larcom-wheaton/>

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### **Frances Hodgson Burnett (1849-1924)**

Frances Hodgson Burnett was born in Manchester, England, in 1849, the third of five children born to Eliza and Edwin Hodgson. When Burnett’s father died in 1854, the family struggled, and eventually moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, to be near other family members. Burnett sold her first short story to *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in 1868, and then wrote consistently for publications such as *Scribner’s* and *Harper’s*. She married Dr. Swan Burnett in 1873, and they had two sons. The couple struggled financially in the early years of their marriage. After the publication of Burnett’s first full length novel, *That Lass o’ Lowrie’s* (1877), they moved to Washington, D.C., where her husband established his medical practice. She found true financial success with *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886) which first appeared serially. This enabled them to travel to Europe. In 1888, her short story “Sara Crewe, or, What Happened at Miss Minchin’s” was published, which Burnett later turned into a play, and then her full-length novel *The Little Princess* (1905). It became one of her most well-known books. After her eldest son died in 1890, Burnett developed an interest in Spiritualism and Christian Science. She lived in England for most of the 1890s, divorcing her husband in 1898, and marrying Dr. Stephen Townsend in 1900. Her second marriage was problematic from the start, and the couple divorced two years later. She then bought a home in Long Island, New York, where she lived for the remainder of her life. Burnett continued producing short stories and novels for children, most notably *The Secret Garden* in 1911. Burnett died in 1924.

For more information, see:

*Notable American Women* (1971).