

# OLD PHOTOGRAPHS.

*By Judy Joyce*

Ellen was sitting by a glowing fire of coals which radiated warmth and brightness into the room, yet seemed to conceal the mysteries of the forgotten past and the unknown future in their gleaming depths. She was old, with pure white hair surrounding a face lined with the cares and troubles of many years, but with the brightness of youth still shone from her soft hazel eyes. The freedom she had once had been taken away by her Unco-operative legs. On her complaining knees lay a large, thick book, full of treasures. Tenderly she opened it at the first page.

Here was a photo of a young man, not handsome, but with such a kind face and honest frank smile. There was determination in the slight tilt of the chin and a challenging look in his eyes. It was her husband Edmund as he had been when she first met him. He was dead now, but she did not feel lonely. This portrait brought back all the memories of their eventful life, and he seemed to live again as she sat there by the fire.

Beside this was a portrait of herself, she knew she was not beautiful by any means. She looked long at the photograph which recalled all the happenings of her young life, surprises, shocks, pleasures and pains, moments of anxiety and sorrow, and even interesting little events which remained in her memory for some unknown reason. She smiled softly as she lived again the moment when she had met her dear Edmund, and gently she passed on to the next photograph.

A scene of happiness beyond all bounds, showed next, a marriage scene. Their wedding where rejoicing friends and relatives were celebrating with confetti outside the little old convict-built church of her home town. It had been in May and the entire world seemed to rejoice with her.

Now came a collection of pretty scenes, taken on their honeymoon. She gave a little sigh of happiness when she enjoyed again the never to be forgotten scenes and incidents of that trip.

The house in which they lived when they were first married was next. Her heart beat quickly as she remembered the good times and the not so good times spent there. She also remembered how devastated the whole family felt when they had to leave this happy home. Not because they wanted to, but because the army repossessed their land to build a military base.



Suddenly Ellen's eye fell on the next picture. It was the portrait of their first child, their son Bill. Her mind slipped back over the years to the time when this little bundle of humanity had brought the young couple so much joy.

Sad memories flooded in with the next photo of him years later in his army uniform. He and his brother Albert went to fight for their countries freedom and how he had lost his. Only his brother had returned.

Soon tears sprang to her eyes as she remembered the death of her third child, a beautiful fair haired boy, Freddy. This photo made him look like an angel. Only three when he so tragically drowned in an unused well on their property.

After this Ellen looked tenderly and lovingly at all the snapshots and portraits of her growing children. She and Edmund and had ten children over twenty four years. She remembered the joys, tribulations, excitements, triumphs and achievements which they had brought to their home. One by one her children grew up, established careers and married happily. A never-loosening bond of affection bound parents and children together.

The photographs now before her, of her grandchildren, made her realise that she had done well along life's road.

Here was a photograph of her Edmund again, just before his death. He had worked hard during his lifetime and had earned his reward. Tears sprang to her eyes and dropped, glistening, on to the worn pages of the precious album before her. She still had sorrows. Thankfully some of her children were around to comfort her.

The last photo was a large coloured photograph of herself, seated, with her children and grandchildren gathered around. What a big, happy family they all were!

She smiled, and gave a yearning sigh as she closed the lovely album and sat gazing into the fire. The memorable photographs returned her freedom for now. In her memories she could walk again, holding her head up high so she now could see how much she had accomplished in her life.

There is priceless value in old photographs!

