

She Gives Them Tea to Get a Good Picture

By FRANCES L. GARSIDE



JESSIE TARBOX BEALS

THERE was a time—as most folks will recall—when the first job of a photographer was to get on the face of his subject the expression of a scared rabbit. Then, click, and the job was done. He was particularly happy, this kind of photographer, in taking family reunions, directing one mem-

ber to gaze at the ceiling, another at the floor, another direct at him, and another at a picture on the wall, producing expressions that displayed every gamut of emotion, from fear that the plumbing above had sprung a leak to the forced pleasantness that could not divorce itself from the pain of sitting so long in a strained position.

That there is a change is due to many things and many agencies: Couldn't it be said that much of it is due to the entry of women into photographic work; women who just naturally know the difference between natural grace and unnatural awkwardness?

Getting down to the individual: Ninety per cent of this change is to the credit of Jessie T. Beals, the first woman press photographer this country ever knew.

She began in Canada as a school teacher; one does not "begin" until one begins to earn a living. She got seven dollars a week. She detested the work; she knew she could not even get admission to an old ladies' home on the salary. She bought a \$1.75 camera one summer, and found she loved to use it. The fifth week she earned ten dollars. Then she resigned as a school teacher.

Has she found affluence taking pictures? No. But she has found something infinitely better; the joy of creation that has its reward in creating a little better than similar work was ever done before. She "found herself," by finding how to develop the best in others. A picture taken by Mrs. Beals is something more than a reproduction of eyes and nose and chin; it is a glimpse of the soul.

"My studio," she explains with a laugh, "is responsible for the work I do. You can see it is a big home-like place and when patrons come, we sit and gossip and get acquainted. Then I limber 'em up with a cup of tea, studying them all the time to find the best that is in them. It is always there; it is an illusive sort of thing—the expression I am seeking—but a cup of tea and the friendliness of which it is a humble symbol, bring it out.

"I once had a subject—a woman—with a dish face. Looked as if it had been pushed in, you know. She expected to buy two pictures. I judge one was for her husband and one for her mother. I humanized that woman, and, do you know, she has so far spent \$140 on those pictures and is still coming.

"No, I didn't idealize her. I didn't do a thing in retouching to make her better looking. I just made my camera get a snap of the real intelligence and goodness in her, and in looking at those one didn't see

the dishiness of her face. Really, it was no longer there."

Mrs. Beals, as press photographer for a Buffalo paper at the time of the St. Louis Exposition, made 60,000 prints. She caught notables and Irrogotes alike; on foot and on parade; nothing escaped her, and if a better view was had of the interior of an Eskimo village or a concession by climbing a telegraph pole, she climbed it.

She has clicked her camera from roof tops, tree tops, balloons, and the tops of freight cars. On one occasion with but fifteen minutes to pack her plates and dress, she caught a train for a Rochester fire, putting on her shoes on the street car, and completing her costume on the train. She has snapped everything that walks, crawls and swims in the United States and Canada; there has never been weather too inclement, or the hour too late and lonely, for her to walk out with her camera. The pictures she has taken of New York at such unusual hours, in rain, in fog, in snow, by moonlight, or by early dawn, are classics.

Mrs. Beals also writes poetry. Almost every one has a weakness, you know. The odd thing is that she seems more proud of her poems than of her pictures, the latter being famed the world over. The former—well, perhaps you know how unappreciative some publishers are.

Mrs. Beals has met human nature in all its disguises; she has had a stormy road up, but is still smiling, still encouraging, still serving such wonderful tea in her studio (or is it her spirit of fellowship that gives it that delicious flavor?) that every afternoon there is a gathering in her studio—not of those who want their pictures taken—but those who need the encouragement that Mrs. Beals unconsciously gives to all she meets.

Her favorites for camera purposes are men and babies; babies because she loves them, and men because they are more pliable. If she were less kind to her own sex, she might explain it by saying their coat of veneering is not so deceiving.

The best time she ever had with her camera, barring her experiences in St. Louis, was in taking President Roosevelt's Rough Riders at a gathering in San Antonio, Texas, when she became on speaking terms with every bustling broncho man in the group.

She gave up a seven-dollar-a-week job, not because of the small pay but because she did not like the work. She took her courage in her hands and made a success in a field hitherto unexplored by her sex; solely because she loved the task her hands had found to do.

The Big Joke Col. E. M. House Played on William J. Bryan

A CERTAIN retired cattle king in Texas, who amassed a few millions and then quit the game in order to "just visit around," has a habit of running up to Washington every six months in order to, as he puts it, "give the lawmakers and national capitalers the once over."

During a recent trip he got real chummy with a western Congressman one night as they sat in a hotel lobby. Following a discussion of the field of presidential candidates, the old Texan chucklingly remarked that the funniest thing that had ever happened in all his life was the time Col. Edward Mandell House played a practical joke on William Jennings Bryan.

Up to this time the westerner had been lolling far back in his big leather chair, with his feet anchored high against a nicely polished marble pillar. "What! Colonel House play a practical joke—and on William J. Bryan," he loudly demanded as he brought his feet floorward and his body to an erect position. "Never! The idea is preposterous! Why House is as quiet and dignified as one of those mummy chaps who have been slumbering 'neath a pyramid tombstone since long before that Cleopatra girl canoed up and down the Nile on moonlight nights, snuggled close to the one man.

"I might believe your tale if it was any one but this quiet, sombre old scout from Texas who has the demeanor of a Quaker deacon, and who wears a plug hat, Prince Albert coat, no smile and patent leather shoes, and who has proved himself to be such an able friend and assistant to the President in deciding what, when, how, where, why and who to do in the way of cabinet making, League of Nationing, railroading, Samuel-gompering, suffragetting, prohibitioning, congressing and various other odd jobs that have been bobbing up for several years past.

"However, I am curious and good-natured, and willing to be the goat now and then and bite, so Mr. Texan, cut loose with your House-Bryan yarn."

"Well you see it's like this," started in the visitor as a reminiscent smile lighted up his face, "some fifteen or sixteen years ago Bryan decided to give his native state a little vacation—he'd been usin' it considerable—so he comes down to Austin, Texas, which in addition

to bein' the state capital, also used to be the permanent home of Col. House. There was some excitement when the news commenced to spread that Bryan was goin' to spend the winter in a house right next door to Col. House. Naturally they gets neighborly and talks some across the dividin' fence—leastways Bryan talks.

"Not wantin' to monopolize the entertainin' of the honored orator and presidential runner, House confers with Jim Hogg, a friend of his'n he had been instrumental in makin' governor a few years prior, and they rib up the greatest huntin' trip ever staged in Travis County. They impressively notify Bryan they are plannin' a wild animal huntin' trip for him, which seemed to please that Nebraskan much.

"There was an old panther chained to the post in the back yard of our most popular saloon—yes, we had lots of saloons them days. To strangers, how-be-ever, she was always referred to as a wild Mexican wolf. The critter was well nigh blind and only had one upper and one lower tooth, neither of which hit, makin' bitin' and eatin' considerable difficult. In fact she had dined on nothin' but soft vittles for years. This animile was kept because she was amusin' to the tipplers who preferred listenin' to her style of growlin' instead of goin' home.

"House and Hogg give a nigger boy a dollar six bits to lead the wolf, under cover of early mornin' darkness, to a strip of woods a right smart piece beyond town—mebbe six or eight miles, and put her up in the forks of a whalin' big cottonwood tree.

"Early that mornin' the huntin' party paraded up Congress Avenoo, everybody on hossback or muleback. House and Bryan a-leadin' the procession, Bryan straddlin' his sorrel mustang as dignified and straight as Napoleon Bonypart and John Pershing combined. They was followed I reckon by fifty or a hundred men and boys armed with muskets, shotguns, and sixshooters. It was as imposin' a lookin' band of hunters as I had ever seen. Every houn' dog for miles around had been borried for this particular festivity. Bryan, of course,

was some happy, duly appreciatin' the kindness of his new Southern neighbors in goin' to all this fuss in order to show him true Southern hospitality. A few miles beyond the city limits the dogs took the scent and away they scampered; such howlin' and barkin' and growlin' I never heard in all my born days. Them that could, jumped their hosses over fences and creeks; them that couldn't, got all excited and cut a lot of wire fences and just waded the creeks. When we reached the big cottonwood you never seen such a picture as them dogs made surroundin' that tree and bayin' away at that old panther girl as she blinked down at them from her safe perch wonderin', I s'pose, what it was all about. Everybody in the crowd, by pre-arrangement, acted scared and excited as if they expected the panther to leap at them any second and rend them arm from leg.

"Gentlemen," said Col. House polite-like, like a true Southern gentleman, 'bein' as how Mr. Bryan is a highly honored guest in our midst, I would respectfully suggest that he be accorded the honor of havin' the first shot at this dangerous wild beast. But in case he misses then it is to be a free for all, each man protectin' himself as he deems best."

"Bryan beamed all kinds of gratitude. Restin' his silver-plated Winchester in the forks of a saplin' he took long and careful aim and shot that decrepit panther plum through the heart. When Bryan rolled it over, nonchalant-like, with the barrel of his gun, the expression on his face said as plain as day that there was only one other time in his life when he was just as happy—that bein' the time he pulled that crown of gold and cross of thorns speech on us Democrats and got nomination number one.

"A delegation of leadin' citizens had the varmint skun and the hide dressed and fixed up right pretty and presented it to Mr. Bryan with a fittin' speech by the mayor. I'm told it decorated the Bryan parlor for many years.

"It wasn't until years afterward that Bryan learned the real truth about that huntin' trip, generated by Col. House, and found that nothin' but cottontails and chipmunks had been within fifty miles of Austin in more than fifty years."