

# INTIMATE FRIENDS.

'There, that's one more done! Ethel tossed the dainty envelope she had just addressed upon a pile of similar notes before her. 'Who comes next on the list? Mrs. Livermore. It says 'silver salver.' To use at the hall door or in the dining-room? Do you remember, mother, darling?'

The lady who sat at a table near by, entering the names and descriptions of the wedding gifts in a small book, raised her head.

'I don't know, I'm sure,' she said. 'I forget them once I've written them down. Ask Olive.'

'She is out doing our errands, you know mamma.'

'Oh, she's out,' repeated Mrs. Orme, vaguely, her face sharpening with anxiety as she watched the maid detach a glass dish from a mass of paper ribbons in the box which had just come.

'Well, never mind about the salver,' and Ethel nodded briefly at the glittering cut glass of the newest gift. 'I've no time to look up any particulars. I'll just write one of my copy-book notes. 'Dear Mrs. Livermore: Your beautiful gift came—Mother mine, you're keeping your dear wits in hand to-day aren't you? Yesterday I nearly thanked Mrs. Smythe effusively for Mrs. Dayton's tea-caddy.'

Well, if people don't put cards in their boxes, I can't help it! sighed the others. I'm doing the best I can.

Who sent that white fan beside you, sweet heart? pursued the bride elect, who had paused in her own work to oversee her parent.

'That?' Mrs. Orme took up the fan and opened it quickly, as if expecting to surprise the name of the giver among the Cupids and shepherdesses frisking across the silk within. 'That is just what I have been talking about. It had no card whatever.'

'Are you sure, mamma, dear? You know you sometimes—'

'Perhaps I do,' admitted Mrs. Orme. 'But this time I am quite positive I have made no mistake. Jane hands me a card just as soon as she opens a box. And I certainly never had one for this fan. It is probably from old Mrs. Long. I think Olive, or some one, said she spoke of giving a fan.'

'It's rather a good one,' remarked Ethel, carelessly. 'That makes eight, doesn't it? There must be an idea afloat that I am going to live at the equator. Dear Mrs. Livermore: Your beautiful gift came this morning. It was so sweet in you—'

'What should you call this in the book?' questioned her mother, holding up an article with distorted prongs which Jane had just excavated from pink cotton wool.

'I've not an idea, mamma, love. There's something new invented for every bride. Here's Olive. She will know.'

The girl who came in with her round cheeks aglow from the October wind glanced at Ethel with a look of devotion which was plainly an habitual expression with her.

'What shall I know?' she asked. 'Not when your friend Agnes will come home. She was not on this train, and Aunt Charlotte is worried about her, for there's no other till ten o'clock tonight. So she surely will not get here until tomorrow. Grandmother must have had one of her attacks and kept her.'

'It's too bad!' mused Ethel. 'She is so clever about packing, and mine ought to begin in the morning. Oh, see here, Olive! Today is Agnes's and the profits are gaged so as to cover only the actual cost of maintenance. The manager of the store is a native, who speaks English fluently, and has been from the start one of Mr. Duncan's most powerful supporters.'

The social side of life is not neglected, and among the sources of entertainment is a well-trained brass band which gives open-air concerts during the summer months. A large and commodious building has recently been erected on one of the most attractive sites for the use of the band.

Liquor and tobacco are unknown in Metlakahla. Sunday is observed, not by force of law, but voluntarily, and the people are deeply religious in conscience and conviction. Church attendance is not compulsory, but the spirit of devotion is manifest, and the services, which are non-sectarian, are largely attended. Mr. Duncan preaches in the Indian dialect, although all of his people understand English, and the hymns are given out and sung in the latter tongue.

Mr. Duncan is truly the father of these people. His word is law, and to him all disputes and disagreements are referred, and no one ever presumes to question his

judgments. His law is the law of kindness, and the affection of his people for him is unbounded. The community is today the most peaceable, moral, industrious and prosperous to be found within the limits of the United States.

William Duncan has certainly done a marvelous work, not only by his sole efforts, but in the face of interference and embarrassments that must have crushed the spirit and paralyzed the efforts of any other than a man of heroic mold.

'I might send her one of those eight fans,' reflected Ethel. 'Who gave that white one, did you say, mother?'

'That? Oh, it had no card, but you told me, Olive that Mrs. Long thought of a fan,' said Mrs. Orme.

'I?' exclaimed Olive. 'I don't remember ever hearing Mrs. Long say—'

'Well, some one told me that,' asserted Mrs. Orme.

'Mrs. Long is a dear old lady,' Ethel said, in her slow, sweet way, 'but I'll send Agnes that fan. It's a pretty good one, too. Jane, find its own box and tie it up. I have seven others and I shan't miss it. Olive, dear, would you just leave it at your house for her, and do one last errand down town for me? I'll write a card and then it will be off my mind. 'With the dearest love of Ethel.' There! The errand I mean is about those white shoes. Where did you say they were, mother?'

'Jane took them to the blue room. I have to go up to mine for a pencil, and I'll bring them. Jane is busy.'

Mrs. Orme rose vaguely, gathered up a handful of articles which had collected in her lap during the afternoon, and holding them in an indeterminate grasp, drifted away—so to speak—upstairs. She evidently disposed of them somewhere on her way, for when she returned she brought only a box containing a pair of satin shoes, and was soon complaining in a small voice that she could not find her eye-glasses or her note-book.

'You know you have promised to stay here overnight,' Ethel reminded Olive, without looking up from the note she was writing. Olive hesitated.

'If Agnes does not come, Aunt Charlotte—'

'Can get on for one night without either of you,' suggested Ethel, smiling as she wrote.

'She is so timid after dark and—'

'She ought not to be humored. It makes dear old ladies selfish.'

Ethel smiled again at her flying pen, but still Olive did not speak.

'Never mind. Don't come dear. Perhaps you are tired.' Ethel's tone had changed and the smile left her face.

Oh, I want to come so much! cried her friend, eagerly.

Then come, Ethel told her, glancing up with a trace of her old smile. I want you, Olive.

The other promised, but she took the fan from the maid and laid it in its box herself, making an attractive little parcel with white paper and pink ribbon. Then she carried it across the street to the house in which she and her cousin Agnes lived with their aunt.

When Olive returned to the other house, her last errand done, she found Mrs. Orme still softly complaining about the mysterious disappearance of her glasses, and after dinner she searched for them while she helped to pick up the odds and ends that strewed the floor after the day's work.

Mother and friend insisted that Ethel should lie down upon the sofa, which she did with a little sigh and the remark, well, don't tire yourselves, dear people, adding, after she closed her eyes, I'm sure the writing of notes more than pays for everything one gets. I'm tired to death of saying, 'thank you, ma'am.'

Her head, with its light hair, looked its best against the deep crimson pillow, and her long blue dress fell in pretty folds from the sofa to the floor. Olive, on her knees upon the carpet, her hands filled with bits of paper, ribbon, string and box covers, glanced with admiration at the resting figure.

Ethel had always been called a sweet girl and a pretty one. She rewarded with smiles all who served her, and when she said dearest to either of her two intimate friends, what did a little weariness matter? Cold-blooded critics sometimes asserted that Ethel had less of good looks than either Olive or Agnes, but she was a girl who from childhood had carried herself as a beauty. No friend who had known her long ever doubted for a moment that she was beautiful.

In five days more, and Olive's eyes dimmed as she thought of it, this fascinating presence would be gone, and Ethel

would be on her wedding journey. It was to be hoped Jack Danielson fully appreciated the treasure he had won.

Olive thought how dull she and Agnes would find life then! And poor Agnes had to lose some of these last precious days, too, because grandmother sent for her with no especial reason. Ethel stirred a little, and Olive quietly rose, unfolded an almanac and laid it across her friend's feet.

'Oh, how good you are!' murmured Ethel, luxuriously. 'What do girls do without intimate friends?'

'My glasses have not appeared yet, have they?' whispered Mrs. Orme.

'Would they be upstairs?' asked Olive, in the same tone.

'Was I upstairs?' demanded Mrs. Orme, sibilantly.

'For the shoes,' suggested Olive.

'Oh, yes, in the blue room. But why should I carry them there?' questioned Mrs. Orme.

Olive did not know, but she went at once and came back with glasses in her hand.

'Well, where could they have been?' exclaimed the delighted owner aloud.

'On the dressing-table, on top of several other things. I have brought the handkerchief, but left the rest of them, mere bits of papers, I think.'

'Dearest mamma in her process through our rooms always leaves what in geology we used to call terminal moraines,' murmured Ethel, without opening her eyes. Later on, when Olive went to the blue room for the night, she lifted the fragments of the 'moraine' from her dressing-table, and a visiting card dropped from the heap to the floor. She stood still in surprise when she had picked it up.

Miss Agnes Towne Ames,  
272 Main Street.

How did Agnes's card happen to be there? Ethel would have mentioned receiving a gift from her. Perhaps it had been in this room ever since she stayed overnight that time Ethel had the sprained ankle. Being very tired, as she finally realized that she was, Olive hurried her preparations and soon fell asleep.

She awoke after some hours and lay awhile, growing more clear-headed every moment. Finally she rose, lighted the gas, and went to the little heap of odds and ends left by Mrs. Orme. There she found the note book which recorded the presents, and ran her finger down the list of the last day's tributes.

'White fan, painted,' she read, but against it was no name. 'O poor Agnes! whispered Olive.

Ethel, in the next room, turned in her sleep a few minutes later at the creak of a well known board in the floor outside of her half-open door.

'What is it?' she asked aloud.

'I'm so sorry if I woke you,' Olive said softly. 'I'm not ill, so don't worry.'

'I wasn't worrying dear,' sighed Ethel. 'You aren't walking in your sleep by any chance, are you?'

'No.'

Hearing nothing further from her, Olive felt for the rail and slipped down stairs very quietly. She stooped in her long cloak to put on her shoes, opened the side door noiselessly, and went out.

She had never before been in the outer air at this hour of the night, and she hurried down the damp path between the asters, out of the gate and across the road. The face of her home in the light of the street lamp looked as if it said: 'Hush! Hush!'

Olive went round the house, trying to lift one after another of the windows on the ground floor; finally the last one in the bay slid up at her push, giving out a slight grating noise. Delia had failed just where failure had been expected of her.

All was still within, and Olive climbed easily to the ledge, remembering in time the crumpled newspapers nightly laid by her aunt's orders where the unwary burglar might rustle them.

She had felt her way to the mantle and struck a match, when she stood stiff with fright at hearing a faint sound behind her. Here it is, said a voice, and Olive turned the flare of the small frame on her face.

Agnes stood before her, and as she spoke took a box from a table near by and held it out to her cousin before they were left in darkness.

Olive did not touch it. She was still staring at the discarded white paper and the pink ribbon with which she herself had decorated it that afternoon.

Agnes, she whispered, while the other girl struck another match. I didn't know you had come home. You took the late train?

Yes, I know this was all an accident, said Agnes, slowly.

Her face, framed in its long, dark hair, looked pale and serious as the gaslight fell upon it.

Oh, it was I cried Olive, almost aloud. They misplaced the card. They never guessed. She had no time to get anything else. She thought it so pretty, Agnes. I know that was why she wanted you to have it, Olive blundered on.

You're a good girl, interrupted her cousin, briefly. She must never know about all this, mind. She musn't be worried with it.

I came to get it so that she could change it before you saw it, explained Olive, but if you say so I won't speak of it. It would be almost a pity, wouldn't it? Just at the last.

I suppose she had too many fans, Agnes went on thoughtfully, but I had no one to ask about it, and now I can't afford to buy something else.

Oh, I know. Such a lovely fan, too! It must have cost a lot! said Olive.

She always liked that gold fligree card-case.

O Agnes, that's the one Aunt Rachel left you in her will!

I'll send it tomorrow, announced its possessor, decidedly. Now it's all settled and we'd better go to bed.

Olive went up to her cousin and kissed her cold cheek. Did you hear me climb in? she asked.

I heard some one.

Oh, you're splendid, Agnes! You're not afraid of anything. I'm so relieved you don't mind it more. I was afraid it would look careless in dear Ethel, when she had not meant to be so.

No, she never meant to be thoughtless, said Agnes, in the same quiet tone she had used before.

'You're always so sensible, Agnes, proceeded Olive, with evident relief. Every one says that. Good night!'

'Good night! I'll wait till you have had time to get into the house.'

Olive slipped out of the window, and Agnes stood looking out for a few moments after she had watched her go up the steps in the gray light. She carefully lowered the window, locked it, turned out the gas, and closed the door leading into the hall.

Then she sat down upon a big sofa, laid her head on its rolling plush arm, and burst into tears.

She slept little, but rose early, as usual. There was a pouring rain darkening the bleak morning, and the library looked so desolate that she went to the window where she had stood the night before.

What she saw there startled her and drove the color from her cheeks.

Ethel Orme, with her rain-coat on, but her blonde head bare, was running down between the dripping asters, was crossing the street in all the mud and wind—Ethel, who was always so careful not to get her hair out of curl or her pretty shoes soiled. Agnes ran to the door, unbolted it and flung it open.

'Ethel,' she cried. 'Has anything happened to Olive?'

'No.' Ethel came hurriedly up the steps as she spoke. 'No, dear, not to Olive.' She drew in a quick breath.

'Something's happened to me!'

'To you?'

'Yes. I've found out I'm horrid!'

'Bewildered, her friend followed her into the library.

'Agnes, see that!' Ethel's fair face flushed red as she took a visiting-card from her coat pocket and held it out. Agnes crumpled it in her hand.

'Oh, that doesn't help it!' said Ethel, still in the same breathless tone. 'I got up early to ask Olive why she was prowling about so late last night. She was asleep and didn't hear me come in. I saw this card on her dressing-table. Then I knew—I knew—Oh, I can't say anything, but—'

'Don't, Ethel! I understood,' Agnes assured her.

'But I'll do better to-day!' exclaimed Ethel, hysterically. 'I promise not to send you Mrs. Livermore's salver.'

She gasped, and again Agnes tried to stop her as she held each other's hands. It was so new for Ethel to come as near as this to saying she was wrong.

'I'll take this back with me, now,' and she made one more attempt at lightness, as she snatched up the white fan, which was still lying on the table.

'It's my property, you know. It—I sent you the best one I had.'

Dear Ethel protested Agnes again.

I'm not dear! Every one is so good to me, and I'm—I'm horrid!'

Was it possible, that queer, beautiful softening in the bright blue eyes? The sight of it almost frightened Agnes, and then it made her feel like kneeling at her friend's feet, as a great love does sometimes. But for once in her life Ethel Orme, as she stood there humble, loving and tenderly contrite before her friend,

was a real beauty—and the best of it was she did not know it!

Reading At Sea.

If books are treasures anywhere, it would seem that they would be especially valuable at sea. But speaking of the merchant seaman, Mr. Frank T. Bullen says in the Spectator that the rarest sight to be seen in a ship's fore-castle is a man with a good stock of books. In the long, brilliant tropical nights, when the glare of the moon is almost like an electric lamp for light, the sailor has every chance to read, but he has not had the forethought to provide himself with books. Yet occasionally he does get hold of a good book or two and then it is quite pathetic to see how he will treasure them.

I never was in but one fore-castle that had not a bible and a copy of Shakespeare, the property of some man who held on to them voyage after voyage. And such books get read at sea with a closeness and persistency one may look for in vain ashore, except among students.

Of the difficulty of reading in the fore-castles of ships, especially foreign ones, Mr. Bullen says: 'In the ship's fore-castle it is seldom possible to read at all, owing to the absence of light either by day or by night. I have known men expose the ship to terrible risks from fire by sticking odd lengths of purlined candle on the edges of their bunks, so that they might have light to see to read when lying down on the only spot on board rightly their own. One man, an American of great mental qualities. I especially remember, whose passion for reading was such that he would sit up the whole night with a favorite author, Dickens for preference, and bribe his watch-mates heavily to take his duties for him, such as wheel or lookout, so that he might remain undisturbed. Bent nearly double in his bunk, the miserable lamp hung upon a surreptitiously shifted book so as to bring it nearer to him while still affording some light for his shipmates to rise or retire by, he made a pathetic picture of the pursuit of literature under difficulties, yet one familiar to all deep-water sailors.'

'I hope you never put off till tomorrow what you can do today,' said the woman who went about doing good, to the tramp. 'No,' replied the hobo, absently, 'I allus put it off indefinitely.'

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