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TRUE FRIENDS.

Mary Ann stood on the back porch churning. Her dress was neatly tucked away from the contact of splashing buttermilk, and her eyes rested on the blue flecks of sky, showing through the leaves of a Virginia creeper which covered the lattice; but her thoughts were remote enough from flecks of sky, green leaves or splashing buttermilk.

Inside the dim sitting room her mother nodded to the musical rhythm of the churn, and the buzzing of two flies, high on the window pane. The needle, stuck half way through the cross stitches in the heel of Mary Ann's stocking, was held perilously close to the gray head bending over it, and bobbing up again at regular intervals. The warm, languorous June day courted sleep, the churn dasher outside rose and fell monotonously, and its cadence mingled with Mrs. Smithers' dreams.

Presently there came a rap of bony knuckles at the front door. Mrs. Smithers' head gave a final jerk upward and her eyes blinked open. She rose and hastened to the door, the stocking still in her hand. "Oh, is it you, Liza?" she said. "Come right in. I was half asleep when you knocked—these long summer days make one so drowsy."

Liza gave her a shake. "It's awful hard, at people to keep clean in Kansas," she complained. "With the wind blowing the dust all over creation." She seated herself and glanced smilingly about her. "It's nice in here, though," she added, "and I'm mighty glad I found you at home, because I came on special business."

"I hope you didn't come beggin' for the church," said Mrs. Smithers. "There ain't a red cent in the house, and won't be until Mary Ann finishes the churning and sells the butter."

"That's her churning now, ain't it?" asked Liza.

"Yes, why?"

"I've got somethin' to say I don't want her to hear, that's all." She took off her mittens and smoothed them out across her lap.

"Sarah," she began solemnly, after an awkward pause, "I've always been a good friend to you, haven't I?"

"Bout as good as any friend I've got," answered Mrs. Smithers, with a curious intonation which was lost on Liza, so intent was she upon the subject in hand.

"Well, I've come to do you a friend's turn now." Here she paused again, and Mrs. Smithers, drawing her needle through, held it suspended, waiting to hear. "Sometimes," Liza went on, "people's own kinfolks is the very last ones to hear things that's goin' on—talk, I mean—and that ain't right. If there's talk goin' on the ones nearest of kin ought to be the first to hear it. Leastways that's my opinion. Ain't it yours, Sarah?"

"It depends," said Sarah dryly.

Liza rolled the mittens neatly together and turned the hem of one over both.

"Now, supposin'," she said, at a slight loss for words for once, "that I had a girl like Mary Ann—"

Mrs. Smithers involuntarily started. For a second she shook as if with a chill.

"And people was goin' roun' talkin' about her? Wouldn't it be your duty to come and tell me?"

Mrs. Smithers did not reply. Her wrinkled face had turned a palish yellow under the tan of the Kansas winds. The stocking had fallen into her lap.

"Of course it would," continued Liza, "and so I'm goin' to tell you this, because I think you ought to know it."

She coughed twice behind her hand before she began again.

"As near as I can make out," she said, "it was this way: Jake Saunders was comin' along the road from Mulvane Saturday night—I think it was; yes, I'm sure it was Saturday night—and he saw two young people driving towards him in a buggy in the shadow of the trees. It was bright moonlight, you know, and when they came out from under the shadow the young fellow threw his arms around the girl's neck and kissed her! Kissed her right there in the moonlight where Jake Saunders could see, where anybody could 'er seen what had a mind to look! Why, in the name of common sense didn't he kiss her when they were in the shadow of the trees? That's what I'd like to know. Sarah, that young fellow was Charlie Sullivan, and the girl—well, the girl was—Mary Ann!"

Mrs. Smithers had mechanically taken up her work and was slowly running the long needle through the heel of Mary Ann's stocking. She pressed the threads down with her thumb nail and snipped off a stray end with her scissors. Her face was emotionless, as if carved in stone, but the fingers that held the scissors trembled a very little.

"You know Jake Saunders," Liza went on. "He can't keep nothin'. That was Saturday night, and before mornin' the whole town was alive with it. Everybody knew it, even the little children. Such things go like wildfire, once they get started, and the

worst of it is they keep addin' and addin'. You wouldn't 'er known the story by Sunday, they'd put so many frills and furbelows to it."

She looked hard at Mrs. Smithers, searching in her stony features for some slight encouragement to proceed, but, finding none, she proceeded anyway.

"Now, seein' I'm your best friend, Sarah, I thought I would be a kindness to come and tell you what they were sayin'. It seemed sort of pitiful-like to hear everybody talkin' about Mary Ann, and you smilin' around

unbeknownst—smilin' maybe at the very people what was doin' the worst talkin'."

She fidgeted a moment, while the sound of the churn filled up the silence.

"As I said to Jane Hawkins," she wound up lamely, "it wasn't right. If nobody else would come and tell you, I said, I would."

Mrs. Smithers cleared her throat.

"I see by the mornin' paper," she said, "that's wheat's gone up. That'll be a good thing for Kansas—that is, if the railroads don't charge mor'n it's worth to haul it away. This ought to be a good year for Kansas with such big wheat crops and the corn so fine."

"Yes; the corn's fine enough right now," retorted Liza, "but there's no telling what it'll be before the season's over. Like as not the hot winds will kill it, or the chinch bugs'll eat it all up."

She flipped a speck of dust from her sleeve and took up the old subject where she had left off.

"If I was a lone widder with one daughter, and people was talkin' about her, I'd thank somebody to come and tell me. That's what I would do."

"I try not to think of the chinch-bugs," said Mrs. Smithers. "If they come, let 'em come. Any way, half a crop in Kansas is better than a whole crop in any other state. That's what the matter with Kansas. Her own people run her down."

Liza suddenly left her chair and stood erect, her starched skirts rustling with indignation.

"You're a queer creature, Sarah Smithers," she said. "You never were like other people, and you never will be, I guess. When a friend comes to do you a kindness you ain't got a civil word in your head for her. This is the last time I'll go out of my way to accommodate you—the very last time!"

Mrs. Smithers remained seated.

"You'll excuse me not goin' to the door with you, I hope," said she, without offering any special reason for not doing so; and her visitor flunked out of the house and down the walk alone, heedlessly brushing against the inoffensive rows of pilox and sweet williams as she went.

When the gate had closed upon her with a loud click, Mrs. Smithers raised her head and listened for the sound of the churn. It had ceased.

"Mary Ann!" she called softly.

"Ma'am," answered Mary Ann from the pantry where she stood, moulding a shining pat of butter.

"Come here a minute."

Mary Ann printed a clover leaf on the butter, laid it on a plate, and appeared in the doorway, holding it out upon the palm of her hand.

"Look at this," she said, "ain't it yellow as gold?"

"Yes," smiled her mother, "but put it down and come here."

She put the plate on the table and approached her mother, her face flushed with the exercise of her work. She knelt down by her.

"There's something I want to tell you," she said, clasping the old woman's waist with her strong young arms, and throwing back her sunny head with an estatic gesture, her eyes aglow.

"Wait," said Mrs. Smithers. "Maybe I can guess what it is. Let me see!" She pondered, her finger on her lip.

"Saturday night you and Charley Sullivan were out driving along in the shadow of the trees. You were driving towards Mulvane. He asked you to be his wife and you said you would. What a naughty girl, to promise without her mother's consent! Just then you drove out of the shadow into the moonlight, and he threw his arms around you—and kissed you!"

The girl smiled and dimpled.

"Why, mother?" she cried. "How did you know?"

"I'm a mind reader," Mrs. Smithers answered; then, seeing the puzzled look on Mary Ann's face, she added: "No, dear, I'm not a mind reader, but I've got so many friends—good, true friends who come and tell me things they think I ought to know."

"I hear one of them coming now," said Mary Ann, rising from her knees. "You go to the door, mother. My face burns so."

Mrs. Smithers put down her work and went to the door. She half opened it and looked out.

Entering the gate was a middle-aged woman of ample proportions. As she approached the house her wide skirts filled up the narrow walk, bending the slender stalks of the flowers to the right and to the left. She

panted as she climbed the steps, a broad smile further expanding her face across which the skin was stretched, drum like, to its utmost tension.

"How pretty your flowers always are, Mrs. Smithers," she gasped. "How do you ever get them to grow like that in Kansas?"

"I suppose stayin' at home and tendin' to 'em has somethin' to do with it," answered Mrs. Smithers grimly. At the same time she fastened the hook on the inside of the screen door.

Mrs. Hawkins stood outside, like a book agent, meekly waiting to be admitted.

"Ain't you goin' to let me in?" she asked.

Mrs. Smithers answered the question with another.

"Are you one of my friends?"

"Yes."

"Have you come to tell me something you think I ought to know?"

"Yes," answered Jane Hawkins. "Well, then, I'm not at home," said Mrs. Smithers, and she slammed the door, drew the bolt and went back to her darning.—Peterson's Magazine.

ETIQUETTE OF THE TOILET.

Peculiar Method of the Russians in Arranging the Hair.

"The etiquette of the toilet varies in different countries," says a contributor of Cassell's Magazine. "I can remember reaching a khan in Armenia once, accompanied by a big party of fellow travellers. Our party had wandered about for miles, and lost our way, and it was so late that we were too sleepy to eat. We were ushered into a long, low room, with beds on the ground about a yard from each other. I was the first to be awakened the next morning by a sunbeam dancing on my face, and on looking up, found that the occupants of the bed next to mine consisted of a man and his wife and a little girl of about three, who had apparently gone to bed in their clothes. In this instance the husband simply got up, shook himself and put on his boots; the lady braided her hair and put on her boots and the little child had gone to bed in its boots. They proved to be native Christians, who have a rooted hatred for soap and water, more intense even than that of Russian pilgrims, whom I remember on board a vessel going from Constantinople to Joppa. On fine days a barrel of water was brought up to that portion of the deck roped off for the accommodation of the Russian pilgrims, who occupied themselves in singing hymns and making tea in a samovar, a utensil much beloved by an old aunt of mine, who informed me, in all seriousness, that she much preferred tea à la Russe, 'in a samovar,' although she did not explain how she was going to get it there. The Russian pilgrim's toilet resembles the way in which the Chinese laundrymen dampen linen, for they would approach the barrel, suck up a mouthful of water, and carefully blow it over the head of some companion whose hair they were arranging."

Wisconsin's Fairest Daughter.

Miss Elizabeth Stephenson, who was selected to christen the battleship Wisconsin at San Francisco, is one



MISS ELIZABETH STEPHENSON.

of the fairest daughters of the Badger state. She is the child of ex-Congressman Isaac Stephenson of Marinette, and is just 21 years old. The Wisconsin sponser was born in Marinette and was educated at Milwaukee-Dower College and LaSalle College, near Boston. She was graduated from the latter institution with high honors. Miss Stephenson is a magnificent specimen of young womanhood. She is almost six feet tall and slender. She has dark eyes and a bright, attractive face. Her father is quite wealthy.

Deserved a Credit.

"Tommy," said the teacher to a pupil in the juvenile class, "what is syntax?"

"I guess it must be a tax on whiskey," replied Tommy. And the teacher thought he was entitled to a credit of 100 per cent.—Utica Press.

It has been calculated that ordinary gunpowder, on exploding, expands about nine thousand times, or fills a space this much larger as a gas than when in solid form.

HOMESICKNESS IN THE ARMY.

The Cause of a Number of Deaths in the Civil War.

Illustrative of how nostalgia becomes a serious matter the following instances are related:

One man from the colored troops on the fighting line who came with the first detachment was not wounded, but only stunned by the explosion of a shell which had fallen near him. There was nothing the matter with him but the shock to his nerves and homesickness. He spoke to no one. He would take no food, and he sat huddled together on his cot, looking out from the open flies of the hospital tent with a face full of unspeakable loneliness. Every morning when she came to the hospital Mrs. Marsh would bring him some little thing which she had prepared for him at home; little by little she awakened his interest and finally he was dismissed from the hospital happy and well. One of the doctors and the writer were speaking of this case—Ward his name was—when a physician offered an illustration of homesickness.

"When I was assistant surgeon in the army during the last war," he said, with an amused nod to the young assistant listening, "I had an idea that I knew more than the surgeon major. I suppose all assistants think so at one time or another, but I believe that in this case it was true. Our major was a hard man and there was one case in camp that he had no patience with. It was a poor chap who was simply dying of homesickness. I stopped by him one day where he was sitting with his face in his hands, and I put my hand on his shoulder and spoke a word or two, and he looked up, and I shall never forget his look as he said: 'You're the first one that has spoken a kind word to me since I came.' I told the surgeon about it afterwards and he said it was all nonsense, and that the man was simply too lazy to work. I said, 'He's not lazy; he's sick.' But the major had his mind made up, and he hunted the poor chap out and set him to loading stuff in the commissary department. That afternoon I came across him sitting on a sack of grain with his head down, and I noticed the way he'd slumped forward. I laid hold of him and found that he was dead. Plenty of them died that way—of homesickness."

There was an odd look on the faces of some of the men on the cots when the doctor had told his story, as if the brief service in Santiago had already taught them what that sickness meant.—Frank Leslie's Weekly.

Winnie Davis' Left Hand Work.

Appropos of the death of Winnie Davis, there is a story told of her by a resident of Philadelphia, which shows why she was held so dear by the veterans of the Confederate army. The man who tells it was a colonel under the stars and bars, and is now a rich man. "But five years ago I wasn't," he says. "I'd lost every penny I had before the war and I had not made many since. A big slump in the West had done for me, and I put up at a New York hotel with just enough to pay my bill and no more. My nerves gave way and I was taken ill. The doctor said I must have a long rest and a complete change of scene. I said I might rest in the grave and change this scene for that of the next world, but that I had no money or friends and would never leave the city any way but feet first. Well, Miss Davis was stopping at that hotel. She knew I wouldn't accept money from her, so she got the doctor to pretend he was lending me his own. I went abroad and came home cured and already on the way to health. It was only then that I found out whom I owed my life to. You know her book, 'The Veiled Doctor'?" Well, for me there is an equivocal significance in that name.—Philadelphia Press.

Some Watch Hints.

"It is a bad practice to be continually setting a watch by the stem setter," observed a watch repairer, "for it has a tendency to wear out the band that attaches the hands to the pinion. The hands are tightened to the pinion as firmly as they can be, and every setting loosens them somewhat. There is a class of persons who set their watches every day rather than give a little attention to the matter of regulating them. They find that the watch gains or loses a minute or a few minutes in each twenty-four hours, and instead of curing this by the regulator, which is put in the watch for that express purpose, and no other, they force back or forward the hands by the stem setter or by a key.

"If the hand pinion wears out, which it frequently does, it is considerable of a job to put in a new one or place new bands on it, and the work necessarily costs something, for watch repairers have to charge for their work. If a person knows that a watch gains or loses a certain amount in each day, it is better to calculate back or forward than to be continually setting it. A little study of the regulator will do the work much better, without the risk of wearing out anything."—Washington Star.

LONG-DISTANCE FIGHTING.

Impossible to Tell Infantry from Cavalry at 2,000 Yards.

"Unless they have had experience," remarked an army officer, "people are very liable to have a very imperfect idea as to distances in army field operations, and as a result they get things terribly mixed. When they read that armies are engaging with each other at 2,000 yards between them, they may think that they can see each other, but the reality is far different. At that distance, to the naked eye, a man or a horse does not look anything larger than a speck. It is impossible to distinguish at that distance between a man and a horse, and at 800 yards less, 1,200 yards, especially where there is any dust, it requires the best kind of eyes to tell infantry from cavalry. At 900 yards the movements become clearer, though it is not until they get within 750 yards of each other that the heads of the columns can be made out with anything like certainty.

"Infantry can be seen in the sunlight much easier than cavalry or artillery for the reason that less dust is raised. Besides that, infantry can be distinguished by the glitter of their muskets. At 2,000 yards, however, everything is unsatisfactory, even with the aid of field glasses, for a marching column in dry weather raises a great deal of dust. At our recent engagements at Santiago the heavy rains of course kept down the dust, but the falling rain shut out from view the opposing forces as effectually as would the dust. Even a glass would not penetrate it.

"There is no doubt that the rifles of the present day do service at a much greater distance than those formerly used, but no general is going to waste ammunition at a greater distance than his men can see to properly use it. Any first class arm will shoot and do good service at a greater distance than men can clearly see, but the chances are that no battles will be fought at such distances.—Washington Star.

A STRANGE LAKE OF DARK FLUID.

California's Most Unnatural Natural Curiosity.

Without doubt the most remarkable body of water in the world lies in the vicinity of the Colorado river, in southern California. In this region of ugly volcanoes, desolate wastes and slimy swamps, the strangest phenomenon of all is what the naturalists call a "lake of ink." No other description fits so well.

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CHRONOGRAPH WATCHES.

They Are Used by Nurses as Well as Sportsmen and Are About Perfect.

The properly equipped trained nurse, whether at the seat of war wearing the badge of the Red Cross or waiting upon the afflicted at home, carries a chronograph watch; not the large, split-second timing piece associated with the sports of the turf and field, but a handsome little single chronograph, cased like other gold watches designed for women's use. These watches are especially made to enable trained nurses to take accurately the pulse of their patients. The moment the pulse has been taken the large sweep second hand can be instantly stopped by a slight pressure upon the stem of the watch; if there is fluctuation in the pulse, the second hand can be thrown quickly back to the starting point and the pulse taken over again without in any way interfering with the other mechanism of the watch. So much depends upon accurate knowledge of the pulse that these chronographs are an invaluable auxiliary in the work of the sickroom. While these watches are an entirely recent idea, many physicians and surgeons carry regular chronographs for the same purpose. The watches for nurses sell at \$50; those for physicians range from \$100 upward.—New York Sun.