



## Friendship

A friend is one who looks with honest eyes  
Straight into yours, and reads the soul behind -  
Who, back to back with you, should need arise,  
Would guard your honour against all mankind.  
One who, unmoved by blame, would grasp your hand,  
Through shine and shadow, friendly to the end -  
Tardy to judge, and swift to understand -  
Write such a one, in golden letters "friend".

Sydney Auchinleck

12<sup>th</sup> January 1907

During the war, my father was given an album by a Dr. Littledale in Charing for whom his mother was housekeeper. The album contains pictures, photographs, drawings autographs, poems and little notes written by people whilst travelling on steamers and ships between 1901 and 1925. It would seem that the doctor was a well travelled man. Over the years my father has wondered about these names. Who were these people in his little album, we did not know! Growing up I was shown this little gem on several occasions and marvelled at the beautiful writing, drawings and other little scribbings.

A few days ago whilst my father was reminiscing about his past he mentioned the album. Not being one for technology, he has never embraced the internet so has never been able to access the vast wealth of knowledge it can provide. I asked if I could have the album to see what I could find. So I collected the album and got to work.

Well just from names I have found an army major wounded at Gallipoli, a war poet, a lady whose portrait hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, and.... your Grandmother Sydney.

But, it is not just a signature from her in the album, no there is a poem. Dated 1907 or 1909 12th January and entitled Friendship.

**My Father is thrilled that we have found you and can give back to you this beautiful poem.** We do not know where or how it became to be in the album. There are so many different dates, and we can't tie it in with any noted steamer journeys as the dates do not match. Dr. and Mrs. Littledale, it would seem, moved in affluent circles travelling to India, China and South Africa. Was Sydney a friend? We do not know. Is the poem perhaps personal to them? Maybe you have come across the name Littledale, probably not but how thrilling that would be to tie it up full circle!

**This Album has given great joy over many years, and the poem has always been a favourite of my father's.** The whole album is a very treasured possession, given to a young child who has grown up reading and wondering about it for over 70 years. In fact for those 70 plus years he thought that Sydney was in fact a man!

Susan Wiseman, 21 May 2020