

Twins.

"To Truth's House there is a single door
Which is Experience -----"

says Bayard Taylor. There is just one subject that I have studied in the School of Experience in which I feel that I have attained a pretty fair proficiency and that is the subject of twins. Some of you who have never yet taken up this branch of your education may consider it very easy; but it has its hard places like every study else. The examinations are especially trying, the board of examiners being very large and the examinations rather more frequent than is customary elsewhere. Like the Regents in New York state, with which you may be familiar, there are certain questions which are very likely to be asked nearly every time. Perhaps the most common are, "Does your mother know you apart?" "Are you the same height?" "Don't you ever get yourselves mixed up and forget which one you are?" "Do you weigh the same?" "Do you always dress alike?" "How do you ever manage to tell your dresses apart?" "Are you in the same class?" "Do your teachers know you apart?" "Have you just the same friends?" "Do you think alike?" "Do you

tastes the same?" with sometimes a comment now and then to help you answer the questions in case they prove too difficult, as; "Do your hair just the same shade?" "I believe this one is lighter." "Is there any way to tell you apart?" "I think this one looks a little fuller in the face" or "Is there any thing different about you?" "Why, I believe even your teeth are alike." And then the examination usually concludes with the poor victims having to turn around back to back and measure height or leave the room and return to see if the difference is recognizable on second trial. Harvard Experience soon teaches one to become accustomed to these ~~examination~~ frequent tests and then one begins to see the really enjoyable side.

For one thing, to be a twin is sometimes a great convenience. As for instance when out to having a gown made it is so nice to have your double fitted for you. I knew a pair of twins who looked precisely alike ~~but~~ they were the least bit different in disposition. One was fond of society and the other cared little for it. As an example of the use they made of their likeness I call later - One evening the ~~of~~ family had company and the twins were among them, but after a

little quietly retired to another room. As the evening drew to a close they must go on and bid the guests good-night. To Hettie this was only a pleasure, but to Nettie it was an insupportable bore; so this is the way they managed it. Hettie went in alone and said a pleasant good-night to all the guests and then left the room. When she in a few moments returned and made the rounds again the guests were none the wiser because they had said their adieus twice to the same girl.

These were two boys of my acquaintance, twins, who tho' they resembled each other so closely that their friends could not tell them apart, showed very different natural characteristics. Will was a laborious hard working student and consequently a good scholar, while Walter who had a quicker brain and liked not but hated to study and would not apply himself to his lessons, often found himself in tight places. The time came for their examinations preparatory to entering the high-school and, as usual, Will came out with a splendid average. As usual also, Walter despite his brilliant mind had difficulty in even scraping thro' with a respect and in a few cases fell short of the passing mark. Now if these had been

just common ordinary boys. I suppose Walter would have been obliged to remain, to make his fate in the old place while he saw his inductions brother sail gloriously on into the desired Lark. But Fate would have it otherwise. When the papers one day arrived the poor teacher became so hopelessly confused that the result was they both joined themselves in the high school. What is the good of having a twin if he can't help one this or a tight place now and then?

This subject has a great many sides as you would soon find if you tried it for yourself. There is the ludicrous side. To illustrate again from my own experience. I suppose most pairs of twins claim that they are not exactly alike, all the world to the contrary notwithstanding. I know we do, and so of course whenever they catch us getting mixed ourselves, they tease us eternally about it. They say that before we were old enough to have biased opinions we didn't knit so and then they tell us how when we were little toddling midgets of a year or two old, Papa would hold us up before the looking glass and say "Who is that?" If it was Ellen she would invariably answer, "Wannie" and I "Emmie": a merrier always.

has been my enemy, getting me into trouble, for
 you see naturally I don't like to acknowledge
 that I don't know myself from some body else.
 At home they have never ceased to tease us
 about a circumstance which happened several
 years ago when a party of us were visiting Paul's
 Art Gallery in Rochester. It was time to leave
 and all were ready but my sister and one
 other. I started ahead to find them, but did
 not have to go far; for in a moment I saw
 my sister just at the foot of the stairs. I
 did not see Gertrude. Suppressing her, however,
 to be around the corner, I called back, "Here
 they are. You go on and will catch up with you."
 Then to Ellen; "It's time to go. Where's Gertrude?
 Come, we must hurry." All this time I was
 walking ahead towards her; but, as she made no
 response, I kept on speaking, until, to my aston-
 ishment, I bumped against one of the long
 murals which line many parts of the wall in
 that building. I can assure you I felt rather
 small when I found that it was to my own
 reflection I had been talking all this time. I
 found ^{ward} one consolation tho? When at last I
 did come upon the girls, Ellen said, "The more

looking for you too and I had the queerest ex-
perience. ~~After~~ then she told me how she also had
mistaken her own reflection, adding "When I
did see you I didn't dare to believe it was you
~~till you had spoken~~ but had to wait till you'd
spoken to make sure you weren't a looking-
glass."

But that is not as bad as an incident
which was told my father. The Messes —
who were twins made the acquaintance of
two young gentlemen who were ^{also} twins. Naturally
they felt an interest in each other, for, if
you see one, you would soon find that there
is a very friendly feeling existing among all
who belong to this class of humanity. One
lovely summer afternoon when they had been
acquainted only a short time, these two pairs
of twins went for a walk. Their path lay thro'
the beautiful country surrounding a little
town in New Jersey, which abounds in many
magnificent hills and sweet little gurgling
brooks. A narrow foot-bridge led across one of
these mountain streams where it was necessary
to walk in single file. When the other side
had been reached and they were standing for

a moment gazing at the view before them, one of the young men turned to the girl who was standing nearest him with the question, "Are you the young lady with whom I was walking?" and received the reply, "I don't know. Are you the young gentleman with whom I was walking?"

What a fund of information and what a store of thrilling tales become the property of those who are thus privileged! In, I presume, two cases out of every nine when my sister and I are introduced to a stranger we are immediately regaled with stories about their relations or friends. Every one seems to think "Twins are so interesting"; ~~but~~ tho' you would think they would all be so used to them it would be no matter at all; for hardly one but has had a great grandm other, a cousin, a sister, uncle, father, or nephew who was a twin or was related to some. People seem to think twins are sort of freaks of nature and therefore the ordinary rules of etiquette do not hold in relation to them. I have often noticed that when my friends make the strictest no stranger returns to address them nor when they are asked and state,

But when my sister and I walk along people passing us say just loud enough for us to hear (I am sure I don't know why) "Twins" or if they are little news-boys or street arabs it is usually "Six Twisters" which they seem to think very ^{clever} smart. People often stop us with, "Pardon me, but are you girls twins? Well I thought so - you look so much alike". I remember one day we passed an elderly lady sitting on the piazza of a hotel. She stopped us with the same old question and then as usual entertained us with a story of some of her relatives, her uncles, aunts, step-son-in-law's granddaughters I believe. These two young ladies were so precisely alike that their nearest relatives would not have been able to distinguish between them except that one, let us call her Margery, had a tiny nick on her front tooth. Every one who met them, of course had a great many remarks to make about this one peculiarity and Helen became so heartily tired of it that she determined to put an end to it. She therefore went to the dentist and had a nick filed in her tooth just to match that in her sister's. Now it happened that a certain young gentleman was very much interested in

Margery and affairs were really coming to quite
 an alarming state. One afternoon this young
 gentleman came to call when Margery was not
 in. Helen went down to entertain him and
 when he saw her, spying the nick in her tooth,
 he took her for the lady of his choice and addressed
 her as Margery. She assured him again and
 again that she was not Margery, but to no
 purpose: he would not believe it. He said she
 was teasing him and at last became almost
 provoked that she would still persist. She even
 told him how she had had her tooth filed, but
 he declared he would not believe such nonsense.
 Perceiving that it was no use to try to con-
 vince him she simply let the matter drop, ^{while he}
 believing her to be Margery the young gentleman
 talked all the time about their private affairs
 much to her discomfort. When his true look as-
 turned and he discovered his mistake then
 alas! he could hardly forgive Helen altho' the
 mistake was all his own.

My grandmother says she thinks twins are
 a great nuisance and I think so myself. I
 generally get scolded for Ellen and she gener-
 ally gets scolded for me; but in this case it is

not so bad for us; because the one who is un-
 justly condemned has the privilege of answering
 and composedly, "I'm not the one". To almost
 every remark that is my answer and that ^{is} why
 my grandmother thinks I'm a nuisance.

This stock expression had to be changed to
 "I am the one" several times during one evening
 not long ago when we had a class-party. As a
 very unusual thing Ellen met and left me
 at home. In the early part of the ~~evening~~ ^{hour} she
 was introduced to several people whom, as one
 is apt to do, she especially, she soon forgot.
 After a while the usual progressive grand march
 was started. To one young gentleman who came
 up to march with her, she said, "Have I ever met
 you before?" to which he replied "No I think not,
 but I have met your sister." "O, have you, when?"
 said she. "Just a few minutes ago in the other
 room. During the evening, at least three young
 men mistook her in the same way. One came
 up said, "I have just been talking to your
 sister in the other ^{room}, Miss Belden." I am
 sure I don't know which the joke hit the hard-
 est, I'm afraid it wasn't always the young
 man.

Since I began writing this essay, I have had
 a new cause to lament the fact that I was
 made a tourist. We must call on a lady who
 is very much interested in science, and of all
 things, she wishes to experiment on us in work-
 ing out some psychological facts about tourists!
 She is going to teach us a certain game to see
 if we play in the same way, whether our minds
 work alike and so on. She wants to make a
 collection of tourists and appointed us a soliciting
 committee to report to her about any in the
 neighborhood who might be procured. I imagine
 it! But then, anything for the advancement
 of science. Think what we may give to the world,
 thus causing our names to live after us in the
 grateful memory of all scholars! I have seriously
 thought of setting up a divine museum called
 "The Gallery of Tourists"; but on further consider-
 ation, I think I will not; for the other services
 which we will have rendered to mankind will
 be so magnificent and the subject will be so en-
 tirely exhausted after the experiments that will
 have been made and especially after so learned
 an essay as I have given you that all other efforts
 in this line would be superfluous. I am sure

you will agree with me in wishing to let the matter rest now until the next pair of terms enters the freshman class, and if it is resumed then, let them understand it to be at their risk not mine.

Mary Magie Belden.

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