

PAUL AND PAULINA OR WHICH WAS WHICH. By Ethel Thomas.

"Twins! Great Scott! Exactly alike, too!" groaned John Dalton as he stood by his wife's bed and gazed in awe at the two little bundles of pink and white, nestling in the cradle.

"Ha, ha! Well, two babies are not so many for a couple who have been married five years. Now, there's Sam Brown and wife been married six years and have six!" "Sam Brown to the diakens! Doctor don't mention that drunken brute's babies in the same breath with mine!"

A guilty flush suffused John Dalton's face as he glanced at the doctor, wondering if "that sermon" was meant for him. He had never been drunk—never expected to be—and if he chose to take an occasional drink it was no one's business.

The doctor was enjoying poor John's embarrassment and always on the lookout for an opportunity to tease, would have had some fun at John's expense, had not Mary caught her husband's hand, drew him toward her and whispered:

"There's a difference in the sex, dear!"

"Thank the Lord! I never thought of that," fervently ejaculated the father, wiping imaginary drops of perspiration from his brow.

"And I'll bet a quarter there's not an ounce of difference in their weight, which is almost seven pounds each," said the doctor.

"Which is the boy doctor?" asked John, a quizzical expression in his blue eyes. The old fellow came and looked down on the little darlings and frowned, "Blessed if I know, man! Aunt Dilsie—" "Yas sir—dis un am de boy—I dressed him fast yo' know to keep 'em frum gittin mixed up, 'se gwine ter keep day boy chile at one end ov de cradle, an de gal at de 'udder end. I ain't nebber had no 'sperunse wid twins, an' de' Lawd only knows how I 'se gwine ter manage 'em. Jake—he out in de kitchen dis minit cuttin de pigeon wing kase dar's two twins, sayin' he gwine to take dat boy chile clean outten Miss Mary's han' an' 'lieve her ov all de trubble soon as hit kin sot up. Reckin it's a good think dar am one apiece fur me an' Jake to spile—kase, if dar was only one we'd shortly have it ruint teotole," said the black nurse, who with her husband, Uncle Jake lived in a cozy log-cabin a short distance from the Dalton's, and on the same "place." They were old "slave niggers," honest and true, and refused to leave the old plantation when freedom was declared.

We will jump over the space of five years. The mother and babies did well, and still exactly alike, the little

ones went by the names of Paul and Pauline. There had been no change as yet, in the way they were dressed, but now it became necessary to put Paul in knickerbockers. The blue-eyed curly-headed tots had learned to play many jokes on their parents by swapping identity, Pauline wore a tiny gold chain around her neck as a mark of distinction, but these mischievous imps rose equal to the occasion and often on dressing them, the mother found with consternation that Paul was wearing the chain, and had for perhaps a whole day, answered to the name of Paulina.

"But now," laughed John when he brought home some pretty knickerbocker suits "now, young man, I guess you can't be a girl any more! No, siree! the chain won't be needed now to tell which from 'tother! Come Paul—now isn't this a pretty suit?—all blue and white; and here's a pretty white dress and blue sash for your sister."

"Oh! John!" exclaimed his wife, "how sweet they will look. But I do hate to put Paul in pants. I almost wish they had both been girls—or both boys. They are so exactly alike and so devoted to each other, it seems a pity that such a severe line of distinction must be drawn between them."

"Nonsense Mary, I'm glad of it. I'm tired being puzzled to death trying to tell them apart."

"John, can't you?" laughed Mary. "No. Can you?" "Yes, certainly. A mother isn't easily fooled." "Well, try some of these things on the boy, my dear, and see if they are all right," said John. Mary looked at the twins, took one and led it to the next room and proceeded to dress him. The other crawled on John's knee and whispered: "Mama's fooled now, any how, 'cause she's got Paulina! I have wore the chain all day and been Paulina!" kissing him. "Papa, if I wuz you I wouldn't chew that old 'baeco—it stinks." Hastily rising and with flushed face, John threw an imaginary chew of tobacco from the window.

"My son, I will try to quit it, for your sake," he said humbly. "So you have been Paulina all day. Ha! ha! ha! Mary—" he called. "Yes, John," she answered, "I'll admit it—I was fooled. Send that naughty boy to me at once. I'll dress him in pants gladly. Oh! dear, did any one ever have such a time. I do wonder?"

"Mary," he laughed. "I'll bet no one else ever had such a wonder!" The little rogues were never punished for their jokes—in fact they were rather encouraged by seeing their father and mother laugh so heartily over them. But now the curly heads were puzzled. Those awful pants would spoil all their fun. "Papa, I don't want to wear breeches, if Paulina can't," pleaded Paul.

"Papa, can't I have breeches too?" teased Paulina, as she skipped back into the room. Paul's eyes danced and he whispered something in his little sister's ear which made the smiles play over her dimpled face. Then he went to his mother and soon came out arrayed in the new blue and white knickerbockers. John caught him up in delight, throw him high in the air then round and round the room with Paul astride his neck, he trotted, galloped and romped till hot and tired. Then noticing Paulina who stood looking on, her blue eyes swimming in tears, one pretty finger poked between pouting lips, her little face a curious study of jealousy, defiance and grief, he caught her up and treated her to the same rough handling, thereby causing a speedy return of the smiles and dimples.

Mary looked on with just a little anxiety, wondering if John really could be so boisterously happy naturally, and if the unusual flush on his face was due entirely to the romping exercise.

"Now, little girls, put on your white dress and new sash and we'll take mama to ride in the new carriage. You can go can't you, Mary?"

"Yes, dear, of course. I'll enjoy it too," was the smiling answer. "And John, I'd like to go to town to see the doctor's wife if you don't mind the three miles drive. Would like to carry her basket of our nice strawberries." "All right," he answered, "I have some business in town and will leave you and the twins at the doctor's still I see after it." The doctor and wife had several small children, all boys, with whom the twins were great favorites. It was a happy two hours spent in romping on the lawn and playing in the nursery which contained loads of toys and picture books, the delight of the country twins, who could boast of but few such coveted treasures. Paulina was growing to be a terrible "tomboy" and her mother had already begun to teach her it was very improper and unlady-like for little

girls to ride astride sticks and play leap-frog. When John returned for his wife and children Paulina was demurely seated on the door-step ruefully watching Paul and the doctor's boys play leapfrog on the lawn. "Why, hello, Pass!" he called, "Why aren't you playing too?" "Mama says girls musn't play leapfrog, an' as I'm a girl, 'course I can't," resignedly.

"Oh! botheration, baby, that's too bad," he said, looking down in pity and love on the one who must be punished so by the "proprieties," and wondering that Paul could be induced to play a game from which she was debarred. On arriving home and undressing the children imagine the poor mother's dismay on finding the knickerbockers on Paulina!

"Oh! John," she groaned, "what-ever shall we do? Paulina is wearing the breeches and Paul the dress! This foolishness must stop right here and now, Oh, dear! you naughty children. When did you change and how did you do it?"

John laughed till he cried. "Mary, don't scold 'em," he pleaded. "Now babies, tell us all about it," he continued, between bursts of laughter.

"Well, Mama," commenced Paulina, "you said little girls musn't play leap-frog an' 'course I couldn't 'less I wuz a boy." Then Paul chimed in, "An' I wuz sorry 'cause she couldn't have any fun. You know, Mama, there wuz no girls for her to play with, an' boys can't play with dolls an' wear breeches too." I told her to take my place an' play awhile. We played hide an' seek an' me an' Paulina hid together in the nursery and changed clothes; an' we got 'em fixed up before the others found us too," proudly.

"Well, by George! Paul, was it you sitting on the door step?" "Yes, papa. I wuz, a girl, you know." "Mary don't you see what a sweet unselfish nature our boy has? Now wasn't that good of him?" "John, I don't like it—they have both been very, very naughty and really should be punished." "Now Mama, Paulina wasn't had a bit, she wouldn't take near half time; an' don't scold her—blame it all to me," pleaded Paul with one

arm thrown protecting around his little sister. Dear little innocents!—they were irresistible. There was a tender note in the mother's voice when she spoke again: "Well, children, this won't do. If Paulina must grow to be a tom-boy she certainly must wear her own clothes. I guess it is rather early to be so careful, anyway. Perhaps when she gets older she will be less rude and boisterous." Paul's arms were around her neck. "An' can she ride sticks an' play leap frog an' climb trees an'—" "Oh! yes, anything I guess, just so you don't change clothes again," helplessly. And the children ran out in the yard, mounted their stiekhorses and went in a mad gallop to visit Uncle Jake and Aunt Dilsie. Half an hour later they returned, Paul politely helped Paulina to dismount and took charge of her horse while the setting sun glorified their golden curls with a good night caress.

In the meantime John and Mary had a serious talk. "Mary, this is the richest yet," John exclaimed delightedly as soon as the twins left the room. "John, it's awful, they are growing up to be perfect in the art of deception. And, dearest, you do so, unintentionally, I know—but you encourage them in these pranks. You only see the funny side now; but if they should always be so alike and continue to change places it would be dreadful."

"Mary, I just can't help laughing at them—bless the darlings, how bright they are! Let 'em be babies as long as possible, dear—childhood is so sweet and innocent," John pleaded earnestly.

"Perhaps you are right, dear; but the Bible says, 'train a child in the way it should go and when it is old it will not depart from it.' Isn't it reasonable to suppose that if trained in the wrong direction it will continue to walk that way?"

"Oh, wife, don't worry. When our little Paulina grows older she'll be sure to pattern after her mother and will grow to perfection."

(To be continued.)

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