

WITCH AND I

a sentinel angel, sitting high in glory,
Heard the shrill wall ring out from purgatory.
"Have mercy, mighty angel! Hear my story!"

WITCH AND I

Witch and I had a quarrel! Who is it that says it takes two to make a quarrel?
Whoever it is makes a mistake. It took only one to make our quarrel, and that was my precious Aunt Betsy Jane.

My name is John, and John I'm always called. Had I been christened Robert or Thomas I should have been called by either of those plain, sensible names.

It was over a game of tennis that Aunt Betsy Jane made us quarrel. Witch didn't play up and I slanted her. I've slanted Witch ever since I have known her and I've known her since she was ten.

I am a doctor, and soon after that some one fetched me away. It was a bad case, and I didn't get home till midnight. In the dining room some child must have been waiting for me, so was a note from Witch. I ate a mouthful and drank a glass of beer, then I opened the note.

The lovely confusion puzzled me altogether. It wasn't in Witch's usual style. Naturally a note of that kind coming from her would have run in this way: "John, I hate and detest you, and hope you'll keep out of my sight forever, or something like that."

"Well, I'm making \$500 a year, and my practice is increasing."
"That's good."
"Don't you think Witch and I might marry on that?"
"Certainly."

"You have no objection to our marrying next month, if she consents?"
"None. I have no wish that she should marry at all, but if she must marry, I'd rather she married you than any one else."

"Thank you very much," said I gratefully, seizing his hand and wringing it hard.
"Just so," said he, removing it from my grasp, and looking anxiously at it.
"By the way, this is for you."

"I am not able to refresh your memory as to what you said on that occasion, but I can tell you what I heard you call her myself," said Mr. Drutt quietly.
"Her name was a revelation to me. Not that I'd call Witch anything worse than a 'little fool.' But I realize what it must have sounded like to the hearers, and to him, her father! I don't know how I looked, but I felt mean, cheap, worthless. Utterly so, I began to stammer out apologies. He waved his hand.

"All right," said he, "but you see your language is at times forcible."
He is a wise man, so he said no more. He showed his wisdom therein, for I went at once to see Witch in a very contrite frame of mind. I was ready to make a mat of myself, and let my darling trample on me if it should so please her, or to do any other extravagant thing, as I journeyed put-upward I wandered as to who could have stirred up the strife between us. Suddenly I flashed across my mind that Witch had seated herself beside Aunt Betsy Jane and that Aunt Betsy Jane was her godmother, and therefore licensed to interfere. I am not going to explain how Aunt Betsy Jane came to be Witch's godmother. I am not a lady's maid, and therefore don't think it necessary to explain everything. It has nothing to do with this story. Witch is only six years old when she was christened, and wasn't consulted as to her sponsors. To be sure, if I had been Aunt Betsy Jane's godmother I should have been about to do the same. If all went well peace would reign between Witch and myself, but if not I would take her to Richmond, get a boat from Mr. Drutt, row up the river, come to anchor in a backwater, I knew of between Richmond and Hampton, and then I'd take her name the day. But things didn't go well, they went exceedingly badly instead. When Amelia (Amelia is the Drutt's housemaid) opened the door, and I inquired for Witch she said gravely:

"Miss Drutt is not well, sir, but I'll tell her your name here."
Then she showed me into the dining room. This was ominous! In the Drutt's ménage it is customary to see people who come on business—dress-makers, laundresses, servants seeking places in the dining room before lunch. Amelia left me and went upstairs. I rapidly diagnosed the situation. I took out my pocketbook and wrote: "My darling, I shall wait in the old boat at the end of the lawn till you can see me," and then I signed it "John."

Amelia came back. "If you please, sir, Miss Drutt does not feel equal to seeing you to-day, but will write to you to-night."
"Exactly," said I quietly. "Can you give me an envelope? Thanks. Give that to Miss Drutt, please."

The form drew near, peering about in the dusk, I sprang forward, caught her in my arms, and kissed her. She had no breath with which to utter sound. She could not listen to my ardent—far more ardent than I ever bestowed on Witch—expressions of affection.

"My darling!" I went on. "I know you would never have made such a little fool of yourself if it hadn't been for that malicious catamaran, Aunt Betsy Jane." The form within my arms struggled. I was holding her tightly, or my face might have suffered.
"But I'll tell you a tale, dear about her. I'm the only living soul that knows how old Aunt Betsy Jane was. You couldn't hear the term breathe, so well was it. I went on. 'Aunt Betsy Jane is forty-five now.' The form wriggled—'about twenty-five years ago'—I could hear the heart beat, I related—'No, Witch, I will not tell you that story! You have come to me, and I can afford to pity Aunt Betsy Jane. She was badly used when she was young, and she can't bear to see people happy now she is old.'

"I am, sir. It stands to reason; I should not be so anxious if she were in fault," and then I explained the whole matter, finishing up with, "I can't remember exactly what I called her, but whatever it was I didn't mean it."
"I am not able to refresh your memory as to what you said on that occasion, but I can tell you what I heard you call her myself," said Mr. Drutt quietly.
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A Paris newspaper recently announced the sale of one of the most curious violins in the world. I formerly belonged to Paganini the great violinist, and at first sight, merely perceiving the appearance of a misshapen wooden shoe. Its history is curious, and is not without interest.

During the winter of 1838 Paganini was living in Rue de la Victoria, 48. One day a large box was brought there by the Normandy diligence, on opening which he found two inner boxes, and wrapped carefully in the folds of tissue paper, a wooden shoe and a letter, stating that the writer, having heard much of the wonderful genius of the violinist, begged, as a proof of his devotion to music, that Paganini would play in public on the oddy-constructed instrument enclosed.

Women's Rights in France. Postmistresses in France have at last obtained the redress of a grievance from which they have suffered for many years. By an established rule, husbands of postmistresses were debarred from exercising a number of trades or professions. Indeed, almost every position official or otherwise, was closed to them, owing to an old prejudice regarding the theory that certain professions would offer temptations to the husband to tamper with the mails. The result of this was that many postmistresses were practically debarred from marrying. The Government, however, have now abolished all restrictions as the choice of husbands by postmistresses with one exception. The only category now remaining as the index is that of police officials.

The Hours Doctors Work. The doctor's calling looks very different inside from what it does outside. A great medical man, say 'The Hospital,' refuse on any condition to put their sons into medicine. They have found the profession an occupation of unceasing, harassing, and responsible work, with poor pay. It must be admitted that the general practitioner in a third-rate neighborhood has but a melancholy time of it. An eight hours working day would be almost heaven for him. A sixteen hours day is a very common experience. Many a doctor who works sixteen hours a day, and has two or three disturbed nights a week into the bargain, nevertheless soon learns to think himself very lucky if he has more than twenty-five per cent of his hard earnings is lost in bad debts.

MY OWN LOVE STORY.

It was bitterly cold. The train for the north was crowded, and after trying in vain to find a seat in a second class carriage, Paula Morrison at last appealed to the guard, who showed her into a first class compartment.

"On the seat opposite was an old gentleman deep in the columns of a paper. Presently it was flung aside, and a letter withdrawn from a bundle in his pocket. 'Bah! he thought, as he scanned the pages; the boy wishes to marry some beggarly governess, but I won't have it. I'll make him understand directly I get home that I will stand no nonsense of that kind.' 'She is of as gentle birth as we.' 'Oh, I dare say. And so Edith said when she wanted to persuade us that that scamp, her fiance, was the best match she could make. Poor little woman, my father was a bit hard on her. I always regret I could not trace her after his death. I should have liked to have done something for the daughter, too.'

"I wonder if that lawyer fellow really did all he could to trace them. I think I will put the investigation into Sparge & Turnover's hands, and see if they cannot find a clue."
They sailed for South Africa in the autumn of 1875, soon after the girl was born. And that is about all I know.
At Grantham the old gentleman settled himself for a dose. 'Pretty girl that opposite,' he thought to himself. 'Sweet, plaintive face, looks as if she had known some trouble.' Then he fell asleep, but awoke a few minutes later with a start.

"No, no one," said Paula, with a little choke, which might be a sob or a sigh, "yet on my way to a lady who does not yet know me. I am to be her companion, and the engagement has been made by correspondence. I dare say she will have sent me at Ardab, but they will expect the train to be late on a day."
That is my story, said Sir Richard. "Is it possible that I am talking to Miss Morrison, who is coming to be my wife's companion?"
"Yes, and I suppose you are Sir Richard Culmore?"
He nodded. The half guinea which he had before him when he awoke, and which he had thoughtfully put in his pocket, again showed under Miss Morrison's jacket as it hung from her little silver watch-chain.

"I am going to begin our acquaintance by asking you a very strange question," he said. "Will you tell me where you got that half-penny guinea?"
"Was my mother's," said Paula, and her eyes clouded with unshed tears. "I found it among her trunks when she died. I do not know its history, except that her brother, whom she loved dearly, gave it to her."
"Would you care to hear his history?" said Sir Richard, his breath coming a little quicker with the excitement of his discovery. "I am the brother who gave her that half penny. See, here is the other portion."

He took his niece's hand in his, and Paula knew that the long struggle against poverty, which she had fought since her parents' death, was over.
Then Paula had to tell of the happy time she spent in the Cape, and of her father's death, then of her mother's troubles, and of the journey back to England under an assumed name, so that knowledge of their poverty might not reach the ears of those who had cast her off.

Chain Mail. At a recent wedding a very pretty feature was the 'chain mail.' Four attractive young ladies with chains of roses presented the bridal party up the broad aisle of the church, tying all guests in their ties and stationing themselves at equal distances, holding the ends of the chains, and after the ceremony and until the bridal party and immediate friends had left the church. Then they gracefully twisted the chains about themselves and followed the party to the carriages, thus delaying the guests from their pews and preventing the crowding of the bridal party, which so generally occurs.—Philadelphia Press.

A Sad Lieber. Blobs—What nonsense it is for this newspaper in their accounts of wedding to describe the bride being led to the altar.
Slobs—How so?
Blobs—Well, most girls could find their way there in the dark.—Philadelphia Record.

MY OWN LOVE STORY.

Feller what thinks an' is best?
'Prospect no use livin', I wuv!
But I tell yer who is the daisy—
The feller that does things new.

He's never procrastinat'!
An' tellin' ye 'why' an' 'how.'
When the dot' on't 's what he's talkin'
He just goes an' does it, now.

My own love story. I had never been called an imprudent woman, and for weeks I refused to be candid with myself. I think it was only when I went into the shop and bought the man's photograph, after tearing myself away from the window at least a dozen times, that I realized what an idiot I had become. Then it fell in love, as romantically, as I had fallen in love with an actor whom I did not know.

I have said that I had never been called an imprudent woman, but I may say more: I had in my youth occasioned my worthy mother great trouble by my "peculiar disposition." Dances were abhorrent to me, and as to flirting, I did not know how to do it. Men did not attract me a bit—scolded better than to be left alone with my pen.

At last the play was done, and I sent it to him. After a week, I got a note begging me to call. He was in his "sanctum," as he termed it, when I was shown in. The MS. was lying on the desk.
"Sit down," he said, with a bright smile. "I'm happy to make me see you here!" I took a chair in front of him.
"You like the drama?" I asked.
"I like it," he said; "yes; but there are a good many alterations needed. The leading lady's part must be weakened."

"Weakened?"
"It detracts from me," he said; "she has too many good lines. Look here, for instance; I have marked some of the places."
I looked. He had marked fifty places if he had marked one.
"And something else," he said. "You have not let me finish every act, I must bring down all the curtains."
"But—but—is that artistic under the circumstances?"
"Oho, artistic!" he laughed. "This is business, not art, my dear Miss Cleve. The applause is too distributed as you have written the piece. I have to stand on the stage in one of the scenes while the leading lady gets two 'standing rounds.' You must cut those 'lows' out, and give something as good to me instead."

The servant came in with a message and he begged me to excuse him. He was absent some time. I turned the pages of the MS., and read the suggestions he had pencilled. Merciful powers! and this was the man I had thought was an artist! Anything more puerile, more contemptible it had never entered into the human imagination to conceive.

There were some proof-sheets lying on the desk. I saw they were the proofs of an "Interview" sent him for correction. What was that?
"Mr. Brudenell raised Ms clever head—'The clever' had been inserted by Mr. Brudenell. Here was a whole sentence written in: 'Mr. Brudenell, like Sarah Bernhardt, might have distinguished himself in many of the arts. He is a talented amateur painter, models with singular felicity, and earlier in life was frequently employed by the appreciation accorded to his literary work to desert the footlights for the study. The British play-goer may be thankful that he did not.' Heavens above!