A WOMAN LIVED IN MAN'S ATTIRE

Catherine Coombs is entitled to the unique distinction of being a woman who has for forty-three years successfully masqueraded in male attire, and under the name of "Charley Wilson," worked with men in the masculine trade of a painter. Through an accident her sex was discovered, and she is now in the West Ham Union, London, where she was recently interviewed by the London Telegraph, which prints her strange story:—

Dressed in the simple uniform of the West Ham Union of blue linen, with white apron and cap upon her short iron gray hair, Mrs. Coombs entered briskly and alertly and would certainly not have been set down as more than fifty years of age, though she is over sixty-three. She is by no means tall, and in her masculine garb must have appeared both short and slight. Her voice sounded unusually deep for a woman, but as she explained in subsequent conversation, she had cultivated its lowest registers, till she had come to use them habitually; and she also expresses herself with a terseness and vigor not quite characteristically feminine. She was not disposed at first to speak fully of her life, saying, modestly, that to some it might not seem a very edifying one; but by degrees, and with the help of a leading question or two, she unfolded her extraordinary history, and as she talked it became evident that she had enjoyed considerable educational advantages. To her possession, in fact, of these is due the unhappy beginning of her life.

As she explained, she was born at Axbridge, in Somersetshire, of comfortably circumstanced parents, who sent her to the Cheltenham Ladies' College, which half a century ago, held, as it does to-day, a leading place among girls' schools, and while there she was far better taught than were the majority of girls at that time. It has been stated that her husband was a curate, but that is not the case. He was a schoolmaster and a cousin of her own, considerably her senior. Thinking that her knowledge would be of assistance to him in teaching, he pressed for a very early marriage, which proved a disastrously unhappy one, until his efforts to live upon her parents, and his personal violence to her, compelled her not only to leave him, but to take steps to prevent his ever finding her again.

Then it was that the problem of existence presented itself. There were not the "openings for women" five and forty years ago that there are to-day, and, to put it in her own words, she saw that the choice lay between a man's clothes and labor and destitution. She elected the former, and, but for an accident, would probably have carried her secret to her deathbed. She succeeded in effecting an outward transformation in humble lodgings at a Birmingham coffee house. Her next step was to find work, and she started as a learner in the house painting trade at four shillings a week. Her aptitude soon showed itself, and after three weeks this modest remuneration was raised, until in a few months she was able to earn a "living wage." In the earlier days of her career she worked a great deal in Yorkshire, and bore her part in the internal decorations of many of the finest mansions of the landed and titled people there.

I interrupted her narrative to ask if she had never felt afraid in these times of some gesture or inadvertent speech that would betray her to her "mates," and her answer showed how well she turned the power of observation to account.

"I knew I must never lapse into carelessness," she said, "and how little it would take to give me away, from a very small episode. We had our luncheon while we were decorating a fine house, and the gardener, thinking to give us a treat, brought in a basket of choice apples. He was in a hurry, however, and to those at the further end of the hall he threw the apples, and a young boy, sitting down, who, I suppose, had been in the habit of wearing an apron at his work, extended his knees apart to make a lap in which to catch the fruit. There was an old Yorkshire foreman close beside him, who at once laughed at the boy, and said, 'Yon lad's learnt how t' wenches play.' I had played cricket, so I knew how to catch mine, but I did not forget the lesson."

"Charley Wilson" went twice to Paris on special jobs for "his" employers, and had an exceedingly good offer on one occasion to go to America.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact of this woman's business capabilities was her employment for over thirteen years by the Peninsular and Oriental Company. It is with considerable pride that she mentions that, with the exception of the last two or three ships built, there is not a vessel in that stately fleet which cannot show her handiwork. She had a large share in the redecoration of the saloon of the Rome after the big alterations that were made in her hull for her improvement. The ornamentation of the music saloons of the Victoria, the Oceana and the Arcadia, which are especially elaborate and rich, was almost entirely carried out by her in enamelling, and this, it should be added, is rather a distinct branch of the painter's craft, for, as she says, "a ship's painter may paint a house, but a mere house painter can't paint a ship." During her engagement by the firm who did this work for the company, and subsequently when the Peninsular and Oriental Company did its own painting, she enjoyed a particularly good character for her punctuality in arriving at her work in the morning.

"But how did you bring yourself to talk as men talk when they are alone?" I asked.

"Well, you see," she answered, "I never mixed with them. From the first I saw my safety would lie in maintaining a rather proud, rather 'standoff' demeanor. My work, I may say without vanity, was so good that that was my claim to the master's notice. The men wondered a little who I could be that chose to keep so much to myself, and so they dubbed me 'the gentleman painter.'"

As Mrs. Coombs talked, it was easy to see that she held strongly religious and devout opinions, though without any ostentation or tendency to obtrude them, and in this way, too, she could save herself from offence. "I have often," she continued, "had to speak my mind out straight when a man working under me has been lazy or careless, but I can safely say I have never used a blasphemous word or an expression that would be jarring on a woman's lips. And, as far as talk about me went, I never hesitated to show that I disliked coarse and irreverent and vulgar conversation."

"Again, as you say you were sent often to the country on jobs, how did you manage for lodgings?" I inquired.

"Now that I look back," she answered, "it does seem remarkable that I never once found it inevitable to sleep in the same room with a man. I used to go to cottages, rather than to public houses, for, though I have never been a teetotaler, the accommodation of the village inn is often very objectionable. One time when I was on some work in South Kensington, I met a man I had known, and he said, 'Charley, old chap, there's a first rate thing some of us are going down to. It's near West Grinstead—the whole of Sir William Burrell's mansion to be decorated, and there's a vacancy still." I hesitated a little, but it seemed a good thing, so I offered myself and went. We all got down there, and while they were sitting round their lunch I strolled out, saw a nice old fellow smoking over a gate, and said, "Know where I could get a room? I'm here for the painting of the big house.' 'Don't know as we couldn't do with you ourselves,' and he took me in and showed me a clean and comfortable room, which I immediately engaged, and, fearing lest any of my companions would want to share it, I said I would have 'my wife' down also and my niece; and I had as healthy and comfortable a summer in the country as you could have wished."

Working at Kingston in the summer, she fell from a scaffolding and fractured some ribs. She made a good recovery, and no suspicion even then was raised as to her sex by the doctor who set them and attended her, any more than it had been when she fell down a ship's hatch and fractured her kneecap. On this occasion, however, the doctor had said one day, "What curiously small hands you have for a man, Wilson." Looking, too, at them, well formed and even white, it is almost a wonder that these never did raise any inquiry. But her savings were soon exhausted, and, for the last few weeks, work was unobtainable. For two days and two nights this brave-hearted woman tramped the streets with no more than a halfpenny roll to eat, and at last she was fain to seek the shelter of the workhouse. She clung to the hope that somehow she might evade the compulsory stripping, but it was impossible, and feminine modesty revolted even to yielding up the secret she had kept so long.

"But I have hope that I shall not have to stay here long," she piteously said. "My eyesight is not as good as it was, and I fear I shall not be able to undertake high class painting work again, but I could act as caretaker, I could keep a lodge and should be very thankful if I could hear of any position of trust. I am doing my best while I am here, and the matron is very kind to me, giving me only some stockings to darn and sheets to hem, instead of sending me to scrub or wash. And I feel very uncomfortable in these clothes, though you would not find me wanting any half-and-half 'bloomers' if I can't have my old coat and trousers."

NOTES FROM FAR LANDS.

The Persians are great lovers of confectionery.

Silence and expedition are the chief characteristics of a Turkish dinner.

The Chinese show their courtesy by feeding their guests and visitors at any hour of the day

Forks are unknown in Turkey; but a good Mussulman washes his fingers before he begins to eat.

A Japanese dinner of high pretensions is eaten with chopsticks, to the accompaniment of music and dancing.

The French people, it is said, now pay more attention to eating and drinking, and less to dancing, than formerly.

Why Suffer?

When there is such a good remedy as Nerviline for all kinds of pain. It cures neuralgia in five minutes; toothache in one minute; lame back at one application; headache in a few moments; and all pain just as rapidly. Give it a trial.

IT DIDN'T WORK

Fr. Dugan—I am afraid Bridget, that you are as much at fault in this quarrel as Patrick. You must learn to exercise forbearance, and remember that a soft answer turneth away wrath.

Bridget O'Hoolihan—Begorra, yer riverance, that's jist wot stharted the trouble. Pat came home from his worruk and axed wot was there for dinner. He was toired an' hungry an' cross as two sthicks, so he was, an' I give him a soft answer.

Well, what did you say?

Cowld mush.

DEAFNESS CANNOT BE CURED

by local applications as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When this tube is inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed, Deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by Catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous surfaces.

We will give One Hundred Dollars for any case of Deafness (caused by catarrh) that can not be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure. Send for circulars; free.

F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O.

Sold by Druggists, 75c.

Hall's Family Pills are the best.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FAMILY NAME.

The question has frequently been asked, "What is Queen Victoria's surname?" A correspondent thus answers the conundrum: "A friend the other day asked me if I knew Queen Victoria's family name. I thought a moment and answered, 'Why, Guelph, of course.' 'Oh, no,' answered my friend, 'not at all. While the members of Queen Victoria's family are Guelphs by descent, her marriage with Prince Albert would give her his surname, as is usual in such cases. And what was the family name of the prince consort?' I had to confess that I did not know. 'Well,' said my friend, 'you are excusable for not knowing, I suppose, since only a short time ago the same question was asked at a dinner party in London, attended by a number of persons of rank, some of whom were very near royalty, and not a soul of them could answer it except the propounder of the question. The name in question is Wettin, and the dominion of Saxony came to this family in 1420. Therefore, without her crown and kingdom, Queen Victoria would be simply Mrs. Wettin.'"

It's a small thing, but when you think that most people drink it at each meal, and some people drink two or three cups each time, you can readily see it is most important that you drink pure tea. Very few know what happens from the time the tea leaf is picked until they buy it from their grocer, who as a rule, sells bulk tea. Few of them carry a sufficient stock of teas to blend successfully, and large importers, knowing this, and seeing the advantage of keeping the tea from exposure, have introduced the package tea. One of the most successful of these is Ludella Ceylon Tea, which seems to be thoroughly appreciated wherever used. A few years ago one dollar a pound would not be as good a tea as 25c. Ludella. To a great extent this is accounted for by new methods of production; instead of rolling the leaf by hand, this is now done by machinery.

TRAGEDY OF THE HEART.

Tears stood in the young woman's eyes.

You pain me deeply, Mr. Highmore, she said.

Then you refuse my love?

For a moment she was silent. Then, with great gentleness, she spoke again:

Mr. Highmore, I can never marry a man who walks pigeon-toed.

As if struck by a heavy and unexpected blow in the face he sank back into a chair.

But presently he recovered himself.

Rising from the chair, he put on his overcoat and drew on his gloves with great deliberation, took his hat and moved to the door. Then, with his hand on the knob, he turned and said:

I could bear the pain of the rejection, Miss Glycerine McCurdy, for this is not the first time. There have been others. But this is the deepest humiliation that has ever befallen me. I shall remember this as the bitterest hour of my life. I have been turned down by a girl who pronounces it "progr'm!"

His head sank till his chin rested on his shirt bosom, and he opened the door and faded out of her sight forever.

Corn Sowing

Is conducted by tight boots. Corn reaping is best conducted by Putnam's Painless Corn Extractor, the only safe, sure, prompt and painless corn cure. Beware of imitations.

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25, 30, 40, 50 and 60 cents per pound.
The Monsoon Tea Co., 7 Wellington-st. W., Toronto.

A SUGGESTION.

I want something in a small check, said young Mr. Twitters, as he examined the tailor's cloths.

Did you bring it with you, sir? asked the tailor.

Bring what with me?

The small check.

Good Men Wanted in every township to sell our CHURN. Fastest seller. Sample $3.50, or stamped envelope for particulars. T. MOUNCE, 10 King St. W., Toronto.

SAUSAGE CASINGS.—New Importations, finest English sheep and American hog casings. Reliable goods at right prices. Park, Blackwell & Co., Limited, Toronto.

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Best watch on earth, $1.25; our celebrated 20th century watch; American movement; warranted five years. Equal as timekeeper to any $25.00 watch; nickel case, stem wind, pendant set, finely finished dial, sunk second hand; received highest gold medal awards at American and European International Exposition; patented the world over; just a watch which sells anywhere for $4 to $5; agents make big money by selling it; one agent sold 22 in a single day; will send sample to any address on receipt of price: 6 for $7, 12 for $12, 6 or more sent C. O. D. if $1 is sent with order; for $2 I will send watch and handsome rolled plate chain warranted to wear five years, and all money will be returned if you are not satisfied with your bargain. Fred M. Mason, box 123, Madison square, New York city.

DR. GOODE'S
PAINLESS PENNYROYAL PILLS
A Specific for Female Complaints,
are a true boon to every lady who suffers in the performance of nature's effort. They at once ease the pain and restore natural and healthy action of the ovarian vessels. For young and developing womanhood they excel any remedy which can be used. They are compounded solely from the active principles of vegetable substances, and are perfectly safe and reliable. Ask your druggist for them, and if he does not keep them in stock he can procure them for you. Price $1.00 per Bottle, or 6 for $5.00. Wholesale Agents:
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.....CEYLON TEA
Until you try it. Then you will thank us. Lead packages. 25, 40, 50 & 60c. Leading grocers

Amberine HAIR PRODUCER.
SOFT, GLOSSY, PLIANT SILKEN TRESSES,
Are the pride and glory of lovely woman. Amberine cleanses the scalp, removes dandruff, itchiness, harshness or brittleness, and makes the hair as beautiful as in youth.

LADIES PRAISE AMBERINE.
The following ladies have kindly permitted us to refer to them. They have used Amberine, they know its worth, and they recommend it highly:—
Miss Jennie Tibbs, Nelson St., London.
Mrs. J. Manson, Young St., Hamilton.
Miss E. Patterson, Hess St. N., Hamilton.
Mrs. Alfred Jordan, Hill St., London.
Miss I. V. Ryckman, Hughson St. S., Hamilton.
Miss Eva Dickenson, Young St., Hamilton.

GROWS A NEW CROP OF HAIR.
SWORN EVIDENCE:
DOMINION OF CANADA, Province of Ontario, County of Middlesex. To Wit: } IN THE MATTER of the "Amberine Hair Producer," manufactured by Messrs. Job Cook and Company, 58 Wellington Street, London, Canada.
I, Henry Amos Plastow, of the City of London, in the County of Middlesex, Water Works Inspector:
Do solemnly declare that I have used the "Amberine Hair Producer," manufactured by Messrs. Job Cook and Company, of No. 58 Wellington Street, in the City of London, Canada, since the 15th day of April, 1897. It has stopped the itching of the scalp, stopped the hair from falling out, removed the dandruff, and has brought out a thick crop of hair where my head was entirely bald before I commenced using their preparation.
And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true and knowing that it is of the same force and effect as if made under oath and by virtue of "The Canada Evidence Act, 1893."
Declared before me at the City London in the County of Middlesex, this 11th day of October, A.D. 1897, all which I certify under my notarial seal } H. A. PLASTOW
E. T. ESSERY, a Notary Public in and for the Province of Ontario.

This little Motor is complete with battery and chemicals. It is a boy's delight.
Electric Railroad Complete $3.50
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We have all kinds of electric supplies. Get our prices.
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Intelligent ladies and gentlemen can be supplied with genteel and very PROFITABLE employment. Industry is the essential NECESSARY to secure GOOD REMUNERATION. Can give the address of representative who has just cleared $113 in 21 DAYS. $5 can be made right AT your own HOME.
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This is a question which has agitated the minds of thousands of Canadian citizens. The answer is contained in the testimony which comes from all parts of the country, from all classes of people, and never before in the medical history of Canada has there been such a popular flood of testimony as that which has poured into the Ryckman Medicine Co.'s offices at Hamilton during the last year.

Rheumatic sufferers who have doctored for years with the best physicians, and undergone hospital treatment to no purpose, declare themselves cured by Kootenay. Limbs that have for months at a time been warped and twisted by the fetters of rheumatism are released by the action of Kootenay Cure. The new ingredient which enters into its composition reaches the old stubborn and chronic cases and leads the way to speedy recovery, causing discerning physicians who have watched its cures to admit that it is a "miracle worker." Read the testimony in which the convincing ring of truth is sealed by sworn statements. It is the only true cure for rheumatism on earth.

HAMILTON.

I, MRS. ISABEL SULLIVAN, residing at 65 Walnut Street South, in the City of Hamilton, County of Wentworth, do solemnly declare: That last fall my little boy, aged five and a half years, was attacked with rheumatism and also pains in his back and kidneys. He was unable to stand and could not get out of bed without assistance. His suffering was terrible, and although he had medical treatment he got no better. The pain was so severe at times he would almost faint. His appetite left him and he grew very weak. About this time we heard of "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*," and commenced giving it to him, with what results I am pleased to tell you. Since taking the first bottle of medicine he has not had a pain, never complains, and is as healthy a boy as one could wish for. He has gained flesh and plays hard all day, and in my opinion is completely cured. Young as he is the boy himself appreciates the medicine, and I heartily recommend it to anyone suffering from rheumatism or kidney trouble.

ISABEL SULLIVAN.

Sworn to before Notary T. F. LYALL, 25th day of August, 1896.

LONDON.

I, C. B. HAMILTON, of the City of London, County of Middlesex, do solemnly declare that I reside at 131 Sydenham Street in said city and that I had rheumatism for over seven years. I was so bad that at times I was unable to satisfactorily use my limbs. I was employed by I. D. Saunby, Black Friars Mill, as head miller, and it was while working for him that I was so severely afflicted. I am now a well man and was cured by "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*," which I recommend to all rheumatic sufferers. In connection with this I may add that my wife gratefully endorses my recommendation of *Kootenay Cure*, as she also has good cause to speak highly of it as a tonic and blood purifier.

C. B. HAMILTON.

Sworn to before Notary C. G. JARVIS, 15th day of August, 1896.

OTTAWA.

I, MARTIN WATSON, of the City of Ottawa, in the County of Carleton, do solemnly declare that I live at 112 Cathcart Street, in the City of Ottawa. That I am thirty years of age and a tinsmith by trade. I was severely afflicted with rheumatism, and so bad was my case that I was confined to my bed for two months. In June, 1895, I began taking "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*." I used two bottles and am now entirely cured and free from rheumatism. I have since been exposed to wet weather which has had no bad effect on me. I consider *Kootenay* a great cure for rheumatism. I have also gained 27 pounds in weight. It is a grand tonic and a wonderful blood purifier. I attribute my cure solely to the use of *Kootenay Cure*.

MARTIN WATSON.

Sworn to before Notary DANIEL O'CONNOR, 19th day of February, 1896.

TORONTO.

I, GEORGE BAKER, of the City of Toronto, County of York, do solemnly declare that I am a fur dyer, and reside at 14 Stayner Street in the said City. That I was afflicted with inflammatory rheumatism in the knees for over a year and was barely able to walk the short distance from my home to my work and then only with great pain. After taking two bottles of "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*" I am an all round healthy man, have a good appetite and sleep well. I frequently walk six to ten miles at a time and feel no fatigue whatever from this exertion. Am free from all pain and attribute my present wholesome and sound condition of body to "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*."

GEORGE BAKER.

Sworn to before Notary J. W. SEYMOUR CORLEY, 10th day of July, A.D. 1896.

INGERSOLL.

I, CHARLES BRITTAIN, of the Town of Ingersoll, County of Oxford, do solemnly declare that I am forty-five years of age, and I live in said town, and was formerly employed by the Ingersoll Pork Packing Company; that I suffered severely with rheumatism for six years. I tried several kinds of patent medicines and was under the care of a physician for some time without relief. I was so bad that I was unable to hold up my arms; in fact I could not raise my hand to my head. I have taken two bottles of "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*" and am now entirely free from rheumatism, and I attribute my recovery solely to the use of "*Ryckman's Kootenay Cure*," and I recommend the remedy to all sufferers from rheumatism.

CHARLES BRITTAIN.

Sworn to before Notary J. F. MONCK, 21st day of August, A.D. 1896.

If you are sick and discouraged by Rheumatism, Bright's Disease, Kidney Troubles, Eczema, or any Blood Disease, write The S. S. Ryckman Medicine Co., Hamilton, for Chart Book, mailed free. It will tell you of cures made by Kootenay that were considered hopeless. The medicine is put up in bottles containing over a month's treatment, and sold for $1.50 per bottle, making it cheaper than a month's use of inferior medicines. If not obtainable from your dealer, sent charges prepaid, by addressing S. S. Ryckman Medicine Co., Limited, Hamilton.

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