

# FIFTY YEAR IN MEN'S CLOTHES

Strange Life of Catherine Coome—She Married Thrice, Once to a Husband and Twice to Wives—Clings to Her Garb.

It is doubted here if any woman masquerading as a man ever had a more extraordinary career than Catherine Coome. She is whose arrest the other day brought out the fact that for the last 50 years she has worn man's clothing, done man's work and everywhere passed as a man, says a London dispatch in the Atlanta Constitution. She is devoted to her pipe, too, in which she smokes the strongest kind of tobacco. Strangest of all, however, Catherine Coome has been twice married as a member of the sterner sex. Three times in all has she entered the bonds of wedlock, but on the first occasion, as a maid of 15, she wedded a man. That marriage turned out unhappily and she resolved never to repeat the experiment. The second time, in the role of a man, she married a woman and for twenty-two years this strange but happy matrimonial partnership was maintained, until the death of her "wife" made her once more—should one say, "widow" or "widower?" Only once before her recent arrest, she declares, was her sex detected. She had been a captain's clerk and in that capacity and subsequently as a painter and decorator on the Pennsylvania and Ohio Company's steamers has sailed over many seas and seen much of the world. On shore she maintained herself and the partner of her joys and sorrows for many years as a house painter. And finally as a fitting climax to her career she elicited from a magistrate the statement that there is no law in England under which a woman can be restricted from donning masculine attire.

She comes of a good family. Her father was a man of some means and a well known member of the Somerset and Devon Hunt. She was educated at a "young ladies' seminary" in Cheltenham, and before she was sixteen she married her first cousin, Percival Coome. He was twenty-two years older than herself and, according to her description of him, a thorough going scamp. He cruelly ill used her, kept her under lock and key and even cut off her hair and sold it. She vowed after that she would never let it grow long again, nor did she. Several times she ran away from him, but he always caught her and made her suffer for it.

It was after one of these experiences that she hit upon the idea of disguising herself in male attire that she might the better hide from him. She was eighteen then, and the change of costume made her look like a bright and handsome lad. It was before the days of pursers and she readily obtained a position as a captain's clerk, a billet which insured her safety from her husband's pursuit. For three and a half years she held this position on the same ship, and no one suspected her secret. The only embarrassment she suffered, she says, was from the attention of feminine passengers, who persisted in falling in love with her. One of them, an actress, and a famous one in her time, actually, she declares, besought her on bended knee to become her husband. "My legs were then scarcely used to trousers," she says, "and I was so worried and ashamed that I told her I was only a girl. Her love then changed to friendship and my staunch friend she remained until she died."

On her last voyage on the ship, according to her story, a girl fell so desperately in love with her that when port was reached she refused to go home. By this time Catherine had grown accustomed to her man role and such a trifling matter as the love of a maid no longer upset her. She got rid of the girl by sending a telegram to her father, a country rector, asking him to take his too susceptible daughter home.

After leaving the sea, still disguised as a man, she apprenticed herself to a house painter and in five years mastered the trade and went to work at it on her own account. "In my 'prentice days," she relates, "my love affairs were many, and when I had won a home of my own the memory of them set me thinking. I loved home life and I wanted my home kept nice. I couldn't myself do both man and woman's work at the same time. But as far as the world was concerned I had become a man, and I could not ask a woman to live with me merely as a companion. Turning the matter over in my mind, I came to the conclusion that there was no good reason why I should not marry a woman and in that way obtain the companionship and domestic assistance I needed. So I went a-courting in earnest."

The result was a wedding at St. Margaret Church, near Westminster Abbey, between "Charles Wilson," the man name assumed by Catherine, and Annie Ridgway, who had been a lady's maid to Lady Campbell. "Annie," she says, "loved me so devotedly and un-

selfishly that we lived an entirely happy married life for four years, when, to my great sorrow, she died." Catherine was not long in seeking consolation in a second wife, choosing this time a dressmaker. "My second wife," she says, "was as true to me as my first had been. I do not believe that a couple were ever so happy as we were for the twenty-two years that she lived after our marriage."

It was toward the end of this happy period of her life that work on shore as a house painter being slack, Catherine obtained a position as painter and decorator with the Pennsylvania and Ohio Company and made several voyages on their steamships.

"It was not always easy work," she states. "Fancy having to be hoisted to the masthead on a freezing morning with a paint pot held in my teeth! No wonder that I met with several accidents and at last broke three ribs." Soon after this the old woman, as she had now become, lost her second wife and then evil days fell upon her and she was driven to the poorhouse. "It was here," she says, "that I was found out for the first time since I had adopted men's clothing that I was a woman. It was discovered because I hit one of the men who wanted to strip me for bathing."

Catherine had to submit to the "humiliation of women's clothes" after that while she remained in the workhouse, but she was allowed to depart in masculine garb. However, finding work at her trade hard to get, she soon donned petticoats again on her own account and made a voyage to Australia and back as stewardess. When ashore once more she resumed her trousers, but having illness and the infirmities of age to contend with, she could get no steady employment. At length she was arrested for drunkenness, when, she declares, she was only faint from hunger. It led to the disclosure of her life story and it is pleasant to record in consequence some men of means have become interested in her and what remains to her life—she is now 68—will be made easy for her. Her unique experiences have not given her a very high opinion of her own sex despite the fact that her two wives turned out so much better than her husband.

"My strange life as a man-woman," she says, "has given me an opportunity of judging women such as I suppose no other woman ever had. And it is my deliberate opinion—though speaking now for my own sex, I am ashamed to say it—that in the main men are better than women."

### MAIL MATTER UNSTAMPED.

Big Business Houses Will Be Allowed to pay Postage in Cash on Advertising Circulars.

WASHINGTON, D. C., Sept. 10.—No stamps will be needed on third and fourth class mail matter under an order to be issued by the Postoffice Department in the next few weeks. It will be stipulated, however, that every piece of mail must be identical in character, and in quantities of not less than 2,000 pieces.

These regulations are made in the interest of large business houses from which thousands of pieces of mail are sent out each week.

Under the present postal regulations each piece of advertising matter must have a stamp affixed. Under the proposed plan the postage will be paid in cash.

### HEAD OF SCHOOL ACCUSED.

President of Baltimore Polytechnic Institute Charged With Intoxication.

BALTIMORE, Md., Sept. 10.—Charges reflecting upon the character of Lieutenant William R. King, principal of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, were considered by the Board of School Commissioners at a secret session yesterday afternoon, but the Board reserved its decision.

Lieutenant King was charged with intoxication and the use of improper language both within and without the Polytechnic Institute building. The charges cover the period since 1900.

### MENU PRICES MAY SUIT ASTOR.

Ordinary Mortals Will Hesitate, However, Before Dining at His New Hotel in Gotham.

The 11 clerks, 17 bellboys, two chefs, one maitre d'hotel and 369 other employes of John Jacob Astor's \$1,000,000 Hotel St. Regis were thrown into a ferment of excitement yesterday over the arrival of another guest. He was assigned to an "elegant suite of apartments" on the tenth floor, says the New York "American." Last night a light shone serenely from his window over the dark and empty avenue. Another gleamed like a signal light from the fourteenth floor, where the pioneer guests of Sunday had pitched their camp. But

the lower light shone with deeper and truer meaning, for yesterday's arrival was none other than Col. John Jacob Astor, scion of a distinguished house, noted militiaman, and incidentally the owner of the hotel.

Second only in importance to the arrival of Col. Astor, in a day crowded with events, was the announcement by a sorrowing clerk the \$125 a day state suite was still without a tenant; the \$250 pillows and the \$10,000 bed still unpressed; the \$498 empire chairs still unoccupied, and the \$75 French clocks still ticking \$1 ticks in innocuous desuetude.

The big caravansary lived up a bit last night. The dinner hour brought, if not guests, at least diners. New Yorkers strolled in for a bite to eat, and Westerners sojourning in town came in to look the place over and see if it was worth the money. A hasty top and bottom examination of the menu, which they found before them, betrays the fact that you can get oysters for 30 cents, which includes a snack of bread and butter, a trio of olives, and your heart's desire of horserradish.

In relishes you can get Lyon's sausage for 50 cents, or, if you prefer salted prunes, the charge is \$1.

Ox-tail soup is listed at \$1.25, but you can get Parmentier Argentine which translated means "silvery potato," for 70 cents.

Pears that surprise you (poires en surprise) cost \$1. The surprising feature is probably the price.

You next come to fish, and run into a whole school, the most expensive of which is lobster according to the revolution, and salmon trout according to Queen Alexandra. The revolutionary lobster is invoiced at \$1.25 per lobster. So is the Alexandra salmon trout, with no one to sing "God Save the Queen" when he pays the bill.

Having partaken of these trifles, you will now have an appetite, and turn eagerly to the meat course. Of course, you first notice your old friend the turkey, at \$4, but in the same glance you catch sight of a chicken

diva, at \$5. The diva is probably black Patti, as she seems to suggest chicken somehow or other, and the price reminds you of the toll per note of the original lady of that name.

If you want filet of Guinea hen, with tomatoes, as it is eaten in Turkey, you need only allot \$2 of your supper money therefor, but noisette of lamb—noisettes are very small chunks—will set you back \$3.

You are now ready for salad, which will be served to you at rates varying from 60 to 80 cents. It would pay you to make your entire meal of salad, but it is likely that your waiter would raise his eyebrows at you if you did.

You can wind up if you want to with hot-house fruits—peaches at \$1, grapes at \$1.50, trunions (which are nectarines) at 60 cents and apples at half a dollar. Guiseppe who keeps a fruit stand just around on Sixth avenue will sell you the same apples for 5 cents; but Guiseppe doesn't have to earn interest on Fifth avenue property.

And then you draw cheese at 30 cents a draw and finish up on Turkish coffee at a quarter, special coffee at the same price, or a small black at 15 cents.

If you still feel hungry when you arise from the table, you can go to a little place on Sixth avenue nearby, which has a white porcelain sign on the window, and get surpassing coffee and "sinkers" for 10 cents. That ought to last you over night.

### Had Better Get Busy.

Judge Parker's letter is presumed to be substantially completed, but we are asked to wait three weeks longer before seeing it. Our judgment may not count for much when intruded among the sage politicians who gather at Rossmount daily to discuss the situation. Unless they begin doing something besides traveling between New York and Esopus there will pretty soon be no situation to discuss.—Boston Herald (Dem.)

Coming—"A Chinese Honeymoon."

YAN YUEH MIH TONG YIN TIH

A CHINESE HONEY MOON.

一月蜜唐人將

## The West Virginian Job Department.

We are now in position to do all kinds of Job Printing. If you want any of the following, or Job Work of any description, try us:

Shipping Tags, Business Cards, Bill Heads, Letter Heads, Note Heads, Dodgers, Sale Bills, Statements, Show Cards, Programmes, Announcements, Negotiable Notes, Promissory Notes, Book Printing, Price Lists.

All Work Promptly and Neatly Executed,

### Fairmont West Virginian, Monroe Street.

### SAFES LOANED TO DEPOSITORS.

One dollar opens a Savings account.

We loan you the safe. We keep the key.

Savings accounts draw four per cent. interest, same being compounded semi-annually.

Call and get a safe. It will help you save.

## HOME SAVINGS BANK.

## LEVI B. HARR,

-- IS --

The only man in the Monongahela Valley who makes a specialty of making you money and incidentally a living for himself.

### Fairmont Real Estate, Special Agents Properties Rented Special Agent

### Loans Negotiated Stocks For Speculation Bonds for Investment.

His clients are his references. Office rooms, 322½ Main Street.

### BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD.

PASSENGER trains will arrive at and depart from Fairmont on the following schedule on and after May 22d, 1904:

WEST BOUND.	
No. 7.—Chicago Express.	4:24 A. M.
No. 5.—Wheeling Accommodation.	7:47 A. M.
No. 55.—Wheeling & Cincinnati Express.	7:29 P. M.
No. 71.—Wheeling Accommodation.	1:36 P. M.
EAST BOUND.	
No. 8.—New York, Baltimore and Washington Express.	3:25 A. M.
No. 72.—Grafton Accom'n	10:53 A. M.
No. 46.—New York, Baltimore and Washington Express.	1:48 P. M.
No. 4.—Grafton Accom'n	8:39 P. M.

**F., M. AND P. BRANCH.**

ARRIVES.

No. 50.—Pittsburg Accom'n	1:00 P. M.
No. 4.—Pittsburg Accom'n	9:55 P. M.

DEPARTS.

No. 3.—Pittsburg Accom'n	7:50 A. M.
No. 51.—Connellsville Ac'm	2:10 P. M.
No. 69 leaves daily for Morgantown at 9:05 P. M. No. 62 arrives from Morgantown at 6:55 A. M., daily except Sunday; at 8:00 A. M. Sunday only.	

**MONONGAH DIVISION.**

No. 5.—Arrives at Fairmont	5:35 P. M.
No. 1.—Arrives at Fairmont	12:10 P. M.
No. 3.—Arrives at Fairmont	7:45 A. M.
No. 2.—Leaves Fairmont	7:10 A. M.
No. 6.—Leaves Fairmont	1:53 P. M.
No. 4.—Leaves Fairmont	9:55 P. M.

All trains are daily except Nos. 3 and 4 on the F., M. and P. branch, which are daily except Sunday.

For sleeping car reservations and information concerning tickets and rates, consult

T. B. HENDERSON,  
Ticket Agent.

**BALTIMORE & OHIO R. R.**

To the Knights of Pythias Biennial Encampment Louisville, Ky--

Very Low Rates For the Round Trip.

Tickets on sale August 12, 13, 14, 15, good returning leaving Louisville not later than August 31st, 1904.

Stop-overs allowed at specified points in each direction. Get details from ticket agent.

Remember, you will find the largest lines of washing machines, wringers, tubs, &c., carried in the city at J. L. Hall's Hardware Store. x

Paint pride is ours in justifiable measure, because we carry Heath & Millegan's best prepared paint, and satisfaction is guaranteed by its use. J. L. Hall's Hardware Store. x

the latest news. Read the West Virginian. It has

### The Bank of Fairmont, FAIRMONT, W. VA.

J. E. WATSON, President.

J. S. HAYDEN, Vice President.

WALTON MILLER, Cashier.

Capital, \$150,000.00. Undivided Profits, \$160,000.00

DIRECTORS:

A. B. Fleming, J. S. Hayden, J. E. Watson, M. L. Hutchinson, F. E. Nichols, O. S. McKinney, C. E. Manley.

Transacts a general banking business. Accounts of corporations, firms and individuals received upon the most favorable terms consistent with sound and conservative banking. Interest paid on time deposits. Separate vault with safety deposit boxes for use of customers.

### The First National Bank of Fairmont, W. Va.

Capital Stock, - \$100,000.00 Surplus and Undivided Profits, - 165,000.00

Designated Depository of the United States and State of West Virginia.

J. M. HARTLEY, President.  
Hon. A. B. FLEMING, Vice President.  
JOS. E. SANDS, Cashier.

DIRECTORS:

J. M. Hartley, Hon. A. B. Fleming, Benj. D. Fleming, Wm. E. Watson, Jos. E. Sands.

Chartered as State Bank in 1851. Organized as National Bank in 1865. Rechartered as National Bank in 1885.

Wants business based on balances and responsibility. Collects on all points. Sells domestic and foreign exchange. Pays interest on special deposits. Customers' private boxes taken care of in our fire and burglar proof vault free of charge.

### The People's Bank of Fairmont, W. Va.

**CAPITAL STOCK, \$200,000.00.**

George M. Jacobs.....President  
George DeBolt.....Cashier  
J. M. Brownfield....Assistant Cashier

Directors—G. M. Jacobs, S. L. Watson, J. M. Hartley, Harry Shaw, W. S. Haymond and C. E. Hutchinson.

All business entrusted to us will receive prompt and careful attention.

**SOLICIT YOUR ACCOUNTS.**

Interest paid on time deposits. Vault is free to customers for private boxes and papers.

### Citizens' Dollar Savings Bank, FAIRMONT, W. VA.

Opened for business Groundhog Day—February 2d, 1903.

**CAPITAL STOCK - \$100,000.00.**

OFFICERS:

A. L. LEHMAN, J. A. CLARK, President, Vice President  
J. R. LINN, Cashier

DIRECTORS:

A. L. Lehman, J. A. Clark, J. P. Hart, J. F. Cook, L. C. Powell, C. W. Swisher, W. H. Nicholson, Jr.

Does a general banking business.

### NEW CENTRAL HOTEL, CORNER Porter Alley and Monroe Street, C. V. ABBOTT, Proprietor.

Rooms have been remodeled and thoroughly renovated.

Rooms with bath.

First class bar attached.

**J. L. INGRAM, Contractor & Builder,** guarantees satisfaction in all his work. Screen doors a specialty. Estimates free. 718 Gaston Ave. Coming—"A Chinese Honeymoon."