

Beauty Is Only Clothes Deep

Men Take Parts of Beautiful Women Successfully

Audience Charmed by Masculine Women at Play



AT top—Men dancers in the Lamb's Gambol. Center—Scene in play in which women's parts are taken by men. Individuals from left to right—Effingham Pinto, in three poses; Ernest Truex, Morgan Coman and another pose of Effingham Pinto. Lower right—William Roselle.

"We can show our pearly teeth and break hearts the same as women if we only have the clothes," they say. "A short time ago a troupe of actor folk, writers and artists made a tour of the country giving a post-season theatrical performance. They were members of the Lamb's, a man's club. The plays they gave on their week of gamboling around the country required some one to take the women's parts. There are no women in the club so men played the parts with such perfection they fooled all who did not know the women were mere men who could grow whiskers and sing bass.

"She's a bear, she's a bear," men in the audience sang, when an unusually well executed dance was finished. But the only things feminine about the "bear" were her false hair, high heeled shoes, silk petticoats and skirts with a waist hooked and eyed in the back.

Julian Ellings, who has played the part of a woman for so long some men forget themselves and call him Julia, explained why the Lamb's use men to play the part of women in their gambol lasting a week.

Ellings said TWENTY-FIVE CAN PLAY WOMEN'S PARTS.

"There are twenty-five men in the Lamb's who can go on after a few rehearsals and present women parts in a way which is calculated to astonish even so technical and difficult an audience as you will

find at the Gambol. Most of the men I have played with tell me they like these parts because they serve as a most diverting stimulus to their work and it gives them a finer shade of understanding when they encounter real actresses in their professional endeavors. I cannot recall off hand the men who have shown the greatest proficiency in this unique line of work, but the illustrations of some of the boys in the Gambol revealed they successfully counterfeited women in appearance with sufficient art to deceive that unrelenting recorder of personality—the camera.

"As the stage is conducted in our time it is rather unusual to see men masquerading as women and playing various characters of the deadlier species. In this reckoning we do not take into account the various college and amateur presentations for these are distinctly classified and have no relationship with the professional stage.

"We are so accustomed to women on the stage that we forget in a comparative sense they have been a prominent feature of dramatic work for only a brief span of years. Less than two and one half centuries back the idea of women being upon the stage was regarded as preposterous and scarcely two hundred years ago their advent aroused a storm of animosity beside which the current anti-suffragette discussions are very mild in tone.

"The Lamb's takes its name and spirit from an English gathering

and possibly Rosalind, we are unable to prove by the record. It is a mingling of romance with traditions that bear the semblance of authenticity, however, and excerpts from the sonnets demonstrate that the poet endeavored therein to express his gratitude to this gracious portrayer of his feminine heroines.

"It was not until the days of the restoration that we encounter genuine records to reveal to us a list of names of 'boy actresses' who became the pride of London.

WHEN WOMEN WENT ON STAGE FIRST.

"Our present day stage is indebted to Pepys and his diary for many true records of the passing events of that era, and his relationship to dramatic history is almost as important as his diary has been to literature.

"The companies of Killigrew and Davenant introduced women to the stage. The feminine pioneers were Mrs. Corey, Estland, Hughes, Knip, the Marshalls (Anna and Rebecca), Mrs. Rutter and Mrs. Uphill. Later a Miss Weaver and a Miss Gwyn joined the company along with Mrs. Bouteil. Miss Gwyn was the notorious Nell of Old Drury, whose name is now writ in the pages of English history.

"The great Betterton was the leading figure of Davenant's original company. Two women pioneers with this force were Mrs. Davenport and Mrs. Sanderson, who shortly after her advent became the wife of Betterton and lived to a ripe old age to share honors with that famous player. Davenant was less radical than his rival at Drury Lane, for his roster shows six lads were included in the company, and who were employed to represent female characters.

assures us that these distinguished boys were men past 40, who frisked it as wenches of 15, even real kings were often kept waiting because theatrical queens had not yet shaved." It is not easy to trace the life of some of these famous 'boys,' who were the dependable females of the London stage. Three names survived the civil wars, which stand out in bold relief against the mass of unproven traditions. These were Hart, Burt and Clum. They were all pupils of one Robinson, himself an accomplished 'actress,' who went to war and was killed in battle.

"Hart rose to great eminence in his chosen profession. His most successful part in his youth was the Duchess in Shirley's 'Cardinal.' After the Restoration he played Cassio, Othello's Brutus and, it is a legend of his period that so successful was his Cataline that Johnson's tragedy died with him.

"But graduated from 'boy actress' parts and his best character study was that of Cleora in 'Cataline,' for which production Charles II contributed 500 pounds for suitable costume effects.

"Angel, Moseley and Flood were players who developed specialties in female characterization. The former outgrew his youth and finished his career by playing low comedy waiting maids and funny old Frenchwomen. His last appearances were about 1673. Moseley and Flood were utilized to represent a vulgar class of women often figuring in the comedies of the period. They both died in 1674.

"Kynaston and James Nokes became the most famous 'boy actresses'

of their times and lived to occupy position of pre-eminence on the London stage. Pepys refers to Kynaston as 'the loveliest lady for a boy I ever beheld.' This was in 1660, when he appeared as Olympia, the Duke's sister, in 'The Loyal Subject.' On January 7, 1661, Pepys wrote:

"Tom and I, and my wife, went to the theater and there saw 'The Silent Woman.' Among other things here, Kynaston, the boy, had the good turn to appear in three shapes: first, as a poor woman in ordinary clothes, to please Morose; then in fine clothes as a gallant; and in these was easily the prettiest woman in the whole house; and lastly as a man—and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the house."

Beauty is only clothes deep. That is twenty-five men taking the parts of women say and they back up their allegations with pictures of their own sweet selves clad in all the regalia of the fair and beautiful sex.

"Women are beautiful because they have the clothes," say these men and after a few rehearsals they essay the parts of women, charming their own brothers with their winsome ways and shapely ankles.

Every now and then the world hears of some woman who has played the part of a man with such perfection she has won other women and even married them. The same stories are told of men who have masqueraded a large part of their lives as women, but such occurrences among men are rare, because men do not care to give up their freedom and live the restricted life of women.