





Marion Edwards in Male Attire.

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LIFE OF

Marion (Bill) Edwards

TOLD BY HERSELF.



Now that the secret that I have so carefully kept for the past ten years has become known to the outside world, I have decided to place my experiences before the public in book form, and relate to the best of my ability the many incidents in which I have been the principal character.

I was born in Wales 26 years ago, but regard myself as an Australian, having left the old country when I was only four years of age. My parents, both of whom were of Welsh extraction, did not live long in my newly-adopted country, for in less than six months after we arrived they both died. Luckily for me, I had relations in the North-Eastern district of Victoria, and it was to them that I was handed over.

I was brought up on a farm, and was taught to milk, and do all kinds of housework ; but I never took kindly to making beds, scrubbing, etc. In fact, I was more at home with an axe or a gun. One particular exercise that I was fond of was swimming, and I soon became an adept in the natorial art ; and I could not have been more than twelve years old when I found the advantages of being able to swim by saving a companion's life. There were several of us bathing, when one who could not swim got out of her depth, and with a cry of " Help !" sank beneath the murky waters. I was some distance away at the time, but I ran round to where she had sunk, and dived in without a moment's hesitation. Luck favored me, for she was just rising at the time. I seized her by the hair of the head, and, with a few powerful strokes, I brought her to a place of safety, little the worse for an experience that might have cost two of our lives ; for, had my companion grasped me, as she endeavored to do, around the neck I should not have been alive to tell of it.

This incident of my girlhood had almost been forgotten, but was brought back to my memory on the occasion of a visit thirteen years afterwards from my school-day companion, who called on me to know whether I needed any monetary assistance, when she informed me she was now the wife of a well-known Melbourne brewer's traveller, and the mother of a family. I was introduced to her husband, and found him an awfully fine fellow, and I laughingly remarked to my old schoolmate that she must be careful or I might sneak him from her. This was at the time I stood my trial for burglary.

He was dumbfounded when he saw the woman whom he regarded as a heroine (for his wife had told him how I had saved her life) garbed in man's clothes, and to celebrate the event he got gloriously drunk, and did his best to make me like himself ; but this he failed to do, as many other men and women have done, for I can honestly say that, through all the vicissitudes of my life, I have not been once what one could call intoxicated, and it is owing to that that I have been enabled to hide the identity of my sex.

Life on a farm is of a hum-drum nature, and my soul longer for something different. I was commencing to feel that roving inclination which has marked my whole career. My uncle was not a bad kind of old chap, and he saw that I received a proper education, but many a thrashing I received from him for coming home late.

At school I could play cricket with the best, and on one occasion, when one of my cousins, a boy about my own age, was having a fight with a bigger lad than he, and was getting all the worst of it, I came to the rescue and gave his opponent a black eye. That crack settled the fight, and I rose 100 per cent. in the estimation of my companions, who used to remark to any of the lads who tormented them that they would tell Marion Edwards.

That was a terrible threat, was'nt it ?

The lad whose eye I blackened and I became good comrades afterwards, and he told me that the punch I gave him was the hardest he had ever received. He may have been joking, but yet I prided myself upon my fighting abilities.

At school all day, and at work when I got home, became more and more irksome to me, and I made up my mind to leave my uncle's home. I confided in two of my girl companions and their brothers, and we decided to make tracks to Port Albert, where the girls had relations. Needless to remark, we kept our secret to ourselves.

We succeeded in scraping up sufficient money to pay our fares, and one night I packed up my belongings, and the following morning we all started on our road to Melbourne.

I wish it to be understood that this was no love affair, though I must confess I was much attached to one of the girls.

On reaching Melbourne I wrote my uncle, and told him not to be anxious about me, as, by the time he received the note, I would be on my way to Port Albert. We reached our destination all right, and was made welcome. Port Albert in those days was an untractable bush. I was a tom-boy before, but now I was a thousand times worse. For eight months I lived at this place with little more than wallabies for companions. It was then that I commenced to realise that I had to earn my own living, and that it was a fool's game wasting one's time in the back-blocks assisting in clearing other people's land of scrub and timber. Swinging an axe may be healthy pastime, but I soon tired of it, and yearned for something better, and where one got paid for their labor. I was passionately fond of riding and shooting, and availed myself of every opportunity of so doing.

Practise makes perfect, they say, and I became an

adept with the gun, and many a time I was the means of providing a good meal for my employer. That eight months hard wear and tear in the back-blocks hardened my muscles, and there is no doubt that this life enabled me to withstand the strain of the many vicissitudes that since then have fallen to my lot.

It was much against my employer's wish that I came to Melbourne, but I was self-willed, obstinate, and determined to see what life in a city was. All country girls, I think, have a desire to come to a city; at least, that is my opinion.

I'll never forget the first day I arrived in Melbourne. I can afford to laugh over it now. I had heaps of confidence in my ability to obtain employment. That night I slept at the Mechanics' Institute Hotel, in Bourke street, at that time kept by a man named De Frietas, so well-known for his free suppers, styled "the eight o'clock rush," and it was there that I learned from one of the waitresses that I could obtain a situation as a waitress if I cared to take it at a cheap restaurant in Elizabeth street. That was the very thing for me, and I lost no time in applying for the billet, which I obtained. The boss was a bit fast, and as his lecherous eyes rested on my buxom figure and fresh face he touched me under the chin and remarked—

"You are just the thing. The customers like plump waitresses," I blushed, and thought to myself that he was like his customers. I was to receive 10s. a week and my keep, and, as my luggage consisted of a small portmanteau which I had left close by, I agreed to start at once.

It was at this restaurant that I had my first love affair ; and it was not with a man, but with a woman, the laundress at the restaurant, who, from the first time she saw me, exhibited a strange and extraordinary attachment to me. Why, I don't know. To the average men and women it may not seem extraordinary, but it was so, because she was keeping company at the time with a young man who wished to marry her, but she turned him up and would have nothing more to do with him. I advised her not to be silly, and that the best thing she could do was to make up friends again with him ; but she would not. Honestly speaking, I liked the company of my laundress friend, for she was a good sort at heart.

Weeks and months past, and we became very much attached to each other. Her lover grew distracted, and one day, with tears in his eyes, he begged of me to use my influence to induce his sweetheart to marry him. I promised I would, and I kept my word. That night, as I lay in bed, she and I had a heated argument. I told her straight that she had a right to keep her word, and marry the man she had promised to. She then accused me of carrying on with one of the customers. This made me cross, and we had a row, which nearly ended in u getting to blows.

She grew hysterical, and it took me all my time to quieten her without arousing the rest of the inmates. It is hard work calming an hysterical woman. I never became hysterical in my life, and I don't think I ever will now. To induce her to regain her composure I consented to make up friends with her, but in the morning, when

she was calm, I again broached the subject of her sweetheart, and told her that I intended leaving the restaurant unless she did as I wished.

At this she went on her knees and said that if I left her she would poison herself, and I believe she would have done so, for the woman was in such a state that she was not responsible for her actions.

To soothe her I promised I would not leave, and agreed that we should go for a stroll that very evening. Her face brightened up at once, and she became a different woman. When I came down stairs her lover was waiting to see me, to hear the result of my intercession on his behalf. I told him what the result was, and, with a maniacal look in his eye, he swore that life without his love had no charms, rushed away, and threw himself into the river Yarra, out of which he was ignominiously pulled with a hook by a policeman. It damped him and likewise damped his ardour, for he never troubled my companion afterwards.

I knew nothing about his attempt at suicide until I saw an account of it in the following morning's "Age." On the night of the day that the suicider was foiled the laundress and I went for a stroll along the banks of the Yarra. We walked and talked as only women can talk, and so engrossed were we with each other's conversation that I'm blessed if she didn't fall into the river. It was the time of one of the floods, but, luckily for her, the place where she fell in was comparatively smooth water. She had no sooner flopped in than I jumped in after her and, after a struggle, we succeeded in reaching *terra firma*

again. I can't help laughing now as my mind wanders back to the incident, as she looked such an uncanny object, with her dripping clothes and her hair all bedraggled ; and I suppose I looked just the same ; it was pretty cold too. We took off our skirts and wrung them as well as we could, and then proceeded to tramp home, nearly two miles. How we got there goodness only knows. It was a strange coincidence that my chum's woe-begone lover should have foolishly attempted to end his life in the Yarra on the afternoon of the same day that she walked into the same stream.

For three years I worked at this restaurant, and, as I was of a saving disposition, I had a few pounds in the bank, and the idea struck me that it would be better to be my own boss than work for someone else. So the laundress (who had about the same amount of money as myself) and I decided to launch out and go into business for ourselves. After due consideration, we took a confectionery shop and tea rooms in Bourke street west. It proved a bad speculation, for we lost all our hard-earned money.

One cannot live on looking at each other. Customers were scarce, and we both got full up. By this time I was getting weary of the laundress's company, and when she suggested that there was not enough in it for both of us I gladly agreed with her, and offered to let her have the shop, but she declined, and that was the end of my first business.

I was then about 17½ years of age, and though up to date I had no boy lovers I had plenty of them casting, a

they call it, goo-goo eyes at me. The laundress's attachment for me had waned, and I experienced little difficulty in ridding myself of an attachment that was irksome to me.

The proceeds of the sale of shop and fittings were equally divided, and my share amounted to about £6.

The roving spirit once more took possession of me, and I took boat to Hobart. On my arrival there I obtained a situation at a boarding-house in Argyle street. It was at this time that I had my first love affair—real genuine love, none of the milk and watery description Young as I was, I knew too much of the ways of the world to do wrong, not that any man has ever attempted to take advantage of my sex. It would have been all the same if they had.

My lover was a doctor, aged 22 years, and to me he was perfection, but the love I felt for him was short lived, for I became infatuated with the blue eyes and soft moustache of a grocer, who was a little older than the doctor. The latter had already proposed marriage to me and I had accepted him, and everything was fixed, even the date, when the grocer boy appeared on the scene and upset all the arrangements. Had it not been for the grocer boy there's no telling I may have been the mother of a family. However, the hand of fate decided otherwise.

One night the vendor of tea and sugar and I were walking arm and arm down a quiet street, cooing soft words into each other's ears, when the doctor appeared. Then there was trouble, and it took me all my time to

prevent the rivals from coming to blows. I did succeed, however, though not before they agreed they would meet on the following Sunday morning outside the Hobart gardens and settle which was the better man with their fists, the stake being that the victor should have the right and title to yours truly. They did meet, and from what I heard of the affair they put up a great fight, and victory rested with the doctor. Now, if the grocer boy had won I would have been awfully pleased, but though he didn't I loved him just the same. But I knew too much to marry a man with an income of 25s. a week, so I told him to bide awee until he received an increase of salary. He would have married me right off the reel if I had been willing.

I soon tired of my illiterate grocer boy, who only had his looks to recommend him.

As to the doctor, he is now a married man, and if he should read this narrative it will give him the greatest shock he ever had, as he was really fond of me, for on the day that I left Hobart to return to Melbourne he came to the boat and begged of me to stay and become his wife. But I had made up my mind, and both his and my grocer lover's appeals fell on deaf ears.

On my return to Melbourne I applied for and obtained a situation at the restaurant in Elizabeth street where I had previously worked, but after staying there for a time I was taken seriously ill with hemorrhage of the lungs. I was very bad, and thought I was going to die, and decided to write to my uncle for assistance. On receipt of my letter he wired me that he had left at once.

On his arrival in Melbourne he obtained the best medical advice, and then took me to Geelong, where I stayed for three months until I was thoroughly recovered. I cannot speak too well of the many kindnesses I received at his hands. He became interested in me, so much so that he made his will in my favor. He was a wealthy man, possessed of between five and six thousand pounds. I saw the will made, and he gave me a copy of it. When I had thoroughly recovered he made me a present of £25, and, as I would not return to his home, he made me a fond adieu and we parted once more.

The life of a waitress had lost all its charm for me. A strange yearning, a yearning that I cannot account for, nor have I tried to, came over me that I would like to earn my living as a man. I commenced to realise the many disadvantages a woman had compared to the opposite sex. The more I thought of it the more determined I was to give men's clothes a trial. I argued to myself that as a girl I had chopped wood, assisted in harvesting, broken in horses, ploughed, and done all kinds of manual work on a farm; therefore, why shouldn't I do so now? I accordingly determined to give it a trial. I purchased a slop-made suit of clothes, altered them myself to fit my figure, and sallied forth. They seemed strange at first, but it did not take me long to get used to them. Feeling that the boots I had been in the habit of wearing would betray me, I purchased a pair of men's boots. In the daytime I would wear female attire, but in the night I would change and wear my male rig-out, and I soon got confidence in my ability to deceive people.

On one occasion my landlady met me coming out of my bedroom in male attire, and asked me what I was doing there. I told her I was Marion Edwards' brother, and that she had sent me for a parcel she had left in the room. The following morning my old landlady gave me notice to quit on the grounds that her house was a respectable one, and that she was not going to have young men going in and out of women's bedrooms. Needless to remark, I had a good laugh, and it gave me much satisfaction to know that my male disguise had not been penetrated by a keen-eyed lodging-house virago.

Knowing that my uncle had made his will in my favor, I succeeded in borrowing sufficient money to purchase an hotel, situated some distance from Melbourne. I will not mention the name of the hotel for the reason that I have made many friends out there, included among whom are several of our present-day principal jockeys, who were in the habit of staying at my hotel whilst going out shooting.

By this time I had discarded women's clothing altogether. Men I knew failed to recognise me, and I soon felt confidence in myself, and from the day that I entered into possession of the hotel I always wore male attire, excepting when I was compelled to do change owing to circumstances over which I had no control.

I had a royal time at the hotel. Many a smile I had listening to the different escapades of the men, and the fun they had with the females they had been out with. I enjoyed the joke, as it was to me, immensely.

An hotel without a woman at the head (I mean a

woman garbed as a woman) is like a ship without a rudder, and I searched around for a suitable female, with the result that I made red-hot love to a widow. She was 35 years of age, and I was about 19. She said she loved me, and I vowed I loved her ; so, when two loving hearts beat as one, there was only one thing to do, and that was to get married, and that is exactly what we did.

The readers will naturally ask themselves the question how I kept my secret from my wife ; but I did so, and that secret will die with me. My wife was a good business woman, and, as she could look after the wants of all the customers, I filled in my time cattle dealing. The hotel I had, as I stated previously, was located in a good shooting district, and when a party of sports came out I always took them out, and showed them the most likely spots where the game was to be found. I always had my gun, a Greener, and a good one too, and, though I say it myself, there were few that could beat me.

So impressed was a certain racehorse owner with my shooting abilities, that he entered me and paid all my expenses at a pigeon match, with such success that I divided the first prize with three others.

That achievement gave me confidence in my shooting abilities, and I became a regular habitue at the different gun club grounds. I hobnobbed with all the big bugs, rubbing shoulders, as it were, with the shrewdest men of the world, such as J. L. Purves and W. T. Coldham, the noted barristers, Jack Trim, Harry Huxtable, and others of the bookmaking fraternity ; and the fact that I was a woman was never suspected,

I carefully eschewed drink at this time, though I confess I always took my full share of champagne whenever it was about. I had a liking for fizz ; most women have I think, and nothing afforded me greater pleasure than to listen to the speeches made by some of our prominent citizens after a big shoot. Of course they never dreamt that a woman was present.

Ah ! I could tell many a spicy tale about some of our leading men if I felt inclined to do so, but it is a wise thing to mind one's own business.

We did very well at the hotel, and as we were under little expense we soon had a tidy banking account. I was always a lover of horses, and seldom missed a race meeting. At every opportunity I would ride from my hotel to Melbourne, a distance of 18 miles, to have a punt. Gradually I was drawn into the game, and became a mark for the tipsters at the pony meetings. But that was only for awhile. They did not get much out of me, for it did not take me long to realise that, with all the certaintie^s that they had, they were always short of cash, the consequences being that I, in racing parlance, "choked" them off.

At the time I am speaking of, Ascot, Richmond, and Fitzroy racecourses were in full swing, and I determined at the first favorable opportunity to become a pony-owner myself, which I did. I attended most horse sales within a radius of 20 miles of my hotel, and at one of these sales I purchased a pony out of a mob. I broke it in, trained it, and ran it with success at the above-named courses. At that time I was much lighter than I am now

and could ride easily at 7st 7lb ; and on several occasions when I doubted my jockey's integrity I would ride it myself. The pony's name was Nancy, but it was afterwards re-christened Inquisitive.

My constant attendance at the races caused a breach between my wife and I, and we separated. I gave her everything but the pony, which I retained. When I left her I determined upon seeing life, and whilst conversing with a big lump of a chap he asked me if I knew anything about shearing. I told him I did, which was the truth, for whilst a girl I had always assisted in the shearing of the sheep on my uncle's selections, and I could shear a sheep fairly well.

"You're the very fellow I want," he replied. "You come with me and I will cut what we get between us." That was fair, and he could not say more.

It did not take me long to make up my mind, and I agreed to fall in with his plans. I sat behind a few pounds, and I purchased a wagg'on, blankets, cooking utensils, etc., and, needless to remark, I took along with me my gun and a plentiful supply of ammunition. Men who work the roads can find employment, and we found no difficulty in obtaining plenty. The first shearing shed we struck belonged to a cocky who required about 750 sheep shorn, and we took the job on. That gave me the opportunity of getting my hand in again, and I clipped no more skin off than I have seen men with years of experience do.

My chum was a splendid specimen of a man, both physically and mentally, and I had many opportunities of judging the different traits in his character, considering

that he and I slept in a covered vehicle for several months, during which time we travelled over a 1000 miles. He stood 6ft. 2in. in height, and weighed 14 stone. My height is 5ft. 5in., and I weighed then 8st. 7lb., clothes and all. He could fight like a demon, and the man in the shearing sheds who can hold his own commands respect.

In one shearing shed we were working in I was wool sorting, when I had a row with the overseer, who was a bully, and had the reputation of being good with his hands. He was an overbearing lout, and a man I took an intense dislike to, though I had not much to say to him, but he was always finding fault with my work. His usual practice was to raise an argument with some inoffensive shearer and a man lighter than himself, and then strike him when he was not looking. That's how he got his name as a pugilist.

One day he called me out of my name, and instead of waiting for him to hit me I struck him on the face. The blow was a solid one and landed fair on the jaw. It made him stagger, and before he could recover from the suddenness of the attack I was on top of him, hammering away with both my fists as hard as I could. The noise attracted the rest of the shearers, who came hurrying to the spot and pulled us asunder. My mate was one of the first to arrive, and the first thing he said was—"The big cur deserved what he got. He thought he had a chicken to deal with. I'll back Bill to beat him fair and square with the fists for £25. Money talks all languages, here it is," and at the same time he pulled out a roll of bank notes.



"I Struck Him on the Face." See page 18.

"He hit the boss cowardly," remarked one of the shearers, who was toadying to his employer.

"Whether he did or not, if anyone wants to take the boss's part and who thinks he is a better man than I am, I'll have a go, either for money or love," and my mate looked anxiously around for someone to accept his defi.

The overseer, after wiping the blood from his mouth told my mate and me to knock off and clear out, which we gladly did, as we were both heartily tired of working under such a man.

It was rumored amongst the men that I was a well-known boxer, who travelled the sheds looking for mugs. We drew our cheques and travelled towards Narandera, still in our covered van.

Regarding food, hunger makes one a thief, and now and again we borrowed from a squatter during our trip. On our arrival at Narandera I entered for a pigeon match, and divided the first prize with three others.


Growing tired of country life, my mate and I sold the waggon that we had slept in for many nights together, equally divided our worldly possessions, and separated. He went towards Sydney and I returned to Melbourne, where I stayed for awhile, and then (along with my racing pony, Inquisitive) took boat to Sydney.

My experiences on the Victorian pony courses, though a bit costly, stood me in good stead in Sydney. "Tale-tellers," "luggers," and "heads" did not find me an easy mark; in fact, I was regarded as a "head" myself. "Head" is a slang word on a racecourse, which means a man who is not particular how he gets money, so long as he gets it.

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Inquisitive was a good pony, and I won 28 races with her, and I became known to habitués of the race-courses as "Inquisitive Billy."

On one occasion I had a good punter for a certain race which I regarded as a certainty. The boy I had engaged to ride the mare was a good lad, but I got suspicious of him, and, thinking he would pull the mare, I decided to make a certainty of having a run for my money by riding it myself. This I did, and, another thing, won. Later in the same afternoon I saddled Inquisitive up again, and, though it had incurred a 7lb. penalty, I started it, and again won. It does not fall to the luck of every jockey to win a double on the same day, and I think it is a record for a woman.

I wasn't a bad-looking little fellow, so the ladies used to tell me, and my winning ways enabled me to have many a joke at their expense, though on one occasion my love for my own sex nearly got me into serious trouble. One of the pony owners had a daughter, and she and I became much attached to each other. Her father warned me not to try any funny business with her unless I intended to marry her, or else there would be a heap of trouble ahead for me. He, like most fathers, thought she was a thorough good girl, but she was fick'e and easily led, with the result that she fell a victim to the wiles of a Jew bookmaker. I had been warned that she was the Jew's girl, and he and I had a row on the racecourse. Had I known as much as I subsequently did he could have had her with pleasure.

The girl (as Smollet's "Peregrine Pickle" said) be-

came in an interesting condition. The father interviewed me and demanded instant marriage, or else he would blow my brains out. I was commencing to think I did not have any. We talked the matter over, with the result that the father agreed to let the matter stand over until the child was born.

The girl stood staunch to me and swore that I was not the father, but refused to state who was. The old man stuck out that I was. The child was born, and I was about to be summoned for the support of the youngster when the Jew, finding that my love for the maid had disappeared, did the right thing and married her.

My next love affair was with a married woman, a regular follower of the races. She was the sister of a well-known Sydney professional boxer, and had another brother who is at the present time one of the biggest and most successful punters in Australia.

She lived with her husband, and they kept an hotel in one of the suburbs. I would mention her name, but it would not add any interest to my story, and might do her harm, which I would not do on any account, for she was a staunch and good friend to me. She was mad in love with me; wherever I went she went, and insisted that I should stable my pony at her place and make her hotel my home, and as I was not of a bashful disposition I did so. So far as the handling of the money and dispensing drinks her husband was a nonentity. I used to open the bar and act as general supervisor. I tell you "Inquisitive Billy" was in clover.

But all good things must come to an end. My pony

proved such a champion that the handicapper had brought its weight up to 11st. 3lb., the result being that unless there was a poor field and the mare was at her best I could not win. I run her stiff for awhile, but the handicappers refused to lighten her burden to any extent.

Keeping and racing a pony requires money. At this particular time I became acquainted with a man named Marsden, a hanger-on of the racecourses, who informed me that he could get a mug with plenty of money to back Inquisitive, and that the mare would lose and he would divide our illicit gains in equal proportions. I know he got £50, and he gave me £5 for my share. The joke was all on his side, and mine was to follow.

Previous to the above transaction I had borrowed £5 from a money-lender on the pony, which my landlady paid, and my debt was transferred to her. I professed to be satisfied with my dealings with Marsden, and when he offered to purchase the pony for £35 I agreed to sell it, and got his money. Marsden was given possession of the pony, but he did not hold it long, for I found out where it was, kidnapped it, and took it back to the hotel, where it was placed safely under lock and key.

When Marsden missed the pony he did not take long in finding out where it had gone to, and he and a mob of racecourse bullies came round to the hotel to recover it. I was behind the bar at the time when he came in, and, with a face as red as a fresh-boiled crayfish, said—

“What is the meaning of you taking the pony away, Edwards?” he asked in a menacing manner.

I smiled cynically, and blowing the smoke of a cigarette into his face, replied—

“You thought you had me for a mug when you rooked me when the mare ran dead. If you had acted square to me I would have done the same to you. The pony does not belong to me, nor you either, for the reason that I had borrowed money on it previously, and as I failed to repay it my landlady, who loaned the money, has seized the pony for the debt. That’s all, Marsden, and you’ll have to fight it out with her.”

Needless to remark, Marsden did not like the aspect of affairs. He was a gun himself, and like all guns did not like being beat at his own game. To recover the pony by force was impossible, for we had a stronger mob than he had, and he went away vowing that he would give me five years for imposition.

There is no worse crime in the eyes of sports (?) than to cry police, and when Marsden sued my landlady for the detention of his property—the pony Inquisitive—and lost the case on the grounds of prior possession, he was tabooed by all his acquaintances, which was doubled when he had me arrested on the charge of obtaining money under false pretences. There was a charge for a man to lay who was in the habit every day in the week of doing worse than I did, and which fact was known by hundreds.

When arrested I remained in the lock-up for three days, being unable to obtain bail. Things looked black against me then, and it was a good thing that I was confined, otherwise I may have skipped for fear of my sex being discovered. As it was I came out of the ordeal with

flying colors. The prosecutor told his story. My counsel was the best that money could employ, and gave Marsden a terrible shaking up in the witness box. My defence was that the receipt held by Marsden was simply given to him by me in confidence to enable him to show to "mugs" that he owned it, and could put them on to a good thing. The case created much interest in racing circles at the time, and ended in Marsden's story being disbelieved and my being discharged. When I left the court I received quite an ovation.

Nine-tenths of the frequenters of pony racecourses are always on the verge of being broke. Well-off one day, broke the next. It is a feast or a famine. My lady hotel-keeper friend's attentions were getting decidedly irksome, and I decided to leave at the first favorable opportunity ; and another thing that induced me to part with her acquaintanceship was that I was tired of battling on the racecourses. The filthy language, the abominably coarse expressions that always assailed one's ears, were decidedly objectionable to me, and I got quite a loathing to earn my living by battling on a racecourse. I liked racing all right, and I loved horses, but it was the surroundings that got on my nerves.

I found it a bit difficult to break away from the woman who had so loyally stuck to me, but when I told her I had obtained a situation as barman and billiard-marker at the Royal Hotel, Leichardt street, Sydney, at a wage of 25s. per week and a percentage on the billiard-room takings she was contented.

During the three months I worked at this hotel I

made money. I did not drink, at any rate seldom at my own expense, and strange to say I could back more winners away from the racecourse than I could on it. At the end of three months I was possessed of £60, and I thought it was about time for me to seek for some other means of earning my living.

My fellow-barman was named Tom Yates, and when I mooted it to him that we should put what money we had together, purchase a horse and waggon, and take an overland trip to Melbourne, he was delighted with the idea. I was tired of Sydney, and my natural roving disposition had re-asserted itself. Irrespective of that, I knew that if I could re-purchase a fast pony there was a bit of money to be made out of it, and I felt certain that in my overland trip I would be able to purchase a second Inquisitive

We had a glorious trip over, which took us seven weeks. We made money on our journey too. I was thoroughly experienced in the breaking in of horses, and had several simple but effective methods for the curbing of the noble brute, which made the most vicious animal tractable, and at any town we reached we would invite the cockies to bring along their noted outlaws to be subdued, and I would show them how to do it for the moderate fee of "one golden sovereign."

I had a good saddle, and I rode over 40 buckjumpers on the trip, and was never thrown. That journey was one of the most pleasant trips I ever had. My mate was a fine chap, very confiding, and he used to tell me all about his different escapades with the fair sex. Naturally I heard



Marion Edwards in Female and Male
Attire.

tales of a decidedly immodest nature, to say the least, but as I was a man (?) I had to grin and bear it. During that 750 miles journey my companion never had the slightest suspicion that the person who slept on the boards of the waggon, under the same blankets, was a woman ! They say men were ever deceivers. What about women ?

On my arrival in Melbourne I learned that my uncle, who had made a will in my favor, had died and left me a sum of £5,000. There was a windfall. He had been dead for close on two months, but I was unaware of that fact: How my five cousins did go off. They threatened all kinds of law proceedings, and spent money (which it would have been better for them not to have done) consulting solicitors to fight the matter out in the courts. I settled all arguments, however, by willingly consenting, against my lawyer's wishes, to divide the money into six equal parts after all expenses were paid. That was the greatest surprise they ever had, but I felt they had as much right to the money as I had, and I would act as I did again if I were placed in a similar position.

One of my cousins was named Alick, and as he had power of attorney to receive his brothers' and sisters' shares, I handed him the other shares as well as his own. Alick evidently thought he could turn it to better use than his brothers and sisters could, for he refused to disgorge. They took the matter to law, and I was called as a witness to prove that I had given the money to the defendant. Those who knew me as a girl were of course unaware that I had been masquerading as a man. The subpoena was left at my address, and I was asked to call on the plaintiffs

solicitors at 9 o'clock in the morning, and an hour and a-half later, I was once more in woman's attire. It was a strange experience, and I felt very awkward coupled up in stays again. But I had no other option. The counsel for the defendant was Mr. Maxwell, who submitted me to a most rigid examination. I was in the witness-box for three hours. To my mind Mr. Maxwell is almost supernatural in his ability to extract information and detect any flaws in a witness' evidence. I know he picked me to pieces; not that I had anything to hide in the matter. So impressed was I with Mr. Maxwell's ability that I made up my mind that if I ever had the misfortune to get into trouble I would have him to appear for me.

Never for a moment did I dream that I would, but one cannot peer into the future, and as subsequent events turned out I did need his services. However, I will defer writing about that matter, as I intend dealing with it later on.

The case was won by the plaintiffs, and my cousin Alick had not only to cut the money up in the manner in which I had directed, but had also to pay heavy costs. My relations behaved handsomely to me over the affair. They fully recognised that, had it not been for my evidence, they would have had a poor chance of gaining their just rights, and they made me a present of £140.

Wearing female garb was most irksome to me, and it was with a feeling of delight that I once more renewed the costume that I had been accustomed to.

Having the means to purchase a good pony I did so, and bought Tasman, the racing pony, which was the in-

direct means of my deception being found out.

I won plenty of money with that pony. I offered Yates, who had been a loyal comrade to me, an equal share in the pony, but he was tired of Melbourne, and, as he desired to return to Sydney, I gave him a "cut," and we parted company.

Anyone that knows the habitues of pony racecourses will agree with me that they are a warm lot — none warmer. I was a battler. I talked with men, told tales to women, and made every post a winning one.

The uniqueness of the affair had worn off. I regarded myself a man, and felt like a man.

Amongst those whom I became acquainted with was a man named Jigger Pollock, and he and I combined forces, that is to say we became partners, and the two of us purchased the pony Rosebud. Jigger was then a single man. He is since married, and now he cannot realise that his pal, Billy Edwards, was a fraud.

He was a good sort, one of the best. The only thing about Jigger was that he was too confiding, but he need have no fear of me betraying the confidences he entrusted me with whilst we were sleeping in the same room.

We kept our ponies at the stables at the rear of the Studley Arms hotel, Wellington street, Collingwood.

I did not make it a practise of sleeping at the hotel, but boarded in Melbourne, though on the mornings that we were going to give the ponies a trial I slept in Jigger's room at the rear of the stables.

Jigger was a great man with the girls, at least he

thought he was, and I used to take great delight in cutting him out. On one occasion Jigger was very much in love with a certain young lady, but I made such hot love to her that she discarded Jigger for me. My word! he was wild, and when he learned I had cut him out he got drunk, wanted to fight me, and finished up by asserting that our partnership was at an end.

He was too good a pal to lose, and I assured him that I had only done it for a joke, and we became friends again.

In connection with pony racing I found my best punters were women. One lady in particular took a fancy to me. No common cab, but always a hansom out to Ascot, and when I had a good thing she would punt well; no humbug about her. She was a married woman, and one night—after she and I had been to the theatre—we adjourned to an oyster saloon for supper. We had a hansom outside, and after we had dined sumptuously it is only natural that I felt pleased. Arm in arm we sauntered out of the saloon. I was the gallant. I was just about to enter the cab when I received a stinging blow in the face.

“What are you doing with my wife?” said my assailant. “You hound! You have come between us, and I have a good mind to kill you.”

My first impulse naturally was to have struck back, but I was saved from that by my companion, who broke her umbrella over her husband's head.

What I had seen of her was all gentleness, but the way she set about her hubby satisfied me that she was a



"She stroked the umbrella over her husband's head"

See page 32.

better friend than an enemy.

The police came up at the time, and to save further trouble she and I jumped into the vehicle and drove to a coffee palace, where we stayed all night.

Things were getting too warm for me, and I decided to get rid of this lady's attentions as quickly as I could. I eventually did so, though I had a job to do it. A sequel to my intrigue came when I was served with papers to appear at the divorce court as a co-respondent. That placed me in an awkward position, as my lady punting friend stated that she was quite prepared to allow her husband to get a divorce provided I would marry her afterwards. However, my coolness towards her gradually lessened her affection for me, and in an interview with her husband I assured him that nothing wrong had taken place between us. They made up friends. It was a good get out for me.

It was at this particular time that Jigger and I were arrested and charged with attempted burglary from Mrs. Hornsby's hotel.

As I stated previously, we were going to have a trial with the horses. I made it a practise of sleeping in the same room as Jigger, at the rear of the stables. Jigger and I were in bed when I was awakened by the horses kicking. Thinking something serious was up I hastily slipped on my trousers to see what was the matter. I did not wait to put my boots on. There was nothing seriously wrong with the horses, and I was about to return to my bed when I saw a light in the hotel bar. I went over to have a drink, and was surprised to find that

the bar door was open. Whilst in there the police came on the scene.

My companion—it may have been Jigger or a jockey boy who was to ride Tasman a trial, or the boots at the hotel, but I have reasons for not wishing to say who it was—foolishly jumped through the window and got away. Knowing that I had not done any wrong, I stood.

“Stand, or I’ll shoot!” said a burly policeman, and for fear that I might make an attack on him this gallant officer retreated backwards. Another policeman shortly afterwards arrived, and I was handcuffed and dragged off to the lock-up, where the sergeant of police struck me in the face with his clenched fist. It made me stagger. I was bailed out shortly afterwards by the lady with whom I boarded in a surety of £30.

Knowing full well that if I was found guilty my sex would be betrayed, I absconded. I hadn’t any money, and I thought and thought until my brain gave way, and I came to the conclusion that that was the only course open to me.

The lady whose bond was estreated had her home sold up to satisfy the claim, but it only realised five pounds, for the reason that her friends bought it in, and no one would bid for them.

As to my leaving Melbourne for Brisbane without informing the police or anyone of my intention, in justice to myself I beg to state that I consulted a well-known barrister regarding the matter, and he informed me that she would get out of it all right if I cleared out, and he would see that she did. However, as affairs turned

out, she did not, and as her furniture did not realise the amount she went bail for she was sentenced to a month's imprisonment. That sentence was reduced to 14 days. This woman's sufferings caused through me gave me great pain, and the only excuse I can make for myself is that it was the dread of being found out. Gaol had no terrors for me, not the slightest. This woman's kindness I will never forget, and I have done my best to repay her since my return to Melbourne.

Jigger Pollock was committed for trial, and I am pleased to say was found not guilty. Had any other verdict been brought in there would have been a miscarriage of justice. There are hundreds of people who know the hotel that Mrs. Hornsby had, and if any burglar had taken the whole of her stock it would have taken them all their while to get drunk. It was simply persecution, nothing more nor less.

From Melbourne I journeyed to Brisbane, where I worked as a house painter, French polisher, barman, and yardman at an hotel. I was a regular ladies' man, and I derived great fun making love to the barmaids, housemaids, in fact anything that wore a skirt. I was so gentle, not a bit rough like other men, they would remark in a coy manner. What was more to my liking was the numerous presents I had bestowed upon me, "for I always behaved as a gentleman should" when I went out for a stroll with my lady lovers.

My love intrigues at times got me into trouble, though luckily not of a serious nature. One girl, who swore she would be as true to me as the stars above if I



As a choir girl in Queensland.



“I worked as a barman.”—See page 37.

would only refrain from escorting other females out, had a narrow escape of being drowned. One bright moonlight night she and I and another couple were walking along the banks of the Breakfast Creek when the embankment gave way and she fell in. My companions shrieked out for assistance. Without even discarding my coat I dived in after her, and it was only after a severe struggle that I succeeded in getting her to the bank, where willing hands assisted us out. I was very much exhausted, and it was some time before I recovered. The girl was little the worse for her immersion. Of course it is very nice to be heroic and manly, but I spoilt a new suit of clothes that cost me £4 10s. That amount does not sound very much to most people, but when one is earning about £2 a week it represents a large amount of toil. It made me think seriously of appearing once more as Marion instead of Bill.

The manageress of the hotel at which I worked was another lady that became enamoured of my winning ways. I was her Will and she was my darling, and after a brief acquaintance she consented to become my bonnie wife. I was making things a bit warm, but as I was already a married man I had no desire to become a bigamist. The cause of true love never did run smoothly, and the bone of dissension in my case was a squatter who vied with me for the manageress' hand. I told him that if he did not refrain from forcing his company on my intended wife I would give him a crack on the jaw, and we nearly came to blows.

Amongst my associates was young Jack Dowridge

the amateur champion boxer, and as he offered to teach me boxing I agreed to learn, and many a spar we had together. Jack could never understand why I did not strip to the buff, as other boxers did. He comprehends now. I proved an adept pupil, and was anxious to see how hard I could hit. My opportunity came one night in an hotel bar when a big loafer, after knocking my beer over, called me out of my name. I hit him with all my force on the point of the jaw. The blow was a bit too high to knock him clean out, and he showed fight. There was a rough and tumble go between the two of us, and I fell underneath. He got up first, and as soon as he did he kicked me in the ribs. That was the last of him, for one of the men in the bar was so incensed at his cowardice that he knocked the cur down with a swinging right on the side of the head. I offered to fight my opponent with small gloves for £10 aside, but he refused to take me on.

Brisbane is a fine place, and I found no difficulty in earning a good living. There was nothing that I would not turn my hand to, from two-up to cook in a restaurant. It was all the same to me. The gambling instinct was always (and I am afraid is still) predominant in my nature, and I used to be a frequent visitor at the hazard school, where I used to do in all my spare cash. I did everything with a motive. At these hazard schools (which is a gambling game with two dice) large sums are lost and won, and the beauty of the game is that a sport with a few shillings, with a run of luck, may run into big money. I was particularly anxious to obtain a few hundred

pounds to enable me to purchase a business—a hotel for preference.

I had received a cheque for £15, melted it, and with the proceeds went out to the races, determined to give it a chance. A pal of mine had a particularly good mare in a handicap, and I determined upon having a good win. I got 10's to 1 for my money, and the reader can imagine my feelings as I saw the horse I had backed pass the winning post two lengths in front of everything else. Hundreds of thoughts flashed through my mind in an instant. I would take good care of it this time, not like I did when I received my uncle's money. I knew the bookmaker I bet with, and as there was no hurry for me to collect my money I, with several companions, adjourned to a drinking booth to partake of a glass of wine to celebrate my win. On my return I handed my ticket into the bookie in a manner as if I were in the habit of collecting such amounts.

“Six one two eight,” said the bookie, “£165,” as he seized hold of the ticket, and he then counted fifteen sovereigns in my hand. Of course I took them, thinking he was going to give me notes for the balance. Judge of my surprise and horror to see him write security at the back of the ticket. I knew too much of booky matters not to know what that meant, and before he could return it to me I raised a protest.

“It's no good of kicking up a row, Bill. You're a man of the world, and know the game. I'll see you outside the club to-morrow and settle,” and with that he

handed me back my brief, on which was marked I.O.U. £150.

How did I perform? I kicked up the deuce of a row. The bookie hadn't the money, and could not pay, and the fact that I know the troubles of a bookmaker who is "geeing for the gloves" inclined me to look at things in a light that the average backer of horses would not have done.

The following day I met him, and he told me that the man who had owned the horse that had won had given it to him as being dead (not trying), and that he had a "mug" who would back him.

I was the mug! However, I afterwards got £50 out of him. If he had not given me something I would certainly have reported him to the ruling racing body, and as he was, and is still, a registered bookmaker it would have meant ruin to him.

The disappointment at my not receiving this money caused me to plunge on other events, with the result that when I left the racecourse my £15 had dwindled down to a sovereign.

After tea and a wash, I met a young lady, and we went to the theatre. She wanted me to go home with her, but I was low-spirited and made up my mind to have a look in at a hazard school, so much to my lady friend's disgust I placed her in a cab and sent her home.

The amount of silver I was possessed of was four shillings, and yet I went and had a gamble with it.

To those who are not conversant with the game it

is hardly credible, but I ran that four shillings into £42. And once more I was glad and happy.

It was daylight when I got home, and the news soon spread that I had a good win, and I earned the name of being a lucky gambler.

With the £50 I afterwards got from the bookmaker and the £42 I had won at hazard I determined to take a trip up North, with the intention of making a book.

I took an experienced clerk with me. We were away three weeks, but though we had a good time it did not turn out a financial success.

My clerk was a decent chap, but awfully fond of the fair sex, and was always getting himself into trouble. At one hotel we stayed at there was hardly any sleeping accommodation.

“Do you mind,” inquired the hotelkeeper, “if you two sleep in the one bed? We are crowded out, and as you are two friends it won’t make much difference.”

That was a poser for me. The clerk assured the hotelkeeper it made no difference to him, and knowing that my mate had no suspicion that I was not of the same sex as himself I agreed to the proposal.

When by ourselves my clerk informed me that he was on “a good wicket” with the housemaid, and asked me, as her room was next to ours, if I would occupy hers instead of sleeping in the same bed as himself. I consented, as it got me out of an awkward predicament! My sole motive in mentioning the above incident is to show the difficult situations I was placed in at times.

These incidents often make me think of the deceit

that exists in this world. Women whom I thought to be the soul of honor have done their best to carry on intrigues with me, whilst men, holding positions in life that have made them regarded as models of propriety, have been at heart filthy, low blackguards. In my dual position I had opportunities to see and judge things that others could not.

For instance, there was the housemaid, who occupied the same bed as my clerk. She was engaged to be married to a tailor. He thought she was divine, and wouldn't for the world have said a word out of place. Then there was the chief magistrate in the same city. He had a wife who never dreamt of doing wrong herself, and placed implicit trust in her husband, and yet he and I visited houses of a doubtful character together. The reader must excuse me from moralising.

However, to return to my life's history again, I, whilst following the occupation of bookmaking, made it a practise of attending all sports meetings, and would bet on anything from two-up to bull-fighting.

At a sports meeting one of the principal events was a wood-chopping contest, and though I had not swung an axe for years, on the secretary applying for entries I gave in my two shillings and decided to have a chop.

I fancy I can hear the ringing cheers of my fellow-bookmakers as I took off my coat and tucked up the sleeves of my shirt.

"Take off your vest and shirt, Billy, old boy. I'll get you the loan of a sweater," shouted one bookmaker. "Mind you don't hurt the axe!" shouted another,

I loaned an axe from one of the competitors, and as I was regarded as a mug weilder of the steel I secured a liberal handicap. My first intention when entering was simply for a joke, but when I saw the start I received, and I had got a good blade in my hand, I decided to go for all that I was worth.

Chopping wood is like eating and drinking ; once you learn how to do it you never forget, at least I found that was the case. The athletic exercises I had indulged in with Jack Dowridge, at Brisbane, combined with the manual work that I had undergone, had made my muscles strong and hard, and when I stood over my log and the starter shouted out "Edwards, go!" yours truly waded in for all he was worth. Luckily for me the log I had was a good one, with no knots in, and the chips flew like sparks from a blacksmith's forge. I could hear the cheers and applause from the spectators, but I never faltered. My condition hung out until I nearly finished, then my arms grew tired, my throat got dry, but still I mechanically chopped on until my log dropped in two. The effort was too much, and as the log fell I fell with it.

With the dread feeling that my secret would be found out, I shouted—"Leave me alone, I will be all right in a minute ; give me a drink."

Honestly, I was nearly a goner. The exertion was too much for me. After I had partaken of a stiff nobbler of brandy I inquired how I got on.

"Why, you won all the way, Bill," replied my clerk. "You beat the favorite easily, and came to the rescue of the books. Our joint (book) won £8 on it. The first

prize is £3 and a gold medal, so you haven't done too bad out of it. Where did you learn to chop?"

"Why, you mug, didn't you know my father had a woodyard once, and I used to cut it up and wheel it out," I replied.

I received congratulations all round. Amongst those who were struck on my wood-chopping abilities was an old farmer, who shook me warmly by the hand, and insisted that I should have a drink with him.

The old man, who had whiskers like pieces of wire, exclaimed—"You're the best chopper for a little 'un I've seen for many a day. Dang it all, man, you'll have to marry my daughter Mary. You ought to see my Mary; she can whang wood nearly as good as you."

I assured the old chap I had no desire to get married, but he would'nt take no for an answer, and assured me that when I saw his Mary I would be sure to want to marry her.

"But perhaps she wouldn't marry me?" I replied, in a half-joking manner; "it always takes two to make a bargain."

The old fellow looked at me in an astonished manner, and, turning round to where a group of young women were standing, said—

"See those women over there; the old 'un, of course, is my missus, the tall young 'un is my Mary. She can play the piano; I had her taught down in Brisbane. She's been sitting on chock-a-block fences with a bank clerk. He's no good to me. I want a chap who can chop wood, and knows how to farm, and you're the chap. She said

she liked you when she saw you chucking the blade around, and the day you get married I'll give you 100 acres and a house to live in."

By this time my clerk and some of the other bookies had gathered around, and old Farmer Bullswool had to pay for all the drinks. They were all thirsty mortals, and were not backward in asking for refreshments.

As the old man insisted that I should be introduced to his daughter, I consented. I found her an intelligent young woman of about 19 summers, a typical Australian girl. I was truly charmed with her appearance, and had I been a man she was just the kind of girl I would have fallen in love with. My clerk was a cheeky kind of a chap, and not the sort of man to be denied when fun was about, and when the farmer invited me to come out with him and have some tea he insisted upon going, despite my requests not to. However, I eventually persuaded him to leave me, under the promise that I would meet him the next day. That promise, however, I did not keep, for the reason that I was made so when at my new found friend's house that I stayed there for over a week, and what a good time I did have.

The old farmer was a fine chap, and I feel real sorry for the deception I practised on him. His daughter played the organ at the local church, and when Sunday came I went with them and sang in the choir. One of the sons also sang in the choir, and to please him I borrowed his surplice and had my photo taken in it. I dolled myself up for the occasion, and it caused me to chuckle

when the old man, after scanning the picture, remarked—

“Dang it man, with your hair all fizzled and fried, you look more like a girl than a man.”

At that sally those present laughed inconsiderately. They regarded it as a great joke. It was a bitter joke to me when the farmer's son chipped in and said—

“Mr. Edwards can play cricket all right dad, and has promised to play for the club I belong to next Saturday ; hav'nt you, Mr. Edwards?”

“Oh, you are a cricketer, too,” said the old fellow. “That's the kind of chap I like—one that can chop wood, sing a good song, drink whisky and know when he's had enough, and play cricket. These measley-family kind of men who are more like women in their ways I have no time for.”

“I don't know about playing in a cricket match next Saturday. I would rather act as umpire. If I failed to score I would lose my reputation, you know,” I replied.

“No chance of his doing that, dad. We were practising yesterday afternoon, and Mr. Edwards belted the ball all over the place, and we had some good players too. One of the bowlers was Jack Marsh, the aboriginal, who plays with a crack club in Sydney. Jack did rock them in too, but I am blowed if he could bowl Mr. Edwards. Make him play with us, Mary,” said Bulls-wool, jun., who was quite taken up with me.

The kind of ownership manner of speaking of the youth to his sister Mary was quite refreshing. Mary was

a sensible girl, despite the fact that she was in the habit of doing whatever her parents wished, and she did a sweet little blush, pushed her knee against mine under the table, and replied that she was sure that I would agree to play for her brother's team.

What could a man (?) do? I had to consent, though I was anxious to return to Brisbane. A holiday in the bush for a few days is all right, but it palls on one after a while, more especially so when one is doing the part of a fraud towards good, honest people, and I usually cursed my foolishness for being led into further intrigues.

Young Bullswool was a grand little chap, and he and his sister and I used to go out possuming at night time. That was right into my hand, and I have at the present time a rug in my possession made out of the skins of the animals we shot. Whilst talking on the subject of shooting, it is not out of place for me to relate how I nearly lost my life whilst out chasing wallabies. The farmer had a 100-acre paddock some five miles distant from where he lived, on which he kept some blood stock. When I expressed a desire to see these animals the old chap arranged that we should go and have a look at them. Mary and her father drove over in a jinker, whilst I accompanied them on horseback. The journey there was accomplished without any misadventure, but on the return trip the dogs that accompanied us from the farm put up a wallaby. They went helter-skelter, and me after them. The animal I bestrode entered into the spirit of the chase as much as I did, and needed no urging. It was thickly timbered ground, and I had to keep my head low down to avoid

having my head cracked by the overhanging timber. On and on we went, up hill and down dale. Judge of my terror to find that the neck strap of the bridle had broken, and the bit was out of the horse's mouth. Had I been in the open I would have pulled the horse up by leaning over its neck and gripping it by the nose. We were advancing towards the side of a hillock, and I quickly came to the conclusion that the best thing I could do was to slide off as quickly as possible ; so, pulling my right foot out of the stirrup, I did so.

The mare's hoof must have struck my head, for I don't remember any more until I found myself lying on a sofa at the farm, with the old farmer pouring a glass of whisky down my throat.

"What happened?" I enquired.

"You must have fallen off. When you didn't come back we drove on, expecting you to follow us, but judge of our horror to find the mare you had ridden grazing in front of the house. So with that we rode back, and after a search found you lying insensible on the ground. I thought you were settled at first, but when I heard you moan I said to myself, 'He'll come to all right.' I was just going to take your clothes off and put you to bed," and the old fellow assisted me to sit up.

I washed my face and brushed my clothes, then had a look at myself in a glass. What a sight I did present. There was hardly a piece of skin on the side of my face. My nose was bent, and I felt as if I had been run over by a steam-roller. It was a lucky escape for me, for if old Bullswool had undressed me the consequences would have

been of a startling nature. There's no telling, I might have been sued for breach of promise!

My stay had been already too prolonged, so I wrote a letter to my clerk, telling him to write me that I was wanted on important business in Brisbane.

The letter came in due course, and it was with feelings of regret that I bade adieu to farmer Bullswool and his family. He was one of the finest old chaps I ever met.

When I arrived in Brisbane I sent his daughter a present, in the shape of a gold ring, and wrote her to the effect that she was a woman I esteemed, but I could not marry her, as I was not in a position to maintain a wife, and it was better for us to part.

That brought old Bullswool into Brisbane. When we met he (as I expected him to do) did not upbraid me, but exclaimed—

“Damn it, man, I have enough for both of you. My son likes you, and he is disappointed at you not playing for his cricket club. My missus likes you, I like you, and, dang it all, Mary likes you. If you don't want to get married I'll give you a job as boss on my farm.”

The old chap's arguments fell on a deaf ear. We had tea together, and that night we had a stroll around town. It was a gay time too. I got home about twelve o'clock. I wanted him to stay at my lodgings with me, but he wouldn't, and as I would not knock about with him any longer he cleared out on his own.

The old fellow got locked up on a charge of drunkenness that night. He sent for me in the morning, and as

he had been robbed of or spent what money he had had on him I paid his fine, which amounted to 10s. The same day he returned home, though he did not leave until I promised to pay him a visit at a near date.

I was glad to get rid of him, even if he was a good fellow.

My love entanglements came to an abrupt ending. Amongst those whom I was known to in Brisbane was a magsman who knew me as a girl, and recognised me, despite my altered conditions—and it was this sneak who informed the police that I absconded from my bail in Melbourne, and was a WOMAN—NOT A MAN. Had I known I was betrayed I would have quitted Brisbane, but I was arrested before I had any opportunity of doing so.

At this time I had taken a contract for painting the outside of a house. One day, as the weather was inclement, I knocked off work, and, to while away the time I strolled around to the police court. Whilst I was there a policeman placed his hand on my shoulder and said—

“I have a warrant for the arrest of Bill Edwards. You are the party it refers to. You are a woman, and your correct name is Marion Edwards.”

Resistance was of course useless. I made every excuse possible, and assured him he was laboring under a huge mistake.

My excuses proved of no avail, and when I found that he was determined to lock me up and have me examined by a medical man, I acknowledged that I was the party named in the warrant, and that I was a woman.

By this means I avoided being examined by a medical man.

It was a mystery to me how my secret had been found out, but I gleaned from the police whom the informer was. He and I will meet again some day, and then there will be an argument, and, though I belong to the fair sex, he will not have the best of it. What his motive for betraying me was I cannot conceive, unless it was to curry favor with the police.

On my appearing before the police court the room was crowded almost to suffocation, whilst hundreds were unable to gain admission.

I was remanded until an officer arrived from Melbourne to escort me over.

I received numerous offers from people to bail me out, but bail was refused.

During my detention in the remand yard I wanted for nothing so far as the necessaries of life were concerned. Everyone seemed to vie with each other to ensure my comfort. The wardresses were as kind as they could be under the circumstances, and there wasn't a day passed that I was not the recipient of large bunches of flowers, bottles of scent, lollies, and offers to lend me money if I wanted it.

When the policeman came to take me back to Melbourne to answer the bogus charge laid against me, a large crowd assembled to see me off, amongst whom was a well-known theatrical lady, who presented me with the diamond ring which I now wear, and offered to pay all legal expenses incurred by me during my trial. A

stranger would have thought it was a gala day. I really believe Morphet, the policeman whose care I was entrusted to, would have had me confined to my cabin had he had the power to do it.

My trip to Melbourne was not as pleasant as it might have been, owing to the overbearing attitude constable Morphet displayed towards me.

On my arrival there, as the reader is doubtless aware, I was charged with burglary at the Collingwood police court, and in connection with my trial there I cannot do better than give the report which appeared in the Melbourne "Age :"—

MY TRIAL AT THE COURT.

"Long before the court was opened a large crowd thronged around the door, and when admittance was allowed many hundreds were compelled to remain outside for lack of space. Extraordinary eagerness to catch a glimpse of the woman who had so long associated with men as one of their own sex was shown, particularly by women.

"The accused came to the court in a closed waggonette, accompanied by her solicitor, Mr. Jas. Fyffe, and some friends.

"A buzz of excitement ran through the court when Sergeant Murphy read out from his list, 'William Edwards, on bail.' There was a stir near the door leading to the court yard, and Marion Edwards came forward, but she was attired in female costume. She wore a torchon lace hat, trimmed with crimson and red berries, and had a heavy, dark colored wig (for her hair had been

kept close cropped). She had a silk blouse of a light blue, with insertion yoke; a white ribbon around the neck, fixed in front with a gold brooch. The skirt was of a dark tartan. She carried a reticule.

“Sub-Inspector Love prosecuted. In opening the case he explained that two men were found in the hotel, and one of them subsequently turned out to be a woman. (Laughter.)

“Mrs. Nelly Hornby gave evidence that she formerly kept the Studley Arms Hotel, Wellington street. She retired to rest before midnight on 29th April, 1905, but was awakened shortly after 2 a.m. by the sound of crashing glass and someone calling for her. When she got into the bar a constable was there with accused. Witness asked, ‘What is the meaning of this? Who was with you?’ Accused replied, ‘Jigger Pollock was with me.’”

(In connection with this assertion of Mrs. Hornby I deny saying that Jigger Pollock was with me, and at my trial in the higher court my counsel gave the lie to that statement. I would rather cut my throat than attempt to do wrong to another to enable me to save my own skin.)

“To Mr. Fyffe—She used to see accused daily. Accused, who appeared as a man, rented a stable with W. A. Pollock, known as ‘Jigger,’ at the back of the hotel, and paid her the rent. They had racing ponies for about eight weeks prior to the night in question. A little gate separated the stables from the hotel.

“Constable Morphett deposed that, as he was passing

along Wellington street at 2,30 a.m. on April 30th, he heard a noise at the back of the Studley Arms Hotel. He noticed the little gate leading to the hotel open, and went through. There were two pairs of boots near the back door, which was also open, and he entered. He found the bar door open too, and on striking a match saw two men in their stockings in the bar. He called out to them, 'Stand, or I'll shoot you.' One man broke his way out through the window. He kicked the big pane to pieces. Witness had only matches to see by.

"Sub-Inspector Love—One of the two men, you say, got away. Who was the other one?"

"Witness—The accused there.

"Sub-Inspector Love—How was she dressed on that occasion?"

"Witness—Just like a man. (Laughter.) I asked her what she was doing there, and he—(a laugh)—I mean she, replied, 'Oh, nothing! What do you think I'm doing in here?' I told her I thought she was there for no good. The landlady then came on the scene, and said, 'The wretches!' or something to that effect. Accused made very light of it. Constable Phelan then came in. Accused said a pair of boots outside the door was hers. She was taken to the Collingwood lockup, where the present charge was laid. Subsequently the accused was bailed out, but she did not answer when the case was called. Witness went with a warrant to Queensland to bring her back. The discovery was there made as to her sex. A jemmy was found on the counter in the bar. One

of the doors had a mark, which appeared to have been made by it in an effort to force it open.

“Accused, who pleaded not guilty, and reserved her defence, was committed for trial. Bail was fixed as before, in one surety of £75.

“As the cab drove away a demonstration was made by the crowd. Cheer after cheer was given, and the vehicle was followed for a long distance along the road.”

The evidence given in the opinion of my couns and unbiassed people present, was not sufficient to warrant me being committed for trial. Mr. Fyffe had told me that I had better reserve my defence, as I was sure to be committed for trial, and it was only a waste of time and expense and give the line of my defence to the Crown if I fought it. I am quite satisfied that his judgment was correct. The manner in which Morphet gave his evidence appeared to my mind that he was particularly anxious to “pot” me, and I pictured to myself what a different object he would look when under the cross firing battery of Mr. Maxwell. However, he had his say, mine had to come later on.

The surprise of my old-time friends at finding that I was a woman was most amusing. Men and women who had known me as a racecourse battler gazed at me in astonishment, and even now Jigger Pollock does not seem to realise that I am a woman.

Notoriety is doubtless an advertisement, but unless one receives coin of the realm in exchange it is of little use. I was nearly broke, and was in a quandary what to do.

At this juncture the management of the Melbourne

Cyclorama offered to stand bail for me provided I consented to appear under their management, for which I was to receive a share of the gate receipts. I consented to do so, but the entertainment not only proved a failure from a financial point of view, but dragged me further into the mire. I was billed to do a shooting act, and one of the feats that I was to perform was to shoot glass balls thrown in the air. I had practised the act, and had performed it satisfactorily in private, and had no fear of my not being able to accomplish feats I was billed to perform.

The gun given me was a poor one, and, instead of being a light trigger was a particularly heavy one. Captain McCleod, who was also performing in company with his wife, threw several balls in the air, but the trigger was too hard to pull, and it caused me to lose my sight. At last I grew confident, and I followed my ball until it nearly reached the ground, when I fired. I had no sooner done so than I was startled by a female shriek.

What had happened was this. Mrs. McCleod had come out of her dressing-room to see how I got on, and unthinkingly got in the line of fire, with the result that quite a number of pellets struck her. Luckily they were small shot. She was taken to the hospital, where she remained for some time, and, I am glad to say eventually quite recovered.

The show was not a paying one, and only ran about a week. The first night's takings were good, and visions of wealth floated before my gaze, but there was a considerable falling off in the second night's takings, and the

untold wealth that I had conjured up in my mind's eye disappeared like a mist before the sun's rays.

It was a matter of necessity that I should get money by hook or by crook to pay counsel to defend me, and as the time was limited, I decided to leave the show and look for something to do elsewhere.

Numerous offers for show purposes had reached me, but on the advice of my friends, I decided to accept an engagement at the Melbourne Waxworks, under the management of Mr. Douglas.

Over a week had elapsed since I left the Cyclorama, and this enforced idleness, combined with the fact that I had to take my stand in the criminal dock made me ill. However, I had plenty of friends to cheer me up. My solicitor, Mr. Fyffe, stuck to me like a brick, whilst Mr. Harry Levy, with the firm of Marriott Watson, solicitor, also offered to give me legal advice gratis, and not only did this but stated his willingness to provide me with counsel if I was unable to obtain it.

Remembering the severe cross-examination I had undergone by Mr. Maxwell when I appeared as a witness against his client in my uncle's will case, I made up my mind that he should appear on my behalf. Money was as scarce as diamonds, but I had prospects of obtaining it if I succeeded in getting out of my trouble. On mentioning to Mr. Fyffe that I wanted Mr. Maxwell he agreed not only to obtain his services, but to stand sponsor for the expenses.

Of course I had to interview Mr. Maxwell, and whe^u

I told him we had met on a previous similar occasion, he laughed heartily and stated he remembered me well.

“Why,” he said, “you were the most stubborn witness I ever tried to elicit evidence from. You certainly did not act like a woman; they generally want to tell everything they know. Had I been able to shake your evidence I would have won the case for my client. However, I am pleased to see you, and to act for you in your trouble.”

My case was heard by Judge Molesworth on Friday, November 2 (the day prior to the Derby being run), before a jury of twelve. Acting on the advice of my solicitor, and also at my own wish, I appeared to answer the charge garbed in man's clothing. Mr. Maxwell, of course, was my counsel, and Mr. Finlayson appeared on behalf of the Crown. It was a case of “freedom or liberty” with me, and any jurymen about whom I had the slightest doubt that he would not give fair play I challenged, with the result that I objected to fourteen; the Crown asked three others to stand aside.

The court was crowded with both sexes, but I took little notice of anyone. There were only four people that I knew, and those were the judge, Messrs. Finlayson and Maxwell, and the witness who was in the box. It seemed like a hideous dream to me.

In fairness to the Crown Prosecutor, I must say he presented the case in a just manner, so much so that it struck me that he had taken a job on which he did not relish. The main witness was Constable Morphett. He

repeated his evidence, and replied to Mr. Finlayson's questions in quite a bold style.

"So you're the policeman who handcuffed a woman with the assistance of another policeman?" asked Maxwell.

"Oh, I don't know about that," replied Morphett, as he moved uneasily in the witness box.

"Answer me that question, sir," said Maxwell, in a manner that caused this brave officer to look appealingly to the Judge, and Morphett had to comply.

Mr. Maxwell elicited from Morphett that when he saw the light in the bar he crept stealthily there, and as soon as he saw two figures he shouted out, "Stand, or I'll fire!" He added—"At this the man who was with prisoner, on seeing the shiny hat of a policeman, broke a window, leisurely climbed through it, and got clean away."

I never saw a witness receive such a severe cross examination, and after he had left the witness box I felt assured that no jury would convict me on his evidence.

The Crown presented every tittle of evidence they could against me in their anxiety to convict me, but, thank God, the men on the jury were not to be misled or coerced into convicting an innocent person.

Mr. Maxwell made an eloquent speech on my behalf to the jury. He asked them to disabuse their minds of any prejudice which might have been raised against accused owing to the fact that she had been masquerading in men's clothes. It was perfectly legal for a woman to attire herself in male apparel so long as she did not do so from any improper motive. If she wore such clothes for the pur-

pose of committing a felony or imposing on people, that would be a different thing, but so long as there was no felonious intent a woman could wear any kind of clothes she liked. Accused had been wearing men's apparel for nine or ten years, and had turned her hands to all kinds of honest work. She kept some ponies at the time of the escapade at the stables of the hotel. On this morning she had returned after visiting some friends. She noticed the door of the hotel open, and went inside, and the policeman immediately afterwards followed and arrested her.

I made a brief statement, after which His Honor summed up, as it appeared to me, dead against me.

He said, in addressing the jury, the accused might have had some good reason for dressing as a man. That should not be any prejudice to her. It was, however, his Honor's first experience of presiding at a criminal trial where a woman appeared in court and pleaded to an offence dressed as a man. It was for the jury to say whether she went into the hotel for a lawful purpose. Her statement was that she merely went there to get a drink, and apparently she took off her boots so that she could enjoy it all the better,

Mr. Maxwell interrupted the judge in this misstatement of facts by saying that it was never said in evidence that I took off my boots for enjoying a drink.

The judge did not relish that well-merited rebuff, and replied—"She said that she took her boots off for the purpose of seeing whether there was anybody about. At any rate the evidence was that she was found in the hotel at 2.30 in the morning, in company with a man who made his escape through the window, and it was for the jury to say whether or not she was there with the intention of committing a burglary, as alleged by the Crown."

The jury retired at 3.10 p.m., and twenty minutes later they returned into court.

My ears were strained to hear the verdict, which was—"WE HAVE UNANIMOUSLY AGREED THAT THE ACCUSED IS NOT GUILTY."

The iron gate was opened, and I was a free woman.

The following day I showed at the Melbourne Wax-works, where I remained for three weeks.

One would have thought that the police authorities would have stopped persecuting me, but that was not the case, as I was summoned for discharging firearms in a public place. If their object was to make a public exhibition of me in a police court they were disappointed, for my solicitor appeared on my behalf, and I was fined £1.

That is my life's history—written as I speak, and in my own language, and I trust that those who read it will not think too harshly of

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