

Hedged beneath the bended skies  
 Of a day in May.  
 So, when days grow longer, sweeter,  
 Grow the rare June hours completer;  
 And the winter's time for snowing  
 Leaves the June winds chance for blowing.  
 I will seek this garden; growing  
 Where I'll never say.

## SLEEP.

In a tangled, scented hollow,  
 On a bed of crimson roses,  
 Stilly now the wind reposes;  
 Hardly can the breezes borrow  
 Breath to stir the night-swept river.  
 Motionless the water-sedges,  
 And within the dusky hedges  
 Sounds no leaf's impatient shiver.  
 Sleep has come, that rare rest-giver.

Light and song have flown away  
 With the sun and twilight swallow;  
 Scarcely will the unknown morrow  
 Bring again so sweet a day.  
 Song was born of Joy and Thought;  
 Light, of Love and her Caress.  
 Nothing's left me but a tress;  
 Death and Sleep the rest have wrought—  
 Death and Sleep, who came unsought.

## HE PLAYING SHE.

DEAR BUSTER:—Rehearsal at five sharp, after Logic. Bring round the two new songs. Do you suppose your corsets would fit Sam, or are they too small? Bring them with you, anyhow, and let him try them on. Wilkinson says he wont play the *Nurse's* part anyhow, but will go into the chorus, if we want him. He's just started out a new mustache, and swears he wont shave it for any play ever written. Who'll fill the part? Think it over in recitation.

JACK.

P. S. For the love of John P. Hale of New Hampshire, tell Warren to have the music all arranged by Thursday evening, for the dress rehearsal.

I burst into the heartiest fit of laughter I had had for many a day when I read that postscript. Many years ago since that was written, and Jack many miles away from here! A note of college days! A dry leaf of a withered and faded rose, but its sight brought up a garden full of remembered roses. There, in the postscript, was Jack's favorite "swear word,"—a euphemism for something or other unsuited to ears polite.

I don't think any of us ever learned why the late Senator from New Hampshire was chosen as a god to swear by,—and, besides, Jack was a Democrat; but this I do know, he frequently—too frequently, perhaps—asseverated by the Hon. J. P. H., and I seldom or never knew of his using the ordinary forms of profanity. But the John P. Hale part of the note above quoted has nothing to do with what is to be offered here. The words "rehearsal," "corsets," "nurse," form the *leit-motives* of the little opera to be produced at this time.

Probably from the fact of being one of the smallest "men" in college at the time of this opera, the writer was called "Buster"—a good, square "*lucus-a-non*"—and for all present purposes I prefer to remain, "a-non." It is also because I was small and fat that I can describe the dramatic life of a term or so of one of the oldest societies devoting time and attention to theatrical

exhibitions, in one of the oldest colleges in America. Not to be too particular and pointed in description, if you should enter the rooms of that society and make an examination of its walls, you would find, in all probability, that the portraits which interested and entertained you most were those of female characters. Placed chronologically, the gallery of "Female Celebrities of Our Society" would show the great progress made in the art of photography, and also in the art of covering up male scragginess and angularity by the shams which now make a performer of "girl parts" in college a pleasant and very deceptive sight. The exponents of the drama in college societies follow the old-time plan *per force*, and give the female assumptions into the care of those of their sex who have the smoothest faces, the neatest forms, and the voices nearest to soprano. Until women are admitted to all the privileges and pleasure of college life, this must continue. Herein then is a fine argument for woman's admission to Harvard, Yale, Amherst, etc.: the society dramatic requirements will be more easily met. The legislators, who were formerly members of the X. Y. Z.; those of the University Corporations, who still enjoy a half-stolen visit to the W. X. Y., have this matter in their own hands, and should not fail to consider it carefully and with judgment. Now, the *Mrs. Malaprop* of the cast is perhaps a fellow who pulls 1,000 on the rowing weights, and thinks nothing of it; the *Juliets* and *Betsys* are round-faced young men who happen to be fat enough to allow of their wearing a dress slightly *décolleté*,—and who smoke unlimited cigarettes, you may venture to wager.

But to return to our gallery of portraits. The first picture—ah! it was taken such a while ago, and the classmates of the subjects are the lawyers, doctors, clergymen and instructors of the lads who are in their turn performing upon the little society stages—is of a group of three young men, in ballet costume. One of those danseuses is now a clergyman. Whatever the subjects are now, then they were very, very bony and very muscular at the same time. Their poses are as graceful as the attitudes of a lamp-lighter. I cannot say how ill or well they danced,—that exhibition of terpsichorean attainments was before my time. The next picture, in a group of a dozen or so, shows us a "woman" or two, who has some semblance to the sex simu-

lated. The next is a still more natural representation; and when the fourth or fifth picture is examined, a natural and well-fitting wig makes the wearer quite girl-like. Passing by ten years, the observer begins to happen upon portraits which would do justice and credit to such impersonations as those of the late Robert Craig,—by far the best of "female impersonators" of his day,—or to those of Mr. Frederick Maccabe. The portraits really seem those of buxom, hearty, moderately graceful and quite pretty girls. In dress, they are "gorgeous," and in my mind's eye I can see several attires which could not be purchased short of several hundred dollars—prepared for a single night's performance in a college theater. Thus far I have gone back among the archives. Now let me be personal, and tell about Jack and his time, or what is the same thing, about my own time.

I cannot well avoid being a little rambling,—the times themselves were a little mixed and had not the regularity and order, the system and careful arrangements which belong to the regular stage. It is to be remembered also that we were all young men, not yet legally at liberty, and at the same time living in a freedom whose like exists no where out of college days. We had fairly reached, in college dramatic life, what may be termed the burlesque or travestie period. On more than one occasion I have seen present at the performance of a burlesque, seated in the front row of the little theater, learned professors, poets whose names and whose works the world knows and loves, scientific men who, with a few moments' calculation, could have told the density of the tobacco smoke which filled the auditorium, or could have named in exact order all the bones, muscles and other adjuncts, which the spectators made use of in their hilarious laughter. I remember how well one of the most learned men in America said to our small committee who invited him to attend a performance of an "entirely new and original travestie" on Shakspeare's "Othello,"—"Oh, I'll be glad to come. Um! Well! It is only great poets who can be travestied." These sedate and dignified shooting-masters would unbend to such a degree that we students felt tempted "many a time and oft" to slap them on the back and say "Old Chap"; but the morrow's dignity and austerity were as sure as was to-night's relaxing. Either as a past or as an honorary member of "our society," every professor in college

could be numbered, and on "theatrical nights" they seemed only too glad to attend. The burlesque or travestie period was quite fruitful in original productions. In one year three or four really good burlesques, wholly from the pens of students, localized and pointed for the college liking, were produced. Besides, this year saw a pretty good amateur performance of "The Rivals," and "The Critic," and a long list of farces and musical pieces. It is easy enough to find good actors in a large college; but good actresses are the desiderata. Let a fellow be fair-looking, moderately rounded in face and limb, a singer and an actor, and he jumps at a leap into the best societies and becomes an admired member of the company, as well as a popular man in his class. He is as much petted, in so far as it is possible, by his fellows, as a pretty soubrette is on the regular stage. He has his own way too—will play this or nothing. Indeed, the stroke oar of the 'Varsity crew is not so strong a man as the "leading lady" or the "singing chambermaid" of a college theatrical corps. You can find another big man, but where, oh! where, are the "pretty little fellows" to be found? It is strange to say also, that generally no manlier set could be found in a class than just the "boys" who play leading ladies' parts.

How we used to get up a play in college is what I wish to tell. Suppose it were a burlesque that was required, and was to be offered upon the boards. Two men would engage to write the burlesque, and would set about their work with a will. The college travestie would not take at all, in most or many of its points, before a mixed audience. Here will come a pun in Latin; here another in Greek; here one on a mathematical subject; here a hit at a professor; here a "take-off" on a college rule—all designed for experienced ears. And how these specialties would go down! A good Latin pun was sure of two rounds, at least; a Greek rhyme of three rounds; and a mathematical allusion would bring down the house. The burlesque's breadth must be attended to more than its length,—not too broad, but a bit spicy. We who had been reading Terrence and Plautus needed not to be very restrained in pointed application, and it is to be remembered that the auditors were all men. Yet I have heard nothing so bad upon the college stage as I have heard upon the boards of the best theaters. Unless the "breadth" was stamped with real wit, it was

hooted at. Well, the burlesque prepared and cast, the first thing to be done was to learn the music. Offenbach and the old college airs, song and dance tunes and pennyroyals, formed the staples for the introduction of hits on manners and times. The writer has in mind one burlesque, full of jolly music, in which seven soloists and a goodly sized chorus participated. No theater in America could, from its regular company, have filled the bill of this play, and yet it was excellently, creditably performed by a college cast, and there was spare material. The rehearsals of the music are always full of fun as well as work. As soon as a number is learned it becomes an especial property, and should it strike the popular fancy of the class, it becomes college property, and they who first introduce it are called upon at all festal occasions for its delivery. So the rehearsals proceed. The principals need not sing their solos or the duets; but all the choruses and concerted pieces must be dinned and dinned into the corps until they are perfectly learned. Sometimes an instrumental bit, such as a burlesque flute solo, a banjo serenade, or a quartette of horns, must be practiced. The first-named I recollect *Tybalt's* doing before he dies (he played "Just Before the Battle, Mother"), the second, *Romeo* performed beneath *Juliet's* window, and the third was an unsurpassed performance, an invention worth describing. *Mercutio*, *Romeo*, *Juliet*, and the *Nurse* engaged in it, and the performance was upon penny trumpets, of wood. Would you suppose any music could be obtained from such instruments? A "four-part song" was performed, and with a perfect reproduction of all the harmony; and, moreover, a "theme and variations" and trio accompaniment were given on these instruments, which cost exactly fifteen cents per dozen. The secret of the method of playing was imparted only to the performers; but it is absolutely true that with practice any tune of ordinary difficulty can be given upon this instrument. The performance—the first of the kind in the world, I believe—has since been repeated with "grand" effect, in public. Parts fairly learned, properties were gotten together and bills painted—yes, painted, and some of them are to this day as fine specimens of water-color drawing as could be found, except from great masters. Then, or rather meanwhile, the leading performers were preparing their costumes. The male impersonators found little difficulty. The costumer—to use our expressive and manifoldly useful

word—*fixed* all that. But the young ladies—their attires were to be procured with more trouble and considerably more anxiety. He who had sisters or sweet cousins, and was to play a lady's part, was accounted lucky. Nearly all the "girls" had their own corsets and boots and shoes, "made for me, you know," as they would say. To lace to eighteen inches about the waist, and to wear "fours" shoes and six-and-a-quarter gloves were nothing uncommon, although to be really comfortable, a size or two larger were generally chosen. The story of the man who blacked himself all over to play *Othello* comes in pat here. Not to enter into too minute particulars, the elegance of the undergarments, the laces, the ruffles, the tuckings, the bows, and the furbelows which were worn, would mate the trousseau of many a happy bride. Indeed, why should they not? The garments were borrowed from sister and cousin, who were generally told to send out "everything that was necessary and a few ornaments." Necklaces, bracelets, ear-rings, fans, etc., etc., were demanded and obtained, the ear-rings being fastened to the ears by bits of court-plaster. The wig was ordered. Of late years—a dozen or so—the wigman has been the great helper of the college actor. He has been the fashioner of fair skins, blooming cheeks, pouting mouths, and round, liquid eyes. The outer dress was probably the last procured. If it could not be obtained at home, the costumer must furnish it, at whatever cost; and it must be made to *fit*, and to fit well. With no exaggeration, one could see as elegant, well-fitting and becoming dresses on these little stages—and that, too, sitting as a spectator very near the performer—as will be seen, except in special cases, at our best theater. Gradually, from practice and habit, the actor learned to carry himself as if "he" were a "she." Gradually, too, he began to expect and claim, in the dressing and green rooms, the attention, courtesies and aid which would have been extended to a young woman. His handkerchief falling, a fellow who tomorrow will rap him on the head with a sofa-pillow, or punch him pleasantly with a base-ball bat, leaps to return it; wishing a glass of water, he bids some one near by hand it, and the mission is answered graciously and gracefully. Nay, even more: the little compliments men—young men—pay young women, are paid him, with no intention of sarcasm. The writer has seen this exemplified in a score of cases. It is

only when our man-woman becomes irate that his sex shows through the dress completely. Then he will perhaps round out a sentence with a few exclamations that almost shock the hearer, seeming to come from the lips of a miss.

The night of the performance is always one of excitement to the "young women." The nimble fingers of a dressing-maid are needed. "Tom, lace my corsets; don't pull 'em too tight!" "Bill, hook the back of my dress!" and the like orders would sound strangely to uninitiated ears. "Confound that pin!" "Hang that string!" "I've forgotten whether this is the front or the back of this blank thing," and "Which is the top and the bottom of these corsets?" are no infrequent sentences. But habit and care conquer, and with skirts gathered about his limbs he rushes across the college-yard to the society rooms, the passing proctor barely turning, fully understanding that "she" is a "he." It is not until the dressing-room is reached that the handsome wig is put on, the rouge and lily-white and the line for the under eyelid, and all the little arts which unite in making the face fair and interesting. A good make-up is sure of a good reception, and the words "You look stunning" will give a fellow more encouragement before his entrance than can be described. The eager plaudits of a college audience, no one who has received it can forget. Besides the smell of the foot-lights, there is the aroma of Alma-Mater good-fellowship in the reception. Then, the actor's audience is above the average intelligence, and catches every point, seconds every witticism, and applauds every good bit of acting. And after the play, when "Company! company! company!" brings the actors and actresses with a scurry to the front, it is no wonder that they who have successfully simulated gentler characters than their own, should feel a particular pride. It is worth while to hurry to one's room, doff the skirts, corsets and et-ceteras, and don the male attire, and with pipe, cigar, or cigarette in mouth, to return to the assemblage and meet the audience. The graduates and older classmen pay the highest compliment possible in not recognizing the actress in the nonchalant young man; the professors smile and nod benignantly, and your own classmates say, "Jolly! old fellow—tip-top!"—"You've done yourself credit!"—"Pretty as a picture!"—"You never did better in your life, Buster!"