

Since an early age I have preferred to be more feminine than masculine and, when possible, to dress as a girl. Unhappily, I have never known anyone as understanding as Mrs Ducroix's sister appears to be (Letters, 24 August). Once, as a child, my parents caught me dressed as a girl, as a result of which I received a hiding that I have never forgotten. This produced a great guilt complex within me, which, thanks to a society too quick to condemn and too slow at trying to understand, I still have.

I have never known anyone who could have tried to understand this, much less be tolerant of it, as when I have in a round-about way broached the subject, I have received nothing but condemnation. Yet, there is nothing of the exhibitionist in me, neither am I a homosexual. I am simply a person who is forced by society to live out his life as a man while a large part of what is essentially me—and not only the desire to express my real character, by means of clothes, but personality and feminine mental characteristics—must be suppressed, or expressed only in private. However, it is surely only by being ourselves—in public—that we can be said to be truly human, and not by being what we really are only when we are alone.

If you decide to print this letter, I should like you not to print my name and address. However, in the event of this letter being printed, and you receiving requests for my address for correspondence purposes only, I should be pleased to receive them.

This is a very difficult matter to write about without giving the wrong impressions, but I should like to assure you that I am a person of high moral character and honesty. Thank you for printing this letter by Mrs Ducroix, as before I saw it I often thought I must be alone.

(Name and address supplied.)

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Referring to the recent letters on the boy who likes girl's clothes. I do not think that homosexuality should have been mentioned because, in deviation from the accepted norm, transvestites are at the opposite end from homosexuals. Their predilection is due in some degree to their attraction towards the opposite sex and their wish to be identified more closely with them.

In my own case, as a boy I had to be satisfied with the occasional indulgence of wearing my sister's clothes when opportunity offered. It was not until after marriage that an understanding wife allowed me to collect a wardrobe of female clothes and to indulge in 'dressing up' whenever I wanted to. As a result, I lost a feeling of guilt and became a happier being.

Eventually the matter resolved itself as I lost the wish to dress completely in woman's clothes, but I continued to wear corsets, long stockings and knickers under my usual male outer clothing.

Salford.

E. Palmer