

DISGUISED FEMALES.

Women are in general so much under the influence of two great principles of their nature, timidity and delicacy, that the protection of their ordinary dress must in general be too much appreciated to be rashly thrown aside. Accordingly that a female should ever, in any circumstances, dismiss her proper apparel, may well appear to us as something like a phenomenon. Yet instances of this being done are by no means infrequent, even in modern times. In some instances, the moving cause is to be found in circumstances; a young female, for example, falls in love with a sailor, and, not being allowed to follow him in her natural and recognized character, puts on jacket and trousers, and becomes to appearance a brother of his mess. But, in most cases, a pure masculinity of character seems to lead females to take on the guise of men. Apparently feeling themselves misplaced and misrepresented by the female dress, they take up with that of men, simply that they may be allowed to employ themselves in those manly avocations for which their nature and taste are fitted.

The case of Mary East, who made some noise about sixty or seventy years ago, was one in which the motive was of a beautiful and romantic nature. She was born in the year 1715, in one of the eastern counties of England. On reaching womanhood, she formed a strong attachment to a young man, who afterwards fell into evil habits, and was condemned to death for a robbery. His sentence, however, was commuted to transportation. Unworthily as this person was of her love, Mary East was so deeply affected by his fate, that she resolved ever to remain in a single state, and, meeting with another young woman whom a similar disappointment had driven to the same resolution, the two determined to pass their lives together. In order to form a sort of protection for both, it was agreed that one of them should assume the male habit, and on casting lots to decide the matter, this metamorphosis fell to the share of Mary East, then only sixteen years of age, and a year younger than her associate. For the execution of her views it was of course necessary for them to remove to a place where they were unknown. With thirty pounds in their possession, they accordingly went to Epping, in Essex, where Mary East, after purchasing a man's attire, and assuming the name of James How, took a small inn which was accidentally found vacant.

We have thus in Mary East's case a plain and intelligible reason for the assumption of the male habit, which we will find scarcely to be the case in other instances. In the little inn at Epping, Mary East lived for some time with her companion in the character of man and wife, until a fortunate accident enabled them to shift to better quarters. The seeming husband, James How, quarrelled with a young gentleman, and, entering an action at law against him, obtained damages to the amount of five hundred pounds. With this sum, the associated couple removed to Limehouse Hole, where they took a larger inn, and by good management soon began to lay up money. As their circumstances improved, they took a still more respectable house of entertainment, the White Horse, at the village of Poplar. In these various situations they had spent more than twenty years, and had purchased considerable property, when an event occurred which gave the pair a great deal of annoyance. A woman, who, from knowing Mary East in her youth, had discovered the secret of her disguise, suddenly resolved to turn that discovery to the purpose of extorting money. Accordingly, she wrote to Mr. (or James) How, demanding ten pounds, and threatening, in case of a denial, to disclose the truth relative to Mr. How's sex. Fearful lest such a disclosure would have put a stop to their profitable business, besides causing other inconveniences, Mr. and Mrs. How at once sent the money demanded.

For a number of years afterwards, this annoyance was not repeated, and James How and his partner continued to thrive in the world. The disguised female served repeatedly in Poplar as foreman on juries, and filled various parochial offices, with great credit, though it was often remarked that there was a sort of effeminacy about her. The maintenance of the secret was perhaps greatly owing to the circumstance of the pair keeping no maid servants about the house, but doing nearly all the necessary business themselves. At length at the close of the year 1764, the woman who had extorted money previously, renewed her attacks. She first demanded, and got, ten pounds. In a fortnight she repeated the demand, and received five pounds. Just about this period, the supposed wife of James How fell ill, and after going to her brothers at some distance, died there. She had sent for How before her decease, but as How could not conveniently come to her, she told her brother all the circumstances; that she had lived, not with a man, but with a woman; that they had been partners in business, and had amassed more than four thousand pounds sterling. As soon as his sister died, the brother went to Poplar, and required How to give up the deceased's share of the property. This was at once complied with. The brother kept the secret of How's sex, but it came out immediately afterwards, in consequence of the extortioner, already mentioned, carrying her demands anew to excess. This woman took two accomplices to assist her, and forced the supposed-How to give her a draft for one hundred pounds. On presenting this draft the parties were taken up, and How, seeing that the secret could be

kept no longer, attended, and bore witness against them before the magistrates, in the character of Mary East, and in the proper habit of her sex. In this attire she behaved at first so awkwardly as to excite much laughter. The extortioners were convicted and punished.

Immediately afterwards Mary East sold off her stock and effects, and retired to a private dwelling in Poplar, to enjoy the fruits of her honest industry. She was fifty years of age when she resumed the habit of her sex, and laid down the borrowed one she had borne for thirty-four years. She lived till June 6, 1780, being sixty-five years old when she died.

The heroine of the preceding narrative can scarcely be said to have laid aside much of her feminine nature with her dress. Not so, however, Hannah Snell, the next personage to whom we have to advert. Hannah Snell was born on the 22d of April, 1723, in the city of Worcester. Her father was a hosier, and had a family of three sons and six daughters, of whom Hannah was the youngest. It is said that, in her youth, this girl showed a bold spirit, and even a martial turn. However this may be, after the death of her parents she came in 1740 to London, to reside with a sister, married to a ship-carpenter at Wapping. About two years afterwards, Hannah married a Dutch seaman, who proved a very bad husband. After using her shamefully, he finally ran off, leaving her on the eve of bringing her first child into the world. This child survived only seven months, and, some time after its decease, Hannah, finding herself alone and unencumbered, formed the romantic notion of setting out in search of her eloped spouse, for whom she still appears to have entertained a strong affection. The best way of finding him, she thought, was to enter the army. Accordingly, secretly assuming her brother-in-law's dress, and also borrowing his name, which was James Gray, Hannah set out, in November 1745, for Coventry, where she enlisted in the corps of General Guise. The main body of this regiment was then at Carlisle, and Hannah was sent thither with other recruits. A disagreeable incident soon after befel her here. A serjeant of the corps pitched upon Hannah to assist him in some base views which he entertained relative to a young female in Carlisle. Though in man's attire, Hannah, to her credit, had so much regard for the honor of her own sex as to put the intended victim on her guard. Finding himself repulsed, the serjeant imagined Hannah to have supplanted him; and the consequence was, that our female soldier was soon after artfully accused by him of some dereliction of duty, and was sentenced to receive six hundred lashes. Five hundred of these she did receive at Carlisle gate. Her secret, nevertheless, was not discovered—in consequence, it is related, of her using a handkerchief as a partial covering. Shortly after this, a recruit, who had before known her, joined the regiment, and Hannah, afraid of exposure, besides being already disgusted with her situation, resolved to desert. She did so, and got in safety to Portsmouth, where she enlisted in the marines, and was speedily drafted on board the Swallow sloop of war destined to join Admiral Boscawen's fleet in the East Indies.

Hannah's sex remained undetected on board of the Swallow, though she did not scruple to show a degree of womanly skill in washing and in cooking, which caused her to be much beloved by her comrades. She, however, went through all ordinary duties at the same time, such as taking her turn on the watch, exercising, and the like. About the Bay of Biscay, the Swallow fell into great distress; and after much severe work at the pumps, in which Hannah took her full share, as she did in all the most trying duties, the sloop put into Lisbon, and afterwards succeeded in joining the rest of the fleet, which the admiral led against the Mauritius. Hannah made herself noted by her extreme bravery in the attack on this island, which proved unsuccessful. From the Mauritius the fleet sailed to Fort St. David, on the Coromandel coast, where the marines were put on shore to join the army in that country. The siege of Arcanocoppo was the first enterprise in which our heroic heroine was here engaged, and she gained so much applause for her soldierly conduct, that she was chosen as one of a select band—a sort of forlorn hope—ordered upon the dangerous service of bringing stores from the shore at a particular point. This service was successfully effected, and Hannah distinguished herself by revenging a comrade's death—killing the author of it with her own hands. The siege of Pondicherry followed these events, and here Hannah underwent the most severe toil. She was on guard seven nights successively, and stood a great part of the time up to the breast in water, exposed continually to the enemy's shot. She herself fired thirty-seven rounds, and when the place was taken, she came off with six wounds in one leg, five in the other, and a ball in her groin. The other wounds were submitted to the care of the surgeon, but she was under the necessity of concealing the last mentioned. However, with surprizing fortitude, she herself contrived to extract the ball, though deeply lodged. By the connivance of a kindly black woman in the hospital, she got dressings applied to the wound, and it was healed at the end of three months, when her other injuries also were cured.

On leaving the hospital, the brave soldier, James Gray (as she was called,) was put on board of the Tartar Pink, and afterwards of the Etliam man of war. While in this vessel, having refused

to sing at the wish of a domineering lieutenant, she was doomed to a dozen lashes, and to four days' confinement in irons, on the pretext of her having stolen a shirt, though the spite of the officer was the real cause. The shirt was afterwards found in the owner's own trunk, and her innocence established. Hannah was at length sent in the Etliam to England. Being called Molly Gray by her comrades, on account of her smooth chin, every frolic that could help to conceal her true character was joined in by her whenever the ship touched at any port, and she thus succeeded in getting her appellation changed to that of Hearty Jemmy. At Lisbon she heard, by mere accident, that her husband had perished by the hands of the public executioner at Genoa, for murdering a native of that city. Thus was Hannah's original reason for donning man's attire done away with. On reaching England (in 1750,) Hannah had the honor to receive two offers of marriage, one in her character of a man, and the other in her real character. The first came from the young woman whose honor she had saved in Carlisle, and whom she met in Portsmouth. Hannah of course declined the connexion. The other matrimonial offer took place in London, when, having received her pay, and being about to part with her comrades, Hannah disclosed to them the secret which she had previously been so assiduous to preserve. One of them offered her his hand on the spot. Her wounds, and the remarkable nature of her adventures, now attracted the attention of the Duke of York, who ultimately settled on her a pension of £30. Before this grant was made, Hannah, having assumed the habit of a woman, and taken up her abode with her sister, was induced, in consequence of the attention which her story excited, to appear on the boards of Goodman's Field's Theatre, and to sing some songs, and to perform the sword exercise. The pension placed her above the necessity of resorting to such public exhibitions of herself for subsistence. She lived till the year 1779, and died in the fifty-sixth year of her age. From the portraits given of her she appears to have been stoutly formed, and not ill looking.

IRRITABLE CHRISTIANS.—There was a clergyman who was of a nervous temperament, and often became quite vexed, by finding his little grandchildren in his study. One day one of these little children was standing by his mother's side, and she was speaking to him of heaven.

"Ma," said he, "I don't want to go to heaven."

"Do not want to go to heaven, my son!"

"No ma, I'm sure I don't."

"Why not my son?"

"Why, grand-pa will be there, won't he?"

"Why, yes, I hope he will."

"Well, as soon as he sees us, he will come scolding along, and say, 'whew, whew, whew, what are these boys here for?' I don't want to get to heaven if grand-pa is going to be there."—*Religious Mag.*

A LIVING SKELETON.—In passing through a village, I was struck with the sight of a stiff and shrivelled corpse, clothed and seated in a chair, laid slanting against a wall, so that the feet were in the air, and the head was bent down upon the breast. While I stood looking at it, I was startled by a jerking motion in the right arm and then seeing two black and vivid eyes straining to catch my attention. This was a human and living being which had existed in this shrivelled and motionless state for 29 years; the flesh seemed to have disappeared from his bones; the skin had shrunk and was almost black. I have seen mummies that appeared in a better state of preservation. The joints were all fixed, with the exception of the right shoulder and the jaws. This freedom of the shoulder amounts, however, only to three inches of a see-saw movement of the fore arm, and he keeps working it backwards and forwards, as he says, for exercise.—*Urquhart's Travels in the East.*

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