

James was abashed at her dignified demeanor and hung back.

"Now, sir," continued Caroline addressing the officer, "may I be informed of the crime of which I am accused?"

TO BE CONTINUED.

Romance in Real Life.

"HARRY" STOKES, THE MAN-WOMAN.

The most remarkable woman of this century was "Harry" Stokes, the bricksetter, who committed suicide in the sluice of the river Irwell, at Mode Wheel, last night week. For about thirty years this extraordinary person had lived in Manchester and Salford as a journeyman and master bricksetter; had been twice married to other women; had kept beer houses and served customers at the tap as a "jolly landlord," had worked at her trade as a bricksetter, and erected many important buildings in both towns, and had obtained the reputation of being the most skillful fire-grate setter and "chimney-doctor" in the neighborhood. She always dressed as a man, in the clothing peculiar to her trade; invariably superintended the men in her employment, and could lift a weight, spread the mortar, and set a brick with the best of them. Her habits were those of a man. She attended a daily ordinary in the town along with other bricksetters, drank, smoked, and joked with the hardest, and joined in the evening carousals. Yet, with all this constant and close intimacy with the opposite sex, this strong minded woman contrived to keep her own great secret; and there is every reason to believe that she has gone down into the grave at the advanced age of 60, or thereabouts, having throughout the whole of her remarkable life maintained an unbroken check upon those passions which crowd the streets of every large town with the unfortunate of her sex. Her great endeavor was on all occasions to keep up the manly character she had assumed. From a child she had been accustomed to the severe work of one of the most laborious occupations in which man is engaged, and the skill she had attained in the trade reveals an amount of persevering energy which made her worthy of a better fate than that of the wretched suicide.

It is curious to know what first induced her to assume the garb and occupation of a man, and what powerful agency it was that enabled her to remain faithful to the line of duty she had thus marked out for herself.—There are innumerable instances where the influences of love, or a romantic disposition has clothed the form of woman with male attire, and sustained her amid the perils of the battle field, in the dangers of the deep, or in wild adventure in foreign lands; but we know of no other case in history or tradition where a woman has so wonderfully repressed her own feelings and natural disposition, so completely assumed the habits of a man, and been so successful in evading the prying curiosity of the world. "Harry" Stokes has indeed played her part so cleverly that it is with the greatest difficulty that we have been able to glean the following facts, which, meager as they are, throw some little light on her past history.

She was the daughter of a bricklayer in a village in the neighborhood of Doncaster.—Before she could well balance her own little body she was made "useful" in the house; and ere many years passed over her head, she was brought into acquaintance with some of the roughest and toughest work in those hard-wrought days. Little Harriet Stokes' lines had not been laid in pleasant places.—She was so ground down by the iron hand at home that, when she was about eight years old, she put on a tattered suit of boy's clothing, and walked forth into the "wide, wide world." Arrived at the village of Withby, she looked about for work. She had not run away from her father's house because she did not like work and preferred to eat the bread of idleness. The hard treatment of parents ignorant of their responsibility, had driven her from the protection of home and from all the associations which should enchain the young mind to home. That she was not afraid of hard work was apparent when she offered her services to a bricksetter in Withby. Though somewhat undersized, she appeared a broadset, active, useful lad, and was speedily set to work. Her first efforts to please were attended with success, and she was soon taken as an apprentice.

From this point we must drop the feminine appellation, and speak of 'Harry Stokes' as a boy who has worked his way to the dignity of a journeyman bricksetter. For something like twenty years from this point we

lose the connecting links which join this Yorkshire experience to his Manchester life. About twenty-five years ago he was brought prominently under the notice of the public by the consequences of an eccentric excursion which he had taken into the domains of matrimony. Harry Stokes, wanting a companion in life, executed a matrimonial *contretemps*. True to his *role* as a man—for he had reached the age when the average of bricksetters are fathers as well as journeymen—he cast about, and fixed his choice upon a plump little widow who kept a beer house in Cupid's alley, off Deansgate, Manchester. He had been accustomed to take his pot of beer and smoke his short pipe under Betsy's roof, and had at last taken a decided fancy to Betsy herself. He was a good looking young man was Harry Stokes, for, although still undersized and innocent of whiskers, a face as smooth as a woman's, he was stoutly built, had a capacious depth of chest, and a pair of hips which gave an unusual profit to his tailor. Betsy then looked with favor on Harry's suit, for he had the reputation of being a good steady workman, and was doing pretty well as a bricksetter. It was resolved that they twain should become one flesh, and so to the church they hied. Harry discharged the duties of bridegroom at church to perfection, but when the widow got him home there was a terrible row. The night was spent in downright quarrel and fight, and the lamentable result was a summons taken out by Betsy against her husband for an assault for which he was condemned to the New Bailey for one or two months.

During the reading of the case, Betsy with great vehemence declared that her husband was not a man, and that she therefore would not live with him. The case created great amusement and gossip at the time, and formed the subject of popular ballads, which were sung and hawked about the streets of Manchester. "Harry" Stokes, on issuing from the New Bailey, was considerably persecuted by those little gamins who know so well how to torment street celebrities, while he was also the object of much curious speculation among his brethren of the trowel. He however maintained a discreet silence as to his sex, threw out hints that the woman he had married was mad, and as the most effective proof that she was a malevolent libeller he soon afterwards married another widow, rejoicing in the name of Frances Collins, who was some fifteen or twenty years his senior, and who had a grown up son and daughter living with her. His connection with this woman, with whom he lived until he committed suicide, is the most mysterious phase of this mysterious history. She declares with solemn earnestness that she did not know, until informed the other day, that the person with whom she had been living for the last twenty-five years was a woman, and her own children looked upon Stokes as their step-father. She asserts that she took Stokes into her house in the first instance out of pity, to shield him from persecution to which he was subjected.

It may be that, although out of the sense of shame the old woman thus attempts to conceal her knowledge of Stoke's sex, she did in reality know from the first that the person was a woman, and she was in all probability induced by Stokes to consent to the union in order that the appearance of married life might dispel the rumors afloat, and enable him to live in "peace and quietness." Whether or not that was the intention, the acquaintance brought about that result, for although there were surmises that "Harry" Stokes was a woman, and he was constantly the object of curious glances, he escaped the open molestation to which he had been previously subjected. Harry and Fanny took a beerhouse in Corporation street, Salford, where they lived for two years, when they "fitted" to Quay street, near Deansgate, turning a private house into a beerhouse. At this house they stayed eleven years, during part of which time they kept a second beerhouse in Camp street, off Deansgate, which they called "The Pilgrim's Rest," and was superintended by Mrs. Stokes' son. To this house they themselves finally removed, and kept it on for six years, when they carried their furniture to No. 11, Richmond street, between St. Stephen street and Broughton road, Salford, where they still lived together as man and wife, though the neighbors had their little whisperings together—the staple of their conversation being the peculiar figure of Harry Stokes, and speculations thereabout.

They were living in Richmond street up to the time of the tragedy which has revived the whole history of this singular person.—Harry Stokes appeared latterly to be falling into decayed circumstances, and the fear of

poverty is believed to have induced him to commit suicide. On Friday evening the deceased went to the Swan public house, Pendleton, and, after drinking four glasses of ale, he left for the purpose of proceeding as he stated, to Throstle Nest. In the morning a hat was found, on the top of the water, in the sluice of the river Irwell, at Mode Wheel, and on examination the body of a man was found standing upright in the water. At the inquest, before Mr. Coroner Rutter, on Saturday, the body was identified as that of "Harry" Stokes, the well-known master bricksetter of Salford, and it would probably have been buried in its clothes as it was, and the secret of the poor, courageous, hard-working Harriet Stokes would thus have been buried with her, had not one of the jury been acquainted with a portion of her past history. He mentioned his suspicion that the deceased was a woman and not a man, and two women who were sent by the coroner to solve the mystery returned tittering into the court with the information that, true enough, the body in the men's clothes, was that of a perfect woman and no man. She was very full breasted, but the shape of her womanly make was distorted by a broad strap which was buckled round her body under the arms.

There is something of grandeur, after all, in the character of that strange woman.— She has left mementoes of her industry and skill all over Manchester, and in many places in Salford. She was very clever in the erection of tall chimneys, and some of the highest in Manchester have been wholly or partially constructed under her superintendence, she has built churches, chapels, and extensive blocks of dwelling houses, among which are mentioned the large houses at the back of St. Philip's church, Salford; she was most expert in fitting stoves and fire-grates, and her aid in this branch of her trade has been obtained in some of the best houses in Manchester, and in the days of the Chartist riots she was sworn in as special constable, and was made captain of her company. Her industry and skill at one time placed her in very comfortable circumstances, and there are persons who are now esteemed among the foremost men in Manchester who have been entertained at the roaring suppers given by "Harry" Stokes.—*Salford (Eng.) Weekly News.*