

PERSONATED A MAN.

Startling Career of a Hungarian Countess Who Had Nine Wives.

The instances where women have donned male attire and acted the part of the sterner sex are many. One of the most remarkable of these is that of the so-called Count Sander Vay, of Hungary. In August, 1897, this individual married a teacher at Klogenfurt. The newly married couple lived for a time with the girl's father, an inspector of forests in that village. But the father-in-law found himself constantly fleeced by the alleged count; the references he gave were all bogus and the inspector, convinced his son-in-law was a swindler, put detectives on his track. Then a series of extraordinary revelations were made. The count was no count, but a countess, the daughter of the late Count Ladislas Vay, a general and imperial chamberlain. Her name was Sarolta Vay. She was born in 1856. Her mother, married for nine years without other issue, knew that Count Ladislas had waited long and anxiously for an heir, and she feared to tell him that his first born was only a girl. With the aid of a nurse she concealed from him the sex of the child, and as time passed took all necessary precautions to continue the deception. Sarolta went into knickerbockers and roundabouts at the age of 5, played boys' games and received a boy's education. When she was 14 her father decided to send her to a military school. To prevent this her mother was forced to confess the truth. The count, after a storm, swallowed his chagrin, put the girl into dresses and sent her to a female school. Sarolta refused to be transformed. She stole into trousers whenever she got a chance, she ran away from school, she begged her father to let her enter the honored hussar regiment. When he refused she swore to astonish the country as soon as she reached her majority. And she kept her word. The day she was 21 she resumed her male attire and swung into the vortex of dissipation in Vienna, Pesth and Prague. She associated with young men, who were not in the secret, in all manly amusements. She smoked, drank, gambled, fought duels, got into debt and to extricate herself embezzled, stole and forged on a grand scale. She likewise contracted no less than nine mock marriages. All of her "wives" have seemed to catch the contagion of her own hallucination. Six of them live in Vienna as divorced Countesses Vay.