

A Most Wonderful Case—Death of a Woman who for Twenty-five Years Passed as a Man.

WATSONVILLE, December 31st.—On Sunday last, in a little cabin situated on the Moss ranch, six or seven miles from town, died a person 67 years of age, well known to old timers here, and stage-drivers and stagemen generally, as Charley Parkhurst. He was one of the best drivers in early days in various parts of the State, from Stockton to Mariposa, from Oakland to San Jose, and from San Juan to Santa Cruz—when San Francisco was reached via San Juan. For fifteen or twenty years he had been engaged in farming, working in the woods, etc., and it is said that he accumulated several thousand dollars. For several years past he has not done much, being greatly troubled with rheumatism, which caused great suffering as well as considerable deformity. The immediate cause of his death was a cancer of the tongue. It was discovered when friendly hands were preparing him for his final rest that Charley Parkhurst was unmistakably a well-developed woman. It could scarcely be believed by persons who had known Charley Parkhurst for a quarter of a century. It is one of the most wonderful of the few such cases on record. That this woman, living among men for thirty years or more, going through all the dangers and vicissitudes of California life, should conceal her sex, could hardly be believed, but it is a fact. On the Great Register of this county of the year 1867 appears this entry: "Parkhurst, Charles Durkee; 55; New Hampshire; farmer; Soquel"—where he then lived. It is said by several who knew her intimately that she came from Providence, R. I. Of course great curiosity is excited as to the cause that led this woman to exist so many years in such a strange guise. There may be a strange history, that to the novelist would be a source of inspiration, and again, she may have been disgusted with the trammels surrounding her sex, and concluded to work out her fortune in her own way. More light may be thrown on this wonderful case.
