

THE WIFE OF A WOMAN

Annie Hindle's Bride---Strange Romance of the Stage.

Singular Marriage of a Male Impersonator With Her Maid—A Marvelous Incongruity Only Ended by Death.

There was a funeral on the Jersey City Heights the other day, and it brought together as mourners a dozen men and women who were once famous in an odd way on the American stage. They gathered in the little parlor of a pretty cottage; they sat for a little while around a handsome coffin; they talked in low and sad voices about the masses of flowers which were heaped upon the bier; they had a good word to say of the woman who lay dead among the palms, the roses and the smilax, and they seemed genuinely sorry for the chief mourner. The latter was a striking person in every way. Her face was masculine in all its lines; her eyes were gray, but lit with a kindly expression; her mouth was firmly cut, and though her lips quivered with emotion one could detect that this mourner was a woman of great mental force and capabilities. She was probably between 45 and 50 years of age. Doubtless she had been in her prime an excellent type of what is called the dashing handsome girl. Once, indeed, audiences in every city in this country had gazed in wonderment and admiration upon her, and perhaps she is not yet entirely forgotten; but here she was a mourner by the side of her dead—that dead a pretty woman, and in life the wife of the woman who now shed tears over the coffin. The wife of a woman! The expression sounds absurd, yet it is absolutely, literally correct. Annie Ryan, the wife, was dead, and Annie Hindle, the female husband, was burying her. No stage romance is this, says the correspondent of the *Chicago Herald*, no fable of grotesque imagination, but simply proof anew that truth indeed is stranger than fiction. Listen to the facts told as plainly as one can tell a story that almost tests human credence.

When Annie Hindle was five years old the woman who had adopted her, and who gave the protegee her own name, put her on the stage in the pottery district of Hertfordshire, in England. The little girl sang well ever so early. There was a fearlessness in her manner that tickled her rough audiences, and they made a favorite of her from the very first. At the outset she sang tender songs, with love as their theme, but as she grew up and traveled to London she enlarged her repertory. One day, half in jest, she put on a man's costume and sang a rollicking ditty about wine, women and the races. A shrewd manager who listened to her saw a new field open to her. In a week Annie Hindle was a "male impersonator" and all London was talking about the wonderful accuracy of her mimicry.

An American manager bargained with her, and about 1867 she came to New York, to triumph here as completely as she had triumphed in London. She was a blonde, about 5 feet 6 inches, with a plump form, well-shaped hands, small feet and closely cropped hair which, on and off the stage, she parted on one side, brushing it away from the temples, as men do. Her voice was deeper than an alto, yet it was sweet, and she sang true and with great expression. She was the first out and out "male impersonator" New York's stage had ever seen. Ella Wesner had not yet ceased to dance obscurely in the ballet with her sister; Maggie Weston was yet to come along in the crowded ranks of Hindle's imitators. But in '67 all the glory was Hindle's, all the novelty was her's, and she got all the money, too. It is a fact that this dashing singer was the recipient of as many "mash" notes as ever went to a stage favorite in this country. Once she compared notes with

H. J. Montague, that careless handsome actor, at whose shrine so many silly women had worshiped, but Hindle's admirer's outnumbered his, and they were all women, strange as it may seem.

A STRANGE AND UNHAPPY MATING.

Traveling through America about this time was Charles Vivian, the English comedian. Hee was a handsome fellow, a ready wit, a free spender, a great entertainer and an admirable performer of the Lindard type. It was famous before he came here, and on Broadway—for our Vanity Fair had a variety house on every third block—he never worked for less than \$150 a week. His path crossed Hindle's one night. She was earning as much as he was; she was as famous in one way as he was in another; their home was across the sea, and there was much in common between them. Charles Vivian speedily fell in love with Annie Hindle. Nobody was surprised. The couple seemed devoted and they made the courtship brief. On Sept. 16, 1868, Charles Vivian and Annie Hindle were married in Philadelphia. They started at once for the Pacific coast, as happy, apparently, as a pair of young doves. Yet they did not travel far together. At Denver Vivian and his wife separated. They never met again. He told his friends that their honeymoon had lasted one night. Hindle has since said he did not tell the truth.

"He lived with me," she declared, rather bitterly, "several months—long enough to black both eyes and otherwise mark me, yet I was a good and true wife to him."

Vivian did not get a divorce. He had no cause. Hindle did not seek one. She was free enough. So they traveled apart, each in his own way, busy enough, yet unhappy, and in March, 1880, Vivian died in Leadville. He had not prospered in his latter days. He should have had thousands of friends, for he it was who founded the great order of Elks. Yet he was practically penniless when he died, and they buried him in an unmarked grave, which waited seven years before the Elks put a monument over it to the memory of the order's founder.

THE LAST ROMANCE.

Hindle's strangest romance came later. In all her travels she carried a dresser. Ella Wesner was once high factotum to this dashing male impersonator, and a half dozen women, since known to the stage, had at various times helped to "make up" Hindle and dress her. In the summer of 1886 Annie Hindle's dresser and faithful companion was a pretty little brunette of 25, a quiet, demure girl, who made friends wherever she went. She accompanied Hindle to and from the theater and she was a most valuable help to the singer. One night in June, 1886, Annie Hindle and Annie Ryan left the Grand Rapids theater where Hindle was then engaged, and drove to the Barnard House. In room 19 a minister of the gospel, Rev. E. H. Brooks, awaited the couple. There was a best man—Jolly Gilbert Saroney, who, oddly enough, was a female impersonator, but there was no bridesmaid. At 10 o'clock Rev. Dr. Brooks performed the marriage ceremony, and solemnly pronounced Annie Hindle the husband of Annie Ryan. The female groom wore a dress suit; the bride was in her traveling costume. The minister put a fat fee in his pocketbook, and Mr. Saroney, the female impersonator, and Miss Hindle, the new husband, opened a bottle of wine and smoked a cigarette or two. There was a sensation in Grand Rapids, of course, but the clergyman defended his action manfully. "I knew all the circumstances," he said. "The groom gave me her—I mean his—name as Charles Hindle, and he assured me that he was a man. The bride is a sensible girl and she was of age. I had no other course to pursue. I believe they love each other and that they will be happy."

The bride was happy and the clergyman was right—her happiness ended only with her death, for she it was around whose coffin Annie Hindle and her friends gathered the other day in the little cottage on the Jersey Heights. For four or five years Annie Hindle and her wife had lived in this cosy nest, which Hindle had built years ago with her savings. The neighbors respected them. The outer world did not disturb them with its gossip. That they could live together openly as man and wife, the husband always in female attire and yet cause no scandal, is the best proof of the esteem in which those around them held them. No children were born to them, and perhaps that is why Annie Hindle, with tears in her eyes, told your correspondent that the best

of her life is gone. A man's widow and a woman's widower, is she not a strange figure on the American stage!

A BRILLIANT MAN SET FREE.

He is Col. Rice, the Star Prisoner at the Elmira Reformatory.

Col. Rice, who was sent to the Elmira Reformatory from New York some four years ago, has at last been released from that institution. Rice is one of the unfortunate. For his offense, in the eyes of most people, he received a big sentence. He was a reporter on the New York *Herald* and for charging illegal extra expenses was committed. About three years ago Superintendent Brockway gave him \$200 and sent him to Boston to learn some new military tactics. While there he married a society belle and they lived happily. To his wife one child was born. In the meantime Mr. Rice had secured a good position at a salary of \$50 a week. After two years had elapsed he was brought back to the Elmira Reformatory and compelled to remain until one day last week.

A Gem for Each Month.

JANUARY.

By her who in this month is born
No gems save her garnets should be worn;
They will insure her constancy,
True friendship, and fidelity.

FEBRUARY.

The February-born will find
Sincerity and peace of mind,
Freedom passion and from care,
If they the amethyst will wear.

MARCH.

Who in this world of ours their eyes
In March first open, shall be wise,
In days of pert-firm and brave,
And wear the hyacinth to the grave.

APRIL.

She who from April dates her years
Diamonds should wear, lest bitter tears
For vain repentance flow; this stone
Emblem of innocence is known.

MAY.

Who first beholds the light of day
In spring's sweet flowery month of May,
And wears an emerald all her life,
Shall be a loved and happy wife.

JUNE.

Who comes with summer to this earth,
And owes to June her day of birth,
With ring of pearl upon her hand,
Health, wealth, and long life can command.

JULY.

The glowing ruby should adorn
Those who in warm July are born;
Then they will be exempt and free
From love's doubt and anxiety.

AUGUST.

Wear moonstone, or will be for thee
No conjugal felicity.
The August-born without this stone,
'Tis said, must live unloved and lone.

SEPTEMBER.

A maiden born when autumn leaves
Are rushing in September's breeze
A sapphire on her brow should bind,—
'Twill cure diseases of the mind.

OCTOBER.

October's child is word for woe,
And life's vicissitudes must know,
But buy an opal on her breast,
And hope will lull those woes to rest.

NOVEMBER.

Who comes to this world below
With drear November's fog and snow
Should prize the topaz amber hue,—
Emblem of friends and lovers true.

DECEMBER.

If cold December gave you birth,
The month of snow and ice and mirth,
Place on your hand a turquoise blue,—
Success will bless what'er you do.

—Della Rankin.

His Money Killed Him.

Of misers who rolled in their gold I have often heard, but it is surely a new experience for one to die from the pressure of his accumulated specie. A poor-looking third-class passenger in the train from Paris to Turin was a week ago taken seriously ill as the latter place was neared. He was still alive when Turin station was reached and was carried off at once to a sofa in the waiting room, where he soon died. On examination, it was found that he was wearing a belt containing no less than 30,000 francs in gold and death had evidently been caused by the pressure of his belt with its precious contents. The dead man had also rouleaux of gold under his armpits, though he was dressed in rags, and so far no clue to his identity has been discovered.