

CONCEALMENT OF SEX.

Many instances are on record of women having successfully concealed their sex while for long years, or a lifetime, they wore the habiliments of men and pursued the rougher, harder vocations that are by common consent abandoned to their brothers. Their story necessarily reads like a romance, deeper, often more tragical than any in fiction, for it has the tremendous reality of truth. The Earl of Albermarle chronicles in his gossipy autobiography one of these strange histories, of which he has had some personal knowledge, and treats it as of undoubted authority. It was while at Cape Town, in 1819, that he met a person whose eccentricities attracted universal attention, Dr. James Barry, staff-surgeon to the garrison, and the Governor's medical adviser. Lord Charles described him to me as the most skillful of physicians and the most wayward of men. He had lately been in professional attendance upon the Governor, who was somewhat fanciful about his health, but, taking umbrage at something said or done, he had left his patient to proscribe for himself. I had heard so much of this capricious yet privileged gentleman, that I had great curiosity to see him. I shortly afterwards sat next him at dinner at one of the regimental messes. In this learned pundit I beheld a beardless lad, apparently my own age with an unmistakable Scotch type of countenance, redish hair, high cheek-bones. There was a certain effemiacy in his manner, which he always seemed striving to conceal. His style of conversation was greatly superior to that one usually heard at mess-tables in those days of non-competitive examination.

A mystery attached to Barry's whole professional career, which extended over more than half a century. While at the Cape he fought a duel, and was considered to be of a most quarrelsome disposition. He was frequently guilty of flagrant breaches of discipline, and on more than one occasion was sent home under arrest; but, somehow or other, his offenses were always condoned at headquarters.

In Hart's Annual Army List for the year 1855, the names of James Barry, M. D., stands at the head of the list of inspector generals of hospitals. In July of that same year, the Times one day announced the death of Dr. Barry, and the next day it was officially reported at the horse guards that the doctor was a woman. It is singular that neither the landlady of her lodging, nor the black servant who had lived with her for years, had the slightest suspicion of her sex. The late Mrs. Ward, daughter of Col. Tidy, from whom I had these particulars, told me further that she believed the doctor to have been the grand-daughter of a Scotch earl, whose name I do not now give, as I am unable to substantiate the correctness of my friend's surmise; and that she adopted the medical profession from the attachment to an army surgeon who has not been many years dead.