

THE MAN COUNTESS AGAIN.

An Inquiry Into Her Mental Condition by the Vienna Doctors.

The Austrian Countess Sarolta Vay is again before the Continental public. She made her debut some ten years ago in Vienna in a cut-away coat, high hat, and extravagantly pointed patent leather shoes. She represented herself to be Count Sandor Vay, and met on the field of honor every man who dared to question her word. It was learned shortly after her first appearance in the imperial city that she was in fact a child of Count Sandor Vay, formerly an Imperial Chamberlain and Colonel in the Austro-Hungarian army. She was his first born after many years of married life, and was passed off in her early years as a boy by her mother, who feared to disappoint the father by confessing that the only child and heir to the immense Vay estates was a girl.



COUNTESS VAY.

When Sarolta came to years of understanding, with a boy's clothes on her stalwart young form and a boy's training permeating her mind, she revolted against the idea of becoming a properly constrained young woman, and took to the gay world of the Kaiserstadt in her habitual garb. Her life there was an open scandal. She drank, bet, fenced, fought, gambled, rode fast horses, and instituted intrigues with numerous women, mostly soubrettes. She spent all the money allowed her by her father, compelled him several times, for the sake of the family's honor, to settle for her obligations of thousands of dollars, and, finally, in desperate financial straits for money with which to continue her attentions to a Hungarian concert hall singer, forged a note for some \$7,000. Then she disappeared. She turned up again at an Austrian summer resort, made love to young Marie Englehardt, daughter of a rich manufacturer from lower Austria, and, under the habitual pretence of being Count Sandor Vay, "married" her with tremendous pomp in the Roman Catholic church at Graz. Just a few days after the ceremony the detectives in charge of the forgery case found and arrested her, but not before she had spent all of Marie's dowry and had got possession of a large part of her private fortune. She was tried, adjudged irresponsible, placed under guardianship, and, with a shattered constitution, retired to the house of a friend in Prague. There for some time she remained quite secluded save for an occasional utterance to reporters to the effect that she would fight any one of them who dared to write of her as a woman.

Her dissyncretisms and profligacy, her crimes and her duels, her forgery, and her gallantry were supposed to be matters of the past, and were treated as such. The famous Vienna professor of medicine, Krafft-Ebing, even went so far as to hold a sort of post-mortem examination of her case and publish it in the form of a pamphlet obituary of her remarkable career.

The Countess, however, had no idea of thus retiring permanently from the gayeties of the life which she had found so sweet. Unknown to the friends and guardian who watched her, she sent a letter to her Marie—"adored Marie," as she called the manufacturer's daughter. Marie was in the proper state of mind to be roused by the Countess' appealing communication, for, curiously enough, this hoodwinked and abused young woman was still full of devotion to the dissolute Countess, called her "husband," and would not be consoled for the loss of her. She therefore at once got legal counsel and had an appeal filed against the order that had placed the Countess under guardianship. The result of the appeal was prolonged court proceedings, and eventually, two or three months ago, an order for the examination of Countess Sarolta Vay as to her sanity by the Vienna medical faculty.

The examination was made three weeks ago. Prof. Dr. Meiner, of the Vienna medical faculty reported that the "Countess, with her excesses, social recklessness, falsehood, and drunkenness, constituted an example of what is known as moral derangement." The evidences of the Countess's "moral derangement" are described, moreover, as her "fickleness in her intrigues with women, her utter lack of foresight in the use of money," her bitterness against Father Englehardt for his "ingratitude in protesting against the abuse of Marie's confidence," and her present expectation that her father and mother will allow her to continue her former life in men's attire." In short, the Vienna medical faculty consider the Countess irresponsible. Against this decision Marie and her attorney urge that, at the age of 18 or 20, when no one ever doubted for an instant that she was sane, the Countess had the same peculiar conception of life and her life duties that she still has. Marie is, moreover, about to try a new line of legal proceedings with a view to rescuing from virtual imprisonment the individual whom she has promised to "love, honor, and obey."