

SNIPPETS FROM TALKS

Tragedies of Mistaken Identity

Two Men Hanged by a Woman's Mistake—Innocence Proved Years Later
—Quaint Aspects of Life in India—Courtesy and Cleanliness of
German Public Servants.

MR. W. H. CARSON (4YA).

ONE of the earliest instances of innocent men being put to death as a result of mistaken identity occurred in the case of Clinch and Mackly, which took place as long ago as 1797. These two men were tried before Sir Hash Grose, a famous judge at that time, for the murder of a man named Sidney Fryer. Fryer's cousin, Ann Fryer, swore that at about 8 o'clock on the evening of May 7, 1797, she and Sidney Fryer were walking along a lane toward Islington. Suddenly a man appeared in front of them and when at a distance of about 12 feet from Miss Fryer he fired the fatal shot at her cousin. Immediately afterwards the man, who had a silk handkerchief tied over the lower part of his face, took from Miss Fryer what money she had and disappeared over a stile. An accomplice who until this time had not taken an active part in the proceedings relieved the unfortunate woman of her cloak and also made good his escape. According to Miss Fryer, the first man was of average size, but, as she put it, "inclined to be lusty." His associate in the crime was a tall man.

WHEN the woman was taken to a public-house soon after the crime she was unable to give anything in the nature of a detailed description of the men. Furthermore, at the coroner's inquiry, evidence was given to the effect that she had stated quite frankly that she could not describe the men. Nevertheless, when she was taken to the police station, she positively identified Clinch and Mackly as being the men who had been concerned in the murder of her cousin. Four other witnesses described two men whom they had seen in the neighbourhood about the time the murder was committed. These witnesses appeared to have been agreed on only one thing; that the taller man of the two had red or khaki hair. Not one of them was prepared to swear, however, that either Clinch or Mackly was one of the men seen by them. The most that could be elicited from them was the evidence of one, a mere boy, to the effect that he believed Clinch to be the man he had seen on the lane.

A POLICE officer named Blackiter swore that while Clinch was in custody, he had passed a remark that his being involved in this matter was going to be bad business for him. Strangely enough, this evidence was admitted without reservation in support of the contention that Clinch had admitted his guilt. Referring generally to the case on behalf of the prosecution, it may be noted that when the prisoners were arrested they had very little money on them, and none of the stolen property was traced to them. The defence produced as a witness Rice, the keeper of the public-house to which Miss Fryer was taken immediately after the commission of the crime. Rice

swore that Miss Fryer had stated that she had no idea whatever as to the description of the people who had been guilty of the murder. The very most that could be sifted from her story was that there were three young men, that they had something over their faces, and that they wore darkish coloured coats. After a retirement of only half an hour the jury found both prisoners guilty, and both were executed. That the evidence upon which they were hanged was all too flimsy was established with tragic certainty within a few years. A criminal named Burton Wood, who was executed on Kemmington Common, and his confederate, a man named Timms, confessed upon the scaffold that they, and not the unfortunate Clinch and Mackly, had been guilty of the murder of Sidney Fryer.

THE REV. FRANK AULT (3YA).

ONE of the interesting features of Indian life is the fact that many customs are the reverse of those in the West. We think a fine day is a happy omen for a wedding day. In the sun-scorched East a wet day is longed for as a happy augury for the bridal pair. The motion of the hand which we use when we say goodbye mean "come here" in India. In New Zealand we notice how happy brides look on their wedding day; in India it is the custom for the bride to look sad, and a bride who smiled at her wedding would be regarded as a bold young lady. Many expressions used in Indian speech indicate a way of thinking which is the reverse of ours. For example, we say: The boy took his exam. yesterday. In Indian idiom it is the master who takes the exam; the boy gives the exam. We say, "I went down town and met a man," an Indian would say, "I went down town and a man met me." Many of their idioms sound quaint to English ears. For instance, to say "I went for a walk" in India would be "I ate the air." "To be defeated" in the Indian vernacular is "To eat defeat." To swear an oath is "to eat an oath." The word for "darling" is a curious one. A mother or a newly-married husband will call the object of his or her affections "piece of my liver." In the Indian wishes to say, "I have lost courage," he says, "My heart has sat down." If he wishes to say, "I have a sore throat," he says, "My throat has sat down."

WHEN Indians meet they do not shake hands. A Hindu will join his hands together and bow—the fingertips of each hand touching one another and the hands raised to meet the face—and will say "Ram, Ram." (Ram, or Rama, is one of the great hero gods of India—an incarnation of Vishnu.) When two Mohammedans meet, each raises his hand to his brow and says, "Salaam," which means

"peace." It is not unusual to meet Indians who speak a number of languages. Our Indian padri-sahib in Hyderabad used to talk to me in English, to his wife in Gujarati, to his Christian congregation in Urdu, and to the non-Christians around him in Sindhi, which was his mother-tongue. We met another Indian padre in Delhi who had a marvellous capacity for interpreting. I remember his listening to a speech in English for about 15 minutes. He made no notes. He then translated that speech into Hindustani, word for word.

DR. HELEN SIMPSON (3YA)

IT is not only motor-cars, aeroplanes and similar things which move quickly in our modern world—in Europe, at any rate. Situations change with startling rapidity, and much has happened in and about Germany since my last, and singularly happy, visit fifteen months ago. We crossed the border at the German part of Strasbourg. The French railway officials left the train, and the Germans took charge. The customs officers waved my passport aside as soon as they saw that it was a British one; they asked me to open one of my two suitcases, barely looked at the top layer, and troubled me no further. But they were intensely interested in the newspapers left in the compartment by earlier travellers, and examined them carefully to see if there was anything in them which might seem unfitted for the eyes of their fellow-countrymen. As the train moved out of the station, along came a smiling young woman with a duster, and tidied us up in the proper German way. This is one of the striking things about Germany—the tidiness of the public places and conveniences.

NOBODY in a bus or tram dreams of dropping a ticket on the floor. The usual practice seems to be to leave them on the window ledge, and the conductor then puts them in the proper receptacle. I noticed the difference more, perhaps, when I went back to London and to the London buses with their hundreds of tickets strewn on seats and floors, and to the underground trains, the floors of which are always covered with cigarette ends and empty packets. More easy-going and suggesting a greater homeliness, perhaps, the English; but it is as much a habit and as easy for the German to drop his used ticket in a box or to put it on the window ledge as it is for the Englishman to drop his on the floor. And it is certainly pleasant to have the dust of travel removed from the railway carriage from time to time. The guard on this train was typical, too, of German guards, and indeed of German public officers generally—so ready and glad to help. I was reassured, and felt that whatever else had changed, the ordinary, kindly German