

MISTAKEN IDENTITIES.

INSTANCES OF MEN PLACED IN DEADLY PERIL BY ERROR.

Some Curious Incidents in the Courts of Europe and America—Old Bailey Records—Remarkable Disappearances and Errors that Have Been Sworn to as Facts.

It requires sometimes only a very slight change of habit or features to render a person unrecognizable as his "former self." Mr. Matthews, the former English Home Secretary, is said to have grown a beard during the recess, and to have been accordingly unrecognized by his Parliamentary friends and associates on his first appearance thereafter in the lobby.

To some types of face the unwonted presence or absence of beard or moustache may and does mean a great deal. Alterations of the features, however, may be made in other ways, and may result in mistakes as to identity of the most complete nature.

It is related of the late Charles Matthews that once upon a time, when lunched with a famous jeweller, who added pawnbroking to his avocation, the question arose regarding the effectual disguising of one's appearance. Matthews, after the pawnbroker had gone back to his shop, tied a bit of thread skillfully round his nose, and by the assumption of a particular air and attitude actually succeeded in getting a loan from the gentleman himself upon some spoons which he had purloined from his host's table.

This may have been a feat easy of accomplishment to a skillful actor, it is true, but it testifies as well to the great alteration which even a slight change of feature may produce in the countenance.

One fact, however, that tells most forcibly in the history of mistaken identities is the Dromio-like resemblance which may occasionally exist between persons who are in no way related to each other.

The old idea of everyone having his "double" may really find a measure of support in certain of the cases of mistaken identities which from time to time puzzle the curious and baffle even the detective expert. People have often enough found themselves in invidious positions in virtue of their close likeness to other persons.

A recent Dublin case illustrates this contention, and many more may be culled from the records of jurisprudence. It appears that a certain person, twenty-five years of age, was duly arrested and charged with being a deserter from the army. The age of the deserter, by the way, was given as eighteen years.

The prisoner had been reading for eight years for a fellowship at Trinity College. He was married, and on the very day he was alleged to have deserted he proved he was at church with his wife. The irony of fate, however, had decreed that both the innocent man and the deserter had boasted of a chicken-pox mark over the left eye, and in addition, I believe, it was alleged that there existed a certain resemblance between the two persons. A careful examination of the circumstances resulted, of course, in the discharge of the accused.

A more serious case was tried at the Old Bailey in 1834. A man named Stuart was placed on his trial charged with being a convict who escaped from transportation. Evidence accumulated fast and sharply against him, despite the assertion that he was not the man in question.

The jail governor swore that the prisoner at the bar was none other than Stuart, and the guard of the convict hulk wherein Stuart had been confined was equally certain of the identity of the prisoner with the escaped convict. It happened, however, that the fact of Stuart having in 1817 had a wart on his left hand was brought out in evidence.

The prisoner had given his name as Stippler, and had difficulty, it seems, in bringing witnesses to testify to the details of his life between 1817 and 1834. The Recorder, who tried the case, was ready to put it to the jury, when fortunately for Stippler, a certain Mr. Carpu, a surgeon, happened to be in court waiting to give evidence in a succeeding case. Struck professionally with the mention of the wart on the hand of the convict Stuart, Mr. Carpu entered the witness-box after a hurried consultation with the prisoner's counsel.

His testimony was to the effect that if such a wart existed, either the man himself, or the scar left after the operation of its removal, would be found on the prisoner's hand, provided he was Stuart. An examination of the hand showed neither wart nor scar, so the prisoner was at once acquitted. This case is not without its parallels in the way of mistaken identity, but it serves to show on how slight a matter the settlement of an individual's personality may really depend.

Perhaps one of the most celebrated cases of mistaken identity was the famous instance reproduced in the drama, "The Lyons Mail," in which Mr. Irving plays the "doubles," Lesurques and Dubosc. Here a citizen of Lyons, Lesurques, well known and respected, was charged with robbery and murder.

Witnesses swore in the most positive manner to his identity with the assassin, and adduced a scar on his face and a deformity of his hand in proof of their veracity.

Such scars Lesurques certainly possessed. He was tried, found guilty and executed, protesting his innocence. Dubosc, a convict, the real perpetrator of the crime, and leader of the gang, was afterward arrested and confessed to the murder.

In his case the marks of identity sworn to in the innocent Lesurques were duly reproduced; yet the two men were in no wise related, although strikingly alike in form and feature, and although, as we have seen, even similar accidental markings were by a cruel fate found on the person of each. Recently, we believe, in accordance with French law, the surviving descendants of Lesurques were awarded damages by the Court in consideration of the terrible judicial mistake which had been perpetrated on their ancestor.

In the State of New York a remarkable drama of mistaken identity was played out at the beginning of the present century. It seems that in the year 1800 there settled down in Haverstraw, Rockland County, a person named Thomas Hoag. He succeeded in entering the service of Judge

Coe, one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas.

Among the persons with whom Hoag became acquainted were Moses Anderson and his wife, and Catherine and Margaret Secor, Mrs. Anderson's daughters by a former husband. Hoag fell in love with Catherine, and they were married on the 25 of December, 1800. That the Anderson household must have been intimately acquainted with Hoag goes without saying.

He stayed at Anderson's house on his frequent week-end visits prior to his marriage, which took place before Judge Coe himself.

All went well till the end of March, 1801. Then Hoag suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace of his whereabouts, and with the distress caused by his wife and her friends by his mysterious fate, the first act of this drama may be said to come to an end. The second act introduces us to one Joseph Parker, an inhabitant of New York City.

On the 8th of May, 1798, Parker married Susan Faesch. They lived from May, 1800, to April 1801, in a house, the landlord of which was a certain Captain Pelor. Parker was by occupation a car driver, though he had been trained as a ship rigger. He was also a member of the city watch service.

Now, about the middle of 1802, Parker was accosted in New York while driving his cart, by Mrs. Anderson, from Haverstraw, who was accompanied by her daughter Margaret. They addressed him as Thomas Hoag, the missing husband of Catherine. Unless their eyes and senses at large were grossly deceived, the women saw Hoag before them, and boldly challenged his motives for his mysterious disappearance.

Even the voice of Parker was noted to be like that of Hoag, and was described as "shrill, thick, and hurried, with something of a lisp." Such a peculiarity, added to the exact physical likeness, was surely incapable of reproduction by mere chance in two distinct individuals.

But more was to follow. Mrs. Anderson remembered that her missing son-in-law had a well-marked pear on his brow. Asked to take off his hat, the scar was seen on the brow of Joseph Parker the carman. He shrugged his shoulders—also a trick of Hoag's—and, despite his denials, both women were ready to swear to his identity with Thomas Hoag.

Then came identification by people from Haverstraw. They were sure Parker was Hoag. A double lawsuit of civil nature was brought against Parker, but was decided in his favor. The Court pronounced in the one suit that he was not the man Hoag, and in the other a non-suit was entered. This ended the second act of the drama.

The curtain rises on the third and concluding act, where it fell—in a Court of Law. This time Parker was placed at the bar of a Criminal Court to answer a charge of bigamy. On the ground that he had married Catherine Secor, when he was already the husband of Susan Faesch, pains and penalties were sought him. But the first, and indeed only question to be established was, "Is the prisoner Thomas Hoag or Joseph Parker?"

Failing to establish his identity as the former, no charge of bigamy could of course be upheld. Judge Coe was as satisfied that Parker was his former servant Thomas Hoag as that he himself was Benjamin Coe.

One Knapp, who was intimate with Hoag at Rockland, swore to Parker's identity with the missing man. Hoag's wife, Catherine Secor, was positive on this point, so was her sister, and so were her father, and her brother, James Secor.

But in addition to the scar on his brow, it turned out that Hoag had a scar on his foot, caused by treading on a knife. This was testified to by three witnesses. The Andersons knew of it, and so did the witness Knapp. This was the one side of the case. Then came the defence, which would have delighted the heart of Weller senior, in respect of its proving to be a remarkable strong alibi.

Seven witnesses swore to Parker having lived in Captain Pelor's house in New York from May, 1800, to April, 1801. On Christmas Day, 1800 (Hoag's wedding day at Haverstraw), Parker was loading a cotton ship, and during October, November and December of 1800, and in January and February, 1801, he was proved to have been on duty in the city watch.

He was certainly on duty on the 29th December, 1800, so that it was morally impossible he could have been the man who had married Catherine Secor the day before in Rockland. Last of all came the episode of the scar on the foot.

Parker exhibited his feet to the jury. There was not the trace of a scar upon them. This was sufficient. He was acquitted without the jury leaving the box. On Hoag's neck was also a scar, testified to by Anderson, and Parker actually also showed such a scar.

There was thus absolute, or at least a remarkably close, identity in general appearance, features, and, more extraordinary still, in the accidental marks borne by the two men. Yet the chain of resemblances was broken by the absence of the scar on the foot.

Singular as it is to think of the absolute certainty of Catherine Secor and her friends as to the identity of Parker with her husband Hoag, what became of Hoag was never known; but the case is remarkable enough, if only by way of teaching us the lesson that, after all, "appearances are deceptive," and never more so, apparently, than when they relate to the recognition of those with whom, it may be, we have lived on terms of the closest association.

Plenty of Beer in Europe.

Statistics of the beer production of Europe show that the total quantity brewed is 3,105,000,000 gallons, Germany coming first with a production of 1,071,066,105 gallons, of which 644,752,505 gallons are brewed in North Germany, 344,830,305 gallons in Bavaria, 70,953,750 gallons in Wurtemberg, 56,445,840 gallons in Baden, and 17,083,305 gallons in Alsace-Lorraine. Great Britain comes next with a total of 874,192,275 gallons, while Austria-Hungary is the third with a total of 308,880,675 while France follows with about 225,000,000 gallons. Relatively to their population, Denmark with 49,185,000 gallons brewed, and Norway with 38,304,990 have a much larger production than most of the others. But Russia, with its vast area and large population, produces only 65,892,870 gallons, while the quantity of beer produced in other countries is: Switzerland,

26,694,495; Spain, 23,062,500 gallons; Turkey, 3,150,000 gallons; Italy, 3,099,665 gallons; Roumania, 2,225,000 gallons; Luxembourg, and Serbia, 2,092,500 gallons each; and Greece, 150,345 gallons. The average quantity of beer brewed out of Europe is 830,668,815 in the United States, 36,258,940 in Australia and 4,966,020 in Japan."

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"Come to my arms, my darling child," he exclaimed, as the tears of joy coursed down his wrinkled cheeks, "come to my arms."

"Do I get the tiara?" she asked, hesitating ere she accepted the invitation. "Of course not," he smiled, delightedly, "you get the coachman. I owe him eight months' wages."

That ended it. It is estimated that the main wheel of a watch makes 1,460 revolutions in a year; the second or central wheel, 8,760; the third wheel 70,080; the fourth wheel, 525,600; and the fifth, or scape wheel, 4,731,860. The number of beats or vibrations is 141,912,000 in a year.

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ALL THAT CERTAIN LOT, PIECE OR parcel of land, situate in the City of Saint John, being known and distinguished as all that part of Lot No. 29, Class M, in the partition of the Estate of the late Honorable William Hazen as its lot on the Northern Side of the Strait Street Road (so called). All that certain lot, piece or parcel of land, heretofore sold and conveyed by Charles Edward Scammell and Anne Maria, his wife to Benjamin Lawton, by Deed recorded in the office of the Registrar of Deeds for the City and County of Saint John, in Book P, No. 6 of Records, pages 414 and 415, and therein described as situate lying and being in the Town (now City) of Portland, in the City and County of Saint John, and Province aforesaid, known and distinguished as Lot number eighteen (18) on a plan of division of land between the late William Hazen, Esquire, and the late James White, Esquire, having a front on the Strait Street Road (so called) of one hundred (100) feet or thereabouts, commencing at low water mark and extending back, preserving the same breadth, until it meets the line of lands owned by the heirs of the said William Hazen, Esquire, and further referred to and described in a certain Indenture of Release or Partition, dated the eighth day of February, A. D. 1890, registered in Book Q, No. 4 of Records, pages 295, 296, 297 and 298, for the City and County of Saint John, and made between John Howe, of the City aforesaid, Esquire, and Mary, his wife, of the one part, and Georganna Wilson of the other part, as the land and premises recently in the tenancy of Messrs. Short and Estey, and afterwards occupied by Nathan S. Demill."

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