

AN AUGUST MORNING.

In gleam of pale translucent amber woke
The perfect August day ;
Through rose-flushed bars, of pearl and opal, broke
The sunlight's golden way.

Scarcely the placid river seemed to flow
In tide of amethyst,
Save where it rippled o'er the sands below,
And granite boulders kissed.

The heavy woodland masses hung, unstirred,
In languorous slumber deep,
While, from their green recesses, one small bird
Piped to her brood, asleep.

The clustering lichen wore a tenderer tint,
The rocks, a warmer glow,
The emerald dew-drops, in the sunbeam's glint,
Gemmaed the rich moss below.

Our fairy shallop idly stranded lay,
Half mirrored in the stream,
Wild roses drooped, glassed in the tiny bay,
Ethereal as a dream.

You sat upon your rock, a woodland queen
Upon a granite throne ;
All that still world of loveliness serene
Held but us twain alone.

Nay, but we felt another Presence there,
Around, below, above ;
It breathed a poem through the crystal air,
Its name was LOVE !

FIDELIS.

PERIWIGS—II.

THE Rev. Sydney Smith in an article on a "Spital Sermon with notes" published by its preacher, Dr. Parr, opens his contribution to the *Edinburgh Review* of 1802, thus : "Whoever has had the good fortune to see Dr. Parr's wig must have observed that while it trespasses a little on the orthodox magnitude of perukes in the anterior parts, it scorns even Episcopal limits behind, and swells out into boundless convexity of frizz, the *mega thauma* of barbers, and the terror of the literary world. After the manner of his wig the Doctor has constructed his sermon, giving us a discourse of no common length, and subjoining an immeasurable mass of notes, which appear to concern every learned thing, every learned man, and almost every unlearned man since the beginning of the world."

Samuel Parr was a great scholar, whose reputation was increased by his dogmatic manner and violent disposition, and it must have been with a smile that the great Sydney thought of this ingenious parallel between Parr's wig and Parr's sermon.

It was about this time that the periwig began, like Silas Wegg's version of the history, to "decline and fall off" after a proud reign of a couple of centuries, for we have seen that wigs were occasionally worn before the Restoration of the rightful heir to the Stuart throne. Mr. Lowell, in his charming essay on Pope, truly says "From the compulsory saintship and cropped hair of the Puritans, men rushed or sneaked, as their temperaments dictated, to the opposite cant of sensuality and a wilderness of periwig." There can be no doubt, in the period of literary decadence which followed the Restoration period, men carried more outside their heads than inside, for some of their wigs were enormously grand and none of their works were.

Everybody wore wigs—old and young, rich and poor. A common street cry of the time was "fine tie or fine bob, sir," and the prices varied from a guinea upwards. Second-hand wigs came cheaper but were confined to the poorer classes and miserly characters. Even the apprentice had a stipulation inserted in his indentures that his master should provide him with "one good and sufficient wig yearly and every year for and during, and unto the expiration of the full end and term of his apprenticeship."

The value of good wigs was considerable and the stealing of them followed as a matter of professional duty to the street thief. The manner he adopted was certainly ingenious. Finding out when a big wig was about to visit the court or the play, he would lay in wait for the carriage at a conveniently dark and sequestered spot, then spring on behind, rip through the leather back, if it had one, and snatch the coveted wig from the astonished head of the gentleman travelling within. Before the carriage could be stopped the thief had usually made good his escape. Stolen wigs were easily disposed of to unscrupulous barbers or to the second hand dealers in Rag Fair or Petticoat Lane.

There is a verse celebrating a barber of Middle Row in the following mellifluous style :—

Full many a year, in Middle Row, has this old barber been,
Which those who often that way go have full as often seen ;
Bucks, jemmies, coxcombs, bloods and beaux, the lawyer, the divine,
Each to this reverend tonsor goes to purchase wigs so fine.

It is a matter of congratulation that British-made wigs were considered far superior to those made in France or Germany.

With the smaller and more mischievous members of the household, and sometimes with the sporting friends, it was a habit to fish for wigs. This sport, which is nowhere recognized by Isaac Walton, consisted of attaching a bent pin to a string and then throwing the line from a window or over a balustrade to attach it to a passing or descending periwig. If the wearer happened to be bald the results were more amusing to the angler ; but more annoying to the fish.

When wigs came in, the judges, lawyers and physicians took to them at once in a very sensible manner and looked far more learned and respectable than nature had probably intended. "The legal waste of wig" still remains like many other legal accessory that would be better out of practice, and perhaps the very same oxtail has supplied a judge with both soup and wig. The gallants of the Restoration period wore wigs, and of course gave a great deal of their spare time (which was their lives—time that might well have been spared) to the proper adornment of their capillary coverings, to which end they carried ivory, pearl, or tortoise-shell combs in their pockets and took every opportunity to use them, whether in church, on the street or at the theatre.

We have often lamented that some literary perquier, who loves pen and peruke alike, has not compiled a catalogue of historical wigs, with particulars of their rises and falls. A volume of peculiar interest to antiquarians, who by the way are usually bald, would certainly result. We will give a few examples to indicate the nature of such an undertaking. It would be culpable negligence to omit a wig of such literary moment as that which belonged to John Gilpin—or the other which he borrowed. What elements of humour those two wigs are in the never-to-be-forgotten ride ! They are put on and taken off at the right instant, and fit their places to a hair ; verily the ballad of "John Gilpin" without its wigs would be as bald an affair as its hero, and as bare a sketch as ever was rhymed. Yet neither wig obtrudes in the poem. His own wig, and beyond a doubt it was his best one, is unfortunately lost soon after the start, in the 25th verse, and it is not until he reaches the 46th verse of his immortal gallop, after he has passed "through merry Islington" and left his wife behind on the balcony of the Bell at Edmonton, that his friend the Callender at Ware lends him "a wig that flowed behind," which is also lost in the 56th verse, "because it was too big." The big wig of the Callender suggests other big-wigs, who derived their nickname as a class from the imposing magnitude of their head-dress.

Some of our favourite wigs are still to be found in the pages of Sterne, notably those which adorn the heads of Mr. Walter Shandy, progenitor of the misnamed Tristram, and "my uncle Toby." The latter gentleman was especially fond, and consequently so are we, of his Ramillie or old tie wig and who does not call to mind the fix Mr. Shandy found himself in through taking off his wig with the wrong hand when he was hot and wanted to get at his handkerchief. Listen a few minutes to Tristram on the incident : "Matters of no more seeming consequence in themselves than 'whether my father should have taken off his wig with his right hand or with his left,' have divided the greatest kingdoms, and made the crowns of the monarchs who governed them to totter upon their heads. As my father's India handkerchief was in his right coat-pocket he should by no means have suffered his right hand to have got engaged ; on the contrary, instead of taking off his wig with it, as he did, he ought to have committed that entirely to his left ; and then, when the natural exigency my father was under of rubbing his head called out for his handkerchief, he would have had nothing in the world to have done but to have put his right hand into his right coat-pocket, and taken it out, which he might have done without any violence, or the least ungraceful twist in any one tendon or muscle of his whole body."

"In this case (unless indeed my father had been resolved to make a fool of himself, by holding the wig stiff in his left hand, or by making some nonsensical angle or other at his elbow-joint or arm-pit) his whole attitude had been easy, natural, unforced ; Reynolds, himself, as great and graceful as he paints, might have painted him as he sat. Now, as my father managed the matter, consider what a devil of a figure my father made of himself."

There was an old form of expletive or verbal explosion of bad temper, which consisted of the simple phrase, "Dash my wig." It was used long after the article referred to went out of fashion and there were really no wigs left to dash. When the folly of dashing anything that was not in existence became apparent the imperative verb depended upon something else for its support and as nothing more *apropos* could be found, "Dash my buttons" took its place as a mode of angry address. One of the best illustrations of the use of a wig as an alleviator of temporary annoyance is given by the same writer in "Tristram Shandy" : "It is not half an hour ago, when, in the great hurry and precipitation of a poor devil's writing for daily bread, I threw a fair sheet, which I had just finished and carefully wrote out, slap into the fire, instead of the foul one. Instantly I snatched off my wig and threw it perpendicularly, with all imaginable violence, up to the top of the room ; indeed I caught it as it fell, but there was an end of the matter. *Nor do I think anything else in nature would have given such immediate ease.*"

It was customary for a long time to use powder on the wig. In one of his satires Pope has a line, "My wig all powder and all snuff my band." It was enacted that

hair-powder should be made of starch and that all other was illegal as well as injurious. Laws standing in the same relation to pie-crusts as promises, it is not to be wondered at that barbers broke them ; consequently such records as the following are to be found in the old books of the London courts of law : "On 20th November, 1746, fifty-one barbers were fined £20 each for having hair-powder not made of starch," and "on 27th November, 1746, forty-nine other barbers were similarly served for similar reasons." The magistrates took the starch out of the barbers for taking the starch out of the wigs.

We have notices of many wigs of many men ; but may merely mention a few. It is recorded thus in the wig-life of Mr. William Emerson, once a famous mathematician, now but little known except as an eccentric character of the last century : "His wigs were made of brown, or of a dirty flaxen-coloured hair, which at first appeared bushy and tortuous behind, but which grew pendulous through age, till at length it became quite straight, having probably undergone the operation of the comb ; and either through the original malformation of the wig, or from a custom he had of frequently thrusting his hand beneath it, the back part of his head and wig seldom came into very close contact."

Some men, either from reasons of economy or comfort, wore their wigs as long as possible, until in fact they were well-nigh worn away and became at once a jest and reproach.

A joke on Jekyl, or some odd, old whig,
Who never changed his principle or wig.

Dr. Browne Willis, the antiquarian, who died in 1739, owned a tie wig, which he had worn for nine years ; after which we are told "it was lain by at his barber's, never to be put on but once a year, in honour of the Bishop of Gloucester's birthday."

There is some sort of reasonable ground for phrenology to stand upon in the bumps of the heads, but to judge of the inside of a skull by the appearance of the wig without is of course a work of pure imagination. A certain set of reasons may account for the milk in the cocoa-nut, though not for the hair outside, and, *vice versa*, the conditions that govern the wig may not affect the character beneath. Yet Præd, in the first quarter of this century, inclined to another view of the matter, when he wrote the following in "The Etonian," a school magazine that was once honoured by a flattering notice in the *Quarterly Review* : "In the days of our ancestors the flowered wig was the decoration of the gentleman ; and the hair, raised by cushions, stiffened with powder, and fastened with wires formed the most becoming insignia of the lady. The behaviour of both sexes was the counterpart of their occipital distinctions ; among the gentlemen the formal gallantry of those days was denoted by a no less formal peruke, and among the ladies the lover was prepared to expect a stiffness of decorum by the warning he received from so rigid a stiffness of *tête*."

Wigs could not last forever, in the ordinary course of mundane affairs ; they often came to an end long before their owners. What became of the old wigs ? They were bought up at the cheapest possible prices by itinerant purchasers, just as the Jews buy up old clothes. Belonging to this old and not respected trade was one, Sir Jeffrey Dunstan, who was elected for Garrat for three Parliaments. Of course he was an outdoor member, for the election, alas, was as mock as Jeffrey Dunstan's title. The little dwarf did not think so, but made political speeches to all who would listen to him and adopted as his armorial bearings four wigs and a quart pot.

Footo has a whimsical comedy entitled "The Mayor of Garrett," and as Hogarth witnessed the mock-election more than once it is not unlikely some of its incidents were reproduced in his election caricatures.

The old wig purchasers sold their purchases to the second-hand clothes men of Rag Fair, Petticoat Lane, Rosemary Lane and such public marts for the poor and one of the curious customs of these places was that of "Dipping for Wigs." A large barrel stood filled with old wigs and for sixpence or a shilling, according to the assorted contents of the tub, the payer dipped his hand into the lottery and pulled out one wig, which he was obliged to be content with. In the leather trade old wigs were also used by curriers for cleaning the waste, etc., from the leather.

One would hardly expect to find wigs at sea, though pig-tails were worn by sailors in the days when Charles Dibdin wrote of "Barbers' blocks, where smiles the parson's wig." Still it is customary at the grand ceremonial, held upon crossing the line, for Daddy Neptune to wear a wig, which consists of the head of a wet swab, the drenched ends of which hang down his back like dripping locks of hair.

What a wig, natural or artificial it matters not, must have belonged to Gargantua when, "combing his head with a comb, which was 900 feet long of the Jewish cane measure, and whereof the teeth were great tusks of elephants, whole and entire, he made fall at every rake about seven balls of bullets, at a dozen the ball, that had stuck in his hair at the razing of the castle of the wood of Vede."

But tales of the hair (apart from balloon adventures) are as numerous as the particular capillary filaments composing the wig itself. Think of that self-sacrificing Countess of Suffolk in the beginning of last century, who, not having enough funds to provide for a large dinner party, sold her fine head of hair to a barber for twenty pounds and bartered the proceeds for the benefit of her expected guests. Hare was certainly on the table that evening.