CHINAMEN'S QUEUE.

BY MRS. S.C. WINGATE.

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Everyone knows that a Chinaman wears his hair in a queue, but not everyone knows why he does so. A Chinaman's queue is not a mere oddity or variety; it is, to him, a very serious thing; losing it, he would almost lose his respectability, and history tells of more than one time when it has been a matter of life and death.

In many of their customs the people of China follow their forefathers of more than a thousand years ago, but queues may be called a new fashion, having only been worn about two handred and fifty years.

In very old times, the Chinese wore their long hair put up in a peculiar manner upon the tops of their heads. and called themselves "The Black-Haired Race;" but about the time that the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, in the year 1627, the Tartars, who had come down from Manchuria, and, after long wars, had conquered China, which they have governed ever since, made a law that all the Chinese, to show that they had been conquered, should take down their top-knots, and wear their hair as the Tartars did, in a hanging braid; and they threatened to kill all, who would not do it.

Of course the Chinese were greatly distressed by this; but, as it was better to have a tail than to be without a head they submitted in the end, making the best of what they could not help.

The people of southern China held out longest against the queue, and, in one district, men were hired to wear it. Even now, dwelling among the hills, are a few men belonging to a very old and wild tribe, whose pride it is that they have never worn hanging hair; while the Amoy men, who were the very last to yield to the Tartars, wear a turban to hide the shaven head, and the detested tail; but some persons think that the nation in general have come to like the new style better than the old; others think that they would gladly go back to a way which, to him is truly delightful the old way, if they could.

A few years ago there was a great rebellion in China. A part of the still less. Chinese rebelled against the Tartists. and all the rebels put up their hair in the old Chinese fashion, and because they did not shave their heads, they went by the name of the "Long-Haired Robbers." When any of their soldiers met a man with a queue they knew that he was loyal to the Tartar government and they would kill him, or cut off his greve, or do what they liked with him; and, on the other hand, the life of a "Long-Haired Robber" was not safe for a moment if he fell into the hands of the government troops. At length, after many, many millions of people were killed, queues carried the day, and the rebels were conquered.

I have heard that thieves sometimes have their queues cut off for a punishment, and, now and then, I suppose, a person's hair must fall off after illness. but, in these cases, it would grow again.

There are two classes of men in China who neves wear queues-the Buddhist priests, who shave their heads all over, and who can be known by the color of their gowns, and their queer hats, and the Tauists, who, as a sign of their priesthood, wear their hair in a kind of twist on the back of their heads. With these few exceptions, every Chinaman has a queue, from the young child whose short hairs are pinched up, sometimes on the crown of the head, and sometimes on the sides of it, and braided with threads of red silk into a tight little tail a few inches long, so stiff that it stands straight out from the head, up to the almost bald old man, whose straggling gray hairs are tied into a thin wisp on the back of his neck.

The Chinese have usually a good quantity of hair, coarse, perfectly straight, and jetty black, except, in a few cases, where, from illness, the color is rusty black. They have hardly any beard, but some of them-though not often before they are grandfathers, and more than forty years old-wear a much-admired moustache. Accustomed to black locks and smooth faces, they look curiously on the full beards of the men, and the yellow curls of the children, of our fairer race, or as they style us, "The Red-Headed Foreigners."

The Chinese shave the whole head, except a round patch on the crown. Awake.

about as large as a breakfast saucer. On this they let the hair grow, and it is combed back and down, and tied firmly with a string, at the middle of the bottom of the patch. It is then divided into three strands and braided. If a man is very poor, he simply has a plat, the length of his hair, fastened at the end with a cotton string; but the Chinese have a good deal of pride about their hair, and, if they can afford it, like to have the queue handsomely made.

Often tresses of false hair are added to it, for making which the hairs that fall out are carefully saved. Of course, the hair is thinner at the end than at at the top, and to keep the braid of more even size, and to increase its length, long bunches of black silk cord are gradually woven into it.

Queues vary in length, but grown men often wear them hanging nearly to their shoes, the upper part of the braid being of hair, and the lower part of black silk cord, which is tied in a tasel at the end. In southern China, children's queues are made bright and junty with crimson silk.

For mourning white cord is used, and for half mourning blue. Also, persons in mourning do not have their heads shaven for a certain length of time. When the emperor dies, nobody in China is expected to be shaven for one hundred days.

Commonly, tidy, well-to-do people have their heads shaven every few days, and, as no one could easily shave the top of his own head, everybody employs a barber. Of course there are a great many barbers, and, with all the millions of people in China, they have a large business.

Besides the shops, many barbers have little movable stands containing all their tools, and they may be often seeing plying their art by the wayside, or at the houses of their customers. The barber has a basin of hot water, a towel and an awkward kind of razor: and when he has shaven and washed the head, and braided the hair of a man, he ends all by patting him, with both hands, upon the back and shoulders, in For all this, his charge is not more than six cents, and a poor man would pay

To make his queue thicker, sometimes a Chinaman wishes to grow more hair. and the barber will leave his head unshaven for, perhaps, a quarter of an inch all round the old circle of hair. When the new hair is an inch or two long, being very stiff, it stands up in a fringelike a kind of black halo—all round his head, looking very comical, and annoying the Chinaman very much, until it is long enough to be put into the

When a man is at work, he finds his queue very much in his way, and he binds it about his head, or winds it up in a ball behind, where he sometimes fastens it with a small wooden comb: but, in his own country, on all occasions of form and dress, he wears it hanging. and it would not be polite to de other-

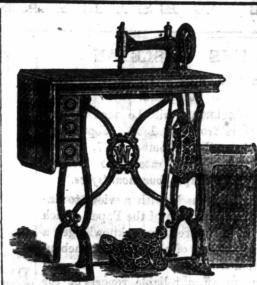
As it would take a long time to dry it, he dislikes to wet it, and, if rain comes on, hastens to roll it up and cover

Sometimes beggars, to make themselves look very wretched, do not dress their hair for a long time, and it becomes so frizzled and matted that hardly anything could be done to it, but to

cut most of it off. When a culprit is arrested in China, the officer takes hold of his queue and leads him to prison by it, often treating him very cruelly.

Little girls, as well as little boys, have their heads shaven when they are about a month old. This is done before an idol, with a good deal of parade. Young girls also wear their hair in queues, but as when older their heads are not shaven like those of the boys, a larger quantity of hair is drawn back into the braid, making it much heavier. When married, their hair is put up in the fashion of the the women of the district where they live, but married

women never wear their hair braided. One who has lived long in China does not like to see a thin, uneven queue, tied with a cotton string; it has a slovenly, poverty-stricken air; while a thick. glossy braid, with a heavy bunch of silk in the end of it, looks tidy and prosperous; and a neat plat of silvery hair betokens comfortable old age. - Wide



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