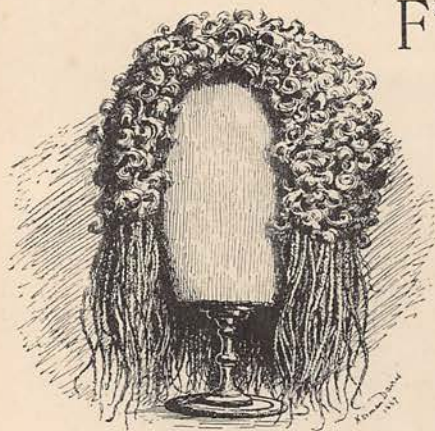


A CHAT ABOUT WIGS.

BY TOM ROBINSON, M.D.



EGYPTIAN WIG (PROBABLY FOR FEMALE).

Found near the small Temple of Isis, Thebes.
(From the British Museum.)

Nazarites, whose hair a vow kept long); the ancient Greeks, with hair so long as to win from Homer the distinction of "long-locked"; the Romans, more fastidious than even the Greeks in the culture of their hair—these nations have given to the men and women of our own time some, though not perhaps all, of the fanciful whims and fashions attaching to this certainly not unimportant feature of the human body; for it is of some moment not entirely to set aside such a characteristic as the hair—contributing as this may be made to do to the dignity, and even beauty and gracefulness, of the body. But I do not propose to write a long paper on the subject of the hair of either the head or the face, but to say a few words about the wig, which appears to date as far back in its origin as the time when pates were first made to fit into them. Secular writers as well as sacred have kept us well informed of the doings of the ancients in hair culture and decoration. While women did not disdain to dye, curl, scent their natural, and even to wear false hair, so young dandies and grave statesmen did not refuse to appear both in public and private in hairy and fragrant structures of the most lavish kind; and as fashion is never content till it reaches the extreme end of its tether, it is fairly safe to assume that the wig is the outcome of a rage that ran rife among society some ages ago to secure, by artificial means, that importance which a magnificent head-dress would afford, yet which Nature had herself denied to them. The Egyptians wore false beards; it is not surprising, therefore, to find them wearing a false head-dress. In any case, they are credited with the invention of

wigs. As they always shaved the head, they could scarcely devise a better covering than the wig, which, while it protected them from the rays of the sun, allowed, from the texture of the article, the transpiration from the head to escape, which is not the case with the turban. In the wigs preserved in the British and Berlin Museums, the upper portion of the wig will be found made with curled hair, the plaited hair being confined to the lower part and sides. These wigs, says Wilkinson, were worn both within the house and out of doors. At parties the head-dress of the guests was bound with a chaplet of flowers, and ointment was put upon the top of the wig, as if it had really been the hair of the head.

The term wig, a contraction of periwig, is evidently derived from the French *perruque*; but the etymology of the French word is not quite so clear: some derive it from the Greek *πέρας*, an impostor; or from *πέριχος*, because the first wigs were made of yellow or reddish hair, which is very doubtful. Fiery-red hair was neither liked in Greece nor in Rome. Clitapho refused to marry the daughter of Phanokrates on account of her red hair.

The word was, as is pointed out in the *Vocabulaire Provençal*, 1785, of Celtic origin.

Perruque occurs abroad in the tenth century, and meant the natural head hair. *Perruque* was only used in the fifteenth century to distinguish the fictitious from the natural. In Rome, the most common name for a wig was *galerus*, a round cap.

Wigs may date back in England from the reign of Stephen. The peruke mania was at its height at the time of Louis XIV. In 1656 there were not less than fifty Court *perruquiers*, whom Louis XIV., by a decree of the Council, declared *artistes*, and Le Gros founded at Paris an *Académie de Frisure*. But a storm was



"IT MAKES AN ILL FACE TOLERABLE" (p. 493).

gathering about their heads. The celebrated Colbert, amazed at the large sums spent for foreign hair, conceived the idea of prohibiting the wearing of wigs at Court, and tried to introduce a kind of cap. But the wig-makers carried the day; they proved that more money came to France for the wigs than went out for the hair. Louis XIV. and his courtiers now wore wigs bigger than ever, some of which cost 5,000 francs (£200). The greatest *perruquier* of the time was Binelle.

Charles II. was the first English monarch to appear on the Great Seal in the habit of a Roman general with a great periwig. Periwigs were not worn by gentlemen alone. They had long before this period been used by ladies—for in Chalmers' "Life of Mary, Queen of Scots," appears a letter of Knollys to Cecil, in which it is stated that Mistress Mary Seaton is praised by the Queen (Mary) as the finest busker (hairdresser) to be found in any country. "She did set a curled hair upon the Queen that was said to be a *perewyke*." Mary's hair was black. Again, Hentzner describes Queen Elizabeth, saying she wore false hair, and that red. The ladies, he says, dyed their hair of various colours, particularly of a sandy colour, in compliment to the Queen, whose natural locks were of that tint. Mary Stuart obtained her wigs from Edinburgh, not merely while in Scotland, but during the time she was a prisoner in England. Her faithful valet and wardrobe keeper, Servais de Cindè, sent her, among other things, in 1567, as we read in the "Illustrations of Queen Mary and King James VI.," "*plusieurs perriques*."

"The True Report of the Last Moments of Mary Stuart" sets forth that when the executioner lifted the head by the hair to show it to the bystanders, with the exclamation, "God save the Queen!" it suddenly dropped from his hands. The hair was false; the head had been shaved in front and at the back, leaving a few grey hairs on the side.

It was in the age of Louis XIV. that the wig became Imperial. The Ramlie wig soon reached our shores, and survived until the reign of George III. The tie of it alone still survives. Louis XIV. had increased his peruke to an enormous size. He found imitators even among philosophers. The peruke of Leibnitz reached down to his loins. There is, therefore, no

doubt that the full-bottomed wig became grand and improving by its associations. The wearing of wigs, says an old writer, is of great use. It saves men great trouble, it makes an ill face tolerable, and the tolerable handsome. It is said that at an election, when the great O'Connell disparaged his opponent on account of his ugliness, his adversary's rejoinder was: "Let

him take off his wig, and I warrant you will find (O'Connell) the uglier of the two." O'Connell immediately, amidst the roar of the audience, snatched his wig from his head, and there was not a hair between his pate and the ceiling. We are not certain as regards the judgment of the audience as to the comparative comeliness of the respective candidates, but O'Connell certainly had the best of it.

Kant's wig at an auction immediately after his death fetched 30,000 florins, but at a subsequent sale of this precious article it was re-sold at 12,000 thalers, a fall of about 25 per cent., owing, probably, to the fact that the Kantian philosophy was then at a discount.

The incident of O'Connell reminds us of an original story of Peter the Great of Russia, who was at Dantzic in the year 1716 on a State occasion, the burgomaster sitting a little below him. The Emperor, feeling his head cold, stretched out his august hand, and took the burgomaster's full-bottomed wig and put it upon his own head, and did not return it until he left the assembly. The attendants of the Czar afterwards explained that his Majesty, being short of hair, was accustomed, when at home, frequently to borrow the wig of any nobleman who happened to be within reach.

The Episcopal Wig.—When Dr. Randolph presented himself before King George IV. to kiss hands on his elevation to the bishopric, he did so without his wig. when the King said, "My lord, you must have a wig." Not until the reign of William IV. did the bishops cease to wear wigs, though one archbishop, necessarily very conservative of old usages, still adhered to it in the reign of Victoria.

The judges and barristers have hitherto not succeeded in obtaining dispensation as regards wigs. Some years ago an eminent counsel, being in a hurry, dared to make a motion, but the judge (Cockburn) sternly said, "I hear your voice, but I cannot see you;"



"THE WIG WAS TWITCHED OFF IN A MOMENT BY THE BOY" (p. 494).

nor did he until a learned brother had lent him his own wig.

When Lord Eldon was raised to the peerage, he petitioned the King for a dispensation from the wig on account of the headache, but was refused, as the Monarch would have no innovations; and when Eldon argued that the wig itself was an innovation, since the old judges wore none, the King said, "True; but the old judges wore beards." In the portraits of the old judges in the Guildhall, Sir M. Hall and other justices are represented with skull-caps and beards.

The periwig, which had been long used in France, was introduced into England soon after the Restoration. The ladies wore their hair curled and frizzed with the nicest art, and they frequently set it off with artificial curls, called "heart-breakers." After the Restoration it was natural for the courtiers to assume an appearance as distinct as possible from that of the enemies of the Monarchy, and, in opposition to the short hair of the Roundheads, they lengthened the periwig to the waist. It is easy to see that in many cases it was necessary to confine the hair of these wigs. That it was first confined by persons in a military capacity, appears by the names which wigs tied back had. A full wig tied back in one curl is a *Major*; in two curls a *Brigadier*; and plaited into a curl below the ribbon was a *Ramilie*; and thus the physicians and the lawyers became possessed of the *Tye*.

Hogarth, who lived during the time of the wig epidemic, satirised the fashion in a print called "The Five Orders of Periwigs Measured Architectonically." But there were certainly more than five orders. We have the parson's wig, the legal wig, the aldermanic wig, the episcopal wig, the composite wig, the bag wig, the wig in folio, the full-bottomed wig, the pigtail wig, the *Ramilie*, the scratch wig, &c. &c.

Fenitut de Eincles says that a wig in folio cost 1,000 French crowns. The full wig of an English gentle-

man varied in price from thirty to forty guineas. It is therefore not surprising that the swell mob of the wig period tried to possess themselves of such costly articles. Their mode of operations is thus described by Sam Rogers:—"A small boy was carried covered over in a butcher's tray by a tall man, and the wig was twitched off in a moment by the boy. The bewildered



"HEART-BREAKERS."

owner looked all around for it, when an accomplice impeded his progress under the pretence of assisting him while the tray-bearer made off."

Gay, in his "Trivia," had already given the following warning concerning wigs:—

"Nor is the flaxen wig with safety worn;
High on the shoulders in a basket borne
Lurks the sly boy whose hand, to rapine bred,
Plucks off the curling honours of thy head."

A RECORD OF ONE DAY.

BY MARIAN PENDLEBURY, AUTHOR OF "IN ROTH CHESTER'S HONEYMOON."



IN all the country-side no more "mighty hunter," or more genial companion, was to be found than Walter Drew, of Callerhowe. From the morning when, mounted upon his shaggy Shetland, he first rode to meet beside his father, until the day whose record I am about to chronicle, only such vexatious interruptions as were imposed by the exactions of school, and college, had been allowed to interfere between himself and the following of his beloved sport. Now, arrived at man's estate, through the death of his father become lord of the manor, possessor of a fine estate, and

a sufficient rent-roll, nothing but unpropitious weather need debar him from its pursuit. It was whispered that he would succeed Sir Everard Wynn, the reigning M.F.H.—who, however, although over seventy, was hale and vigorous still—whenever circumstances, or nature, demanded his resignation of the office.

I—Alison Weir—a girl just introduced into society, to whom the whole scene was a novelty, and Marcia Fane, were standing upon the terrace watching the splendid animals, which were being led up and down while waiting for their masters to mount and ride to cover. The hunt breakfast was at Callerhowe that morning; and Mrs. Drew's little pony-carriage was in readiness for Marcia to drive herself and me to