

WILLIAM ANDREWS

ENGLAND IN
THE DAYS OF
OLD

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William Andrews

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Preface

This volume of new studies on old-time themes, chiefly concerning the social and domestic life of England, is sent forth with a hope that it may prove entertaining and instructive. It is a companion work to "Bygone England," which the critical press and reading public received with a warm welcome on its publication, and thus encouraged me to prepare this and other volumes dealing with the highways and byways of history.

William Andrews.

The Hull Press,
February 14th, 1897.

When Wigs were Worn

Ohe wig was for a long period extremely popular in old England, and its history is full of interest. At the present time, when the wig is no longer worn by the leaders of fashion, we cannot fully realize the important place it held in bygone times. Professional, as well as fashionable people did not dare to appear in public without their wigs, and they vied with each other in size and style.

To trace the origin of the wig our investigations must be carried to far distant times. It was worn in Egypt in remote days, and the Egyptians are said to have invented it, not merely as a covering for baldness, but as a means of adding to the attractiveness of the person wearing it. On the mummies of Egypt wigs are found, and we give a picture of one now in the British Museum. This particular wig probably belonged to a female, and was found near the small temple of Isis, Thebes. "As the Egyptians always shaved their heads," says Dr. T. Robinson, "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." Dr. Robinson has devoted much study to this subject, and his conclusions merit careful consideration. He also points out that in the examples of Egyptian wigs in the British and Berlin Museums the upper

portions are made of curled hair, the plaited hair being confined to the lower part and the sides. On the authority of Wilkinson, says Dr. Robinson, "these wigs 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."

We find in Assyrian sculptures representations of the wig, and its use is recorded amongst ancient nations, including Persians, Medes, Lydians, Carians, Greeks, and Romans. Amongst the latter nation *galerus*, a round cap, was the common name for a wig.

The early fathers of the Church denounced the wig as an invention of the Evil One. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, as a proof of the virtue of his simple sister Gorgonia, said, "she neither cared to curl her own hair, nor to repair its lack of beauty by the aid of a wig." St. Jerome pronounced these adornments as unworthy of Christianity. The matter received consideration or perhaps, to put it more correctly, condemnation, at many councils, commencing at Constantinople, and coming down to the Provincial Council at Tours. The wig was not tolerated, even if worn as a joke. "There is no joke in the matter," said the enraged St. Bernard: "the woman who wears a wig commits a mortal sin." St. John Chrysostom pleaded powerfully against this enormity; and others might be mentioned who spoke with no uncertain sound against this fashion.

Dr. Doran relates a strange story, saying St. Jerome vouches

for its authenticity, and by him it was told to deter ladies from wearing wigs. "Prætexta," to use Doran's words, "was a very respectable lady, married to a somewhat paganist husband, Hymetius. Their niece, Eustachia, resided with them. At the instigation of the husband Prætexta took the shy Eustachia in hand, attired her in a splendid dress, and covered her fair neck with ringlets. Having enjoyed the sight of the modest maiden so attired, Prætexta went to bed. To that bedside immediately descended an angel, with wrath upon his brow, and billows of angry sounds rolling from his lips. 'Thou hast,' said the spirit, 'obeyed thy husband rather than the Lord, and has dared to deck the hair of a virgin, and made her look like a daughter of earth. For this do I wither up thy hands, and bid them recognize the enormity of thy crime in the amount of thy anguish and bodily suffering. Five months more shalt thou live, and then Hell shall be thy portion; and if thou art bold enough to touch the head of Eustachia again, thy husband and thy children shall die even before thee.'"

Church history furnishes some strange stories against wearing wigs, and the following may be taken as a good example. Clemens of Alexandria, so runs the tale, surprised wig-wearers by telling those that knelt at church to receive the blessing, they must please to bear in mind that the benediction remained on the wig, and did not pass through to the wearer! Some immediately removed their wigs, but others allowed them to remain, no doubt hoping to receive a blessing.

Poetry and history supply many interesting passages bearing on our present investigations. The Lycians having been engaged in war, were defeated. Mausoleus, their conqueror, ruthlessly directed the subdued men to have their heads shaven. This was humiliating in the extreme, and the Lycians were keenly alive to their ridiculous appearance. The king's general was tempted with bribes, and finally yielded, and allowed wigs to be imported for them from Greece, and thus the symbol of degradation became the pink of Lycian fashion.

Hannibal, the brave soldier, is recorded to have worn two sorts of wigs; one to improve, and the other to disguise his person.

Wigs are said to have been worn in England in the reign of King Stephen, but their palmy days belong to the seventeenth and the earlier part of the eighteenth centuries. Says Stow, they were introduced into this country about the time of the Massacre of Paris, but they are not often alluded to until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The earliest payment for one in the Privy Purse expenses occurs in December, 1529, and is for twenty shillings "for a *perwyke* for Sexton, the king's fool." Some twenty years later wigs, or, to give the full title, periwigs, became popular.

In France the mania was at its height in the reign of Louis XIV. We are told in 1656 he had not fewer than forty court *perruquiers*, and these, by an order of Council, were declared artistes. In addition to this, Le Gros instituted at Paris an Académie de France des Perruquiers. Robinson records that a storm was gathering about their heads. He tells us "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.” He lost the day, for it was proved that more money reached the country for wigs than went out to purchase hair. The fashion increased; larger wigs were worn, and some even cost £200 apiece.

Charles II. was the earliest English king represented on the Great Seal wearing a large periwig. Dr. Doran assures us that the king did not bring the fashion to Whitehall. “He forbade,” we are told, “the members of the Universities to wear periwigs, smoke tobacco, or to read their sermons. The members did all three, and Charles soon found himself doing the first two.”

Pepys’ “Diary” contains much interesting information concerning wigs. Under date of 2nd November, 1663, he writes: “I heard the Duke say that he was going to wear a periwig, and says the King also will. I never till this day observed that the King is mighty gray.” It was perhaps the change in the colour of his Majesty’s hair that induced him to assume the head-dress he had previously so strongly condemned.

As might be expected, Pepys, who delighted to be in the fashion, adopted the wig. He took time to consider the matter, and had consultations with Mr. Jervas, his old barber, about the affair. Referring in his “Diary” to one of his visits to his hairdresser, Pepys says “I did try two or three borders and periwigs, meaning to wear one, and yet I have no stomach for it; but that the pains of keeping my hair clean is great. He trimmed

me, and at last I parted, but my mind was almost altered from my first purpose, from the trouble which I foresee in wearing them also.” Weeks passed before he could make up his mind to wear a wig. Mrs. Pepys was taken to the periwig-maker’s shop to see the one made for Mr. Pepys, and expressed her satisfaction on seeing it. We read in April, 1665, of the wig being at Jervas’ under repair. Early in May, Pepys writes in his “Diary,” he suffered his hair to grow long, in order to wear it, but he said “I will have it cut off all short again, and will keep to periwigs.” Later, under date of September 3rd, he writes: “Lord’s day. Up; and put on my coloured silk suit, very fine, and my new periwig, bought a good while since, but durst not wear, because the plague was in Westminster when I bought it; and it is a wonder what will be in fashion, after the plague is done, as to periwigs, for nobody will dare to buy any hair, for fear of the infection, that it had been cut off the heads of people dead of the plague.”

We learn from an entry in the “Diary” for June 11th, 1666, that ladies in addition to assuming masculine costume for riding, wore long wigs. “Walking in the galleries at Whitehall,” observes Mr. Pepys, “I find the ladies of honour dressed in their riding garbs, with coats and doublets with deep skirts, just for all the world like mine, and buttoned their doublets up the breast, with periwigs and with hats, so that, only for long petticoats dragging under their men’s coats, nobody could take them for women in any point whatever.”

Pepys, we have seen, wondered if periwigs would survive after

the terrible plague. He thought not, but he was mistaken. Wigs still remained popular. The plague passed away, and its terrors were forgotten. The world of folly went on much as of yore, perhaps with greater gaiety, as a reaction to the lengthened time of depression.

In some instances the wig appears much out of place, and a notable example is that given in the portrait by Kneller, of George, Earl of Albemarle. He is dressed in armour, and wearing a long flowing wig. Anything more absurd could scarcely be conceived.

The beau of the period when the wig was popular carried in his pocket beautifully made combs, and in his box at the play, or in other places, combed his periwig, and rendered himself irresistible to the ladies. Making love seems to have been the chief aim of his life. Sir John Hawkins, in his "History of Music," published in 1776, has an informing note on combing customs. "On the Mall and in the theatre," he tells us, "gentlemen conversed and combed their perukes. There is now in being a fine picture by the elder Laroon of John, Duke of Marlborough, at his *levée*, in which his Grace is represented dressed in a scarlet suit, with large white satin cuffs, and a very long white peruke which he combs, while his valet, who stands behind him, adjusts the curls after the comb has passed through them." Allusions to the practice may be found in the plays from the reign of Charles II. down to the days of Queen Anne. We read in Dryden's prologue to "Almanzor and Almahide" —

“But as when vizard mask appears in pit,
Straight every man who thinks himself a wit
Perks up, and, managing a comb with grace,
With his white wig sets off his nut-brown face.”

Says Congreve, in the “Way of the World”: —

“The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam, and will wait on you.”

Thomas Brown, in his “Letters from the Dead to the Living” presents a pen portrait of beaux, as they appeared at the commencement of the eighteenth century. Some of the passages are well worth reproducing, as they contain valuable information concerning wigs. “We met,” says the writer, “three flaming beaux of the first magnitude. He in the middle made a most magnificent figure – his periwig was large enough to have loaded a camel, and he bestowed upon it at least a bushel of powder, I warrant you. His sword-knot dangled upon the ground, and his steinkirk, that was most agreeably discoloured with snuff from the top to the bottom, reach’d down to his waist; he carry’d his hat under his left arm, walk’d with both hands in the waistband of his breeches, and his cane, that hung negligently down in a string from his right arm, trail’d most harmoniously against the pebbles, while the master of it was tripping it nicely upon his toes, or humming to himself.” Down to the middle of the eighteenth century, wigs

continued to increase in size.

It will not now be without interest to direct attention to a few of the many styles of wigs.

Randle Holme, in his “Academy of Armory,” published in 1684, has some interesting illustrations, and we will draw upon him for a couple of pictures. Our first example is called the campaign-wig. He says it “hath knots or bobs, or dildo, on each side, with a curled forehead.” This is not so cumbrous as the periwig we have noticed.

Another example from Holme is a smaller style of periwig with tail, and from this wig doubtless originated the familiar pig-tail. It was of various forms, and Swift says: —

“We who wear our wigs
With fantail and with snake.”

A third example given by Holme is named the “short-bob,” and is a plain peruke, imitating a natural head of hair. “Perukes,” says Malcolm, in his “Manners and Customs,” “were an highly important article in 1734. Those of right gray human hair were four guineas each; light grizzle ties, three guineas; and other colours in proportion, to twenty-five shillings. Right gray human hair, cue perukes, from two guineas; white, fifteen shillings each, which was the price of dark ones; and right gray bob perukes, two guineas and a half; fifteen shillings was the price of dark bobs. Those mixed with horsehair were much lower. It will be

observed, from the gradations in price, that real gray hair was most in fashion, and dark of no estimation." As time ran its course, wigs became more varied in form, and bore different names.

We find in the days of Queen Anne such designations as black riding-wigs, bag-wigs, and nightcap-wigs. These were in addition to the long, formally curled perukes. In 1706, the English, led by Marlborough, gained a great victory on the battlefield of Ramillies, and that gave the title to a long wig described as "having a long, gradually diminishing, plaited tail, called the 'Ramillie-tail,' which was tied with a great bow at the top, and a smaller one at the bottom." It is stated in Read's *Weekly Journal* of May 1st, 1736, in a report of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, that "the officers of the Horse and Foot Guards wore Ramillie periwigs by his Majesty's order." We meet in the reign of George II. other forms of the wig, and more titles for them; the most popular, perhaps, was the pigtail-wig. The pig-tails were worn hanging down the back, or tied up in a knot behind, as shown in our illustration. This form of wig was popular in the army, but in 1804, orders were given for it to be reduced to seven inches in length, and finally, in 1808, to be cut off.

Here is a picture of an ordinary man; by no means can he be regarded as a beau. He is wearing a common bag-wig, dating back to about the middle of the eighteenth century. The style is modified to suit an individual taste, and for one who did not follow the extreme fashion of his time. In this example may be

observed the sausage curls over the ear, and the frizziness over the forehead.

We have directed attention to the large periwigs, and given a portrait of the Earl of Albemarle wearing one. In the picture of the House of Commons in the time of Sir Robert Walpole we get an excellent indication of how popular the perwig was amongst the law-makers of the land. Farquhar, in a comedy called "Love and a Bottle," brought out in 1698, says, "a full wig is imagined to be as infallible a token of wit as the laurel."

Tillotson is usually regarded as the first amongst the English clergy to adopt the wig. He said in one of his sermons: "I can remember since the wearing of hair below the ears was looked upon as a sin of the first magnitude, and when ministers generally, whatever their text was, did either find or make occasion to reprove the great sin of long hair; and if they saw any one in the congregation guilty in that kind, they would point him out particularly, and let fly at him with great zeal." Dr. Tillotson died on November 24th, 1694.

Wigs found favour with parsons, and in course of time they appear to have been indispensable. A volume in 1765, was issued under the title of "Free Advice to a Young Clergyman," from the pen of the Rev. John Chubbe, in which he recommended the young preacher to always wear a full wig until age had made his own hair respectable. Dr. Randolph, on his advancement to the bishopric, presumed to wait upon George IV. to kiss hands without wearing a wig. This could not be overlooked by the king,

and he said, "My lord, you must have a wig." Bishops wore wigs until the days of William IV. Bishop Blomfield is said to have been the first bishop to set the example of wearing his own hair. Even as late as 1858, at the marriage of the Princess Royal of England, Archbishop Sumner appeared in his wig.

Medical men kept up the custom of wearing wigs for a long period; perhaps they felt like a character in Fielding's farce, "The Mock Doctor," who exclaims, "I must have a physician's habit, for a physician can no more prescribe without a full wig than without a fee." The wig known as the full-bottomed wig was worn by the medical profession: —

"Physic of old her entry made
Beneath the immense, full-bottom'd shade;
While the gilt cane, with solemn pride
To each suspicious nose applied,
Seemed but a necessary prop
To bear the weight of wig at top."

We are told Dr. Delmahoy's wig was particularly celebrated in a song which commenced:

"If you would see a noble wig,
And in that wig a man look big,
To Ludgate Hill repair, my boy,
And gaze on Dr. Delmahoy."

In the middle of the last century so much importance was attached to this portion of a medical man's costume, that Dr. Brocklesby's barber was in the habit of carrying a bandbox through the High Change, exclaiming: Make way for Dr. Brocklesby's wig!

Professional wigs are now confined to the Speaker in the House of Commons, who, when in the chair, wears a full-bottomed one, and to judges and barristers. Such wigs are made of horsehair, cleaned and curled with care, and woven on silk threads, and shaped to fit the head with exactness. The cost of a barrister's wig of frizzed hair is from five to six guineas.

An eminent counsel in years ago wished to make a motion before Judge Cockburn, and in his hurry appeared without a wig. "I hear your voice," sternly said his Lordship, "but I cannot see you." The barrister had to obtain the loan of a wig from a learned friend before the judge would listen to him.

Lord Eldon suffered much from headache, and when he was raised to the peerage he petitioned the King to allow him to dispense with the wig. He was refused; his Majesty saying he could not permit such an innovation. In vain did his Lordship show that the wig was an innovation, as the old judges did not wear them. "True," said the King; "the old judges wore beards."

In more recent times we have particulars of several instances of both bench and bar discarding the use of the wig. At the Summer Assizes at Lancaster, in 1819, a barrister named Mr. Scarlett hurried into court, and was permitted to take part in

a trial without his wig and gown. Next day the whole of the members of the bar appeared without their professional badges, but only on this occasion, although on the previous day a hope had been expressed that the time was not far distant when the mummeries of costume would be entirely discarded.

We learn from a report in the *Times* of July 24th, 1868, that on account of the unprecedented heat of the weather on the day before in the Court of Probate and Divorce the learned judge and bar appeared without wigs.

On July 22nd, 1874, it is recorded that Dr. Kenealy rose to open the case for the defence in the Tichborne suit; he sought and obtained permission, to remove his wig on account of the excessive heat.

Towards the close of the last century few were the young men at the Universities who ventured to wear their own hair, and such as did were designated Apollos.

Women, as well as men, called into requisition, to add to their charms, artificial accessories in the form of wigs and curls. Ladies' hair was curled and frizzed with considerable care, and frequently false curls were worn under the name of heart-breakers. It will be seen from the illustration we give that these curls increased the beauty of a pretty face.

Queen Elizabeth, we gather from Hentzner and other authorities, wore false hair. We are told that ladies, in compliment to her, dyed their hair a sandy hue, the natural colour of the Queen's locks.

We present a picture of a barber's shop in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It looks more like the home of a magician than the workshop of a hairdresser, although we see the barber thoughtfully employed on a wig. The barber at this period was an important man. A few of his duties consisted in dressing wigs, using the razor, cutting hair, starching beards, curling moustachios, tying up love-locks, dressing sword-wounds received in street frays, and the last, and by no means the least, of his varied functions was that of receiver and circulator of news and scandal.

It is recorded that Mary Queen of Scots obtained wigs from Edinburgh not merely while in Scotland, but during her long and weary captivity in England. From "The True Report of the Last Moments of Mary Stuart," it appears, when the executioner lifted the head by the hair to show it to the spectators, it fell from his hands owing to the hair being false.

We have previously mentioned Pepys' allusions to women and wigs in 1666. Coming down to later times, we read in the *Whitehall Evening Post* of August 17th, 1727, that when the King, George II., reviewed the Guards, the three eldest Princesses "went to Richmond in riding habits, with hats, and feathers, and periwigs."

It will be seen from the picture of a person with and without a wig that its use made a plain face presentable. There is a good election story of Daniel O'Connell. It is related during a fierce debate on the hustings, O'Connell with his biting, witty

tongue attacked his opponent on account of his ill-favoured countenance. But, not to be outdone, and thinking to turn the gathering against O'Connell, his adversary called out, "Take off your wig, and I'll warrant that you'll prove the uglier." The witty Irishman immediately responded, amidst roars of laughter from the crowd, by snatching the wig from off his own head and exposing to view a bald plate, destitute of a single hair. The relative question of beauty was scarcely settled by this amusing rejoinder, but the laugh was certainly on O'Connell's side.

An interesting tale is told of Peter the Great of Russia. In the year 1716, the famous Emperor was at Dantzic, taking part in a public ceremony, and feeling his head somewhat cold, he stretched out his hand, and seizing the wig from the head of the burgomaster sitting below him, he placed it on his own regal head. The surprise of the spectators may be better imagined than described. On the Czar returning the wig, his attendants explained that his Majesty was in the habit of borrowing the wig of any nobleman within reach on similar occasions. His Majesty, it may be added, was short of hair.

In the palmy days of wigs the price of a full wig of an English gentleman was from thirty to forty guineas. Street quarrels in the olden time were by no means uncommon; care had to be exercised that wigs were not lost. Says Swift: —

"Triumphing Tories and desponding Whigs,
Forget their feuds, and join to save their wigs."

Although precautions were taken to prevent wigs being stolen, we are told that robberies were frequently committed. Sam Rogers thus describes a successful mode of operation: “A boy was carried covered over in a butcher’s tray by a tall man, and the wig was twisted off in a moment by the boy. The bewildered 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,” thus writes: —

“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.”

We will bring our gossip about wigs to a close with an account of the Peruke Riot. On February 11th, 1765, a curious spectacle was witnessed in the streets of London, and one that caused some amusement. Fashion had changed; the peruke was no longer in favour, and only worn to a limited extent. A large number of peruke-makers were thrown out of employment, and distress prevailed amongst them. The sufferers thought that help might be obtained from George III., and a petition was accordingly drawn up for the enforcement of gentleness wearing wigs for the benefit of the wig-makers. A procession was formed, and waited upon the King at St. James’s Palace. His Majesty, we are told, returned

a gracious answer, but it must have cost him considerable effort to have maintained his gravity.

Besides the monarch, the unemployed had to encounter the men of the metropolis, and from a report of the period we learn they did not fare so well. "As the distressed men went processionally through the town," says the account, "it was observed that most of the wig-makers, who wanted other people to wear them, wore no wigs themselves; and this striking the London mob as something monstrously unfair and inconsistent, they seized the petitioners, and cut off all their hair *per force*."

Horace Walpole alludes to this ludicrous petition in one of his letters. "Should we wonder," he writes, "if carpenters were to remonstrate that since the Peace there is no demand for wooden legs?" The wags of the day could not allow the opportunity to pass without attempting to provoke more mirth out of the matter, and a petition was published purporting to come from the body of carpenters imploring his Majesty to wear a wooden leg, and to enjoin his servants to appear in his royal presence with the same graceful decoration.

Powdering the Hair

In the olden days hair-powder was largely used in this country, and many circumstances connected with its history are curious and interesting. We learn from Josephus that the Jews used hair-powder, and from the East it was no doubt imported into Rome. The history of the luxurious days of the later Roman Empire supplies some strange stories. At this period gold-dust was employed by several of the emperors. "The hair of Commodus," it is stated on the authority of Herodian, "glittered from its natural whiteness, and from the quantity of essences and gold-dust with which it was loaded, so that when the sun was shining it might have been thought that his head was on fire."

It is supposed, and not without a good show of reason, that the Saxons used coloured hair-powder, or perhaps they dyed their hair. In Saxon pictures the beard and hair are often painted blue. Strutt supplies interesting notes on the subject. "In some instances," he says, "which, indeed, are not so common, the hair is represented of a bright red colour, and in others it is of a green and orange hue. I have no doubt existing in my own mind, that arts of some kind were practised at this period to colour the hair; but whether it was done by tingeing or dyeing it with liquids prepared for that purpose according to the ancient Eastern custom, or by powders of different hues cast into it, agreeably to the modern practice, I shall not presume to determine."

It was customary among the Gauls to wash the hair with a lixivium made of chalk in order to increase its redness. The same custom was maintained in England for a long period, and was not given up until after the reign of Elizabeth. The sandy-coloured hair of the queen greatly increased the popularity of the practice.

The satirists have many allusions to this subject, more especially those of the reigns of James and Charles I. In a series of epigrams entitled "Wit's Recreations," 1640, the following appears under the heading of "Our Monsieur Powder-wig": —

"Oh, doe but marke yon crisped sir, you meet!
How like a pageant he doth walk the street!
See how his perfumed head is powdered ore;
'Twou'd stink else, for it wanted salt before."

In "Musarum Deliciæ," 1655, we read: —

"At the devill's shopps you buy
A dresse of powdered hayre,
On which your feathers flaunt and fly;
But i'de wish you have a care,
Lest Lucifer's selfe, who is not prouder,
Do one day dresse up your haire with a powder."

From the pen of R. Younge, in 1656, appeared, "The Impartial Monitor." The author closes with a tirade against female follies in these words: — "It were a good deed to tell men

also of mealing their heads and shoulders, of wearing fardingales about their legs, etc.; for these likewise deserve the rod, since all that are discreet do but hate and scorn them for it.” A “Loyal Litany” against the Oliverians runs thus: —

“From a king-killing saint,
Patch, powder, and paint,
Libera nos, Domine.”

Massinger, in the “City Madam,” printed in 1679, describing the dress of a rich merchant’s wife, mentions powder thus: —

“Since your husband was knighted, as I said,
The reverend hood cast off, your borrowed hair
Powdered and curled, was by your dresser’s art,
Formed like a coronet, hanged with diamonds
And richest orient pearls.”

John Gay, in his poem, “Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London,” published in 1716, advises in passing a coxcomb, —

“Him like the Miller, pass with caution by,
Lest from his shoulder clouds of powder fly.”

We learn from the “Annals of the Barber-Surgeons” some particulars respecting the taxing of powder. On 8th August, 1751, “Mr. John Brooks,” it is stated, “attended and produced a

deed to which he requested the subscription of the Court; this deed recited that by an Act of Parliament passed in the tenth year of Queen Anne, it was enacted that a duty of twopence per pound should be laid upon all starch imported, and of a penny per pound upon all starch made in Great Britain, that no perfumer, barber, or seller of hair-powder should mix any powder of alabaster, plaster of Paris, whiting, lime, etc. (sweet scents excepted), with any starch to be made use of for making hair-powder, under a pain of forfeiting the hair-powder and £50, and that any person who should expose the same for sale should forfeit it and £20.” Other details were given in the deed, and the Barber-Surgeons gave it their support, and promised twenty guineas towards the cost of passing the Bill through Parliament.

A few years prior to the above proceeding we gather from the *Gentleman's Magazine* particulars of some convictions for using powder not made in accordance with the laws of the land. “On the 20th October, 1745,” it is recorded, “fifty-one barbers were convicted before the commissioners of excise, and fined in the penalty of £20, for having in their custody hair-powder not made of starch, contrary to Act of Parliament: and on the 27th of the same month, forty-nine other barbers were convicted of the same offence, and fined in the like penalty.”

Before powder was used, the hair was generally greased with pomade, and powdering operations were attended with some trouble. In houses of any pretension was a small room set apart for the purpose, and it was known as “the powdering-

room.” Here were fixed two curtains, and the person went behind, exposing the head only, which received its proper supply of powder without any going on the clothes of the individual dressed.

In the *Rambler*, No. 109, under date 1751, a young gentleman writes that his mother would rather follow him to his grave than see him sneak about with dirty shoes and blotted fingers, hair unpowdered, and a hat uncocked.

We have seen that hair-powder was taxed, and on the 5th of May, 1795, an Act of Parliament was passed taxing persons using it. Pitt was in power, and being sorely in need of money, hit upon the plan of a tax of a guinea per head on those who used hair-powder. He was prepared to meet much ridicule by this movement, but he saw that it would yield a considerable revenue, estimating it as much as £200,000 a year. Fox, with force, said that a fiscal arrangement dependent on a capricious fashion must be regarded as an absurdity, but the Opposition were unable to defeat the proposal, and the Act was passed. Pitt’s powerful rival, Charles James Fox, in his early manhood, was one of the most fashionable men about town. Here are a few particulars of his “get up” about 1770, drawn from the *Monthly Magazine*: “He had his chapeau-bas, his red-heeled shoes, and his blue hair-powder.” Later, when Pitt’s tax was gathered, like other Whigs he refused to use hair-powder. For more than a quarter of a century it had been customary for men to wear their hair long, tied in a pig-tail and powdered. Pitt’s measure

gave rise to a number of Crop Clubs. The *Times* for April 14th, 1795, contains particulars of one. “A numerous club,” says the paragraph, “has been formed in Lambeth, called the *Crop Club*, every member of which, on his entrance, is obliged to have his head docked as close as the Duke of Bridgewater’s old bay coach-horses. This assemblage is instituted for the purpose of opposing, or rather evading, the tax on powdered heads.” Hair cropping was by no means confined to the humbler ranks of society. The *Times* of April 25th, 1795, reports that: — “The following noblemen and gentlemen were at the party with the Duke of Bedford, at Woburn Abbey, when a general cropping and combing out of hair-powder took place: Lord W. Russell, Lord Villiers, Lord Paget, &c., &c. They entered into an engagement to forfeit a sum of money if any of them wore their hair tied, or powdered, within a certain period. Many noblemen and gentlemen in the county of Bedford have since followed the example: it has become general with the gentry in Hampshire, and the ladies have left off wearing powder.” Hair-powder did not long continue in use in the army, for in 1799 it was abolished on account of the high price of flour, caused through the bad harvests. Using flour for the hair instead of for food was an old grievance among the poor. In the “*Art of Dressing the Hair*,” 1770, the author complains: —

“Their hoarded grain contractors spare,
And starve the poor to beautify the hair.”

Pitt's estimates proved correct, for in the first year the tax produced £210,136. The tax was increased from a guinea to one pound three shillings and sixpence. Pitt's Tory friends gave him loyal support. The Whigs might taunt them by calling them "guinea-pigs," it mattered little, for they were not merely ready to pay the tax for themselves but to pay patriotic guineas for their servants. A number of persons were exempt from paying the tax, including "the royal family and their servants, the clergy with an income of under £100 per annum, subalterns, non-commissioned officers and privates in the army and navy, and all officers and privates of the yeomanry and volunteers enrolled during the past year. A father having more than two unmarried daughters might obtain on payment for two, a license for the remainder." A gentlemen took out a license for his butler, coachman, and footman, etc., and if he changed during the year it stood good for the newly engaged servants.

Powder was not wholly set aside by ladies until 1793, when with consideration Queen Charlotte abandoned its use, swayed no doubt by her desire to cheapen, in that time of dearth, the flour of which it was made. It has been said its disuse was attributable to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Angelica Kauffmann, and other painters of their day, but it is much more likely that the artists painted the hair "full and flowing" because they found it so, not that they as a class dictated to their patronesses in despite of fashion. The French Revolution had somewhat to do with the change, a powdered head or wig was a token of aristocracy, and as the

fashion might lead to the guillotine, sensible people discarded it long before the English legislature put a tax upon its use.

With reference to this Sir Walter Scott says in the fifth chapter of "The Antiquary": – "Regular were the Antiquary's inquiries at an old-fashioned barber, who dressed the only three wigs in the parish, which, in defiance of taxes and times, were still subjected to the operation of powdering and frizzling, and who for that purpose divided his time among the three employers whom fashion had yet left him."

"Fly with this letter, Caxon," said the senior (the Antiquary), holding out his missive, "fly to Knockwinnock, and bring me back an answer. Go as fast as if the town council were met and waiting for the provost, and the provost was waiting for his new powdered wig." "Ah, sir," answered the messenger, with a deep sigh, "thae days hae lang gane by. Deil a wig has a provost of Fairport worn sin' auld Provost Jervie's time – and he had a quean of a servant-lass that dressed it hersel', wi' the doup o' a candle and a dredging box. But I hae seen the day, Monkbarns, when the town council of Fairport wad hae as soon wanted their town-clerk, or their gill of brandy ower-head after the haddies, as they wad hae wanted ilk ane a weel-favoured, sonsy, decent periwig on his pow. Hegh, sirs! nae wonder the commons will be discontent, and rise against the law, when they see magistrates, and bailies, and deacons, and the provost himsel', wi' heads as bald an' as bare as one o' my blocks."

It was not in Scotland alone that the barber was peripatetic.

“In the last century,” says Mrs. G. Linnæus Banks, author of the “Manchester Man” and other popular novels, “he waited on his chief customers or patrons at their own homes, not merely to shave, but to powder the hair or the wig, and he had to start on his round betimes. Where the patron was the owner of a spare periwig it might be dressed in advance, and sent home in a box, or mounted on a stand, such as a barrister keeps handy at the present day. But when ladies had powdered top-knots, the hairdresser made his harvest, especially when a ball or a rout made the calls for his services many and imperative. When at least a couple of hours were required for the arrangement of a single toupée or tower, or commode, as the head-dress was called, it may well be understood that for two or three days prior to the ball the hairdresser was in demand, and as it was impossible to lie down without disarranging the structure he had raised on pads, or framework of wire, plastering with pomatum and disguising with powder, the belles so adorned or disfigured were compelled to sit up night and day, catching what sleep was possible in a chair. And when I add that a head so dressed was rarely disturbed for ten days or a fortnight, it needs no stretch of imagination to realize what a mass of loathsome nastiness the fine ladies of the last century carried about with them, or what strong stomachs the barbers must have had to deal with them.”

The Tories often regarded with mistrust any persons who did not use hair-powder. The Rev. J. Charles Cox, LL.D., F.S.A., the eminent antiquary, relates a good story respecting

his grandfather. “So late as 1820,” says Dr. Cox, “Major Cox of Derby, an excellent Tory, declined for some time to allow his son Edward to become a pupil of a well-known clerical tutor, for the sole reason that the clergyman did not powder, and wore his hair short, arguing that he must therefore, be a dangerous revolutionist.”

In 1869 the tax on hair-powder was repealed, when only some 800 persons paid it, producing about £1,000 per year.

Men wearing Muffs

The muff in bygone times was worn by men as well as women. Several writers state that it was introduced into England in the reign of Charles II., but this is not correct, for, although it is not of great antiquity, it can certainly be traced back to a much earlier period. Most probably it reached us from France, and when it came into fashion it was small in size.

The earliest representation of a muff that has come under our notice occurs in a drawing by Gaspar Rutz (1598) of an English lady, and she wears it pendant from her girdle. A few years later in the wardrobe accounts of Prince Henry of Wales, a charge is made for embroidering two muffs. The entries occur in 1608, and are as follow: – “One of cloth of silver, embroidered with purles, plates, and Venice twists of silver and gold; the other of black satten, embroidered with black silk and bugles, viz., for one £7, the other 60s.” Muffs were usually ornamented with bunches of gay ribbons, or some other decorations, and were generally hung round the neck with ribbons.

Several poems and plays of the olden time contain references to men using muffs. One of the earliest, if not the first, to mention a man wearing a muff, occurs in an epistle by Samuel Rowlands, written about 1600. It is as follows: —

“Behold a most accomplished cavalier

That the world's ape of fashion doth appear,
Walking the streets his humour to disclose,
In the French doublet and the German hose.
The *muffes*, cloak, Spanish hat, Toledo blade,
Italian ruff, a shoe right Spanish made."

A ballad, describing the frost fair on the Thames in the winter of 1683-4, mentions amongst those present: —

"A spark of the Bar with his cane and his *muff*."

In course of time the muff was increased in size, until it was very large. Dryden, in the epilogue of "The Husband his own Cuckstool," 1696, refers to the *monstrous muff* worn by the beau.

Pepys made a point of being in fashion, but in respect to the muff he was most economical. He says he took his wife's last year's muff, and it is pleasing to record that he gallantly bought her a new one.

Professional men did not neglect to add to their dignity by the use of the muff. In addition to the gold-headed cane, the doctor carried a muff. An old book called "The Mother-in-law," includes a character who is advised by his friends to become a physician. Says one to him: "Tis but putting on the doctor's gown and cap, and you'll have more knowledge in an instant than you'll know what to do withal." Observes another friend: "Besides, sir, if you had no other qualification than that muff of yours, twould go a great way. A muff is more than half in the making of

a doctor.” Cibble tells Nightshade in Cumberland’s “Cholerick Man,” 1775, to “Tuck your hands in your *muff* and never open your lips for the rest of the afternoon; ’twill gain you respect in every house you enter.” Alexander Wedderburn, before being called to the English Bar in 1757, had practised as an advocate in his native city, Edinburgh. In his references to his early days, there is an allusion to the muff, showing that its use must have been by no means uncommon in Scotland in the middle of the eighteenth century. “Knowing my countrymen at that time,” he tells us, “I was at great pains to study and assume a very grave, solemn deportment for a young man, which my marked features, notwithstanding my small stature, would render more imposing. Men then wore in winter *small muffs*, and I flatter myself that, as I paced to the Parliament House, no man of fifty could look more thoughtful or steady. My first client was a citizen whom I did not know. He called upon me in the course of a cause, and becoming familiar with him, I asked him ‘how he came to employ me?’ The answer was: ‘Why, I had noticed you in the High Street, going to the court, the most punctual of any, as the clock struck nine, and you looked so grave and business-like, that I resolved from your appearance to have you for my advocate.’” More instances of the muff amongst professional men might be cited, but the foregoing are sufficient to indicate the value set upon it by this class.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century it was customary to carry in the muff small dogs known as “muff dogs,” and Hollar made a picture of one of these little animals.

A tale is told of the eccentric head of one of the colleges at Oxford, who had a great aversion to the undergraduates wearing long hair, that on one occasion he reduced the length of a young man's hair by means of a bread-knife. It is stated that he carried concealed in his muff a pair of scissors, and with these he slyly cut off offending locks.

Both the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* include notices of the muff. In No. 153 of the *Tatler*, 1710, is a description of a poor but doubtless a proud person with a muff. "I saw," it is stated, "he was reduced to extreme poverty, by certain shabby superfluities in his dress, for – notwithstanding that it was a very sultry day for the time of the year – he wore a loose great coat and a *muff*. Here we see poverty trying to imitate prosperity." There are at least three allusions to the muff in the pages of the *Spectator*. We find in the issue for March 19th, 1711, a correspondent desires Addison to be "very satirical upon the little muff" that was then fashionable amongst men.

A satirical print was published in 1756, at the Gold Acorn Tavern, facing Hungerford Market, London, called the "Beau Admiral." It represents Admiral Byng carrying a large muff. He had been sent to relieve Minorca, besieged by the French, and after a futile action withdrew his ships, declaring that the ministry had not furnished him with a sufficient fleet to successfully fight the enemy. This action made the ministry furious, and Byng was brought before a court martial, and early in 1757 he was, according to sentence, shot at Portsmouth.

In America muffs were popular with both men and women. Old newspapers contain references to them. The following advertisement is drawn from the *Boston News Letter* of March 5th, 1715: —

“Any man that took up a Man’s Muff drop’t on the Lord’s Day between the Old Meeting House & the South, are desired to bring it to the Printer’s Office, and shall be rewarded.”

Mrs. Alice Morse Earle, in her “Costume of Colonial Times” (New York: 1894), gives other instances of men’s muffs being missing, “In 1725,” says Mrs. Earle, “Dr. Prince lost his ‘black bear-skin muff,’ and in 1740 a sable-skin man’s muff was advertised.” It is clear from Mrs. Earle’s investigations that the beaux of New England followed closely the lead of the dandies of Old England. “I can easily fancy,” she says, “the mincing face of Horace Walpole peering out of a carriage window or a sedan-chair, with his hands and his wrists thrust in a great muff; but when I look at the severe and ascetic countenance in the portrait of Thomas Prince, I find it hard to think of him, walking solemnly along Boston streets, carrying his big bear-skin muff.” Other Bostonians, we are told, maintained the fashion until a much later period. Judge Dana employed it even after Revolutionary times. In 1783, in the will of René Hett, of New York, several muffs are mentioned, and were considered of sufficient account to form bequests.

The puritans of New England had little regard for warmth in

their places of worship, and it is not surprising that men wore muffs. People were obliged to attend the services of the church unless they were sick, yet little attempt was made to render the places comfortable.

The first stove introduced into a meeting-house in Massachusetts was at Boston in 1773. In 1793 two stoves were placed in the Friends' meeting-house, Salem, and in 1809 one was erected in the North Church, Salem. Persons are still living in the United States who can remember the knocking of feet on a cold day towards the close of a long sermon. The preachers would ask for a little patience and promise to close their discourses.

Concerning Corporation Customs

The history of old English Municipal Corporations contains some quaint and interesting information respecting the laws, customs, and every-day life of our forefathers. The institution of corporate towns dates back to a remote period, and in this country we had our corporations before the Norman Conquest. The Norman kings frequently granted charters for the incorporation of towns, and an example is the grant of a charter to London by Henry I. in the year 1101.

For more than a century and a half no person was permitted to hold office in a municipal corporation unless he had previously taken sacrament according to the rites of the Established Church. The act regulating this matter was known as the Test Act, which remained in force from the days of Charles II. to those of George IV. It was repealed on the 9th May, 1828. In the latter reign, in 1835, was passed the Municipal Reform Act, which greatly changed the constitution of many corporate towns and boroughs. It is not, however, so much the laws as local customs to which we wish to direct attention.

The mace as a weapon may be traced back to a remote period, and was a staff about five feet in length with a metal head usually spiked. Maces were used by the heavy cavalry in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but went out of use in England in the reign of Elizabeth. It is not clear when the ornamental maces

came to be regarded as an ensign of authority. Their first use may be traced back to the twelfth century. At that period and later spikeless maces were carried by the guards attending princes, as a convenient weapon to protect them against the sudden attacks of the assassin. Happily their need passed away, and as a symbol of rank only they have remained. In civic processions the mace is usually borne before the mayor, and when the sovereign visits a corporate town it is customary for the mayor to bear the mace before the monarch. We learn from history that when Princess Margaret was on her way to Scotland in 1503 to be united in marriage to James IV., as she passed through the city of York the Lord Mayor shouldered the mace and carried it before her. The mace was formerly borne before the mayoress of Southampton when she went out in state. A singular custom connected with the mace obtained at Leicester. It was customary for the newly-elected mayor to proceed to the castle, and in accordance with a charter granted by James I., take an oath before the steward of the Duchy of Lancaster, "to perform faithfully and well all and every ancient custom, and so forth according to the best of his knowledge." On arrival at a certain place within the precincts of the stronghold the mayor had the great mace lowered from an upright position as a token of acknowledgment to the ancient feudal earls within their castle. In 1766 Mr. Fisher, a Jacobite, was elected mayor, and like others of his class was ever ready when opportunity offered to show his aversion to the reigning dynasty. He purposely omitted the ceremony of lowering the

mace. When the servant of the mayor refused to “slope the mace,” the Constable of the castle or his deputy refused to admit the mayor. The ceremony was discontinued after this occurrence, and the mayor went in private to take the oath.

The following ordinances were in force at Kingston-upon-Hull about 1450, and point their own moral.

“No Mayor should debase his honourable office by selling (during his Mayoralty) ale or wine in his house.”

“Whenever the Mayor appeared in public he should have a sword carried before him, and his officers should constantly attend him; also he should cause everything to be done for the honour of the town, and should not hold his office for two years together.”

“No Aldermen should keep ale-houses or taverns, nor absent themselves from the town’s business, nor discover what is said in their councils, under heavy penalties.”

An entry in the annals of Hull in 1549 states that three of the former sheriffs of the town, named respectively Johnson, Jebson, and Thorp, were fined £6 13s. 4d. each “for being deficient in the elegance of their entertainments, for neglecting to wear scarlet gowns, and for not providing the same for their wives during their shrievalties.” Ten years later a Mr. Gregory was chosen sheriff, and he refused to accept the office. The matter was referred to the Queen in Council, and he was ordered to be fined £100, to be disfranchised and turned out of the town. We are told that the order was executed.

We gather from the ancient records of Canterbury that, in 1544, it was decided “that during winter every dark-night the aldermen, common council, and inn-holders are to find one candle, with light, at their doors, and the other inhabitants are to do in like fashion upon request, and if any lantern be stolen, the offender shall be set in the pillory at the mayor’s discretion; the candles are to be lighted at six, and continued until burnt out.”

In 1549 the sheriff of Canterbury paid a fine of three shillings and fourpence for wearing his beard.

Another quaint item in the Canterbury records under the year 1556 is an order directing the mayor every year before Christmas to provide for the mayoress, his wife, to wear one scarlet gown, and a bonnet of velvet. If the mayor failed to procure the foregoing he was liable to a fine of £10.

At Nottingham the new mayor took office on the 29th September each year. The outgoing mayor and other members of the corporation marched in procession to St. Mary’s Church. At the conclusion of divine service all retired to the vestry, and the retiring mayor occupied the chair at the head of a table covered with a black cloth, in the middle of which lay the mace covered with rosemary and sprigs of bay. This was called burying the mace, and no doubt was meant to denote the official decease of the late holder. The new mayor was then formally elected, and the outgoing mayor took up the mace, kissed it, and delivered it to his successor with a suitable speech. After the election of other town officials the company proceeded to the chancel of

the church, where the mayor took the oath of office, which was administered by the senior coroner. After the mayor had been proclaimed in public places by the town clerk, a banquet was held at the municipal buildings; the fare consisted of bread and cheese, fruit in season, and pipes of tobacco! The proclaiming of the new mayor did not end on the day of election: on the following market-day he was proclaimed in face of the whole market, and the ceremony took place at one of the town crosses.

We learn from the Report of the Royal Commission issued in 1837 that the election of the Mayor of Wycombe was enacted with not a little ceremony. The great bell of the church was tolled for an hour, then a merry peal was rang. The retiring mayor and aldermen proceeded to church, and after service walked in procession to the Guildhall, preceded by a woman strewing flowers and a drummer beating a drum. The mayor was next elected, and he and his fellow-members of the corporation marched round the market-house, and wound up the day by being weighed, and their weights were duly recorded by the sergeant-at-mace, who was rewarded with a small sum of money for his trouble.

In the *Gentlemen's Magazine* for 1782 we find particulars of past mayoral customs at Abingdon, Berkshire. "Riding through Abingdon," says a correspondent, "I found the people in the street at the entrance of the town very busy in adorning the outside of their houses with boughs of trees and garlands of flowers, and the paths were strewed with rushes. One house was distinguished

by a greater number of garlands than the rest. On inquiring the reason, it seemed that it was usual to have this ceremony performed in the street in which the new mayor lived, on the first Sunday that he went to church after his election.”

At Newcastle-on-Tyne still lingers a curious custom which dates back to the period when strife was rife between England and Scotland. It has long been the practice to present the judges attending the Assizes on their arrival with two pairs of gloves, a pair to each of their marshals and to the other members of their retinue, also to the clerks of Assize and their officers. The judges are entertained in a hospitable manner during their stay in the city. At the conclusion of the business of the Assizes the mayor and other members of the Corporation in full regalia wait upon the judges, and the mayor thus addresses them: —

“My Lords, we have to congratulate you upon having completed your labours in this ancient town, and have also to inform you that you travel hence to Carlisle, through a border county much and often infested by the Scots; we therefore present each of your lordships with a piece of money to buy therewith a dagger to defend yourselves.”

The mayor then gives the senior judge a piece of gold of the reign of James I., termed a *Jacobus*, and to the junior judge a coin of the reign of Charles I., called a *Carolus*. After the judge in commission has returned thanks the ceremony is ended. Some time ago a witty judge returned thanks as follows: “I thank the mayor and corporation much for this gift. I doubt, however,

whether the Scots have been so troublesome on the borders lately; I doubt, too, whether daggers in any numbers are to be purchased in this ancient town for the protection of my suite and of myself; and I doubt if these coins are altogether a legal tender at the present time.”

The local authorities are anxious to keep up the ancient custom enjoined upon them by an old charter, but they often experience great difficulty in obtaining the old-time pieces of money. Sometimes as much as £15 has been paid for one of the scarce coins. “Upon the resignation or the death of a judge who has travelled the northern circuit, we are told the corporation at once offer to purchase from his representative the ‘dagger-money’ received on his visits to Newcastle, in order to use it on future occasions.”

It was customary, in the olden time, for the mayor and other members of the Banbury Corporation to repair to Oxford during the assizes and visit the judge at his lodgings, and the mayor, with all the graces of speech at his command, ask “my lord” to accept a present of the celebrated Banbury cakes, wine, some long clay pipes, and a pound of tobacco. The judge accepted these with gratitude, or, at all events, in gracious terms expressed his thanks for their kindness.

The Corporation of Ludlow used to offer hospitality to the judges. The representatives of the town met the train in which the judges travelled from Shrewsbury to Hereford, and offered to them cake and wine, the former on an ancient silver salver, and

the latter in a loving-cup wreathed with flowers. Mr. Justice Hill was the cause of the custom coming to a conclusion in 1858. He was travelling the circuit, and he communicated with the mayor saying, "owing to the delay occasioned, Her Majesty's judges would not stop at Ludlow to receive the wonted hospitality." We are told the mayor and corporation were offended, and did not offer to renew the ancient courtesy.

The making of a "sutor of Selkirk" is attended with some ceremony. "It was formerly the practice of the burgh corporation of Selkirk," says Dr. Charles Rogers, the social historian of Scotland, "to provide a collation or *dejeûner* on the invitation of a burghess. The rite of initiation consisted in the newly-accepted brother passing through the mouth a bunch of bristles which had previously been mouthed by all the members of the board. This practice was termed 'licking the birse:' it took its origin at a period when shoemaking was the staple trade of the place, the birse being the emblem of the craft. When Sir Walter Scott was made a burghess or 'sutor of Selkirk,' he took precaution before mouthing the beslabbered brush to wash it in his wine, but the act of rebellion was punished by his being compelled to drink the polluted liquor." In 1819, Prince Leopold was created "a sutor of Selkirk," but the ceremony was modified to meet his more refined tastes, and the old style has not been resumed. Mr. Andrew Lang, a distinguished native of the town, has had the honour conferred upon him of being made a sutor.

The Mayor of Altrincham, Cheshire, in bygone times was, if

we are to put any faith in proverbial lore, a person of humble position, and on this account the “honour” was ridiculed. An old rhyme says —

“The Mayor of Altrincham, and the Mayor of Over,
The one is a thatcher, and the other a dauber.”

Sir Walter Scott, in “The Heart of Mid-Lothian,” introduces the mayor into his pages in no flattering manner. Mr. Alfred Ingham, in his “History of Altrincham and Bowdon” (1879), has collected for his book some curious information bearing on this theme. He relates a tradition respecting one of the mayors gifted with the grace of repartee, which is well worth reproducing: — “The Mayor of Over — for he and the Mayor of Altrincham are often coupled — journeyed once upon a time to Manchester. He was somewhat proud, though he went on foot, and on arriving at Altrincham, felt he would be all the better for a shave. The knight of the steel and the strop performed the operation most satisfactorily; and as his worship rose to depart, he said rather grand-eloquently, ‘You may tell your customers that you have had the honour of shaving the Mayor of Over.’ ‘And you,’ retorted the ready-witted fellow, ‘may tell yours that you have had the honour of being shaved by the Mayor of Altrincham.’ The rest can be better imagined than described.”

We learn from Mr. J. Potter Briscoe that a strange tradition still lingers in Nottingham, to the effect that when King John last

visited the town, he called at the house of the mayor, and the residence of the priest of St. Mary's. Finding neither ale in the cellar of one, nor bread in the cupboard of the other, His Majesty ordered every publican in the town to contribute sixpennyworth of ale to the mayor annually, and that every baker should give a half-penny loaf weekly to the priest. The custom was continued down to the time of Blackner, the Nottingham historian, who published his history in 1815.

The mayor of Rye, in bygone times, had almost unlimited authority, and if anyone spoke evil of him, he was immediately taken and grievously punished by his body, but if he struck the mayor, he ran the risk of having cut off the hand that dealt the blow.

As late as 1600, at Hartlepool, it was enacted, that anyone calling a member of the council a liar be fined eleven shillings and sixpence, if, however, the term false was used, the fine was only six shillings and eightpence.

Bribes for the Palate

In the days of old it was no uncommon practice for public bodies and private persons to attempt to bribe judges and others with presents. Frequently the gifts consisted of drink or food. In some instances money was expected and given. It is not, however, to bribery in general we want to direct attention, but to some of its more curious phases, and especially those which appealed to the recipients' love of good cheer.

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