



BEARDS AND NO BEARDS.

By J. CUTHBERT HADDEN.

Illustrated by JOSEPH GREGO.

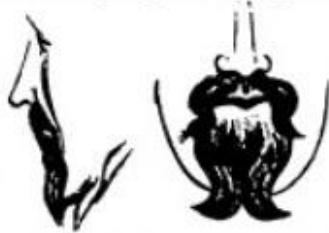


HAVING, De Quincey used to say, was a grand difficulty. He allowed his beard to grow, not as some men do, because it kept him out of many a painful "scrape," but simply because he could not be troubled shaving himself. Southey belonged also to the class who, with Leigh Hunt, look upon shaving as a "villainous and unnecessary custom." And yet he tells us that if he could boast of a beard, he "would cherish it as the Cid Campeador did his, for my pleasure." He would regale it on a summer's day with rose-water, and without making it an idol, he would sometimes offer incense to it with a pastile or with lavender and sugar. His children, when they were young enough for such blandishments, would delight to comb and stroke and curl it, and his grandchildren in turn would succeed to the same course of mutual endearment. But Southey probably employed the razor as Cervantes advised in the case of Sancho—in order to secure a comely appearance. Or perhaps, like Martin Luther, he believed in the intimate connection between shaving and sin—believed that the beard is ingrained in man like evil itself: that neither can be eradicated, but that both must be resisted and unceasingly cut down.

Such a notion is not likely to have ever entered into the head of the historian of England, who as a rule mortified the flesh by shaving himself. When Macaulay went

to a barber, and after an easy shave asked what he had to pay, the shaver replied, "Just what you generally give the man who shaves you, sir." "I generally give him," said the historian, "a couple of cuts on each cheek." Some men are not so niggardly to themselves, and these are probably the cynics who look upon the beard as the penalty incurred by the eating of the forbidden fruit. And this is a theory that is at least plausible, for the daily labour of rooting out the martial growth that fringes the cheek of the *genus homo*, is a labour in which the sweat of the brow is not altogether unfamiliar, while even the tears have been known to flow as from a heart "bowed down beneath a load of sin." It is certainly disquieting to think that Eve may be at the bottom of that twenty-seven feet of hirsute stubble which the German scientist calculates that a man has mowed down by the time he is eighty! But there is the other theory, favoured by the disciples of Darwin, that the beard is merely the survival of a primitive decoration. Man, according to this view, was originally as hairy as the opossum itself, but as he rolled down the ages, he wore the hair off in patches by sleeping on his sides and sitting against a tree. Of course the hair of the dog is not worn off in this way, but a great theory is not to be set aside by an objection so trifling. By and by our ancestors "awoke to the consciousness that they were patchy and spotty," and resolving to "live down" all hair that was not ornamental, they, with remarkable unanimity, seem to have fixed on the eye-

brows, the moustache, and—unfortunately, as the self-scrapers mostly think—the beard as being all that was worth preserving of the primitive covering. This is a view of the matter that may be pleasing enough to the Darwinian disciple who never lifts the razor against himself, but those whose fate it is to begin the duties of the day by scraping their chins



Henry IV. From the effigy at Canterbury.

may be excused if they reject it in favour of the more likely theory that the beard is one of the punishments entailed on man with the curse of toil. The one theory, it is true, may be less scientific than the other, but then what mortal man thinks of science while he is shaving?

The mental eye of the beard historian has certainly a very fine field to scan—a vista of beards, broad, pointed, and stubbled. If one were to begin on the history, he would probably lead off with a definition, in which he might or might not be assisted by the old Latin author who thus quaintly queried and answered: "What is a beard? Hair. And what is hair? A beard," which reminds one of *Punch's* "What is matter? Never mind. What is mind? No matter." A clearer



From the Triumph of the Emperor Maximilian I., 1517-19.



Gaspar Coade, Duque de Olivares, Prime Minister to Philip IV., died 1645.

definition would be that of the lecturer who said of the beard that "in its full extent it comprehends all hair visible on the countenance below the eyes, naturally growing down the sides of the face, crossing the cheeks by an inverted arch, fringing the upper and lower lips, covering the chin above and below, and hanging down in front of the neck and throat—moustaches and whiskers being merely parts of a general whole." This would be comprehensive enough to go on with, although the present day young man, whose delight is in the upward curl, would probably

object to the moustache being regarded as part of the beard. But the young man might have his consolation in thinking of the fact that the Celts of Britain, as described by Julius Cæsar, shaved everything except the upper lip. It is true that people still in middle life can look back to the time when—male England being mostly smooth-faced—the appearance of a moustache at once declared the wearer, in the eyes of the mob, to be either a cavalry officer, an Italian fiddler, a billiard sharper, or a foreigner of some sort. It has been recorded that even in Edinburgh, most cultured and cosmopolitan of Caledonian cities, a distinguished scientist on first appearing in the streets with a moustache some fifty years ago, was followed by a rabble of rude urchins shouting "Frenchy! Frenchy!" though he was no nearer being a Frenchman than Taffy is of being a Turk. Leech's picture, representing "the dismay of the British



Peter Martyr, Reformer, died 1562.



Wolfgangus Masculus, died 1563.



John Bale, Theologian, died 1563.

swell on seeing the postmen with moustaches," is well known; for even in 1854 not to use the razor on the upper lip was regarded as extreme dandyism. But when the police appeared about the end of that year with their faces uncropped, the masculine world began to realise that a new era had arrived. Mr. Muntz was among the first of the prominent men who ventured to abjure the razor; and a certain Royal Academician, James Ward by name, followed suit immediately after sending to the printer a kind of *Apologia pro barba sua*, in the shape of a pamphlet showing eighteen sound scriptural reasons why a man might let his beard grow and yet not forfeit his title to Paradise!

One would think it were quite superfluous to appeal to Scripture in favour of the beard. For have the preachers not found texts on which to hang discourses in its behalf? "It's surely no' that beardless boy that's going to preach to us," said an old lady as John Skinner, the author of Scotland's "Tullochgorum" passed through the crowd at the church door to conduct his first service, and shortly afterwards the ancient dame was

listening to an extempore discourse from the words, "Tarry at Jericho till your beards be grown." Not so many years ago some one issued a rhyming dissertation in which we are told that Moses commanded the oppressed of Pharaoh to wear the beard, and so displaced the razors of Egypt. So far as I know Moses never lifted his lip against the razors of Egypt, but there is something very like an injunction to wear the beard and to wear it long in Leviticus—"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." It will be remembered how Sir Roger de Coverley, wanted to know "whether our forefathers did not look much wiser in their beards than we do without them," and declared how he loved "to see your Abrahams, your Isaacs and your Jacobs, as we have them in the old pieces of tapestry, with beards below their girdles, that cover half the hangings." Likely enough the

medan oath, "By the beard of the Prophet," as well as the supplication, "By your beard, or the life of your beard." And then look at the veneration paid in Asia to even a single hair of the beard of Mohammed. This precious relic is enshrined in a monument erected especially



Archbishop Cranmer, died 1556.
[The dotted line below describes the length of John Knox's beard.]



F. Morus, Theologian, died 1592.
Also Titian and Corregio.



Theodore Beza, Theologian, died 1605.



John Calvin, Theologian, died 1564.

old patriarchs really rejoiced in an unusual length of beard, but whether the artists are right in carrying the hirsute appendage below the girdle is another matter. The ancient Jews considered it the greatest insult that could be offered to a man to pluck his beard, which may account in part for the wonderful state of preservation that tradition has connected with the beard of the old-world male. It was a notion of the Mohammedans that though Noah reached his thousandth birthday no hair of his blessed beard fell off or became white; but the Mohammedans had no more authority for that than for their belief that the devil has but one solitary long hair for a beard. It was, as some say, in order to distinguish themselves from the ancient Israelites that the followers of Mohammed cropped the beard; but Mohammed, as we know, sanctioned the dyeing of the beard, and preferred a cane colour, because that was the traditional hue of Abraham's beard. More than that, have we not the common Moham-

medan oath, "By the beard of the Prophet," as well as the supplication, "By your beard, or the life of your beard." And then look at the veneration paid in Asia to even a single hair of the beard of Mohammed. This precious relic is enshrined in a monument erected especially for it in 1135, five hundred years after the prophet's death. Where it had reposed during the long interval is as great a mystery as that connected with the Holy Coat of Treves. But at any rate, there it is now, a precious "hair"-loom, kept in a box of gold and crystal, in which small holes have been bored for the purpose of admitting water to float the blessed hair, which is done at an annual festival when the faithful from all parts are gathered together.

There is no human feature that has been more the subject of the changing humours of fashion than the beard, and the historian would assuredly have his work cut out for him—occasionally in a double sense—who should seek to follow its vagaries down the ages. The early



George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, died 1605.



Captain John Smith, Admiral of New England, died 1631.

fathers of the Church of course approved of it, and most of them wore it. Father Clement of Alexandria has it that "nature adorned man like the lion with a beard as the index of strength and empire;" and an early Council enacted that "a clergyman shall not cherish his hair nor shave his beard." St. Augustine is figured with a beard, when he comes to make Christians of our ancestors in the sixth century. But men were not long in beginning to be proud of their fine beards, and pride in a

priest was not to be tolerated. St. Augustine had not been many years in his grave, when a writer was complaining that "the clergy had grown so corrupt as to be distinguished from the laity less by their actions than by their want of beards." The Greek Church stuck to the beard because of its "becoming gravity," but Rome's asceticism was felt to be incom-



John Fox, Martyrologist, died 1537.



Robert, Earl of Essex, died 1600.

patible with a hairy face, and so popes, cardinals, and priests came to be subjected to the Turk's insulting comparison of the plucked pigeon. Now and again a manly fellow, like Cardinal Pole and Pope Julius II. rebelled. When the latter ascended the Papal throne in 1503, he at once intimated that he would allow his beard to grow "in order to inspire the greater respect among the faithful." The monuments of Roger, Bishop of Sarum, and Andrew, Abbot of Peterborough, show that bishops wore the beard, and abbots and monks shaved in the time of Richard the Lion-hearted, who was himself bearded like a lion. Most of the reformers were bearded, John Knox outstripping them all in the patriarchal dimensions of his chin covering. Luther confined himself to a moustache, but Luther, as we have seen, had original ideas regarding the connection of sin and shaving. By and by his plan came



H. Everhard Cratz, 1648.



N. G. Raigersburg, 1649.
(T beard.)

to be followed somewhat extensively in Germany. There is a Luther pentameter running, "Sigismund commanding, the long beard perished in 1564," the explanation of which is that Archbishop Sigismund in the year named, introduced into Magdeburg the custom of shaving off the full beard and wearing instead a moustache.

Among European nations the want of a beard has usually been a reproach; and the enemies of Njal in ancient Iceland could say nothing worse of him than

that he was beardless. Even a sham beard was considered better than no beard, as when Mehemet Ali bought beards for his Egyptian grenadiers that they might more closely resemble the European model. One author gravely contends that all the leading races of men who have stamped their character on history were furnished with an abundant cheek-covering—that, in fact, their hardest efforts were contemporaneous with the existence of their beards. But this is stretching the beard a little too far. If there were anything in the theory the Turk would have to be extolled as "a mighty man of valour." No one has honoured the beard more than he. He holds it to be the noblest ornament of the male sex, and considers it more infamous for a man to have his beard cut off than to be publicly whipped or pilloried. With him a man's testimony used to be so much measured by his beard that in hiring a witness the length of this appendage was made an important con-



Cardinal Borromeo, died 1631,
wore a double-tufted beard.



Gustavus Adolphus, died 1632,
and Philip, Earl of Pembroke, died 1650.

sideration. The Turkish wife shows her affection for her husband by kissing his beard; when friends meet they salute beards instead of shaking hands; and a form of blessing common as any is, "May God preserve your beard." But all this has not improved the Turk's position among the nations: nay, it is even possible that his beard may have formed a convenient handle for his enemies. One wiseacre of a Sultan wore a smooth chin because "his councillors should never lead him by the beard as they had done his forefathers" (he must have forgotten that he could still be led by the nose); and Plutarch is probably veracious enough when he tells of a Macedonian conqueror who ordered his soldiers to shave so that their beards should not afford a handle to their enemies. The Greek sword was short, and if the beard was long it would assuredly put a certain advantage on the side of one of the combatants, as indeed we may see from a cartoon of Raphael's, where a warrior is represented as cutting down his antagonist whom he has seized by the beard. Of course we manage things better nowadays, and any one who

should endeavour to get at a modern warrior's beard would inevitably find himself a dead man before he had touched a hair.

This theory of the superiority of the bearded races would hardly have gone down with Schopenhauer. That fine pessimist philosopher knew no such thing as toleration in the matter of beards, his idea being that they put a man's masculinity into greater prominence than his humanity. In all highly-civilised times and countries, so he argued, the shaving of the beard has betokened the desire of men to distinguish themselves from the lower animals; and he even went the length of saying that beards should be forbidden by the police. It was a terrible fulmination truly, but is there one "bearded barbarian" the less for it all?



Liotard.

The king's beard has always been an important affair, not only as regulating the fashion, but in matters of graver import. In the Middle Ages there was a curious custom of embedding three hairs of the royal beard in the wax of the seal in order to give greater solemnity to a document. Sometimes the chin-scrapers cite the ladies as objecting to the hirsute covering, but however this may be now it was not the case in former times. Beatrice, we know, thought that a man without a beard is only fit to be "a waiting gentlewoman"; and the elder Disraeli tells us very explicitly that when the fair sex were accustomed to see their lovers with beards the appearance of a shaved chin excited feelings of "horror and aversion." There was a certain painter named Liotard, who lived in the reign of George I. He had been travelling in the East—probably he "tarried at Jericho" for a time—and came back with

a cheek-covering that fairly captivated the ladies. He surrendered to one of the charmers, but alas! just after the wedding he got hold of his razors and in the secret of his chamber ruthlessly rooted out the fine martial growth on his cheeks. It was a fatal act. "Directly his wife saw him, the charm of that ideal which every



Charles I.
died 1649.



Paul de Vos,
Painter.



Christian IV.
King of Denmark.
(Stiletto beard.)

true woman forms of her lover was broken; for instead of a dignified manly countenance, her eyes fell upon a small pinched face,

'And such a little perking chin
To kiss it seemed almost a sin!'

But abstention from osculation is but a trifling matter after all, as Louis VII. of France would probably have admitted. When that monarch, yielding to the injunctions of his bishops, cropped his hair and shaved his beard, his good Queen, Eleanor, conceived such a dislike to him that she revenged herself to the extent of providing her husband with the title to a divorce. The divorce was obtained and Eleanor became the wife of Henry Duke of Normandy, afterwards Henry II. of England. On this marriage rested the English claim to Guienne and Poitou, a claim which caused the long and bloody wars between the two nations, and all because the French King had been so rash as to part with his beard.



John Taylor,
the water poet.
(Screw beard.)



Charles,
Earl of Derby,
died 1672.



Francis & Donia,
1648.

Kings, with now and then an exception, seem to have been bearded from time immemorial. One of the Arthurian legends mentions a giant who made "a great exhibition of domestic manufacture," consisting of "a cloak fringed with the beards of kings," which must have been a novel-looking garment in all conscience. The first French monarch held the beard

to be as sacred as the solitary hair of Mohammed, and ornamented it with gold. Charlemagne not only swore by his own beard, but passed a law that any one who should call another red-beard should be fined, an enactment which is perhaps explained by the old notion that the beard of Judas Iscariot was, like that of



Sir Edward Coke, Jurist,
died 1634.



Hocus Pocus, junr., Author of
The Anatomie of Legerdemaine.

Chaucer's miller, "red as a fox." The Normans were firm believers in the virtue of the razor, and so it was that when Harold sent out his spies to ascertain the numbers and position of William the Conqueror's forces, the spies came back with the report that "the host did almost seem to be priests because they had all their face and both their lips shaved." Harold himself had led the fashion of wearing the beard, but by and by William compelled the sturdy Saxons to shave—or at any rate such of them as remained at home, for many left their country rather than part with their beards. But the custom did not long survive the Conqueror. As early as the time of Henry I. we find a certain Bishop Serlo, complaining to the monarch about long hair and bushy beards, which, he declared, the gallant males would not clip lest the stumps should wound the ladies' faces! The bishop, it seems, carried about with him the tools of the tonsorial art, and



Jerome Weller,
Theologian,
died 1572.
(Swallowtail beard.)



J. Himmel,
Theologian,
died 1642.



Erasmus Schmidt,
Greek Scholar,
died 1637.

Henry, with repentant obedience, at once submitted his hirsute growth to the shears of Serlo, who trimmed king and nobles with his own hand. Henry II. as we have seen, got his queen because he had got a beard, and Henry III. also refrained from scraping his chin. Edward I. had both a long beard and a long head, and it was during the reign of his successor, that the favourite old song "'Tis merry in hall,

when beards wag all" was composed. Henry IV. had a beard in whose every curl it was once said lurked an intrigue, which perhaps led his son, as a penance for his parent, to present a smooth chin to the world. The Henries were, in truth, a somewhat capricious lot as regards their beards. The sixth of the number was, at any rate in his later years, bearded like a philosopher; the seventh Henry "shaved himself and fleeced his people;" and the eighth had his beard close clipped perhaps to be in keeping with his bluff bloated face. In some instances a king coming to the throne who was too young to indulge in the luxury of a beard, the fashion has been set in favour of a smooth chin. This was the case with Louis XIV. of France, whose courtiers to keep him in countenance at once gave up their beards to the barbers. Something of the same kind happened when Charles V. came to the Spanish throne. He wore no beard and his courtiers immediately followed



J. Kimedontius,
Theologian,
died 1596.



Hans Sachs, Shoemaker and
Poet, died 1578, and
Duke of Sully, died 1641.

the royal example and scraped themselves smooth every morning. The people, however, did not like the change, their idea being that without the beard there could be no manliness. "We have lost our souls," said they, "since we lost our beards."

Some curious things have been recorded in the way of taxes on beards, and other enactments regarding them. Though Francis I. was himself one of the bearded monarchs he was responsible for a tax on the beards of his clergy, which, he believed, would bring him in a handsome revenue. The tax gave no trouble to the bishops and the wealthier ecclesiastics, who paid it and saved their beards; but the poorer priests had mostly to take to the use of the razor. There came a time, however, when the tables were turned. In the succeeding reign a son of the chancellor who had suggested the hated tax, was returning in triumph from the Council of Trent to take possession of the Bishopric of Claremont. He had not dreamed of any opposition, but, behold! the dean and

canons closed the brass gates of the chancel, and stood within flourishing shears and razor, and pointing to the statutes *de radendis barbis*. Notwithstanding his remonstrances and entreaties they declined to induct him until he had sacrificed his beard which was the handsomest of the time. And thus were the sins of the father visited upon the children.

The Russians had an old law by which any one who drew hair from another's beard should be fined four times as much as for cutting off a finger; and the importance and value of the appendage is further illustrated by the fact that although the loss of a leg was estimated at twelve shillings, the loss of the beard was estimated at twenty. Peter the Great thought



From painted glass, 1581.

to civilise his savages by making them shave, and imposed a tax of one hundred roubles on the wealthy and middle classes, and a copeck on peasants and labourers. Now it was a superstition among the poorer people that no beardless son of Adam could ever enter Heaven, and being obliged to part with their beards, the great majority treasured up their hairs to be buried with their bodies. In dealing with his soldiers the Great Peter enlisted the aid of the priests, who cunningly pointed to the fact that they were going to fight the bearded Turk, and that their patron Saint Nicholas, would be unable to distinguish them from their enemies unless they sacrificed their beards. This was all right, and the beards of the beloved Russians went down before the razor in defer-

ence to St. Nicholas. But unluckily for the priests, the next little war happened to be with the Swedes who wore no beards,



Pilgrim and Saint. From painted glass, 1605.

and thus it was that the Russian soldiers demanded to be allowed to abjure the razor so that the Holy Nicholas might have no difficulty in arranging for their protection. Our own former reverence for the beard is well illustrated by the story told of Sir Thomas More, who was beheaded for denying the supremacy of Henry VIII. His usual cheerfulness did not forsake him even on the scaffold. "Help me up," he said to one standing by; "for my coming down let me shift for myself." As he laid his head on the block he begged the executioner to wait a moment while he carefully placed his beard out of the reach of the axe, for, he said, "it hath not committed treason," which reminds one of the story of Simon Lord Lovat, who, the day before his execution on Tower Hill, bade the operator who shaved him, be cautious not to cut his throat, as such an accident would cause disappointment to the gaping crowd on the morrow. In the



Arquebusier, Carpenters' Hall, 1654.
From painted glass.

reign of "good Queen Bess," an attempt was made by some of the heads of Lincoln's Inn to restrain the growth of the legal beard. It was resolved that "no fellow of that house should wear a beard of above a fortnight's growth"—which

no fellow was likely to do if he consulted his own comfort. Although, as we read in the *Percy Anecdotes*, transgressions of this resolution were punished with fine, loss of commons, and final expulsion, such was the vigorous resistance to the tyrannical order that in the following year all previous orders respecting beards were repealed.

A talk about beards might be prolonged indefinitely, till, in fact, the article should become longer than the chin covering of the sixteenth century painter, John Mayo, who could not only stand upon his beard,

but could sit at table and enjoy the spectacle of seeing it—the beard not the table—floating out at the open window and occasionally tripping up a passer-by. But readers must be spared: they have not all the leisure of a certain Duc de Brissac, whose usual soliloquy, as he adjusted the razor to the proper angle, was—"Timoleon de Cosse, God hath made thee a gentleman, and the King hath made thee a Duke; it is right and fit, however, that thou shouldst have something to do; therefore thou shalt shave thyself."

