

N<sup>o</sup> 331. *Thursday, March 20.*

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——— *Solidam præbet tibi vellere barbam.* Perf.

WHEN I was last with my Friend Sir ROGER in *Westminster-Abby*, I observed that he stood longer than ordinary before the Bust of a venerable old Man. I was at a loss to guess the reason of it, when after some time he pointed to the Figure, and asked me if I did not think that our Forefathers looked much wiser in their Beards than we do without them. For my part, says he, when I am walking in my Gallery in the Country, and see my Ancestors, who many of them died before they were of my Age, I cannot forbear regarding them as so many old Patriarchs, and at the same time looking upon my self as an idle smock-fac'd young Fellow. I love to see your *Abrahams*, your *Isaacs*, and your *Jacobs*, as we have them in old Pieces of Tapestry with Beards below their Girdles, that cover half the Hangings. The Knight added, if I would recommend Beards in one of my Papers, and endeavour to restore human Faces to their antient Dignity, that upon a Month's warning he would undertake to lead up the Fashion himself in a pair of Whiskers.

I smiled at my Friend's Fancy ; but after we parted, could not forbear reflecting on the Metamorphoses our Faces have undergone in this Particular.

THE Beard, conformable to the Notion of my Friend Sir ROGER, was for many Ages look'd upon as the Type of Wisdom. *Lucian* more than once rallies the Philosophers of his Time, who endeavour'd to rival one another in Beards ; and represents a learned Man who stood for a Professorship in Philosophy, as unqualify'd for it by the Shortness of his Beard.

*ÆLIAN*, in his Account of *Zoilus*, the pretended Critick, who wrote against *Homer* and *Plato*, and thought himself wiser than all who had gone before him, tells us  
that

that this *Zoilus* had a very long Beard that hung down upon his Breast, but no Hair upon his Head, which he always kept close-shaved, regarding, it seems, the Hairs of his Head as so many Suckers, which if they had been suffer'd to grow might have drawn away the Nourishment from his Chin, and by that means have starved his Beard.

I have read somewhere that one of the Popes refus'd to accept an Edition of a Saint's Works, which were presented to him, because the Saint in his Effigies before the Book, was drawn without a Beard.

WE see by these Instances what Homage the World has formerly paid to Beards; and that a Barber was not then allow'd to make those Depredations on the Faces of the Learned, which have been permitted him of later Years.

ACCORDINGLY several wise Nations have been so extremely jealous of the least Ruffle offer'd to their Beards, that they seem to have fixed the Point of Honour principally in that Part. The *Spaniards* were wonderfully tender in this Particular. Don *Quevedo* in his third Vision on the last Judgment, has carry'd the Humour very far, when he tells us that one of his vain-glorious Countrymen, after having receiv'd Sentence, was taken into custody by a couple of evil Spirits; but that his Guides happening to disorder his Mustachoes, they were forced to recompense them with a Pair of Curling-Irons before they could get him to file off.

IF we look into the History of our own Nation, we shall find that the Beard flourish'd in the *Saxon* Heptarchy, but was very much discourag'd under the *Norman* Line. It shot out, however, from time to time, in several Reigns under different Shapes. The last Effort it made seems to have been in Queen *Mary's* Days, as the curious Reader may find, if he pleases to peruse the Figures of Cardinal *Poole*, and Bishop *Gardiner*; tho' at the same time, I think it may be question'd, if Zeal against Popery has not induced our Protestant Painters to extend the Beards of these two Persecutors beyond their natural Dimensions, in order to make them appear the more terrible.

I find but few Beards worth taking notice of in the Reign of King *James* the First.

DURING the Civil Wars there appeared one, which makes too great a Figure in Story to be pass'd over in Silence;



lence; I mean that of the redoubted *Hudibras*, an Account of which *Butler* has transmitted to Posterity in the following Lines :

*His tawny Beard was th' equal Grace  
Both of his Wisdom, and his Face ;  
In Cut and Dye so like a Tyle,  
A sudden View it would beguile :  
The upper Part thereof was Whey,  
The neither Orange mixt with Grey.*

THE Whisker continu'd for some time among us after the Expiration of Beards; but this is a Subject which I shall not here enter upon, having discussed it at large in a distinct Treatise, which I keep by me in Manuscript, upon the *Mustachoe*.

IF my Friend Sir ROGER's Project, of introducing Beards, should take effect, I fear the Luxury of the present Age would make it a very expensive Fashion. There is no question but the Beaux would soon provide themselves with false ones of the lightest Colours, and the most immoderate Lengths. A fair Beard, of the Tapistry-size, Sir ROGER seems to approve, could not come under twenty Guineas. The famous Golden Beard of *Æsculapius* would hardly be more valuable than one made in the Extravagance of the Fashion.

BESIDES, we are not certain that the Ladies would not come into the Mode, when they take the Air on horseback. They already appear in Hats and Feathers, Coats and Periwigs; and I see no reason why we may not suppose that they would have their *Riding-Beards* on the same Occasion.

*I may give the Moral of this Discourse in another Paper.*

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*Friday,*