

of England, the enriching of strange realms, and the total destruction of husbandry. To obviate the evil consequences of this terrible state of affairs, it was decreed that no man under the state of a lord should wear sable, cloth of gold, or purple cloth. Knights were forbidden to array themselves in "cloth of velvet upon velvet." Ermine, velvet, satin, and its imitation were not to be used by any person under the rank of knight. Those whose income was below forty pounds a year, were debarred from wearing myniver or marten furs, foreign silks or girdles garnished with gold or silver. Fustian, scarlet cloth, and all furs save white and black lamb, were forbidden articles to persons possessing less than forty shillings per annum; while no husbandman or artificer was permitted to use any cloth of higher value than two shillings a yard. Short garments were held to be indecent when worn by any but noblemen; so gowns, cloaks, and jackets were ordered to be made of a certain length, under pain of forfeiture; and none but lords were permitted to wear boots or shoes having peaks above two inches long. To make assurance doubly sure, any tailor or shoemaker supplying the means of infringing the law, was liable to punishment as well as the actual offender. Certain legal and official dignitaries and the officers of the royal household were exempt from the operation of this act, and a special clause also declared that it was not to apply to henchmen, heralds, pursuivants, sword-bearers, messengers, minstrels, and "players in their interludes." Henry VII. further infringed on the liberty of the subject by issuing an ordinance fixing the quantity of material to be used in the making of masculine gowns. Dukes, marquises, and archbishops were allowed to use sixteen yards of cloth or other stuff in their gowns; earls had to be content with a couple of yards less; viscounts were limited to twelve yards; barons to eight; and knights to six; while five yards was considered quite enough to make a garment for any one of less degree. Surely the proverb anent cutting one's coat according to one's cloth must have originated with this curious bit of paternal legislation.

'I will tell you,' says Camden, 'how Sir Philip Calthrop purged John Drakes, the shoemaker of Norwich, in the time of Henry VIII., of the proud humour which our people have to be of the gentleman's cut. This knight bought on a time as much fine French tawny cloth as should make him a gown, and sent it to the tailor's to be made. John Drakes, coming to the said tailor's, and seeing the knight's gown-cloth lying there, liking it well, caused the tailor to buy him as much of the same cloth, and bade him make it of the same fashion that the knight would have his made of. Not long after, the knight, coming to the tailor's to take measure of his gown, perceiving the like cloth lying there, asked whose it was. Quoth the tailor: "It is John Drakes' the shoemaker, who will have it made to the self-same fashion that yours is made of." "Well," said the knight, "in good time be it; I will have mine made as full of cuts as thy shears can make it." "It shall be done," said the tailor. Whereupon he made haste to finish both the garments. Now John Drakes, busy with his customers, had no time to go to the tailor's till Christmas-day, when he had hoped to wear his gown. When he perceived the same to be full of cuts, he began swearing at the tailor. "I have done nothing," quoth the tailor "but that you bid me; for as Sir Philip Calthrop's garment is, even so have I made yours." "By my latchet," quoth John Drakes, "I will never wear gentleman's fashion again!"

The church, hardly molested by earlier enactments, was brought within reach of the law by the act passed in 1532, which forbade the inferior degrees of the clergy from wearing costly furs, or any article of foreign manufacture. A few years afterwards, Cranmer touched them in a tenderer spot, by issuing an ordinance for the better regulation of clerical tables. This unwelcome mandate allowed an archbishop's table to be served with half-a-dozen different dishes of flesh or fish, but limited bishops to five, deans and archdeacons to four, and the lesser clergy to two dishes only, 'provided also that the archbishop may have second dishes four, the bishops three, and all

others under the degree of a bishop but two; as custard, tart, fritter, cheese or apples, pears, or two of other kinds of fruits.' When one of the lesser clergy entertained a superior, he was allowed to provide a dinner in accordance with the rank of his guest; and if he was fortunate enough to be able to invite an ambassador to his table, he might be as prodigal as he chose. To guard against cunning evasions of the ordinance, it was provided that cranes, turkeys, swans, pike, haddock, and tench, should be served one in a dish; and capons, pheasants, conies and wood-cocks two in a dish. Three black-birds were thought sufficient for a dish; but bishops might have four, and archbishops six; while a dozen larks or snipes were allowed to all, whatever their degree. The money expected to be saved by this dinertable economy was ordered to be spent in providing plain food for the poor. Leland supplements his quotation of Cranmer's ordinance with the significant 'Memorandum—That this order was kept for two or three months, till by the disusing of certain wilful persons, it came to the old excess.'

One of the first acts passed after Mary's marriage with Philip of Spain was a sumptuary law, 'not extending to any person of or above the degree of a knight's son or daughter,' by which persons possessed of less than twenty pounds a year were forbidden to wear any silk in their hats, bonnets, girdles, night-caps, hose, shoes, scabbards, or spur-leathers, under pain of three months' imprisonment, and a fine of ten pounds for every day the interdicted material was worn; and as if this was not enough, it was enacted that any one keeping a servant in his service who had broken the law, should pay a fine of one hundred pounds. This short and severe act concluded with the curious proviso, "that women may wear in their caps, hats, girdles, and hoods, as they or any of them might lawfully wear before the making of this act." It was destined to be the last of its well-meaning but useless tribe—the last sumptuary law to be enrolled among the statutes of England. Not that Elizabeth, much as she delighted in a costly and overflowing wardrobe of her own, was one whit less anxious to restrain the extravagance of her subjects than 'her sister and father before her; but she was satisfied with the laws they had made, and contented herself with trying to persuade or frighten the people into obeying them.

Her majesty commenced her crusade, soon after her accession, by issuing a Royal Proclamation, gently reminding all whom it concerned of the existence of certain Acts of Apparel, and advising her loving subjects to dress themselves accordingly. This proving of no avail, it was followed by another, which, after declaring that the chief offenders were the meaner sort of people, who were least able to maintain such excesses, appointed officers to arrest all persons coming to court in illegal attire; directed corporation of London to choose four substantial and well-meaning men in each city ward, to see that the statutes were obeyed; and strictly enjoined the authorities of the Inns of Court, and the mayors, bailiffs, and justices throughout the realm, to seek out and punish all who did not conform to the law. This proclamation also regulated the length of swords, rapiers, and daggers, and forbade any hosier or tailor (under pain of being forbidden to carry on his occupation) using more than a yard and three-quarters of any stuff in the making of a pair of hose. Three yards afterwards, this quantity was still further reduced, and the wearing of hose with upper-stocks of velvet, satin, or material of equal value, forbidden to any one below the degree of a baron's eldest son. That no one might plead ignorance of the law, a tabular summary of the Acts of Apparel was appended to the proclamation, by which any one could see at a glance what he might or might not wear.

Spite of the queen's efforts, matters did not mend; and in 1575, a fresh proclamation was published, setting forth the evils caused by the daily increasing excess, 'particularly the wasting and undoing of a great number of young gentlemen, otherwise serviceable; and others seeking by show of apparel to be esteemed as gentlemen, who, allured by the vain show of those things, do

not only consume themselves, their goods and lands, which their parents have left unto them, but also run into such debts and shifts, as they cannot live out of danger of laws, without attempting of unlawful acts, whereby they are not in any way serviceable to their country, as otherwise they might be.' Her majesty then proceeds to remind her obstinate people that the law has provided severe punishment for such as refuse to obey it; but entreats her loving subjects to reform themselves, and not put her to the pain of punishing them. Justices of the peace are directed to keep their eyes open, to arrest all who treat the queen's orders with contempt, and to make a return twice a year of the results of their official activity.

Mr. Fairholt tell us that the sumptuary laws were all repealed at the beginning of James I.'s reign, but the Scotch Solomon was not so much wiser than his predecessors as he would have us infer. He was mightily indignant at the excess and strange fashions indulged in by the 'prentices of London, and the inordinate pride of servant-maids; and sent precepts to the wardens of the various city guilds, enjoining them to harangue their members upon this heinous offence. The result was that the Common Council considered the subject, and issued a code of regulations concerning the material, fashion, and quality of every article of dress worn by the offending classes. 'Prentices were to wear no hat costing more than five shillings, and their hat-bands were to be made of cheap linen, without any ornament save a plain hem. The collar of the 'prentice's doublet was to be innocent of point, whalebone, or plait, fashioned close and comely, and, like his breeches, made either of cloth, kersey, fustian, sackcloth, canvas, or any English stuff not exceeding half-a-crown a yard in value. His stockings were to be of kersey or woollen yarn; and he was especially warned against wearing "Spanish shoes with polonied heels," and having his hair in tufts or locks. The serving-maids were forbidden to indulge in lawn, cambric, tiffany, velvet, lawns and white wires on their heads; and their ruffs were not to exceed four yards in length before the gathering of it in, or to be of greater depth than three inches. The farthingale was prohibited altogether, as was "any body or sleeves of wire, whalebone, or other stiffening, saving canvas and buckram only."

If the Common-councilmen were successful in their attempt to control the subjects of their court, they were luckier than James himself. Their majesties had been left nearly alone in their glory at Whitehall, during the performance of a masque by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn, by reason of the passage into the room being blocked up by some ladies, whose farthingales prevented them either advancing or retiring. James thereupon issued a proclamation declaring that no lady or gentleman should be admitted to any future entertainment at Whitehall who wore "this impertinent garment." As a matter of course, the ladies replied by increasing the size of the obnoxious farthingale, and the proscribed article of apparel held its own as long as James lived. After this, kings and parliaments left dress alone, the only interference with it since being George IV.'s decree, banishing the hoop-petticoat from court, and thereby supplying us with a solitary instance of successful sumptuary legislation.

FOOLISH letters do get occasionally into the columns of well-edited journals, and an odd instance of this has just occurred in *Notes and Queries*. Mr. Skeet, the editor of *Sir Lancelot*, had stated there that *rime* was the old spelling for *rhyme*. On this a Mr. GEO. V. IRVING—his name is worthy of capitals—writes to say that, by referring to Brockett and Jamieson, it will be found that *rime* expresses something "quite inconsistent with the idea of poetic lines." A reference to the two dictionaries shows that they contain no word *rime*, but do contain *rim*. With what meaning does the reader think? "*Rim*, Belly-rim, the membrane inclosing the intestines (the peritoneum); '*Mind, dinna burst your belly-rim*,' a caution among the vulgar in Northumberland." Brockett.