

habit, taken from the robe of the preaching friars, who wore it instead of the white tunic, or *alb*. The use of the black gown in English pulpits got its origin from the itinerant lay preachers in time of Elizabeth, and from the customs of the universities as well as from the vanity of the richer clergy, who wore black silk robes out of doors and then in the pulpit. The clerical dress of the Lutheran reformers differed little from that worn by the civil authorities.

An ancient church history of Geneva says: "The minister's habits are like those of the Syndicks and Councillors, only their cloaks are somewhat longer, their bands shorter, and their wigs less. They preach with warmth, without notes, with their hats on, and in a gown." The ministerial bands, a part of clerical costume, were evolved from the collar of linen or cambric originally worn around the neck and stiffened. These were often of large dimensions, and were allowed to fall upon the shoulders. When the ruffs went out of fashion at the end of the reign of James I, these bands succeeded them. Their simplicity made them acceptable to the Puritanic party, whose "Geneva bands" were very plain and small. The narrow one has in its progress degenerated into two small "bibbs" beneath the chin, as frequently seen in the portraits of early New England clergymen, having been worn within the present century.

Although we may all readily admit that no man's stature and no man's brain has ever been increased by the adoption of any particular apparel, nor his honesty and judgment in any way augmented by it, yet we must admit that mankind has not arrived at that state of perfection when all outward pomp and show can be withdrawn; and, even if this were possible, would it be well to divest the mind of all associations of this character?

I should be very unwilling to dispel the early associations which cluster about the form of the venerable Channing, as he appeared in the pulpit clothed in gown and band, the very personi-

fication, as he was, of Christian excellence and dignity. No: while we do not want mediæval sham, but require character and learning, these last will be all the more acceptable in the house of God, if presented in a dignified and suitable dress, becoming to the place and occasion; and such I consider the minister's black gown.

Yet we should allow to all the utmost latitude in such matters. To quote the words of that liberal and high-minded Christian, the late Dean Stanley of Westminster: "It would seem to be the duty of every one to proclaim their absolute indifference and triviality, compared with matters of serious religion. It is high time to see whether we could not now, once and forever, dispel the idea that the kingdom of God consists in the color of a coat or the shape of a handkerchief. Even to the most extreme Puritan we venture to quote, in justification of an exceptional toleration in these trivial matters, the saying of the great John Calvin himself. They are *tolerabiles ineptiæ* (insignificant trifles)."—*Daniel Denison Slade, in the Commonwealth*.

HE WAS A BETTER MAN THAN I.

Recently, in a Texas lodge, the Worshipful Master, in a sort of lecture to the brethren on the moral obligation of the ballot, said:

Years ago I lived in a small West Texas town where the pistol was the chief arbiter in all personal difficulties.

I had a misunderstanding with a man, and meeting him, I set in to abuse him with great bitterness, till he, apparently unable to longer bear it, reached for his pistol pocket and calmly said:

"Well, sir; I reckon I'll have to kill you."

I knew him to be a quiet, but determined and brave man, and as I was unaccountably unarmed, for in those days I rarely was without a pistol, I felt very much like running. Fortunately mutual friends interfered, and I was