

true principles of legislation in respect to commerce. Thus, regarding gold and silver, independently of their value as a medium of exchange, as constituting in a peculiar manner the wealth of a country, they considered that the true policy was to keep the precious metals at home, and prayed that their exportation might be forbidden. Yet this was a common error in the sixteenth century with other nations besides the Spaniards. It may seem singular, however, that the experience of three-fourths of a century had not satisfied the Castilian of the futility of such attempts to obstruct the natural current of commercial circulation.

In the same spirit, they besought the king to prohibit the use of gold and silver in plating copper and other substances, as well as for wearing-apparel and articles of household luxury. It was a waste of the precious metals, which were needed for other purposes. This petition of the commons may be referred in part, no doubt, to their fondness for sumptuary laws, which in Castile formed a more ample code than could be easily found in any other country.⁵⁷ The love of costly and ostentatious dress was a passion which they may have caught from their neighbors the Spanish Arabs, who delighted in this way of displaying their opulence. It furnished, accordingly, from an early period, a fruitful theme of declamation to the clergy, in their invectives against the pomp and vanities of the world.

Unfortunately, Philip, who was so frequently deaf to

⁵⁷ The history of luxury in Castile, and of the various enactments for the restraint of it, forms the subject of a work by Sempere y Guarinos, containing many curious particulars, especially in regard to the life of the Castilians at an earlier period of their history. *Historia del Luxo* (Madrid, 1788, 2 tom. 1. mo).