

1337, a protection Act was passed which decreed that "none should wear any cloth, but such as is made in England," and in the same year another Act prescribed "who only shall wear furs;" an Act that would scarcely be brought before the Dominion Parliament to-day. There is such a persistency in the regulation of dress by Parliament, that some confusion appears to have been made as to due distinction of class, for, after a century and a quarter of legislation on this matter, an Act passed in 1463 definitely fixed "what kind of apparel men and women of every vocation and degree were allowed, and what prohibited."

Workmen's wages were fixed by Parliament, and altered as occasion required. In 1347, Parliament attempted to solve the labour question in a very high-handed manner. It was ordered that "every person able in body under the age of sixty years, not having to live on, being required, shall be bound to serve him that doth require him or else be committed to the gaol until he find surety to serve." In the same year another Act of Parliament was passed, declaring that "if any artificer or workman takes more wages than were wont to be paid, he shall be committed to the gaol." And another Act enjoined that "no person shall give anything to a beggar that is able to labour." Trade unions were forbidden by two Acts of Parliament passed respectively in 1424 and 1436. The former prevented masons from confederating "themselves into chapters and assemblies," and the latter was passed as "a restraint of unlawful orders made by masters of guildes, fraternities and other companies."

Nearly the whole of the laws made in the middle ages, of which the lower classes of humanity were the subjects, were of great severity, and almost without exception tended to degrade their condition still more. The following is amusing in its way: "That no manner of artificer, labourer, nor any other layman which hath not lands or tenements to the value of 40s. by year, nor any priest, nor other clerk, if he be not advanced to the value of £10 by year shall have or keep from henceforth any greyhound, hound, nor other dog to hunt; nor shall they use fyrets, heys, harpipes, nor cords, nor other engines for to take or destroy deer, hares, nor conies nor other gentlemen's game upon pain of one year's imprisonment."

The game laws of England have always been severe, and even at the present time need serious revision. The first Act of Parliament, in the right direction, was passed ten years after King John met the Barons at Runnymede, when it was ordained that "no man from henceforth shall lose either life or member for killing our deer; but if any man be taken, and convict for taking of our venison, he shall make a grievous fine." Another statute in the same year, and in the following chapter, it was made "lawful for archbishops, bishops, earls or barons to kill one or two deer in view of the forester, and if he were not present he shall cause one to blow an horn for him that he seem not to steal our deer."

We all remember the election cry, a few years back in England, of "three acres of land and a cow," which is ascribed to Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. It may perhaps be a surprise to some of my readers to learn that an Act of Parliament was actually in force whereby no cottage was to built without four acres of land at the least being laid out for the use of the occupier. When we

consider and compare the scant population of the country at that time, and the congested condition of the present day, the Act is really laughable. "For the avoiding of the great inconveniences which are found by experience to grow by the erection and building of great numbers and multitudes of cottages which are daily more and more increased in many parts of this realm" it was enacted, "that no person should, within the realm of England, build or erect, etc., any manner of cottage for habitation, etc., unless the same person do assign and lay to the same cottage or building four acres of ground at the least."

What would the exponents of "Woman's Rights" think of an Act which was passed in the year 1225 and seems to suggest the total distinction of the softer sex. In that year it was decreed that "no man shall be taken or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman for the death of any other than that of her husband."

Queen Elizabeth's Parliament is responsible for the foundation of the present English poor law system. Consequent upon the dissolution of the monasteries, the poverty of the masses increased so greatly that the poor became a social problem for the first time in English history and has remained still unsolved to the present time. In the 39th year of her reign an Act was passed "for erecting hospitals or abiding and working-houses for the poor." Subsequently Justices of the Peace were empowered to give licenses, under their seal, to poor, aged and impotent persons to beg within a prescribed limit, and anyone begging without a license was to be whipped or put in stocks for three days and three nights and fed on bread and water only.

The people's and the king's food has exercised the attention of the ancient law-givers. The sturgeon was pronounced a royal fish by a statute passed in 1343, which recites that "the king shall have the wreck of the sea throughout the realm, whales and great sturgeons taken in the sea, or elsewhere within the realm, except in certain places privileged by the king." An earlier Act ordained that things purveyed for the king's house should be praised. It required a special act to regulate the several prices of a hen, capon, pullet and goose; and an Act was passed to regulate the sale of herrings at Yarmouth. Herrings were to be sold "from the sun rising till the sun going down, and not before nor after, upon the forfeiture of the same merchandise." Six scores were to be counted to the hundred, and 10,000 herrings were to be sold for 40s., and that people who bought them at that rate should sell "for half a mark of gain, and not above."

Butchers were prohibited by Henry VII.'s Parliament, from killing beasts within any walled town, and the same privilege was also accorded Cambridge.

The Parliaments of the last of the Tudor monarchs passed many measures which seem curious in our time. The spirit of Elizabeth to appear well in the eyes of neighboring countries burns throughout the whole of the work of Parliament. Take for example the preamble to a statute for abolishing logwood in the dyeing of cloth, wool or yarn:—"Forasmuch as the colors made with the said stuff, called logwood, alias blockwood, is false and deceitful, and the clothes and other things therewith dyed are not only sold and uttered to the great deceit of the Queen's loving subjects within her realm of England, but also beyond the

seas to the great discredit and slander as well of the merchants as of the dyers of the realm." In 1545 an unique Act of Parliament (passed in 1541) was repealed. It recited, "that no manner of person or persons from and after the 1st day of August then next, ensuing, should vent, utter or put for sale, by retail, in the gross or otherwise, any manner pins, within this realm, but only such as should be double-headed, and have the heads soldered fast to the shank of the pins, well smoothed, the shank well shaven, the point well and round filed, canted and shaped; upon pain that every offender in that behalf should lose and forfeit for every 1,000 pins not sufficiently wrought and made, vented, uttered or put to sale, contrary to the purport of this Act, forty shillings."

Space will only allow me to briefly refer to a few other curious Acts. In 1236 it was declared that the day of Leap Year and the day before should be regarded as one day only. In 1331, it was made a penal act to convey gold or silver out of the country. In 1565 it was made unlawful to work hats and caps with foreign wool, unless the artificer had been apprenticed to the mystery of hat-making, and in the same year it was made a felony to carry over sea rams, lambs or sheep. In 1585 an Act was passed for the preservation of the timber in the wilds of Surrey, Sussex and Kent, and is chiefly noteworthy on account of the total absence of timber in that locality in our time. Parliament, in 1581, proscribed the true making, melting and working of wax, and in 1597, prohibited the excessive making of malt. This is perhaps the earliest appearance of the political prohibitionist. In the same year they proscribed "lewd and wandering persons pretending themselves to be soldiers and mariners." And about the same time they passed an Act against "vagabonds calling themselves Egyptians." This Act was apparently abortive to judge by the number of gipsies in our days. Tin was prohibited from export from all the ports of the realm, except Dartmouth. In 1403 we learn "what things may be gilded and laid over with silver or gold, and what not."

James I., the English Solomon, vented all his energies on the suppression of witchcraft. And many interesting Acts were passed during the Stuart period, but time will not allow me to cite enactments posterior to the death of Queen Elizabeth.

A. MELBOURNE THOMPSON.

CAESAR'S TRIBUTE.

The lady lecturer had come to town.

There was no subject under the sun, from Dante to door-knobs that she could not handle with masterful ease.

Perhaps her most brilliant success of the season was a lecture on "Canada's Contribution to the Empire." As the newspapers set it up an hour or so before the discourse was delivered: "The eloquent speaker, after demonstrating that Canada's share towards the maintenance of the Empire was less than that of any other dependency, went on to show that it was left for the women of Canada to clear their country from a stigma of hollow Imperialism.

"Let Canadian women feed, clothe, educate and elevate the submerged tenth of England. From a swarming mass of humanity, lying in worse than heathen darkness, a festering sore in the civilization of London, let Canadian women, exerting that