

laced very loosely and did not attain the length of later fashions. A great velvet hood with a sort of cape hanging over the shoulders was worn frequently at this time. In male costume there was not much change, although the quality of goods made and those imported into the country greatly improved. The trunks, which were developed from the skirts of former times, were made in this reign of two, and sometimes more, colors.

AS in these times the sovereign's taste for finery affected the fashions a great deal, we will not be surprised to find in

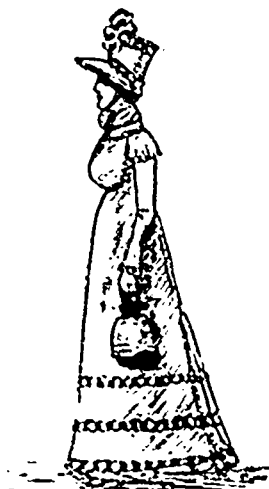


BRITISH DRESS IN 1550.

who tried to vie in splendor with the court, also improved in their dress.

THE KING, however, was not willing to have himself and his nobles equalled in apparel by the "lower" classes, so he passed laws placing a limit on the dress of all subjects. Black jennets' furs, for instance, were permitted to the use of none but royalty; the nobility were given certain marks of distinction in material and color of costume which the "lower"

classes were prohibited from using, and many other small privileges kept the commonality from becoming too gorgeous in their dress, and the merchant from making too much money.



BRITISH DRESS IN 1817.

The court looked upon English made goods as inferior, and not fit for any but the laboring classes; while foreign goods found a ready sale. Foreign goods, however, were brought in at a great risk to the merchant in those days. Each merchant was his own importer, and with the continual warfare and piracy, so prevalent at the time, as well as the risk which his small, frail ships ran on the sea, his importations caused him great anxiety and often great loss.

THE male costume of Henry VIII.'s reign was a radical change from all the previous dresses of gentlemen from the time of the Norman Conquest. The hose were lengthened from the knees to the hips. The trunks were lowered to almost halfway to the knees, and continued from this time to be gradually elongated until the Stuart period. A short jacket, with cape-like sleeves reaching nearly to the elbow, was very often worn, from under which the sleeves and trunks, both of the same material and color, protruded. These were slit to a very great extent, showing the undergarment through each slit, and giving an appearance of padding to the whole suit. The female costume underwent almost as great a change. The short waist lengthened, and we find the very long narrow bodice, so often seen in Queen Elizabeth's reign, making its appearance here. The whole dress was much more elaborate, and the beautiful patterns of a later period had their beginning in the last part of Henry's reign.

PROBABLY no court in the history of Great Britain was as brilliant in the way of dress as that of Elizabeth. Being a woman, it is but natural to suppose that more attention would be paid to dress and display than if a male sovereign led the court. Elizabeth herself was most careful about her personal appearance, and, with all her masculine ability as a sovereign and diplomat, she was a woman in the matter of fashion. Trunks and stockings of woolen cloth, which had hitherto been worn by all, were now used by none but the poor people, the nobles and gentry abandoning them for silk and thread garments. The wide ruff which came in toward the last of Henry VIII.'s reign, became still larger at this time, and was worn by the gentlemen as well as the ladies. Although the costumes of this time did not change radically in design, they underwent a great reformation in regard to material. But, even with all the notice given to fashion, there remained the same style practically throughout the whole period, with very few alterations, until the Stuarts came to the throne.



BRITISH DRESS IN 1840.

THE first part of James I.'s reign (from 1603 onwards) produced no new styles, the dress being the same as worn in the time of Elizabeth. It is not until the middle of Charles I.'s reign that any great change is found in costume. A large number of new materials and patterns came in under James' rule, and gold cloth, brocaded silks, velvets, satins, tissues, etc., were used for the first time in Britain. The female costume was much the same as in the previous reign, with less padding and of still better goods. The wide, felt hat, adorned with a feather, was worn by the gentlemen of the last part of James I.'s reign, and the trunks, which by this time had been lengthened to the knee, were brought just below the knee and fastened to the leg with a tight band around the bottom. They soon lost the baggy appearance of former times, and in Charles I.'s reign had become knickerbockers. Although loose at first, they were gradually made tighter until the Hanoverian period, when we find them fitting the leg closely.