

Novel 122.

An edict in regard to artisans
(Edictrum de constitutione artificum.)

Preface.¹ We have learned that after the chastisement, which God, in his clemency, visited upon men,^a those who carry on business and artisans and the workmen of the various trades and farmers and seamen, instead of becoming better, have been bent upon avarice and are demanding double and triple price and compensation contrary to ancient usage.

a. Reference is made to the pestilence of October, 541, which lasted four months.

c. 1. It has, accordingly, pleased us to forbid such avarice, on the part of anyone, by an imperial edict, and hereafter no merchant, farmer or artisan in any trade, business or farming, shall demand any price or compensation greater than according to the ancient custom. We, moreover, direct that those who measure building-work, farm-work or other work shall not allow a greater amount to the workmen, but shall observe the ancient custom. This shall be observed also by those who let out any work, or undertake any on contract. We do not permit that more shall be paid to them than the amount according to custom. Everyone must know that those who demand more than is allowed under the ancient custom will be compelled to pay three times the amount thereof into the fisc, if it appears that he has received or given more than the amount fixed in the beginning.

Epilogue. We direct Your Sublimity and the glorious prefect of this fortunate city to examine into and punish these violations. We want you to collect the fine that is fixed, from those who violate this constitution and punish them. And a fine of five pounds of gold hangs over your official staffs, if they neglect any of the provisions made by us.

¹ Blume penciled in above this line “? Emperor.” Schoell and Kroll likewise offer no emperor attribution.

Given March 23, 544.

Note.

The edict of Diocletian in which he attempted to fix prices on everything is well known, and so is the fact that he dismally failed in his undertaking.