

writings, unless we have an intimate acquaintance with the man himself; unless we can prove from his actions that his high-wrought descriptions are the index of his mind. It is even possible, as the philosopher Moyes asserted, that a man of no feeling may succeed best in giving us a finished picture of distress. How is this to be accounted for, unless it be, that because they have no interest in what they deliver, they are not hurried on by any real passion, they take time to dress it to the popular taste, by ornamenting it with all the nicknackery which it will bear? The man, however, who feels and suffers in a high degree must express himself strongly on the subject which affects him, though he does not go out of his way to introduce any artful embellishment. I intended to have attempted to explain this, but rather wish to have this done by some of your ingenious Correspondents. I shall only observe, that, notwithstanding all the admiration which Sterne's Maria has produced, he could not, to save his life, have written any thing equal to David's Lamentation over Absalom. He would, like Dr. Swift, if in his situation, have been proud and witty, even when deploring the death of his lovely Stella. W. HAZLETT."

If these anecdotes which tend to place the character of Sterne in a new point of view, are thought worthy of a place in the Belfast Monthly Magazine, they are submitted to its service.

A READER,

---

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

AS I perceive you wish to pay particular attention to every subject connected with the *rural economy* of Ireland, perhaps the following cheap and simple method of dying woollen stuffs an excellent and permanent black, without the aid of copperas, may be acceptable to many of your readers. It is extracted from one of the most valuable publications, that the present age has produced; and I have been assured by a very respectable and intelligent lady, who made an experiment, according to the directions, that it is infinitely preferable to the method commonly practised in ma-

ny parts of Great Britain, and Ireland. By this method, the texture of the cloth is not in the smallest degree injured, but continues to the last, soft and silky, without that hardness to the touch which it acquires, when dyed by means of copperas; besides it is not by any means, so liable to fade, as when dyed in the common way. The method is as follows. "Let the stuff to be dyed be well washed in soap and water, and afterwards completely dried. Then of the common broad leaved sorrel, or as it is vulgarly called in some parts, *sourack*, boil as much as shall make a decoction of sufficient quantity to let the stuff to be dyed, lie in it open and easy to be stirred; the greater the quantity of sorrel that is used, the better will the colour be; and therefore if the pot, or caldron, will not hold enough at once, when part has been sufficiently boiled, it must be taken out and wrung, and a fresh quantity to be boiled in the same juice or decoction. When the liquor is made sufficiently acid, strain it from the sorrel through a sieve, put the cloth or yarn into it, and let it boil two hours, stirring it frequently. If stockings be among the stuff to be dyed, it will be expedient, after they have been an hour in the boiling liquor, to turn them inside out, and at the end of the second hour, let the whole be poured into a tub or any other vessel. The pot, or caldron must then be washed, and clean water put into it, with half a pound of logwood-chips, for every pound of dry yarn, or cloth. The logwood and water should boil slowly for four hours; and then the cloth or yarn being wrung from the sour liquor, and put into the logwood decoction, the whole must be suffered to boil slowly for four hours more; stockings, if there be any, turned inside out at the end of two hours. Of this last decoction there must, as of the former, be enough to let the cloth lie open, and easy to be stirred, while boiling. At the end of the four hours, the cloth must be taken out, and among the boiling liquor, first removed from the fire, must be poured an English gallon of stale urine for every pound of dry yarn, or cloth to be dyed. When this compound liquor has been well stirred,

and become cold, the cloth, or yarn must be put into it, and suffered to remain well covered for *twelve* hours, and then dried in the *shade*; after which, to divest it of smell, or any other impurity, it may be washed in cold water, and dried for use."

G.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

## ON FASHIONS IN FEMALE DRESS.

**M**UCH obliquy, much sneer and unbounded severity of remark, have from time to time, been employed, in endeavouring to reduce female fashions to some rational standard, but hitherto without producing the desired effect. Perhaps we may be more successful than our predecessors by adopting a candour on the subject, which they have uniformly neglected, and by fairly laying before our readers (particularly the fair part of them) the advantages and inconveniences resulting from an indiscriminate and ardent pursuit of this variously coloured goddess.

It is unjust to insinuate that the fickleness of fashion, hath been of modern growth. Human nature has been at all times, under similar circumstances, perfectly uniform in her propensities; where variety could be obtained she has enjoyed it; where natural or accidental restraints may have been interposed, she submits to the restriction. The luxurious Roman, who had his summer and winter rings, must have been actuated in his tastes for variety of dress by the same principle which operates at this day, and perhaps, had not Heliogabalus exhausted the public treasury, his fickleness, in point of dress, would have passed without a comment.

The state of climate, or poverty, have at all times induced a sameness in the external appearance of a nation. During the winter season nothing can induce the Russian to exchange his *sable dress* for the *ventus textilis*, the woven wind, that floats on a British loom; and while Asia shall be visited by sultry summers, the turban will uniformly deck the heads of its voluptuous inhabitants.

It is only in climates like ours, which are subject to all the vicissitudes of cold and heat, that fashion is seen to

vary the appearance, the costume, and the opinion of a nation at large: here every breeze that blows, every flower that blooms periodically, and every, the most trivial variation of the season, changes the fold of the drapery, varies the form of a curl, or a ringlet, and draws out or curtails the extent of the female dress. It is entertaining to one, like me, who is uninfected by the general taste for variety, to behold the rapid succession of fashions which spread over the face of the country with the rapidity of wild-fire. Some years ago, the females of this island, were delighted with assuming a zig-zag external; a profusion of inflated gauze, decorated the bosom, which was very prudently preponderated by a quantity of cork in another quarter. The cork suddenly disappeared, the inflated gauze was necessarily removed, and the whole sex in a moment seemed as if by common consent, reduced to skeletons; like the vain frog in the fable, who suffered from his temerity, in endeavouring to approach the magnitude of the ox.

The long and taper waist still rested on the female hips, but at length, by a sudden and unaccountable revolution, it vanished and was superseded by an immoderate sweep of train, which commenced at the *scapula*, and terminated indefinitely. The ornament of the head too, was suffering from the same train of vicissitudes, at one time, it was plentifully thickened with grease and flower, which, like the mantle of winter,

....."Makes white with other snows,

Than those of age."

No sooner was it relieved from this nauseous and greasy composition, than it began to be twisted and twined round the head, and tortured into ringlets resembling those of Medusa, as if it were deemed a deformity to allow it to obey the gravitating law of nature. This however was only a prelude to a new and more extravagant innovation, for another edict from fashion cut it sheer off from the neck, and now every female we meet, exhibits a profusion of hair in front, and the spare and glossy locks of an infant in the rere. Perhaps (the taste for invasion has been so prevalent latterly) this may be only the fore-runner of some new fashion; and perhaps ere long we shall see their