

long been familiar; yet not before now having any knowledge that it was before the public.

“A mourning garb gives public notice of the situation of those who are in affliction from the loss of friends, informing others that they wish to commune with their own hearts, without being disturbed by the frivolities of the world around them.”—*New-York article.*

Here are two distinct views of the subject.—Such a garb does indeed give public notice of the death of a relative, if seen by the public; but it does not give the public any assurance of sorrow, or of mourning; for we may judge from what has transpired within our knowledge, that in general it is not *proof*, but a doubtful *evidence* of sincerity. And further, I cannot admit that a consciousness of this “public notice” affords any real, or religious consolation to the person that wears the garb. To our friends and neighbors, whose sympathy and condolence we may need and desire, notice is useless; and they can better judge than the public, whether we mourn or rejoice; indeed, strangers feel no interest in it.

As every view we take of human life, in connexion with death, and the solemn concerns of the soul, should be tested by the criterion of religious principle, I will on this ground offer my ideas of the latter part of the last quotation, in order to show that the “mourning garb” does not furnish any evidence of a “wish to commune with their own hearts.”

I have personally witnessed, and through a longer life than falls to the common lot of man, the practice of families on the death of a member; and in this respect, generally of one character, though of different grades. As soon as convenient, after the corpse is in its winding sheet, the shops are searched for *fashionable mourning*; the milliner and mantuamaker called upon, and the neighboring women employed, more or less, in fitting out the family in a fashionable manner. From this to the time of the burial, the bereaved relatives, especially the female part, have but little leisure “for communion with their own hearts;” and from being so occupied, their minds are sorrowfully disqualified for serious meditation upon death, and the awful scenes that follow it. But they are now fitted for six months, and then a half mourning must be prepared for the next six, which will complete the mourning period!!!

I would here propose an appeal to any or every intelligent person, that has passed through such a course, and inquire; to which was it most conducive, to *sorrow*, or to *pride*? If to the former, my views are erroneous—if to the latter, can we consistently withhold our assent to the abolition of the custom?

Can it truly be said, that this practice is adopted as a guard against the “frivolity of the world around them?” If it were against their own, they could find a rational argument for it. But the *Christian* *anon* sustains the soul in humble confidence in the Everlasting