

well, it has gradually usurped a degree of power that is well nigh irresistible; and this gannny prevaile in various forms, but with equal cruelty over the whole habitable earth. In a stream it bears along all ranks and conditions of men, all avocations and professions, and often principles. Fashion is that a notable courtier, bowing to the strong and flattering the powerful. Fashion is mere whim, a conceit, a foible, a toy, a folly, and withal an idol whose worshippers are universal. Wherever introduced, it generally assumes the familiar name of Habit, and many of your great and philosophical men, and certain ill-natured old women who appear at parties in their wedding gown, and mispe the very name of Fashion, are each slaves of sundry habits which once bore appellation. Should Fashion miss the skirts of a man's coat, it is certain of seizing on by the beard. It is humiliating to the dignity of immortal beings, possessed of capacities the extent of which is yet unknown; confess that many of them professing to be Christians, Jews, Mahomedans, or Pagans, are merely the followers in the stream of fashion; and are Christians or Jews simply because such a religion was after the fashion of their fathers or country. During the present century it has been the cause of much credulity and freethinking, or rather, as is more frequently the case with its votaries, of *no thinking*; this arose from wisdom and learning being the fashion, and a vast number of brainless people, who could neither be out of the service of their idol, nor yet endure the plodding labour and severe study necessary for the acquiring of wisdom and learning, and many of them not even possessing the requisite abilities; in order to be thought once wise men and philosophers, they pronounced religion to be a cheat, futurity a lie, and themselves organic clods.—Fashion indeed is as capricious as it is tyrannical; with one man it plays the infidel, and with another it runs the gauntlet of bible and missionary meetings, or benevolent societies. It is like the Emperor of Austria—a command of intolerable evil and much good. It attempts to penetrate the mysteries of metaphysics, and it mocks the calculations of the sagacious Chancellor of the Exchequer. The nod of Fashion, ladies change their dresses, and the children of the glove-makers Worcester go without dinners. At its call they took the shining buckles from their shoes, and they walked in the laced boot, the slipper, or the tied shoe; individu-

ally it seemed a small matter whether shoes were fastened with a buckle or with ribbon; but the small-ware manufacturers found a new harvest, while the buckle-makers of Birmingham and their families in thousands, were driven through the country to beg, to steal, to coin, to perish. This was the work of Fashion, and its effects are similar to the present hour; if the cloak drive the shawl from the promenade, Paisley and Bolton may go in sackcloth. Here I may observe, that the cry of distress is frequently raised against *bad government*, assuming it to be the cause, when fickle Fashion has alone produced the injury. In such a matter, government was unable to prevent, and is unable to relieve—Fashion defying all its enactments, and the ladies being the sole governors in the case.—For although the world rules man and his business, and Fashion is the ruler of the world, yet the ladies, though the most devoted of its servants, are at the same time the rulers of Fashion. This last assertion may seem a contradiction, but is not the less true. With simplicity and the graces, Fashion has seldom exhibited any inclination to cultivate an acquaintance: now the ladies being in their very nature, form and feature, the living representatives of these virtues, I am the more surprised that they should be the especial patrons of Fashion, seeing that its efforts are more directed to conceal a defect by making it more deformed, than to lend a charm to elegance, or an adornment to beauty.—The lady of Fortune follows the tide of Fashion till she and her husband are within sight of the shores of poverty. The portionless or the poorly portioned maiden presses on in its wake, till she find herself immured in the everlasting garret of an old maid.—The well-dressed woman every man admires—the fashionable woman every man fears. Then comes the animal of the male kind, whose coat is cut, whose hair is curled, and his very cravat tied according to the fashion. Away with such shreds and patches of effeminacy! But the fashion for which Andrew Donaldson, the day-labourer, sighed, aimed at higher things than this. It grieved him that he was not a better-dressed man and a greater man than the squire on whose estate he earned his daily bread. He was a hard and severe man in his own house—at his frown his wife was submissive and his children trembled. His family consisted of his wife,—three sons, Paul, Peter, and Jacob, and two daughters, Sarah and Rebecca. Though all scriptural names, they had all