

became significant of the separation from the living world of the person on whom it was performed. Of the antiquity of this practice, we have a proof in a command given by Moses to the Jews:—"Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead." These were superstitious customs of the nations by whom they were surrounded.

The Gentiles used excessive lamentations, amounting to frenzy, at their funeral rites. According to Bruce, the Abyssinian woman, upon the death of a near relation, cuts the skin of both her temples with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose; and thus every fair face throughout the country is disfigured with scars. The same notion of abstraction from the present life and its concerns is expressed by the clerical tonsure, so long known in the Christian church, and still retained among the Roman Catholics. It is still common, also, among ourselves, for widows, in the earlier period of their mourning, to cut off their hair, or to remove it back from the brow. Among all rude nations, besides, the hair has been held in peculiar estimation from its ornamental nature, and its capability of being formed into any shape, according to the fancy of its possessor, or the fashion of the country.

Amongst nations, especially, where the ordinary clothing of the people, from the materials of which it was formed, did not admit