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### **Frailties of fashion, or, the adventures of an Irish smock**

interspersed with whimsical anecdotes of a Nankeen pair of breeches

Illustrated with some of the most striking and humorous descriptions in high and low life, that fancy can suggest ...

**London, 1783**

Chap. II.

**urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-17682**

## C H A P. II.

*Lady W—y, Mrs. N—n, and Clackitt, repair to Mr. Cr—ie's sale:—His polite address to the ladies.—Begins his sale, and disposes of Perdita, the Bird of Paradise, Dally the Tall, and the Armst—d.*

**M**R. Elziver having taken his leave, I now began to consider how to proceed upon the succeeding sheets; turning over the first volume, I found I left Jack Clackitt in company with Lady W—y and Mrs. N—n, previous to their attending Mr. C—ie's sale, when the Bird of Paradise, and the other impures upon the *haut ton*, were to be put up at auction. Referring accordingly to my notes, I found this business thus conducted:

Clackitt waited upon the ladies the next day, agreeable to appointment, at  
 Mrs.

Mrs. N—n's, and after taking chocolate, the carriage was ordered, and they repaired to Pall-Mall. They had no sooner entered the auction-room, than Mr. C—ie complimented the ladies upon the honour they did him that day to assist a this sale; saying that he had just written a card to request their attendance, but he was perfectly happy to find it was unnecessary to dispatch it. He concluded by adding, "this day will establish my reputation, my glory and renown for ever; I shall soar above all competitors, all my predecessors; Cock and Langford dealt in baubles, compared to what I am going to exhibit. I have no copies, no one can dispute that the lots I am going to put up are originals, and far more like real life, than whatever Raphael, Rubens, and all the schools put together

together, with Sir Joshua into the bargain, ever produced: It is true they have some glowing tints that may be considered as extraneous, but they are introduced by way of *relief*——Lud! I beg pardon; the time is come and I shall dwell no more upon those valuable, I might say invaluable lots, till I mount the rostrum.”

Having concluded this short address, he drew out his hammer, and began the sale.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, the first lot I shall offer you is the *Perdita*. The *Perdita* every one knows her story in the *Winter's Tale*, but she by an enchantment peculiar to herself, makes it summer all the year wherever she appears; the loves and graces constantly accompany her; princes kneel at her feet, and are compleatly happy if she

she will vouchsafe a smile. She besides possesses many great talents: she is an excellent actress off, as well as on the stage, and is a perfect mistress of every *part* she *undertakes*. Gentlemen, what shall we put her up at?—pray say something—such another opportunity of making so valuable a purchase, may, probably, never again present itself.”

*Count H—g.* I will give five hundred guineas.

*C—ie.* Five hundred guineas, Count! why it would not pay her shoemaker's annual bill. Look at her; see what a ravishing eye—what a dimple! what a smile! what a regular set of teeth that rival ivory! what a charming complexion, *almost* all her own! pray Gentlemen, call forth your judgment upon this occasion.

*Lord S—*

*Lord S—*. I will give a thousand, as I think she greatly resembles Miss R—y.

*C—ie*. A thousand guineas bid, and nobody more?

*Col. T—n*. Fifteen hundred: I am sure of a bargain if I get her.

*C—ie*. A going, a going, a going, for fifteen hundred guineas, the beautiful, the enchanting, the divine Perdita—once, twice, a third time going, Perdita herself for fifteen hundred guineas.—[knocks her down to the colonel.]

*C—ie*. The next lot, gentlemen, is the *Bird of Paradise*: the very name commands a heavenly price; besides, she warbles as sweet as she looks—angels are painted fair to look like her—pray, Gentlemen, bid.

*Sir John L—de*.

*Sir John L—de.* I will give a thousand d—mn me!

*C—ie.* A thousand, to begin.

*Mordecai.* Twelve hundred, (*aside*) I can sell her again to Sir John, and get cent per cent as usual.

*Sir John.* Fifteen hundred and a vis-a vis.

*Mordecai.* Two thousand, vid de vis-a-vis and a fine pair of geldings.

*Sir John.* Damn the Jew, he always gets the better of me; but he shall not this time if I borrow the money of him to pay at two hundred per cent.

*Mordecai.* (*Aside*) Oh, if dat be the case you shall have her.

*Sir John.* I say five thousand, with the vis-a-vis, horses and all.

*C—ie.* Gentlemen, the Bird of Paradise is going for five thousand guineas with a vis-a-vis and horses—a going, a going,

going, a going—once, twice, three times [knocks her down] Sir John, I wish you joy, you have displayed your taste and judgment very conspicuously upon this occasion.

The next lot, Gentlemen, is Dally the Tall—there are limbs, symmetry and proportion; not to mention her latent charms, which would entitle her to be the favourite Sultana in the Ottoman seraglio: besides, Gentlemen, I can assure you, she has received no less than six lessons from my neighbour the celestial Doctor, on his celestial bed, and she has a certificate from him, that her movements are incomparably fine, and no woman ever gave him more real blifs.

*Sb—ne.* Two hundred guineas.

*C—ie.* I am sorry your lordship betrays your judgment upon this occasion  
—you



—you might as well make a peace without stipulating the demolition of the fortifications of Dunkirk; or by mistaking the boundaries of Canada, make the Americans a present of the most valuable part of that province.

*Lord Cb—y.* I will give a thousand, as I have tried her, like her paces, and she never threw me out of the saddle.

*C—ie.* A thousand guineas bid for Dally the Tall.—Pray, Gentlemen, view her, and do not let so valuable a lot go for a mere song. A thousand guineas, and no body more—a going, a going, a going—once, twice, three times, a going: (knocks her down) heavens! I never saw such excellent goods go so cheap—why she could bring more in a month in King's Place. Does your lordship choose to take her home with

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you

you, or shall I keep her till to-morrow?

*Lord C—y.* No, no, master C—ie, I know you too well, I shall take her with me; or, perhaps, you may knock her up, as well as down, before I see her again.

*C—ie.* The next lot, Gentlemen, is the Arm—d. Her fame, her renown for beauty, as well as gratification, are known all over Europe. It is true she has been lately out of luck, and a captain of marines, for whom she entertained a *penchant*, has made free with her jewels; but she is a cluster of brilliants of the first water herself, and wants no fictitious aids to make her shine. What do you say, Gentlemen, to fifteen hundred?

*Lord M—th.* No; I will give a thousand, as she will make a good figure

gure

gure in my new phaeton, two stories higher than Sir John's.

*D— of D—*. Five hundred more, (*aside*) she will do for common use, when I am out of luck with females upon the Ton.

*Lord M—th*. Seventeen hundred and fifty—I will have her though I must cut down another forest.

*C—ie*. A going, a going for seventeen hundred and fifty, and nobody more (*flourishes his hammer and knocks her down*) Ladies and Gentlemen, as it is now four o'clock, I shall close this day's sale, most respectfully thanking you for the great honour you have conferred upon me, by your attendance this day; and I hope to-morrow's assembly here will be equally polite and elegant."

## C H A P. III.

*The Sale continued, when Kit Fred—k, the Goldfinch, Lady W—y, Mrs. Nel—n, and Lady C—ke are knocked down—B—ll, M—re, and Mrs. W—ms are not put up, they having been previously disposed of by private contract.*

**A**BOUT twelve o'clock the next day, the same company attended the sale, where they found a numerous and brilliant audience to attend Mr. C—ie's pulpit oratory. In about half an hour he mounted the rostrum, and after paying his obeisances, with his usual politeness, to the elegant groupe, he began the auction.

“ Ladies and Gentlemen, I had designed to have put up Dally the Tall and Kitty Fred—k in one lot ; but at  
the