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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. XI.

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C H A P. XI.

Mr. Trope's distress compels him to dispose of the Nankeen Breeches.—They are soon after transferred to Miss W——s, an itinerant actress.—Uncommon address and gallantry of Mr. Buckram, which explode the vulgar prejudices entertained against the Faculty of Taylors.

THE nearer night approached, the keen shafts of hunger preyed more forcibly upon poor Trope: in vain did he muster to his aid all his philosophy; at length he flew out in a parody upon Romeo's speech to Friar Lawrence:

“Hang up philosophy—unless

“Philosophy can make a—*dinner*.”

Having come to this pious resolution, he returned to his lodging, when

he stript off his Nankeen Breeches, and supplied their place with a pair of tatter'd black ones, that scarcely preserved decency. He was at this moment in possession of one single half-penny, which he resolv'd to venture at a desperate game. The reader will, perhaps, fancy there were half-penny E O tables in the purlieus of St. Giles's, and that this last stake was there, to decide whether he should have a stake of another kind; but this was not the case at present. Trope had long fought the old soldier, and was *au fait* to most things. He knew that old clothes men had a natural propensity to feel at the knees of breeches, if they could discover any coin, which had descended through the aperture of a pocket; and when they met with any thing of the kind thus lodged (as they sometimes found in this situation the king's golden picture)

picture) they were induced to bid a higher price than they otherwise would for the commodity offered.

This political conjecture foreran the event, for had not the Levite, to whom he offered his fragment of Nankeen, received proof of there being a piece of coin concealed, he would not have bid Trope above half what he did. As it was, the genius, to his great joy, was once more put into cash, with the amazing sum of three shillings, with which he immediately applied to a cook-shop, and there indulged, and to his genius freely gave.

The Nankeen Breeches did not remain in the Levite's hands, nor in possession of the next purchaser, for being hung up at a sale-shop, in the purlieu of Holborn, they soon caught the eyes of an itinerant actress, who was going to Yarmouth, to play Macheath.

This was Miss W—s, who was going to make her first theatrical campaign, after having met with several disappointments in the commerce of gallantry, and was certainly the fair one that Mr. Elziver had in his eye, in the first chapter of this volume, when he spoke of a female designed for, or already upon the boards, who had made a rent in the Nankeen Breeches just between the thighs, as the event will evince.

Mr. Buckram being *standing* at his shop door to invite in customers, no sooner perceived Miss W—s's eye was caught by the breeches, than he politely, according to the graces of Monmouth-street, for which that place is so celebrated, took her by the hand, without *barking*, as is too commonly the case, and requested her, with his hat off, to walk in; which invitation,

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she with little hesitation accepted.— Miss W—s having, with a jocularitv peculiar to herself, said she was tired of being a woman any longer, the men were such base wretches, as never to fulfill their promises, was easily prevailed upon to walk up stairs, and try the breeches on.

It was in this operation that the crack mentioned by Mr. Elziver, became visible; but Mr. Buckram, with an address and readiness for which he is remarkable, laying Miss W—s upon the shop board, and producing his needle, presently filled up the interstice greatly to the lady's satisfaction.

Miss W—s then thinking she had purchased the breeches a bargain, for indeed, Mr. Buckram charged no more for them than he had given, induced her to inquire what a waistcoat, suitable to the breeches would come to?

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He said that the terms should be perfectly easy, and immediately took measure of her in form.

Miss W—s returned two days after for the waistcoat, which however was not ready; but she having informed Mr. Buckram that the breeches wanted a little more of his assistance, he immediately fitted them once more entirely to her fancy.

The time of Miss W—s's departure for Yarmouth approaching, she had only one more interview with Mr. Buckram, who convinced her he was as staunch a friend as ever, and having most cordially embraced her, by way of *finale*, for the present, paid her a compliment of the waistcoat, which we must now take leave of for some time, as well the breeches.

It must be acknowledged, that upon these occasions Mr. Buckram approved himself

himself a man of no inconsiderable share of gallantry; and notwithstanding the prejudices that are entertained against the faculty of Taylors, by some ignorant people, who idly say, that nine taylors make a man; yet we may venture to say that Mr. Buckram, with Miss W—s, in breeches for his aid de camp, mounted guard, and entered the breach as gallantly as would have done Elliot's light horse in the late war, though entirely composed of taylors, or his brave and invincible troops that lately so gloriously defended Gibraltar.

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C H A P.



C H A P. XII.

A trip to France—Remarks upon the road and in the capital, worthy the notice of English travellers—A whimsical and truly risible anecdote—A new species of cheats described—The marquis de Pillotte's motto upon the urn which inclosed the great Voltaire's heart.

THE honey moon could not be completed, according to the laws of the Ton, without a trip to the continent. Monsieur and Madame Cabriole, with Mademoiselle Convert, accordingly set off for France. This married Miss, was an useful companion, as an interpreters for the young lady, who had not yet made any great progress in the French language.

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