

Landesbibliothek Oldenburg

Digitalisierung von Drucken

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

interspersed with whimsical anecdotes of a Nankeen pair of breeches

Containing among a great variety of curious connexions between the most celebrated Demi Reps and Beaux Garcons upon the ton, the secret memoirs of Madame D'Eon as related by herself ...

London, 1784

Chap. XIII.

urn:nbn:de:gbv:45:1-17699

C H A P. XIII.

The umbrella, or the parapluie and parasol—A Sbandean digression.

FOLLY and vanity constantly go hand in hand upon all occasions, and may be seen every day and every hour in and about this metropolis, from the peer down to the pauper. Perhaps the present rage of wearing umbrellas is one of the most striking proofs of the absurdity of the times. Whilst they were confined to the ladies, the mode was to be overlooked, or considered as one of those appendages to female dress, which a finished coquette might consider she was entitled to. Nay, when the epicene gender, I mean the present race of macaronies, took them up, as their
gender

gender was equivocal, the propriety of the censure still remained doubtful, but when Herculean figures six feet high, perhaps professed martinets, took up the parapluye or the parasol, it became high time to lay aside their spon-
toons.

But the ridicule is carried farther, an officer with a great coat and boots on, whom we might suppose was prepared to ford a river, has been seen in one of the mildest and most serene days in summer, carrying his umbrella, as the insignia of his courage, fortitude, and resolution of braving all danger, scorning all fear.

What shall we say to a man with a shabby—aye, a ragged coat, a hat not worth two-pence, whose stockings pleaded in the most forcible manner for a little darning worsted, carrying

an

an umbrella worth more than all his wardrobe? This might be stiled the summit of folly, if some other species, equally striking, could not be produced. It, for the moment, makes us recall an anecdote of the late chevalier Defcafeu, of Poitic, and eccentric memory.

The chevalier, from absence, or poverty, or both, had reduced his wardrobe so low, that his very breeches would not cover his nakedness. The gentlemen, who then associated at Old Slaughter's coffee-house, which he constantly frequented, made a liberal subscription for him, that he might re-equip himself with his taylor. The subscription money was communicated to him with great delicacy, by a gentleman to whom he had had former pecuniary obligations,

obligations, and a hint was given him concerning the necessity of having immediately another pair of breeches, that he might not shock decency and the lady at the bar.

Two nights after he made his appearance in a second-hand embroidered coat, and a new feather in his hat—but with the same breeches as had given so much offence. A gentle remonstrance being delivered to him upon the occasion—he replied, “He was inspired by his muse and his genius to purchase that feather to soar above breeches, and all such low concerns, to Mount Parnassus.”

CHAP. XIV.

The chapter of virtue and chastity.

VIRTUE, what art thou?—Chastity, how camest thou in such company?—in a brothel!

Have we not seen even
Cato 'midst a *gamesome* crowd;
No stranger to the revels there allowed?

Virtue came forward—blushed
and acknowledged her mistake. “I thought,” said she, “that under the very eye of Justice, no such rendezvous could possibly be admitted, I imagined with the poet:

He can't be wrong whose life's been
always—*Right!*

But I have been mistaken—I am
convinced Bow-street should be called

VOL. I. I *Frail-*