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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 Garçons upon the ton, the secret memoirs of Madame D'Eon as related by herself ...

London, 1784

Chap. XI.

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safe in town, with all that was valuable about him.

Just as I reached Hounslow, continued Sam, I was accosted by two footpads, and finding I had only eightpence in my pocket, and that I was an Irish boy, lately come from the Sod, they dismissed me without reducing my *immense* fortune.

C H A P. XI.

Sam Scribble's arrival in London.—His meeting with Dick Rant, and their conversation upon theatrical subjects.—Sam waits upon a certain great circulating librarian—the reception he meets with.

UPON my arrival in London I now thought I had reached the ultimate goal of all my wishes; I imagined

gined, from what I had heard, it was impossible to want money in Lombard-street, with or without drafts; and that no man could be destitute of a dinner in Leadenhall-market, though he had not a *thirteener* in his pocket. But alas! I was presently convinced of my errors.

As soon as I got to the stones end in Piccadilly, I considered my fortune as immediately made; indeed, I began to contemplate, whether I should take a ready furnished house, or only a lodging; whether I should keep a servant in or out of livery, or both; true it is, the fascination, as I advanced towards Devonshire-house, carried me so far, that I began to debate, whether I should order a chariot or a *vis-a-vis*. Just as I had reached the summit of this delirium, I felt such an internal indication

indication of being extremely hungry, that my thoughts were all in a moment turned towards eating. My carriage disappeared, my servant was dismissed, my apartments dissolved like the fabric of a vision, and nothing presented itself to my view but a—
Sirloin of beef in all its glory.

As I approached Leicester-fields, I recollected Dick Rant, who was upon the boards in Dublin, had told me, there was an excellent house in Ruffel-street, Covent-garden. It was the Black-lion, which now recurred to my memory, with all the allurements he had bestowed upon it. I soon found it out, and almost as soon ordered a large beef steak, which I thought the nicest meal I had ever met with in my life; which, added to a pot of porter, put me into tolerable good spirits, which
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had not time to subside in the disagreeable contemplation of the state of my finances, before I saw my friend Rant enter; we were equally astonished at seeing each other; and I received no small satisfaction in observing him so well dressed. After he had eat a mutton chop, and drank a pint of porter, he ordered eighteen pennyworth of punch, which induced me to give him a hint concerning the state of my pocket; to which he replied, never mind, I have credit here, and to-morrow is pay day at the house. I congratulated him upon his being employed at a London theatre, where I was told all the performers had good salaries. That is very true, said Dick—but to let you into the secret, I am little more than a dumb waiter—a mere faggot; though I am resolved to give myself

myself as many airs as ever Garrick did ; and I abuse the printers of the bills when they put my name in smaller letter than the first rate actors—there is nothing like a laudable ambition said Rant, for I intend doing *Othello* for my own benefit, though by the bye, I have but an *eighth* share in it. I doubt not that will display my powers, and bring me forward next year.

By this time it approached twelve o'clock, and it was necessary to think of a lodging ; this I intimated to Dick, which I found appeared to give him some uneasiness; saying he had only one bed, and that Poll D— lived with him, and probably she might not that night be called out to a bagnio ; but added he, I'll chalk your reckoning with mine—you must take up your quarters

quarters at the Brown-bear till to-morrow, and at two o'clock I'll meet you here, we'll have something for the tooth; and if you cannot dispose of your manuscript, I'll assist you with a trifle till you can.

Being an entire stranger in London, I pursued his directions; he conducted me to the Brown-bear, when he left me in a scene of riot, debauchery and confusion. As soon as it was daylight I beat a retreat; and having cleaned myself as well as I could, took a walk till the shops were open.

Having been in the bookfelling trade I could not fail being acquainted with the greatest dealers, manufacturers, and fabricators of romances in London. A certain illustrious name in Holborn immediately struck me, and I waited upon this Circulating Librarian,

Librarian, whilst he was at breakfast. I could not at first make him understand me, as he was somewhat deaf, and was upon the point of enrolling my name amongst the number of his subscribers, when exerting a Stentorian voice, I convinced him of his error, and produced my two volumes. He stared me full in the face, saying, I was a young author, as he had never seen me before, and he was acquainted with most of the literary faces upon the town. He then desired me to leave my manuscript till Monday; but anticipated my fate, by saying, that novels were mere drugs now; that he had half a dozen milleners' prentices in the sentimental way, and four mantua-makers journeymen in the epistolary stile, who wrote by the yard as they worked at their trades; that he

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had a commodity from them both good and cheap, but it would not tell since the additional duty on paper, besides nothing will do but double entendre, and they are so da—n'd modest, that they will not sport a luscious conceit, though it would carry off a whole impressiion; but hoped I was not quite so scrupulous.

I retired and met my friend Rant, according to appointment, when he accommodated me with half-a-crown, advising me not to refuse any thing Mr. Illustrious might offer, as money was very scarce.

On the Monday I waited upon my bookfeller, who told me, the M. S. did not suit him—that he expected to have found it dashed and sprinkled; but, however, as I had been at the trouble of coming twice, he would
advance

advance me a guinea, and if it came to a second edition, with the luscious improvements he should get his *operator-general* to throw into it, he would let me have half-a-guinea more. I doubt not he took advantage of the distress he saw depicted in my countenance, and necessity compelled me to accept what this generous Mecænas offered.

From this moment I took an utter aversion to letters, and have, with the advice of my friend Rant, come to a resolution of attempting the boards; he is accordingly to introduce me tomorrow to Mr. Dibble Davis, professor-general of the drama, and from whom I am to receive half a dozen lessons gratis, on condition of playing at his next benefit.

When Mr. Scribble had got thus far, a rap at the door was a prelude to

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the announcing of Mr. Melville, upon which Sam took his leave, but not before my master had slipped half-a-crown into his hand, which he thought would be a necessary passport to the next cook-shop.

C H A P. XXII.

The chapter of accidents ;—or, the adventures of an unfortunate poet, kinsman to Sam Scribble.

AN unfortunate author, and an unfortunate poet, are nearly synonymous, and equally proverbial. Poor Dick Stanza, who was first cousin to Sam Scribble, and had treated him with his last shilling at Jupp's, has often wished that he could say with Shenstone, that his name was inimical