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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. XIX.

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red together; but what became of them afterwards I cannot at present tell.

C H A P. XIX.

*Curious anecdotes of the celebrated Mrs.*

*N——n; in which are displayed many whimsical situations, and unexpected gratifications,—Her man Thomas's good fortune interrupted by a certain son of Thespis.—Succeeds him in his principal character—Fatal effects of her coachman's good luck, &c. &c.*

**I**T is time now to look after the Nankeen Breeches, which ere this had been transferred through the agency of a long bearded Levite, under the description of an old clothes man, to little Isaac, Mrs. N——n's foot-

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for

for he it remarked—though he was nick-named *little Isaac*, from that character in the *Duenna*; he was a lad of considerable parts as well as penetration, as the sequel will clearly evince.

The public history of Mrs. N—n is so well known, that it would be impertinent here to dwell upon it; but there are some private anecdotes concerning this Lady, as well as the celebrated Lady W—r—y, which have not transpired, that will, doubtless, prove agreeable and satisfactory to the curious reader.

It has doubtless appeared somewhat extraordinary upon her trial, that Thomas C——pe, her coachman, should rank amongst the list of her paramours, before and after she made experiment of Oxonians; actors, who  
played

played perfectly well and entirely to her satisfaction, as well as squires and men of rank; but the cause of this intimacy is still to be revealed, for though her man Thomas could *cope* with most women, let their *calibres* be what they might, he would not have had the effrontery to have attacked his mistress, had not a whimsical circumstance occurred that favoured the attempt and accomplished his design.

Mr. B—— the actor had made an appointment with her that day precisely at one o'clock; but one of the Bath managers calling upon him, they discoursed so long upon the theatrical matters, that Mrs. N——n began to be out of all patience, and with deep philosophical research, like her namesake, Sir Isaac, she was meditating  
the

the discovery of a new prism. She threw up her chamber-window, and leaning out, observed Thomas and Isaac in conversation. Isaac, like his great predecessor of the same name, she judged was in possession of a very valuable prism; but notwithstanding many indirect overtures she had made him, to examine it, he had hitherto, either through bashfulness, or for want of more explicit declarations, constantly concealed it.

The subject of Thomas and Isaac's conversation at this juncture was as whimsical as their mistress's reveries: said Isaac, "Tom, now is your time, if you have a mind to make a bold push—she has been this hour impatiently waiting for the actor, and I am positive you can supply his place entirely to my Lady's satisfaction—for,  
poor

poor gentleman, she has made him rehearse so often, that his pipe is almost fore." Tom took the hint, and being in a complete mettlesome mood, crept up stairs, Mrs. N——n still leaning out of the window, and cogitating upon nothing but natural philosophy, and the powerful effects of a well applied *prism*. Having entered the chamber unperceived, and shut the door, he boldly made an assault *a la Levrette*. Mrs. N———n was not insensible or displeas'd at this unexpected attack, which far surpass'd what she expected.

After the second lounge, she cried in extasy, "Heavens! who is that?" "Only your man Thomas," replied the coachman, "Oh, very well," resumed Mrs. N———n, "drive on coachman! drive on as fast as you please;  
you

you are as good a whipper in as you are a driver."

At this very critical period Mr. B—tt entered, and suprised Thomas in his last *coup d'essai*. He shrunk and retired.—“Heavens! Madam,” said the hero of the boards—“What do I see!”

“Oh!” replied Mrs. N—, with great *sang froid*, for she was pretty cool by this time; “Is it you, you keep your engagements very punctually—if you do not play your part better upon the dramatic stage, than that of gallantry, I do not wonder you stand so much in need of a prompter?”—“I find, Madam,” he replied, with some warmth, “You stand in need of no prompter—but a stallion; and if you cannot get him, as you must have

have something out of the stable, you put up with the coachman!"

"You seem warm Mr. B——, he was only your *locum tenens*, and no bad one, I can assure you."

"I believe not, from what I could perceive, when your tenant was ejected, unable any longer to pay the window-tax." Saying this, he turned upon his heel, and left her to her own meditation, which soon concentrated in these resolutions. Thomas shall be put upon a better establishment—he must be paid for ordinaries and extraordinaries, for he cannot perform double duty without receiving a double salary; besides, it will be necessary that the cook receive intimation, that strong soups and viper broth be prepared for this industrious driver.

Mrs.



Mrs. N—n having ratified these resolutions *nem. con.* in her own breast, she rang for Thomas, who immediately made his appearance, when she presented him with five guineas, as a specimen of her future generosity for his expected good services.

Tom having received this testimony of his mistress's benevolence, he repaired to the kitchen, and acquainted little Isaac with his good fortune, and his perspective views; at the same time insisted upon treating him with a bowl of punch for the lucky hint he had given him; nay, in the fulness of his glee, and the expansion of his heart, he offered *little Isaac* a moiety of his amorous perquisites, but the youth with his usual modesty refused it; however, as he had not yet paid Abraham for his nankeen breeches,  
and

and he was to call the next morning ; he was persuaded to accept of half-a-guinea, to liquidate the demand of the Levite.

Thomas having succeeded Mr. B—tt in his most capital as well as lucrative character, it was necessary for him often to exhibit ; but in this personification it unfortunately happens that practice diminishes powers and abilities, and the more a performer represents a practical lover's part, the less capable he is of approving himself a Roscius on the Cyprian boards. Never was this observation more completely verified than in the case of poor Thomas, who though he had hitherto been able to *Cope* with all the sex, found a N—n insatiable ; her amorous researches were like Sir Isaac's astronomical ones, extended from pole to pole, and like his still ungratified,

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still



still excited by inexhaustible curiosity  
—at least.

In fine, after a few weeks had elapsed from the time that Thomas had entered up nis new vocation, he became in a declining state—strong soups and viper broth lost their efficacy; and from a stout bodied coachman, thus embodied, he was emaciated, and reduced to a mere skeleton. No handkerchiefs was now thrown as the signal for rapture—No little stones *flung*, in hopes of having them returned with great ones. Vide Trial, p. 11, 12.

In this dilemma what could Mrs. N—n do? B—ggs and B—tt had been discharged as worn out in the service. Thomas was now an invalid, and where must she look for solace, in so desperate a situation? A happy thought struck her, whilst her head lay ruminating upon her pillow,

to

to appoint a successor to Thomas, with which the reader shall be made acquainted in the succeeding chapter.

## C H A P. XX.

*Epistolary correspondence between Lady W—y and Mr. N—n— Little Isaac is put to the test, and approves himself worthy of the recommendation he carries with him to Lady W—y.— Amorous frolic, in various Arétin's attitudes, &c.*

**A**T the close of the last chapter we prepared our readers for a happy thought which struck Mrs. N—n. We shall soon reveal it. An epistolary correspondence had for some time subsisted between Mrs. N—n and Lady W—y; their ideas were so congenial, and their sentiments so sym-

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