



The Town and Country Magazine;

O R,

UNIVERSAL REPOSITORY

O F

Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment.

For J U L Y, 1777.

MEMOIRS of the (soy distant) CHEVALIER D'EON, alias MADEMOISELLE BEAUMONT.

THIS very extraordinary character has for some time made a great noise in the world; and considering her sex, at length *judicially* proved, she may be pronounced the phoenix of the age.

This lady (we may now be allowed to say) is descended from a good family in the South of France, and was born in the year 1734; but it seems somewhat mysterious, that even her own relations should wink at the deception she put upon the world, as her letters published some time since clearly evince, in a correspondence she kept up with her mother, whom Miss D'Eon advised not to enter into politics, but to attend to the cultivation of her kitchen-garden.

We find her many years past in a public character at the court of Russia, and afterwards a bold enterprizing captain of dragoons in the last war in Germany.— At the conclusion of that war she came over here as secretary to the duke de Nivernois, who was appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to this court, at the time that the late duke

of Bedford ratified the treaty of Paris, at Versailles. On the departure of the duke de Nivernois, she remained here as *chargé d'affaires*, and was afterwards appointed minister, in which capacity she continued till the arrival of the count de Guerchy, as ambassador from France.

Soon after that nobleman's appearance here, a rupture ensued between them; Miss D'Eon still claiming her rank as envoy, and the ambassador refusing it.— She was recalled, but would not comply with the orders of her court; upon which she was refused admission at St. James's, and declared to *have no character whatever here*. This declaration produced several sarcasms in the prints; but probably the then minister knew that *she* was precisely in that predicament; or at least he was truly prophetic.

A paper war commenced, and a M. Goddard was the advocate of Count Guerchy; but though he was the author of the Chinese Spy, a work in esteem, and several others, he was no way capable of contesting with Mademoiselle—*elle étoit si adroite et si bien lettrée*. Those celebrated letters now came forth, which will ever establish her reputation as a scholar, a politician, and a philosopher. They are in the possession of every gentleman of taste in literature, therefore we need only refer to them.

A certain adventurer (De Vergy) lifted under the Chevalier's banner, and made affidavit, at the quarter-sessions, that he was applied to by Count Guerchy to assassinate D'Eon; nay, upon his death-bed, he made this same declaration in the most solemn manner.—The bill was, however, thrown out at the quarter sessions; but the public may probably have received some impression from so bold an accusation, made with such perseverance.

A rumour began to prevail that the Chevalier D'Eon was of the female gender; and, in this gambling age, as every opportunity affords occasion for wagers under any specious appellation, insurances were opened upon the doubt of her sex, as well in London as at Paris and Amsterdam, to a very considerable amount.—The Chevalier took these *manceuvres* in great dudgeon, threatened some, and challenged others. He thought it advisable to make a public affidavit, that he had no interest or concern whatever in these insurances; and that *he* never would make a judicial disclosure of his sex, though proposals had been offered *him* to the amount of 25000 l.

In the mean time, overtures were made *him* from the court of Versailles to give up certain papers in his possession of a political nature; to which *he* consented, on the promise of 500 l. a year regularly paid in London. To obtain these papers there had been forcible entries made at his apartments in Scotland yard, but it happened they were not there.

Soon after this transaction *he* took apartments in Petty France; from whence he thought it advisable to make a precipitate retreat, and it was then furnished *he* had been kidnapped and carried to France. Advertisements appeared in the papers, with rewards for discovering where he was. At the expiration of a few weeks, the *nominal* chevalier returned; but it is now generally believed that he made a temporary retreat, to give posterity a young chevalier—male or female, we find, signifies not.

From this time till very lately the Chevalier remained in obscurity; but a dispute which arose between *her* and M. Morande, concerning this gentleman's giving out he knew *her* to be a woman, made *her* come again upon the tapis. The Chevalier challenged M. Morande, but he declined fighting *her*, on account of her sex; upon which the Chevalier made application to the court of King's Bench.

This affair brought on the late trial, the following abstract of which will satisfy our readers of the authenticity of what we have said.

Guildhall, Tuesday, July 1, 1777.

HAYES against JAQUES.

This cause was opened by Mr. Buller, stating the pleadings, that it was a certain discourse held between the parties, whether the Chevalier D'Eon was a man or a woman.—The defendant undertook to prove that he was a man; when, in fact, the plaintiff avers he is a woman; I shall call our witnesses to prove that *he* is a woman, and then you will find a verdict for the plaintiff, with 700l. damages; on which opening, the court was thrown into a prodigious fit of laughter.

Mr. Wallace said, that he would not go so far as his learned friend had undertaken to prove, but his client would content himself with proving, that *she* was not *he*.

Policy read: That in consideration of 700l. the defendant undertook to pay 700l. in case at any time hereafter it shall be proved that the Chevalier was a female.

Mr. La Goue. I am a surgeon and man-midwife; I have been acquainted with the Chevalier four or five years; I know it is a woman. The witness was then cross-examined by Mr. Mansfield. He said he had known *her* a great many years; became acquainted with *her* when *she* was fourteen; between four or five years ago I first knew *she* was a woman; *she* was complaining of some disorders, and it was necessary for me to know, before I applied proper medicines; *he* then told me that *he* was a woman; I examined, and found it to be a real woman; *he* told me not to mention it to any person. The plaintiff applied to me about three weeks ago; I told him I did not chuse to be examined, but if he sent me a subpoena, I must come. He told me he should want my assertion; I said, I did not like it, as it might be discovering the secrets of my profession. He said he was told I was the person who could tell. Many people have applied to me before, but I never discovered it. After I knew it *she* passed for a man. I do not know Michael Taff, Emsley, nor Hayes. Swanton told me three years ago, *he* would be glad if I would appear as a witness; I told him I would not, I did not like it; I did not tell him the secret

cret. Hayes the plaintiff did not mention any person that recommended him to me.

Mr. de Morande. It is a woman; I say so within my own knowledge. The defendant's counsel, not satisfied with this, Mr. Lee took up this witness, and on his cross-examination he said, about four years ago he was very intimate with her; she was very lively in her conversation, and spoke to me with great freedom on the subject. She one day shewed me her woman's cloaths, ear-rings, and shewed me her breasts. Some time after I was one morning (being myself a married man) introduced into her bedchamber: she was in bed, and with great freedom bid me satisfy myself of what we had so often been jocular about, for she had often used to say I was to be godfather. I put my hand into bed, and was fully convinced she was a woman. In consequence of this last demonstration, I mentioned it to several of my acquaintance, and wrote to Monsieur de Mouchier in France. There was a treaty on foot to get some papers of consequence out of her hands, and 500 guineas were and are settled upon her.--- In winter, 1771, Madame de Chouchie told me, if I had a mind to lay any wager, to lay on the woman side. I never knew Hayes till last November. It was necessary for me on a former occasion * to say something of this transaction, but not to be so particular as you now oblige me to be. I thought it would be indecent and not necessary.

M. de Morande was then sworn, as interpreter to a French physician, whose evidence was---It is a woman; I know it of my own knowledge. The defendant's counsel compelled this witness likewise to be particular. He then said, he was a physician, had attended the lady about two years ago: he knew she was a woman by *sight* and *touch*.

Mr. Mansfield then said, it was a gambling wager, and very unfit to be

brought into a court of justice, and rested his client's defence on the ground, that the plaintiff was satisfied at the time of the wager, and knew that the chevalier was a woman; and therefore contended it was in the nature of a fraudulent insurance; and Hayes not discovering all he knew at the time, ought not to maintain the action; and read the defendant's answer in chancery, wherein he disclosed the grounds he went upon in making the insurance, That the court of France had discovered and treated with her as a woman.

Mr. Wallace replied, that his client, as at Newmarket, was not bound to disclose the ground he went upon. No doubt each party thought themselves right. But Mr. Jaques thinks it an indecent action; and because it is such, he thinks the court and jury are to kick the cause out of the court, and let him keep the pool. of our's he has had in his pocket these five years, for he has not paid a penny of the premium into court. But for his part, he thought it was a fair wager, and the only question was, who had won it: which he hoped the jury were by that time fully satisfied of in favour of his client.

Lord Mansfield said, it was a mere gambling policy, and wished it was in his or the jury's power to make both lose, but it was not; and there was no objection to the legality of the wager; the only question was, who had won it? It was truly said by Mr. Wallace, that this was not to be compared to the case of a fraudulent policy; it had no relation to the laws touching legal insurance, but was a mere wager, and the parties not bound to disclose the ground he stands upon; for each party takes and abides by his own judgment and information; and I myself remember a wager about the circumference of the Statue de Medicis, or something abroad, the parties laid; and the one says I know I am right, because I have myself actually measured it:--- says the other, do you think I would lay if I had not also measured it? and notwithstanding you have, I will lay.--- There was no ground to lay any intentional fraud to Mr. Hayes, or any contrivance connected with the Chevalier to take people in; for she writes challenges, and is angry when it is proposed to her to discover her sex; and perhaps if it had not been for quarrels and misunderstandings, the plaintiff would never have been able to prove the fact, which might still be well known, and not capable of legal proof

* This was an application by the Chevalier to the court of King's Bench, which was argued for an information against the witness for a libel in a morning paper, insinuating, that the Chevalier was not a man, but a woman: which the witness in shewing cause of that rule satisfied the court was the fact; they discharged the rule, after having a very long argument on both sides, and some papers written by the Chevalier to De Morande read.

proof before a jury, for there is no compelling her to submit to an inspection.--- But here is a person employed by the court of France, in a civil and military capacity, as a man; and by and by there is a buzz---it is suspected but remains a matter of doubt, what sex he is; wagers are laid, and policies opened; some think one way and some another. It would be very much our wish if we could prevent the plaintiff from recovering on this wager, but I am afraid we cannot; and of the two, he has the fairest side, for all the indecencies were pressed out by the defendant: all the plaintiff's witnesses swear to the positive fact, and without going further, the defendant might have been satisfied.

The Jury found for the Plaintiff 700l.

* * We cannot close this article, without referring our readers to a humorous examination of the Chevalier, by a jury of celebrated Matrons upon the *bon ton*, so far back as the Magazine for May, 1771, page 249, where they will also find a striking likeness of M. D'Eon, though in miniature.

CONVIVIAL DEVICES of our ANCESTORS *passed out.*

SOME ancient adopts in cookery inform us, that in former days, when good house-keeping was in fashion among the *English* nobility, they used either to begin or conclude their entertainments, and divert their guests, with such devices as the following ones--A castle made in paste-board, with gates, draw-bridges, battlements, and port-cullises, all done over with paste, was set at one end of the table, in a large charger, with salt laid round about it, as if it were the ground, in which were stuck egg-shells full of rose, or other sweet waters, the meat of the egg having been taken out by a great pin. Upon the battlements of the castle were planted guns made of kexes, covered over with paste, and made into the form of cannons, and made to look like brass, by covering them with Dutch leaf gold; these cannons being charged with gunpowder, and trains laid, so that you might fire as many of them as you pleased at one touch. The castle was set at one end of the table, then in the middle of the table they would see a stag made in paste, but hollow, and filled with red wine, and a broad arrow stuck in the side of him; this being also set in a large charger, with

a ground made of salt, and egg-shells of perfumed waters, stuck in it as before; then at the other end of the table they would have the form of a ship, made in paste board, and covered all over with paste, with masts, sails, flags, and streamers, and guns made of kexes, and covered with paste, and charged with gunpowder, with a train as in the castle: this also in a large charger, set up upright in, as it were, a sea of salt, in which are also stuck egg-shells full of perfumed waters; then betwixt the stag and castle, and stag and ship, were placed two pies, made of coarse paste and filled with bran, and washed over with saffron and yolks of eggs. When these were baked, the bran was taken out, a hole was cut in the bottoms, and live birds put into one, and frogs into the other, and then the holes closed up with paste, then the lids were cut neatly up, so that they might be easily taken off by the funnels, and adorned with gilded laurels. These being thus prepared, and placed in order on the table, first of all one of the ladies is persuaded to draw the arrow out of the body of the stag, which being done, the red wine issues out like blood out of a wound, and causes some small admiration in the spectators; which being done, after a little pause, all the guns on one side of the castle are, by a train, discharged against the ship, and afterwards the guns of one side of the ship against the castle; then having turned the chargers, the other sides are fired off, as if in a battle. This causing a great stink of powder, the ladies or gentlemen take up the egg-shells of perfumed water, and throw them at one another. This pleasant disorder being pretty well laughed over, and the two great pyes still remaining untouched, some one or other will have the curiosity to see what is in them, and lifting off the lid of one pye, out jump the frogs: this makes the ladies skip and scamper, and lifting up the lid of the other, out fly the birds, which will naturally fly at the light, and so put out the candles; and so with the leaping of the frogs below, and flying of the birds above, it did cause a surprizing and diverting hurley-burley amongst the guests in the dark; after which, the candles being lighted, the banquet was brought in, the music sounded, and the particulars of each person's surprize and adventures, furnished matter for diverting discourse.

Answers