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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

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Extempore Verses upon a Trial of Skill between the two great Mailers of Defence,
Messieurs Figg and Sutton. By Dr. Byron.

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Awhile the venerable hero ſtood,
And ſtemm'd with quiv'ring limbs the boiſt'rous flood;
At length, o'er-match'd by injuries and time,
Stole from the world, and ſought his native clime.
Cambria for him with moans her region fills:
She wept his downfal from a thouſand hills:
Tender embrac'd her prelate tho' undone,
Stretch'd out the mother rocks to hide her ſon:
Search'd, while alive, each vale for his repaſt,
And, when he died, receiv'd him in her breaſt.
Envied Ambition! what are all thy ſchemes,
But waking miſery, or pleaſing dreams,
Sliding and tottering on the heights of ſtate!
The ſubject of this verſe declares thy fate.
Great as he was, you ſee how ſmall the gain,
A burial ſo obſcure, a Muſe ſo mean.

Extempore Verſes upon a Trial of Skill between the two great Maſters of Defence, Meſſieurs FIGG and SUTTON.

By Dr. BYROM.

I.

LONG was the great Figg, by the prize-fighting ſwains,
Sole monarch acknowledg'd of Mary-bone plains:
To the towns, far and near, did his valour extend,
And ſwam down the river from Thame to Graveſend;

Where

Where liv'd Mr. Sutton, pipemaker by trade,
Who hearing that Figg was thought ſuch a ſtout blade,
Reſolv'd to put in for a ſhare of his fame,
And ſo ſent to challenge the champion of Thame.

II.

With alternate advantage two trials had paſt,
When they fought out the rubbers on Wedneſday laſt.
To ſee ſuch a conteſt the houſe was ſo full
There hardly was room left to thruſt in your ſkull.
With a prelude of cudgells we firſt were ſaluted,
And two or three ſhoulders moſt handſomely fluted;
Till weary at laſt with inferior diſaſters,
All the company cry'd, come, the maſters, the maſters.

III.

Whereupon the bold Sutton firſt mounted the ſtage,
Made his honours as uſual and yearn'd to engage;
Then Figg, with a viſage ſo fierce, yet ſedate,
Came, and enter'd the liſts, with his freſh-ſhaven pate;
Their arms were encircled with armigers too,
With a red ribbon Sutton's, and Figg's with a blue.
Thus adorn'd the two heroes, 'twixt ſhoulder, and elbow,
Shook hands, and went to't, and the word it was Bilboe.

IV.

Sure ſuch a concern in the eyes of ſpectators,
Was never yet ſeen in our amphi-theatres.
Our commons and peers from the ſeveral places,
To half an inch diſtance all pointed their faces;
While the rays of old Phœbus, that ſhot thro' the ſky-light,
Seem'd to make on the ſtage a new kind of twilight;

And

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And the Gods without doubt, if one cou'd but have ſeen 'em,
Were peeping there thro' to do juſtice between 'em.

V.

Figg ſtruck the firſt ſtroke, and with ſuch a vaſt fury,
That he broke his huge weapon in twain, I aſſure you;
And if his brave rival this blow had not warded,
His head from his ſhoulders had been quite diſcarded.
Figg arm'd him again, and they took t'other tilt,
And then Sutton's blade ran away from it's hilt;
The weapons were frighted, but as for the men,
In truth they ne'er minded, but at it again.

VI.

Such a force in their blows, you'd have thought it a wonder
Every ſtroke they receiv'd did not cleave 'em aſunder,
Yet ſo great was their courage, ſo equal their ſkill,
That they both ſeem'd as ſafe as a thief in a mill;
While in doubtful attention dame Victory ſtood,
And which ſide to take cou'd not tell for her blood,
But remain'd like the aſs 'twixt the bundles of hay,
Without ever ſtirring an inch either way.

VII.

Till Jove to the Gods ſignified his intention
In a ſpeech that he made 'em too tedious to mention;
But the upſhot on't was, that at that very bout,
From a wound in Figg's ſide the hot blood ſpouted out;
Her ladyſhip then ſeem'd to think the caſe plain,
But Figg ſtepping forth with a ſullen diſdain,
Shew'd the gaſh, and appeal'd to the company round,
If his own broken ſword had not given him the wound.

VIII. That

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VIII.

That bruiſes, and wounds a man's ſpirit ſhou'd touch,
With danger ſo little, with honour ſo much!
Well, they both took a dram, and return'd to the battle,
And with a freſh fury they made the ſwords rattle;
While Sutton's right arm was obſerved to bleed,
By a touch from his rival, ſo Jove had decreed;
Juſt enough for to ſhew that his blood was not icor,
But made up, like Figg's, of the common red-liquor.

IX.

Again they both ruſh'd with as equal a fire on,
'Till the company cry'd, hold, enough of cold iron,
To the quarter-ſtaff now, lads. So firſt having dram'd it,
They took to their wood, and i' faith never ſham'd it:
The firſt bout they had was ſo fair, and ſo handſome,
That to make a fair bargain, was worth a king's ranſom;
And Sutton ſuch bangs on his neighbour imparted,
Wou'd have made any fibres, but Figg's to have ſmarted.

X.

Then after that bout they went on to another,
But the matter muſt end on ſome faſhion, or other;
So Jove told the Gods he had made a decree,
That Figg ſhou'd hit Sutton a ſtroke on the knee.
Tho' Sutton diſabled as ſoon as he hit him
Wou'd ſtill have fought on, but Jove wou'd not permit him;
'Twas his fate, not his fault, that conſtrain'd him to yield,
And thus the great Figg became lord of the field.