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A Collection Of Poems In Six Volumes. By Several Hands

Dodsley, Robert

London, 1758

The Fakeer. A Tale. By the Same.

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My MANDOLINE—what place can music find
Amid the discord of my restless mind ?

How shall I waste this time which slowly flies !
How lull to slumber my reluctant eyes !
This night the happy and th' unhappy keep
Vigils alike,—N * * * *has murder'd sleep.*



The F A K E E R : A T A L E.

By the Same.

AFAKEER (a religious well known in the East
Not much like a parson, still less like a priest)
With no canting, no sly jesuitical arts,
Field-preaching, hypocrisy, learning or parts ;
By a happy refinement in mortification,
Grew the oracle, saint, and the pope of his nation.
But what did he do this esteem to acquire ?
Did he torture his head or his bosom with fire ?
Was his neck in a portable pillory cas'd ?
Did he fasten a chain to his leg or his waist ?
No. His holiness rose to this sovereign pitch
By the merit of running long nails in his breech.

A wealthy young Indian, approaching the shrine,
Thus in banter accosts the prophetic divine :
This tribute accept for your int'rest with FO, [know ;
Whom with torture you serve, and whose will you must
To

To your suppliant disclose his immortal decree ;
Tell me which of the heav'ns is allotted for me.

FAKEER.

Let me first know your merits.

INDIAN.

I strive to be just :

To be true to my friend, to my wife, to my trust :
In religion I duly observe ev'ry form :
With an heart to my country devoted and warm :
I give to the poor, and I lend to the rich——

FAKEER.

But how many nails do you run in your breech ?

INDIAN.

With submission I speak to your rev'rence's tail ;
But mine has no taste for a ten-penny nail.

FAKEER.

Well ! I'll pray to our prophet and get you prefer'd ;
Though no farther expect than to heaven the third.
With me in the thirtieth your seat to obtain,
You must qualify duly with hunger and pain.

INDIAN.

With you in the thirtieth ! you impudent rogue !
Can such wretches as you give to madness a vogue !
Though the priesthood of FO on the vulgar impose,
By squinting whole years at the end of their nose,
Though with cruel devices of mortification
They adore a vain idol of modern creation,



Does the God of the heav'ns such a service direct ?
 Can his mercy approve a self-punishing sect ?
 Will his wisdom be worship'd with chains and with nails ?
 Or e'er look for his rites in your noses and tails ?
 Come along to my house and these penances leave,
 Give your belly a feast, and your breech a reprieve.

This reas'ning unhing'd each fanatical notion ;
 And stagger'd our saint, in his chair of promotion.
 At length with reluctance he rose from his seat :
 And resigning his nails and his fame for retreat ;
 Two weeks his new life he admir'd and enjoy'd :
 The third he with plenty and quiet was cloy'd.
 To live undistinguish'd to him was the pain,
 An existence unnotic'd he could not sustain.
 In retirement he sigh'd for the fame-giving chair :
 For the crowd to admire him, to rev'rence and stare :
 No endearments of pleasure and ease could prevail ;
 He the faintship resum'd, and new larded his tail.

Our FAKEER represents all the vot'ries of fame ;
 Their ideas, their means, and their end is the same :
 The sportsman, the buck ; all the heroes of vice,
 With their gallantry, lewdness, the bottle and dice ;
 The poets, the critics, the metaphysicians,
 The courtier, the patriot, all politicians ;
 The statesman begirt with th' importunate ring,
 (I had almost compleated my list with the king)
 All labour alike to illustrate my tale ;
 All tortur'd by choice with th' invisible nail.

To