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THE
DANCE OF DEATH,

OF

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THE CELEBRATED

HANS HOLBEIN;

IN

A Series of Fifty-two Engravings on Wood

BY

MR. BEWICK:

WITH

LETTER-PRESS ILLUSTRATIONS.

What's yet in this
That bears the name of life? yet in this life
Lie hid more thousand deaths, yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even.

SHAKESPEARE.

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THE
LIFE
OF
HOLBEIN.

JOHN HOLBEIN, better known by his German name Hans Holbein, a most excellent painter, was born, according to some accounts, at Basil in Switzerland in 1498; but Charles Patin places his birth three years earlier, supposing it very improbable that he could have arrived at such maturity of judgment and perfection in painting, as he shewed in 1514 and 1516, if he had been born so late as 1498. He learned the rudiments of his art from his father John Holbein, who was a painter, and had removed from Augsburg to Basil; but the superiority of his genius soon raised him above his master. He painted our Saviour's Passion in the town-house of Basil; and in the fish-market of the same town, a Dance of peasants, and Death's dance. These pieces were exceedingly striking to the curious; and Erasmus was so affected with them, that he requested of him to draw his picture, and was ever after his friend. Holbein, in the mean time, though a great genius and fine artist, had no elegance or delicacy of manners, but was given to wine and revelling company; for which he met with the following gentle rebuke from Erasmus. When Erasmus wrote his "*Moriæ Encomium*," or "*Panegyric upon Folly*," he sent a

copy of it to Hans Holbein, who was so pleased with the several descriptions of folly there given, that he designed them all in the margin; and where he had not room to draw the whole figures, pasted a piece of paper to the leaves. He then returned the book to Erasmus, who seeing that he had represented an amorous fool by the figure of a fat Dutch lover, hugging his bottle and his lass, wrote under it, "Hans Holbein," and so sent it back to the painter. Holbein, however, to be revenged of him, drew the picture of Erasmus for a musty book-worm, who busied himself in scraping together old MSS. and antiquities, and wrote under it "Adagia."

It is said, that an English nobleman, who accidentally saw some of Holbein's performances at Basil, invited him to come to England, where his art was in high esteem; and promised him great encouragement from Henry VIII.; but Holbein was too much engaged in his pleasures to listen to so advantageous a proposal. A few years after, however, moved by the necessities to which an increased family and his own mismanagement had reduced him, as well as by the persuasions of his friend Erasmus, who told him how improper a country his own was to do justice to his merit, he consented to go to England: and he consented the more readily, as he did not live on the happiest terms with his wife, who is said to have been a termagant. In his journey thither he stayed some days at Strasburg, and applying to a very great master in that city for work, was taken in, and ordered to give a specimen of his skill. Holbein finished a piece with great care, and painted a fly upon the most conspicuous part of it; after which he withdrew privily in the absence of his master, and pursued his journey.

When the painter returned home, he was astonished at the beauty and elegance of the drawing; and especially at the fly, which, upon his first casting his eye upon it, he so far took for a real fly, that he endeavoured to remove it with his hand. He sent all over the city for his journeyman, who was now missing; but after many enquiries, found that he had been thus deceived by the famous Holbein. This story has been somewhat differently told, as if the painting was a portrait for one of his patrons at Basil, but the effect was the same, for before he was discovered, he had made his escape.

After almost begging his way to England, as Patin tells us, he found an easy admittance to the lord-chancellor, Sir Thomas More, having brought with him Erasmus's picture, and letters recommendatory from him to that great man. Sir Thomas received him with all the joy imaginable, and kept him in his house between two or three years; during which time he drew Sir Thomas's picture, and those of many of his friends and relations. One day Holbein happening to mention the nobleman who had some years ago invited him to England, Sir Thomas was very solicitous to know who he was. Holbein replied, that he had indeed forgot his title, but remembered his face so well, that he thought he could draw his likeness; and this he did so very strongly, that the nobleman, it is said, was immediately known by it. This nobleman, some think, was the Earl of Arundel, others the Earl of Surrey. The Chancellor, having now sufficiently enriched his apartments with Holbein's productions, adopted the following method to introduce him to Henry VIII. He invited the king to an entertainment, and hung up all Holbein's pieces, disposed in the best order, and in

the best light, in the great hall of his house. The king, upon his first entrance, was so charmed with the sight of them, that he asked, "Whether such an artist were now alive, and to be had for money?" on which Sir Thomas presented Holbein to the king, who immediately took him into his service, with a salary of two hundred florins, and brought him into great esteem with the nobility of the kingdom. The king from time to time manifested the great value he had for him; and upon the death of Queen Jane, his third wife, sent him into Flanders, to draw the picture of the Duchess Dowager of Milan, widow of Francis Sforza, whom the Emperor Charles V. had recommended to him for a fourth wife; but the king's defection from the See of Rome happening about that time, he rather chose to match with a protestant princess. Cromwell, then his prime minister (for Sir Thomas More had been removed, and beheaded), proposed Anne of Cleves to him; but the king was not inclined to the match, till her picture, which Holbein had also drawn, was presented to him. There, as Lord Herbert of Cherbury says, she was represented so very charming, that the king immediately resolved to marry her; and thus Holbein was unwittingly the cause of the ruin of his patron Cromwell, whom the king never forgave for introducing him to Anne of Cleves.

In England Holbein drew a vast number of admirable portraits; among others, those of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. on the wall of the palace at Whitehall, which perished when it was burnt, though some endeavours were made to remove that part of the wall on which the pictures were drawn. There happened, however, an affair in England, which might have been fatal to Holbein, if the king had

not protected him. On the report of his character a nobleman of the first quality wanted one day to see him, when he was drawing a figure after the life. Holbein, in answer, begged his lordship to defer the honour of his visit to another day; which the nobleman taking for an affront, came, broke open the door, and very rudely went up stairs. Holbein, hearing a noise, left his chamber; and meeting the lord at his door, fell into a violent passion, and pushed him backwards from the top of the stairs to the bottom. Considering, however, immediately what he had done, he escaped from the tumult he had raised, and made the best of his way to the king. The nobleman, much hurt, though not so much as he pretended, was there soon after him; and upon opening his grievance, the king ordered Holbein to ask pardon for his offence. But this only irritated the nobleman the more, who would not be satisfied with less than his life; upon which the king sternly replied, "My lord, you have not now to do with Holbein, but with me; whatever punishment you may contrive by way of revenge against him, shall assuredly be inflicted upon yourself: remember, pray, my lord, that I can, whenever I please, make seven lords of seven ploughmen, but I cannot make one Holbein even of seven lords."

We cannot undertake to give a list of Holbein's works, but this may be seen in Walpole's *Anecdotes*. Soon after the accession of the late king, a noble collection of his drawings was found in a bureau at Kensington, amounting to eighty-nine. These, which are of exquisite merit, have been admirably imitated in engraving, in a work published lately by John Chamberlaine, F. S. A. certainly one of the most splendid books, and most interesting collec-

tions of portraits ever executed. Holbein painted equally well in oil, water-colours, and distemper, in large and in miniature: but he had never practised the art of painting in miniature, till he resided in England, and learned it from Lucas Corneli; though he afterwards carried it to its highest perfection. His paintings of that kind have all the force of oil-colours, and are finished with the utmost delicacy. In general, he painted on a green ground, but in his small pictures frequently he painted on a blue. The invention of Holbein was surprisingly fruitful, and often poetical; his execution was remarkably quick, and his application indefatigable. His pencil was exceedingly delicate; his colouring had a wonderful degree of force; he finished his pictures with exquisite neatness; and his carnations were life itself. His genuine works are always distinguishable by the true, round, lively imitation of flesh, visible in all his portraits, and also by the amazing delicacy of his finishing.

It is observed by most authors, that Holbein always painted with his left hand; though Walpole objects against that tradition, (what he considers as a proof), that in a portrait of Holbein painted by himself, which was in the Arundelian collection, he is represented holding the pencil in the right hand. But that evidence cannot be sufficient to set aside so general a testimony of the most authentic writers on this subject: because, although habit and practice might enable him to handle the pencil familiarly with his left hand, yet, as it so unusual, it must have had but an unseemly and awkward appearance in a picture; which probably might have been his real inducement for representing himself without such a particularity. Besides, the writer of Hol-

bein's life, at the end of the treatise by De Piles, mentions a print by Hollar, still extant, which describes Holbein drawing with his left hand. Nor is it so extraordinary or incredible a circumstance; for other artists are remarked for the very same habit; particularly Mozzo of Antwerp, who worked with the left; and Amico Aspertino, as well as Ludovico Cangiago, who worked equally well with both hands. This great artist died of the plague at London in 1554; some think at his lodgings in Whitehall, where he had lived from the time that the king became his patron, but Vertue rather thought at the Duke of Norfolk's house, in the priory of Christ church near Aldgate, then called Duke's-place. Strype says that he was buried in St. Catherine Cree church: but this seems doubtful.

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THE DANCE OF DEATH.

THE celebrity of a subject which has been distinguished by the labours of such artists as Holbein and Hollar, seems necessary to demand some investigation of its origin.

In the dark ages of monkish bigotry and superstition, the deluded people, terrified into a belief that the fear of death was acceptable to the great Author of their existence, had placed one of their principal gratifications in contemplating it amidst ideas the most horrid and disgusting: hence the frequent descriptions of mortality in all its shapes amongst their writers, and the representations of this kind, in their books of religious offices, and the paintings and sculptures of their ecclesiastic buildings. They had altogether lost sight of the consolatory doctrines of the Gospel, which regard death in no terrific point of view whatever; a discovery reserved for the discernment of modern and enlightened Christians, who contemplate scenes which excited gloom and melancholy in the minds of their forefathers, with the gratification of philosophic curiosity. Some exceptions, however, to this remark are not wanting, for we may yet trace the imbecility of former ages in the decorations of many of our monuments, tricked out in all the silly ornaments of deaths' heads and marrow-bones.

The most favourite subject of the kind, however, was what is usually denominated the Dance of Death,

or a representation of Death in the act of leading all ranks and conditions of men to the grave; with gesticulations not a little bordering upon the grotesque, though probably without any view to provoke the mirth of the spectator in those times. One of the most ancient still existing, is that at Basil in Switzerland, in the church-yard formerly belonging to the convent of Dominicans, which is said to have been painted at the instance of the fathers and prelates assisting at the grand council at Basil, in 1431, in memory of a plague which happened soon afterwards, and during its continuance. The name of the painter is unknown, and will probably ever remain so, for no dependence can be had upon vague conjectures of those who, without any authority, or even the smallest probability, have attempted to ascertain it. To refute, or even to mention the blunders which have been committed by most of the travellers who have described the town of Basil, when they discuss this subject, would fill a volume: it will be sufficient to notice an assertion of Keysler, that the painting was executed by Hans Bok, a celebrated painter of this place, who, however, from the testimony of Scheutzer, in his Itinerary, was not born till 1584. From some inscriptions on the spot it appears to have been retouched, or perhaps renewed, in 1566 and 1616; the first time probably by Hans Klauber, whose name occurs in the lines addressed by Death to the Painter.

It has been frequently supposed that the Basil painting was the first of the kind; but this is extremely doubtful, from the knowledge we have of many others of apparently equal antiquity. Many of the bridges in Germany and Switzerland were ornamented in this manner, a specimen of which is still to be seen at Lucerne; and it is probable that almost every church of eminence was decorated with a Dance of Death. In the cloisters of St. Innocent's church at Paris, in those belonging to the old cathedral of St. Paul at London,*

* On the walls of a cloister on the north side of St. Paul's, called *Pardon-church-hugh*, was painted the *Machabre*, or

and in St. Mary's church at Berlin, these paintings were to be seen. At Klingenthal, a convent in the Little Basil, are the remains of a Dance of Death, differently designed from that at the Dominicans, and thought to be more ancient. The figures remaining till very lately in Hungerford's chapel, in the cathedral at Salisbury, and known by the title of Death and the Young Man, were undoubtedly part of a Death's Dance, as might be further insisted on from the fragment of another compartment which was close to them. In the church at Hexham, in Northumberland, are the remains of a Death's Dance; and at Feschamps, in Normandy, it is carved in stone, between the pillars of a church; the figures are about eighteen inches high. Even fragments of painted glass, whereon this subject has been depicted, with old English verses over the figures, may contribute to shew how very common it has been in our own country. P. C. Hilcher, in a tract printed at Dresden in 1705, has taken notice of other Dances of Death at Dresden, Annaberg, Leipzig, and Berne. Dr. Nugent has described one in St. Mary's church at Lubeck, which he states to have been painted in 1463.

The origin of all these is perhaps to be sought for in an ancient pageant, or religious farce, invented by the

Dance of Death, a common subject on the walls of cloisters or religious places. This was a single piece, a long train of all orders of men, from the Pope to the lowest of human beings; each figure has as his partner, Death; the first shaking his remembering hour-glass. Our old poet Lydgate, who flourished in the year 1430, translated a poem on the subject, from the French verses which attended a painting of the same kind about St. Innocent's cloister, at Paris. The original verses were made by Macaber, a German, in his own language. This shews the antiquity of the subject, and the origin of the hint from which Holbein composed his famous painting at Basil.

This cloister, the dance, and innumerable fine monuments (for here were crowded by far the most superb) fell victims to the sacrilege of the Protector Somerset, who demolished the whole, and carried the materials to his palace then erecting in the Strand.—*Pennant's London*, vol. ii. p. 135.

clergy, for the purpose of at once amusing and keeping the people in ignorance. In this all ranks and conditions of life were personated and mixed together in a general dance, in the course of which every one in his turn vanishes from the scene, to shew that none were exempted from the stroke of death. This dance was performed in the churches, and can be traced back as far as the year 1424;* it was called the Dance of Macaber, from a German poet of that name, who first composed some verses under the same title. Of this person very little is known, but Fabricius thinks the poem more ancient than the paintings† His work has been translated into Latin and French, in the last of which languages there are some very ancient and very modern editions.

The earliest allusion to the subject, but whether to the above-mentioned farce or to the paintings seems uncertain, is in the following lines, from the Visions of Pierce the Plowman, who wrote about 1350.

Death came drivynge after, and all to dust pashed,
 Kynges and kaysers, knightes and popes
 Learned and lewde, he ne let no man stande
 That he hitte even, he never stode after.
 Many a lovely ladie, and lemmans of knights
 Swonned and swelted, for sorrow of death dyntes.

When the arts of printing and engraving became established, various copies of the Dance of Macaber made their appearance, particularly in the Hours, Breviaries, Missals, and other service books of the church, few of which were unaccompanied with a Dance of Death; and in these the desigus sometimes varied. Many of our own service books for the use of Salisbury were thus decorated, and the fashion at length terminated in a book of Christian prayers, printed more than once during the reign of Elizabeth, since which time nothing of the kind has appeared. In all these are

* Glossar. Carpentier, tom. ii. 1103.

† Bibl. med. et infim. Ætat.

to be found the same dull and uniform representation of Death leading a single figure, without much attempt at character or execution. until at length there appeared, in 1538, a book, entitled "*Les simulachres et historiees faces de la Mort, autant elegamment pourtraictes, que artificiellement imaginees*" It was printed at Lyons, by Melchior and Gasper Trechsel, and is accompanied with forty-one of the most beautiful groups of figures that can be well conceived, both for their composition and execution, being most delicately cut on wood, and surpassing in this branch of art almost every thing of the kind that has appeared before or since. This work was often republished, as well in the French, as in the Latin and Italian languages,* and

* The following is presumed to be a tolerably correct list of the various editions of this book :

"*Simulachres et Historiees faces de la Mort, &c.*" Lugd. 1538, 4to.

"*Imagines de Morte.*" Lugd. 1542, 12mo.

"*Imagines Mortis.*" Lugd. 1545, 12mo.

"*Imagines Mortis.*" Lugd. 1547, 12mo.

"*Les Images de la Morte.*" Lyon, 1547, 12mo.

"*Simolachri, Historie, e Figure de la Morte.*" Lyone, 1549, 12mo. with an address from the printer, in which he complains of some attempts having been made in other countries to imitate the cuts to his book, and informs the reader that he had caused many more cuts to be added to this edition than had appeared in any other ; a declaration not a little extraordinary, for both the editions of 1547, which were also published by this person, have the same number of cuts, and contain twelve more than the three first editions. These additional cuts were probably executed from the unfinished designs spoken of in the dedication to the first edition. Four of them, being groups of children playing, are rather foreign to the subject, but are evidently done by the same artist who executed the others.

"*Icones Mortis.*" Basil, 1554, 12mo.

"*Les Images de la Mort, auxquelles sont adjoustees dix sept. figures.*" Lyon, 1562, 12mo. There are but five additional figures to this edition, the other twelve being what had already appeared, making in the whole seventeen more than in

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has been usually denominated by most of the writers upon the arts of painting and engraving, as well as by many travellers, *Holbein's Dance of Death*. It is extremely clear, however, that Holbein did not *invent* these subjects, for it appears in a dedication, which is only to be found in the first edition of this work, that the painter was then dead, and that he had not lived to finish some of the designs, which, however, afterwards appeared in a subsequent edition. The painter must therefore have died before 1538, and it is well known that Holbein was at this time living, and continued so until 1555. Unluckily no evidence whatever, nor even tradition, has been preserved relating to this great artist, and it is feared that he will ever remain undiscovered.

After what has been said, it becomes necessary to attempt at least to give some reason for the almost universal opinion, that these designs were the offspring of Holbein's pencil. Most of those writers who have described the town of Basil, as well as the compilers of the lives of the painters, speak of a Dance of Death by Holbein, some referring to the old Dance of Macaber, and others to the more modern one; but it is not difficult to see, that they have but transcribed from each other, without taking any pains to examine the subject. Certain it is, however, that Holbein did paint a Death's Dance in its improved state, and likewise more than once. Bishop Burnet, in his *Travels in Switzerland*, speaks of a Dance of Death, painted by Holbein, "on the walls of a house where he used to drink," which was then so worn out, that very little was to be seen except shapes and postures. He then mentions the old Death's Dance at the Dominicans' convent,* which, he says, was "so worn out some time ago, that they

the first edition. Of these five cuts, which have all the delicacy of the others, three are groups of boys.

De Doed vermaskert," &c. Antwerp, 1654, 12mo.

* By mistake called the convent of the Augustinians.

“ordered the best painter they had to lay new colours on it; but this is so ill done, that one had rather see the dead shadows of Holbein’s pencil, (i. e. on the walls of the house), than this coarse work.”

This account is corroborated by Keysler, who adds, that the painting on the house was then *entirely* obliterated. Patin, in his travels, also speaks of a house at Basil, curiously painted by Holbein, but does not mention the subject; it was probably the same as Burnet saw. These are the only travellers who have spoken upon this subject with any degree of accuracy, and fortunately their testimony throws much light upon it.

To the book already mentioned to have been published by the Trechsels, at Lyons, they sometimes annexed another, which was in some degree connected with it, and appears to have been printed by them the following year. This was entitled, “*Historiarum veteris testamenti icones*,” the cuts of which are in some instances much inferior to the others, and apparently by a different artist. The designs of these are indisputably by Holbein, as appears from some verses before the book, composed by Nicolas Bourbon, a contemporary poet, who also wrote some lines upon a Dance of Death painted by Holbein.* To these cuts to the Bible, are prefixed the first four which occur in the Dance of Death, as they likewise belong to the subject, and represent the creation and fall of man; but they are different in size, and were added, not only from the analogy of the subjects, but from the circumstance of their being already in the hands of the printer; and thus, from an odd coincidence of things, as well as a palpable confusion of the respective verses of Bourbon, seems to have originated an opinion, that Holbein *invented* the Dance of Death.

But it has not only been asserted that Holbein designed, but that he *engraved*, or rather *cut* this Dance of Death on wood. That he practised this art, nay, that he excelled in it, there is reason to believe, from

* *Borbonii Nugarum libri octo.* Basil 1540, 12mo. p. 445.

some specimens that have been preserved, and which bear on them the unequivocal marks of H. H. & HANS. HOLBEN*. A set of cuts with the latter mark occurs in Archbishop Cranmer's Catechism, printed by Walter Lyne in 1548; and although the composition of these is extremely good, their execution is not only inferior to the Dance of Death, but entirely different in its manner: and the mark of HB which is to be seen upon one of the cuts in this latter work, has been ascribed without any authority to Holbein, upon the strength of the vague opinions concerning his interference with the Dance of Death†.

The great popularity and success of these cuts very soon excited many imitations of them both in copper and on blocks. In 1541, Aldegraver engraved eight of them, but with very material alterations. Other editions of the *Imagines Mortis*, which had been first published under that title in 1545, appeared in 1555, 1566, 1573, and probably at many other times; these were also accompanied with cuts in wood by a very eminent but unknown artist, whose mark is AP. This mark is also to be found in some of the Emblems of Sambucus and Lejeunne, in some initial letters to Grafton's Chronicle, and in other cuts executed during the sixteenth century‡. It is not a little remarkable, that so late as the

* It is not however impossible that Holbein, in putting his mark upon these cuts, might only intend to shew that he designed them; or drew the subject upon the blocks.

† This mark is also given by Professor Christ, in his *Dictionnaire des Monogrammes*, to Hans Lantensack, and Hans Lederer, persons of whom absolutely nothing is known.

‡ The inaccurate Papillon, who in matters of historical discussion is hardly ever to be trusted, has asserted in his "*Traité de la gravure en bois*," that this is the mark of Silvius Antonianus, or Antoniano. Having found it upon some cuts, in an edition of Faerno's fables, printed at Antwerp in 1567, with a dedication to Cardinal Borromeo, by Silvius Antoniano, he instantly conceived that he had discovered the name of the artist in that of the author of the dedication. The fact is, that Antoniano was no engraver, but a professor of belles lettres at

year 1654, there appeared a Dutch book, printed at Antwerp, where this artist worked, entitled "*Doodt vermaskert, or Death masked,*" accompanied with eighteen cuts of the Dance of Death, which in the title page are ascribed to Holbein. They are all, except three, impressions from the identical blocks of the beautiful and original cuts of this subject; but the above-mentioned artist has had the effrontery to put his mark, together with the figure of a graving tool or knife, upon several of them. It is, however, possible that he might have repaired them, as some of the smaller lines, which in former impressions seem to have been injured, are here much stronger.

It might be tedious to describe *all the imitations* of the Dance of Death which have appeared at different times, as they are exceedingly numerous; but it would be unpardonable not to notice an alphabet of initial letters with this subject, which for humour, and excellence of design, are even superior to the celebrated one; and with respect to execution, especially when their minuteness is considered, being less than an inch square, absolutely wonderful. Their composition is entirely different from that of any of the others, and one of them is extremely indecent. They appear to have been done at Basil; for in the public library there is preserved a *sheet*, whereon are printed three alphabets, viz. the

Rome, afterwards secretary to Pope Pius V. and at length a Cardinal. His dedication had already appeared in the first edition of these fables in 1564, which has a different set of cuts engraved on copper. Another of Papillon's blunders is equally curious. He had seen an edition of the Emblems of Sambucus with cuts, on which the same mark occurs. In this book is a fine portrait of the author, with his dog, under whom is the word *nombo*, which Papillon gravely informs us is the name of the engraver, and again refers to it on another cut of one of the Emblems under a dog also. Had he read the verses belonging to this particular Emblem, he would have immediately seen that it was nothing more than the *dog's* name, as Sambucus himself declares, whilst he pays a laudable tribute to the attachment of the faithful companion of his travels.

one above-mentioned, another of boys at play, and the third, a dance of peasants, &c. The designs of some of the last are the same as those in a similar Dance by Holbein, formerly painted on a house at Basil, and of which some drawings are still preserved; and it is therefore not improbable that he also designed the Dance of Death for these initials. They have apparently been struck off as proofs or patterns for some bookseller*, and at the bottom of the sheet is the mark HL with the words "Hans Lutzelsburger Formschneider, (i. e. block-cutter), in Basel." In this manner has been preserved the name of a most exquisite artist whom, from the similarity of style and subject, there is every reason to suppose the person who executed the fine cuts of the first Dance of Death. As he worked after the designs of Holbein, it is also probable that the painter might have invented *some* of the seventeen subjects which appeared in continuation of the original work, and that Lutzelsburger also cut them for the subsequent editions. From the extreme delicacy with which the initials with the Dance of Death are executed, there is reason to suppose that they were not cut upon blocks of wood, but of metal, as was probably the larger work of the same subject; and in support of this conjecture it may be observed, that blocks of this kind are still preserved in the cabinets of the curious.

In 1780, Cretien de Mehel, a well-known artist and printseller at Basil, published forty-five engravings of a Death's Dance, as part of the works of Holbein, of which he intends to give a series. Mr. Coxe, in his travels, has given some account of this work, and informs us that they are done after some small drawings by Holbein, sketched with a pen, and slightly shaded with Indian ink; that these drawings were pur-

* They were actually used by Cratander, a printer at Basil; and other initial letters, with Dances of Death, are to be seen in books printed at Zurich, Strasburg, and Vienna, in the sixteenth century. All the alphabets are in the possession of the compiler of this essay, but they have not the monogram.

chased by Mr. Fleichman, of Strasburg, at Crozat's sale at Paris, and are now in the collection of Prince Galitzin, Minister from the Empress of Russia to the court of Vienna, at which last place he had frequent opportunities of seeing and admiring them. He further adds, that Hollar copied these drawings, an opinion which will admit of some doubt. Mons. De Mechel's remark, that from the dresses and character of several of the figures, it is probable the drawings were sketched in England, as well as Mr. Coxe's conjecture that they were in the Arundelian collection, will appear but slightly founded to any one conversant in the dresses of the French and German nations at that period, to which they bear at least an equal resemblance: again, one of the cuts represents a King sitting at table under a canopy, powdered with Fleurs de lis, whose figure has a remarkable affinity to the portraits of Francis I. If these drawings were copied from the celebrated wooden cuts, they must have been done after the year 1547, as eight of them did not appear till that time.

But it has entirely escaped the knowledge of all the biographers of Holbein, that he painted a Dance of Death in fresco, upon the walls of the palace of Whitehall, which was consumed by fire in 1697. This curious fact is ascertained from two sets of nineteen very indifferent etchings from the wooden cuts, by one Nieuhoff; they were never published, but copies of them presented to the artist's friends, with manuscript dedications in the Dutch language, in which he speaks of the above-mentioned paintings at Whitehall. The book has the following title engraved in a border: "Imagines Mortis, or the Dead Dance of Hans Holbeyn, Painter of King Henry the VIIIth." The author, in one of these dedications, addressed to the Right Honourable William Benting, informs him, that "he had met with the scarce little work of H. Holbeyn in wood, which he had himself painted as large as life in fresco, on the walls of Whitehall; that he had followed the original as nearly as possible, and had presumed to lay his copy before him as being born in the same palace; that he consi-

dered the partiality which every one has for the place of his nativity, and that therefore an account of what was curious and remarkable therein, and of what was then no more, as being destroyed by a fatal fire, must of course prove acceptable, particularly as there were hardly any more remains of the palace left than his own dwelling." He then states, that the design of the painter resembled that of the founder of the Greek monarchy, who ordered these words to be written to remind him of his mortality: "Remember, Philip, that thou art a man!" and proceeds to describe in a very quaint manner the different subjects of his work. The dedication to the other copy is nearly in similar words, and addressed to Mynheer Heymans, who appears, in consideration of his singular merits, to have had a dwelling assigned him in the palace at Whitehall. From the hand-writing and Dutch names in this work, it is evidently of the time of William III but of the artist no memorial is preserved; however, the importance of the fact which he has recorded, will render him a valuable personage in the opinion of the lovers of the arts.

After what has been said then, it is to be hoped that no additional evidence will be requisite to shew that Holbein did not invent the subjects, nor execute the cuts belonging to the Dance of Death, which is usually ascribed to him; that he painted it, however, and most assuredly more than once, seems to be beyond the possibility of doubt.

It only remains to give some account of the prints which are the immediate object of this publication, and to which it is hoped the preceding introduction will not have appeared uninteresting. It has been commonly supposed that Hollar copied these prints from the original cuts; but Mr. Coxe* thinks he followed the drawings engraved by De Mechel, which he imagines to have been in the Arundelian collection. Both these opinions seem erroneous; for many of Hollar's prints are

* Travels in Switzerland.

materially different, as well from the cuts as the drawings; and are, with two or three exceptions, very close copies of the cuts already mentioned to have been first published in 1555, with the mark of AP*. He must therefore have either had before him both the sets of wooden cuts, or have copied the paintings at Whitehall; for his acknowledged fidelity would have hardly suffered him to depart from his originals, whatever they were, and as they now remain, they are not correct copies of any single existing model.

Hollar's prints were first published in 1651†, with borders designed by Abraham à Diepenbeke, and afterwards without the borders. In this latter impression the letters HB *i.* occur upon every print, and are intended for "Holbein invenit," as appears from some other of Hollar's prints, which have upon them these words at length. No panegyric is here wanting upon the works of this admirable artist; they are sufficiently known and esteemed by every collector of taste, and particularly his Dance of Death. The plates, which appear to have been but little used, have been till lately preserved in a noble family, and impressions from them are once more presented to the public, without the least alteration‡.

* It is not a little remarkable, that almost the same variations from the original cuts, are to be found in those of the edition of 1555, in De Michel's prints, and in Hollar's etchings; a circumstance which renders it probable that these last were all copied from the same originals, which might have been the work of Holbein, to whom the variations may be likewise attributed.

† In 1632 there appeared engraved copies of the Dance of Death, in a work entitled "*Theatrum mortis humanæ*," by J. Weichard. These engravings are within borders of fruit, flowers, and animals, which are executed with an uncommon degree of elegance.

‡ In the present edition, however, it was found requisite that the plates should be retouched, and it has been done with the utmost attention to the preservation of their original spirit and character.

Vertue, in his description of Hollar's works, mentions that, he engraved a reverse of the first print, an additional one without a border, representing the rich man disregarding the prayers of the poor; and three others from the *set after Holbein*, with four Latin verses at bottom. He also engraved the six first letters of the alphabet, adorned with small figures of a Death's Dance, and one large plate of the same subject for Dugdale's St. Paul's, and the Monasticon; but this last plate is only a copy from an old wooden cut prefixed to Lydgate's Dance of Macaber, at the end of his Fall of Princes, printed by Tottell in 1554, and was not intended to represent the Dance of Death at St. Paul's, as Mr. Warton has supposed*, but only as an emblematical frontispiece to the verses.

* Observ. on Spencer, vol. ii. 117.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. I.—MORTALIUM NOBILITAS.

It has been supposed by Papillon, without the least authority, or even probability, that the two figures represent the persons for whom Holbein painted this work. It has been already shewn that Holbein did not design this plate. It is altogether emblematical, and appears to be an heraldical representation of mortality, viz. a tattered shield, surmounted with a death's head; the crest, an hour-glass between two arms of a skeleton, holding part of a skull. The two figures are probably intended for supporters, and represent the dress of the Swiss Nobility of the sixteenth century. The "MORTALIUM NOBILITAS" was added by Hollar, and is a very concise and admirable explanation of the subject.

4500

The Dance of Death.



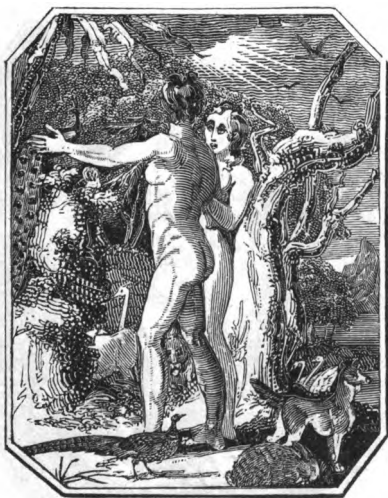
No. II.—SIN.

Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake, &c.—*Gen. iii. 17.*

HOLBEIN has begun the scenes of life by that which had such influence on all the rest. The mother of the human race holds in her right hand the fatal apple, which she has just received from the serpent with a young man's head; and Adam, at the same time, is plucking another, enticed by the solicitations of the too credulous Eve, who shows him the one she has received.

43160

The Dance of Death.



No. III.—SIN.

**THE ABOVE IS A SECOND ILLUSTRATION TO THE LETTER-
PRESS IN THE PRECEDING PAGE.**

4.3106

The Dance of Death.



No. IV.—PUNISHMENT.

Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.— *Gen. iii. 23.*

Our first Parents, driven out by the Angel, are flying from the terrestrial Paradise, preceded by Death, who is playing on the fiddle, and shews, by dancing, the joy he feels for his triumph.

1 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. VI.—THE POPE CROWNING AN EMPEROR.

To bind his Princes at his pleasure, and teach his Senators wisdom.

Psalm cv. 22

A CARDINAL and three bishops are assisting at the ceremony: Death is there also under the figure of two skeletons, one of which is dressed in cardinal's robes, the other embraces the Holy Father, with the left hand, and is leaning on a crutch with the right.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. VII.—THE EMPEROR.

Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

Isaiah, xxxviii. 1.

SEATED on a throne, and holding in his hand the sword of state, he is attentively listening to an advocate pleading, in a soothing tone, against an unfortunate peasant, who trembling waits, in the most suppliant posture, the decree that is to determine his fate. Death at this moment displays all his power; he proudly takes possession of the bottom of the throne, and is carelessly leaning his arm on the Monarch's crown. The angry aspect with which the Emperor views the advocate and his two clients, who are seen standing with their heads uncovered, is a happy pre-sage for the poor oppressed peasant.

2000

The Dance of Death.



No. VIII.—THE EMPRESS.

And all the inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth.—*Daniel*, iv. 35.

IN the midst of a pompous march, in the court of a great palace, Death, who seems here to do the office of a gentleman-usher, leads this princess to the brink of the grave, and shews her the bounds within which all her grandeur is to be confined.

1000

The Dance of Death.



No. IX.—THE QUEEN.

Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech.--*Daniel*, xxxii. 9.

DEATH, arrayed in the habits of folly, drags away violently this young Princess, just as she is coming out of her palace to enjoy the pleasure of walking. With terror painted in her countenance, she is making the air resound with mournful cries; the maid of honour, who accompanies her, agitated with the most violent despair, is imploring the aid of Heaven, while the buffoon is making vain efforts to defend her against Death, who holds aloft his glass, to shew that the fatal hour is come.

4: 3460

The Dance of Death.



NO. X. THE CARDINAL.

Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous for him.--*Isaiah*, v. 23.

A MESSENGER has just presented to him, on his knees, the bull that constitutes him a cardinal. Death seizes this moment to make his appearance, and seems to want to turn his hat upon his head. The messenger is holding in his right hand a tin box, hung by a strap, in which he had, no doubt, carried the bull, which the new-made cardinal holds in his right hand with the seals appended to it.

4-3A60

17-11-1960

The Dance of Death.



No. XI.—THE ELECTOR.

The king shall mourn, and the prince shall be clothed with desolation, and the hands of the people of the land shall be troubled.

Ezekiel, vii. 27.

THIS prince, as he is coming out of his palace with his courtiers, is accosted by a poor woman, who implores his help for herself and the infant she holds by the hand; but he, insensible to the distresses of the widow and orphan, refuses to listen, and is turning aside with a disdainful air to his courtiers. Death at this instant appears; and his severe aspect announces, that he is just about to make him repent his hard-heartedness.

4. 3A 00

The Dance of Death.



No. XII.—THE BISHOP.

I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.—*Matt xxvi. 31.*

WITH an air of tranquillity and resignation this worthy Pastor follows Death, who is leading him away laughing and dancing, whilst some shepherds forgetting their flocks, are wandering here and there through the country, in despair for the loss of their chief. The sun, now ready to set, is just about to leave in darkness the ill-fated flocks, who, having no longer a conductor, will soon become the prey of wolves and other ravenous animals.

4. 5000

The Dance of Death.



No. XIII.—THE COUNT.

Rebuke the company of spearmen; scatter thou the people that delight in war.--*P'salm, lxxviii. 30*

DEATH here adds to his usual employment that of avenger of oppressed vassals. He is throwing with violence at the head of this Lord, his coat of arms, the dear object of his pride, under the weight of which he is ready to make him fall. He appears trampling under foot a flail, to mark his inhumanity to labourers, a class of society so necessary and respectable. On the ground also are to be seen the remains of the helmet which formed the crest of his arms, with the other ornaments that decorated them.

12000

The Dance of Death.



NO. XIV.—THE ABBE.

His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden by the cords of his sins.---*Prov. iv. 22.*

DEATH, not contented with stripping this fat Prelate of his crosier, which he is carrying in triumph on his shoulder, and his mitre, with which he is dressing himself, is dragging him away without pity. He raises his breviary with one hand, and with the other is making some vain efforts to push him off.

4. 3/100

The Dance of Death.



No. XV.—THE ABBESS.

Wherefore I praised the dead, which are already dead, more than the living, which are yet alive.—*Eccles. iv. 2.*

DEATH ludicrously hooded with several flowing plumes, and robed in a kind of gown, carries out of her convent an Abbess, whom he is dragging with all his might by her scapular. The reverend Mother with regret is leaving life and the honours she enjoys; and expresses, by the alteration of her features and by her cries, the fright that Death has produced in her soul. Behind her, under the gate of the convent, appears a young Nun, strangely agitated with terror and grief.

4. 3A 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XVI.—THE FRIAR PROVISO.

And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.—*Psalm*, cvi. 10.

As he is just stepping into his convent, with his Christmas-box and wallet, Death stops him at the door; and deaf to his cries, as well as regardless of the fright he throws him into, drags him with all his might by his cloak, and renders all the good Friar's attempts to disengage himself ineffectual.

2460

The Dance of Death.



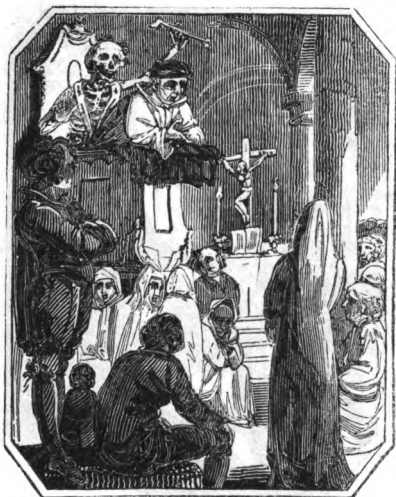
No. XVII.—THE CANONESS.

Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men -- *Prov. iv. 14.*

THERE appears in this young and beautiful recluse, a striking mixture of gallantry and devotion. On her knees before a little altar, with her rosary in her hand, she is amorously listening to the songs which a young man, seated on a bed, addresses to her, accompanying them with his lute. Death comes to put out the tapers burning on the altar, and to change into sadness the pleasures of this conversation.

24 JAGO

The Dance of Death.



NO. XVIII.—THE PREACHER.

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! — *Isaiah*, v 20

As he is preaching to his congregation, Death, who is behind him with a stole about his neck, holds over his head the bone of a dead body, and by shewing it to the assembly, preaches to them, undoubtedly, the most eloquent of all sermons.

4-1460

The Dance of Death.



No. XIX.—THE PHYSICIAN.

Physician, heal thyself.—*Luke. iv. 23.*

DEATH is leading to him a sick old man, whose urine he is presenting to him in a phial, and appears to be saying, in a jeering manner, Dost thou think that thou art able to save a man whom I have already in my power?

43A69

The Dance of Death.



No. XX.—THE ADVOCATE.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.---*Prov. xxii. 3.*

THE example of the Judge seems to authorize the Advocate to get himself well paid for his prevarication, and even in the presence of his poor client, whose wretched condition would raise compassion to any breast less obdurate than that of the lawyer. But Death will avenge the oppressed; he is pouring into the hands of the Advocate money in abundance, of which he will have little use, for he is at the same instant, shewing him, with an air of insult, his sand run out.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXI.—THE MISER.

Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ?—*Luke, xi. 2.*

THE character of the Miser is very forcibly expressed in this sketch. Shut up in a vault, which receives the light only through a wicket, secured with a double grate of thick iron bars, he is entirely taken up with his beloved treasure, a considerable part whereof Death is snatching up before his eyes. This loss excites in him all the symptoms of the most violent desperation, and it plainly appears that his gold is an hundred times dearer to his heart than his life.

4 JA 60.

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXII.—THE WAGGONER.

But when they to their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.—2 Chron. xv. 4.

WE see Death here venting his capricious fury on a cart of wine that a poor Waggoner is conducting. Without doubt, the man himself will soon come, in his turn, to be the sport of his caprice; and the same cause that has now produced, will ere long effectually finish his despair.

1 1160

The Dance of Death.



No. XXIII.—THE COUNTESS.

What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?—*Job. ii. 10.*

SHE is wholly taken up with the care of her dress, and is receiving with eagerness from the hands of one of her maids, a very rich robe with a gold chain. Death comes to derange her toilet, and has already, without being perceived, slipped round her neck a collar made of small bones.

4 JACO

The Dance of Death.



No. XXIV.—THE SWISS SOLDIER.

But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth the spoils.—*Luke, xi. 22.*

Death, armed with a buckler and a huge dart, attacks this warrior, in the bosom of victory; escaped alone from the carnage of the day, and is giving him some terrible blows. It is in vain that this brave Soldier, whose courage seems invincible, is obstinately attempting to dispute the victory with an irresistible adversary.

4 JAGO

The Dance of Death.



No. XXV.—THE HAWKER.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.---*Matt. xi. 28.*

BENDING under the weight of his load he is advancing, with a quick pace, to the neighbouring town, comforting himself with thinking on the gain he is to make there; but Death, in the form of two skeletons, is come to put a sudden end to his labours and his hopes. One of the skeletons is dragging him forcibly by the arm, while the other behind him is playing on a marine trumpet. It is in vain that the poor Hawker points with his finger to the place where his business calls him; this disagreeable company appear desirous of making him take another road.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXVI.—THE NEW-MARRIED PAIR.

Where thou diest, will I die.—*Ruth*, i. 17.

IN the first transports of an happy union, this tender couple appear so wholly taken up with each other, and so inebriated with their mutual happiness, that they neither see nor hear. Death, who is marching before them, beating furiously on a little drum, is soon to give a cruel interruption to their enjoyments.

4 2160

The Dance of Death.



No. XXVII.—THE MERCHANT.

The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seeketh death.—*Prov. xxi. 6.*

ESCAPED from the dangers of the sea, and safely arrived in port, this rich Merchant believes himself now in perfect safety; but he is mistaken. Employed in counting his money, examining his goods and treating about their disposal, a bad customer, Death himself, comes up, and it is his person only that he wants to bargain for.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXVIII.—THE GAMESTERS.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Matt. xvi. 26.

THE Devil and Death are disputing which of them shall carry off the losing Gamester. It is a contest, if we may say so, frightful as well as ludicrous, so much the more so, that the second Gamester, interesting himself in the fate of the first, is addressing fervent prayers to the Devil on his behalf; but the third is doing still better, taking the advantage of this moment of trouble and terror, to gather in the money that is lying on the table.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXIX.—THE OLD MAN.

My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.—*Job. xvii. 1.*

HERE we see Death leading away, playing on a psaltery, an Old Man to the brink of the grave, bent under the load of years, and verging to the last degree of frailty. The Old Man allows himself to be carried off, with that calmness and tranquillity, which are the effects of wisdom, and the fruits of a good conscience.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXX.—THE OLD WOMAN.

Death is better than a bitter life, or continual sickness

Eccles. xxx. 17.

THE grim countenance of this good old dame does not indicate the same resignation as appears in the former subject. Wholly occupied in mumbling her rosary, she pays no attention to the sound of a dulcimer, on which one of her conductors is playing. The other skeleton, impatient of the slowness of the Old Woman's march, is employing menaces and blows to make her advance.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXXI.—THE CHILD.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.—*Job. xvi. 1.*

IF under the roof of poverty there is any comfort, it is in having children by whom we may hope one day to be solaced. This is the case with this poor widow; but Death is of a different opinion, and is come to carry off her youngest child, unmoved by her prayers and lamentations.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXXII.—THE DESOLATION OF DEATH.

Woe, woe, woe to the inhabiter of the earth.—*Rev* viii. 13.

All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died — *Gen.* vii 22.

Woe, grievous woe! to all who now
In this vile world abide;
For times await you big with grief,
And nameless ills betide.

Though now to you a plenteous share
Of Fortune's gifts may fall,
Pale Death will come, or soon or late,
A visitant to all.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXXIII.---THE KING.

He that is to-day a king, to-morrow shall die.---*Eccles. x. 10.*

To him who this day's sceptre sways,
In costly pride a king,
To-morrow's light, with baleful speed,
A direful fate will bring :

For him, who rules o'er nations high,
And powerful kingdoms guides,
When Death his office bids him quit,
The common lot betides.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXXIV.—THE GENTLEMAN.

What man is he, that liveth, and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?—*Psalm, lxxxix. 48.*

WHAT man is he, however great,
Where'er his lot is cast,
Who in this mortal world shall live,
And death shall never taste?

What man is he, who that fell dart,
Which conquers all, can brave?
Or his own life, by force or skill,
From Death can hope to save?

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXXV.—THE CANON.

Behold! the hour is at hand.—*Matt. xxvi. 45.*

THOUGH crowds attend thee to the choir,
And flatt'ers throng the way,
An humble suppliant thou must come,
And here thy homage pay.

For thee the Fates do loud demand,
And instant Death does crave;
A day, which no one can retard,
Compels thee to the grave.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXXVI.—THE JUDGE.

I will cut off the judge, from the midst thereof.—*Amos*, ii. 3

YE who false judgments now pronounce,
For filthy lucre's sake,
From midst of crowds and judgment-seat,
I, Death, will quickly take.

To Fate's just laws ye must submit,
Nor with my pow'r contest;
Which every trembling son of man
Has hitherto confest.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXXVII.—THE COUNSELLOR.

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.—*Prov. xxi. 13.*

THE rich and wealthy readily
To suitors rich give ear,
Yet scorn the poor and needy man,
Nor deign his suit to hear :

But when themselves, in their last hour,
To God shall earnest cry,
Their anxious prayers he shall reject,
And their request deny.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



No. XXXVIII.—THE PRIEST.

I myself also am a mortal man, like to all.—*Wisdom*, vii. 1.

THE holy sacrament, behold,
Celestial gift! I bear;
The sick man, at the hour of death,
With certain hope to cheer.

But I myself am mortal too.
And the same laws obey,
And must, like him, when time arrives,
To Death become a prey.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XXXIX.—THE ASTROLOGER.

Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great.—*Job, xxxviii, 21.*

THOU, by contemplating this sphere,
Which heaven's bright face does show
Events, which shall to others chance,
Pretendest to foreknow.

Tell me, if thou of fates to come
A skilful prophet art,
When to the tomb the pow'r of Death
Shall urge thee to depart?

4 J160

The Dance of Death.



No. XL.—THE SHIPWRECK.

But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.—1 *Tim.* vi. 9.

THAT worldly goods they may procure,
And wealth immense obtain,
What troubles will mankind endure,
What evils, and what pain !

But men whom dangers thus surround,
Will Fortune tempt to bend
Their footsteps to those beaten paths
Which in destruction end.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XLI.—THE DUCHESS.

Thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.—*2 Kings*, i. 16.

FROM the soft bed, O youthful maid,
Whereon thy limbs now lie,
Permission ever to arise,
Thy cruel fates deny :

For soon shall Death thy lifeless frame
Subdue without remorse,
And in the solemn winding-sheet
Enwrap thy breathless corse.

4. JA 89

The Dance of Death.



No. XLII.—THE PEASANT.

In the sweat of thy face, shalt thou eat bread.—*Gen. iii. 10.*

BREAD for thyself, by labour great,
Thou shalt thyself obtain ;
Nor from the ground, without great toil,
Thy sustenance shall gain.

Yet after all thy cares below,
And numerous labours past,
Pale Death to all thy hopes and toils
Shall put an end at last.

4. JACO

The Dance of Death.



No. XLIII.—THE KNIGHT OR SOLDIER.

When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.—*Luke, xi. 21, 22.*

UNDAUNTED and secure in arms,
While strength and life remain,
The brave his mansions, and his wealth,
In safety dares maintain.

But Death with greater force shall wage
Against him war ere long,
And for the grave shall make him quit
His post, however strong.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XLIV.—THE DRUNKARDS.

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.—*Ephes* v. 18.

With wine's excess your soul's to drench,
Ye mortal throng, forbear ;
For luxury of every kind,
And beastliness, is there.

Death shall assail you unpar'd,
Oppress'd with sleep and wine ;
And, in a vomit foul, your souls
Compel you to resign.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XLV.—THE FOOL.

He goeth after her as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks -- *Prov. vii. 22.*

‘MADNESS is sweet,’ the mad-man cries,
And void of care and woe:
Nor serious thoughts engage his mind,
As well his actions show.

Heedless of fate, the witless fool,
Like sportive lambkin, treads,
And knows not that his every step
To Death’s sad portal leads.

4. JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XLVI.---THE THIEF.

O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me!-- *Isaiah, xxxviii. 14.*

MEN to destroy, with fell intent,
The thief by night does rise ;
And now to spoil an aged dame,
Of her full basket, tries.

‘ I suffer wrong,’ she cries ; and God
Sends Death to her relief,
Who frees her from the ruffian’s gripe,
And disappoints the thief.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. XLVII.—THE BLIND MAN.

Let the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Matth. xv. 14

THE blind man, to a guide as blind,
Himself does here commit ;
And wanting sight, they both descend
Into the fatal pit.

For, while the man does vainly hope
Success his steps attends,
Into the darkness of the grave
He suddenly descends.

4. JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XLVIII.—THE BEGGAR.

O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this Death ?—*Rom. vii. 24.*

‘ Who from the body of this Death
Will me, sad wretch, release ;
And snatch me from this sinful world,
To realms of purest peace ?’

So, he who mourns his mortal ills,
And evil nature, cries,
While to the seat of Christ above
His hopes and wishes rise.

4 JA 60

The Dance of Death.



NO. XLIX.—THE HUSBAND.

What taketh away the life? even Death.—*Eccles. xxxi. 7* *
Remember that Death will not be long in coming.—*Eccles. xiv. 12.*

Lo! husband fond! the tyrant Death,
The worst of all life's foes,
In prime of youth, to call thee hence,
The dreaded summon blows.

Reflect thou, then, amid thy course,
"While it is call'd to-day,"
That thou art hast'ning to thy end,
With unperceiv'd decay.

* From an old translation.

4 JACO

The Dance of Death.



No. L.—THE WIFE.

Of the woman, came the beginning of sin; and through her's we all die!--*Eccles. xxv. 4.*

FROM Eve, the mother of mankind,
Our parent Adam's wife,
Sprang Sin; and thence fell Death arose,
The enemy of life.

Let not, howe'er, thy tender mind
To grief a victim fall;
Let faith and hope support thy soul,
'Tis but thy Father's call.

4 JA60

The Dance of Death.



No. LI.—THE LAST JUDGMENT.

We shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.—*Rom. xiv. 10.*
Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come ...
Matt. xxiv. 42.

For all his actions to account,
By God's express command,
Each man before the judgment-seat
Of Christ, the judge, shall stand !

Watch, therefore, and be vigilant,
Lest, when that time shall come,
God, for your actions, should pronounce
A just but angry doom.

4 JA 60



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