

**DOUCE
FRANCIS**

THE DANCE OF
DEATH

Francis Douce

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Содержание

PREFACE	5
CHAPTER I	7
CHAPTER II	16
CHAPTER III	27
CHAPTER IV	38
CHAPTER V	41
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	47

Francis Douce
The Dance of Death Exhibited in Elegant Engravings on Wood with a Dissertation on the Several Representations of that Subject but More Particularly on Those Ascribed to Macaber and Hans Holbein

PREFACE

The very ample discussion which the extremely popular subject of the Dance of Death has already undergone might seem to preclude the necessity of attempting to bestow on it any further elucidation; nor would the present Essay have ever made its appearance, but for certain reasons which are necessary to be stated.

The beautiful designs which have been, perhaps too implicitly, regarded as the invention of the justly celebrated painter, Hans Holbein, are chiefly known in this country by the inaccurate etchings of most of them by Wenceslaus Hollar, the copper-plates of which having formerly become the property of Mr. Edwards, of Pall Mall, were published by him, accompanied by a very hasty and imperfect dissertation; which, with fewer faults, and considerable enlargement, is here again submitted to public attention. It is appended to a set of fac-similes of the above-mentioned elegant designs, and which, at a very liberal expense that has been incurred by the proprietor and publisher of this volume, have been executed with consummate skill and fidelity by Messrs. Bonner and Byfield, two of our best artists in the line of wood engraving. They may very justly be regarded as scarcely distinguishable from their fine originals.

The remarks in the course of this Essay on a supposed German poet, under the name of Macaber, and the discussion relating to Holbein's connection with the Dance of Death, may perhaps be found interesting to the critical reader only; but every admirer of ancient art will not fail to be gratified by an intimate acquaintance with one of its finest specimens in the copy which is here so faithfully exhibited.

In the latest and best edition of some new designs for a Dance of Death, by Salomon Van Rusting, published by John George Meintel at Nuremberg, 1736, 8vo. there is an elaborate preface by him, with a greater portion of verbosity than information. He has placed undue confidence in his predecessor, Paul Christian Hilscher, whose work, printed at Dresden in 1705, had probably misled the truly learned Fabricius in what he has said concerning Macaber in his valuable work, the "*Bibliotheca mediæ et infimæ ætatis*." Meintel confesses his inability to point out the origin or the inventor of the subject. The last and completest work on the Dance, or Dances of Death, is that of the ingenious M. Peignot, so well and deservedly known by his numerous and useful books on bibliography. To this gentleman the present Essay has been occasionally indebted. He will, probably, at some future opportunity, remove the whimsical misnomer in his engraving of Death and the Ideot.

The usual title, "The Dance of Death," which accompanies most of the printed works, is not altogether appropriate. It may indeed belong to the old Macaber painting and other similar works where Death is represented in a sort of dancing and grotesque attitude in the act of leading a single character; but where the subject consists of several figures, yet still with occasional exception, they

are rather to be regarded as elegant emblems of human mortality in the premature intrusion of an unwelcome and inexorable visitor.

It must not be supposed that the republication of this singular work is intended to excite the lugubrious sensations of sanctified devotees, or of terrified sinners; for, awful and impressive as must ever be the contemplation of our mortality in the mind of the philosopher and practiser of true religion, the mere sight of a skeleton cannot, as to them, excite any alarming sensation whatever. It is chiefly addressed to the ardent admirers of ancient art and pictorial invention; but nevertheless with a hope that it may excite a portion of that general attention to the labours of past ages, which reflects so much credit on the times in which we live.

The widely scattered materials relating to the subject of the Dance of Death, and the difficulty of reconciling much discordant information, must apologize for a few repetitions in the course of this Essay, the regular progress of which has been too often interrupted by the manner in which matter of importance is so obscurely and defectively recorded; instances of which are, the omission of the name of the painter in the otherwise important dedication to the first edition of the engravings on wood of the Dance of Death that was published at Lyons; the uncertainty as to locality in some complimentary lines to Holbein by his friend Borbonius, and the want of more particulars in the account by Nieuhoff of Holbein's painting at Whitehall.

The designs for the Dance of Death, published at Lyons in 1538, and hitherto regarded as the invention of Holbein, are, in the course of this Dissertation, referred to under the appellation of *the Lyons wood-cuts*; and with respect to the term *Macaber*, which has been so mistakenly used as the name of a real author, it has been nevertheless preserved on the same principle that the word *Gothic* has been so generally adopted for the purpose of designating the pointed style of architecture in the middle ages.

F. D.

CHAPTER I

Personification of Death, and other modes of representing it among the Ancients. – Same subject during the Middle Ages. – Erroneous notions respecting Death. – Monumental absurdities. – Allegorical pageant of the Dance of Death represented in early times by living persons in churches and cemeteries. – Some of these dances described. – Not unknown to the Ancients. – Introduction of the infernal, or dance of Macaber.

The manner in which the poets and artists of antiquity have symbolized or personified Death, has excited considerable discussion; and the various opinions of Lessing, Herder, Klotz, and other controversialists have only tended to demonstrate that the ancients adopted many different modes to accomplish this purpose. Some writers have maintained that they exclusively represented Death as a mere skeleton; whilst others have contended that this figure, so frequently to be found upon gems and sepulchral monuments, was never intended to personify the extinction of human life, but only as a simple and abstract representation. They insist that the ancients adopted a more elegant and allegorical method for this purpose; that they represented human mortality by various symbols of destruction, as birds devouring lizards and serpents, or pecking fruits and flowers; by goats browsing on vines; cocks fighting, or even by a Medusa's or Gorgon's head. The Romans seem to have adopted Homer's¹ definition of Death as the eldest brother of Sleep; and, accordingly, on several of their monumental and other sculptures we find two winged genii as the representatives of the above personages, and sometimes a genius bearing a sepulchral vase on his shoulder, and with a torch reversed in one of his hands. It is very well known that the ancients often symbolized the human soul by the figure of a butterfly, an idea that is extremely obvious and appropriate, as well as elegant. In a very interesting sepulchral monument, engraved in p. 7 of Spon's *Miscellanea Eruditæ Antiquitatis*, a prostrate corpse is seen, and over it a butterfly that has just escaped from the *mouth* of the deceased, or as Homer expresses it, "from the teeth's inclosure."² The above excellent antiquary has added the following very curious sepulchral inscription that was found in Spain, HÆREDIBVS MEIS MANDO ETIAM CINERE VTMEO VOLITET EBRIVS PAPILIO OSSA IPSA TEGANT MEA, &c. Rejecting this heathen symbol altogether, the painters and engravers of the middle ages have substituted a small human figure escaping from the mouths of dying persons, as it were, breathing out their souls.

We have, however, the authority of Herodotus, that in the banquets of the Egyptians a person was introduced who carried round the table at which the guests were seated the figure of a dead body, placed on a coffin, exclaiming at the same time, "Behold this image of what yourselves will be; eat and drink therefore, and be happy."³ Montfaucon has referred to an ancient manuscript to prove that this sentiment was conveyed in a Lacedæmonian proverb,⁴ and it occurs also in the beautiful poem of Coppa, ascribed to Virgil, in which he is supposed to invite Mæcenas to a rural banquet. It concludes with these lines: —

Pone merum et talos; pereat qui crastina curat,
Mors aurem vellens, vivite ait, venio.

¹ Iliad, and after him Virgil, *Æn.* vi. 278.

² Iliad IX. On an ancient gem likewise in Ficoroni's *Gemmæ Antiquæ Litteratæ*, Tab. viii. No. 1, a human skull typifies mortality, and a butterfly immortality.

³ Lib. ii. 78.

⁴ *Diarium*, p. 212.

The phrase of pulling the ear is admonitory, that organ being regarded by the ancients as the seat of memory. It was customary also, and for the same reason, to take an oath by laying hold of the ear. It is impossible on this occasion to forget the passage in Isaiah xxii. 13, afterwards used by Saint Paul, on the beautiful parable in Luke xii. Plutarch also, in his banquet of the wise men, has remarked that the Egyptians exhibited a skeleton at their feasts to remind the parties of the brevity of human life; the same custom, as adopted by the Romans, is exemplified in Petronius's description of the feast of Trimalchio, where a jointed puppet, as a skeleton, is brought in by a boy, and this practice is also noticed by Silius Italicus:

... Ægyptia tellus
Claudit odorato post funus stantia Saxo
Corpora, et a mensis exsanguem haud separat umbram.⁵

Some have imagined that these skeletons were intended to represent the larvæ and lemures, the good and evil shadows of the dead, that occasionally made their appearance on earth. The larvæ, or lares, were of a beneficent nature, friendly to man; in other words, the good demon of Socrates. The lemures, spirits of mischief and wickedness. The larva in Petronius was designed to admonish only, not to terrify; and this is proved from Seneca: "Nemo tam puer est ut Cerberum timeat et tenebras, et larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium."⁶ There is, however, some confusion even among the ancients themselves, as to the respective qualities of the larvæ and lemures. Apuleius, in his noble and interesting defence against those who accused him of practising magic, tells them, "Tertium mendacium vestrum fuit, macilentam vel omnino evisceratam formam diri cadaveris fabricatam prorsus horribilem et larvalem;" and afterwards, when producing the image of his peculiar Deity, which he usually carried about him, he exclaims, "En vobis quem scelestus ille sceletum nominabat! Hiccine est sceletus? Hæccine est larva? Hoccine est quod appellitabatis Dæmonium."⁷ It is among Christian writers and artists that the personification of Death as a skeleton is intended to convey terrific ideas, conformably to the system that Death is the punishment for original sin.

The circumstances that lead to Death, and not our actual dissolution, are alone of a terrific nature; for Death is, in fact, the end and cure of all the previous sufferings and horrors with which it is so frequently accompanied. In the dark ages of monkish bigotry and superstition, the deluded people, seduced into a belief that the fear of Death was acceptable to the great and beneficent author of their existence, appear to have derived one of their principal gratifications in contemplating this necessary termination of humanity, yet amidst ideas and impressions of the most horrible and disgusting nature: hence the frequent allusions to it, in all possible ways, among their preachers, and the personification of it in their books of religious offices, as well as in the paintings and sculptures of their ecclesiastical and other edifices. They seemed to have entirely banished from their recollection the consolatory doctrines of the Gospel, which contribute so essentially to dissipate the terrors of Death, and which enable the more enlightened Christian to abide that event with the most perfect tranquillity of mind. There are, indeed, some exceptions to this remark, for we may still trace the imbecility of former ages on too many of our sepulchral monuments, which are occasionally tricked out with the silly appendages of Death's heads, bones, and other useless remains of mortality, equally repulsive to the imagination and to the elegance of art.

If it be necessary on any occasion to personify Death, this were surely better accomplished by means of some graceful and impressive figure of the Angel of Death, for whom we have the authority of Scripture; and such might become an established representative. The skulls and bones of modern,

⁵ Lib. xiii. l. 474.

⁶ Epist. xxiv.

⁷ Apolog. p. 506, 507. edit. Delph. 4to.

and the entire skeletons of former times, especially during the middle ages, had, probably, derived their origin from the vast quantities of sanctified human relics that were continually before the eyes, or otherwise in the recollection of the early Christians. But the favourite and principal emblem of mortality among our ancestors appears to have been the moral and allegorical pageant familiarly known by the appellation of the *Dance of Death*, which it has, in part, derived from the grotesque, and often ludicrous attitudes of the figures that composed it, and especially from the active and sarcastical mockery of the ruthless tyrant upon its victims, which may be, in a great measure, attributed to the whims and notions of the artists who were employed to represent the subject.

It is very well known to have been the practice in very early times to profane the temples of the Deity with indecorous dancing, and ludicrous processions, either within or near them, in imitation, probably, of similar proceedings in Pagan times. Strabo mentions a custom of this nature among the Celtiberians,⁸ and it obtained also among several of the northern nations before their conversion to Christianity. A Roman council, under Pope Eugenius II. in the 9th century, has thus noticed it: “Ut sacerdotes admoneant viros ac mulieres, qui festis diebus ad ecclesiam occurrunt, ne *ballando* et turpia verba decantando choras teneant, ac ducunt, similitudinem Paganorum peragendo.” Canciani mentions an ancient bequest of money for a dance in honour of the Virgin.⁹

These riotous and irreverent tripudists and caperers appear to have possessed themselves of the church-yards to exhibit their dancing fooleries, till this profanation of consecrated ground was punished, as monkish histories inform us, with divine vengeance. The well-known Nuremberg Chronicle¹⁰ has recorded, that in the time of the Emperor Henry the Second, whilst a priest was saying mass on Christmas Eve, in the church of Saint Magnus, in the diocese of Magdeburg, a company of eighteen men and ten women amused themselves with dancing and singing in the church-yard, to the hindrance of the priest in his duty. Notwithstanding his admonition, they refused to desist, and even derided the words he addressed to them. The priest being greatly provoked at their conduct, prayed to God and Saint Magnus that they might remain dancing and singing for a whole year without intermission, and so it happened; neither dew nor rain falling upon them. Hunger and fatigue were set at defiance, nor were their shoes or garments in the least worn away. At the end of the year they were released from their situation by Herebert, the archbishop of the diocese in which the event took place, and obtained forgiveness before the altar of the church; but not before the daughter of a priest and two others had perished; the rest, after sleeping for the space of three whole nights, died soon afterwards. Ubert, one of the party, left this story behind him, which is elsewhere recorded, with some variation and additional matter. The dance is called St. Vitus's, and the girl is made the daughter of a churchwarden, who having taken her by the arm, it came off, but she continued dancing. By the continual motion of the dancers they buried themselves in the earth to their waists. Many princes and others went to behold this strange spectacle, till the bishops of Cologne and Hildesheim, and some other devout priests, by their prayers, obtained the deliverance of the culprits; four of the party, however, died immediately, some slept three days and three nights, some three years, and others had trembling in their limbs during the whole of their lives. The Nuremberg Chronicle, crowded as it is with wood-cut embellishments by the hand of Wolgemut, the master of Albert Durer, has not omitted to exhibit the representations of the above unhappy persons, equally correct, no doubt, as the story itself, though the same warranty cannot be offered for a similar representation, in Gottfried's Chronicle and that copious repertory of monstrosities, Boistuaau and Belleforest's *Histoires Prodigieuses*. The Nuremberg Chronicle¹¹ has yet another relation on this subject of some persons who continued dancing and singing on a bridge whilst the eucharist was passing over it. The bridge

⁸ Lib. iii.

⁹ Leg. Antiq. iii. 84.

¹⁰ Folio clxxxvii.

¹¹ Folio ccxvii.

gave way in the middle, and from one end of it 200 persons were precipitated into the river Moselle, the other end remaining so as to permit the priest and his host to pass uninjured.

In that extremely curious work, the *Manuel de Pêché*, usually ascribed to Bishop Grosthead, the pious author, after much declamation against the vices of the times, has this passage: —

Karoles ne lutes ne deit nul fere,
 En seint eglise ki me voil crere;
 Kas en cimeteire karoler,
 Utrage est grant u lutter.¹²

He then relates the story in the *Nuremberg Chronicle*, for which he quotes the book of Saint Clement. Grosthead's work was translated about the year 1300 into English verse by Robert Mannyng, commonly called Robert de Brunne, a Gilbertine canon. His translation often differs from his original, with much amplification and occasional illustrations by himself. As the account of the *Nuremberg* story varies so materially, and as the scene is laid in England, it has been thought worth inserting.

Karolles wrastelynges or somour games,
 Whosoever haunteth any swyche shames,
 Yn cherche other yn cherche yerd,
 Of sacrilage he may be aferd;
 Or entyrludes or syngyng,
 Or tabure bete or other pypyng;
 All swyche thyng forboden es,
 Whyle the prest stondest at messe;
 But for to leve in cherche for to daunce,
 Y shall you telle a full grete chaunce,
 And y trow the most that fel,
 Ys sothe as y you telle.
 And fyl thys chaunce yn thys londe,
 Yn Inghland as y undyrstonde,
 Yn a kynges tyme that hyght Edward,
 Fyl this chaunce that was so hard.
 Hyt was upon crystemesse nyzt
 That twelve folys a karolle dyzt,
 Yn Wodehed, as hyt were yn cuntok,¹³
 They come to a toune men calle Cowek:¹⁴
 The cherche of the toune that they to come,
 Ys of Seynt Magne that suffred martyrdome,
 Of Seynt Bukcestre hyt ys also,
 Seynt Magnes suster, that they come to;
 Here names of all thus fonde y wryte,
 And as y wote now shal ye wyte
 Here lodesman¹⁵ that made hem glew,¹⁶

¹² Bibl. Reg. 20 B. xiv. and Harl. MS. 4657.

¹³ Contest.

¹⁴ Q. Cowick in Yorkshire?

¹⁵ Leader.

¹⁶ Glee.

Thus ys wryte he hyzte¹⁷ Gerlew;
Twey maydens were yn here coveyne,
Mayden Merswynde¹⁸ and Wybessyne;
All these came thedyr for that enchesone, } doghtyr
Of the prestes of the toune.
The prest hyzt Robert as y can ame,
Azone hyzt hys sone by name,
Hys doghter that there men wulde have,
Thus ys wryte that she hyzt Ave.
Echone consented to o wyl,
Who shuld go Ave out to tyl,
They graunted echone out to sende,
Bothe Wybessyne and Merswynde:
These women zede and tolled¹⁹ her oute,
Wyth hem to karolle the cherche aboute,
Benne ordeyned here karollyng,
Gerlew endyted what they shuld syng.
Thys ys the karolle that they sunge,
As telleth the Latyn tunge,
Equitabat Bevo per sylvam frondosam,
Ducebat secum Merwyndam formosam,
Quid stamus cur non imus.
By the levede²⁰ wode rode Bevolyne,
Wyth hym he ledde feyre Merwyne,
Why stonde we why go we nocht:
Thys ys the karolle that Grysly wrought,
Thys songe sung they yn chercheyerd,
Of foly were they nothyng aferd.

The party continued dancing and carolling all the matins time, and till the mass began; when the priest, hearing the noise, came out to the church porch, and desired them to leave off dancing, and come into the church to hear the service; but they paid him no regard whatever, and continued their dance. The priest, now extremely incensed, prayed to God in favour of St. Magnes, the patron of the church:

That swych a venjeaunce were on hem sent,
Are they out of that stede²¹ were went,
That myzt ever ryzt so wende,
Unto that tyme twelvemonth ende.
Yn the Latyne that y fonde thore,
He seyth not twelvemonth but evermore.

¹⁷ Called.

¹⁸ A name borrowed from Merwyn, Abbess of Ramsey, temp. Reg. Edgari.

¹⁹ Took.

²⁰ Leafy.

²¹ Place.

The priest had no sooner finished his prayer, than the hands of the dancers were so locked together that none could separate them for a twelvemonth:

The preste yede²² yn whan thys was done,
And comaunded hys sone Azone,
That shuld go swythe after Ave,
Oute of that karolle algate to have;
But al to late that wurde was sayde,
For on hem alle was the venjeaunce leyd.
Azonde wende weyl for to spede
Unto the karolle asswythe he yede;
Hys syster by the arme he hente,
And the arme fro the body wente;
Men wundred alle that there wore,
And merveylye nowe ye here more;
For seythen he had the arme yn hand,
The body yode furth karoland,
And nother body ne the arme
Bled never blode colde ne warme;
But was as drye with al the haunche,
As of a stok were ryve a braunche.

Azone carries his sister's arm to the priest his father, and tells him the consequences of his rash curse. The priest, after much lamentation, buries the arm. The next morning it rises out of the grave; he buries it again, and again it rises. He buries it a third time, when it is cast out of the grave with considerable violence. He then carries it into the church that all might behold it. In the meantime the party continued dancing and singing, without taking any food or sleeping, "only a lepy wynke;" nor were they in the least affected by the weather. Their hair and nails ceased to grow, and their garments were neither soiled nor discoloured; but

Sunge that songge that the wo wrozt,
"Why stond we, why go we nozt."

To see this curious and woful sight, the emperor travels from Rome, and orders his carpenters and other artificers to inclose them in a building; but this could not be done, for what was set up one day fell down on the next, and no covering could be made to protect the sinners till the time of mercy that Christ had appointed arrived; when, at the expiration of the twelvemonth, and in the very same hour in which the priest had pronounced his curse upon them, they were separated, and "in the twynklyng of an eye" ran into the church and fell down in a swoon on the pavement, where they lay three days before they were restored. On their recovery they tell the priest that he will not long survive:

For to thy long home sone shalt thou wende,
All they ryse that yche tyde,
But Ave she lay dede besyde.

Her father dies soon afterwards. The emperor causes Ave's arm to be put into a vessel and suspended in the church as an example to the spectators. The rest of the party, although separated,

²² Went.

travelled about, but always dancing; and as they had been inseparable before, they were now not permitted to remain together. Four of them went hopping to Rome, their clothes undergoing no change, and their hair and nails not continuing to grow:

Bruning the Bysshope of Seynt Tolous,
 Wrote thys tale so merveylous;
 Setthe was hys name of more renoun,
 Men called him the Pope Leon;
 Thys at the courte of Rome they wyte,
 And yn the kronykeles hyt ys write;
 Yn many stedys²³ beyounde the see,
 More than ys yn thys cuntre:
 Tharfor men seye an weyl ys trowed,
 The nere the cherche the further fro God.
 So fare men here by thys tale,
 Some holde it but a trotevale,²⁴
 Yn other stedys hyt ys ful dere,
 And for grete merveyle they wyl hyt here.

In the French copies the story is said to have been taken from the itinerary of St. Clement. The name of the girl who lost her arm is Marcent, and her brother's John.²⁵

Previously to entering upon the immediate subject of this Essay, it may be permitted to observe, that a sort of Death's dance was not unknown to the ancients. It was the revelry of departed souls in Elysium, as may be collected from the end of the fourth ode of Anacreon. Among the Romans this practice is exemplified in the following lines of Tibullus.

Sed me, quod facilis tenero sum semper Amori,
 Ipsa Venus campos ducit in Elysios.
 Hic *choreæ* cantusque vigent ...²⁶

And Virgil has likewise alluded to it:

Pars pedibus plaudunt *choreas* et carmina dicunt.²⁷

In the year 1810 several fragments of sculptured sarcophagi were accidentally discovered near Cuma, on one of which were represented three dancing skeletons,²⁸ indicating, as it is ingeniously supposed, that the passage from death to another state of existence has nothing in it that is sorrowful, or capable of exciting fear. They seem to throw some light on the above lines from Virgil and Tibullus.

²³ Places.

²⁴ A falsehood.

²⁵ Whoever may be desirous of inspecting other authorities for the story, may consult Vincent of Beauvais *Speculum Historiale*, lib. xxv. cap. 10; Krantz *Saxonia*, lib. iv.; Trithemii *Chron. Monast. Hirsaugensis*; *Chronicon Engelhusii* ap. Leibnitz. *Script. Brunsvicens.* II. 1082; *Chronicon. S. Ægidii*, ap. Leibnitz. iii. 582; *Cantipranus de apibus*; & Cæsarius Heisterbach. *de Miraculis*; in whose works several *veracious* and amusing stories of other instances of divine vengeance against dancing in general may be found. The most entertaining of all the dancing stories is that of the friar and the boy, as it occurs among the popular penny histories, of which, in one edition at least, it is, undoubtedly, the very best.

²⁶ Lib. i. *Eleg.* iii.

²⁷ *Æn.* lib. vi. l. 44.

²⁸ Millin. *Magaz. Encycl.* 1813, tom. i. p. 200.

At a meeting of the Archæological Society at Rome, in December, 1831, M. Kestner exhibited a Roman lamp on which were three dancing skeletons, and such are said to occur in one of the paintings at Pompeii.

In the Grand Duke of Tuscany's museum at Florence there is an ancient gem, that, from its singularity and connexion with the present subject, is well deserving of notice. It represents an old man, probably a shepherd, clothed in a hairy garment. He sits upon a stone, his right foot resting on a globe, and is piping on a double flute, whilst a skeleton dances grotesquely before him. It might be a matter of some difficulty to explain the recondite meaning of this singular subject.²⁹

Notwithstanding the interdiction in several councils against the practice of dancing in churches and church-yards, it was found impossible to abolish it altogether; and it therefore became necessary that something of a similar, but more decorous, nature should be substituted, which, whilst it afforded recreation and amusement, might, at the same time, convey with it a moral and religious sensation. It is, therefore, extremely probable, that, in furtherance of this intention, the clergy contrived and introduced the Dance or Pageant of Death, or, as it was sometimes called, the Dance of Macaber, for reasons that will hereafter appear. Mr. Warton states, "that in many churches of France there was an ancient show, or mimicry, in which all ranks of life were personated by the ecclesiastics, who danced together, and disappeared one after another."³⁰ Again, speaking of Lydgate's poem on this subject, he says, "these verses, founded on a sort of spiritual masquerade antiently celebrated in churches, &c."³¹ M. Barante, in his History of the Dukes of Burgundy, adverting to the entertainments that took place at Paris when Philip le Bon visited that city in 1424, observes, "that these were not solely made for the nobility, the common people being likewise amused from the month of August to the following season of Lent with the Dance of Death in the church yard of the Innocents, the English being particularly gratified with this exhibition, which included all ranks and conditions of men, Death being, morally, the principal character."³² Another French historian, M. de Villeneuve Bargemont, informs us that the Duke of Bedford celebrated his victory at Verneuil by a festival in the centre of the French capital. The rest of what this writer has recorded on the subject before us will be best given in his own words, "Nous voulons parler de cette fameuse *procession* qu'on vit defiler dans les rues de Paris, sous le nom de *danse Macabrée ou infernale*, epouvantable divertissement, auquel présidoit un squelette ceint du diadème royal, tenant un sceptre dans ses mains décharnées et assis sur un trône resplendissant d'or et de pierreries. Ce spectacle repoussant, mélange odieux de deuil et de joie, inconnu jusqu'alors, et qui ne s'est jamais renouvelé, n'eut guere pour témoins que des soldats étrangers, ou quelques malheureux échappés à tous les fléaux réunis, et qui avoient vu descendre tous leurs parens, tous leurs amis, dans ces sepulchres qu'on dépouilloit alors de leurs ossemens."³³ A third French writer has also treated the Dance of Death as a spectacle exhibited in like manner to the people of Paris.³⁴ M. Peignot, to whom the reader is obliged for these historical notices in his ingenious researches on the present subject, very plausibly conceives that their authors have entirely mistaken the sense of an old chronicle or journal under Charles VI. and VII. which he quotes in the following words. — "Item. L'an 1424 fut faite la Danse Maratre (pour Macabre) aux Innocens, et fut comencée environ le mois d'Aoust et achevée au karesme suivant. En l'an 1429 le cordelier Richard preschant aux Innocens estoit monté sur ung hault eschaffaut qui estoit près de toise et demie de hault, le dos tourné vers les charniers encontre la charounerie, à l'endroit de la danse Macabre." He observes, that the Dance of Death at the Innocents, having been commenced in August and finished

²⁹ Gori Mus. Florentin. tom. i. pl. 91, No. 3.

³⁰ Hist. Engl. Poetry, vol. ii. p. 43, edit. 8vo. and Carpentier. Suppl. ad Ducang. v. Machabæorum chorea.

³¹ Id. ii. 364.

³² Hist. des Ducs des Bourgogne, tom. v. p. 1821.

³³ Hist. de René d'Anjou, tom. i. p. 54.

³⁴ Dulaure. Hist. Physique, &c. de Paris, 1821, tom. ii. p. 552.

at the ensuing Lent, could not possibly be represented by living persons, but was only a painting, the large dimensions of which required six months to complete it; and that a single Death must, in the other case, have danced with every individual belonging to the scene.³⁵ He might have added, that such a proceeding would have been totally at variance with the florid, but most inaccurate, description by M. Bargemont. The reader will, therefore, most probably feel inclined to adopt the opinion of M. Peignot, that the Dance of Death was not performed by living persons between 1424 and 1429.

But although M. Peignot may have triumphantly demonstrated that this subject was not exhibited by living persons at the above place and period, it by no means follows that it was not so represented at some other time, and on some other spot. Accordingly, in the archives of the cathedral of Besançon, there is preserved an article respecting a delivery made to one of the officers of Saint John the Evangelist of four measures of wine, to be given to those persons who performed the Dance of Death after mass was concluded. This is the article itself, “Sexcallus [seneschallus] solvat D. Joanni Caleti matriculario S. Joannis quatuor simasias vini per dictum matricularium exhibitas illis qui choream Machabeorum fecerunt 10 Julii, 1453, nuper lapsa hora misse in ecclesia S. Joannis Evangeliste propter capitulum provinciale fratrum Minorum.”³⁶ This document then will set the matter completely at rest.

At what time the personified exhibition of this pageant commenced, or when it was discontinued cannot now be correctly ascertained. If, from a moral spectacle, it became a licentious ceremony, as is by no means improbable, in imitation of electing a boy-bishop, of the feast of fools, or other similar absurdities, its termination may be looked for in the authority of some ecclesiastical council at present not easily to be traced.

³⁵ Recherches sur les Danses des Morts. Dijon et Paris, 1826, 8vo. p. xxxiv. et seq.

³⁶ Mercure de France, Sept. 1742. Carpentier. Suppl. ad Ducang. v. Machabæorum chorea.

CHAPTER II

Places where the Dance of Death was sculptured or depicted. – Usually accompanied by verses describing the several characters. – Other Metrical Compositions on the Dance.

The subject immediately before us was very often represented, not only on the walls, but in the windows of many churches, in the cloisters of monasteries, and even on bridges, especially in Germany and Switzerland. It was sometimes painted on church screens, and occasionally sculptured on them, as well as upon the fronts of domestic dwellings. It occurs in many of the manuscript and illuminated service books of the middle ages, and frequent allusions to it are found in other manuscripts, but very rarely in a perfect state, as to the number of subjects.

Most of the representations of the Dance of Death were accompanied by descriptive or moral verses in different languages. Those which were added to the paintings of this subject in Germany appear to have differed very materially, and it is not now possible to ascertain which among them is the oldest. Those in the Basle painting are inserted in the editions published and engraved by Mathew Merian, but they had already occurred in the *Decennalia humanæ peregrinationis* of Gaspar Landismann in 1584. Some Latin verses were published by Melchior Goldasti at the end of his edition of the *Speculum omnium statuum*, a celebrated moral work by Roderic, Bishop of Zamora, 1613, 4to. He most probably copied them from one of the early editions of the *Danse Macabre*, but without any comment whatever, the above title page professing that they are added on account of the similarity of the subject.

A Provençal poet, called *Marcabres* or *Marcabrus*, has been placed among the versifiers, but none of his works bear the least similitude to the subject; and, moreover, the language itself is an objection. The English metrical translation will be noticed hereafter. Whether any of the paintings were accompanied by descriptive verses that might be considered as anterior to those ascribed to the supposed Macaber, cannot now be ascertained.

There are likewise some Latin verses in imitation of those above-mentioned, which, as well as the author of them, do not seem to have been noticed by any biographical or poetical writer. They occur at the end of a Latin play, intitled *Susanna*, Antverp. apud Michaellem Hillenium, MDXXXIII. As the volume is extremely rare, and the verses intimately connected with the present subject, it has been thought worth while to reprint them. After an elegy on the vanity and shortness of human life, and a Sapphic ode on the remembrance of Death, they follow under this title, “*Plausus luctificæ mortis ad modum dialogi extemporaliter ab Eusebio Candido lusus. Ad quem quique mortales invitantur omnes, cujuscujus sint conditionis: quibusque singulis Mors ipsa respondet.*”

Luctificæ mortis plausum bene cernite cuncti.
Dum res læta, mori et viventes discite, namque
Omnes ex æquo tandem huc properare necessum.

Hic inducitur adolescens quærens, et mors vel philosophus respondens.

Vita quid est hominis? Fumus super aream missus.
Vita quid est hominis? Via mortis, dura laborum
Colluvies, vita est hominis via longa doloris
Perpetui. Vita quid est hominis? cruciatus et error,
Vita quid est hominis? vestitus gramine multo,
Floribus et variis campus, quem parva pruina

Expoliat, sic vitam hominum mors impia tollit.
Quamlibet illa alacris, vegeta, aut opulenta ne felix,
Icta cadit modica crede ægritudine mortis.
Et quamvis superes auro vel murice Cræsum,
Longævum aut annis vivendo Nestora vincas,
Omnia mors æquat, vitæ meta ultima mors est.

Imperator

Quid fers? Induperator ego, et moderamina rerum
Gesto manu, domuit mors impia scepra potentum.

Rex Rhomanus

Quid fers? en ego Rhomulidum rex. Mors manet omnes.

Papa

En ego Pontificum primus, signansque resignans.
Et cœlos oraque locos. Mors te manet ergo.

Cardinalis

Cardineo fulgens ego honore, et Episcopus ecce
Mors manet ecce omnes, Phrygeus quos pileus ornat.

Episcopus

Insula splendidior vestit mea, tempora latum
Possideo imperium, multi mea jura tremiscunt.
Me dicant fraudis docti, producere lites.
Experti, aucupium docti nummorum, et averni
Causidici, rixatores, rabulæque forenses.
Hos ego respicio, nihil attendens animarum,
Ecclesiæ mihi commissæ populivæ salutem
Sed satis est duros loculo infarcisse labores
Agricolûm, et magnis placuisse heroibus orbis.
Non tamen effugies mortis mala spicula duræ.

Ecclesiae Prælati

Ecclesiae prælati ego multis venerandus
Muneribus sacris, proventibus officiorum.
Comptior est vestis, popina frequentior æde
Sacra, et psalmorum cantus mihi rarior ipso
Talorum crepitu, Veneris quoque voce sonora.
Morte cades, annos speras ubi vivere plures.

Canonicus

En ego melotam gesto. Mors sæva propinquat.

Pastor

En parochus quoque pastor ego, mihi dulce falernum
Notius æde sacra: scortum mihi charius ipsa
Est animæ cura populi. Mors te manet ergo.

Abbas

En abbas venio, Veneris quoque ventris amicus.
Cœnobii rara est mihi cura, frequentior aula
Magnorum heroum. Chorea saltabis eadem.

Prior

En prior, ornatus longa et splendente cuculla,
Falce cades mortis. Mors aufert nomina honoris.

Pater Vestalium

Nympharum pater ecce ego sum ventrosior, offis
Pinguibus emacerans corpus. Mors te manet ipsa.

Vestalis Nympha

En monialis ego, Vestæ servire parata.
Non te Vesta potest mortis subducere castris.

Legatus

Legatus venio culparum vincla resolvemus
Omnia pro auro, abiens cœlum vendo, infera claudio
Et quicquid patres sanxerunt, munere solvo
Juribus à mortis non te legatio solvet.

Dominus Doctor

Quid fers? Ecce sophus, divina humanaque jura
Calleo, et à populo doctor Rabbique salutor,
Te manet expectans mors ultima linea rerum.

Medicus

En ego sum medicus, vitam producere gnarus,
Venis lustratis morborum nomina dico,
Non poteris duræ mortis vitare sagittas.

Astronomus

En ego stellarum motus et sydera novi,
Et fati genus omne scio prædicere cœli.
Non potis es mortis duræ præscire sagittas.

Curtisanus

En me Rhoma potens multis suffarsit onustum
Muneribus sacris, proventibus, officiisque

Non potes his mortis fugiens evadere tela.

Advocatus

Causarum patronus ego, producere doctus
Lites, et loculos lingua vacuare loquaci
Non te lingua loquax mortis subducet ab ictu.

Judex

Justitiæ judex quia sum, sub plebe salutor.
Vertice me nudo populus veneratur adorans.
Auri sacra fames pervertere sæpe coëgit
Justitiam. Mors te manet æquans omnia falce.

Prætor

Prætor ego populi, me prætor nemo quid audet.
Accensor causis, per me stant omnia, namque
Et dono et adimo vitam, cum rebus honorem.
Munere conspecto, quod iniquum est jure triumphat
Emitto corvos, censura damno columbas.
Hinc metuendus ero superis ereboque profundo.
Te manet expectans Erebus Plutoque cruentus.

Consul

Polleo consiliis, Consul dicorque salutor.
Munere conspecto, quid iniquum est consulo rectum
Quod rectum est flecto, nihil est quod nesciat auri
Sacra fames, hinc ditor et undique fio opulentus
Sed eris æternum miser et mors impia tollet.

Causidicus

Causidicus ego sum, causas narrare peritus,
Accior in causas, sed spes ubi fulserit auri
Ad fraudes docta solers utor bene lingua.

Muto, commuto, jura inflecto atque reflecto.
Et nihil est quod non astu pervincere possim.
Mors æqua expectat properans te fulmine diro.
Nec poteris astu mortis prævertere tela.

Scabinus

Ecce Scabinus ego, scabo bursas, prorogo causas.
Senatorque vocor, vulgus me poplite curvo,
Muneribusque datis veneratur, fronte resecta.
Nil mortem meditor loculos quando impleo nummis
Et dito hæredes nummis, vi, fraude receptis,
Justitiam nummis, pro sanguine, munere, vendo.
Quod rectum est curvo, quod curvum est munere rectum
Efficio, per me prorsus stant omnia jura.
Non poteris duræ mortis transire sagittas.

Ludimagister

En ego pervigili cura externoque labore.
Excolui juvenum ingenia, et præcepta Minervæ
Tradens consenui, cathedræque piget sine fructu.
Quid dabitur fructus, tanti quæ dona laboris?
Omnia mors æquans, vitæ ultima meta laboris.

Miles Auratus

Miles ego auratus, fulgenti murice et auro
Splendidus in populo. Mors te manet omnia perdens.

Miles Armatus

Miles ego armatus, qui bella ferocia gessi.
Nullius occursum expavi, quam durus et audax.
Ergo immunis ero. Mors te intrepida ipsa necabit.

Mercator

En ego mercator dives, maria omnia lustrō
Et terras, ut res crescant. Mors te metet ipsa.

Fuckardus

En ego fuckardus, loculos gesto æris onustos,
Omnia per mundum coëmens, vendo atque revendo.
Heroës me sollicitant, atque æra requirunt.
Haud est me lato quisquam modo ditior orbe.
Mortis ego jura et frameas nihil ergo tremisco
Morte cades, mors te rebus spoliabit opimis.

Quæstor

Quæstor ego, loculos suffersi arcasque capaces
Est mihi prænitidis fundata pecunia villis.
Hac dives redimam duræ discrimina mortis
Te mors præripiet nullo exorabilis auro.

Naucerus

En ego naucerus spaciosa per æquora vectus,
Non timui maris aut venti discrimina mille.
Cymba tamen mortis capiet te quæque vorantis.

Agricola

Agricola en ego sum, præduro sæpe labore,
Et vigili exhaustus cura, sudore perenni,
Victum prætenuem quærens, sine fraude doloque
Omnia pertentans, miseram ut traducere possim
Vitam, nec mundo me est infelicior alter.
Mors tamen eduri fiet tibi meta laboris.

Orator

Heroum interpres venio, fraudisque peritus,
Bellorum strepitus compono, et bella reduco,

Meque petunt reges, populus miratur adorans.
Nulla abiget fraudi linguève peritia mortem.

Princeps Belli

Fulmen ego belli, reges et regna subegi,
Victor ego ex omni præduro quamlibet ecce
Marte fui, vitæ hinc timeo discrimina nulla.
Te mors confodiet cauda Trigonis aquosi,
Atque eris exanimis moriens uno ictu homo bulla.

Dives

Sum rerum felix, fœcunda est prolis et uxor,
Plena domus, lætum pecus, et cellaria plena
Nil igitur metuo. Quid ais? Mors te impia tollet.

Pauper

Iro ego pauperior, Codroque tenuior omni,
Despicior cunctis, nemo est qui subleuet heu heu.
Hinc parcet veniens mors: nam nihil auferet à me,
Non sic evades, ditem cum paupere tollit.

Fœnerator

Ut loculi intument auro, vi, fraude, doloque,
Fœnore nunc quæstum facio, furtoque rapinaque,
Ut proles ditem, passim dicarque beatus,
Per fas perque nefas corradens omnia quæro.
Mors veniens furtim prædabitur, omnia tollens.

Adolescens

Sum juvenis, forma spectabilis, indole gaudens
Maturusque ævi, nullus præstantior alter,
Moribus egregiis populo laudatus ab omni.
Pallida, difformis mors auferet omnia raptim.

Puella

Ecce puellarum pulcherrima, mortis iniquæ
Spicula nil meditor, juvenilibus et fruor annis,
Meque proci expectant compti, facieque venusti.
Stulta, quid in vana spe jactas? Mors metet omnes
Difformes, pulchrosque simul cum paupere dices.

Nuncius

Nuncius ecce ego sum, qui nuncia perfero pernix
Sed retrospectans post terga, papæ audio quidnam?
Me tuba terrificans mortis vocat. Heu moriendum est.
Peroratio.
Mortales igitur memores modo vivite læti
Instar venturi furis, discrimine nullo
Cunctos rapturi passim ditesque inopesque.
Stultus et insipiens vita qui sperat in ista,
Instar quæ fumi perit et cito desinit esse.
Fac igitur tota virtuti incumbito mente,
Quæ nescit mortem, sed scandit ad ardua cœli.
Quo nos à fatiis ducat rex Juppiter, Amen.

Plaudite nunc, animum cuncti retinete faventes

FINIS

Antwerpiæ apud Michaelem Hillenium M.D.XXXIII. Mense Maio

A very early allusion to the Dance of Death occurs in a Latin poem, that seems to have been composed in the twelfth century by our celebrated countryman Walter de Mapes, as it is found among other pieces that carry with them strong marks of his authorship. It is intitled “Lamentacio et deploracio pro Morte et consilium de vivente Deo.”³⁷ In its construction there is a striking resemblance to the common metrical stanzas that accompany the Macaber Dance. Many characters, commencing with that of the Pope, are introduced, all of whom bewail the uncontrolable influence of Death. This is a specimen of the work, extracted from two manuscripts:

³⁷ Bibl. Reg. 8 B. vi. Lansd. MS. 397.

Cum mortem meditor nescit mihi causa doloris, Nam cunctis horis mors venit ecce cito. Pauperis et regis communis lex moriendi, Dat causam flendi si bene scripta leges. Gustato pomo missus transit sine morte Heu missa sorte labitur omnis homo.

Vado mori Papa qui jussu regna subegi	Vado mori, Rex sum, quod honor, quod gloria regum,
Mors mihi regna tulit eccine vado mori.	Est via mors hominis regia vado mori.

Then follow similar stanzas, for presul, miles, monachus, legista, jurista, doctor, logicus, medicus, cantor, sapiens, dives, cultor, burgensis, nauta, pincerna, pauper.

In Sanchez's collection of Spanish poetry before the year 1400,³⁸ mention is made of a Rabbi Santo as a good poet, who lived about 1360. He was a Jew, and surgeon to Don Pedro. His real name seems to have been Mose, but he calls himself Don Santo Judio de Carrion. This person is said to have written a moral poem, called "Danza General." It commences thus:

"Dise la Muerte

"Yo so la muerte cierta a todas criaturas,
 Que son y seran en el mundo durante:
 Demando y digo O ame! porque curas
 De vida tan breve en punto passante?" &c.

He then introduces a preacher, who announces Death to all persons, and advises them to be prepared by good works to enter his Dance, which is calculated for all degrees of mankind.

"Primaramente llama a su danza a dos doncellas,
 A esta mi danza trax de presente,
 Estas dos donzellas que vades fermosas:
 Ellas vinieron de muy malamente
 A oir mes canciones que son dolorosas,
 Mas non les valdran flores nin rosas,
 Nin las composturas que poner salian:
 De mi, si pudiesen parterra querrian,
 Mas non proveda ser, que son mis esposas."

It may, however, be doubted whether the Jew Santo was the author of this Dance of Death, as it is by no means improbable that it may have been a subsequent work added to the manuscript referred to by Sanchez.

In 1675, Maitre Jacques Jacques, a canon of the cathedral of Ambrun, published a singular work, intitled "Le faut mourir et les excuses inutiles que l'on apporte à cette nécessité. Le tout en vers burlesques." Rouen, 1675, 12mo. It is written much in the style of Scarron and some other similar poets of the time. It commences with a humorous description given by Death of his proceedings with various persons in every part of the globe, which is followed by several dialogues between Death and the following characters: 1. The Pope. 2. A young lady betrothed. 3. A galley slave. 4. Guillot, who

³⁸ Madrid. 1779, 8vo. p. 179.

has lost his wife. 5. Don Diego Dalmazere, a Spanish hidalgo. 6. A king. 7. The young widow of a citizen. 8. A citizen. 9. A decrepit rich man. 10. A canon. 11. A blind man. 12. A poor peasant. 13. Tourmenté, a poor soldier in the hospital. 14. A criminal in prison. 15. A nun. 16. A physician. 17. An apothecary. 18. A lame beggar. 19. A rich usurer. 20. A merchant. 21. A rich merchant. As the book is uncommon, the following specimen is given from the scene between Death and the young betrothed girl:

La Mort

A vous la belle demoiselle,
Je vous apporte une nouvelle,
Qui certes vous surprendra fort.
C'est qu'il faut penser à la mort,
Tout vistement pliés bagage,
Car il faut faire ce voyage.

La Demoiselle

Qu'entends-je? Tout mon sens se perd,
Helas! vous me prener sans verd;
C'est tout à fait hors de raison
Mourir dedans une saison
Que je ne dois songer qu'à rire,
Je suis contrainte de vous dire,
Que très injuste est vostre choix,
Parce que mourir je ne dois,
N'estant qu'en ma quinzième année,
Voyez quelque vielle échinée,
Qui n'ait en bouche point de dent;
Vous l'obligerez grandement
De l'envoyer à l'autre monde,
Puis qu'ici toujours elle gronde;
Vous la prendrez tout à propos,
Et laissez moi dans le repos,
Moi qui suis toute poupinette,
Dans l'embonpoint et joliette,
Qui n'aime qu'à me réjouir,
De grâce laissez moi jouir, &c.

CHAPTER III

Macaber not a German or any other poet, but a nonentity. – Corruption and confusion respecting this word. – Etymological errors concerning it. – How connected with the Dance. – *Trois mors et trois vifs*. – Orgagna's painting in the Campo Santo at Pisa. – Its connection with the *trois mors et trois vifs*, as well as with the Macaber dance. – Saint Macarius the real Macaber. – Paintings of this dance in various places. – At Minden; Church-yard of the Innocents at Paris; Dijon; Basle; Klingenthal; Lubeck; Leipsic; Anneberg; Dresden; Erfurth; Nuremberg; Berne; Lucerne; Amiens; Rouen; Fescamp; Blois; Strasburg; Berlin; Vienna; Holland; Italy; Spain.

The next subject for investigation is the origin of the name of Macaber, as connected with the Dance of Death, either with respect to the verses that have usually accompanied it, or to the paintings or representations of the Dance itself; and first of the verses.

It may, without much hazard, be maintained that, notwithstanding these have been ascribed to a German poet called Macaber, there never was a German, or any poet whatever bearing such a name. The first mention of him appears to have been in a French edition of the *Danse Macabre*, with the following title, “*Chorea ab eximio Macabro versibus Alemannicis edito, et à Petro Desrey emendata. Parisiis per Magistrum Guidonem Mercatorem pro Godefrido de Marnef. 1490, folio.*” This title, from its ambiguity, is deserving of little consideration as a matter of authority; for if a comma be placed after the word *Macabro*, the title is equally applicable to the author of the verses and to the painter or inventor of the Dance. As the subject had been represented in several places in Germany, and of course accompanied with German descriptions, it is possible that Desrey might have translated and altered some or one of these, and, mistaking the real meaning of the word, have converted it into the name of an author. It may be asked in what German biography is such a person to be found? how it has happened that this *famous* Macaber is so little known, or whether the name really has a Teutonic aspect? It was the above title in Desrey's work that misled the truly learned Fabricius inadvertently to introduce into his valuable work the article for Macaber as a German poet, and in a work to which it could not properly belong.³⁹

M. Peignot has very justly observed that the *Danse Macabre* had been very long known in France and elsewhere, not as a literary work, but as a painting; and he further remarks that although the verses are German in the Basil painting, executed about 1440, similar verses in French were placed under the dance at the Innocents at Paris in 1424.⁴⁰

At the beginning of the text in the early French edition of the *Danse Macabre*, we have only the words “*la danse Macabre sappelle,*” but no specific mention is made of the author of the verses. John Lydgate, in his translation of them from the French, and which was most probably adopted in many places in England where the painting occurred, speaks of “*the Frenche Machabrees daunce,*” and “*the daunce of Machabree.*” At the end, “*Machabree the Doctoure,*” is abruptly and unconnectedly introduced at the bottom of the page. It is not in the French printed copy, from the text of which Lydgate certainly varies in several respects. It remains, therefore, to ascertain whether these words belong to Lydgate, or to whom else; not that it is a matter of much importance.

The earliest authority that has been traced for the name of “*Danse Macabre,*” belongs to the painting at the Innocents, and occurs in the MS. diary of Charles VII. under the year 1424. It is also strangely called “*Chorea Machabæorum,*” in 1453, as appears from the before cited document at St.

³⁹ *Bibl. Med. et Inf. Ætat. tom. v. p. 1.*

⁴⁰ *Recherches sur les Danses de Mort, pp. 79 80.*

John's church at Besançon. Even the name of one *Maccabrees*, a Provençal poet of the 14th century, has been injudiciously connected with the subject, though his works are of a very different nature.

Previously to attempting to account for the origin of the obscure and much controverted word *Macaber*, as applicable to the dance itself, it may be necessary to advert to the opinions on that subject that have already appeared. It has been disguised under the several names of *Macabre*,⁴¹ *Maccabees*,⁴² *Maratre*,⁴³ and even *Macrobius*.⁴⁴ Sometimes it has been regarded as an epithet. The learned and excellent M. Van Praet, the guardian of the royal library at Paris, has conjectured that *Macabre* is derived from the Arabic *Magbarah*, *magbourah*, or *magabir*, all signifying a church-yard. M. Peignot seems to think that M. Van Praet intended to apply the word to the Dance itself,⁴⁵ but it is impossible that the intelligent librarian was not aware that personified sculpture, as well as the moral nature of the subject, cannot belong to the Mahometan religion. Another etymology extremely well calculated to disturb the gravity of the present subject, is that of M. Villaret, the French historian, when adverting to the spectacle of the *Danse Macabre*, supposed to have been given by the English in the church-yard of the Innocents at Paris. Relying on this circumstance, he unceremoniously decides that the name of the dance was likewise English; and that *Macabrée* is compounded of the words, to *make* and to *break*. The same silly etymology is referred to as in some historical dictionary concerning the city of Paris by Mons. Compan in his *Dictionnaire de Danse*, article *Macaber*; and another which is equally improbable has been hazarded by the accomplished Marquis de Paulmy, who, noticing some editions of the *Danse Macabre* in his fine library, now in the arsenal at Paris, very seriously states that *Macaber* is derived from two Greek words, which denote its meaning to be an *infernal dance*;⁴⁶ but if the Greek language were to be consulted on the occasion, the signification would turn out to be very different.

It must not be left unnoticed that M. De Bure, in his account of the edition of the *Danse Macabre*, printed by Marchant, 1486, has stated that the verses have been attributed to Michel Marot; but the book is dated before Marot was born.⁴⁷

Again, – As to the connexion between the word *Macaber* with the Dance itself.

In the course of the thirteenth century there appeared a French metrical work under the name of “*Li trois Mors et li trois Vis*,” *i. e.* *Les trois Morts et les trois Vifs*. In the noble library of the Duke de la Valliere, there were three apparently coeval manuscripts of it, differing, however, from each other, but furnishing the names of two authors, Baudouin de Condé and Nicolas de Marginal.⁴⁸ These poems relate that three noble youths when hunting in a forest were intercepted by the like number of hideous spectres or images of Death, from whom they received a terrific lecture on the vanity of human grandeur. A very early, and perhaps the earliest, allusion to this vision, seems to occur in a painting by Andrew Orgagna in the Campo Santo at Pisa; and although it varies a little from the description in the above-mentioned poems, the story is evidently the same. The painter has introduced three young men on horseback with coronets on their caps, and who are attended by several domestics whilst pursuing the amusement of hawking. They arrive at the cell of Saint Macarius an Egyptian Anachorite, who with one hand presents to them a label with this inscription, as well as it can be made out, “*Se nostra mente fia ben morta tenendo risa qui la vista affitta la vana gloria ci sara sconfitta la superbia e sara da morte;*” and with the other points to three open coffins, in which are a skeleton and two dead bodies, one of them a king.

⁴¹ Passim.

⁴² Modern edition of the *Danse Macabre*.

⁴³ *Journal de Charles VII.*

⁴⁴ Lansd. MS. No. 397 – 20.

⁴⁵ Peignot *Recherches*, p. 109.

⁴⁶ *Mélange d'une Grande Bibliothèque*, tom. vii. p. 22.

⁴⁷ *Bibl. Instruc.* No. 3109.

⁴⁸ *Catal. La Valliere* No. 2736 – 22.

A similar vision, but not immediately connected with the present subject, and hitherto unnoticed, occurs at the end of the Latin verses ascribed to Macaber, in Goldasti's edition of the *Speculum omnium statuum à Roderico Zamorensi*. Three persons appear to a hermit, whose name is not mentioned, in his sleep. The first is described as a man in a regal habit; the second as a civilian, and the third as a beautiful female decorated with gold and jewels. Whilst these persons are vainly boasting of their respective conditions, they are encountered by three horrible spectres in the shape of dead human bodies covered with worms, who very severely reprove them for their arrogance. This is evidently another version of the "Trois mors et trois vifs" in the text, but whether it be older or otherwise cannot easily be ascertained. It is composed in alternate rhymes, in the manner, and probably by the author of Philibert or Fulbert's vision of the dispute between the soul and the body, a work ascribed to S. Bernard, and sometimes to Walter de Mapes. There are translations of it both in French and English.

For the mention of S. Macarius as the hermit in this painting by Orgagna, we are indebted to Vasari in his life of that artist; and he had, no doubt, possessed himself of some traditionary information on the subject of it. He further informs us, that the person on horseback who is stopping his nostrils, is intended for Andrea Uguzzione della fagivola. Above is a black and hideous figure of Death mowing down with his scythe all ranks and conditions of men. Vasari adds that Orgagna had crowded his picture with a great many inscriptions, most of which were obliterated by time. From one of them which he has preserved in his work, as addressed to some aged cripples, it should appear that, as in the Macaber Dance, Death apostrophizes the several characters.⁴⁹ Baldinucci, in his account of Orgagna, mentions this painting and the story of the Three Kings and Saint Macarius.⁵⁰ Morona, likewise, in his *Pisa illustrata*, adopts the name of Macarius when describing the same subject. The figures in the picture are all portraits, and their names may be seen, but with some variation as to description, both in Vasari and Morona.⁵¹

Now the story of *Les trois mors et les trois vifs*, was prefixed to the painting of the Macaber Dance in the church-yard of the Innocents at Paris, and had also been sculptured over the portal of the church, by order of the Duke de Berry in 1408.⁵² It is found in numerous manuscript copies of *Horæ* and other service books prefixed to the burial office. All the printed editions of the Macaber Dance contain it, but with some variation, the figure of Saint Macarius in his cell not being always introduced. It occurs in many of the printed service books, and in some of our own for the use of Salisbury. The earliest wood engraving of it is in the black book of the "15 signa Judicii," where two of the young men are running away to avoid the three deaths, or skeletons, one of whom is rising from a grave. It is copied in *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, vol. i. p. xxx.

From the preceding statement then there is every reason to infer that the name of Macaber, so frequently, and without authority, applied to an unknown German poet, really belongs to the Saint, and that his name has undergone a slight and obvious corruption. The word *Macabre* is found only in French authorities, and the Saint's name, which, in the modern orthography of that language, is *Macaire*, would, in many ancient manuscripts, be written *Macabre* instead of *Macaure*, the letter *b* being substituted for that of *u* from the caprice, ignorance, or carelessness of the transcribers.

As no German copy of the verses describing the painting can, with any degree of certainty, be regarded as the original, we must substitute the Latin text, which may, perhaps, have an equal claim to originality. The author, at the beginning, has an address to the spectators, in which he tells them that the painting is called the Dance of Macaber. There is an end, therefore, of the name of Macaber, as the author of the verses, leaving it only as applicable to the painting, and almost, if not

⁴⁹ Vasari vite de Pittori, tom. i. p. 183, edit. 1568, 4to.

⁵⁰ Baldinucci Disegno, ii. 65.

⁵¹ Morona Pisa Illustrata, i. 359.

⁵² Du Breul Antiq. de Paris, 1612, 4to. p. 834, where the verses that accompany the sculpture are given. See likewise Sandrart Acad. Picturæ, p. 101.

altogether confirmatory of the preceding conjecture. The French version, from which Lydgate made his translation, nearly agrees with the Latin. Lydgate, however, in the above address, has thought fit to use the word *translator* instead of *author*, but this is of no moment, any more than the words *Machabrée the Doctour*, which, not being in the French text, are most likely an interpolation. He likewise calls the work *the daunce*; and it may, once for all, be remarked, that scarcely any two versions of it will be found to correspond in all respects, every new editor assuming fresh liberties, according to the usual practice in former times.

The ancient paintings of the Macaber Dance next demand our attention. Of these, the oldest on record was that of Minden in Westphalia, with the date 1383, and mentioned by Fabricius in his *Biblioth. med. et infimæ ætatis*, tom. v. p. 2. It is to be wished that this statement had been accompanied with some authority; but the whole of the article is extremely careless and inaccurate.

The earliest, of which the date has been satisfactorily defined, was that in the church-yard of the Innocents at Paris, and which has been already mentioned as having been painted in 1434.

In the cloister of the church of the Sainte Chapelle at Dijon the Macaber Dance was painted by an artist whose name was Masonçelle. It had disappeared and was forgotten a long time ago, but its existence was discovered in the archives of the department by Mons. Boudot, an ardent investigator of the manners and customs of the middle ages. The date ascribed to this painting is 1436. The above church was destroyed in the revolution, previously to which another Macaber Dance existed in the church of Notre Dame in the above city. This was not a painting on the walls, but a piece of white embroidery on a black piece of stuff about two feet in height and very long. It was placed over the stalls in the choir on grand funeral ceremonies, and was also carried off with the other church moveables, in the abovementioned revolution.⁵³ Similar exhibitions, no doubt, prevailed in other places.

The next Macaber Dance, in point of date, was the celebrated one at Basle, which has employed the pens and multiplied the errors of many writers and travellers. It was placed under cover in a sort of shed in the church-yard of the Dominican convent. It has been remarked by one very competent to know the fact, that nearly all the convents of the Dominicans had a Dance of Death.⁵⁴ As these friars were preachers by profession, the subject must have been exceedingly useful in supplying texts and matter for their sermons. The present Dance is said to have been painted at the instance of the prelates who assisted at the Grand Council of Basle, that lasted from 1431 to 1443; and in allusion, as supposed, to a plague that happened during its continuance. Plagues have also been assigned as the causes of other Dances of Death; but there is no foundation whatever for such an opinion, as is demonstrable from what has been already stated; and it has been also successfully combated by M. Peignot, who is nevertheless a little at variance with himself, when he afterwards introduces a conjecture that the painter of the first Dance imitated the violent motions and contortions of those affected by the plague in the dancing attitudes of the figures of Death.⁵⁵ The name of the original painter of this Basle work is unknown, and will probably ever remain so, for no dependance can be had on some vague conjectures, that without the smallest appearance of accuracy have been hazarded concerning it. It is on record that the old painting having become greatly injured by the ravages of time, John Hugh Klauber, an eminent painter at Basle, was employed to repair it in the year 1568, as appears from a Latin inscription placed on it at the time. This painter is said to have covered the decayed fresco with oil, and to have succeeded so well that no difference between his work and the original could be perceived. He was instructed to add the portrait of the celebrated Oecolampadius in the act of preaching, in commemoration of his interference in the Reformation, that had not very long before taken place. He likewise introduced at the end of the painting, portraits of himself, his

⁵³ Peignot Recherches, xxxvii-xxxix.

⁵⁴ Urtisii epitom. Hist. Basiliensis, 1522, 8vo.

⁵⁵ Peignot Recherches, xxvi-xxix.

wife Barbara Hallerin, and their little son Hans Birich Klauber. The following inscription, placed on the painting on this occasion, is preserved in Hentzner's Itinerary, and elsewhere.

A. O. C

Sebastiano Doppenstenio, Casparo Clugio Coss.
 Bonaventura à Bruno, Jacobo Rudio Tribb. Pl.
 Hunc mortales chorum fabulæ, temporis injuria vitiatum
 Lucas Gebhart, Iodoc. Pfister. Georgius Sporlinus
 Hujus loci Ædiles.
 Integritati suæ restituendum curavere
 Ut qui vocalis picturæ divina monita securius audiunt
 Mutæ saltem poëseos miserab. spectaculo
 Ad seriam philosophiam excitentur.
 OPATEΛOΣ MAKPOY BIOY
 APXHN OPAMAKAPIOY
 CII LXIIX.

In the year 1616 a further reparation took place, and some alterations in the design are said to have been then made. The above inscription, with an addition only of the names of the then existing magistrates of the city, was continued. A short time before, Mathew Merian the elder, a celebrated topographical draftsman, had fortunately copied the older painting, of which he is supposed to have first published engravings in 1621, with all the inscriptions under the respective characters that were then remaining, but these could not possibly be the same in many respects that existed before the Reformation, and which are entirely lost. A proof of this may be gathered from the lines of the Pope's answer to Death, whom he is thus made to apostrophize: "Shall it be said that I, a God upon earth, a successor of St. Peter, a powerful prince, and a learned doctor, shall endure thy insolent summons, or that, in obedience to thy decree, I should be compelled to ascertain whether the keys which I now possess will open for me the gates of Paradise?" None of the inscriptions relating to the Pope in other ancient paintings before the Reformation approach in the least to language of this kind.

Merian speaks of a tradition that in the original painting the portrait of Pope Felix V. was introduced, as well as those of the Emperor Sigismund and Duke Albert II. all of whom were present at the council; but admitting this to have been the fact, their respective features would scarcely remain after the subsequent alterations and repairs that took place.

That intelligent traveller, Mons. Blainville, saw this painting in January, 1707. He states that as it had been much injured by the weather, and many of the figures effaced, the government caused it to be retouched by a painter, whom they imagined to be capable of repairing the ravages it had sustained, but that his execution was so miserable that they had much better have let it alone than to have had it so wretchedly bungled. He wholly rejects any retouching by Holbein. He particularizes two of the most remarkable subjects, namely, the fat jolly cook, whom Death seizes by the hand, carrying on his shoulder a spit with a capon ready larded, which he looks upon with a wishful eye, as if he regretted being obliged to set out before it was quite roasted. The other figure is that of the blind beggar led by his dog, whom Death snaps up with one hand, and with the other cuts the string by which the dog was tied to his master's arm.⁵⁶

The very absurd ascription of the Basle painting to the pencil of Hans Holbein, who was born near a century afterwards, has been adopted by several tourists, who have copied the errors of their predecessors, without taking the pains to make the necessary enquiries, or possessing the means of

⁵⁶ Travels, i. 376.

obtaining correct information. The name of Holbein, therefore, as combined with this painting, must be wholly laid aside, for there is no evidence that he was even employed to retouch it, as some have inadvertently stated; it was altogether a work unworthy of his talents, nor does it, even in its latest state, exhibit the smallest indication of his style of painting. This matter will be resumed hereafter, but in the mean time it may be necessary to correct the mistake of that truly learned and meritorious writer, John George Keysler, who, in his instructive and entertaining travels, has inadvertently stated that the Basle painting was executed by Hans Bock or Bok, a celebrated artist of that city;⁵⁷ but it is well known that this person was not born till the year 1584.

The Basle painting is no longer in existence; for on the 2d of August, 1806, and for reasons that have not been precisely ascertained, an infuriated mob, in which were several women, who carried lanterns to light the expedition, tumultuously burst the inclosure which contained the painting, tore it piecemeal from the walls, and in a very short space of time completely succeeded in its total demolition, a few fragments only being still preserved in the collection of Counsellor Vischer at his castle of Wildensheim, near Basle. This account of its destruction is recorded in Millin's *Magazin Encyclopédique* among the *nouvelles littéraires* for that year; but the *Etrenne Helvétique* for the above year has given a different account of the matter; it states that the painting having been once more renovated in the year 1703, fell afterwards into great decay, being entirely peeled from the wall – that this circumstance had, in some degree, arisen from the occupation of the cloister by a ropemaker – that the wall having been found to stand much in the way of some new buildings erected near the spot, the magistrates ventured, but not without much hesitation, to remove the cloister with its painting altogether in the year 1805 – and that this occasioned some disturbance in the city among the common people, but more particularly with those who had resided in its neighbourhood, and conceived a renewed attachment to the painting.

Of this Dance of Death very few specific copies have been made. M. Heinecken⁵⁸ has stated that it was engraved in 1544, by Jobst Denneker of Augsburg; but he has confounded it with a work by this artist on the other Dance of Death ascribed to Holbein, and which will be duly noticed hereafter. The work which contained the earliest engravings of the Basle painting, can on this occasion be noticed only from a modern reprint of it under the following title: “Der Todten-Tantz wie derselbe in der weitberuhmten Stadt Basel als ein Spiegel menschlicher beschaffenheit gantz kuntlich mit lebendigen farben gemahlet, nicht ohne nutzliche vernunderung zu schen ist. Basel, bey Joh. Conrad und Joh. Jacob von Mechel, 1769, 12mo.” that is, “The Dance of Death, painted most skilfully, and in lively colours, in the very famous town of Basel, as a mirror of human life, and not to be looked on without useful admiration.”

The first page has some pious verses on the painting in the church-yard of the Predicants, of which the present work contains only ten subjects, namely, the cardinal, the abbess, the young woman, the piper, the jew, the heathen man, the heathen woman, the cook, the painter, and the painter's wife. On the abbess there is the mark D. R. probably that of the engraver, two cuts by whom are mentioned in Bartsch's work.⁵⁹ On the cut of the young woman there is the mark G S with the graving knife. They are coarsely executed, and with occasional variations of the figures in Merian's plates. The rest of the cuts, thirty-two in number, chiefly belong to the set usually called Holbein's. All the cuts in this miscellaneous volume have German verses at the top and bottom of each page with the subjects. If Jansen, who usually pillages some one else, can be trusted or understood, there was a prior edition of this book in 1606, with cuts having the last-mentioned mark, but which edition he calls the Dance of Death at Berne;⁶⁰ a title, considering the mixture of subjects, as faulty as that of the present book,

⁵⁷ Travels, i. 138, edit. 4to.

⁵⁸ Heinecken *Dictionn. des Artistes*, iii. 67, et iv. 595. He follows Keysler's error respecting Hans Bock.

⁵⁹ *Peintre graveur*, ix. 398.

⁶⁰ *Essai sur l'Orig. de la Gravure*, i. 120.

of which, or of some part of it, there must have been a still earlier edition than the above-mentioned one of 1606, as on the last cut but one of this volume there is the date 1576, and the letters G S with the knife. It is most probable that this artist completed the series of the Basle Dance, and that some of the blocks having fallen into the hands of the above printers, they made up and published the present mixed copy. Jost Amman is said to have engraved 49 plates of the Dance of Death in 1587. These are probably from the Basle painting.⁶¹

The completest copies of this painting that are now perhaps extant, are to be found in a well-known set of engravings in copper, by Matthew Merian, the elder, the master of Hollar. There are great doubts as to their first appearance in 1621, as mentioned by Fuesli and Heineken, but editions are known to exist with the respective dates of 1649, 1696, 1698, 1725, 1744, 1756, and 1789. Some of these are in German, and the rest are accompanied with a French translation by P. Viene. They are all particularly described by Peignot.⁶² Merian states in his preface that he had copied the paintings several years before, and given his plates to other persons to be published, adding that he had since redeemed and retouched them. He says this Dance was repaired in 1568 by Hans Hugo Klauber, a citizen of Basle, a fact also recorded on the cut of the painter himself, his wife, Barbara Hallerin, and his son, Hans Birich, by the before-mentioned artist, G. S., and that it contained the portraits of Pope Felix V., the Emperor Sigismund, and Albert, King of the Romans, all of whom assisted at the Council of Basle in the middle of the 15th century, when the painting was probably executed.

A greatly altered and modernised edition of Merian's work was published in 1788, 8vo. with the following title, "La Danse des Morts pour servir de miroir à la nature humaine, avec le costume dessiné à la moderne, et des vers à chaque figures. Au Locle, chez S. Girardet libraire." This is on an engraved frontispiece, copied from that in Merian. The letter-press is extracted from the French translation of Merian, and the plates, which are neatly etched, agree as to general design with his; but the dresses of many of the characters are rather ludicrously modernised. Some moral pieces are added to this edition, and particularly an old and popular treatise, composed in 1593, intitled "L'Art de bien vivre et de bien mourir."

A Dance of Death is recorded with the following title "Todtentantz durch alle Stande der Menschen," Leipsig, durch David de Necker, formschneider. 1572, 4to.⁶³ Whether this be a copy of the Basle or the Berne painting, must be decided on inspection, or it may possibly be a later edition of the copy of the wood-cuts of Lyons, that will be mentioned hereafter.

In the little Basle, on the opposite side of the Rhine, there was a nunnery called Klingenthal, erected towards the end of the 13th century. In an old cloister, belonging to it there are the remains of a Dance of Death painted on its walls, and said to have been much ruder in execution than that in the Dominican cemetery at Basle. On this painting there was the date 1312. In the year 1766 one Emanuel Ruchel, a baker by trade, but an enthusiastic admirer of the fine arts, made a copy in water colours of all that remained of this ancient painting, and which is preserved in the public library at Basle.⁶⁴

The numerous mistakes that have been made by those writers who have mentioned the Basle painting have been already adverted to by M. Peignot, and are not, in this place, worthy of repetition.⁶⁵ That which requires most particular notice, and has been so frequently repeated, is the making Hans Holbein the painter of it, who was not born till a considerable time after its execution, and even for whose supposed retouching of a work, almost beneath his notice in point of art, there is not the slightest authority.

⁶¹ Heineken Dictionn. des Artistes, i. 222.

⁶² Recherches, &c. p. 71.

⁶³ Heller Geschichte der holtzchein kunst. Bamberg, 1823, 12mo. p. 126.

⁶⁴ Basle Guide Book.

⁶⁵ Recherches, 11 et seq.

In the small organ chapel, or, according to some, in the porch, of the church of St. Mary at Lubeck in Lower Alsace, there is, or was, a very ancient Dance of Death, said to have been painted in 1463. Dr. Nugent, who has given some account of it, says, that it is much talked of in all parts of Germany; that the figures were repaired at different times, as in 1588, 1642, and last of all in 1701. The verses that originally accompanied it were in low Dutch, but at the last repair it was thought proper to change them for German verses which were written by Nathaniel Schlott of Dantzick. The Doctor has given an English translation of them, made for him by a young lady of Lubeck.⁶⁶ This painting has been engraved, and will be again mentioned. Leipsic had also a Dance of Death, but no particulars of it seem to have been recorded.

In 1525 a similar dance was painted at Anneberg in Saxony, which Fabricius seems alone to have noticed. He also mentions another in 1534, at the palace of Duke George at Dresden.⁶⁷ This is described in a German work written on the subject generally, by Paul Christian Hilscher, and published at Dresden, 1705, 8vo. and again at Bautzen, 1721, 8vo. It consisted of a long frieze sculptured in stone on the front of the building, containing twenty-seven figures. A view of this very curious structure, with the Dance itself, and also on a separate print, on a larger scale, varying considerably from the usual mode of representing the Macaber Dance, is given in Anthony Wecken's Chronicle of Dresden, printed in German at Dresden 1680, folio. It is said to have been removed in 1721 to the church-yard of Old Dresden.

Nicolai Karamsin has given a very brief, but ludicrous, account of a Dance of Death in the cross aisle of the Orphan House at Erfurth,⁶⁸ but Peignot places it in the convent of the Augustins, and seems to say that it was painted on the panels between the windows of the cell inhabited by Luther.⁶⁹ In all probability the same place is intended by both these writers.

There is some reason to suppose that there was a Dance of Death at Nuremberg. Misson, describing a wedding in that city, states that the bridegroom and his company sat down on one side of the church and the bride on the other. Over each of their heads was a figure of Death upon the wall. This would seem very like a Dance of Death, if the circumstance of the figure being on both sides of the church did not excite a doubt on the subject.

Whether there ever was a Macaber Dance at Berne of equal antiquity with that of Basle has not been ascertained: but Sandrart, in his article for Nicolas Manuel Deutch, a celebrated painter at Berne, in the beginning of the 16th century, has recorded a Dance of Death painted by him in oil, and regrets that a work materially contributing to the celebrity of that city had been so extremely neglected that he had only been able to lay before the readers the following German rhymes which had been inscribed on it:

Manuel aller welt figur,
Hastu gemahlt uf diese mur
Nu must sterben da, hilft kun fund:
Bist nit sicher minut noch stund.

Which he thus translates:

⁶⁶ More on the subject of the Lubeck Dance of Death may be found in 1. An anonymous work, which has on the last leaf, "Dodendantz, anno domini MCCCCXCVI. Lubeck." 2. "De Dodendantz fan Kaspar Scheit, na der utgave fan, 1558, unde de Lubecker fan, 1463." This is a poem of four sheets in small 8vo. without mention of the place where printed. 3. Some account of this painting by Ludwig Suhl. Lubeck, 1783, 4to. 4. A poem, in rhyme, with wood-cuts, on 34 leaves, in 8vo. It is fully described from the Helms. library in Brun's Beitrage zu krit. Bearb. alter handschr. p. 321 et seq. 5. Jacob à Mellen Grundliche Nachricht von Lubeck, 1713, 8vo. p. 84. 6. Schlott Lubikischers Todtentantz. 1701. 8vo. 7. Berkenmeyer, le curieux antiquaire, 8vo. p. 530; and, 8. Nugent's Travels, i. 102. 8vo.

⁶⁷ Biblioth. Med. et inf. ætat. v. 2.

⁶⁸ Travels, i. 195.

⁶⁹ Recherches, xlii.

Cunctorum in muris pictis ex arte figuris.
Tu quoque decedes; etsi hoc vix tempore credes.

Then Manuel's answer:

Kilf eineger Heiland! dru ich dich bitt:
Dann hic ist gar kein Bleibens nit
So mir der Tod mein red wird stellen
So bhut euch Gott, mein liebe Gsellen.

That is, in Latin:

En tibi me credo, Deus, hoc dum sorte recedo
Mors rapiat me, te, reliquos sociosque, valet!

To which account M. Fuseli adds, that this painting, equally remarkable for invention and character, was retouched in 1553; and in 1560, to render the street in which it was placed more spacious, entirely demolished. There were, however, two copies of it preserved at Berne, both in water colours, one by Albrech Kauw, the other a copy from that by Wilhelm Stettler, a painter of Berne, and pupil of Conrad Meyer of Zurich. The painting is here said to have been in *fresco* on the wall of the Dominican cemetery.⁷⁰

The verses that accompanied this painting have been mentioned as containing sarcastical freedoms against the clergy; and as Manuel had himself undergone some persecutions on the score of religion at the time of the Reformation, this is by no means improbable. There is even a tradition that he introduced portraits of some of his friends, who assisted in bringing about that event.

In 1832, lithographic copies of the Berne painting, after the drawings of Stettler, were published at Berne, with a portrait of Manuel; and a set of very beautiful drawings in colours, made by some artist at Berne, either after those by Stettler or Kauw, in the public library, are in the possession of the writer of this essay. They, as well as the lithographic prints, exhibit Manuel's likeness in the subject of the painter.

One of the bridges at Lucerne was covered with a Macaber Dance, executed by a painter named Meglinger, but at what time we are not informed. It is said to have been very well painted, but injured greatly by injudicious retouchings; yet there seems to be a difference of opinion as to the merit of the paintings, which are or were thirty-six in number, and supposed to have been copied from the Basle dance. Lucerne has also another of the same kind in the burial ground of the parish church of Im-hof. One of the subjects placed over the tomb of some canon, the founder of a musical society, is Death playing on the violin, and summoning the canon to follow him, who, not in the least terrified, marks the place in the book he was reading, and appears quite disposed to obey. This Dance is probably more modern than the other.⁷¹ The subject of Death performing on the above instrument to some person or other is by no means uncommon among the old painters.

M. Maurice Rivoire, in his very excellent description of the cathedral of Amiens, mentions the cloister of the Machabees, originally called, says he, the cloister of Macabré, and, as he supposes, from the name of the author of the verses. He gives some lines that were on one of the walls, in which the Almighty commands Death to bring all mortals before him.⁷² This cloister was destroyed about

⁷⁰ Pilkington's Dict. of Painters, p. 307, edit. Fuseli, who probably follows Fuesli's work on the Painters. Merian, Topogr. Helvetiæ.

⁷¹ Peignot Recherches, xlv. xlvi.

⁷² Rivoire descr. de l'église cathédrale d'Amiens. Amiens, 1806. 8vo.

the year 1817, but not before the present writer had seen some vestiges of the painting that remained on one of the sides of the building.

M. Peignot has a very probable conjecture that the church-yard of Saint Maclou, at Rouen, had a Macaber Dance, from a border or frieze that contains several emblematical subjects of mortality. The place had more than once been destroyed.⁷³ On the pillars of the church at Fescamp, in Normandy, the Dance of Death was sculptured in stone, and it is in evidence that the castle of Blois had formerly this subject represented in some part of it.

In the course of some recent alterations in the new church of the Protestants at Strasburg, formerly a Dominican convent, the workmen accidentally uncovered a Dance of Death that had been whitewashed, either for the purpose of obliteration or concealment. This painting seems to differ from the usual Macaber Dance, not always confined like that to two figures only, but having occasionally several grouped together. M. Peignot has given some more curious particulars relating to it, extracted from a literary journal by M. Schweighæuser, of Strasburg.⁷⁴ It is to be hoped that engravings of it will be given.

Chorier has mentioned the mills of Macabrey, and also a piece of land with the same appellation, which he says was given to the chapter of St. Maurice at Vienne in Dauphiné, by one Marc Avril, a citizen of that place. He adds, that he is well aware of the Dance of Macabre. Is it not, therefore, probable, that the latter might have existed at Vienne, and have led to the corruption of the above citizen's name by the common people?⁷⁵

Misson has noticed a Dance of Death in St. Mary's church at Berlin, and obscurely referred to another in some church at Nuremberg.

Bruckmann, in his *Epistolæ Itinerariæ*, vol. v. Epist. xxxii. describes several churches and other religious buildings at Vienna, and among them the monastery of the Augustinians, where, he says, there is a painting of a house with Death entering one of the windows by a ladder.

In the same letter he describes a chapel of Death in the above monastery, which had been decorated with moral paintings by Father Abraham à St. Clara, one of the monks. Among these were, 1. Death demolishing a student. 2. Death attacking a hunter who had just killed a stag. 3. Death in an apothecary's shop, breaking the phials and medicine boxes. 4. Death playing at draughts with a nobleman. 5. Harlequin making grimaces at Death. A description of this chapel, and its painting was published after the good father's decease. Nuremberg, 1710, 8vo.

The only specimen of it in Holland that has occurred on the present occasion is in the celebrated *Orange-Salle*, which constitutes the grand apartment of the country seat belonging to the Prince of Orange in the wood adjacent to the Hague. In three of its compartments, Death is represented by skeletons darting their arrows against a host of opponents.⁷⁶

Nor has Italy furnished any materials for the present essay. Blainville has, indeed, described a singular and whimsical representation of Death in the church of St. Peter the Martyr, at Naples, in the following words. "At the entrance on the left is a marble with a representation of Death in a grotesque form. He has two crowns on his head, with a hawk on his fist, as ready for hunting. Under his feet are extended a great number of persons of both sexes and of every age. He addresses them in these lines:

Eo sò la morte che caccio
Sopera voi jente mondana,
La malata e la sana,
Di, e notte la percaccio;

⁷³ Recherches, xlvi.

⁷⁴ Recherches, xlvi.

⁷⁵ Recherches sur les antiquités de Vienne. 1659. 12mo, p. 15.

⁷⁶ Dr. Cogan's Tour to the Rhine, ii. 127.

Non fugge, vessuna intana
Per scampare dal mio laccio
Che tutto il mondo abbraccio,
E tutta la jente humana
Perchè nessuno se conforta,
Ma prenda spavento
Ch'eo per comandamento
Di prender à chi viene la sorte.
Sia vi per gastigamento
Questa figura di morte,
E pensa vie di fare forte
Tu via di salvamento.

Opposite to the figure of Death is that of a man dressed like a tradesman or merchant, who throws a bag of money on a table, and speaks thus:

Tutti ti volio dare
Se mi lasci scampare.

To which Death answers:

Se mi potesti dare
Quanto si pote dimandare
Non te pote scampare la morte
Se te viene la sorte.⁷⁷

It can hardly be supposed that this subject was not known in Spain, though nothing relating to it seems to have been recorded, if we except the poem that has been mentioned in p. [25](#), but no Spanish painting has been specified that can be called a regular Macaber Dance. There are grounds, however, for believing that there was such a painting in the cathedral of Burgos, as a gentleman known to the author saw there the remains of a skeleton figure on a whitewashed wall.

⁷⁷ Travels, iii. 328, edit. 4to.

CHAPTER IV

Macaber Dance in England. – St. Paul's. – Salisbury. – Wortley Hall. – Hexham. – Croydon. – Tower of London. – Lines in Pierce Plowman's Vision supposed to refer to it.

We are next to examine this subject in relation to its existence in our own country. On the authority of the work ascribed to Walter de Mapes, already noticed in p. 24, it is not unreasonable to infer that paintings of the Macaber Dance were coeval with that writer, though no specimens of it that now remain will warrant the conclusion. We know that it existed at Old Saint Paul's. Stowe informs us that there was a great cloister on the north side of the church, environing a plot of ground, of old time called Pardon church-yard. He then states, that "about this *cloyster* was artificially and richly painted the Dance of Machabray, or Dance of Death, commonly called the Dance of Paul's: the like whereof was painted about St. Innocent's cloyster at Paris: the meters or poesie of this dance were translated out of French into English, by John Lidgate, Monke of Bury, the picture of Death leading all estates; at the dispenche of Jenken Carpenter in the reigne of Henry the Sixt."⁷⁸ Lydgate's verses were first printed at the end of Tottell's edition of the translation of his Fall of Princes, from Boccaccio, 1554, folio, and afterwards, in Sir W. Dugdale's History of St. Paul's cathedral.⁷⁹ In another place Stowe records that "on the 10th April, 1549, the cloister of St. Paul's church, called Pardon church-yard, with the Dance of Death, commonly called the Dance of Paul's, about the same cloister, costly and cunningly wrought, and the chappel in the midst of the same church-yard, were all begun to be pulled down."⁸⁰ This spoliation was made by the Protector Somerset, in order to obtain materials for building his palace in the Strand.⁸¹

The single figure that remained in the Hungerford chapel at Salisbury cathedral, previously to its demolition, was formerly known by the title of "Death and the Young Man," and was, undoubtedly, a portion of the Macaber Dance, as there was close to it another compartment belonging to the same subject. In 1748, a print of these figures was published, accompanied with the following inscription, which differs from that in Lydgate. The young man says:

Alasse Dethe alasse a blesful thyng thou were
Yf thou woldyst spare us yn ouwre lustynesse.
And cum to wretches that bethe of hevy chere
Whene thay ye clepe to slake their dystresse
But owte alasse thyne own sely selfwyldnesse
Crewelly werneth me that seygh wayle and wepe
To close there then that after ye doth clepe.

Death answers:

⁷⁸ Survey of London, p. 615, edit. 1618, 4to.

⁷⁹ In Tottell's edition these verses are accompanied with a single wood-cut of Death leading up all ranks of mortals. This was afterwards copied by Hollar, as to general design, in Dugdale's St. Paul's, and in the Monasticon.

⁸⁰ Annales, p. 596, edit. 1631. folio. Sir Thomas More, treating of the remembrance of Death, has these words: "But if we not only here this word Death, but also let sink into our heartes, the very fantasye and depe imaginacion thereof, we shall perceiue therby that we wer never so gretly moved by the beholding of the *Daunce of Death pictured in Poules*, as we shal fele ourself stered and altered by the feling of that imaginacion in our hertes. And no marvell. For those pictures expresse only y^e lothely figure of our dead bony bodies, biten away y^e flesh," &c. – Works, p. 77, edit. 1557, folio.

⁸¹ Heylin's Hist. of the Reformation, p. 73.

Grosless galante in all thy luste and pryde
Remembyr that thou schalle onys dye
Deth schall fro thy body thy sowle devyde
Thou mayst him not escape certaynly
To the dede bodyes cast down thyne ye
Beholde thayme well consydere and see
For such as thay ar such shalt thou be.

This painting was made about the year 1460, and from the remaining specimen its destruction is extremely to be regretted, as, judging from that of the young gallant, the dresses of the time would be correctly exhibited.

In the chapel at Wortley Hall, in Gloucestershire, there was inscribed, and most likely painted, “an history and Daunce of Deathe of all estatts and degrees.” This inscribed history was the same as Lydgate’s, with some additional characters.⁸² From a manuscript note by John Stowe, in his copy of Leland’s Itinerary, it appears that there was a Dance of Death in the church of Stratford upon Avon: and the conjecture that Shakespeare, in a passage in *Measure for Measure*, might have remembered it, will not, perhaps, be deemed very extravagant. He there alludes to Death and the fool, a subject always introduced into the paintings in question.⁸³

On the upper part of the great screen which closes the entrance to the choir of the church at Hexham, in Northumberland, are the painted remains of a Dance of Death.⁸⁴ These consist of the figures of a pope, a cardinal, and a king, which were copied by the ingenious John Carter, of well-deserved antiquarian memory.

Vestiges of a Macaber Dance were not long since to be traced on the walls of the hall of the Archbishopal palace at Croydon, but so much obscured by time and neglect that no particular compartment could be ascertained.

The tapestries that decorated the walls of palaces, and other dwelling places, were sometimes applied in extension of this moral subject. In the tower of London, the original and most ancient seat of our monarchs, there was some tapestry with the Macaber Dance.⁸⁵

The following lines in that admirable satire, the *Vision of Pierce Plowman*, written about the year 1350, have evidently an allusion to the Dance, unless they might be thought to apply rather to the celebrated triumph of Death by Petrarch, of which some very early paintings, and many engravings, still exist; or they may even refer to some of the ancient representations of the infernal regions that follow Death on the Pale horse of the Revelations, and in which is seen a grotesque intermixture of all classes of people.⁸⁶

Death came driving 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 knightes
Swounded and sweltd for sorrowe of Deathes dyntes.

⁸² Cotton MS. Vesp. A. xxv. fo. 181.

⁸³ Leland’s Itin. vol. iv. part i. p. 69. – *Meas. for Meas.* Act iii. sc. 1.

⁸⁴ Hutchinson’s Northumberland, i. 98.

⁸⁵ Warton’s *H. E. Poetry*, ii. 43, edit. 8vo.

⁸⁶ And see a portion of Orgagna’s painting at the Campo Santo at Pisa, mentioned before in p. 33.

It is probable that many cathedrals and other edifices, civil as well as ecclesiastical, in France, Germany, England, and probably other European countries, were ornamented with paintings and sculpture of this extremely popular subject.

CHAPTER V

List of editions of the Macaber Dance. – Printed Horæ that contain it. – Manuscript Horæ. – Other Manuscripts in which it occurs. – Various articles with letter-press, not being single prints, but connected with it.

It remains only, so far as regards the Macaber Dance, to present the reader with a list of the several printed editions of that celebrated work, and which, with many corrections and additions, has been chiefly extracted from M. Peignot's "Recherches historiques et litteraires sur les Danses des Morts," Paris et Dijon, 1826, 8vo.

The article that should stand at the head of this list, if any reliance could be had on a supposed date, is the German edition, intitled, "Der Totendantz mit figuren. Clage und Antwort Schon von allen staten der welt," small folio. This is mentioned in Braun Notitia de libris in Bibliotheca Monasterii ad SS. Udalricum et Afram Augustæ, vol. ii. 62. The learned librarian expresses his doubts as to the date, which he supposes may be between 1480 and 1500. He rejects a marginal note by the illuminator of the letters, indicating the date of 1459. Every page of this volume is divided into two columns, and accompanied with German verses, which may be either the original text, or a translation from the French verses in some early edition of the Macaber Dance in that language. It consists of twenty-two leaves, with wood-cuts of the Pope, Cardinal, Bishop, Abbot, &c. &c. accompanied by figures of Death.

1. "La Danse Macabre imprimée par ung nommé Guy Marchand, &c. Paris, 1485," small folio. Mons. Champollion Figeac has given a very minute description of this extremely rare, and perhaps unique, volume, the only known copy of which is in the public library of Grenoble. This account is to be found in Millin's *Magazin Encyclopedique*, 1811, vol. vi. p. 355, and thence by M. Peignot, in his *Recherches*, &c.

2. "Ce present livre est appelle Miroer salutaire pour toutes gens, et de tous estatz, et est de grant utilité et recreation pour pleuseurs ensegnemens tant en Latin comme en Francoys lesquels il contient ainsi compose pour ceulx qui desirent acquerir leur salut: et qui le voudront avoir. La Danse Macabre nouvelle." At the end, "Cy finit la Danse Macabre hystoriee augmentee de pleuseurs nouveaux pârsonnages (six) et beaux dis. et les trois mors et trois vif ensemble. Nouvellement ainsi composee et imprimee par Guyot Marchant demorant a Paris au grant hostel du college de Navarre en champ Gaillart lan de grace, 1486, le septieme jour de juing." A small folio of fifteen leaves, or thirty pages, twenty-four of which belong to the Danse Macabre, and six to the *Trois morts et les trois vifs*.

On the authority of the above expression, "composée," and also on that of *La Croix du Maine*, Marchant has been made the author as well as the printer of the work; but M. De la Monnoye is not of that opinion, nor indeed is there any other metrical composition by this printer known to exist.

3. "La Danse Macabre des femmes, &c. Paris, par Guyot Marchant, 1486, le septieme jour de Juillet," small folio, of fifteen leaves only. This is the first edition of the Macaber Dance of females; and though thirty-two of them are described, the Queen and Duchess only are engraved. See No. 6 for the rest. This and the preceding edition are also particularly described by Messrs. Champollion Figeac and Peignot.

4. "Chorea ab eximio Macabro versibus Alemanicis edita, et a Petro Desrey emendata. Parisiis per magistrum Guidonem Mercatorem pro Godefrido de Marnef. 1490," folio. Papillon thought the cuts were in the manner of the French artist Jollat, but without foundation, for they are much superior to any work by that artist, and of considerable merit.

5. "La nouvelle Danse Macabre des hommes dicte miroer salutaire de toutes gens et de tous estats, &c. Paris, Guyot Marchant. 1490." folio.

6. “La Danse Macabre des femmes, toute hystoriée et augmentée de nouveaulx personnages, &c. Paris, Guyot Marchant, le 2 Mai, 1491,” folio. This edition, the second of the Dance of females, has all the cuts with other additions. The list of the figures is in Peignot, but with some doubts on the accuracy of his description.

7. An edition in the Low German dialect was printed at Lubeck, 1496, according to Vonder Hagen in his *Deutschen Poesie*, p. 459, who likewise mentions a Low German edition in prose, at the beginning of the 15th (he must mean 16th) century. He adds, that he has copied one page with cuts from *Kindeling’s Remains*, but he does not say in what work.

8. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes hystorice et augmentée de beaulx dits en Latin, &c. &c. Le tout composé en ryme Françoise et accompagné de figures. Lyon, le xviii jour de Fevrier, l’an 1499,” folio. This is supposed to be the first edition that contains both the men and the women.

9. There is a very singular work, intitled “Icy est le compost et kalendrier des *Bergeres*, &c. Imprimé à Paris en lostel de beauregart en la rue Cloppin à lenseigne du roy Prestre Jhan. ou quel lieu sont à vendre, ou au lyon dargent en la rue Saint Jaques.” At the end, “Imprimé à Paris par Guy Marchant maistre es ars ou lieu susdit. Le xvii iour daoust mil ccciiiixx·xix.” This extremely rare volume is in the British Museum, and is mentioned by Dr. Dibdin, in vol. ii. p. 530 of his edition of Ames’s typographical antiquities, and probably nowhere else. It is embellished with the same fine cuts that relate to the females in the edition of the Macaber Dance, Nos. 4 and 11. The work begins with the words “Deux jeunes Bergeres seulettes,” and appears to have been composed for females only, differing very materially from the well-known “Kalendrier des Bergers,” though including matter common to both.

10. “Chorea ab eximio Macabro versibus Alemanicis edita et à Petro Desrey Trecacio quodam oratore nuper emendata. Parisiis per Magistrum Guidonem Mercatorem pro Godefrido Marnef. 15 Octob. 1499,” folio, with cuts.

11. “La Danse Macabre, &c. Ant. Verard, no date, but about 1500,” small folio. A vellum copy of this rare edition is described by M. Van Praet in his catalogue of vellum books in the royal library at Paris. A copy is in the Archb. Cant. library at Lambeth.

12. “La Danse Macabre, &c. Ant. Verard, no date, but about 1500,” folio. Some variations from No. 9 are pointed out by M. Van Praet. This magnificent volume on vellum, and bound in velvet, came from the library at Blois. It is a very large and thin folio, consisting of three or four leaves only, printed on pasteboard, with four pages or compartments on each leaf. The cuts are illuminated in the usual manner of Verard’s books. In the beginning it is marked “Marolles, No. 1601.” It is probably imperfect, the fool not being among the figures, and all the females are wanting, though, perhaps, not originally in this edition. It is in the royal library at Paris, where there is another copy of the work printed by Verard, with coloured prints, but differing materially from the other in the press-work. It is a common-sized folio, and was purchased at the sale of the Count Macarthy’s books.⁸⁷

13. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Imprimée à Troyes par Nicolas Le Rouge demourant en la grant rue à l’enseigne de Venise auprès la belle croix.” No date, folio. With very clever wood-cuts, probably the same as in the edition of 1490; and if so, they differ much from the manner of Jollat, and have not his well-known mark.

14. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Rouen, Guillaume de la Mare.” No date, 4to. with cuts, and in the Roman letter.

15. “La grande Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, ou est démontré tous humains de tous estats estre du bransle de la Mort. Lyon, Olivier Arnoulet.” No date, 4to.

16. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Lyon, Nourry, 1501,” 4to. cuts.

⁸⁷ From the Author’s own inspection.

17. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Imprimé à Genesve, 1503,” 4to. cuts.

18. “La grant Danse Macabre, &c. Paris, Nicole de la Barre, 1523,” 4to. with very indifferent cuts, and the omission of some of the characters in preceding editions. This has been privately reprinted, 1820, by Mr. Dobree, from a copy in the British Museum.

19. “La grant Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes. Troyes, Le Rouge, 1531,” folio, cuts.

20. “La grand Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes. Paris, Denys Janot. 1533,” 8vo. cuts.

21. “La grand Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, tant en Latin qu’en Francoys. Paris, par Estienne Groulleau libraire juré en la rue neuve Nostre Dame à l’enseigne S. Jean Baptiste.” No date, 16mo. cuts. The first edition of this size, and differing in some respects from the preceding.

22. “La grand Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Paris, Estienne Groulleau, 1550,” 16mo. cuts.

23. “La grande Danse des Morts, &c. Rouen, Morron.” No date, 8vo. cuts.

24. “Les lxxviii huictains ci-devant appellés la Danse Machabrey, par lesquels les Chrestiens de tous estats tout stimulés et invités de penser à la mort. Paris, Jacques Varangue, 1589,” 8vo. In Roman letter, without cuts.

25. “La grande Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, &c. Troyes, Oudot,” 1641, 4to. cuts. One of the bibliothèque bleue books.

26. “La grande Danse Macabre des hommes et des femmes, renouvelée de vieux Gaulois en langage le plus poli de notre temps, &c. Troyes, Pierre Garnier rue du Temple.” No date, but the privilege is in 1728, 4to. cuts. The *polished* language is, of course, for the worse, and Macaber is called “des Machabées,” no doubt, the editor’s improvement.

27. “La grande Danse *Macabre* des hommes et des femmes, renouvelée, &c. Troyes, chez la veuve Oudot, et Jean Oudot fils, rue du Temple, 1729,” 4to. cuts. Nearly the same as No. 25.

These inferior editions continued, till very lately, to be occasionally reprinted for the use of the common people, and at the trifling expense of a very few sous. They are, nevertheless, of some value to those who feel interested in the subject, as containing tolerable copies of all the fine cuts in the preceding edition, No. 11.

Dr. Dibdin saw in the public library at Munich a very old series of a Macaber Dance, that had been inserted, by way of illustration, into a German manuscript of the Dance of Death. Of these he has given two subjects in his “Bibliographical Tour,” vol. iii. p. 278.

But it was not only in the above volumes that the very popular subject of the Macaber Dance was particularly exhibited. It found its way into many of the beautiful service books, usually denominated Horæ, or hours of the Virgin. These principally belong to France, and their margins are frequently decorated with the above Dance, with occasional variety of design. In most of them Death is accompanied with a single figure only, characters from both sexes being introduced. It would be impossible to furnish a complete list of them; but it is presumed that the mention of several, and of the printers who introduced them, will not be unacceptable.

No. I. “Las Horas de nuestra Senora con muchos otros oficios y oraçiones.” Printed in Paris by Nicolas Higman for Simon Vostre, 1495, 8vo. It has two Dances of Death, the first of which is the usual Macaber Dance, with the following figures: “Le Pape, l’Empereur, le Cardinal, l’Archevesque, le Chevalier, l’Evesque, l’Escuyer, l’Abè, le Prevost, le Roy, le Patriarche, le Connestable, l’Astrologien, le Bourgoys, le Chanoine, le Moyne, l’Usurier, le Medesin, l’Amoureux, l’Advocat, le Menestrier, le Marchant, le Chartreux, le Sergent, le Cure, le Laboureur, le Cordelier.” Then the women: “La Royne, la Duchesse, la Regente, la Chevaliere, l’Abbesse, la Femme descine, la Prieure, la Damoisele, la Bourgoise, la Cordeliere, la Femme daceul, la Nourice, la Theologienne, la nouvelle mariee, la Femme grosse, la Veufve, la Marchande, la Ballive, la Chamberiere, la Recommanderese, la vielle Damoise, l’Espousée, la Mignote, la Fille pucelle, la Garde d’accouchée, la jeune fille, la Religieuse, la Vielle,

la Revenderesse, l'Amoureuse, la Sorciere, la Bigote, la Sote, la Bergere, la Femme aux Potences, la Femme de Village; to which are added, l'Enfant, le Clerc, l'Ermite.”

The second Dance of Death is very different from the preceding, and consists of groupes of figures. The subjects, which have never yet been described, are the following:

1. Death sitting on a coffin in a church-yard. “Discite vos choream cuncti qui cernitis istam.”
2. Death with Adam and Eve in Paradise. He draws Adam towards him. “Quid tum prosit honor glorie divitie.”
3. Death helping Cain to slay Abel. “Esto meorum qui pulvis eris et vermibus esca.”
4. Death holding by the garment a cardinal, followed by several persons. “In gelida putrens quando jacebis humo.”
5. Death mounted on a bull strikes three persons with his dart. “Vado mori dives auro vel copia rerum.”
6. Death seizing a man sitting at a table with a purse in his hand, and accompanied by two other persons. “Nullum respectum dat michi, vado mori.”
7. An armed knight killing an unarmed man, Death assisting. “Fortium virorum est magis mortem contemnere vitam odisse.”
8. Death with a rod in his hand, standing upon a groupe of dead persons. “Stultum est timere quod vitari non potest.”
9. Death with a scythe, having mowed down several persons lying on the ground. “Est commune mori mors nulli parcit honori.”
10. A soldier introducing a woman to another man, who holds a scythe in his hand. Death stands behind. “Mors fera mors nequam mors nulli parcit et equam.”
11. Death strikes with his dart a prostrate female, who is attended by two others. “Hec tua vita brevis: que te delectat ubique.”
12. A man falling from a tower into the water. Death strikes him at the same time with his dart. “Est velut aura levis te mors expectat ubique.”
13. A man strangling another, Death assisting. “Vita quid est hominis nisi res vallata ruinis.”
14. A man at the gallows, Death standing by. “Est caro nostra cinis modo principium modo finis.”
15. A man about to be beheaded, Death assisting. “Quid sublime genus quid opes quid gloria prestant.”
16. A king attended by several persons is struck by Death with his dart. “Quid mihi nunc aderant hec mihi nunc abeunt.”
17. Two soldiers armed with battle-axes. Death pierces one of them with his dart. “Ortus cuncta suos: repetunt matremque requirunt.”
18. Death strikes with his dart a woman lying in bed. “Et redit in nihilum quod fuit ante nihil.”
19. Death aims his dart at a sleeping child in a cradle, two other figures attending. “A, a, a, vado mori, nil valet ipsa juvenus.”
20. A man on the ground in a fit, Death seizes him. Others attending. “Mors scita sed dubia nec fugienda venit.”
21. Death leads a man, followed by others. “Non sum securus hodie vel cras moriturus.”
22. Death interrupts a man and woman at their meal. “Intus sive foris est plurima causa timoris.”
23. Death demolishes a group of minstrels, from one of whom he has taken a lute. “Viximus gaudentes, nunc morimur tristes et flentes.”
24. Death leads a hermit, followed by other persons. “Forte dies hec est ultima, vado mori.”

This Dance is also found in the *Horæ* printed by Godar, Vostre, and Gilles Hardouyn, but with occasional variations, as to size and other matters, in the different blocks which they respectively used. The same designs have also been adopted, and in a very singular style of engraving, in a work printed by Antony Verard, that will be noticed elsewhere.

Some of the cuts, for they are not all by the same artist, in this very rare and beautiful volume, and not found in others printed by or for Simon Vostre, may be very justly compared, in point of the delicacy of design and engraving, though on wood, with the celebrated pax of Maso Finiguerra at Florence, accurately copied in Mr. Ottley's history of engraving. They are accompanied with this unappropriated mark 6.

No. II. "Ordinarium beate Marie Virginis ad usum Cisterciensem impressum est caracteribus optimis una cum expensis honesti viri Symonis Vostre commorantis Parisiis in vico novo Dive Marie in intersignio Sancti Joannis Evangeliste, 1497," 12mo. This beautiful book is on vellum, with the same Danse Macabre as in the preceding, but the other cuts are different.

No. III. "Hore presentes ad usum Sarum impresse fuerunt Parisiis per Philippum Pigouchet Anno Salutis MCCCCXCVIII die vero xvi Maii pro Symone Vostre librario commorante, &c." 8vo. as above.

Another beautiful volume on vellum, with the same Danse Macabre. He printed a similar volume of the same date, for the use of Rome, also on vellum.

A volume of prayers, in 8vo. mentioned by M. Peignot, p. 145, after M. Raymond, but the title is not given. It is supposed to be anterior to 1500, and seems to contain the same personages in its Danse Macabre, as in the preceding volumes printed by Simon Vostre.

No. IV. "Heures à l'usage de Soissons." Printed by Simon Vostre, on vellum, 1502, 8vo. With the same Danse Macabre.

No. V. "Heures à l'usage de Rheims, nouvellement imprimées avec belles histoires, pour Simon Vostre," 1502, 8vo. This is mentioned by M. Peignot, on the authority of Papillon. It was reprinted 1513, 8vo. and has the same cuts as above.

No. VI. "Heures à l'usage de Rome. Printed for Simon Vostre by Phil. Pigouchet," 1502, large 8vo. on vellum. With the same Danse Macabre. This truly magnificent volume, superior to all the preceding by the same printer in beauty of type and marginal decoration, differs from them in having stanzas at the bottom of each page of the Dance, but which apply to the figure at the top only. They are here given.

Pope

Vous qui vivez certainement
Quoy qu'il tarde ainsi danserez
Mais quand Dieu le scet seulement
Avisez comme vous ferez

Dam Pape vous commencerez
Comme le plus digne Seigneur
En ce point honorire serez
Au grant maistre est deu l'honneur.

King

Mais maintenant toute haultesse
Laisseriez vous nestes pas seul
Peu aurez de votre richesse
Le plus riche n'a qung linseul

Venez noble Roy couronne
Renomme de force et prouesse
Jadis fustez environne
De grans pompes de grant noblesse.

Archbishop

Que vous tirez la teste arriere
Archevesque tirez vous près,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

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