



THE PHAETON.

## DEATH

AND

## THE GAY CHARIOTEER.

THE sun, in splendour, was setting bright,  
 And the west was sheeted in ruby light,  
 The hymn of the woodland choir was singing,  
 And the winds o'er the forest their incense flinging,  
 The grove its leaves of gold was waving,  
 The mountain its summit in glory bathing,  
 The flowers for day's departure weeping,  
 And the wolf in his cave yet soundly sleeping,  
 When young Cytheron, e'en as Hylas fair,  
 With cheek of the damask rose, and hair  
 In darkly beauteous ringlets flowing,  
 And lip like the piony richly glowing,  
 With a smile like summer's morn, and eye  
 That no maiden could look on without a sigh,  
 Met Comus, as on he journeyed, gay  
 And thoughtless, life's primrose-scattered way.

Comus invited the youth to spend the night  
At his magic palace of pomp and delight,  
To rest himself after the toils of the day,  
And chase the tardy-footed hours away  
With banquet and song, and care-killing glee,  
Music, and wine, and jollity.

Young Cytheron, regardless of what might betide,  
Turned joyous to follow his laughing guide,  
Who led him on through a solemn wood,  
Where tall colonnades of cedar stood,  
And verdant palms in long array,  
That shone with the tints of departing day ;  
While the dew-brightened flowers caught the sun's  
last smile,

And rivalled the pomp of the evening sky,  
Where a pageant of mountain, lake, and isle,  
In glory unearthly met the eye!

Amid the forest, sweetly embowered,  
Were seats of green moss, with roses showered,  
And each fragrant hyacinthine bed  
Was o'er-canopied with the rich web



Of tissued blossoms, in nature's loom  
Wove gorgeous, and bright with radiant bloom.

The gleams of an alabastrian pile,  
With pillared form of classic style,  
Shone down the opening vista far,  
Like the softened light of Neptune's star ;  
When the midnight winds part the fleecy cloud,  
And she walks forth in her beauty and splendour  
proud.

It was the bright magic palace reared  
By Pleasure, to ensnare the idle and vain,—  
A temple it seemed with glory ensphered,  
But Death dwelt there in her fatal train !

Young Cytheron before the portal stood,—  
Then entered with enraptured eye,  
When round him poured a rainbow flood  
Of dazzling light, while harmony  
Angelic came on his ravished ears,  
Rich-toned as the music of the spheres !  
The palace court with pillars was hemmed  
Of flaming carbuncle, and gemmed

The tessellated floor, save where  
    Bloomed bowers of myrtle, and orange, and lime,  
Pomegranates, and aloes, that gave to the air  
    The exquisite odours of Araby's clime.  
These bowers, rich with the rose of Cashmere,  
    Of a thousand birds were the blessed haunt,  
Whose plumes did like clustered gems appear  
    As they warbled their wild melodious chant.  
Now forth from the inner palace came,  
Whose walls outshone the sapphire flame,—  
A lady, who leant on a damsel fair,  
That for beauty might e'en with Calypso compare !  
INTEMPERANCE was the portly dame,  
And WANTONNESS the damsel's name,  
Whose eye shot forth such thrilling fires  
As fill'd young Cytheron with fond desires ;  
Her form is voluptuous, her cheek outglows  
The blush of young Venus as from the deep she  
    first rose.  
They welcomed glad Cytheron, and smiling led  
To an arbour with roses fresh-blooming spread,  
Acanthus, and myrtle, and luscious woodbine,  
And o'erhung with the fruit-empurpled vine.

There on couches of emerald and Tyrian dye,  
 In pomp and luxurious ease they lie,  
 While the lady **INTEMPERANCE** in her cup of gold  
 Pressed the musky clusters that o'er them hung,  
 And gave to her guest \* \* \*  
 The magic draught made him proud and bold,  
 And joyous,—then soft airs were sung,  
 By attendant virgins fair and young;  
 And the fountains their rainbow streams out-flung,  
 And music breathed from harp and lute,  
 From sacbut, theorbo, and flute;  
 While youths and maidens, bright as the Hours,  
 Danced along the green arcade of bowers  
 That, torch-lit, showed like Eden's shades  
 When angel shapes thronged its moonlight glades.  
 Again the chalice of gold the youth drains,  
 Which flowed like fire through his glowing veins!  
 Then dallies with the damsel on beds of roses,  
 Till wearied with sport in her arms he reposes.  
 Whence summoned by music to the banquet-hall,  
 He feasts high on his lordly stall.  
 O what a proud display was there,  
 Of thronging chivalry and ladies fair!



Of richest viands, wines, fruits, and flowers,  
That deck young Summer or Autumn's bowers,  
Amid that gorgeous hall of might,  
Where the columns, formed of jewels rare,

Seemed each a shaft of sunny light!  
But what grim unbidden guest sits there,  
With eyeless sockets and ribs all bare,  
And grinning so hideously upon  
The laughter-loving Cytheron?  
'Tis Death! who marks him for his prey,  
Long ere the close of another day!

'Tis dawn,—come, rouse thee, who didst rejoice  
And sport with the young loves and pleasures,  
The harp and the viol have ceased their voice,

And the lute its soft prelude measures;  
Arise with the lark and the dappled fawn,  
And brush the dews from the cowslip lawn;  
Mount the proud seat of thy glittering car,  
Which in silvery splendour beams afar;  
Pleasure hath harnessed thy horses, all eager to run,  
Fiery and swift as the steeds of the sun!  
“ Ah, this is life, happiness, splendour, and glee;  
Mount, mount, my sweet damsel, and journey with  
me.”

But, ah! that grim king, who sat at the feast,  
 Hath followed the track of thy chariot wheel;  
 He heeds not the cry of anguish for rest,  
 Nor the sorrows that time will never heal,  
 Nor the captive's sigh for sweet release,  
 Nor the exile's prayer for the dark grave's peace;  
 No,—he follows thee, thou gay and vain,  
 And all thy schemes of pride will mar,  
 He takes the wheel from thy splendid car  
 And hurls thee prostrate on the plain!  
 Nature heeds not thy parting groan  
 No more than thou didst the beggar's moan;  
 The skylark amid the full sun-blaze is singing,  
 While down the lone valley thy death-shriek is  
 ringing!  
 Ah! what are worldly pomp and glory?  
 An empty shadow, a noisy story!  
 While earthly pleasure is a fleeting dream,  
 And honour but the meteor's gleam!

J. F. P.