

AN AUXILIARY OF DEATH.

It was in the tranquil reign of ———, when neither war, pestilence, nor famine, swept the subjects of his kingdom from the face of the earth, that the grim Monarch of the Tomb began to think himself defrauded of his rights, and to devise how to remedy the wrongs which he concluded had been inflicted upon him.

And, first, he called before him his regulating agent, Old Father Time, upbraiding him with lengthening the years of the inhabitants of this favoured empire, and especially by unnaturally prolonging the duration of peace.

With this Time said he had nothing to do, but that he could perhaps give a guess at one of the causes that kept this portion of the human race a longer period than heretofore on earth. It was

that a learned and skilful leech* had succeeded in quelling a direful malady; and that not only this pestilent disorder, but others of a very malignant kind, had been greatly mitigated by the progress of knowledge which had of late years *diminished* the practice of medicine.

At this information, Death cast a withering look around him, and, in a sepulchral tone, commanded some of the principal destroyers of the human race to appear in his presence.

And now a low, but portentous sound was heard, as coming from a remote part of the cavern in which Death held his court, which gradually became more audible and terrific, until a form, gigantic in size, and furious in aspect, stood revealed. The uproar which immediately preceded his approach resembled the discharge of artillery, the clashing of swords, and the shouts of combat, mixed with the groans of dying men.—It was the **Demon of War.**

* Some presume that Dr. Jenner, of vaccine celebrity, is here alluded to.—ED.

This fell destroyer was, however, soon dismissed; his readiness to serve was not at all questioned: and, if Death had to complain of the want of supplies, War had to grumble at his want of employment.—He accordingly filed off with marks of approbation, and an assurance that his vacation would not last long.

The phantom that next appeared was preceded by no sounds, but a chilling atmosphere seemed to invade even the chamber of Death, and the gaunt figure of Famine, with its meagre and wasted visage, stood before the grim Monarch of the Tomb.

Upon being questioned why he had not visited the favoured land and given his powerful assistance in forwarding the works of the Destroyer, he readily answered, that he acted only on commission, and by the decrees of a higher power. True, he had his substitutes, the monopolists;—some how or other, however, their measures were defeated by the bounty of Providence, or the vigilance of the government; but he had an all-

powerful friend and ally whom he would presently introduce, with the permission of his mighty Commander, who had already made no inconsiderable inroads on the human frame by mixing himself in every society, where he seldom failed in planting his baneful influence, and in accelerating the march to the tomb.

Desirous of being acquainted with the ally and friend of Famine, Death gave instant orders for his admission; and accordingly a low breathing was first heard, which gradually increased to deep sighs, and, on a signal given by Famine, a figure started into view: his pace sudden and irregular, his looks eager and penetrating, his visage sallow and gaunt like that of his precursor, and, hideous to relate, he was in the act of feeding upon a human heart; while the looks that he cast around him seemed to evince an insecurity of enjoyment of the hateful meal.

The auxiliary now brought into the awful presence was CARE, who, tremulous from anxiety, suspended awhile his operation of devouring, in

obedience to the commands of so absolute an interrogator.

In exhibiting his means to effect the destruction of the human race, he produced a mixture which had the power so to canker and corrode the heart it once entered, that neither wealth nor greatness could withstand its baneful influence; and, while the fiendlike power was describing the various characters that had sunk beneath the effects of this subtle poison, it seemed as if Care himself could be diverted from carefulness when ardently employed. The details of his operations, and the artifices used by the afflicted parties to disguise their malady, threw a fitful gleam over the countenance of the grim tyrant, that gave a momentary emotion to his ghastly features; but whether the expression was surprise, or triumphant malignity, was not easily to be determined.

A pause of some length ensued, after which Care was permitted to touch, by way of approbation, the icy hand of Death, and to receive a regular commission enlisting him into the various forces employed

in the destruction of the human species. Hence he carries on his operation in courts, in camps, in the palace of the monarch, and in the cottage of the villager. But it is in civilized life, and amid scenes of leisure and retirement (where his presence is least suspected) that his power is mostly felt: indeed, a laugh is no unfrequent disguise that his victims put on, and his place of concealment is often a *bed of roses*.

HATCHMENT.

