



CHAPTER XVII.

Trois vifs et trois morts.—*Negro figure of Death.*—*Danse aux Aveugles.*



THE first of these subjects, as connected with the Macaber Dance, has been already introduced at pp. 28, 29; what is now added will not, it is presumed, be thought unworthy of notice.

It is needless to repeat the descriptions that have been given by M. Peignot of the manuscripts in the Duke de la Vallière's catalogue. The following are some of the printed volumes in which representations of the *Trois vifs et trois morts* occur.

They are to be found in all the editions of the *Danse Macabre* that have already been described, and in the following *Horæ* and other service-books of the Catholic Church.

"*Horæ ad usum Sarum*," 1495, no place, no printer. 4to. Three Deaths, three horsemen with hawks and hounds. The hermit, to whom the vision appeared, in his cell.

"*Heures à l'usage de Rome*." Paris. Nicolas Higman, for Guil. Eustace, 1506, 12mo.

"*Horæ ad usum Traject*." 1513. 18mo.

"*Breviarium seu horarium domesticum ad usum Sarum*." Paris, F. Byrckman, 1516. Large folio. Three Deaths and three young men.

"Horæ ad usum Romanum." Paris. Thielman Kerver, 1522. 8vo. And again, 1535. 4to.

A Dutch Horæ. Paris. Thielman Kerver, 1522. 8vo.

"Heures à l'usage de Paris." Thielman Kerver's widow, 1525. 8vo.

"Missale ad usum Sarum." Paris, 1527. Folio. Three horsemen as noblemen, but without hawks or hounds.

"Enchiridion preclare ecclesie Sarum." Paris. Thielman Kerver, 1528. 32mo.

"Horæ ad usum fratrum predicatorum ordinis S. Dominici." Paris. Thielman Kerver, 1529. 8vo.

"Horæ ad usum Romanum." Paris. Yolande Bonhomme, widow of T. Kerver, 1531. 8vo.

"Missale ad usum Sarum." Paris. F. Regnault, 1531. Three Deaths only; different from the others.

"Prayer of Salisbury." Paris. François Regnault, 1531, 12mo.

"Horæ ad usum Sarum." Paris. Widow of Thielman Kerver, 1532. 12mo.

"Heures à l'usage de Paris." François Regnault, 1535. 12mo.

"Horæ ad usum Romanum." Paris. Gilles Hardouyn, 1537. 18mo. The subject is different from all the others, and very curiously treated.

"Heures à l'usage de Paris." Thielman Kerver, 1558. 12mo.

"Heures à l'usage de Rome." Paris. Thielman Kerver, 1573. 12mo.

"Heures à l'usage de Paris." Jacques Kerver, 1573. 12mo. And again, 1575. 12mo.

In "The Contemplation of Sinners," printed by Wynkyn de Worde. 4to.

All the above articles are in the collections of the author of this dissertation.

In an elegant MS. Horæ, in the Harl. Coll. No. 2917, 12mo. three Deaths appear to a pope, an emperor, and king coming out of a church. All the parties are crowned.

At the end of Desrey's "Macabri speculum choreæ mortuorum," a hermit sees a vision of a king, a legislator, and a vain female. They are all lectured by skeletons in their own likenesses.

In a manuscript collection of unpublished and chiefly pious poems of John Awdeley, a blind poet and canon of the monastery of Haghmon, in Shropshire, anno 1426, there is one on the "*Trois vifs et trois morts*," in alliterative verses, and composed in a very grand and terrific style.

NEGRO FIGURE OF DEATH.

In some degree connected with the old painting of the Macaber Dance in the churchyard of the Innocents at Paris, was that of a black man over a vaulted roof, constructed by the celebrated N. Flamel, about the year 1390. This is supposed to have perished with the Danse Macabre; but a copy of the figure has been preserved in some of the printed editions of the Dance. It exhibits a Negro blowing a trumpet, and was certainly intended as a personification of Death. In one of the oldest of the above editions he is accompanied with these verses :—

CRY DE MORT.

Tost, tost, tost, que chacun savance
Main à main venir à la danse
De Mort, danser la convient,
Tous et à plusieurs nen souvient.
Venez hommes femmes et enfans,
Jeunes et vieulx, petis et grans,
Ung tout seul nen eschapperoit,
Pour mille escuz si les donnoit, &c.

Before the females in the Dance the figure is repeated, with a second "Cry de Mort :"—

Tost, tost, venez femmes danser
Après les hommes incontinents,
Et gardez vous bien de verser,
Car vous danserez vrayment ;
Mon cornet corne bien souvent
Après les petis et les grans.
Despecte vous legièrement,
Après la pluye vient le beau temps.

These lines are differently given in the various printed copies of the Danse Macabre.

This figure is not to be confounded with an alabaster statue of Death that remained in the churchyard of the

Innocents, when it was entirely destroyed in 1786. It had been usually regarded as the work of Germain Pilon, but with greater probability belonged to François Gentil, a sculptor at Troyes, about 1540. It was transplanted to Notre Dame, after being bronzed and repaired, by M. Descine, a distinguished artist. It was saved from the fury of the iconoclast revolutionists by M. Le Noir, and deposited in the Museum which he so patriotically established in the Rue des petits Augustins, but it has since disappeared. It was an upright skeleton figure, holding in one hand a lance which pointed to a shield with this inscription:—

Il n'est vivant, tant soit plein d'art,
Ne de force pour résistance,
Que je ne frappe de mon dart,
Pour bailler aux vers leur pitance.
Priez Dieu pour les trespasés.

It is engraved in the second volume of M. Le Noir's "Musée des monumens Français," and also in his "Histoire des arts en France," No. 91.

DANSE AUX AVEUGLES.

There is a poetical work, in some degree connected with the subject of this dissertation, that ought not to be overlooked. It was composed by one Pierre Michault, of whom little more seems to be known than that he was in the service of Charles, Count of Charolois, son of Philip le Bon, Duke of Burgundy. It is entitled "La Danse aux Aveugles," and the object of it is to show that all men are subject to the influence of three blind guides, Love, Fortune, and Death, before whom several persons are whimsically made to dance. It is a dialogue in a dream between the Author and Understanding, and the respective blind guides describe themselves, their nature, and power over mankind, in ten-line stanzas, of which the following is the first of those which are pronounced by Death:—

Je suis la Mort de nature ennemie,
Qui tous vivans finablement consomme,
Anichillant à tous humains la vie,
Reduis en terre et en cendre tout homme.
Je suis la mort qui dure me surnomme,