

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, cujuscuque 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,

Florib
Expoli
Quam
Ieta ca
Et qua
Longæ
Omnia

Quid f
Gesto

Quid f

En ego
Et cœl

Cardin
Mors n

Insula
Posside
Me dic
Expert
Causid
Hos eg
Ecclesi
Sed sat
Agricol
Non ta

Ecclesi
Muneri
Compt
Sacra,
Talur
Morte

En ego

En par

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 sceptræ potentum.

REX RHOMANUS.

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

PAPA.

En ego Pontificum primus, signansque resignans.
 Et cælos 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.

ECCLESIE PRÆLATUS.

Ecclesiæ prælatus 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 aede sacra : scortum mihi charius ipsa
Est animæ cura populi. Mors te manet ergo.

ABBAS.

En abbas venio, Veneris quoque ventris amicus.
Cænobii 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 VESTALIIUM.

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 cælum 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 cæli.
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
NonJusti
Verti
Auri
JustiPræ
Acce
Et de
Mun
Emit
Hinc
Te mPolle
Mun
Quoc
Sacr
SedCaus
Acci
Ad f
Mut
Et n
Mor
NecEcce
Sena
Mur
Nil r
Et d
JustiQuo
Effic
Non

En e

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 cõggit
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 dura: 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 lustro
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.

NAUCLERUS.

En ego nauclerus 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 infelicio 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,
 Despicio cunctis, nemo est qui sublevet heu heu.
 Hinc parcat veniens mors: nam nihil auferet à me,
 Non sic evades, ditem cum paupere tollit.

FENERATOR.

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 compta, 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 lati
 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 cæli.
 Quo nos à fati ducat rex Juppiter, Amen.

Plaudite nunc, animum cuncti retinete faventes.

FINIS.

Antwerpia apud Michaelem Hillenium M.D.XXXIIII. 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 :

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.

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

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 :

" Disc 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.

³⁸ Madrid. 1779, 8vo. p. 179.

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. Guilot, who 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 quinziesme 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.

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4. Guil-
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