

CHAPTER XII.

Books in which the subject is occasionally introduced.

TO offer any thing in the shape of a perfect list of these, would be to attempt an impossibility, and therefore such only as have come under the author's immediate inspection are here presented to the curious reader. The same remark will apply to the list of single prints that follows.

There is a very singular book, printed, as supposed, about 1460, at Bamberg, by Albert Pfister. It is in German, and a sort of moral allegory in the shape of complaints against Death, with his answers to these accusations. It is very particularly described from the only known perfect copy in the royal library at Paris, by M. Camus, in vol. ii. of "Memoires de l'institut. national des sciences et arts: litterature et beaux arts," p. 6 et seq. It contains five engravings on wood, the first of which represents Death seated on a throne. Before him stands a man with an infant to complain that Death has taken the mother, who is seen wrapped in a shroud upon a tomb. The second cut represents Death also on a throne with the same person as before, making his complaint, accompanied by several other persons at the feet of Death, sorrowfully deposing the attributes of their respective conditions, and at the head of them a Pope kneeling with one knee on the ground. The third cut has two figures of Death, one of which, on foot, mows down several boys and girls; the other is on

horseback, and pursues some cavaliers, against whom he shoots his arrows. The fourth cut is in two compartments, the upper representing, as before, a man complaining to Death seated on a throne with a crown on his head. Below, on the spectator's left hand, is a convent whence several monks are issuing towards a garden encircled with hurdles, in which is a tree laden with fruit by the side of a river; a woman is seen crowning a child with a chaplet, near whom stands another female in conversation with a young man. M. Camus, in the course of his description of this cut, has fallen into a very ludicrous error. He mistakes the very plain and obvious gate of the garden, for a board, on which, he says, *several characters are engraved which may be meant to signify the arts and sciences, none of which are competent to protection against the attacks of Death.* These supposed characters, however, are nothing more than the flowered hinges, ring or knocker, and lock of the door, which stands ajar. The fifth cut is described as follows, and probably with greater accuracy than in M. Camus, by Dr. Dibdin, from a single leaf of this very curious work in the Bibliotheca Spenceriana, vol. i. p. 104, accompanied with a copy of part of it only. "Above the figures there seen sits the Almighty upon a throne, with an attendant angel on each side. He is putting the forefinger of his left hand into the centre of his right, and upon each of the hands is an eye, denoting, I presume, the omniscience of the Deity." The fac-simile cut partly corresponds with M. Camus's description of Death, and the complainant before Christ seated on a throne in a heaven interspersed with stars. The above fourth cut among these is on a single leaf in the possession of the author, which had Dr. Dibdin seen, he would not have introduced M. Camus's erroneous account of it, who has also referred to Heineken's *Idée*, &c, p. 276, where it certainly is not in the French edition of 1771. 8vo.

In the celebrated Nuremberg Chronicle, printed in that city, 1493, large folio, there is at fo. cclxiii. a fine wood-cut of three Deaths dancing hand in hand, another playing to them on a haut-boy. Below is a skeleton rising from a grave. It is inscribed *IMAGO MORTIS*.

In the "*Stultifera navis*" of Sebastian Brant, originally printed in German at Basle and Nuremberg, 1494, are several prints, finely cut on wood, in which Death is introduced. In an edition printed at Basle, 1572, 12mo. with elegant wood engravings, after the designs of Christopher Maurer, and which differ very materially from those in the early editions, there is a cut of great merit to the verses that have for their title, "*Qui alios judicat.*" It represents a man on his death bed; and as the poet's intention is to condemn the folly of those who, judging falsely or uncharitably of others, forget that they must die themselves, Death is introduced as pulling a stool from under a fool, who sits by the bed-side of the dying man. In the original cut the fool is tumbling into the jaws of hell, which, as usual, is represented by a monstrous dragon.

In the "*Calendrier des Bergers*," Paris, 1500, folio, at sign. g. 6, is a terrific figure of Death on the pale horse; and at sign. g. 5. Death in a cemetery, with crosses and monuments; in his left hand the lid of a coffin in which his left foot is placed. These cuts are not in the English translation.

"*Ortulus Rosarum*," circa 1500, 12mo. A wood-cut of Death bearing a coffin on his shoulder, leads a group consisting of a pope, a cardinal, &c.

In the dialogue "*Of lyfe and death*," at the end of "*the dialoges of creatures moralysed*," probably printed abroad without date or printer's name soon after 1500, are two engravings in wood, one representing Death appearing to a man with a falcon on his fist, the other Death with his spade leading an emperor, a king, and a

duke. The latter is not found in the Latin editions of this work, and has probably formed a part of some very old Dance of Death.

In an edition of "Boetius de consolatione," Strasburg, 1501, folio, is a figure of Death on a lean horse throwing his dart at a group of warriors.

In the "Freidanck," Strasburg, 1508, 4to, near the end is a wood-cut of a garden, in which two men and two women are feasting at a table. They are interrupted by the unexpected appearance of Death, who forcibly seizes one of the party, whilst the rest make their escape.

In the "Mortilogus" of Conrad Reitter, Prior of Nordlingen, printed at Augsburg by Erhard Oglin and Geo. Nadler, 1508, 4to. there is a wood-cut of Death in a church-yard, holding a spade with one hand and with the other showing his hour-glass to a young soldier; and another of Death shooting an arrow at a flying man.

In "Heures à l'usage de Sens," printed at Paris by Jean de Brie, 1512, 8vo. the month of December in the calendar is figured by Death pulling an old man towards a grave; a subject which is, perhaps, nowhere else to be found as a representation of that month. It is certainly appropriate, as being at once the symbol of the termination of the year and of man's life.

"In the "Chevalier de la Tour," printed by Guillaume Eustace, Paris, 1514, folio, there is an allegorical cut, very finely engraved on wood, at fo. xxii. nearly filling the page. The subject is the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, the gate of which exhibits a regular entrance, with round towers and portcullis. Behind this gate is seen the forbidden tree, at the bottom of which is the Devil, seemingly rejoicing at the expulsion, with an apple in his hand. Near the gate stands the angel with his sword, and a cross on his head. Between

him and the parties expelled is a picturesque figure of Death with a scythe ready for action.

“*Horæ ad usum Romanum*,” printed for Geoffrey Tory of Tours, 1525. Before the *Vigiliæ Mortuorum* is a wood-cut of a winged Death holding a clock in one hand; with the other he strikes to the ground and tramples on several men and women. Near him is a tree with a crow uttering *CRAS CRAS*. In another edition, dated 1527, is a different cut of a crowned figure of Death mounted on a black mule and holding a scythe and hour-glass. He is trampling on several dead bodies, and is preceded by another Death, armed also with a scythe, whilst a third behind strikes the mule, who stops to devour one of the prostrate figures. Above is a crow.

In a beautiful *Officium Virg.* printed at Venice, 1525, 12mo. is a vignette of Death aiming an arrow at a group consisting of a pope, cardinal, &c. Another Death is behind, on the spectator’s left.

In “*Heures de Notre Dame mises en reyne, &c.*” par Pierre Gringoire, 1527, 8vo. there is a cut at fo. lx. before the *vigilles de la mort*, of a king lying on a bier in a chapel with tapers burning, several mourners attending, and on the ground a pot of holy water. A hideous figure of Death holding a scythe in one hand and a horn in the other, tramples on the body of the deceased monarch.

In a folio missal for the use of Salisbury, printed at Paris by Francis Regnault, 1531, there is a singular cut prefixed to the *Officium Mortuorum*, representing two Deaths seizing a body that has the horrible appearance of having been some time in its grave.

In a Flemish metrical translation of Pope Innocent III.’s work, “*De vilitate conditionis humanæ*,” Ghend, 1543, 12mo. there is a wood-cut of Death emerging from hell, armed with a dart and a three-pronged fork,

with which he attacks a party taking their repast at a table.

In the cuts to the Old Testament, beautifully engraved on wood by Solomon or le petit Bernard, Lyons, 1553, 12mo. Death is introduced in the vision of Ezeziel, ch. xxxvii. In this work the expulsion from Paradise is imitated from the same subject in the Lyons wood-cuts.

In "Hawes's History of Graund Amoure and la bel Pucell, called the Pastime of Pleasure," printed by R. Tottel, 1555, 4to. are two prints; the first exhibits a female seated on a throne, in contemplation of several men and animals, some of whom are lying dead at her feet; behind the throne Death is seen armed with a dart, which he seems to have been just making use of: there is no allusion to it in the text, and it must have been intended for some other work. The second print has two figures of Death and a young man, whom he threatens with a sort of mace in his right hand, whilst he holds a pickaxe with his left.

"Imagines elegantissimæ quæ multum lucis ad intelligendos doctrinæ Christianæ locos adferre possunt, collectæ à Johann Cogelero verbi divini ministro, Stetini." Viteberg, 1560, 12mo. It contains a wood-print, finely executed, of the following subject. In the front Death, armed with a hunting-spear, pushes a naked figure into the mouth of hell, in which are seen a pope and two monks. Behind this group, Moses, with a pair of bulls' horns, and attended by two Jews, holds the tables of the law. In the distance the temptation, and the brazen serpent.

A German translation of the well known block book, the "Ars Moriendi," was printed at Dilingen, 1569, 12mo. with several additional engravings on wood. It is perhaps the last publication of the work. On the title-page is an oval cut, representing a winged boy sleeping on a scull, and Death shooting an arrow at him. The

first cut exhibits a sort of Death's dance, in eight small compartments. 1. A woman in bed just delivered of a child, with which Death is running away. 2. A man sitting at a table, Death seizes him behind, and pulls him over the bench on which he is sitting. 3. Death drowning a man in a river. 4. Flames of fire issue from a house, Death tramples on a man endeavouring to escape. 5. Two men fighting, one of whom pierces the other with his sword. The wounded man is seized by Death, the other by the Devil. 6. A man on horseback is seized by Death also mounted behind. 7. Death holds his hour-glass to a man on his death-bed. 8. Death leading an aged man to the grave. At the end of this curious volume is a singular cut, intitled "Symbolum M. Joannis Stotzinger Presbyteri Dilingensis." It exhibits a young man sitting at a table, on which is a violin, music books, and an hour-glass. On the table is written *RESPICE FINEM*. Near him his guardian angel holding a label, inscribed *ANGELVS ASTAT*. Behind them Death about to strike the young man with his dart, and over him *MORS MINATVR*. At the end of the table Conscience as a female, whom a serpent bites, with the label *CONSCIENTIA MORDET*, and near her the Devil, with the label *DIABOLVS ACCVSAT*. Above is the Deity looking down, and the motto *DEVS VIDET*.

"Il Cavallero Determinado," Antwerp, 1591, 4to. A translation from the French romance of Olivier de la Marche, with etchings by Vander Borcht. The last print represents Death, armed with a coffin lid as a shield, attacking a knight on horseback. In several of the other prints Death is represented under the name of Atropos, as president in tournaments. In other editions the cuts are on wood by the artist with the mark *A*.

In the margins of some of the *Horæ*, printed by Thielman Kerver, there are several grotesque figures of Death, independently of the usual Dance.

In many of the Bibles that have prints to the Reve-

lations, that of Death on the pale horse is to be noticed.

In Petrarch's work "de remediis utriusque fortunæ," both in the German and Latin editions, there are several cuts that relate materially to the subject. It may be as well to mention that this work has been improperly ascribed to Petrarch.

In many of the old editions of Petrarch's works which contain the triumphs, that of Death is usually accompanied with some terrific print of Death in a car drawn by oxen, trampling upon all conditions of men from the pope to the beggar.

"Guilleville, Pelerin de la vie humaine." The pilgrim is conducted by Abstinence into a refectory, where he sees many figures of Death in the act of feeding several persons sitting at table. These are good people long deceased, who during their lives have been bountiful to their fellow-creatures. At the end, the pilgrim is struck by Death with two darts whilst on his bed.

Death kicking at a man, his wife, and child. From some book printed at Strasburg in the 16th century.

Death, as an ecclesiastic, sitting on the ground and writing in a book. Another Death holding an inscribed paper in one hand, seizes with the other a man pointing to a similar paper. The Deity in a cloud looking on. From the same book.

"Mors," a Latin comedy, by William Drury, a professor of poetry and rhetoric in the English college at Douay. It was acted in the refectory of the college and elsewhere, and with considerable applause, which it very well deserved. There is as much, and sometimes more, wit and humour in it than are found in many English farces. It was printed at Douay, 1628, 12mo. with two other Latin plays, but not of equal interest.

A moral and poetical Drama, in eleven scenes, intitled, "Youth's Tragedy, by T. S." 1671 and 1707, 4to. in which the interlocutors are, Youth, the Devil,

Wisdom, Time, Death, and the Soul. It is miserable stuff.

“La Historia della Morte,” Trevigi, 1674, 4to. four leaves only. It is a poem in octave stanzas. The author, wandering in a wood, is overwhelmed with tears in reflecting on the approach of Death and his omnipotent dominion over mankind. He is suddenly accosted by the king of terrors, who is thus described :

Un ombra mi coperse prestamente
 Che mi fece tremar in cotal sorte
 Ell'era magra, e longa in sua figura,
 Che chi la vede perde gioco, e festa,
 Dente d'acciaio haveva in bocca oscura,
 Corna di ferro due sopra la testa
 Ella mi fe tremar dalla paura, &c.

The work consists of a long dialogue between the parties. The author enquires of Death if he was born of father and mother. Death answers that he was created by Jesus Christ, “che e signor giocondo,” with the other angels; that after Adam's sin he was called *Death*. The author tells him that he seems rather to be a malignant spirit, and presses for some further information. He is referred to the Bible, and the account of David's destroying angel :

Quando Roma per me fu tribolata
 Gregorio videmi con suo occhio honesto
 Con una spada ch'era insanguinata
 Al castel de Sant Angelo chiamato
 Da l' hora in qua cosi fu appellato.

This corresponds with the usual story, that during a plague Gregory saw an angel hovering over the castle, who, on the Pope's looking up to him, immediately sheathed his flaming sword. More questions are then propounded by Death, particularly as to the use of his horns and teeth, and the curiosity of the author is most condescendingly gratified.

Bishop Warburton and Mr. Malone have referred to

old Moralities, in which the fool escaping from the pursuit of Death is introduced. Ritson has denied the existence of any such farces, and he is perhaps right with respect to printed ones; but vestiges of such a drama were observed several years ago at the fair of Bristol by the present writer. See the notes to *Measure for Measure*, Act iii. sc. 1, and to *Pericles*, Act iii. sc. 2.

In "*Musart Adolescens Academicus sub institutione Salomonis*," Duaci, 1633, 12mo. is an engraving on copper of a modern Bacchus astride upon a wine cask drawn by two tigers. In one hand he holds a thyrsus composed of grapes and vine leaves, and in the other a cup or vase, from which a serpent springs, to indicate poison. Behind this Bacchus Death is seated, armed with his scythe and lying in wait for him. The motto, "*Vesani calices quid non fecere*," a parody on the line, "*Fecundi calices quem non fecere disertum?*" Horat. lib. i. epist. v. l. 19.

In "*Christopher Van Sichem's Bibels' Tresoor*," 1646, 4to. there is a wood-cut of Death assisting Adam to dig the ground, partly copied from the subject of "*the Curse*," in the work printed at Lyons.

In "*De Chertablon, maniere de se bien preparer à la mort, &c.*" Anvers, 1700, 4to. there is an allegorical print in which a man is led by his guardian angel to the dwelling of Faith, Hope, and Charity, but is violently seized by Death, who points to his last habitation, in the shape of a sepulchral monument.

In Luyken's "*Onwaardige wereld*," Amst. 1710, 12mo. are three allegorical engravings relating to this subject.

In a very singular book, intitled "*Confusio disposita rosis rhetorico-poeticis fragrans, sive quatuor lusus satyrico morales, &c. authore Josepho Melchiore Francisco a Glarus, dicto Tschudi de Greplang.*" Augsburg, 1725, 12mo. are the following subjects. 1. The world

as Spring, represented by a fine lady in a flower-garden, Death and the Devil behind her. 2. Death and the Devil lying in wait for the miser. 3. Death and the Devil hewing down the barren fig-tree. 4. A group of dancers at a ball interrupted by Death. 5. Death striking a lady in bed attended by her waiting maid. 6. Death gives the coup-de-grace to a drunken fellow who had fallen down stairs. 7. Death mounted on a skeleton-horse dashes among a group of rich men counting their gold, &c. 8. A rich man refused entrance into heaven. He has been brought to the gate in a sedan chair, carried by a couple of Deaths in full-bottom periwigs.

In Luyken's "Vonken der lief de Jezus," Amst. 1727, 12mo. are several engravings relating to the subject. In one of them Death pours a draught into the mouth of a sick man in bed.

In Moncrief's "March of Intellect," 1830, 18mo. scene a workhouse, Death brings in a bowl of soup, a label on the ground, inscribed "Death in the pot." An engraving in wood after Cruikshank.

In Jan Huygen's "Beginselen van Gods koninryk," Amst. 1738, 12mo. with engravings by Luyken, a dying man attended by his physician and friends; Death at the head of the bed eagerly lying in wait for him.

In one of the livraisons of "Goethe's Balladen und Romanzen," 1831, in folio, with beautiful marginal decorations, there is a Dance of Death in a church-yard, accompanied with a description, of which an English translation is inserted in the "Literary Gazette" for 1832, p. 731, under the title of "The Skeleton Dance," with a reference to another indifferent version in the "Souvenir."

The well-known subjects of Death and the old man with the bundle of sticks, &c. and Cupid and Death in many editions of Æsopian fables.