

CHAPTER XVI.

Paintings.—Drawings.—Miscellaneous.

RENE of Anjou is said to have painted a sort of Death's Dance at Avignon, which was destroyed in the French revolution.

In one of the wardrobe accounts of Henry VIII. a picture at Westminster is thus described: "Item, a table with the picture of a woman playing upon a lute, and an old manne holding a glasse in th' one hande and a deadde mannes headde in th' other hande." MS. Harl. No. 1419.

A round painting in oil, by or from Hans Holbein. The subject, an old man making love to a young girl. Death pulling him back, hints at the consequences, whilst the absurdity is manifested by the presence of a fool, with cockscomb and bauble, on the other side. Diameter, 15 inches. From the striking resemblance in the features of the old lover to those of Erasmus, there is no doubt that Holbein intended by this group to retort upon his friend, who, on one of the drawings which Holbein had inserted in a copy of Erasmus's Praise of Folly, now in the public library at Basle, and which represented a fat epicure at table embracing a wench, had written the name of HOLBEIN, in allusion to his well-known intemperance. In the present writer's possession.

The small painting by Isaac Oliver, from Holbein, formerly at Whitehall, of Death with a green garland, &c. already more particularly described at p. 145.

A small painting in oil, by Old Franks, of a gouty

old miser startled at the unexpected appearance of Death, who approaches him playing on a violin, one of his feet resting on an hour-glass. In the distance, and in another room, Death is seen in conversation with a sitting gentleman. Upright, $7\frac{1}{2}$ by $5\frac{1}{2}$.

The same subject, painted in oil by Otho Vænius, in which a guitar is substituted for the violin. This picture was in the collection of Richard Cosway, Esquire. Upright, 12 by 6. and is now belonging to the present writer.

A Mr. Knowles, a modern artist, is said to have painted a miser counting his hoard, and Death putting an extinguisher over him.

At p. 460 of the memoirs of that most ingenious artist, Charles Alfred Stothard, by his widow, mention is made of an old picture at Nettlecombe Hall, Somersetshire, belonging to its owner, a clergyman, of a Dance of Death.

Mr. Tyssen, a bookseller at Bristol, is said to possess a will of the 15th century, in which the testator bequeaths a painting of the Dance of Death.

DRAWINGS.

In a beautifully illuminated Psalter, supposed to have been made for Richard II. and preserved among the Cotton MSS. Domit. xvii. is a very singular painting, representing part of the choir of a cathedral, with ten monks sitting in their stalls, and chaunting the service. At the top of these stalls, and behind it, are five grotesque Deaths looking down on the monks. One of the Deaths has a cardinal's hat, two have baronial crowns on their heads, and those of the remaining two are decorated with a sort of imperial crowns, shaped like the papal tiara. A priest celebrates mass at the altar, before which another priest or monk prostrates himself. What the object of the painter was in the

introduction of these singular figures of Death is difficult to comprehend.

In the manuscript and illuminated copies of the "Romance of the Rose," the "Pelerin de la vie humaine" and the "Chevalier Deliberé," representations of Death as Atropos, are introduced.

A very ancient and masterly drawing of Death and the beggar, the outlines black on a blue ground, tinted with white and red. The figures $\mathcal{R}\mathcal{R}$ at bottom indicate its having been part of a Macaber Dance. Upright, $5\frac{1}{4}$ by 4. In the author's possession.

Sir Thomas Lawrence had four very small drawings by Callot that seemed to be part of an intended series of a Dance of Death. 1. Death and the bishop. 2. Death and the soldier. 3. Death and the fool. 4. Death and the old woman.

An extremely fine drawing by Rembrandt of four Deaths, their hands joined in a dance, their faces outwards. One has a then fashionable female cap on his head, and another a cap and feather. Upright, $9\frac{1}{2}$ by $6\frac{1}{2}$. In the author's possession.

A very singular drawing in pen and ink and bistre. In the middle, a sitting figure of a naked man holding a spindle, whilst an old woman, leaning over a tub on a bench, cuts the thread which he has drawn out. Near the old woman Death peeps in behind a wall. Close to the bench is a woman sitting on the ground mending a piece of linen, a child leaning on her shoulder. On the other side is a sitting female weaving, and another woman in an upright posture, and stretching one of her hands towards a shelf. Oblong, $11\frac{1}{4}$ by 8. In the author's possession.

An anonymous drawing in pen and ink of a Death embracing a naked woman. His companion is mounted on the back of another naked female, and holds a dart in each hand. Oblong, 4 by $3\frac{1}{4}$. In the author's possession.

A single sheet, containing four subjects, skilfully drawn with a pen and tinted in Indian ink. 1. An allegorical, but unknown figure sitting on a globe, with a sort of sceptre in his right hand. Death seizes him by his garment with great vigour, and endeavours to pull him from his seat. 2. Two men eating and drinking at a table. Death, unperceived, enters the room, and levels his dart at them. 3. Death seizes two naked persons very amorously situated. 4. Death seizes a miser counting his money. In the author's possession.

Twenty-four very beautiful coloured drawings by a modern artist from those in the public library at Berne that were copied by Stettler from Kauw's drawings of the original painting by Nicolas Manuel Deutch. In the author's possession, together with lithographic copies of them that have been recently published at Berne.³⁷

A modern Indian ink drawing of a drunken party of men and women. Death above in a cloud levels his dart at them. Upright, $5\frac{1}{2}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$. In the author's possession.

A spirited drawing in Indian ink of two Deaths as pugilists with their bottle-holders. Oblong, 7 by $4\frac{1}{2}$. In the author's possession.

A pen and ink tinted drawing, intitled "The Last Drop." A female seated before a table on which is a bottle of gin or brandy. She is drinking a glass of it, Death standing by and directing his dart at her. In the author's possession.

Mr. Dagley, in the second edition of his "Death's Doings," p. 7, has noticed some very masterly designs chalked on a wall bordering the road from Turnham-Green towards Kew-Bridge. They exhibited figures of Death as a skeleton ludicrously occupied

³⁷ See before, in p. 46.

with gamblers, dancers, boxers, &c. all of the natural size. They were unfortunately swept away before any copies were made to perpetuate them, as they well deserved. It was stated in *The Times* newspaper that these sketches were made by a nephew of Mr. Baron Garrow, then living in retirement near the spot, but who afterwards obtained a situation in India. These drawings were made in 1819.

Four very clever coloured drawings by Rowlandson, being probably a portion of an unfinished series of a *Death's Dance*. 1. *The Suicide*. A man seated near a table is in the act of discharging a pistol at his head. The sudden and terrific appearance of Death, who, starting from behind a curtain, significantly stares at him through an eye-glass. One of the candles is thrown down, and a wine-glass jerked out of the hand of the suicide, who, from a broken sword and a hat with a cockade, seems intended for some ruined soldier of fashion. A female servant, alarmed at the report of the pistol, rushes into the apartment. Below, these verses :

Death smiles, and seems his dart to hide,
When he beholds the suicide.

2. *The Good Man, Death, and the Doctor*. A young clergyman reads prayers to the dying man ; the females of his family are shedding tears. Death unceremoniously shoves out the physician, who puts one hand behind him, as expecting a fee, whilst with the other he lifts his cane to his nostrils. Below, these lines :

No scene so blest in Virtue's eyes,
As when the man of virtue dies.

3. *The Honey-moon*. A gouty old fellow seated on a sofa with his youthful bride, who puts her hand through a window for a military lover to kiss it. A table covered with a desert, wine, &c. Death, stretching over a screen, pours something from a bottle into

the glass which the husband holds in his hand. Below, these verses :


When the old fool has drunk his wine,
And gone to rest, I will be thine.

4. The Fortune-teller. Some females enter the conjurer's study to have their fortunes told. Death seizes the back of his chair and oversets him. Below, these verses :

All fates he vow'd to him were known,
And yet he could not tell his own.

These drawings are oblong, 9 by 5 inches. In the author's possession.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A circular carving on wood, with the mark of Hans Schaufelin , representing Death seizing a naked female, who turns her head from him with a very melancholy visage. It is executed in a masterly manner. Diameter, 4 inches. In the author's possession.

In Boxgrove church, Sussex, there is a splendid and elaborately sculptured monument of the Lords Delawar; and on the side which has not been engraved in Mr. Dallaway's history of the county, there are two figures of Death and a female, wholly unconnected with the other subjects on the tomb. These figures are 9½ inches in height, and of rude design. Many persons will probably remember to have seen among the ballads, &c. that were formerly, and are still exhibited on some walls in the metropolis, a poem, intitled "Death and the Lady." This is usually accompanied with a wood-cut, resembling the above figures. It is proper to mention likewise on this occasion the old alliterative poem in Bishop Percy's famous manuscript, intitled *Death and Liffe*, the subject of which is a vision

wherein the poet sees a contest for superiority between "our Lady Dame Life," and the "ugly fiend, Dame Death." See "Percy's Reliques of ancient English poetry," in the Essay on the Metre of Pierce Plowman's Vision. Whether there may have been any connexion between these respective subjects must be left to the decision of others. There is certainly some reason to suppose so.

The sculptures at Berlin and Fescamp have been already described.

Among the subjects of tapestry at the Tower of London, the most ancient residence of our kings, was "the Dance of Macabre." See the inventory of King Henry VIII.'s Guardrobe, &c. in MS. Harl. 1419, fo. 5.

Two panes of glass with a portion of a Dance of Death. 1. Three Deaths, that appear to have been placed at the beginning of the Dance. Over them, in a character of the time of Henry VII. these lines :

. . . ev'ry man to be contented w^t his chaunce,
And when it shall please God to folowe my daunce.

2. Death and the Pope. No verses. Size, upright, 8½ by 7 inches. In the author's possession. They have probably belonged to a Macaber Dance in the windows of some church.