

DESCRIPTION OF THE LYONS WOOD-CUTS
OF THE
DANCE OF DEATH.

The Copies have been made by MR. BONNER from the Cuts belonging to the "Imagines Mortis, Lugduni sub scuto Coloniensi, 1547," 12mo. and which have been usually ascribed to Holbein.

1. THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS. The Deity is seen taking Eve from the side of Adam. "Formavit Dominus Deus hominem de limo terræ, &c." Gen. i.

2. THE TEMPTATION. Eve has just received the forbidden fruit from the serpent, who, on the authority of venerable Bede, is here, as well as in most ancient representations of the subject, depicted with a female human face. She holds it up to Adam, and entices him to gather more of it from the tree. "Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuæ, et comedisti de ligno, &c." Gen. iii.

3. THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE. Adam and Eve are preceded by Death, who plays on a vielle, or beggar's lyre, as if demonstrating his joy at the victory he has obtained over man. "Emisit eum Dominus Deus de Paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur terram de qua sumptus est." Gen. iii.

4. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL OF MAN. Adam is digging the ground, assisted by Death. In the distance Eve is suckling her first-born and holding a distaff. Whence the proverb in many languages:

When Adam delv'd and Eve span
Where was then the gentleman?

"Maledicta terra in opere tuo, in laboribus comedes cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ, donec revertaris, &c." Gen. iii.

5. A CEMETERY, in which several Deaths are assembled, most of whom are playing on noisy instruments of music, as a general summons to mortals to attend them. "Væ, væ, væ habitantibus in terra." Apoc. viii.

6. THE POPE. He is crowning an Emperor, who kneels before him, two Cardinals attending, one of whom is ludicrously personated by Death. In the back-ground are bishops, &c. Death embraces the Pope with one hand, and with the other leans on a crutch. Two grotesque Devils are introduced into the cut, one of whom hovers over the Pope, the other in the air holds a diploma, to which several seals are appended. "Moriatur sacerdos magnus." Josue xx.

7. THE EMPEROR. Seated on a throne, and attended by his courtiers, he seems to be listening to, or deciding, the complaint of a poor man who is kneeling before him, against his rich oppressor, whom the Emperor, holding the sword of justice, seems to regard with an angry countenance. Behind him Death lays hands upon his crown. "Dispone domui tuæ, morieris, enim tu, et non vives." Isaïæ xxxviii.

8. THE KING. He is sitting at his repast before a well-covered table, under a canopy studded with fleurs-de-lis. Death intrudes himself as a cupbearer, and presents the King with probably his last draught. The figure of the King seems intended as a portrait of Francis I. "Sicut et Rex hodie est, et cras morietur; nemo enim ex regibus aliud habuit." Ecclesiast. x. et Sapient. vii.

9. THE CARDINAL. There is some difficulty in ascertaining the real meaning of the designer of this subject. It has been described as the Cardinal receiving the bull of his appointment, or as a rich man making a purchase of indulgences. The latter interpretation seems warranted by the Latin motto. Death

is twisting off the Cardinal's hat. "Væ qui justificatis impium pro muneribus, et justitiam justi aufertis ab eo." *Isaïæ v.*

10. THE EMPRESS. Gorgeously attired and attended by her maids of honour, she is intercepted in her walk by Death in the character of a shrivelled old woman, who points to an open grave, and seems to say, "to this you must come at last." "Gradients in superbia potest Deus humiliare." *Dan iv.*

11. THE QUEEN. She has just issued from her palace, when Death unexpectedly appears and forcibly drags her away. Her jester, in whose habiliments Death has ludicrously attired himself, endeavours in vain to protect his mistress. A female attendant is violently screaming. Death holds up his hour-glass to indicate the arrival of the fatal hour. "Mulieres opulentæ surgite, et audite vocem meam: post dies et annum, et vos conturbemini." *Isaïæ xxxii.*

12. THE BISHOP. Quietly resigned to his fate he is led away by Death, whilst the loss of the worthy Pastor is symbolically deplored by the flight and terror of several shepherds in the distance amidst their flocks. The setting sun is very judiciously introduced. "Percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves gregis." *Mat. xxvi. Mar. xiv.*

13. THE DUKE. Attended by his courtiers, he is accosted in the street for charity by a poor beggar woman with her child. He disdainfully turns aside from her supplication, whilst Death, fantastically crowned with leaves, unexpectedly lays violent hands upon him. "Princeps induetur moerore, et quiescere faciam superbiam potentium." *Ezech. viii.*

14. THE ABBÔT. Death having despoiled him of his mitre and crosier, drags him away. The Abbot resists with all his might, and is about to throw his breviary

at his adversary. "Ipse morietur, quia non habuit disciplinam, et in multitudine stultitiæ suæ decipietur."

15. THE ABBESS. Death, grotesquely crowned with flags, seizes the poor Abbess by her scapulary. A Nun at the convent gate, with uplifted hands, bewails the fate of her superior. "Laudavi magis mortuos quam viventes." Eccles. iv.

16. THE GENTLEMAN. He vainly, with uplifted sword, endeavours to liberate himself from the grasp of Death. The hour-glass is placed on his bier. "Quis est homo qui vivet, et non videbit mortem, eruet animam suam de manu inferi?"

17. THE CANON. Death holds up his hour-glass to him as he is entering a cathedral. They are followed by a noble person with a hawk on his fist, his buffoon or jester, and a little boy. "Ecce appropinquat hora." Mat. xxvi.

18. THE JUDGE. He is deciding a cause between a rich and a poor man. From the former he is about to receive a bribe. Death behind him snatches his staff of office from one of his hands. "Disperdam judicem de medio ejus." Amos ii.

19. THE ADVOCATE. The rich client is putting a fee into the hands of the dishonest lawyer, to which Death also contributes, but reminds him at the same time that his glass is run out. To this admonition he seems to pay little regard, fully occupied in counting the money. Behind this group is the poor suitor, wringing his hands, and lamenting that his poverty disables him from coping with his wealthy adversary. "Callidus vidit malum, et abscondit se: innocens pertransiit, et afflictus est damno." Prover. xxii.

20. THE MAGISTRATE. A Demon is blowing corruption into the ear of a magistrate, who has turned his back on a poor man, whilst he is in close conversa-

tion with another person, to whose story he seems emphatically attentive. Death at his feet with an hour-glass and spade. "Qui obturat aurem suam ad clamorem pauperis, et ipse clamabit, et non exaudietur." Prover. xxi.

21. THE PREACHER. Death with a stole about his neck stands behind the preacher, and holds a jaw-bone over his head, typifying perhaps thereby that he is the best preacher of the two. "Væ qui dicitis malum bonum, et bonum malum: ponentes tenebras lucem, et lucem tenebras: ponentes amarum in dulce, et dulce in amarum." Isaïæ v.

22. THE PRIEST. He is carrying the viaticum, or sacrament, to some dying person. Attendants follow with tapers and holy water. Death strides on before, with bell and lantern, to announce the coming of the priest. "Sum quidem et ego mortalis homo." Sap. vii.

23. THE MENDICANT FRIAR. He is just entering his convent with his money box and wallet. Death seizes him by the cowl, and forcibly drags him away. "Sedentes in tenebris, et in umbra mortis, vinctos in mendicitate." Psal. cvi.

24. THE NUN. Here is a mixture of gallantry and religion. The young lady has admitted her lover into her apartment. She is kneeling before an altar, and hesitates whether to persist in her devotions or listen to the amorous music of the young man, who, seated on a bed, touches a theorbo lute. Death extinguishes the candles on the altar, by which the designer of the subject probably intimates the punishment of unlawful love. "Est via quæ videtur homini justa: novissima autem ejus deducunt hominem ad mortem." Prover. iv.

25. THE OLD WOMAN. She is accompanied by two Deaths, one of whom, playing on a stickado, or

wooden psalter, precedes her. She seems more attentive to her rosary of bones than to the music, whilst the other Death impatiently urges her forward with blows. "*Melior est mors quam vita.*" *Eccle. xxx.*

26. THE PHYSICIAN. He holds out his hand to receive, for inspection, a urinal which Death presents to him, and which contains the water of a decrepid old man whom he introduces, and seems to say to the physician "Canst thou cure this man who is already in my power?" "*Medice cura te ipsum.*" *Luc. iv.*

27. THE ASTROLOGER. He is seen in his study, looking attentively at a suspended sphere. Death holds out a skull to him, and seems, in mockery, to say, "Here is a better subject for your contemplation." "*Indica mihi si nosti omnia. Sciebas quod nasciturus esses, et numerum dierum tuorum noveras?*" *Job xxxviii.*

28. THE MISER. Death has burst into his strong room, where he is sitting among his chests and bags of gold, and, seated on a stool, deliberately collects into a large dish the money on the table which the Miser had been counting. In an agony of terror and despair, the poor man seems to implore forbearance on the part of his unwelcome visitor. "*Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam: et quæ parasti, cujus erunt?*" *Lucæ xii.*

29. THE MERCHANT. After having escaped the perils of the sea, and happily reached the wished-for shore with his bales of merchandize; this too secure adventurer, whilst contemplating his riches, is surprised by Death. One of his companions holds up his hands in despair. "*Qui congregat thesauros lingua mendacii, vanus et excors est, et impingetur ad laqueos mortis.*" *Proverb. xxi.*

30. THE SHIP IN A TEMPEST. Death is vigorously employed in breaking the mast. The owner of

the vessel is wringing his hands in despair. One man seems perfectly resigned to his impending fate. "Qui volunt ditescere, incidunt in tentationem et laqueum, et cupiditates multas, stultas ac noxias, quæ demergunt homines in exitium et interitum." 1 ad Tim. vi.

31. THE KNIGHT. After escaping the perils in his numerous combats, he is vanquished by Death, whom he ineffectually resists. "Subito morientur, et in media nocte turbabuntur populi, et auferent violentum absque manu." Job xxxiv.

32. THE COUNT. Death, in the character of a ragged peasant, revenges himself against his proud oppressor by crushing him with his own armour. On the ground lie a helmet, crest, and flail. "Quoniam cum interierit non sumet secum omnia, neque cum eo descendet gloria ejus." Psal. xlvi.

33. THE OLD MAN. Death leads his aged victim to the grave, beguiling him with the music of a dulcimer. "Spiritus meus attenuabitur, dies mei breviantur, et solum mihi superest sepulchrum." Job xvii.

34. THE COUNTESS. She receives from an attendant the splendid dress and ornaments with which she is about to equip herself. On a chest are seen a mirror, a brush, and the hour-glass of Death, who, standing behind her, places on her neck a collar of bones. "Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendant." Job xxi.

35. THE NEW-MARRIED LADY. She is accompanied by her husband, who endeavours to divert her attention from Death, who is insidiously dancing before them and beating a tambour. "Me et te sola mors separabit." Ruth i.

36. THE DUCHESS. She is sitting up, dressed, in her bed, at the foot of which are two Deaths, one of

whom plays on a violin, the other is pulling the clothes from the bed. "De lectulo, super quem ascendisti, non descendes, sed morte morieris." 4 Reg. i.

37. THE PEDLAR. Accompanied by his dog, and heavily laden, he is proceeding on his way, when he is intercepted by Death, who forcibly pulls him back. Another Death is playing on a trump-marine. "Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis, et onerati estis." Matth. xi.

38. THE HUSBANDMAN. He is assisted by Death, who conducts the horses of his plough. "In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo." Gen. iii.

39. THE CHILD. A female cottager is preparing her family mess, when Death enters and carries off the youngest of her children. "Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis: qui quasi flos egreditur, et conteritur, et fugit velut umbra." Job xiv.

40. THE SOLDIER. He is engaged in unequal combat with Death, who simply attacks him with a bone. On the ground lie some of his demolished companions. In the distance, Death is beating a drum, and leading on a company of soldiers to battle. "Cum fortis armatus custodit atrium suum, &c. Si autem fortior eo superveniens vicerit eum, universa ejus arma aufert, in quibus confidebat." Luc. xi.

41. THE GAMESTERS. Death and the Devil are disputing the possession of one of the gamblers, whom both have seized. Another seems to be interceding with the Devil on behalf of his companion, whilst a third is scraping together all the money on the table. "Quid prodest homini, si universum mundum lucretur, animæ autem suæ detrimentum patiatur?" Mat. xvi.

42. THE DRUNKARDS. They are assembled in a brothel, and intemperately feasting. Death pours

liquor from a flaggon into the mouth of one of the party. "Ne inebriemini vino, in quo est luxuria." Ephes. v.

43. THE IDEOT FOOL. He is mocking Death, by putting his finger in his mouth, and at the same time endeavouring to strike him with his bladder-bauble. Death smiling, and amused at his efforts, leads him away in a dancing attitude, playing at the same time on a bag-pipe. "Quasi agnus lasciviens, et ignorans, nescit quod ad vincula stultus trahatur." Prover. vii.

44. THE ROBBER. Whilst he is about to plunder a poor market-woman of her property, Death comes behind and lays violent hands on him. "Domine vim patior." Isaïæ xxxviii.

45. THE BLIND MAN. Carefully measuring his steps, and unconscious of his perilous situation, he is led on by Death, who with one hand takes him by the cloak, both parties having hold of his staff. "Cæcus cæcum ducit: et ambo in foveam cadunt." Matt. xv.

46. THE WAGGONER. His cart, loaded with wine casks, has been overturned, and one of his horses thrown down by two mischievous Deaths. One of them is carrying off a wheel, and the other is employed in wrenching off a tie that had secured one of the hoops of the casks. The poor affrighted waggoner is clasping his hands together in despair. "Corruit in curru suo." 1 Chron. xxii.

47. THE BEGGAR. Almost naked, his hands joined together, and his head turned upwards as in the agonies of death, he is sitting on straw near the gate of some building, perhaps an hospital, into which several persons are entering, and some of them pointing to him as an object fit to be admitted. On the ground lie his crutches, and one of his legs is swathed with a

bandage. A female is looking on him from a window of the building. "Miser ego homo! quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus?" Rom. vii.

48. THE LAST JUDGMENT. Christ sitting on a rainbow, and surrounded by a group of angels, patriarchs, &c. rests his feet on a globe of the universe. Below, are several naked figures risen from their graves, and stretching out their hands in the act of imploring judgment and mercy. "Memorare novissima, et in æternum non peccabis." Eccle. vii.

49. THE ALLEGORICAL ESCUTCHEON OF DEATH. The coat or shield is fractured in several places. On it is a skull, and at top the crest as a helmet surmounted by two arm bones, the hands of which are grasping a ragged piece of stone, and between them is placed an hour-glass. The supporters are a gentleman and lady in the dresses of the times. In the description of this cut Papillon has committed some very absurd mistakes, already noticed in p. 110.