

THE PHYSICIAN OF
THE DANCE OF DEATH

ALDRED SCOTT WARTHIN

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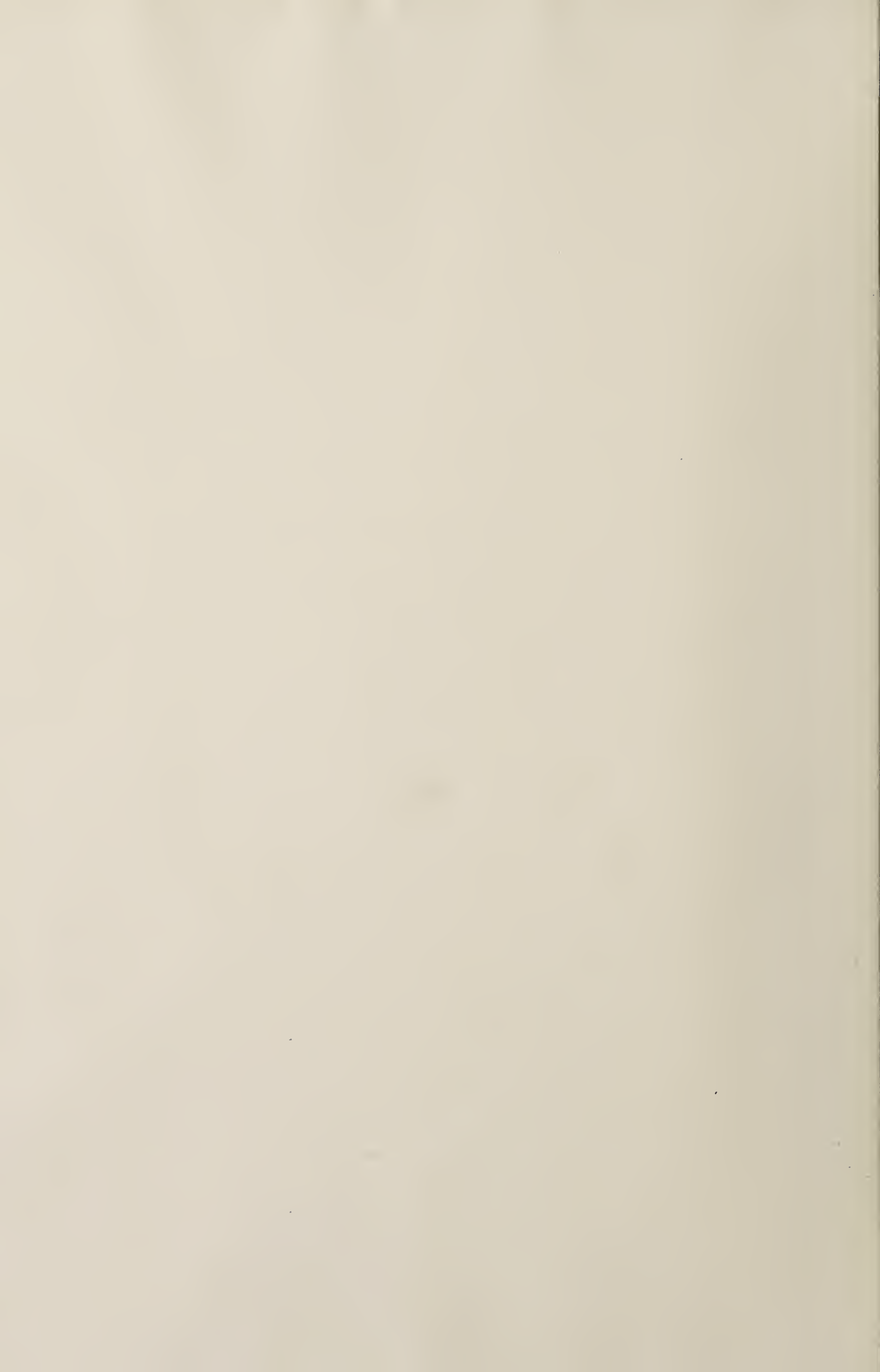
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OLD AGE. The Major Involution

PUBLISHED APRIL 1929, REPRINTED SEPT. 1930

THE CREED OF A BIOLOGIST

PUBLISHED FEB. 1930, REPRINTED MAY 1930

PAUL B. HOEBER, INC., PUBLISHERS

THE PHYSICIAN OF
THE DANCE OF DEATH

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION
OF THE DANCE OF DEATH MYTHUS IN ART

*Pallida Mors Aeque Pulsat Pede Pauperum Tabernas,
Regumque Turres.*

HORACE.



(Frontispiece)

Ritter, Tod und Teufel (Albrecht Dürer, 1513)

*Across my path though Hell should stride,
Through Death and Devil I will ride.*

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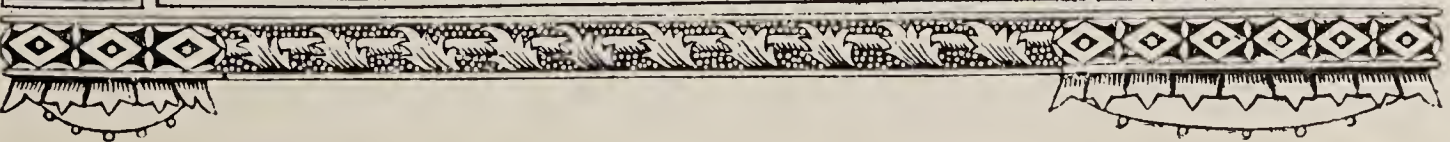
BY
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in the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

WITH 92 ILLUSTRATIONS



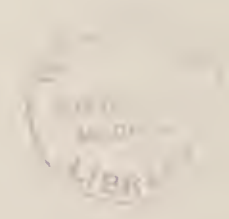
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NOS. 4, 5, 6, 1930, AND VOL. III, NOS. 1, 2, 1931).
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TO
GEORGE DOCK



FOREWORD

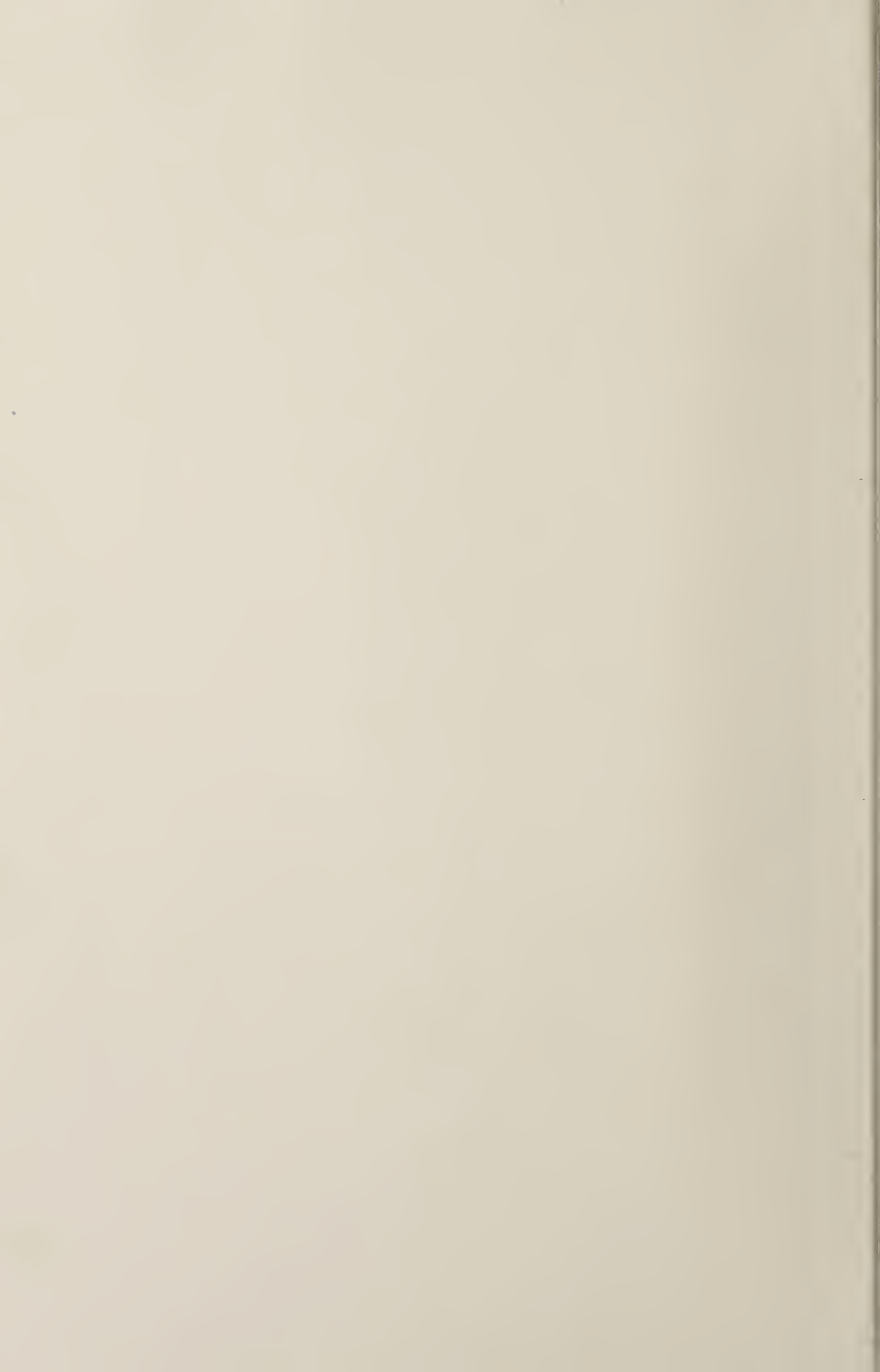


IN 1893, a young medical student on his way to Vienna passed through Nuremberg. In a shop-window, in the street leading up to the castle, a print caught his eye. It was Albrecht Dürer's "Ritter, Tod und Teufel." So deep was the impression made by it upon the susceptible, perhaps somewhat sentimental, youth, that the print at once became his own; and the brave Knight, who feared neither Death nor Devil, came to represent to him an ideal of life. For thirty-eight years this little masterpiece of Dürer has been to the writer a source of constant inspiration. It hangs today on his study wall, between Alfred Rethel's two great woodcuts, "Der Tod als Erwärger" and "Der Tod als Freund." These three prints formed the beginning of a collection of the representations of

Death in art, that eventually grew into the collection of the Dance of Death, about which this little book has been written. An interest in Death is not necessarily a morbid one. It may be either scientific or philosophic. The passing of the individual from the active scene will always be to the human mind an event of the deepest interest; much more so than his entrance into the world. The latter is a wholly uncontrolled event, but the manner of one's departure may bear a definite relationship to one's philosophy of life. This study of man's changing psychical reactions to the concept of Death, throughout six centuries, has occupied the writer, in his scattered hours of leisure, affording him much stimulating interest and mental recreation. He can wish his colleagues no greater pleasure than the pursuit of such a hobby.

ALDRED SCOTT WARTHIN.

Ann Arbor, Michigan,
March, 1931.



CONTENTS

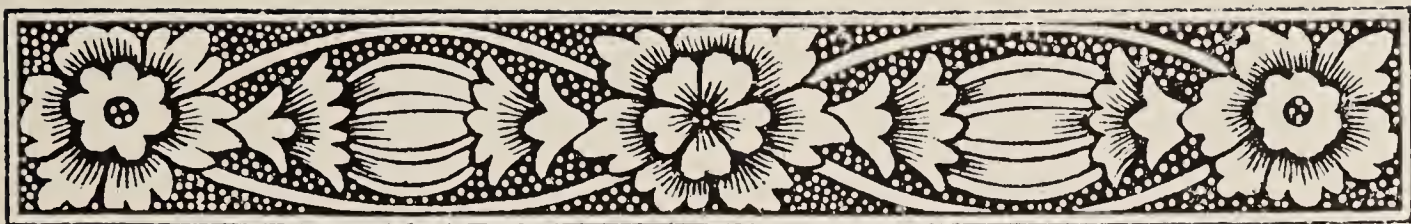
	PAGE
FOREWORD	XI
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	XV
INTRODUCTION	I
PART I: THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT WALL PAINTINGS	10
PART II: THE PRE-HOLBEIN MANUSCRIPTS, BLOCK BOOKS, AND INCUNABULA	24
PART III: HOLBEIN. THE GREAT DANCE OF DEATH OF THE RENAISSANCE	43
PART IV: THE IMITATORS OF HOLBEIN. THE ROCOCO PERIOD	57
PART V: THE PERIOD OF CARICATURE	92
PART VI: THE MODERN DANCE OF DEATH	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY IN THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION	128
REFERENCES NOT IN THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION	136
INDEX	139



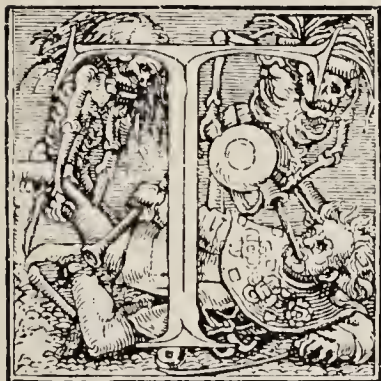
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURE	PAGE	FIGURE	PAGE
Dürer's Ritter, Tod, und Teufel.	<i>Frontispiece</i>		
1. The Dance of Death. From "Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten," Leipzig, 1723	2	28. Death and the Physician. Holbein. From <i>Les Simulachres et Historiées faces de la Mort</i> . Lyons, 1542.	48
2. Dance of Death. Ascribed to Hollar, Copied by Him from Old Woodcut in Lydgate's <i>Dance of Macaber</i> , 1554	4	29. Death and the Physician. Holbein. From <i>Simolachri, Historie e Figure de la Morte</i> . Vaugris, Venice, 1545.	50
3. "Legende von den drei Lebenden und den drei Toten." Mcister of the Amsterdam Cabinet.	6	30. Death and the Physician. Holbein. <i>Les Images de la Mort</i> . Lyons, 1547	50
4. "Trionfo della Morte." Andrea Orcagna, Campo Santo, Pisa, 1350	8	31. Pelvis of the Death from the Physician of Holbein's <i>Imagines Mortis</i>	53
5. Physician and Youth from the Paris <i>Danse Macabre</i>	12	32. Death and the Physician. Holbein's <i>Imagines Mortis</i> , Lyons, 1547.	53
6. Physician and Nobleman from the Lübeck <i>Totentanz</i>	13	33. Letter Y with Death and the Physician from Holbein's <i>Imagines Mortis</i> . de Yciar, 1555	54
7. The Physician of the Berlin <i>Totentanz</i>	14	34. Death and the Physician. Jobst Denecker, 1544	58
8. The Physician of the Klingenthal <i>Totentanz</i>	15	35. Death and the Physician. David Denecker, 1561	59
9. The Physician of the <i>Totentanz</i> in Basel	17	36. Death and the Physician. Glissenti, 1609	60
10. Head of the Physician of the <i>Totentanz</i> in Basel.	18	37. Death and the Anatomical Lecture. Glissenti, 1609	61
11. The Physician of the <i>Totentanz</i> in Berne.	19	38. End-picce to Johann Vogel's <i>Icones Mortis</i> . Paulus Fürst, 1648.	62
12. The Barber-Surgeon of the <i>Totentanz</i> in Luzern	21	39. Death and the Physician. Johann Vogel, 1648	63
13. The Physician of the <i>Totentanz</i> in Erfurt	22	40. Death and Physician. Conrad Meyers, 1650	64
14. Death and the Physician. Zimmern <i>Totentanz</i> Manuscript of the 16th Century.	26	41. Death and Physician. Hollar's <i>Mortalium Nobilitas</i> , 1651	65
15. Death and the Physician from the Heidelberg Block Book. Early 15th Century	27	42. Physician and Death. Hollar, 1794.	66
16. Death and the Physician. <i>Le Grât Dance Macabre</i> , Lyons, 1499	28	43. Physician and Death. 1804. After Rebiting of Hollar's Original Plates.	67
17. Death and the Physician. <i>La Dance Macabre</i> , Paris, 1500	29	44. Physician and Death. Solomon van Rusting. Amsterdam, 1741	68
18. Death and the Physician. <i>La Gran Danse Macabre</i> , Lyons, 1555	30	45. Death and the Physician. Michael Rentz, 1753	70
19. Dance of Death Border. From Book of Hours, 1490 (?)	30	46. Death and the Physician. Chretien de Mechel, Basel, 1780	71
20. Dance of Death Border. Book of Hours, Simon Vostre, Paris, 1502.	31	47. Death and the Physician. David Deuchar, 1788	72
21. Dance of Death Border, Paris, 1500. Simon Vostre (?).	31	48. Death and the Physician. David Deuchar, 1803	73
22. The Physician. From the Dance of Death Border of "Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book." J. Day, 1569. After the original in the British Museum	32	49. Death and the Physician. J. R. Schellenberg. Winterthur, 1785	74
23. Physician and Death. <i>Des Dodes Dantz</i> , Lübeck, 1489.	33	50. Death and the Physician. John Bewick, 1789	75
24. Death and the Physician. <i>Der Doten Dantz mit Figuren, Clage und Antwort</i> , Mainz, 1495	35	51. Death and the Physician. Thomas Bewick, 1825	76
25. Dance of Death. Schedel's "Weltchronik," Nürnberg, 1493	39	52. Death and the Physician. D. N. Chodowiecki, 1792.	77
26. <i>Die Eitelkeit</i> . Hans Baldung, about 1515. <i>Kunsthistorische Museum</i> , Vienna.	40	53. Death and the Physician. Copenhagen, 1814	79
27. The letter <i>M</i> with the Physician. From Holbein's <i>Alphabetum Mortis</i>	45	54. Death and the Physician. Fahlun, Sweden, 1838	80
		55. Death and the Physician. Alexander Anderson, Charleston, S. C., 1846.	81
		56. Death and the Physician. C. Hellmuth, Magdeburg, 1835	82

FIGURE	PAGE	FIGURE	PAGE
57. Death and the Physician. Fröhlich, Basel, 1608	83	76. Der Tod als Freund. Alfred Rethel, about 1853	109
58. Death and the Physician. Conrad de Mechel, Basel, 1724	84	77. Death and the Physician. From "Bilder des Todes," by C. Merkel, Leipzig, 1858	110
59. Death and the Physician. Matthew Merian, the Elder, Frankfort, 1649	85	78. Death and the Physician. From "Die Arbeit des Todes," by Ferdinand Barth, Munich, 1866	111
60. Death and the Physician. Lithographic Edition by Wentzel, Wissembourg, 19th Century	86	79. Death and the Army Surgeon. The Amputation. From "La Pensée de la Mort," by R. P. Ladislas, Paris, 1885	112
61. Death and the Physician. Modernized Edition of the Basel Totentanz, Locle, 1788	87	80. Death and the Old Doctor. From "La Pensée de la Mort," by R. P. Ladislas, Paris, 1885	113
62. The Quack Doctor. Rowlandson. "English Dance of Death," 1815-16	93	81. Drei Würfel: Pest—Cholera—Typhus. From "A Modern Dance of Death," by Joseph Sattler, 1893	114
63. The Good Man, Death, and the Doctor. Rowlandson. "English Dance of Death," 1815-16.	94	82. Death in the Apothecary's Shop. From "Ein Moderner Totentanz," by Tobias Weiss, Munich, 1893	115
64. The Life Insurance Office. Rowlandson. "English Dance of Death," 1815-16	95	83. Cholera. From "Ein Moderner Totentanz." By Tobias Weiss, Munich, 1893	116
65. Undertaker and Quack. Rowlandson. "English Dance of Death," 1815-16.	96	84. Death the Leech. From "The Doings of Death," by William Strang, London, 1901	117
66. Doctors Three. Rowlandson. "English Dance of Death," 1815-16	97	85. Death the Apothecary. From "Ein neuer Totentanz," by Hans Jentsch, Stuttgart, 1904	118
67. Giving Up the Ghost. Print by Rowlandson. Early 19th Century	98	86. La Mort et le Médecin. From "Nouvelle Danse Macabre," by August Hoyau, Chartres, 1904.	119
68. Death and the Physician. Van Assen. "British Dance of Death," 1825.	99	87. Death at the Fountain of Hygeia. From "Ein Totentanz," by Hans Meyer, Berlin, 1911	120
69. The Empiric. From "Death's Doings." Dagley, 1826	100	88. La Glorie. Drawing by Jean Veber, 1918	122
70. The Empiric. From the American Edition of Dagley's "Death's Doings." Boston, 1828	101	89. Death Aiding the Young Wounded Soldier. From "Ein Totentanz, 1914-1918," by Carl Wiegand. Zurich.	123
71. The Physician, Patient, and Death. From "Death's Ramble," Hull, London, 1827.	102	90. Death Awed. From "The Dance of Death, 1914-1918," by Percy Smith, 1919.	124
72. Death and the Apothecary. From "Voyage pour l'Eternité." Grandville, 1830	103	91. Death and the Anatomist. From "Ein Totentanz," by Walter Draesner. Berlin, 1922	125
73. Death and the Physician. From "Voyage pour l'Eternité." Grandville, 1830	104		
74. The Doctor Too Many for Death. Print by Collings. Early 19th Century	105		
75. Der Tod als Erwürger. Alfred Rethel, 1851	108		



INTRODUCTION



HE time is that of the late fourteenth century. The place is the cloister of the churchyard of a monastery in the upper Rhine valley. The sunlight of a September afternoon strikes slanting across the tombstones and paints geometrical patterns of pale gold upon the stone pavement of the cloister passage. On the opposite wall-spaces the reflected light illumines the dim painted pictures of a great wall fresco. On the left there is a charnel house heaped high with grinning skulls; on its steps stand two mummy-like figures of the dead, one blowing a trumpet, the other a fife and beating a drum with its right hand. Before the steps is an open grave from which skeletonized and mummified dead are springing with wild and unseemly gestures. Their slit bellies, their empty orbits and sunken noses, the protruding heads of snakes coiled in the body cavities, their shrivelled skin and muscles, all picture the repulsive features of advanced putrefaction. One sniffs the air unconsciously. Passing along the cloister there is met on the frescoed wall a strange procession of the living and the dead, hand in hand, in single file, all coming towards the open grave and the charnel house. With wild demonic glee the dead seize upon the living, and leap about in a frenzied springing dance, forcing

them to join the row, which moves on in a sort of slow polonaise advance. The living appear shocked, or sadly resigned; some of them in their drooping figures betray the advent of dissolution. Heading the procession is the Pope with his triregnum and double cross; upon the ground lies an indulgence with the papal seals. Death holds his right hand, and drums upon a skull with a thigh bone. Upon the wall is the legend:

Der Tod zum Papste:

Herr Papst, merket auf der Pfeifen Ton,
Ihr sollt darnach springen schon;
Es hilf dafür kein Dispensir'n,
Der Tod will auch den Tanz hofir'n.

Antwort des Papstes:

Ich wurde ein heil'ger Vater genannt,
Dieweil ich lebte an Furcht bekannt;
Nun werd ich geführet freventlich,
Zum Tode, ich wehr' mich üppiglich.

Then follows the Kaiser with his sword, scepter and crown.

Der Tod zum Kaiser:

Herr Kaiser, euch hilft nicht das Schwert,
Zepter und Krone sind hier unwert,
Ich hab' euch an die Hand genommen,
Ihr müsset an meinen Reigen kommen.

Antwort des Kaisers:

Ich konnte das Reich in hohen Ehren,
Mit Streiten und Fechten wohl vermehren;
Nun hat der Tod überwunden mich,
Dasz ich bin weder Kaiser noch Menschen
gleich.

Next comes a female death with long flowing hair, with the Kaiserin in hand, in the full pride of her state and beauty. With head averted and eyelids closed she unwillingly follows. After

her the King and Queen, each with their dancing attendant dead; and then the Cardinal with his red hat.

Der Tod zum Herzoge:

Habet ihr mit Frauen hoch gesprungen,
Stolzer Herzog, oder wol gesungen,



FIG. 1. THE DANCE OF DEATH. FROM "GESPRÄCHE IN DEM REICHE DERER TODTEN," LEIPZIG, 1723.

Der Tod zum Cardinal:

Springet auf mit eurem roten Hut,
Herr Cardinal, der Tanz ist gut,
Ihr habt gesegnet wohl die Laien,
Ihr müszt mit an des Todes Reihen.

Antwort des Cardinals:

Ich war mit päpstlicher Wahl,
Der heiligen Kirche Cardinal.
Nun bin ich dazu gezwungen gar,
Dasz ich tanze an des Todes Schar.

Then follow the Patriarch, the Archbishop and the Duke, each linked hand in hand with his appropriate death and with each other into the long continuous line of march.

Das müsset ihr an dem Reigen büßen,
Wol her! laszt euch die Toten grüßen.

Antwort des Herzogs;

Ich hab' die edelen Herren wert,
Als ein Herzog regieret mit dem Schwert;
Nun werd' ich in reicher Kleider Glanz,
Geswungen zu des Todes Tanz.

Next in turn the Bishop with his crook, the Count in full panoply, the Abbot and the Knight, each figure with his appropriate dialogue with the death who has seized upon him. After these come other representatives of the Church and Secular orders, and

then the Jurist, the first of the professions to be included in the Dance.

Der Tod zum Juristen:

Das Urtheil ist also gegeben,
Dasz ihr länger nicht sollt leben;
Herr Jurist, das thut des Todes Kraft,
Möget ihr so bewahren eure Meisterschaft.

Antwort des Juristen:

Kein Appeliren zu dieser Zeit,
Hilft vor des Todes hartem Streit;
Er überwind't mit seinem Geschlecht,
Das geistlich und das weltlich Recht.

A little farther on comes the Physician, who in the shock of the encounter with Death, drops and breaks the urine bottle which he had been examining.

Der Tod zum Arzte:

Herr Arzt, gebet euch selber Rat,
Mit eurer meisterlichen That;
Ich führe euch zu des Todes Gesellen,
Die mit euch hier tanzen wollen.

Antwort des Arztes:

Ich hab' mit meinem Wasserschauen,
Gesund gemacht Mann und Frauen.
Wer will nun machen mich gesund,
Ich bin doch zum Tode verwund't.

As one passes along under the cloister arches, these wall paintings reveal to us the panorama of human life: all classes of human society, all ranks and degrees of social position, man and woman, the old and the young, the great and the most humble, the rulers and the ruled, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, all professions and trades, down to the peasant, the fool and the little child—all called together to the common equality of death.

Hier richt' Gott nach dem Rechten,
Die Herren liegen bei den Knechten.
Nun merket hierbei,
Wer Herr oder Knecht gewesen sei.
Hier liegen also unsere Gebein',
Zu uns her tanzet grosz und klein.
Die ihr jetzt seid, die waren wir,
Die wir jetzt sind, die werdet ihr.

The golden September sun is sink-

ing, under the cloister arches the light grows dim, the paintings on the wall fade into vague patches of color, but still we linger, in the contemplation of the soul of the Middle Ages, so nakedly revealed in this panorama of Death. Out of the mysterious obscurity of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we feel strange ancestral influences moving our souls to a melancholy sympathy for the dark and troubled lives of our forefathers in those sad and fearful centuries—their lives passed in the daily fear and contemplation of death, in the shadow of well-nigh continuous war and pestilence.

The great folk-drama of human life displayed in this monumental wall painting constitutes the Toten Tanz or Danse Macabre motive, which for more than half a thousand years had an extraordinary vogue in the literature and art of Middle Europe. Its origin is unknown; we do not know the name of the artist who first painted a Dance of Death, or that of the poet who produced the first literary form of the motive. France apparently gave birth to the idea; and it is certain that its appearance in dramatic form preceded that of the wall paintings. Performances of a Danse Macabre play are mentioned in the literature, and the oldest known form of the poem, the Spanish "Dança general de la muerte," without illustrations, indicates clearly its origin in some dramatic form. Probably originally a Church play, performed within the church or churchyard, for the religious-didactic instruction of the people, the first form of the poem represented a dance of the living with the dead. Later the *dead* became personified as *Death*, and this personification of the skeletonized human body as representing the process of

death has persisted in our art and literature since the fourteenth century.

Many elements and many factors

through the medium of the popular woodcut. Numerous Latin poems of the eleventh and twelfth centuries



FIG. 2. THE DANCE OF DEATH. FROM HOLLAR'S PLATES AFTER HOLBEIN, LONDON, 1816. THIS PLATE IS ASCRIBED TO HOLLAR, WHO IS SAID TO HAVE COPIED IT FROM AN OLD WOODCUT PREFIXED TO LYDGATE'S DANCE OF MACABER, PRINTED BY TOTTELL IN 1554.

contributed to the origin of the Toten Tanz motive. During the early Christian centuries the *carpe diem* philosophy of the ancients gradually became replaced by that of the Christian *memento mori*. Faith became superstition in the Dark Ages among the uneducated and ignorant people; the remnants of learning and spiritual life were found only in the Church; the laity could scarcely read or write. In order to enforce its teachings of a moral life, the Church found that its most efficient method was in the emphasis laid upon Death, the Last Judgment, and the alternative future of Heaven or Hell. The inevitableness of death for all human beings, the uncertainty of its hour, and the eternity thereafter formed the favorite and most effective sermon material of the period. And such sermons were made more objective and impressive through religious dramatic spectacles, pictures and sculptures, and later

celebrated the power of death, from which no one can escape, and of life in another land beyond the grave. Among these were the celebrated "Vision Fulbert's" and the "Vado Mori" poems. The latter had existed in manuscript form since the beginning of the thirteenth century. They treat of the same theme as the Toten Tanz, the consciousness of the nearness of death from which there is no escape, the inevitable hard common lot, and the necessity for repentance before it becomes too late. In these poems a representative of each class and rank of society speaks a verse which begins and ends with "vado mori," and the thought expressed in this verse varies with the attributes of the person speaking. For example, the physician says:
Vado mori medicus, medicamine non redi-
mendus,
Quidquid agat medici pocio. Vado mori.

In the eighteenth century this poem became extremely popular throughout

the whole of central Europe, acquiring the liturgical or prayerbook significance of a veritable Litany of Death.

The most famous of the literary predecessors of the Toten Tanz was the legend of "Li trois Vifz et li trois Mors." Three knights are hunting in the forest. Suddenly they come upon three death forms who remind them of the fleeting nature of all earthly glory. In its various forms this legend, which dates from the beginning of the eleventh century, is but a variation of the same theme which underlies that of the Dance of Death motive. It appeared in numerous French, German, Italian and English manuscripts, in wood cuts, copperplates, miniatures, paintings, wood carvings and sculptures. While its main theme remained unchanged, its content became greatly varied and much enriched along the line of the Toten Tanz. The oldest and most celebrated of its pictorial representations is the famous wall painting, the "Trionfo della morte" in the Campo Santo at Pisa, dating from about 1350. In many of its literary and pictured forms it closely resembles the poems and scenes of the Dance of Death; so close is this similarity that many writers have seen in the legend of the three living and the three dead, the original source of the Toten Tanz idea. Numerous intermediate forms exist between the legend and the Dance of Death; but in spite of the close relationship between the two themes, there is no positive proof that the legend is the parent form of the Toten Tanz. Moreover, in the legend and its variants there is no hint of the association of the dance or of music with death, which is the most striking feature of all the Dances of Death proper. The explanation of this

association of Death and the Dance is the great problem of the latter. How did two things so remote from each other come to be united in this motive? Some writers refer the origin of this association to the influence of the superstition, common to all of central Europe, of the midnight dance of the dead in the churchyards. However, it is more reasonable to attribute the dialogue-form of the Toten Tanz, as well as its satire on social equality to the Visions and the Vado Mori poems. Perhaps from all of these sources there gradually evolved the motive of the Dance.

The most satisfactory explanation of the origin of the Toten Tanz motive is to be found in the psychology of the times, which constantly stressed the thought of death and the vanity of all earthly things. The Middle Ages felt the primitive horror of death, as no other epoch has done, and expressed this feeling in the concrete embodiment of Death in the form of the putrescent cadaver. Death was thought of only in its horrible and gruesome aspects; there was no conception of death as a release from suffering, or as a rest for the weary. Of the consolations of death the Middle Ages had no conception. The fixed idea of the times was the individual's fear of death for himself; the fear of the agony of death transcended all other emotions; the chief mental image was that of the transitory nature of all things. This was indeed a very materialistic conception of death. We would say now that the Middle Ages had developed a death-complex, based upon the fear of death, which it satisfied by the constant contemplation of death's most unpleasant and awful aspects, taking actual pleasure in such horrors. It was a neurotic and psycho-

pathic age, as shown in its superstitions, its religious fanaticism, its sensuality, belief in witchcraft and

offered the possibilities of salvation through righteous living. The wandering mendicant preachers made the



FIG. 3. "LEGENDE VON DEN DREI LEBENDEN UND DEN DREI TOTEN," MEISTER OF THE AMSTERDAM CABINET.

magic, its pleasure in torture, the dancing manias of the Rhine villages and in a thousand other manifestations of an unbalanced and uncontrolled mentality. To the mind of the period the visions of the Apocalypse made special appeal. A natural, though pathologic, reaction to the environment of the times! What else could be expected from minds exposed to daily contact with the danger of death; in the cities during these centuries pestilence almost day by day claimed its victims by the thousands; war and famine took also their share; and in each man's mind must have been the thought of the possibility of his impending end. Perhaps in time a certain degree of cynicism, or of actual indifference colored his feeling.

Opposed to this psychologic state of the fear of death, the Church

most of such promises in their sermons. Out of all these sources, liturgy, sermons, mystery play, legends and poems, together with the morbid psychology and superstitions of the people there evolved a great folk-cultural idea which took form ultimately in the Dance of Death as expressed in the great wall paintings and woodcuts of the period, and which, even today, retains its hold upon the imagination of man. From the very beginning this motive presented a satire on social equality, in that death makes all men equal and levels all distinctions; to this democratic concept religious and political satires were later added, especially during the Reformation period. All of these motives crystallized into an art form, in which Death personified as a skeleton collects into a chain or

“Reigen” representatives of all classes of human society, and dances with them to the grave. In its variant art forms it represents a great cultural index of nearly six centuries of human life, and its significance in the cultural evolution of modern society cannot be disregarded. It had its origin in the soul of the people; and the main themes of the Dance of Death are as potent today as ever they were, though altered in their significance; and they will retain their value for the human mind as long as the race persists.

It was thought that a study of the Physician of the Dance of Death might prove interesting, and perhaps of some value, representing as he does nearly six centuries of the development of medical knowledge and practice. From the standpoint of costume alone, such a study might be worth while, but more important than this, it should reveal something of the physician's social standing through the ages, how and what he appears to the layman, and the latter's opinion of him. It should constitute a revelation of professional manners and mannerisms, of the progress in the knowledge and practice of medicine, and give a true picture of the type of man who becomes a physician.

The oldest Dance of Death of which the date of origin is positively known is that of the wall paintings of the cloister of the Cimetière Aux Innocents in Paris, which were begun in August, 1424, and completed in the following year. Throughout the fifteenth century the Toten Tanz motive appeared on the walls of the charnel houses, cloisters, churchyards and cemeteries in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and England. Among those of which we possess definite knowledge are the frescoes of Kermaria, La

Chaise-Dieu, Klingenthal, Basel, Lübeck, Berlin, Clusone, Pizzolo, Berne, Strassburg, Luzern, Freiburg and Erfurt. The “Tod von Basel” was one of the most celebrated of these, and attracted many visitors to the old city on the Rhine, as many contemporary writings testify. The motive found representation also in paintings on wooden tablets, in tapestries and in sculptures, on clocks, drinking cups, borders of prayer books, and other objects of the most varied kind. Before the invention of printing the theme was presented in hand-illuminated manuscripts; then followed its tremendous development in woodcut and copper-plate, culminating in the Holbein masterpiece in 1530. From that time on, through the remainder of the sixteenth century, and through the next three centuries, the history of the evolution of the Toten Tanz is but that of countless imitators of Holbein who worked and reworked his formulae according to their individual conceptions of the theme. Among these later artists may be mentioned the unknown cutter of the blocks for Valgrisi's edition, DeNecker, Kieser, Meyers, Trost, de Mechel, Hollar, Rusting, Rentz, Frenzel, Deuchar and Bewick. Over one hundred editions of the Holbein cuts have appeared. Some of these many editions based upon Holbein showed much originality. In America the wood cut artist Anderson essayed an imitation of the Bewick treatment of Holbein. A second series of Dance of Death editions was based upon Matthew Merian's copies, made in 1649, of the old wall paintings in Basel. These are to be found in many editions and imprints. A third series consists of reproductions of the Danse Macabre of Guyot Marchant, the first

edition of which appeared in 1485, and to which we owe our chief knowledge of the wall paintings in the

these modern Dances of Death are but catalogues of the different forms in which Death lurks for his victims.



FIG. 4. "TRIONFA DELLA MORTE." ANDREA ORCAGNA, CAMPO SANTO, PISA, 1350.

Cemetery of the Innocents in Paris. In the early nineteenth century the Dance of Death motive became used as a vehicle for caricature, particularly in the hands of the English: Rowlandson, Van Assen, Hull and Dagley. In Germany the middle years of the last century saw the theme degenerate in the hands of uninspired artists into a mawkish sentimentality or morbidity. Rethel's work stands out as the best of this period. Lacking creative imagination to improve upon the Holbein model, the artists of the nineteenth century sought to give new interest to the theme by emphasizing the causes of death. Many of

The progress made in the material world is reflected in the successive introduction of new forms of death, as those caused by the railway train, steamboat, theatre fire, bicycle, balloon, motor car and airplane. The old original theme had lost its power of appeal, and novelty in the cause of death assumed the rôle of chief importance in creating interest in the old theme of death. It remained for the Great War to give new life to the Dance of Death in the opportunity afforded by modern warfare for the creation of an interest in horror. Some of the works of this period show true inspirational value; others show

striking realism. A further change in the modern treatment of the theme is the introduction of an altered attitude towards death, in its representation as a desired release from suffering and unhappiness. To many modern minds death has lost the horror with which the mind of the Middle Ages invested it. The modern has lost his fear of death, and meets it with resignation or bravery, or with cynical indifference. Many have lost their belief in a personal immortality; death is no longer the gate of entrance into another land, but is now regarded as the normal

termination of the natural period of involution—the end of the individual life. With such a basic change in our conceptions of life and death, any modern treatment of the Dance of Death motive must reckon.

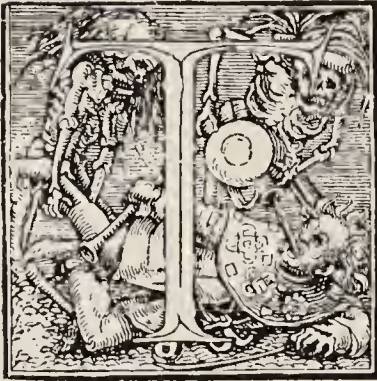
The historical treatment of the evolution of the Dance of Death falls logically into the following periods: 1, The Period of the Great Wall Paintings; 2, The Pre-Holbein Manuscripts, Block Books and the Incunabula; 3, Holbein; 4, The Imitators of Holbein; 5, The Period of Caricature; 6, The Modern Dance of Death.





PART I

THE PERIOD OF THE GREAT WALL PAINTINGS



THE first Dance of Death to which an exact date can be given is the "Danse Macabre" of the cloisters of the churchyard of the Innocents in Paris. Definite historical evidence exists that it was begun in August, 1424, and finished six months later. It has been preserved to us in the woodcut editions of 1485 and 1486 by Guyot Marchant. Of the first edition only one copy remains to the present day, and that is in Grenoble. Numerous facsimiles and reproductions have been made of the two editions; that of 1867 is probably the best for the woodcuts, for the text that of 1875. The origin of the word *Macabre*, in spite of countless investigations, is still in doubt, but it is certain that it was known in the fourteenth century as the name of the mystery play of the Totentanz. It is first mentioned in a line of the poet, Jean le Fèvre "Je fis de Macabré la dance," dating from 1376. On the authority of Dufour the artist of the Paris *Danse Macabre* was a Jehann d'Orleans, the poet Jehann Gerson. It is most probable that Gerson took the old material of the mystery play and reworked it into a form suitable for the explanation of the wall paintings. The internal evidence favors the view that its text is derived from an

earlier dramatic form, which may date back into the thirteenth century. The Spanish "Danca general de la muerte" of the fourteenth century is evidently to be traced back to the same source. The Prologue and Epilogue of the various dances of death also favor the view that the *Danse Macabre* was originally a church festival play, differing only in its special content from other festival plays, such as those of Christmas, the Epiphany, Easter and the Passion. In some special way it must have been associated with the sermons on repentance and fasting. It is probable that the French clergy seeing the deep impression made upon the people by the *Danse Macabre* play sought to make this more lasting through paintings of its various scenes on the walls of the churches and cloisters. The most recent researches confirm the opinion that the Dance of Death paintings originated in France, in the thirteenth century, developing out of the old mystery play; and that all of the paintings dealing with this theme in Germany, Italy, England and elsewhere were but imitations of the French pictures. Just how and in what form the Dance of Death was carried to other countries is not known. In England a translation of the Paris *Danse Macabre* appeared as early as 1430. The wall paintings soon had a greater vogue than the play, and gradually replaced it; its last performance took place in France in

the fifteenth century. In each country to which the Dance of Death was taken, there occurred a certain original development of the theme, in the choice and number of the scenes depicted and in the content of the accompanying text. In Germany xylographic reproductions of the pictures and text appeared in great numbers in the second half of the fifteenth century, so great was its appeal to the popular fancy.

The Marchant edition of 1485 is a true copy of the old wall paintings of the churchyard of the Innocents. Proof of this is afforded by the costumes which belong to the Paris period of 1422-1430. The secular persons wear the girdled houppelande which was worn in Paris until 1430; they do not wear the long pointed "Schnabel" shoes of the period 1350-1500. The use of the latter was sternly prohibited in Paris about the year 1422. Further, the high hat and short hair of the period 1422-1461 do not appear in these woodcuts. The costumes would therefore belong to the Paris period of 1422-1430; and as we know the actual date of the original painting to be 1424-25, it is definitely proved that the artist of 1485 did not work independently but that he faithfully copied the costumes of the original paintings. The later editions contain all that was in the first, with certain additions. There are seventeen pictures, an introductory one of the "acteur," then fifteen of the Danse Macabre proper, followed by the closing one of the "maistre" (Prediger). The paintings were arranged in ten arcades of the wall of the cloister, in groups consisting of two living and two death figures, framed in painted arches and pillars. In the group of the usurer a third person is introduced

represented in the act of taking a loan. The dramatic unity of the whole is pictorially expressed in the linking of the two pairs of living and dead in each division of the picture through the hands of the second figure of death. In its chain formation as well as in its forms of the dead, the French pictures closely follow the old dramatic structure. The order of the personages depicted is as follows: Pope, Kaiser, Cardinal, King, Patriarch, Constable, Archbishop, Knight, Bishop, Nobleman, Abbot, Warden, Astrologer, Bürger, Domherr, Merchant, Carthusian, Sergeant, Monk, Usurer, Physician, Youth, Advocate, Player, Pastor, Peasant, Franciscan, Child, Sexton and Hermit. Preceding the Maistre is the figure of a dead King, with his crown lying on the ground. This episode is evidently not taken from the old mystery play, but is undoubtedly a reminiscence of the old legend of the three living and the three dead. The clerical and secular personages alternate.

All of the living forms are presented in a quiet pose, and are recognizable chiefly by means of their costumes and general attributes. The physician and the usurer alone show professional activities, being engaged in the tricks of their trade. The dead resemble those of all the old Totentanz paintings; they have shrunken fleshy bodies, with apparently naked skulls, which, however, are not true skulls. In full front view the orbital and nasal cavities are indicated, but in the profile the whole nose is apparent. This suggests the masks worn in the old play. The great belly slit, the emaciation of the bodies, and the transverse separation of the joints are an effort at imitation of the dead body in an advanced state of putrefac-

tion. The joint articulations are not always indicated, rarely in the shoulders or upper extremities, but are necessary to repeat the death figure with each separate group. This figure of the dead sooner or later became

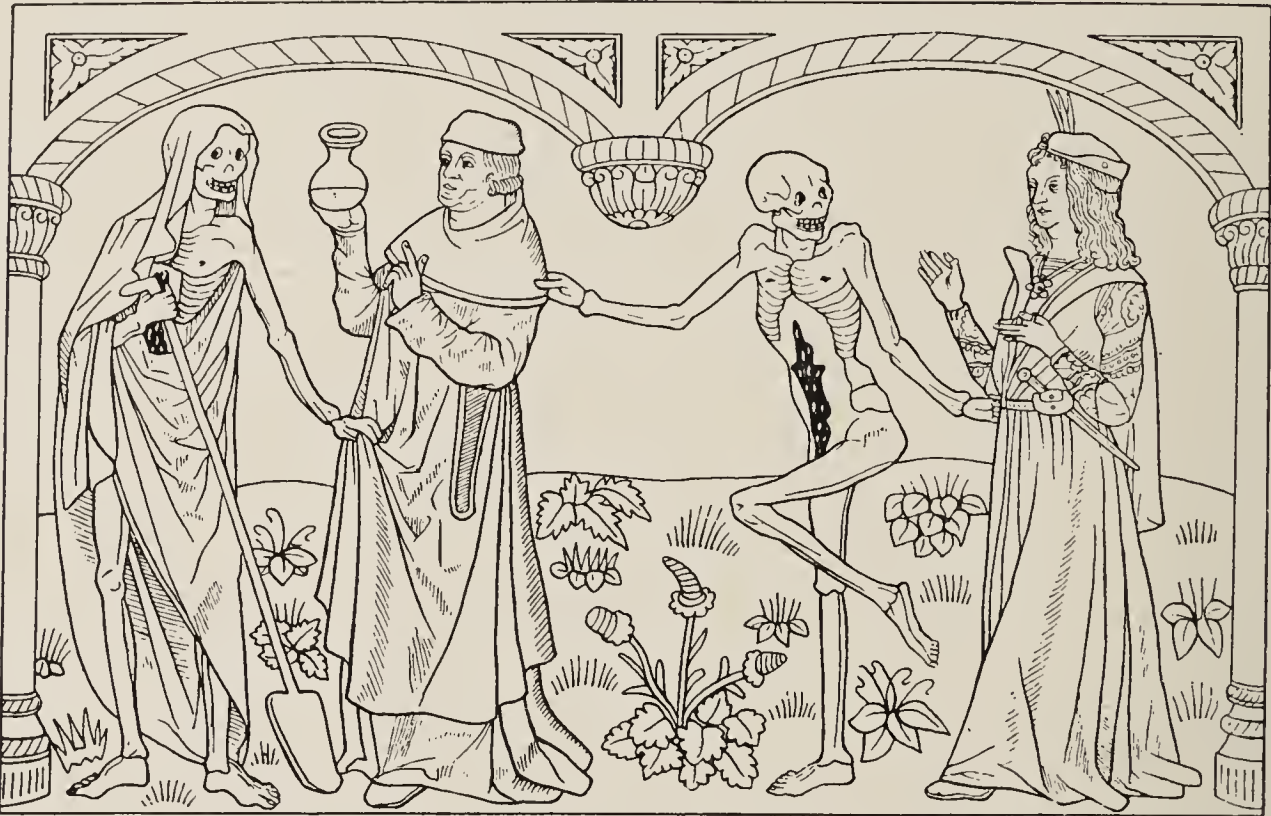


FIG. 5. THE PHYSICIAN AND YOUTH FROM THE DANSE MACABRE IN THE CLOISTER OF THE INNOCENTS, IN PARIS. AFTER LE ROUX DE LINCY AND TISSERAND'S REPRODUCTION OF GUYOT MARCHANT'S FIRST EDITION OF 1485.

usually shown in the other joints. The muscles are represented in detail and in strong relief, thus increasing the impression of the dead body. In strong contrast the dancing and springing movements of the dead are represented in a very lively and lifelike manner. The dead carry no musical instruments as they do in the German Dances of Death, but these were introduced in the later editions of the Danse Macabre. They bear coffin-lids, shovels, arrows and scythes. A distinct change in the motive from that of the old play makes the dead "le mort" become "la mort," death. In the Paris wall paintings and in all that follow, the conception of "murdering death" holds henceforth. In the old play death in the form of one individual called the different classes and ranks to join in the death dance; in the paintings it became

personified as death. In general women were excluded from the Death Dance. This led later to the development of a "Danse macabre des femmes" by Marchant in 1486, and later numerous editions of the "Danse macabre des hommes et des femmes" were published. The "La Grant Danse des Femmes," by Martial d'Auvergne in the latter part of the fifteenth century remained in manuscript form until 1869, when it was first published. In the later editions of the Danse Macabre the woodcuts were divided into single pairs of living and dead, framed in a single arch.

The Physician of the Paris Danse Macabre has the twenty-first place in the chain of the dance, being preceded by such classes of citizens as the merchant, astrologer, sergeant, monk and usurer; he is the tenth from its end. No place of honor is accorded

him; on the contrary he is distinctly placed among the lower social orders. From this we may conclude that his

youth. In his answer to death in the accompanying dialogue, the physician mourns that there is no herb or root,



FIG. 6. THE PHYSICIAN AND NOBLEMAN FROM THE LÜBECK TOTENTANZ. AFTER MANTELS.

social position was not very high. Moreover, he is paired with the Youth (Amoureux), an association which perhaps throws some light upon the nature of his professional activities. He wears a long gown of the houppelande type, having a short cape-like collar, and with a long pocket slit in the side. On his head is a low skull cap, and his moderately long hair is slightly curled at the ends. In his right hand he holds aloft the wide-mouthed flask of urine which he contemplates with a judicial expression raising his left hand with thumb and index finger extended, as if making a sign to the young lover, who raises his hands as if surprised, whether pleasantly or unpleasantly the picture does not reveal. The physician appears to be unconscious of his accompanying death, who, holding a long-handled spade in his right hand, seizes the physician's robe with his left. The second death has his right hand touching the latter's right shoulder, while with his left he has hold of the girdle of the

or any medicine that has any power to avert death.

Representations of the Danse Macabre appeared in frescoes, tapestries and in sculptures in the churches at Amiens, Angers, Dijon, Rouen, and elsewhere. Most of these have been destroyed, some were never reproduced or published and we possess but slight knowledge concerning them. The Danse Macabre of Kermaria was undoubtedly an imitation of the one in Paris, and is probably second to this in age. The verses accompanying it are identical with those of the latter; the painted arcades are repeated, and the arrangement is the same. Seven pairs of figures are however lacking, including that of the physician; these omissions were undoubtedly due to lack of space. No exact date can be ascribed to this painting but the costumes would indicate that it was made about the middle of the fifteenth century. The forms of the dead show original variations; some have animal heads, and the feet have long point-

ed shoes resembling the "Schnabelschuhe."

The third and latest of the great



FIG. 7. THE PHYSICIAN OF THE BERLIN TOTENTANZ.
AFTER BUCHHEIT.

French Danse Macabre wall paintings is that of the church of La Chaise-Dieu in Auvergne, dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. It differs in many respects from those of Paris and Kermaria. In general the order of personages corresponds with that of Paris; two women are, however, introduced into the groups. The forms of the death resemble closely those of Kermaria. The figure supposed to be that of the physician is very doubtful. In the place occupied by him in the Paris dance, between the usurer and the youth, is a man in a short girdled gown, with balloon sleeves, and hat with plumes. He stands in a half back-view position, with the upper part of one side of his face showing, which is transfixed by an arrow shot from the bow of the accompanying death. None of the attributes of the physician is seen in this figure, and it is extremely

doubtful if it was intended for the physician. Goette regards the paintings of La Chaise-Dieu as following the original macabre drama more closely than did those of Paris or Kermaria.

Belonging also to the second half of the fifteenth century is the Totentanz in the Marienkirche in Lübeck, to which the date 1463 is usually ascribed, but it is probably somewhat earlier. Originally painted in water colors on wooden tablets it was transferred to canvas and oils in 1707. It bears a very close resemblance to the Paris dance. It is very probable that the painter of the Lübeck dance either had seen the Paris paintings or a painting similar in all respects to the latter, and had worked either from memory or from a sketch of the same. It represents twenty-four personages of the higher social ranks, with their deaths, forming a long chain, interrupted in two places only. This procession is led by a death figure playing a flute. The representation is simple and life-like. The deaths display greater activity in their movements. The Physician of the Lübeck Totentanz wears a loose gown with a hood, and fur cuffs. He has a taller cap, and his hair is long and curled. On his feet are pointed shoes. In his right hand he raises the urine bottle. His left hand is held by the death following after him. He has a youthful face; he is not looking at the urine in the bottle, but straight ahead, with an inquiring anxious air. His attributes are essentially those of the Paris physician, although more living. The personages of the Lübeck dance give the impression of having been drawn from life; they show a simple thoughtful pose.

Of about the same date (1450-60, or later) there was painted a Toten-

tanz in the Marienkirche at Berlin, which undoubtedly owed its inspiration to the Lübeck paintings. It belongs to a cruder period of fresco art; there were no shadows or gradations of color. The poses, faces and gestures have a solemn stereotyped quality. The number of clerical personages is increased over that of Lübeck. It bears evidence of a strong monastic, ascetic influence. The dance is preceded by a preaching monk, at whose feet are two devils, one playing the bagpipes. The clerical and secular personages are divided into two wholly separate groups. The forms of the dead are represented as emaciated mummified bodies, with narrow shoulders and pelvises. No parts of the skeleton are shown; the nasal profiles are preserved, and there are no belly slits. They move in an attitude of earnest solemnity and formality, and with one exception are all turned to one side. Two deaths attend the physician, who stands with his body turned to the left. In his left hand he holds a short-necked urine flask which he is examining with a serious air, and raises his right hand from the wrist. He is dressed in the long houpelande without a girdle, and with collar, cuffs and hem of fur. A high cap sits on his head, and from under it his curly locks fall over the back of his neck. In general his attributes are very similar to those of the physician in the Paris and Lübeck dances of death.

The Lübecker Totentanz was copied also at Reval, of which only slight remains exist, and at Wismar. There was also a dance of death in the Maria Magdalenakirche in Hamburg, said to date from the monastic period, but no details of it are preserved. The most remarkable and possibly

the oldest of the German Totentänze was that of Klingenthal in Klein-Basel. As it was painted on the walls



FIG. 8. THE PHYSICIAN OF THE KLINGENTHAL TOTENTANZ. AFTER BÜCHEL.

of the inaccessible cloister of a nunnery, it remained concealed and unknown. Even after the convent was dissolved in the sixteenth century, it never became an object of public interest, and was finally destroyed in the middle of the nineteenth century. We owe our knowledge of it to the master baker Büchel of Basel, who in 1768 discovered it and copied it in water colors. Most authorities assign its date to about 1450; others, as Goette, ascribe it to the late fourteenth century, or about 1400. There were thirty-nine social ranks represented in the paintings, the physician being number sixteen, showing a higher social position than that previously accorded him. Seven females are represented. The chain of dancers is broken up into separate pairs, but is still a procession, each pair moving successively towards the charnel house to the left in a kind of polonaise movement. Because of the disconnected grouping the representation loses its

original religious-didactic significance. Numerous death figures bear musical instruments. On the step of the charnel house two deaths stand, one blowing a trumpet, the other a fife and playing a drum. The living show for the greater part a quiet composed attitude, as if shocked or resigned, when seized by the death. Frequently through the dropping of the head and arm they indicate the actual signs of approaching death. Humor and satire are introduced into a number of the groups. The general impression is, however, somewhat monotonous. The dead in part do not dance, but move stiffly, in a half-bent position. The artist is unknown. Several renovations are known to have taken place. Goette believes that the first one occurred in 1439, and would place the date of the original paintings as early or even earlier than 1400. He regards the Klingenthal wall pictures as derived from an early German Totentanz play, which was independent of the Danse Macabre. The physician is attired in a richly brocaded cloak worn over the houppelande. On his head is a flat crowned hat. His hair falls just below his ears. From his left hand he has apparently dropped the urine bottle; in his right hand he carries some object, apparently of wood. His costume suggests those of the beginning of the fifteenth century. His face shows a shocked, somewhat pained, expression. The accompanying death, blowing a fife, leads him by his gown.

The most celebrated and widely known of the medieval wall paintings of the Dance of Death was that of Gross Basel. It dates from about 1480, and was preserved for us also in the water color copy made by the same master baker, Büchel, in 1773. For several centuries it was an object of

the greatest interest to travelers coming to Basel from all countries; and is repeatedly referred to in contemporary literature as the famous "Tod am Basel." It was renovated or restored a number of times (1568, 1616, 1658 and 1703); in 1773 it was in a badly damaged condition and was repaired in that year. It was painted on the churchyard wall of the Dominican cloister; and was destroyed in 1805 when this wall was torn down by the authorities of Basel. Only small fragments are preserved in the Historical Museum in Basel, and these include portions of the physician. (See Fig. 10.) In spite of its great popularity it showed no great originality, and was but an imitation of the one in Klingenthal. Numerous copies exist since: 1588-1608 (woodcuts by Fröhlich), 1621 (copper-plates by Merian), 1725-1796 (woodcuts by de Mechel), 1744 (copper-plates by Chovin), and the water color copy by Büchel. These copies vary in numerous details, and show many free variations of the original. The Fröhlich and the de Mechel copies contain only the Gross Basel verse, while the majority of the woodcuts are taken bodily from Holbein, and are very poor copies at that. The copies of Merian, Chovin and Büchel, while agreeing fairly closely in the number and order of the pictures, show certain deviations in detail that are noteworthy, but which cannot be considered here. The careful comparative study made by Goette of the Klingenthal and Gross Basel dances leads convincingly to the conclusion that the latter is an imitation of the former, made between the time of the original painting and that of the first retouching. There are thirty-nine figures present in both Totentänze. The costumes on the whole indicate the latter

part of the fifteenth century, at least before 1493. The artist, or copyist, of the Gross Basel paintings is unknown; but on the left leg of the figure of the youth is a flowering plant on which a bird sits; around the plant is a scroll with the initials W S M G, and below this the initials G M. These do not correspond to any of the known Basel painters of the fifteenth century, or to any of the later restorers of the paintings. The physician of the Gross Basel paintings shows certain variations from the one in the Klingenthal pictures. He is attired in practically the same costume, the houppelande with an over-cloak with wide arm openings, and wears the same brimmed flat cap. The right foot, which alone shows, reveals a broad-toed shoe. His left arm is outstretched, having dropped the urine bottle, which lies broken on the ground. His right arm is raised as if in surprise or alarm. Below his arm is the large arm-hole in which there can be seen some object (knife handle?) in his pocket. His face is thin, ascetic, with eyes half closed, with a tense, worried expression. The death holds his cloak with his right hand; while in his left he holds a pipe which he is blowing, and over the bend of his left elbow he carries the long handle of the urine basket in which presumably the flask of urine has just been delivered to the physician. The death is remarkable in that it is a true skeleton, but with many inaccurate anatomical details; this is the first appearance of a true skeleton in any of the Totentanz paintings. There is at first sight a superficial resemblance to the skeleton in one of the Vesalius plates of 1543, but this resemblance is purely accidental, chiefly in the position of the skeleton. On closer ex-

amination the number of the vertebrae does not coincide, the sacrum is high between the upper portions of the



FIG. 9. THE PHYSICIAN OF THE TOTENTANZ IN BASEL. AFTER BÜCHEL.

iliac bones; and a detailed comparison of the two shows that the Basel skeleton cannot be an imitation of the Vesalius, but dates from the fifteenth century. It is primarily an imitation of the mummified death attending the physician in the Klingenthal picture; it has the same wrongly placed hand on the right arm, and the same general position. The hands are not skeletonized. The many anatomical inaccuracies show that it belongs to the fifteenth century, before the knowledge of a correctly mounted skeleton had been achieved, and that it bears the marks of a later restoration, probably that carried out by Klauber in 1568, who perhaps altered the bones of the pelvis and legs to accord with the Vesalian anatomy with which he was acquainted. He was not the inventor of the skeleton however; he altered the original only. The verses accompanying the physician are:

Der Tod zum Doctor:

Herr Doctor, b'schaut die Anatomey,

An mir, ob sie recht g'macht sey?
 Dann du hast manchen auch hing'richt,
 Der eben^gleich, wie ich jetzt sieht.

Between 1515-1520 a Totentanz was painted by Niclaus Manuel, called Deutsch, on the inside of the garden



FIG. 10. HEAD OF THE PHYSICIAN OF THE TOTENTANZ IN BASEL.

Antwort des Doctors:

Ich hab mit meinem Wasser b'schaun,
 Geholfen beide Mann und Frauen;
 Wer b'schaut mir nun das Wasser mijn,
 Ich musz jetzt mit den Tod dahin.

The "Trionfo della morte" at Clusone belongs to the fifteenth century; and is the oldest dance of death presenting all of the dead in the form of true skeletons. The text is lacking, and the physician is not represented. It shows traces of both French and German influence (Basel). Three figures, especially that of the cook, are evidently derived from the latter. The chief motive is the triumph of death; all ranks and classes offer money and treasure to be spared, and all are denied. This painting is important chiefly in showing how quickly the fame and influence of the "Tod von Basel" had spread.

wall of the Dominican cloister in Berne, which also became widely known and justly celebrated for the striking effect of its presentation. It was destroyed in 1660, but is preserved to us in two water color copies; the more recent of which by Stettler has been reproduced in lithographs. It has been generally regarded as an imitation of the Gross Basel paintings; but it shows almost as marked an influence of the Paris Danse Macabre and the figures of the Books of Hours. Only one figure, that of the cook, is taken directly from the Gross Basel dance. Most of the figures were copied or imitated in an original manner from those of the Paris Danse Macabre. Each group consists of two pairs of living and dead, framed in an arcade, with a painted landscape, representing local Swiss scenes, for

background. The illustrations show a certain independence of the text; the old conception of the dance is abandoned in part, in that the individual pairs of figures pass before the onlooker, busied only with their own dialogue. The clerical and secular personages are separated into two rows. The spirit of the Reformation shows clearly in Manuel's work, and is presented with a certain degree of brutality, in the scornful and biting satire shown towards the clergy and ruling classes. He betrays the attitude of his time, which manifested itself in passionate social and religious conflicts. His work produces a strong intellectual effect through the plausible and impressive human types presented. The Deaths become again the "mähender und schiessende Tod" of the French *Danse Macabre*; they attack the living with murderous and brutal force, even strangling the theologian. They lay violent hands upon

the clerical representatives in particular. After the original French manner, the Physician is again represented



FIG. 11. THE PHYSICIAN OF THE TOTENTANZ IN BERNE. (AFTER GOETTE.)

busied in the occupation of his profession, the examination of urine. Death, with a horrible grin, comes up behind him and breaks the urine bottle, spilling its contents on the ground. The physician has a coarse unpleasant face, that of a quack rather than of an intelligent person. He wears a contemporary costume, a loose gown, not reaching his ankles, broad shoes, flat cap, and curly hair reaching to his shoulders. The death wears a tall shapless cap, and carries the basket for the urine bottle (or is it a drum?) on a long handle around his waist. If this object is a drum, he is using the drumstick to break the bottle. We see here a return to the French and early German representation of the physician busied in his professional activity, which had been abandoned in both the Klein and Gross Basel

done in part, in that the individual pairs of figures pass before the onlooker, busied only with their own dialogue. The clerical and secular personages are separated into two rows. The spirit of the Reformation shows clearly in Manuel's work, and is presented with a certain degree of brutality, in the scornful and biting satire shown towards the clergy and ruling classes. He betrays the attitude of his time, which manifested itself in passionate social and religious conflicts. His work produces a strong intellectual effect through the plausible and impressive human types presented. The Deaths become again the "mähender und schiessende Tod" of the French *Danse Macabre*; they attack the living with murderous and brutal force, even strangling the theologian. They lay violent hands upon

paintings, in which the physician is represented as having dropped the flask. In his treatment of the subject Manuel sacrificed the harmonious development of a great art idea to the presentation of the social and religious-political atmosphere of his times. This led him into inartistic excesses, even into certain absurdities of composition, as in the case of the death represented in a creeping posture with an hour-glass placed on the middle of his back. The Bernese Dance of Death is the last one of the predecessors of the great Holbein masterpiece. It closed the epoch of the medieval wall paintings and marked the transition to a new period. It fulfilled the criteria of great monumental folk art.

The verses and pictures of the Paris Danse Macabre were taken to England as early as 1430; and in the reign of Henry VI, a Dance of Death was painted on the north wall of the old Paul's churchyard in London, which was torn down in 1559. The English verses were written by the monk, John Lydgate; no copy of the painting is preserved, but Lydgate's text was published in London, in 1554, from which edition the verses relating to the physician are taken:

THE DAUNCE OF MACHABREE,
LONDON, 1554.

Death speaketh to the physicien.

Maister of phisike which on your dryne,
So looke and gaze and stare agaynst the
sunne,
for all your craft and study of medicine,
All the practise and science that ye cunne,
Your life course so farre forth is yrunne,
Agein my might your craft may not endure,
for al the gold that thereby ye haue wonne,
Good leche is he that himself can cure.

The Physicien maketh answer.

Full long agon that I unto phisike,
Set my wit and eke my diligence,

In speculacitie and also in practise,
To geat a name through mine excellence,
To fynd out agaynst pestilence,
Preseruaites to staunche it and to fine,
But I dare shortly in sentence,
Say that agaynst death is worth no medicine.

Representations of the Dance of Death existed also in the Tower, in the Bishop's Palace at Croydon, and at Salisbury, Stratford, Wortley-Hale and at Hexham. Four panels painted on wood still exist of the last named. Practically nothing is known of the details of the others. During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were created many other wall paintings of the Totentanz, in Annaberg, Hamburg, Kienzheim, Chur, Füssen, Luzern, Constance, Freiburg, Kuckucksbad in Bohemia, Erfurt and Dresden. In the year 1824 the paintings in the old Dominican church in Strassburg were discovered under the coating of whitewash with which they had been long covered. They were destroyed in the later fire which consumed the church. They dated from the end of the fifteenth century. Very little is known of the majority of these Dances of Death, either of their subject matter, mode of treatment, or their artistic value. Between 1626 and 1635 Kaspar Meglinger painted fifty-six dance of death pictures on the Mühlenbrücke at Luzern. These paintings are uninspired, and have little artistic worth. There is no physician represented, medicine is represented by the Apothecary, who holds the thirtieth place, and by the Barber-Surgeon, who is given the thirty-sixth place. This is the only representation of bleeding that the author has been able to find in the Dance of Death literature. One death holds aloft a mirror behind the barber-surgeon; a second death

holds the bleeding basin. Two children attend with bandages. The patient is in the costume of the early seventeenth

century. He sits in his office, dressed in knee-breeches, frock coat with broad cuffs, long waistcoat, low buckled shoes and



Barbierer ist das Zeichen gut,
Das man vom Leben lasse blut?

Georg Baltisser.

Ich glaub, die Zeichen seyn im Wider,
Ja wider dich, stirb, leg dich nieder.

FIG. 12. THE BARBER-SURGEON OF THE TOTENTANZ IN LUZERN. (AFTER EGLIN'S LITHOGRAPH OF THE ORIGINAL.)

century. He sits in a chair, extending his left arm, supported by a cane, and held by the barber, who is in the act of bleeding him. Some of the Luzern groups suggest Holbein's influence but they show a total lack of artistic inspiration and imagination.

The last great wall painting of the Dance of Death was that of Erfurt, painted in 1736 in the old Augustine cloister by Jakob Samuel Beck, with contributions from a number of other artists. It consisted of fifty-six oil paintings, which were destroyed by fire in 1872. Twenty years before, pen and ink drawings had been made of them by Kruspe. The cycle was led by death playing the oboe. The twelfth position was held by Death and the Physician. The latter seated in a chair before a

wig, holds aloft the urine bottle which he regards appraisingly; Death, with a small flat-crowned hat on his head stands behind the chair, with head cocked on one side and holding a human skull. The general impression of this cycle, according to contemporary accounts, was a fresh and living one, because of the fine and vital characteristics of the personages. Death appears here always in the background suddenly surprising the living in the midst of their activities; lurking unsuspected behind them or attaching himself to their side. Traces of Holbein influence appear in the composition, but the conception is simple and naive; the moment of moralization outweighs the humanistic and ironic.

The great wall paintings of the

Dance of Death have passed away; only unimportant fragments remain, and their memory comes down to us



Der Tod zum Arzt.

FIG. 13. THE PHYSICIAN OF THE TOTENTANZ IN ERFURT. AFTER KRUSPE.

only in the reproductions so fortunately preserved. They represented a monumental art—a great folk-cultural idea—an expression of the awakening spirit of democracy in the dying Middle Ages, presented in the form of social and religious satire, and are to be interpreted as the healthy reaction of the people against the narrowness of the Church and its unnatural asceticism. From all the ranks and classes of men represented in these paintings we have chosen the physician as affording a key to their meaning. In all of these wall paintings he is throughout, with one exception, depicted as the “urine-gazer.” This was the favorite popular conception

of the physician in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and continued even into the eighteenth. The examination of the urine was a direct legacy of Arabic medicine. Diagnosis, according to the latter, rested almost wholly upon the examination of the pulse and of the urine; hence the teaching of the theory of the pulse and of “urine-gazing” comprised almost the whole of the medieval practice of medicine. These two things constituted the two great professional “poses,” or attributes of the medieval physician and were maintained for several centuries. In the art of the times the physician is represented either in the act of taking the pulse, or in the contemplation of the urine flask. Particularly did the latter pose become a favorite with the genre artists of the Netherlands during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and many charming pictures of this period by van Ostade, Teniers, Terborch, Dou and others attest the popularity of this conception of the physician’s methods of practice. That the principles of pulse-taking and urine-gazing were so easily learned, the diagnostic conclusions based upon their characters so readily arrived at, and so fully under the control of the physician, who could interpret his findings as he willed, and in case he found nothing, could easily master the situation, made of the urine examination especially a vehicle for the development of quackery and deceit in their gravest forms. In fact, such methods were actually taught to the physician. In the early fourteenth century, Villanovanus of Montpellier actually advised the following: “If you find nothing in the examination of the urine, then say there is an obstruction of the liver; should the patient say he has

a headache, then you must say, it arises from the liver. But especially use the word obstruction, because they will not understand its meaning, and much depends on their not knowing what one is talking about." When such advice and practices were taught in the centers of medical learning of the time, what could be expected of the actual professional practice? It of course degenerated into the grossest forms of quackery. Further, the art of urine examination became tintured with mysticism and astrologic practices. Moreover, the urine-gazer played a definite, though shady, part in the sexual life and habits of the times. In the older *Danse Macabre* he is usually associated with a youth (*amoureux*) who appears to wait upon his decision as to what the urine might show. In the art of the Netherlands this relationship is more clearly

brought out. The urine examination was made to determine chastity or pregnancy, and such a diagnostic rôle could only aid in making the medieval practitioner's reputation still more questionable. Is it any wonder, then, that in this great folk art form, representing as it does all classes and ranks of the society of the day, the physician is presented with biting satire and irony, as the urine-gazer, who with his examinations has (said to have) cured so many men and women, but is himself helpless against death! In the older pictures, his social position is decidedly that of an inferior person; towards the end of the period, it had risen, but there is no escaping the conclusion that the satire of both the pictures and the text was aimed at the elements of quackery which the popular mind of the day associated with the professional practices of the physician.

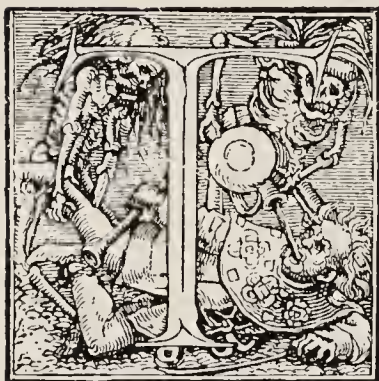




PART II

THE PRE-HOLBEIN MANUSCRIPTS, BLOCK BOOKS AND INCUNABULA

A. MANUSCRIPTS



THE sources of the Dance of Death are to be sought in numerous manuscript didactic-religious Latin poems dating back to the beginning of the eleventh century. Of these the most significant are the various forms of the "Legende von den drei Lebenden und den drei Toten," which became the common property of all European Christendom, with its sepulchral cry of the dead to the living: *Quod fuimus, estis. Quod sumus, eritis.* In the twelfth century the English scholastic theologian, Walter de Mapes, related the legend in his "Lamentatio et deploratio pro morte." In the thirteenth century it was put into poetic form by Baudouin de Condé and Nicoles de Marginal. Soon it became a favorite subject of the illuminated manuscripts, and these in their turn inspired the creation of many wall and panel paintings, sculptures and reliefs. Of these the most celebrated is the fresco of the "Trionfo della morte" in the Camposanto at Pisa. From Petrarch's Triumphs came undoubtedly the idea of Mors Imperator, Death triumphant over all. Gradually the content of the legend became varied in many forms,

and new features were added. Of especial significance for the evolution of the Dance of Death were also the manuscripts of the "Vision Fulbert's" and those of the Vado mori poems dating from the thirteenth century. The dialogue form of the Totentänze may very well have had its origin in the so-called "Conflictus" literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, of which many examples are preserved in German, French and English manuscripts. One of the most popular of these was the Latin poem ascribed to Bernhard von Clairvaux, "Dialogus mortis cum homine," which had a great vogue in the Middle Ages, and was translated into German, French, English and Italian popular speech. It inspired the production of numerous poems and prose tracts treating the same theme in dialogue form, either enlarging on or specializing in certain of its features. To the "Conflictus" literature belong also the fourteenth century manuscripts of the "Ackersmann aus Böheim," which was later printed by Pfister under the title of "Der Rechtsstreit des Menschen mit dem Tode."

The oldest manuscript dance of death is that of the "Dança general de la muerte," in the Escorial, and which for a long time was ascribed to Rabbi Santol de Carrion, about 1360, but which is now known from its form of versification to have been written

early in the fifteenth century. It begins with the heading "Prologoen en la Transladaçion." In contrast to the general custom of writing rubrics in Latin, this manuscript was written in the common folk language of the time. It has no illustrations. It was undoubtedly the work of a priest, as the clerical series is represented in full. The verse is in the Spanish form "verso de arte mayor." It is very probable that the "Dança general" evolved from the primitive Montserrat dance of death song, "Ad mortem festinamus," but no intermediate forms are known to exist. A thorough search of old Spanish libraries and archives might throw some light upon this question. The manuscript of the poem consists of 79 strophes, preceded by a short prose prologue in which Death declares his universal power. After this speech, the Preacher in 3 strophes calls upon the Holy Writings to prove that all born of dust must die; after which invocation, Death calls to men of every rank and station in life to join "la dança mortal." Two young maidens are first invited, and after having being danced away by death, the dialogue between death and his victims begins with the Pope. Thirty-three orders of society are called by death, the clerical personages alternating with the secular. The physician has the eighteenth place. At the end death calls upon all of those whom he has not specifically named to follow in the dance. The importance of this manuscript poem in the evolution of the dance of death is very great. For the first time the human personages are presented with sharply-cut characterization, not as things or fixed types which suffer a common fate. They mourn, implore and beg for mercy; they call for help from their

friends or dependents, or take a sad farewell from them. Coarse or humorous episodes are wanting; the poem expresses a serious ascetic-religious tendency in an earnest and solemn didactic style. Traces of the Spanish poem are found in the Paris Danse Macabre and in the old text of the Lübeck Totentanz, which undoubtedly was greatly influenced by the old Castilian poem. This is natural enough, when we consider that Lübeck, through the Spanish Netherlands held active commercial and artistic intercourse with Spain.

In the manuscript collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris there are several manuscript copies of the Danse Macabre of 1425. One of these (No. 7310.3) is a superb manuscript ornamented with illuminated miniatures; it contains the text of the poem printed with Marchant's edition of 1485. All of the others have the text only without miniatures. In Germany there are manuscripts containing Totentanz material preserved in many libraries; particularly is that of Stuttgart rich in the possession of a number. Munich has three manuscripts without illustrations; Heidelberg and Berlin each possess one.

To the sixteenth century belong the Zimmern Totentanz manuscripts decorated with artistic colored illustrations. They recall the Basel wall paintings in their general treatment. The death figures are partly skeletonized, partly mummified, showing but little knowledge of anatomy; and have worms, snakes, frogs, lizards and snails attached to their bodies. For the greater part they play upon musical instruments. The background shows trees, mountains, houses, castles, churches and cities, suggestive of the Schwarzwald region. The cos-

tunes are characteristic and appropriate to the individual depicted. The figure of the physician recalls that of the so-called Block Books of Heidelberg and Munich, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century. Before



FIG. 14. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE ZIMMERN TOTENTANZ MANUSCRIPTS OF THE 16TH CENTURY. ORIGINAL IN THE KÖNIGSEGG LIBRARY AT AULENDORF.

“Der Doten Dantz,” in its similar composition (see Fig. 14). The death holds the same musical instrument, a sort of clapper-castanet; serpents twine about the body. The physician wears a long tightly girdled gown with full skirt and wide sleeves. His shoes are pointed, his hair long and straight; he wears a high rounded cap, and has an ornamented collar or chain around his neck. He has the characteristic pose of the urine-gazer, and is represented as a type, without individuality.

B. THE BLOCK BOOKS

The oldest manuscripts of the Totentanz illustrated with woodcuts are

the invention of movable type, an attempt was made to print whole books by means of woodcuts having both picture and text cut in one block. Just when this attempt began is not known, but it is assumed to have been developed among the printers of picture cards illustrating the saints, holy festivals, popular legends or tales, playing cards, and the like. Originally only an attempt at economy and the saving of time, this method of block printing was destined to evolve into the highest expression of book illustration. The majority of the block books preserved to us are roughly colored with washes of brown, yellow

and grayish brown, while green and cinnabar were used to accentuate the printed line. Later, the art of woodcut book illustration sought to rid itself of the use of color, at first, probably from the standpoint of economy, later for pure artistic reasons. As books of the people, purely as picture books, the block books had a great popularity, and numerous editions were printed, until they were replaced by the typographic book. The Heidelberg block book contains colored woodcuts and a xylographic text; the Munich example has similar illustrations, but with a handwritten text. The texts agree in content and arrangement, but show dialectic variations and differences in the use of words. The artist of the Heidelberg book had undoubtedly seen the Klingenthal or the Basel wall paintings, or both; there are twenty-six pictures, the "Prediger" and twenty-four pairs of figures, with the additional figure of death and the apothecary by an entirely different hand, and which appears in no other Totentanz. The page upon which this picture is printed shows much less damage from wear than the others; it must be regarded as a later addition to the original set. The Heidelberg woodcuts show the strong head and angular folds in the garments characteristic of the older art. There is no hatching or shading, and no indication of any background. The artist made use of the fewest lines possible. The death figures are shrunken mummified bodies with skeletonized heads having enormous lower jaws. The physician (see Fig. 15) is dressed in a flowing over-gown with balloon sleeves and tight cuffs over an ungirdled robe. He has a high, closely fitting collar, and wears a flat double-crowned cap. He has short curly locks. He wears

pointed shoes. His face is thin and rather ascetic. Death seizes him by his right wrist; from his falling left



FIG. 15. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN FROM THE HEIDELBERG BLOCK BOOK. EARLY 15TH CENTURY. (AFTER MASSMANN.)

hand drops the urine bottle upside down, spilling its contents. He is the urine-gazer type of the old wall paintings, represented in a cruder art-form. The artist of the Munich block book has abandoned the old dance form and represents simply the dialogue of man and death. The latter addresses his victims, gesticulates or threatens, while they appear resigned to their fate. They are also types, but represented with a touch of spirit and humor. The drawing shows strong feeling and sense of rhythm. In both block books the creative material is wholly that of the use of the line. Their significance for the development of the dance of death lies in their abandonment of the dance form for

that of the paired dialogue, and in their simplicity of conception and treatment. They hold an intermediate

¶ Dado mori medicus. medicamine non redimendus
 Quicquid agat medici pocio/ dabo mori.



FIG. 16. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "LE GRÂT DANSE MACABRE," LYONS, 1499. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

position between the art of the wall paintings and that of German book illustration.

C. THE DANCE OF DEATH INCUNABULA

The Danse Macabre and Totentanz imprints are among the rarest and most precious books of the incunabula period. So few are preserved in the great libraries of the world that they are not even mentioned in many of the catalogues of incunabula. No copy has come into the market for many years. This great rarity attests the great popularity of the various editions that were printed; the volumes were in all probability so much used that they

were worn out. The imperfect condition of the few copies preserved to us bears out this assumption.

French Incunabula. The history of the French Dance of Death incunabula is chiefly that of dates of editions and the names of the printers. The first French book edition of the Danse Macabre, as has been stated before, is that of Guyot Marchant in 1485, which is apparently a faithful copy of the wall paintings in the Cloister of the Innocents in Paris. Only one copy of this edition is known to exist, and this is preserved at Grenoble. The deaths and living figures are presented in double pairs in fifteen woodcuts, in frames of arches and pillars. The death on the left in each picture is paired with a representative of the clerical rank, the death on the right with one on the secular class. The left hand death in each case carries in one hand a scythe, spade, coffin-lid or spear; with his other hand he clutches his victim; the second death seizes the clerical individual with his right hand and the secular with his left, so that in each woodcut the four figures are united into a semblance of the "Reigen" form of the dance. The artist of the woodcuts held himself closely to his monumental model. His lines are coarse and the hatching simple. The figures stand quietly or show slight action; the expression of their faces is calm and composed. On the other hand, the movements and gestures of the deaths are more animated and lively, their positions angular. There is the barest indication of a landscape background in the form of little bushes and flowers. So popular, however, was this work that a second edition was brought out in Paris in 1486; and in the same year Marchant published a "Danse

macabre des femmes." In 1490 two more editions of the "Danse macabre des hommes" were printed by Mar-

lished (see Fig. 18), the great majority of these being of the "Danse macabre des hommes et des femmes"; and



Clamor.

FIG. 17. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "LA DANSE MACABRE," PARIS, 1500. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

chant, one of these in Latin, the "Chorea ab eximio macabro," purporting to be a translation from the German. In 1491, Marchant brought out another edition of the "Danse des femmes." In 1499, an edition combining both the dance of men and of women appeared in Lyons (see Fig. 16); and in the same year another edition was published in Paris of the "Chorea." In 1500 four editions of the dance of men were brought out in Paris, one each by de la Barre and the firm of Jehan Treperet and Jehan Jehannot, and two by Antoine Verard. (See Fig. 17.) Those by de la Barre and Verard contained also the "Le trois vifs et les trois morts." All of these were large or small folios, with the exception of a large octavo by Treperet and Jehannot. In the same year editions of the female danse macabre were published in Troyes, Rouen and Lyons. From 1501-1729 more than twenty editions were pub-

numerous reprints and facsimiles of the various forms of the "Danse macabre" have appeared during the last century, even to the present day.

In many of the old editions of the Danse Macabre, the figure of a Negro blowing a trumpet and holding a javelin is introduced, usually at the beginning of the Danse des Femmes. This figure is said to have been painted on the vaulted roof of the charnel-house of the Innocents. It was destroyed in 1786. It was in some way connected with the Danse Macabre, probably in the same way as the dwarf and fool.

Books of Hours (Livres d'heures, Horae). After the publications of Guyot Marchant had appeared, various printers made use of the Danse Macabre illustrations for the adornment of their magnificent prayer-books, the books of Hours. These beautiful works with dance of death borders are among the most sought

after and cherished by the collector of dance of death items, and are the most costly as well. Printed on parchment,

not use the danse macabre motive until about 1491. So successful and popular were these beautiful prayer-



FIG. 18. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "LA GRAN DANSE MACABRE," LYONS, 1555. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

they were richly ornamented and illuminated. The interesting and, to us, most fascinating subjects used for the adornment of the borders of these prayerbooks were taken from the histories of the saints, from mythology, the sibyls, hunting and pastoral scenes, fantastic conceptions, and above all from the danse macabre. In the dance of death borders sixty-six personages were often repeated over and over, usually one individual and one death in each picture. The style and treatment were essentially Gothic in spirit, and the text was usually beautifully illuminated with colors. The most renowned editor of these Gothic hours was Simon Vostre, who began his series in Paris about 1484, but did



FIG. 19. FROM THE DANCE OF DEATH BORDER OF THE BOOK OF HOURS, 1490(?). EDITION NOT IDENTIFIED.

books, and so great was the demand created for them in the whole of France, the Low Countries and in England, that from 1491 to 1519 Vostre put out forty-six editions. The great majority of these were printed by Philippe Pigouchet. Naturally other printers followed with imitations, and in the last decade of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth a great number of editions of the same kind were issued. The most important of these were those of Antoine Verard (8 editions, 1497-1510); Jean Poiterin (1 edition, 1503); Thielman Kerver

(5 editions, 1505-1531); Gilles and Germain Hardouin (3 editions, 1499-1520); Guillaume Godard (6 editions,

artist was restrained by the religious-didactic considerations. Very little difference in style or treatment is



FIG. 20. FROM THE BOOK OF HOURS BY SIMON VOSTRE, PRINTED BY PIGOUCHET, PARIS, 1502.

1510-1520); Jean Bignon (1 edition, 1521); and François Regnault (4 editions, 1527-37). Editions were also published at Troyes (in German, 1491); and in Lyons (1491-1521). Prayerbooks with dance of death borders continued to be printed until the middle of the seventeenth century, and reproductions have appeared within the last century. In this form of prayerbook ornamentation, rather than illustration, the invention of the



FIG. 21. FROM THE BOOK OF HOURS, PARIS, 1500. SIMON VOSTRE(?), PIGOUCHET(?).

shown in the different editions. They all follow the Gothic tradition of ornamentation and show a certain stiffness and coldness of treatment; the significance of the figures becomes lost in the confusing richness of decorative forms spread over the whole surface without strong contrast or effective silhouettes. The dark background behind the figures is dotted with white points, so that large white and black spaces are almost wholly absent. The three illustrations (Figs. 19, 20 and 21) give an idea of the

slight variations in treatment of the Physician in different Vostre editions. The influence of the original Danse



The Physician.

By thy water I do see,
Thou must away
with me.

FIG. 22. THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE DANCE OF DEATH BORDER OF "QUEEN ELIZABETH'S PRAYER BOOK." J. DAY, 1569. AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Macabre is evident. Under an arch decorated with skulls and cross-bones stand the Physician and Death, the former in the usual attitude and pose of the urine-gazer, intent upon his urine inspection, while death holding a spade grins at him.

The woodcuts of the French incunabula of the Danse Macabre and of the Books of Hours had not the slightest influence upon the evolution of the

Dance of Death motive. That evolution, as we shall see, occurred wholly through the development of German woodcut art, in which the dramatic element in the theme, the development and individualization of the single picture, the vitalizing of the material with spirit and humor, showed a distinct advance in each new artistic creation; while the French Danse Macabre showed complete stagnation in all of these directions. It remained from first to last a constantly repeated copying or imitation of a stereotyped form untouched by the magic of creative genius and inspiration. In England, there was published by J. Day, in 1569, "A Booke of Christian Prayers," usually known as Queen Elizabeth's Prayerbook. It was probably compiled by John Fox. It had fine woodcut borders on every page, by an unknown artist. They have been attributed to Holbein, and even to Agnes Frey, wife of Albrecht Dürer. The section of the Psalms has a Dance of Death border of especial interest as it presents seventy-six personages of every rank and degree of both sexes, in contemporary costume. These are repeated several times. That of the Physician is reproduced in Figure 22. Reprints of Day's book were made in 1578, 1581, 1590, and 1609. In 1853 a facsimile reprint was issued by Pickering of London. (See Fig. 22.)

German Incunabula. The oldest of the German incunabula is the "Des Dodes Dantz," printed in Lübeck in 1489. Four editions of this are known, and of each edition one example only. The first edition (1489) is in the Germanic National Museum in Nürnberg; the second (1496) is in the Wolfenbüttel Ducal Library; the third (1520) is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford; while the fourth (1536) is in

the Royal Library in Copenhagen. A facsimile reproduction was issued by the Graphische Gesellschaft in

of 1496. The Lübeck first edition probably owes its origin to the great popularity of the wall paintings in



FIG. 23. PHYSICIAN AND DEATH. FROM THE "DES DODES DANTZ," LÜBECK, 1489. (AFTER THE FACSIMILE REPRODUCTION OF THE GRAPHISCHE GESELLSCHAFT, BERLIN, 1910.)

1910. This was made from the copy in the Germanic Museum, with the exception of the sixth leaf, which the Nürnberg copy lacked, and which was reproduced from the second edition in Wolfenbüttel. It is in a different type. The second edition differs from the first in that two figures "Der Oficial" and "Der Narr" are added. The copy of the fourth edition in the Copenhagen Library is very much damaged, and appears to have several additional figures of inferior value. Single woodcuts from "Des Dodes Dantz" appear in other Lübeck incunabula: Death with the scythe in the editions of "Nauolghinge Jesu Christi" of 1489 and 1496; the Nun in "S. Birgitten Openbarringe" of 1496; and the Pope, Cardinal and Bishop in the "Speygel der Ieyen"

the Marienkirche of that city; and the text of the book is undoubtedly derived from that of the paintings. Not so, however, are the illustrations. In the composition of the figures, their simple and significant disposition, and in the arrangement of death and his victim, facing each other and engaged in conversation, are to be found the elements of the new art of book illustration. The older scheme of composition as shown in the wall paintings, with the various human figures paired and dancing with the deaths, and forming a chain, is hereby abandoned. The artist of the Lübeck woodcuts, as is also the printer of the book, is unknown. Many hypotheses have been advanced connecting various artists with these woodcuts, but no one stands the test of critical

research. The two coats of arms at the close of the book have not been identified. It is certain that the artist of the woodcuts of the *Dodes Dantz* is the same as that of the Lübeck bible of 1496, who seems to have been active in Lübeck for a long time, and to have exercised a great influence upon the art of that city during the period of his activity, particularly upon book illustration. He is regarded as an original and free spirit, unhampered by conventionality, and was probably of foreign origin, possibly Dutch.

The woodcuts present twenty-eight ranks of life, single individuals, each paired with a death, facing each other, and engaged in characteristic dialogue. Besides these there are three single cuts, two of death as a grave-digger and one showing him with a scythe. There are only four figures of death, these two, and one representing him riding a lion and brandishing a sword, and the fourth in which he is holding a spear. These four death figures are used over and over in alternation. The physician is in the fourteenth pair, coming after the burgomaster. He is a stout individual with an unpleasant, rather impudent, sensual face. (See Fig. 23.) He is dressed in the girdled robe, wears a high cap with short tassel, and holds the urine bottle high in his right hand. Contrary to the accepted conventional figure of the physician in the wall paintings, he is not looking at the bottle, but away from it, towards the death, who holds the scythe. Behind the figures is a neutral background, only slightly sketched, as that of the medieval stage, consisting of a brick wall, over which hills rise. The figure of the physician is one of flesh and blood, taken from the midst of life's activities, as are all of the person-

ages representing the different ranks of society depicted. The woodcuts show much individuality of observation, power of expression and temperament; and are bound together by a lively dialogue, the speech of each living individual accompanying his picture, the answer that of the figure of death.

Besides the Lübeck *Totentanz* there are two other German illustrated dance of death incunabula, belonging to South Germany. The woodcuts are the same in each; both are undated, and name neither printer nor place of printing. Through a comparison of the type characters of "*Der Doten Dantz mit Figuren, Clage und Antwort schon von allen Staten der Welt*," it seems certain that the printer of the first edition (about 1490) was Heinrich Knoblochzer von Ettenheim, who was active in Heidelberg from 1486 to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The second edition was printed by Jakob Meydenbach in Mainz, sometime between 1491 and 1495; and towards the end of the fifteenth century a third edition, or copy of the second, appeared. Of the three editions only a few copies are preserved: five of the first, and only three of the second edition. They are in the libraries at Berlin, Munich, Darmstadt, Karlsruhe, Wolfenbüttel and London, and the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin. No one is wholly perfect; the copy in the Bavarian State Library in Munich is complete and hardly cut, but is lightly colored. Two reproductions of the "*Der Doten Dantz*" have been made: that of Wasmuth's *Kunsthefte*, in which thirteen of the cuts are reproduced from the original in Berlin; and the facsimile edition printed by Hiersemann of Leipzig in 1922. The original work has 44 pages, with 41

woodcuts and accompanying text. The first and the last cuts are nearly of full-page size; the others of half-

Pope leads the clerical row; after him follow the Cardinal, Bishop, Official, Domherr, Pastor, Chaplain, Abbot and



FIG. 24. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE "DER DOTEN DANTZ MIT FIGUREN, CLAGE UND ANTWORT." SECOND GERMAN EDITION(?). 1495(?). (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

page size. In the first woodcut four deaths sit on a table under a roof, three blowing musical instruments, the fourth directing their concert. In the foreground three skeletonized deaths dance about an open coffin in which a shrivelled corpse is lying. Then follow thirty-eight single dances of death. The final woodcut represents a churchyard scene in which the dead arise from the graves. There is a charnel-house heaped with skulls. The text is arranged in two columns above the cuts; the first column contains the speech of death, while the second contains the answer of the human individual addressed. Both columns have large initial letters taken from older incunabula. The

the Physician. The inclusion of the physician in the clerical ranks follows the precedent set in the Paris *Danse Macabre*, and is probably significant of his origin from the priesthood. In the Lübeck "*Des Dodes Dantz*" the physician has the fourteenth place in the series; in the "*Der Doten Dantz mit Figuren*" he is advanced to the ninth place, following the Abbot, taking precedence of all other members of the secular class. (See Fig. 24.)

The Physician of the South German incunabula is attired in a loose, ungirdled robe, tightly fitting at the neck, and showing two large round buttons on the chest. The cuffs are fur-trimmed. On his head is the high rounded cap, and on his feet are

pointed shoes. His long straight hair reaches to his shoulders. In his right hand he holds aloft the urine bottle; his left hand is extended and open. He is intently examining the urine through spectacles of the contemporary type astride the bridge of his nose. He appears to be a man in early middle age; the primitive woodcut betrays little facial expression, except in his lips, the lines of which give to his face a serious or critical air. The accompanying death is in a lively dancing attitude, holding in his right hand a musical instrument, a combination of castanet and clappers. Both hands and arms are raised aloft. In his body cavity a serpent is seen coiled, and another protrudes from his left orbit. A background of rolling landscape is barely indicated by a few bold lines. The verses attached to the woodcut, put into equivalent High German form, are:

Der Tod:

Herr Arzt, Ihr könnt den Leuten wohl sagen,
Wie Ihr den Tod wollt von ihnen verjagen,
Könnt Ihr finden was wider den Tod?
Sucht's hervor, das ist Euch not!
Ihr habt andre Leute gesund gemacht,
Und Eure Seele gering geacht!
Wie mag Eurer Seele Rat werden!
Ihr habt gekürzet manchen sein Leben!

Der Arzt:

In aller Arznei konnte ich Rat geben,
Zu verlängern des Menschen Leben.
Nur wider den Tod, zu dieser Fahrt,
Finde ich kein Kraut, das mich verwahrt.
Ach, göttliche Barmherzigkeit.
Meine Sünden sind mir leid.
Deine grundlose Güte die gibt Vertrauen mir,
Weil all' mein Heil stehet bei Dir.

The verses of the first edition were written in the Middle Rhenish dialect. Whether originally composed for the Heidelberg edition is unknown. The eight-line strophe form shows that

they belong to the latter half of the fifteenth century. They show evidences of various sources, particularly the text of the Paris *Danse Macabre*, from which whole lines have been taken almost word for word. The relation between poet and artist is very loose; the illustrator had read the verses, but used his own imagination in the woodcuts, so that his art is fresh and original, and not bound to mere reproductions of the text. Nevertheless, there is an artistic unity reached in both text and illustration, such as was rarely attained in printed book illustration. It is evident that the woodcuts represent the work of two artists, both unknown and forgotten. They mark the close of the period of the primitive woodcut. To one artist is ascribed the first twenty-six cuts; to the second the last fifteen. In the second edition this order was changed, and the work of the two artists mixed in order to bring about a sharper classification of the social orders represented. The Meister of the last fifteen woodcuts is by far the more important; in his work fantasy runs free and unchecked. On the other hand, the work of the artist of the first twenty-six cuts was influenced by older models. The gestures and poses of his human characters are quiet, almost monotonous, and show little evidence of the tragic moment. They accept their fate with stoicism or resignation. Their garments hang in heavy, almost unbroken folds. His death figures show greater activity; they are represented as partly mummified, partly skeletonized cadavers, betraying a lack of careful anatomical observation. They present usually an open belly-slit, with snakes or frogs in the body cavities. The general style suggests the contemporary dra-

matic form. His effects are achieved, not through perspective and plastic form, but through the contrast of surfaces, outlined with expressive contours. The reduction of the action to a two dimensional space, and the omission of non-essential details are contributing factors to the effect which these woodcuts make upon us. The artist of the last fifteen cuts was a master of the living line, through which he shows a temperament full of fire, spirit and invention. His deaths are also shrunken cadavers rather than skeletons; the belly-slits do not show in the majority, and are only indicated in the others. Five of them still have hair on their heads. Although the pairs of figures are monotonously arranged, the deaths always looking to the right and his victims to the left, the general impression is lively, and the interest concentrated upon the two figures which are presented with a tragic grotesqueness. Bizarre humor is mingled with the elements of horror, that border upon the theatrical, but always showing a true artistic instinct. The spirit revealed is that of a Northern race, which found its highest expression in the *Imagines Mortis* of Holbein. A special unity of impression is given this dance of death by the various musical instruments which nearly all of the death figures carry. These constitute a veritable orchestra: flutes, shawms, trumpets, bagpipe, hand-organ, dichord and trichord, violin, cymbals, harps, mandolin, guitar, zither, drum, tambourine, bells, castanets, clappers and triangles. Perhaps it was intended that the sound of the given instrument should indicate the character of the given individual; thus the death of the physician has in his right hand a combination of castanet

and clapper, an instrument of noise rather than of melody.

Critical opinions differ as to the importance of the rôle played by the German incunabula in the development of the Totentanz idea. According to Goette the "Doten Dantz mit Figuren" does not follow any especial model, nor does it show any decided originality. He regards it as made up of reminiscences of the Danse Macabre, the Lübeck and Gross Basel wall paintings and their texts, in which admonitions to repentance and threats of punishment for sin play the chief rôle; and, on the whole, of little importance in the history of the Totentanz paintings. On the other hand Bossert accords it great importance as a production of the dying Gothic period, as marking the close of medieval world-outlook and philosophy. Buchheit follows Bossert in his high estimate of its significance, and ascribes to it a greater degree of skill, winged fantasy and richness of style than that presented by any other single work of the medieval dance of death period. As far as its more immediate influence upon the Totentanz motive is concerned, the old "Reigen" of the wall paintings is almost wholly abandoned in the incunabula, and the personification of death is wholly accomplished. The text says again and again "Ich bin's der Tod," or "Ich bin hier, der bittere Tod." Death is represented as a ruling-power who works the will of God.

The second edition of the South German incunabula is known to exist in only three examples, those of Berlin, Munich and London. It is generally ascribed to Jakob Meydenbach in Mainz, whose dated works fall from 1491-1495. The woodcuts

are the same as in the first edition, but, as mentioned previously, the order is somewhat changed. The initials are lacking in the text, and the cuts are not numbered; otherwise the second edition is wholly dependent upon the first. A complete copy of the pictures, after the lost Strassburg example, is found in Kastner's "Les Danses des Morts." At the close of the fifteenth century a third edition, copied from the second, was printed. No mention is made in the literature of the whereabouts of the examples of this edition, and no description of it apparently exists.

The bond between typography and book illustration was created about 1470, with the introduction of woodcuts into books printed with movable type. Albrecht Pfister led the way, almost a full decade ahead of all other printers in Germany, France and Italy. Among the great rarities from his press was the poem "Der Rechtsstreit des Menschen mit dem Tode," a version of the "Der Ackersmann aus Böhmeim," belonging to the "Conflictus" literature. After 1470 woodcut books appeared in constantly increasing numbers from various presses, particularly those of Augsburg, Ulm, Lübeck, Cologne, Strassburg and Mainz. Scattered through the woodcut books are numerous single prints dealing with some phase or aspect of the dance of death motive. The skeletonized personification of Death occurs in many of these, as in the woodcuts of the Meister von Zwolle (1480), and those of the Meister H. W. (1482), and in the "Le Chevalier dé libré" of 1486.

It certainly cannot be regarded as purely accidental that among the relatively few woodcuts of the early incunabula period, there should occur

so frequently the representation of death. The early woodcut artists were all well acquainted with the churchyard motive, and undoubtedly responded to a popular demand for its illustration. As early as 1464, the "Meister mit den Bandrollen" produced a naive cut of a skeleton shooting at men sitting in the tree of life, the clerical nearer to heaven than the secular personages. In these cuts Death is usually represented as a skeleton form on foot or on horseback, with scythe, arrows, hourglass and other attributes. Among the most interesting of the incunabula woodcuts, in which this death motive is introduced, is one in the "Weltchronik" of Dr. Schedel, Nürnberg, 1493. The picture, most probably the work of Wohlgemuth, shows five deaths celebrating the feast of the Resurrection. (See Fig. 25.) One blows the flute, the others dance a solemn cancan. The deaths show different stages of dissolution; two are almost completely skeletonized. An interesting tale is told of the artist's difficulty in drawing the skeletons. He wished to borrow a skeleton from Schedel to serve as a model. Schedel, however, possessed only a thigh bone; from this the artist developed the whole of the extremities. This woodcut is an amusing and sophisticated caricature of the Totentanz motive, invented by a physician himself, perhaps as a comeback to the special satire against the physician of the Dance of Death. It is, therefore, of especial interest to us. In these scattered Totentanz illustrations no cut representing the physician has been found.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century, and particularly in the first decade of the sixteenth, the development of the graphic arts led to a

gradual transition from the older dance of death woodcut, which was more or less dependent upon the

a skeleton. The artist was bound by no text; he was free to follow only his imagination. Such was the graphic

Septima etas mudi CCLXIII
Imago mortis



Morte nihil melius. vita nil peius iniqua
 O pma mors hoim. reqes eterna laboru
 Tu senile iugum domino volente relaxas
 Vincitoruq; graues adimis ceruice carbenas
 Exiliumq; leuas. ⁊ carceris hostia frangis
 Eripis indignis. iusti bona pibus equans
 Atq; immota manes. nulla exorabilis arte
 A primo prefixa die. tu cuncta quieto
 Ferre iubes animo. promisso sine laborum
 Te sine supplicium. vita est carcer perennis

FIG. 25. WOODCUT OF DANCE OF DEATH. FROM DR. SCHEDEL'S "WELTCHRONIK," NÜRNBERG, 1493. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY, ANN ARBOR.)

accompanying text, and dealt with type forms and with flat surfaces, to a more pictorial and poetic presentation of death fantasies. The technic slowly developed into one dealing with a variety of strokes, shadows and living lines; the figures came to be placed in a well-defined landscape or architectonic surrounding, and were developed into living individuals unique in their appearance and significance. Death, from a mummy, became

art displayed by Dürer in his "Spaziergang" (1479), "Der Tod und der Landsknecht" (1510); "Ritter, Tod und Teufel" (1513), by Burgkmair in "Der Tod als Würger" (1510); in the "Tod und Frau" of Baldung Grien (1515); in the "Der lauernde Tod" of Urs Graf (1524); and in numerous other creations of the masters of the early sixteenth century. (See Fig. 26.)

The block books, incunabula and the single woodcut illustrations of the

graphic artists of this period marked the transition period from the Totentanz of the old wall paintings to the

sought to tell a dramatically living story, that of the conflict between life and death. The dramatic motive



FIG. 26. DIE EITELKEIT. HANS BALDUNG, ABOUT 1515. KUNSTHISTORISCHE MUSEUM, VIENNA.

supreme creation of Holbein, and prepared the way for his great masterpiece. In this period the way was paved for the development of the modern conception of death. The stereotyped forms of the old dance became real and living personages. While the art of the fifteenth century sought to obtain the effect of dramatic action through violent movement, eccentric positions and grotesque gestures, the art of the sixteenth century

changes from a single conflict between these two forces to a spiritual analysis of their combined actions and reactions. The characterization becomes more psychological and of deeper significance, more closely allied to the modern conception of the philosophy of life. Through the German book illustration of the last decade of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century may be traced a continuous art-evolution from the old dance of death

wall paintings to the modern representations of the motive. France took no part in this art-development, the *Danse Macabre* stagnated in countless editions and repetitions of the medieval form.

Through this transition period the Physician of the Dance of Death has wandered unchanged. He is still the urine-gazer, presented regularly in a half-hypocritical, half-satirical manner. For the painters of the dances of death he was a favorite subject; he must have appealed in a similar way to the onlookers. Many of the latter must have personally appreciated the satirical justice of the physician, who may have been responsible for the death of friend or relative, himself becoming one of death's victims. Surely the never-failing satire of the urine bottle, which in all of the *Totentänze* is represented in the same manner, must have done much to bring discredit upon this professional pose. It is all too evident from the constant use of this motive in the *Totentänze* that the popular mind had little belief in, or respect for, this symbol of quackery and charlatanry. Aside from his representation in the special dance of death art of the period, the contemporary literature and book illustration, as well as the graphic art of the times, contains many allusions to, and representations of the physician himself. Not one of these presents a flattering picture; quite the opposite. With coarse humor, bitter satire and irony, he is accorded the same ridicule and distrust shown the clergy. His origin in and relationship to the priesthood made him also a common object of the caricature accorded the latter. Towards the close of the fifteenth century the medieval world was approaching the beginning of a

new cycle. Characteristic of the epoch was the appearance in numbers of bold and free spirits as path breakers in the field of knowledge. In their fight against ignorance and blind stupidity, satire became a most potent weapon. In the satirical literature of the revolutionary thought of the period, contemporary life was pictured with great originality and vivacity; and the position of the physician in the civic society of the times was accorded a similar illuminating treatment. If we reconstruct the life of the contemporary physician from the prose and poetic literature of the pre-reformation time, we find him painted in black colors indeed. He became a shining target for the scoff and scorn of the Renaissance period. There were many reasons for this antagonistic attitude against the physician. The association of the man of medicine with the clergy, from which he had evolved only in the previous century, naturally let him in for a share of the hatred and distrust aimed at the latter. Further, his therapeutic impotence, with his dishonest assumptions and pretences, stamped him as a rogue skilled only in the trickery and knavery of the quack. Cupidity was one of the least, though most common, evils ascribed to him; and all of these qualities served to discredit him both with the common people and the more educated classes. Added to these characteristics was the shameful and cowardly rôle the physician played in the inquisition of witches. There were striking exceptions to the general attitude of the physician in this matter; some bolder than their fellows were burned alive, or forced into exile, for their denunciation of this persecution of alleged

witches. The popular opinion of the physician and his trade is reflected in the moral-satirical "Narrenschiff" of Sebastian Brant (Basel, 1494), and in Thomas Murner's "Narrenbeschwörung" (Strassburg, 1512). In the Latin edition of Brant's book there is a woodcut representing the physician with the fool's cap and bells upon his head. Murner has this to say over the diagnostic ability of the physician:

Galien und Meister Hippokras
Die haben mich gelehret das
Wo Wasser sei, da ist es nass,
Stirbt er nicht, so wird ihm bass (good).

The physician can diagnose jaundice, gout, vertigo, bladder trouble, stone,

and many other conditions by the examination of the urine, and can cure all of these. Only when it comes to the heart is he willing to confess his impotence.

Sag an wie steht es um das Herz?
Ach Herr ich leide grossen Schmerz
Denn eine Liebste hatte ich,
Die ohne Schuld mich liess im Stich
O welche Lust wenn ich sie schaute
Jetzt hat verbannt mich meine Traute.
Nun hilf dir Gott du bist sehr krank
Es dauert mit dir nicht mehr lang.
Erduldet dein Herz solche Pein
Wie kann es da ein Wunder sein
Dass alle Glieder schwächer sind,
Und ich dich in Spitale find,
Ich weiss es selbst, wie das greift an
Die weil ich selber litt daran
Dafür hilft dir kein Recipe.





PART III

HOLBEIN. THE GREAT DANCE OF DEATH OF THE RENAISSANCE



THE name of Holbein is inseparably linked with the Dance of Death. The small woodcuts of his cycle of the "Imagines Mortis," the title under which many of the early editions appeared, constitute one of the greatest masterpieces of pictorial art the world has ever seen. The impression made by them upon the modern human mind viewing them for the first time is as vivid and deep as that made when these little xylographic sheets were first given out in the early part of the sixteenth century. They have a dramatic Shakespearean force and quality. As in the case of all other masterpieces of art of the highest order, their vitality of interest is eternal because they are pictures of life even more than of death. They are full of the deepest human interest. In each of these little cuts the story of a man's life, his calling, fate, and end, is told with tragic force and truth. For centuries they have delighted and charmed lovers of art throughout the world; and to many the phrase, Dance of Death, suggests Holbein only. In Germany the Holbein woodcuts are known as "Der grosse Totentanz"; and German appreciation of their artistic value is

expressed in such critical judgments as this: "In diesen kleinen Blättern eine Welt von Gedanken und Beziehungen mit höchster Meisterschaft zusammengefasst ist."

For Holbein the subject of the Dance of Death must have had an especial intriguing interest, for he produced three separate masterpieces dealing with it. These three, the Dagger Sheath with the Dance of Death, The Alphabet of the Dance of Death, and the great Imagines Mortis, we are sure are his creations. In addition to these are the legendary paintings of a dance of death on a house in Basel and a painting on the same subject in the palace at Whitehall in London. The evidence concerning these two reputed works is very slender indeed and rests largely upon inferences derived from rather vague contemporary literary mention. It must be remembered here that for a long time Holbein's relation to the great Dance of Death was uncertain; it was not definitely known whether he was the artist who drew the designs, or whether he cut the blocks himself; and it was even denied by some writers that he had any connection with it. The fact that the first edition of the woodcuts in book form was made in Lyons was used as an argument against Holbein's authorship. Further, a curious error arose in regard to the Dance of Death

at Basel. Holbein at a certain period came to be regarded as the artist who painted the wall paintings in that city, and this is repeatedly stated as a fact in the literature of the early part of the nineteenth century. To increase this confusion, some of the artists who brought out editions of reproductions of the Basel Dance of Death mixed Holbein's designs with those derived from Büchel's copies of the Basel paintings, producing a curious hybrid of the two art works. All of these confusing errors have been cleared up by the critical researches made during the latter half of the last century, and Holbein's position as the Master of the Dance of Death of the Renaissance has been established for all time.

The drawings for the Dance of Death for the dagger sheath are the earliest effort of Holbein in dealing with this subject, and must have been made before 1521, since the design was executed on the sheath for a dagger which was engraved by Urs Graf in that year. Two examples of the hand-drawn design have been preserved, one in Berlin and the other in Basel. Opinions differ as to which is the original drawing and which the copy. Certain anatomical differences in the two led Goette to the conclusion that the Berlin example is the original Holbein drawing, and that the example in Basel is only a copy. Six persons only, King, Queen, Soldier, Maid, Monk, and Child, are represented in this design, each with a companion Death, those attending the Queen and Maid being of the female sex. While no one of the figures is taken outright from the Basel Totentanz, it is clear that Holbein derived his inspiration wholly from the Basel pictures; there is no evi-

dence of any other influencing factor. Some of the figures, as that of the King, have a certain composite character, showing characteristics belonging to several figures in the Basel paintings. The deaths are represented in skeleton form. The twelve figures are arranged in separate pairs; both the living and the dead show active and passionate movement. The design is extraordinarily adapted to its purpose as a decoration for a dagger sheath. It gives the impression of a perfectly balanced and rhythmical unit. Holbein's art lies here in his wonderful adaptation of the Totentanz motive for purely decorative purposes. In this composition he retained more of the style and spirit of the old Dance of Death than he did in his Alphabet and in the *Imagines Mortis*.

The Alphabet with the Totentanz scenes was also primarily decorative in aim. It was intended as a collection of initial letters to be used in book printing. Twenty-four letters of the alphabet were designed, each with a dance of death scene, enclosed within quadratic borders, and were cut in wood. The designs were most probably drawn by Holbein directly upon the wood blocks, and were cut by Lützelburger. They first appeared in print in 1524, and were, therefore, probably drawn in 1523. Holbein's inspiration for the dance of death scenes connected with each letter is chiefly drawn from the Basel Totentanz; but they also contain evidences of other sources, as the Heidelberg woodcuts, the *Danse Macabre*, the *Heures*, and the wall paintings of Manuel in Berne. The scene in the letter A is taken bodily from the Basel Totentanz; it represents the charnel-house scene at the beginning of that paint-

ing. The Cardinal (E) in costume and position suggests that of the Basel dance, the Nun (Q) that of the Heidelberg woodcuts, and the Physician (M) that of the Danse Macabre and of the Hours. The majority of the individuals represented in the Alphabet correspond with those in the Basel Totentanz. In the letter s the second death bears an hourglass upon his back after the manner of the death in the scene with the Artist in Manuel's painting in Berne. Further, the position of the death in the scene of the Physician (M), standing behind the latter, is suggestive of the similar position in Manuel's painting. It is of interest to note that Holbein made use also of earlier drawings of his own for the Alphabet. The monk in the letter o is undoubtedly copied from the Dagger Sheath; and the horse in the letter v is a copy of that in his rider of the Apocalypse.

In spite of these numerous reminiscences and free borrowings from other sources, the dance of death scenes of the Alphabet are for the greater part worked out in an original manner as far as the general situation and dramatic significance are concerned. It would seem that Holbein started to reproduce the Basel paintings, but was quickly led by his own artistic instinct to the development of dramatic scenes taken from real life. In this development he abandoned the traditional conventions of the old Totentänze and produced a work in which the interest of human life and experiences often over-balances the interest of the rôle played by death in the depicted incident. Satire and humor are freely used, but Holbein knew how to individualize and bring home to his audience the general abstract idea, and to give it a manifold

personal application. In the old Totentänze such conceptions were confined almost wholly to the text, and did not



FIG. 27. THE LETTER M WITH THE PHYSICIAN. FROM HOLBEIN'S ALPHABETUM MORTIS. REPRODUCED BY LÖDEL. EDITION PRINTED BY H. LEMPertz, COLOGNE, 1849. ENLARGED.

reveal themselves in the pictures. In the Alphabet, Holbein stands in an intermediate position between the beautiful decorative adaptation of the old Totentanz motive of the Dagger Sheath and his wonderful artistic creation of the Imagines Mortis, in that each picture becomes a completely rounded representation of contemporary life, which the presence of the figures of death serves only to accentuate. Some of these pictures undoubtedly possess a special significance, satirical or political. In the scene in letter κ with the figure of the Count, the death figure is dressed in a peasant's costume and through his threatening manner brings to mind the contemporary peasant war in which often enough the lower classes decided the life or death of their rulers.

The twelfth letter, M, shows us the physician (see Fig. 27). Some writers have taken it for granted that the letter is the initial for the Latin name

of the personage represented, *m* for *medicus*, and although this supposition fits this individual case, it is not generally applicable to the *Alphabet* without recourse to the most far-fetched assumptions. The physician stands before his study table, on which there is a lighted candle and an open book. He is dressed in the costume of the *Danse Macabre*. In his right hand he holds the urine flask which the figure of death, standing behind him, is reaching to him over his right shoulder. He is examining the urine against the light of the candle. The death has his left hand upon the physician's left shoulder. At the side of the death, half concealed by the descending limb of the letter *m* can be made out portions of the body of a little devil who is urinating into another urine flask. Thus the satire is doubly sharp and bitter. Not only is the helplessness of the physician to avert his own death indicated, but his pretense of knowledge is mercilessly exposed in a manner so coarse as to add insult. In the great *Imagines Mortis* this representation of the Physician is replaced by a conception more human and realistic, but with as deeply biting satire, which is the more effective because of its realism.

In its presentation of dramatic scenes from real life the *Alphabet* made a great advance over the design for the *Dagger Sheath*, but the small woodcuts of the former do not possess the elegance of style shown in the hand-drawing. The technique of the wood cutting, however, has always been a source of wonder to artists and engravers. In the fineness and delicacy of the lines many have found reason to believe that the drawings were executed on copper plates

and not upon wood blocks. The most competent authorities agree, however, that they are woodcuts, and that Hans Lützelburger, "the prince of woodcutters," cut the blocks. Differences in imprints once thought to indicate differences in plate or block are now believed to be due to different degrees of pressure used in printing. Only two complete copies of the *Alphabet* printed on single sheets exist, and these are in the library at Basel and in the print collection in Dresden. Single prints of these initial letters occur in numerous works printed in Basel by Hervagius, Frobenius, Bebelius, Cratander, Isingrin, and other printers, also in the *Strassburg Greek Bible* of 1526, in Cratander's *Greek Galen* of 1538, and in other works. Proofs of portions of the *Alphabet* are to be found in numerous collections. Modern reproductions have been published by Dietrich (1849), Lempertz (1849), Tross (1856), Trübner (1897), and Weicher (1911).

The Great Dance of Death. Proofs of some of the blocks of Holbein's *Totentanz* are known to have been made in 1527. In 1530 an edition of forty woodcuts, printed only on one side of the sheet with German text above and below the cuts, was issued in Basel. The edition was anonymous; neither the date nor place of printing was given. According to Massmann there are very good reasons for ascribing to it the date of 1530; and this is generally considered the first edition; although some writers regard the earlier issue of proofs as constituting a first edition. It is very probable that there were several of these proof editions issued, varying in the number of cuts. In 1538 the brothers Melchior and Gaspar Trech-

sel in Lyons brought out an edition in French with forty-one cuts, that of the astrologer having been added. This work, also anonymous, bore the title of "Les Simulachres et Historiées faces de la Mort." Over each cut was a Latin text taken from the Bible and appropriate to the subject. Beneath each picture were four verses in French doggerel verse explaining the subject. Art critics and connoisseurs have been almost unanimous in attributing these anonymous pictures of death to Hans Holbein (1498-1554), and they are today accepted universally as his creation. In spite of the arguments to the contrary advanced by the Englishman, Douce, in his critical study of the Dance of Death in 1833, the researches of Rumohr, Massmann, Kastner, Wackernagel, Woltmann, and Goette, have proved conclusively Holbein's authorship of the cuts of the greater Dance of Death, as well as of the design for the Dagger Sheath and the Alphabet. For at least twelve years before the publication of the Lyons edition, proofs of the Holbein pictures were issued in Basel with German inscriptions, and according to Holbein's contemporary, Amerbach, with the titles "Totentanz" and "Chorea Mortis." The question, which has led to much fruitless discussion as to whether Holbein simply drew the designs upon paper or upon the wood blocks themselves and then turned them over to a professional "Formschneider" to be cut, or whether he cut some of the blocks himself, is a matter of very subordinate interest and can probably never be settled. It is certain that some, if not the majority, of the blocks were cut by Hans Lützelburger, who went to Basel in 1522 and died in 1526,

leaving some of the blocks uncut. It is not known who cut the remaining ones, or in what way the whole set was taken to Lyons. Among the designs which were cut later for the 1545 editions were four, the Soldier, Gambler, Drunkard, and Fool, which had formed part of the material of the Alphabet. It is probable that the blocks, which were cut in Basel under the inspiration of the Basel Totentanz, after their first use in the German edition, became the property of some creditor, who carried them into France to be used there, at the discretion of the new owner, for the illustration of one of the then popular religious books, with explanatory verses accompanying each picture. Very much in the same way were the pictures of the Danse Macabre utilized for the adornment of the Books of Hours. That such a use of the Holbein cuts was actually made is shown by the inclusion in the Lyons edition of the pictures of death of 1545, of Holbein's groups of children, which had no connection with his dance of death pictures, but were used with Bible verses attached, characterizing them as a representation of the different vices.

That the Holbein Totentanz had a contemporary fame is shown by the poetic glorification of it by the Latin poet Nikolaus Borbonius in the following verses:

DE MORTE PICTA A HANSO PICTORE NOBILI
Dum mortis Hansus pictor imaginem
exprimit,

Tanta arte mortem rettulit, ut mors vivere
Videatur ipsa: et ipse se immortalibus
Parem dis fecerit, operis hujus gloria.

That its fame extended into the next generation is shown by the story told by Sandrart, that in his youth he made a journey to Amsterdam and

paid a visit to the celebrated Paul Rubens, who in conversing with him advised him strongly to study and

*Medice, cura te=
ipsum.*

LVCAE IIIII.



**Tu congnoys bien la maladiꝯ
Pour le patient secourir,
Et si ne scais teste estourdiꝯ,
Le mal dont tu deburas mourir.**

FIG. 28. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM *LES SIMULACHRES ET HISTORIÉES FACES DE LA MORT*. J. AND F. FRELLON, LYONS, 1542. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.) LÜTZELBURGER'S ORIGINAL WOOD BLOCKS AFTER HOLBEIN'S DESIGNS WERE USED FOR THIS EDITION. IT HAD 41 PLATES. TO THE PLATES ARE ADDED, AS IN THE FIRST EDITION, THE LATIN QUOTATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE AND THE FRENCH QUATRAINS OF CORROZET.

to copy Holbein's pictures of death, as he had himself done in his youth. The early German proof editions have practically disappeared; only a few incomplete sets remain. This was probably due to the perishable nature of the prints; it was not until the first book edition of 1538 that the more durable form made the possibilities of preservation greater, so that our definite knowledge of the Holbein Totentanz really begins with the first

Lyons anonymous edition. The title-page of this edition bears the following: "Les Simulachres and Historiées Faces de la Mort, autant elegamment pour-traictes, que artificiellement imaginées. A Lyon, Soubz l'escu de Coloigne, M.D. XXXVIII," with the Trechsel device and motto. It is a small quarto, with 104 unnumbered pages. It is dedicated to Jeanne du Touszelle, Abbess of the Convent of Saint Pierre in Lyons. Pages 3 to 8 are taken up by "Epistre des Faces des Morts"; 9 to 15 by "Diverses Tables de la Mort"; 16 to 56 by the 41 plates; 57 to 72 by "Figures de la Mort moralement descriptes"; 73 to 85 by "Les diverses Mors des bons et des mauvais"; 84 to 93 by *Memorables Authoritez*"; 94 to 107 by "De la Necessitie de la Mort, etc." The colophon is: "Excudebant Lvgdvni Melchior et Gaspar Trechsel fratres, 1538." The moral quatrains accompanying the pictures were composed by the Paris printer Gilles Corrozet. The order of the 41 plates is as follows: 1, Creation of Eve; 2, The Temptation; 3, Expulsion from Paradise; 4, Adam Tilling the Earth; 5, The Charnel House; 6, Pope; 7, Emperor; 8, King; 9, Cardinal; 10, Empress; 11, Queen; 12, Bishop; 13, Duke; 14, Abbot; 15, Abbess; 16, Nobleman; 17, Canon; 18, Judge; 19, Advocate; 20, Senator; 21, Preacher; 22, Priest; 23, Monk; 24, Nun; 25, Old Woman; 26, Physician; 27, Astrologer; 28, Rich Man; 29, Merchant; 30, Seaman; 31, Knight; 32, Count; 33, Old Man; 34, Countess; 35, Lovers; 36, Duchess; 37, Peddler; 38, Ploughman; 39, Child; 40, The Last Judgment; 41, Arms of Death. On the bedpost in the cut of the Duchess, 36, is the monogram **HL**, which is generally believed to indicate Hans Lützelbur-

ger, the cutter of the majority of the blocks. Sixteen editions were printed from the original blocks between 1542 (see Fig. 28) and 1574; one French and four Latin editions by Johann and Franz Frelon of Lyons (1542-1547); and four Latin, three French, and two Italian editions by Johann Frelon alone (1547-1574). In the Frelon editions of 1545, 1547, 1549, and 1554, there were 53 plates; after 1562 there were 58 plates. In those with 53 plates 1 to 39 are the same as in the first edition. The additional plates are: 40, Soldier; 41, Gambler; 42, Drunkard; 43, Idiot; 44, Robber; 45, Blind Man; 46, The Wagoner; 47, The Beggar; and 48 to 51, groups of children; followed by 52, The Last Judgment; and 53, Arms of Death. In the editions with 58 plates, 1 to 44 are the same as 1 to 44 of the editions with 53 plates, the added plates being 46, Young Husband; 47, Young Wife; and 45, 48, and 58, being groups of children; while 49 to 57 are the same as 45 to 53. The plates of the children are not dance of death pictures; the final number of cuts belonging to the Totentanz proper is 51. Some of the copies of the 1545 Latin edition show a crack in the first plate, running from top to bottom, and this cracked block was used in the succeeding editions. It is probable that the accident to the block happened while this edition was in the press and that a portion of it was printed before the block was cracked. In the Latin edition of 1542 the French verses of the two French editions are translated into Latin tetrastichs by Georg Aemylius, a clergyman of repute and the brother-in-law of Luther. The Bible verses were also translated into Latin. These various editions were

published under the titles of "Les Simulachres de la Mort," "Imagines de Morte," "Imagines Mortis," "Les Images de la Mort," and "Icones Mortis."

Innumerable editions, copies, and imitations, as well as facsimile reproductions of the Holbein Totentanz have been published. More than one hundred editions in 300 years are known to have appeared. It is necessary to make a distinction between the copies and the facsimiles. Of the latter, the most important are those by Lippmann (1879), Hirth (1884), Schlotthauer (1832), Douce (1833) and the English Holbein Society (1869). The Lippmann facsimile was made from the set of proofs in Berlin with 40 plates; Hirth's from the first Lyons edition of 1538 with 41 pictures; the Schlotthauer lithographic reproduction from an original edition not specified, containing 53 plates with 49 Totentanz pictures, corresponding to the fifth Lyons edition of 1545. It is necessary also to distinguish between copies of Holbein made either on wood or copper and those imitations of his design in which the artist used his discretion in varying them at his own pleasure, giving more or less free rein to his own imagination. Some of the latter borrow nothing from Holbein, except the general idea of the Totentanz, and work out the individual plates in a wholly different and original manner, adding or substituting new subjects. These imitators of Holbein will be discussed in Part IV. As to the copies in which a more or less faithful attempt was made to follow Holbein's designs accurately, very few are successful in preserving the charm of the original. In many of these editions the plates are reversed, and in others they are

enlarged; and a careful comparison of the copies and the originals will show certain minor alterations in the

*Medice, cura te
ipsum.*

LVCAR IIII,



*Cura te stesso medico, se sai.
Che pensi altrui cauar de le mie mani;
E più infelici, che contenti fai:
Ma' i son per fare i tuoi disegni uani.*

FIG. 29. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM SIMOLACHRI, HISTORIE E FIGURE DE LA MORTE. V. VAUGRIS, VENICE, 1545. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.) THE WOODCUTS FOR THIS ITALIAN EDITION WERE MADE BY AN UNKNOWN ARTIST. IT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL THE REPRODUCTIONS OF HOLBEIN. THE PUBLISHER BOASTED THAT THEY EXCELLED THE ORIGINAL. VAUGRIS WAS A FRENCH PRINTER ESTABLISHED AT VENICE, AND SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT HE HAD FREQUENT RELATIONS WITH BASEL.

former. The best of these copies is undoubtedly that made by an unknown wood engraver for the edition published by Vincenzo Vaugris, Venice, 1545 (see Fig. 29). This contains 41 beautiful plates, so skillfully done that the publisher claimed that they were superior to the originals. They are, however, slightly larger than these. On the other hand the numerous editions brought out in Cologne

by Arnold Birckman (1543-1574) are very inferior to the originals, and do not compare with the Vaugris editions.

*Medecin, guery toy
toymesme.*

LVC IIII.



*Tu cognois bien la maladie
Pour le patient secourir,
Et si ne sçais teste estourdie,
Le mal dont tu deuras mourir.*

FIG. 30. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM HOLBEIN'S LES IMAGES DE LA MORT. J. FRELLON, LYONS, 1547. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.) THIS EDITION HAD 53 PLATES. ORIGINAL WOOD BLOCKS WERE USED (41) WITH TWELVE NEW ONES ADDED.

Unfortunately copies come fairly frequently into the market at prices higher than their intrinsic value. In the early years of the 17th century, copies on copper plates appeared, and during the 17th and 18th centuries this was a favorite medium for their reproduction. The great majority of these copies, however, belong to the imitations rather than faithful copies, and will be described later. Only a few lithographic copies have been essayed. In Langlois' "Essai His-

torique sur les Danses de Morts," 1852, there are eight plates reproduced, claimed by the author to be printed from the original wood blocks used in the Lyons edition in French of 1547 (see Fig. 30). These are the plates of the Pope, Empress, Judge, Physician, Astrologer, Seaman, Duchess, and Soldier. They show evidence of wear; in those of the Judge and Seaman the fillet of the border has disappeared in part. It is remarkable that these blocks should stand their prolonged use so well; it has been estimated that over 100,000 impressions had been made from them. Goette confirms Langlois' statement that these eight plates are printed from the original wood blocks; and says further that recent investigations in France gave no evidence as to their present whereabouts.

A comparative study of the Alphabet with the Totentanz and the Great Dance of Death shows conclusively that the latter represents the complete and fully ripened working-out of the idea in Holbein's mind, to which the conception of the Dagger Sheath and the Alphabet were but preparatory stages in the evolution of the Great Dance of Death. The relationship of the Alphabet to the Totentanz is very close. The latter is but a more finished and complete working-out of the ideas that gradually developed in Holbein's mind while engaged on the Alphabet, in the execution of which he found that the material hampered the complete expression of his ideas. He chose, therefore, the series of small pictures as the medium for the fuller exposition of his conceptions of the Totentanz motive. In the creation of these designs his art had ripened and his technical skill increased. The final result was

the creation of a great masterpiece, the most perfect and complete expression of the Totentanz idea the world has seen. Out of the old dance of death material he created new forms and new situations, and brought them into the realm of true art. Some writers have urged the inappropriateness of the designation of the Dance of Death for Holbein's pictures, preferring the appellation of Pictures of Death. That the Holbein pictures differ in many details from those of the old Totentänze is very evident, but the essential motive of the old wall paintings and woodcuts is still the central idea of Holbein's work. But he has approached it in the spirit of a new age. Holbein stood at the height of the narrow pass between the old and the new epochs, the Gothic and the Renaissance. The idea of the freedom of man was replacing the old mystic-catholic conception of sinful man's relation to the universe. In place of the world of abstract ideas of the Middle Ages the concrete facts of earthly existence now asserted themselves. Self-consciousness became the ruling principle. Man's soul looked earthwards and not to the heavens; in place of mystic or demonic ruling influences, he accepts only moral and esthetic laws created by his own intellect. And these revolutionary changes in man's outlook upon the universe were reflected naturally in the art of the times. The artist no more sought to express the spiritual aspects of things, but turned to the actual world for his subject matter. Foreign to Holbein is the pathos of faith and belief; he is free from all sentimentality and lyricism; he is confused by no system of ethics. He presents only that which he sees, the comedy of human life in the early

sixteenth century. As in the old Totentänze his pictures are arranged in a definite cycle, although each picture is a world in itself. His sharp, bold line is the medium of expression, and through it the movement of the figures, the sense of the action, and the special features of the environment are dramatically portrayed. In each scene he has seized the critical moment, the high point of the situation. Death, no mere symbolic representation, but a dramatic active personage, snatches away the human individual in that moment which reveals the specific characteristic of his life. It is not so much the creation of new material in which Holbein excelled, as in the artistic and intellectual reworking of the old. There is a progressive evolution from the wall paintings, block books, and woodcuts, to the artistic culmination of the Totentanz idea in the Holbein cycle. In this the art of the Dance of Death reached its highest level. Holbein undoubtedly was inspired by the Basel Totentanz, which he may have seen almost daily; that he was familiar with other representations of the motive is evident enough from the suggestions of these found in his work. But from all of these he received only an external inspiration. For its cyclical form, its individual pairs of death and the living, for the dancing of death, the introduction of musical instruments, and for other things he is indebted to the old forms of the Totentänze. But for the intellectual, or psychologic effect of his working-out of the idea Holbein departed widely from the old forms. The *memento mori* impression, which was the chief artistic aim in the old pictures is here subordinated to the impression of active dramatic life. These are pictures

of life rather than of death. He shows us no representation of the actual death scene; his demonic forms of death serve only to illuminate and to heighten the energy of life. At the first glance his pictures may seem to be simple depictions of death scenes; but a moment's contemplation convinces us that their chief interest lies in their dramatic expression of life, and not in the horror or the inevitableness of death.

Like his contemporary, Manuel of Berne, Holbein shows the influence of the Reformation in his pictures, but he expresses his satire much less violently than did the former. In the plate of the Pope, one of the most satirical of them all, are two little devils; one introduced into the upper part of the picture is holding back the drapery of the dais, and the other is bearing an indulgence with the papal seals. In some of the later editions these two devils have been removed from the picture. At one time, apparently, the Holbein pictures were prohibited as offensive to Rome. Many writers have professed to see in the Pope a likeness to Leon x, in the Emperor to Maximilian, and in the King to Francis I. Others see a portrait of Holbein himself in the young man seated on the bed and playing a musical instrument in the plate of the Nun. Further, the two figures in the Arms of Death, as supporters, are said to represent Holbein and his wife. Much discussion has been carried on regarding Holbein's knowledge of anatomy in the depiction of his death figures; by some they have been criticized as not representing true skeletons. That Holbein had an accurate knowledge of the anatomy of the human body is evident from his rendering of the best pre-Vesalian skeleton in his Totentanz of

the Dagger Sheath. But a skeleton has limitations as far as the depiction of movement and expression is con-

representations of the dead, as in the old Totentänze, nor are they a personification of death; they represent

**Medice, curate
ipsum.**

LVCAE IIII.



FIG. 31. PELVIC REGION OF THE DEATH FROM THE PHYSICIAN OF HOLBEIN'S IMAGINES MORTIS. MUCH ENLARGED. COMPARISON OF THIS WITH ACCURATE ANATOMICAL REPRESENTATIONS SHOWS THAT IT IS ONLY A REPRODUCTION OF THE MUCH SHRUNKEN NORMAL PLASTIC ANATOMY. THE NORMAL LANDMARKS ARE CORRECTLY INDICATED.



*Tu bene cognoscis morbos, artemq; medēdi,
Qua simul egrotis subueniatur, habes.
Sed caput ô stupidū, cū fata aliena retardes,
Ignoras morbi, quo moriere, genus.*

FIG. 32. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM HOLBEIN'S IMAGINES MORTIS. J. FRELLON, LYONS, 1547. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.) THIS EDITION HAD 53 PLATES, INCLUDING THE 41 ORIGINAL BLOCKS, TO WHICH 12 NEW FIGURES WERE ADDED. LATIN TRANSLATIONS OF THE FRENCH EPIGRAMS MADE BY GEORG AEMYLIUS, BROTHER-IN-LAW OF LUTHER.

cerned; Holbein wished to give his figures of death a share in the human activities which he depicted, and to give them facial expression. He, therefore, abandoned the skeleton form for one frequently with hair on the head and clothed in muscles and soft parts, that would give the impression of a living relief contour, yet in such a manner that these soft parts suggest a dead body. Nevertheless, a close study of the head, trunk, extremities, and pelvis of his death forms shows an accurate knowledge of anatomical details not surpassed in any of Holbein's contemporaries (see Fig. 31). Holbein's forms of death are not

fantastic imaginary demonic beings, having attributes of life, and play rôles corresponding to this in the individual pictures. In order to heighten this impression he not infrequently introduced figures of devils alongside his death figures, both in the Alphabet and in the great Dance of Death. Holbein's deaths perform a wholly different function from those of the older Totentanz pictures. They appear upon the scene, not as guides for departing souls to the land beyond, but as active malicious and malevolent

spirits, leering and capering in glee over the sad joke they are about to perpetrate upon the unfortunate vic-



FIG. 33. LETTER Y WITH THE DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN FROM HOLBEIN'S *IMAGINES MORTIS*. FROM THE LIBRO EN EL QUAL HAY MUCHAS SUERTES DE LETRAS HISTORIADAS . . . Y TAMBIEN UN ABECEDARIO CON FIGURAS ET LA MUERTE. BY J. DE YCIAR, 1555. (AFTER THE ORIGINAL IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.)

tim. It has been said that Holbein's cycle is not a true Dance of Death. As a matter of fact, a study of the pictures will show almost as much dancing on the part of the death figures as in the old Basel pictures.

The charm of Holbein's pictures is so great that one is tempted to consider them in detail, one by one. They have served as a rich mine for adaptation to use as bookplates. And of all of the series no one plate has been more frequently drawn upon to fulfill this function than the well-known one of the Physician (see Fig. 28). The scene is that of an office or study. At the left before a window with oval bull's eye panes sits the physician on a heavy wooden chest. He is at his study table on which rests an open book with an hourglass at its side. The floor is apparently of square tiles, and in the immediate left foreground lies a dog asleep. This introduction of the animal companion is significant in itself of the character of the physician. He has become more human. He must have a kind heart or

he would not have a pet. This tactful human touch is one of Holbein's greatest gifts; into every one of the pictures of his cycle little incidents or objects are introduced that have a deep significance for the interpretation of the personages represented in the scene. High on the wall, behind the physician, is a shelf filled with books and flasks, indicating his professional armamentarium. The physician himself is attired in the long ungirdled robe of the period. It has a wide fur collar and voluminous sleeves. On his head is the tall rounded cap. His hair is abundant and long and somewhat curly. He wears no beard. His face is thin and sharp, with a long straight nose and a thin but strong chin. It is not an attractive face, but may be described as intellectual in type. It is evident that Holbein presents the physician as a student. Nothing of the quack is here apparent. The whole atmosphere is that of a study, plainly furnished with the bare necessities, the physician intently engaged in consulting his Galen or Hippocrates, while his dog sleeps happily upon the floor. Into this quiet retreat, disturbing the reader but not the dog, have come, through the round-arched door, which they have closed behind them, a strange pair. Death advances, holding the urine bottle before him, for inspection by the physician. Behind him he leads by the left hand a stooped and bent old man, who leans upon a long cane which he holds in his right hand. The old man wears a quilted hood and a long cloak buttoned by a single button at his neck, beneath which the usual gown appears. He has on soft shoes slightly pointed at the toes. His expression is that of a feeble old man, a perfect portrayal of advanced senility, weak,

ill, and querulous. The transom over the door is decorated with an arabesque; on the door itself is a beautiful, simple strap-hinge, terminating in a fleur-de-lis. Holbein must have been very fond of this decorative motive for he employed it frequently in his pictures. The composition of the three figures reveals Holbein's great artistic sense. The death stands forward, between the sitting physician and the aged patient, binding the group into a perfect balanced unity. It is a consultation between death and the physician as to the fate of the patient. But the satire of this picture is double; it includes both the physician and the patient. Over the plate is the quotation from Luke iv: 23, "Physician, heal thyself." The physician has no power to avert death, either from himself or the old man. He knows what advice to give the patient, but he is ignorant of his own approaching end. A free rendering of Corrozet's explanatory quatrain beneath the plate seems to indicate that the death of the physician and not that of the old man is intended:

Well knowest thou the malady,
In order to succour the patient,
And yet knoweth not, addle-pate,
The disease by which thou, thyself, are about
to die.

The delineation of the death in this scene is most remarkable. The artist has succeeded in giving to his face and body, though partly skeletonized, a living expression of sly deprecation and mischievous humor. The physician with a serious inquiring face turns his head towards death and extends his left hand, with palm open to the pair. Simple as this gesture would appear, yet it has been interpreted differently by various writers. Some see in it simply a movement to

receive the urine flask from the death; others have interpreted it as a gesture of dismissal to the old patient, an acknowledgement that nothing can be done for him. Against the first interpretation it may be argued that the most natural way to take the urine bottle would be by putting the hand around the long neck of the flask, instead of receiving it on the open palm. To the writer's mind the physician is but making a conventional gesture of receiving the patient and the consultant. The double-edged satire, aimed against both the physician and the patient, is heightened by the consultation scheme of the composition, in that the consultant himself is death. The impression made upon the beholder is infinitely greater than that which might be produced by viewing the actual death scene of either one of the principals in this drama. In his *Physician of the Alphabet*, Holbein represented not so much the powerlessness of the physician against death, as the futility and absurdity of his pretended knowledge of diagnosis. In doing this he broke away from the old convention of this scene. Much further did he depart from the old conception in this ingenious and charming genre-picture of the consultation with death. It is a more human picture, more intellectual and less coarse than the satire of the *Alphabet*. It has been and always will be one of the favorite plates of Holbein's cycle. A few writers have made the curious error of taking the patient in this scene for an old woman; and some of the imitators of Holbein have actually represented an unmistakable woman as the patient, as Rentz, for example. It may be that this change of sex was intentional, as an effort towards originality.

In Holbein's Physician a more pleasing conception of the character of the contemporary man of medicine is shown us in the emphasis laid upon two cardinal traits. In the first place he is a student, earnestly engaged in searching his authorities; in the second place, he shows humane qualities, reflected in the confidence reposed in him by his sleeping dog. It may be safely assumed that for him the urine examination is not the whole thing in diagnosis; it is only a preliminary step in the examination of the patient. The old pose has lost its significance of quackery. We have a kindly feeling for this student of medicine, whose studies have been so rudely inter-

rupted by the messenger of death. Not only did Holbein express satire in this plate, but humanity as well, and the impression made upon the beholder is rather preponderantly in favor of the latter. In the Holbein cycle the art of the Totentanz motive reached the highest point of its development. Nothing has since approached it, either in inspirational value, human interest, or in skill of technic. From now on the art works dealing with this motive show a progressive decline until the period of the Great War, when individual creations show a new quality of realism in the depiction of the external horror of death under the conditions of modern warfare.



HOLBEIN'S ESCUTCHEON OF DEATH.



PART IV

THE IMITATORS OF HOLBEIN



WITHIN a very few years after its appearance, Holbein's "Grosse Totentanz" was reproduced, copied, and imitated in numerous editions, and so spread throughout the world. Everywhere it excited admiration and wonder for the strength and clarity of its artistic vision and the realistic force of its symbolism. But this masterpiece had attained such a degree of perfection that the artists who came after Holbein were unable to create or develop new and original treatments of the old theme. Holbein had completely secularized the medieval dance of death mythus, so that it had lost forever its old religious significance. For the remainder of the sixteenth century, and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth, all artists who attempted this motive took their inspiration wholly from Holbein, and were unable to strike out for themselves along any new line of treatment, either as far as style or naturalism was concerned, or to invent new motives. It was the period of the "little artists," who could only imitate Holbein's general manner of treatment of the old theme, but who lacked individual creative power and imagination. All attempts to restore the dance of death to its

ancient position of religious-didactic influence fell flat because of the overwhelming success of Holbein's wholly secular treatment, which led to a widespread change of psychology in the mass of people accessible to influence by art. This was strikingly shown in France. Up to the time of the appearance of the Holbein cuts there had appeared in France twenty-two editions of the *Danse Macabre* and more than eighty editions of the *Books of Hours* having dance of death borders derived from the latter. Interest in the Holbein masterpiece replaced the old religious interest in the *Danse*, so that from this time on editions of the latter appeared only at widely spaced intervals. Holbein's art was henceforth the high point of interest in the Dance of Death motive; all that preceded it now acquired a purely historical interest.

The art productions of the imitators of Holbein varied from mere slavish copies of his dance of death, with slight changes, usually not improvements on the original, with one or several new subjects introduced, to series in which the only originality consisted in the replacing of Holbein's *dramatis personae* with an entirely new set of actors presented in a Holbeinesque manner. The technical ability shown in some of the imitations was excellent, in a few very effective; in some the skill of the artist was devoted to the adornment of the

plates with rich ornamental borders, thus detracting from the forcible impression of the originals enclosed in Füssen (early 17th century), Wolgast (17th century), Kuckucksbad (18th century), Freiburg (18th century),

Der Arzet.



FIG. 34. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. JOBST DENECKER, 1544.

simple fillet borders. Those who attempted to combine the medieval spirit with Holbein's style were particularly unfortunate, their results being characterized by pedantic stiffness or by over-sentimentality. As in the book illustration following Holbein, so it was in the case of the few wall paintings produced after his time, as those at Chur (1543), Constance (1558), Lucerne (1610; 1626-1635),

Erfurt (1736), and Elbigenalp (1820). All of these used the Holbein woodcuts as their model. We cannot but wonder at the number of the artists who busied themselves with such imitations during the centuries following Holbein. It speaks volumes for the deep impression made upon the mind of man by his masterpiece, as well as for the vitality of the ancient theme.

As early as 1544 Jobst Denecker

printed in Augsburg an edition of 42 woodcuts, 40 of which were after Holbein, the other two original ones that Denecker copied the 1530 edition of Holbein issued at Basel. The plates taken bodily from the latter are



FIG. 35. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. DAVID DENECKER, 1561.

being the celebrated plate of the Adulterer and that of the Crucifixion. It bears the colophon "Gedruckt inn der Kaiserlichen Reychstatt Augspurg durch Jobst Denecker Formschneider." On the title-page is the date MDXLIIII. It was entitled simply "Todtentanz." On the bed of the Duchess in the thirty-second plate is the date 1542, replacing the monogram HL of the Holbein plate. It is evident

reversed, and their order is changed. They are reproduced as large full-page woodcuts in bold, spirited, sometimes rather coarse, style, suggesting that of the German book illustrations. All of the delicate charm of the original is lost; but, nevertheless, these cuts have a force and attraction all their own. On the page opposite each engraving is the dialogue between death and his vis-à-vis, and at the bottom a

Latin hexameter. In general, the details of the Holbein cuts are faithfully copied; the chief differences are to

while with his left he pushes upon the handle of the sword. It appears that even in the sixteenth century



FIG. 36. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FABIO GLISSENTI, 1609. ON THE LEFT IS VALGRISI'S REPRODUCTION OF THE HOLBEIN; ON THE RIGHT AN ORIGINAL WOODCUT OF GLISSENTI, REPRESENTING DEATH IN THE ACT OF GIVING A CLYSTER.

be found in the features of the personages, which are much altered in the Denecker plates. Each cut has a heavy black line as border, instead of the double-line fillet border of the Holbein plates. The upper border of the cut of the Physician is broken in several places. Special interest attaches to this edition of Denecker because of the plate of the Adulterer which is found in none of the Lyons, Cologne, or Venice editions of Holbein. It is not known that Holbein ever designed a plate of this subject, so that it is generally assumed that it is original with Denecker. The plate represents the guilty wife and her paramour in bed, caught in the act by the outraged husband, who is pushing his sword through the bodies of the pair. Death assists him, holding the head of the wife in his right hand,

the boldness of this representation led to scandal, for there is in existence another edition with woodcuts engraved by the same hand and with the same background, in which the adulterous couple is represented, instead of lying in bed, as sitting before the bed, with arms intertwined. Two other editions by Jobst Denecker are known. One bears neither name, place, nor date, but has the same cuts, that of the Adulterer bearing the mark of Jobst Denecker. The third edition has 40 cuts only, without title or date, and a different text. The cut of the Adulterer has Jobst Denecker's mark as in the preceding. Denecker's physician is a faithful enlargement of the Holbein cut, except that it is reversed and shows marked differences in the features of the physician and patient (see Fig. 34). The former

has a facial type suggesting somewhat the Jewish.

The Denecker family appears to

Necker. Formschneider." This contained also 42 woodcuts, but apparently not that of the Adulterer.



FIG. 37. DEATH AND THE ANATOMICAL LECTURE. F. GLISSENTI, 1609.

have been one of printers and engravers, wandering from city to city as did Holbein, and possessing establishments in Leipzig, Augsburg, Vienne, and Saint-Gallen. In 1561, David Denecker, either a brother or a son of Jobst, produced a "Todtentanz" with 42 woodcuts, having the colophon "Getruckt inn der loblichen Reychstatt Augspurg—durch Davidt Denecker—Formschneyder." The title-page is dated MDLXI. The plate of the Adulterer is lacking. In 1572, there was brought out in Leipzig an edition of a "Todtentanz durch alle stende der Menschen," by "David De

He is said to have brought out another edition in Leipzig, differing in some minor details from the preceding. In 1581, a "Totentanz, Durch alle Stendt der Menschen," was printed in Saint Gallen by Leonhart Straub, with 40 cuts of Denecker. This edition was incorrectly cited by Dibdin as having been copies on copper of the Holbein engravings. The title was printed partly in red. The Adulterer print is lacking. In the copy of the Augsburg edition of David Denecker, owned by the author, there are but 38 cuts, and they are brilliantly colored with heavy washes in a variety

of shades, after the manner of the early German woodcut illustrations. In the print of the Physician (see in his 1544 edition. The same defects appear in the upper border of the block of the Physician as in that

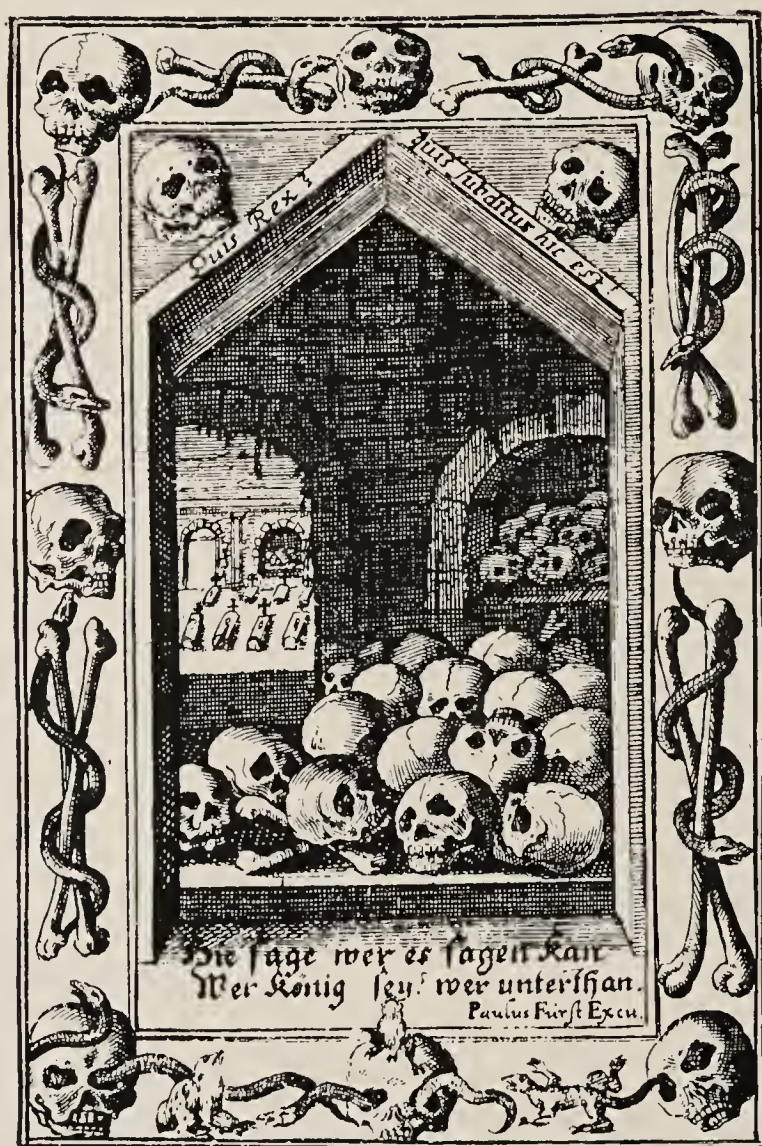


FIG. 38. END-PIECE TO JOHANN VOGEL'S *ICONES MORTIS*. PAULUS FÜRST, 1648.

Fig. 35), the cap and robe of the doctor are of a reddish maroon, the fur collar is brownish, and his under robe is green. He sits on a blue cushion. The patient's quilted hood is gray, his cloak blue, lined with brown, his gown a sort of violet brown. His stockings are green. The tiles of the floor are varicolored, and the books on the shelf are bound in bright colors. His dog is white with patches of gray. This coloring of the prints has been done by a fairly skilled hand. In very few instances do the colors overlap. Aside from the colors, the cuts seem to have been printed from the same blocks as those used by Jobst Denecker

edition. The text shows, however, various typographical differences and variations in spelling. That accompanying the print of the Physician in both Jobst's and David's editions is the same, save for slight orthographical variations.

Der Tod:

Jetzt sieht man Doctor das dein kunst
Weit fählt—und ist genn mir umb sunst
Dann wa die stund verhanden ist
Hast du das leben nie gefrist
Kain augenblick—das ist wol schein
Und in der not kain hilff nit thon
Nimbst doch von andern leüten lon.

Artzet:

Wiewohl ich manchem gholffen hab

Der ainer krankhait kommen ab
Und lebt noch—der sunst leg im grab
So sich ich doch das Kain Artzney

man followed by death. These woodcuts were executed with much nicety of technic, and achieved much popu-



FIG. 39. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. REPRODUCTION OF THE HOLBEIN IN COPPER-PLATE, WITH FLORAL BORDER. JOHANN VOGEL, 1648.

Noch Kraut und Wurtz gewachsen sey
Die mir der letzten stund befrey
Weyl dann mein kunst kain rath nit waisst
Will stellen ich zu Gott mein trost
Und im beuelhen meinen Gaist.

David Denecker was followed at Vienne by one Hercule de Necker, who was also a wood engraver. In 1579 he published at Vienne an album representing the ten ages of

larity. They were probably the first of a species of publication, representing the ages of human life, that later became very popular in France and Germany, and were used by both the Catholic and Lutheran churches for religious propaganda.

From 1557 to 1575 a number of editions of the "Der Todten-Danz, durch alle Stend und Geschlecht der

Menschen" were published at Cologne and one in Nuremberg in 1560 by Casper Scheyt. He copied the

omitted, as is also the demon blowing with a bellows into the ear of the Counsellor. Several different printers'

59
26. *Arzt.*



Doctor.
Hera Doctor dem berühmte Kunst
Dem Todt zu wehren ist ymb sich
Kunst Kraut nach Wurtz dieselbs verdirbt
Erhalt das Leben das nicht stirbt.

FIG. 40. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. ORIGINAL ADAPTATION OF HOLBEIN, BY CONRAD MEYERS, 1650.

cuts after Holbein from the Birckmann editions, but used a German text, whereas all of the Birckmann editions had a Latin text. Many of the impressions of these inferior woodcuts are poor. They are all coarsely executed. In 1590, in a work entitled "Libellus Davidis Chytraei de morte et vita aeterna," published at Wittenberg, by Matthaeo Welack, 53 of the Holbein series are reproduced in coarsely engraved woodcuts, but fairly faithful to the originals. The two devils in the cut of the Pope are

marks are found upon some of these engravings.

In a very curious Italian work entitled "Discorsi Morali dell' eccell. Sig. Fabio Glissentini contra il dispiacer del morire. Delto athanatophilia. In Venetia, appresso Bartolameo de gli Alberti. MDCIX," twenty-four of Vaugris' reproductions of Holbein's woodcuts are introduced with five others taken from the Simolachre together with many new subjects imitated in the Holbein manner, over 300 in all. These woodcuts all bear

upon the subject of death, which any rate his writings proclaim him a the author discusses from every possible angle. It is a sort of tragedy of highly religious man, philosophical rather than scientific. Holbein's cut



FIG. 41. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. WENCESLAUS HOLLAR, WITH BORDER BY DIEPENBEEKE. FROM THE "MORTALIUM NOBILITAS," LONDON, 1651.

human life. The work consists of five dialogues and a *brevissimo trattato*. Each of these is preceded by a portrait of the author. These portraits, as all of the other plates, are decorated with funeral emblems. The cuts, all of which contain a skeletonized or mummified figure, are repeated over and over again, most of them in each section of the work. Some of the Holbein subjects are very poorly imitated. The devils are omitted from the cut of the Pope. The prints bearing upon medical subjects are especially interesting to us, as Glissentti is said to have been a physician himself. At

of the Physician is repeated several times, always with a companion picture of Death in the act of preparing to administer a clyster to a patient who has risen from his bed and kneels upon the floor (see Fig. 36). In another print an anatomist is in the midst of an autopsy, while Death addresses forcibly the foremost of a group of young medical students crowding in to view the anatomizing of the body of a young woman. From the text we gather that this is the anatomical theater at Padua (see Fig. 37). The body is that of a celebrated beauty. Death points out the

repulsive features of the dead body. Behind the lips so beautiful are decayed teeth and a foul odor issues

as it appears on the surface to consist chiefly of arid religious moralizations and philosophizing. So it is more



FIG. 42. PHYSICIAN AND DEATH. FROM THE 1794 LONDON EDITION OF HOLLAR, WITHOUT DIEPENBEEKE'S BORDERS.

from the mouth. The parts of the body formed for love in life are in the dead body horrible and repulsive through putrefaction. Death is attempting to so horrify and disgust the young student that he will no longer desire to live, but will give himself to death. The end of this tale is that the student decided to abandon the practice of medicine and to live upon the income left him by his parents. One would like to know what the author had in his mind as to many of these cuts; but the mass of text is too formidable for one to make the attempt at translation, particularly

profitable to take the pictures at their face value. They are interesting and curious enough to repay a careful examination. Many of the Glisenti woodcuts are reproduced in Venetian works published in 1670 and 1677. This edition of 1609 is apparently the second one, for in the Sears' catalogue (1889), a first edition is described as having been printed by Dom. Ferri, in Venice, in 1596. It was said to be extremely rare, as is also the 1609 edition.

About 1600, there was published in Frankfort a "Todten Dantz durch alle stände und Geschlecht der Mensch-

en," with frontispiece and 60 copperplates engraved by Eberhard Kieser. This is most probably the earliest

The frontispiece is an elaborate design of an arched gateway, surmounted by the Holbein arms of death; in the



Medice, curate ipsum. *Tab. 4.*

FIG. 43. PHYSICIAN AND DEATH. FROM THE ENGLISH EDITION OF HOLLAR, 1804. AFTER REBITING OF THE ORIGINAL PLATES.

reproduction of the Holbein woodcuts as a whole in copperplates, although Henry Aldegrever in 1541 engraved on copper a dance of death in 8 plates, copied from the Lyons edition, and which are copied by Kieser in this work of his. The entire series of the *Imagines Mortis* is reproduced, mostly reversed and in different order, with some new and original ones. Among the latter are the Jew and the Jewess, and the "Meusthurn" which is represented in the form of a human head, with a door for the mouth and windows for the eyes. A ladder leads up to one of the windows through which Death is entering. The devils are omitted from the plate of the Pope.

pediment are the three Fates; below them in the gateway are Adam and Eve and the tree of life. On each side are skeleton caryatids. The pages have borders of flowers and fruits, accompanied by Scripture texts and verses in German. Both the title and text are copied from Caspar Scheyt. Five editions of this work were printed in Frankfort; one in 1625 has both Latin, French and German verses. The plate of the physician is also reversed and shows slight variations in detail. In 1647 there was issued at Nuremberg a copy of the Kieser edition in the form of 60 copperplates engraved by A. Khol. This edition has a frontispiece by Georg Strauch,

and a new translation of the Latin verses into German. Langlois believes that eight of the first plates of this

tive, with heaped-up skulls and underneath is the motto, "Hie sage, wer es sagen kan, wer König ist? Wer



FIG. 44. PHYSICIAN AND DEATH. SOLOMON VAN RUSTING, AMSTERDAM, 1741.

series are copies of those by Aldegrever which were made in 1541, and were copied by Kieser in his editions. The Kieser plates, or copies of them, appear also in an edition by Johann Vogel, "Icones Mortis," printed by Christoff Lochner of Nuremberg in 1648. This edition has two new title-pages, and the 60 copperplates are followed by an end-piece, a new conception of the charnel house mo-

unterthan?" This plate bears the mark of Paulus Fürst. (See Figure 38.) In the sixty plates are included Kieser's Meusthurn, and his Jew and Jewess. The plate of the physician is reproduced in Figure 39. It is a very good reproduction of the original Holbein. Changes in the features of the physician and the old man may be noted, and the tiles of his study floor now appear with decorative figures. The

floral border, with its examples of old garden flowers, is quite attractive, and does not detract from the interest of the plate. These borders, although the individual flowers are repeated, are different for each plate.

In 1650, the "Sterbenspiegel," of the brothers Rudolph and Conrad Meyers was brought out at Zurich, with 60 copper-plates, published by Johann Jacob Bodmer. Some of the plates engraved by Rudolph bear the date 1637. He died in 1638, and his brother in 1689. This work was the first to break away from the slavish imitation of Holbein, both as to subject and treatment. Most of the subjects are wholly original in conception, and even those borrowed from Holbein are treated so differently that the resemblance is slight. They are on the whole beautifully executed, and the plates are full of interest. Somewhat baroque in style, they show an excess of detail which at times is rather cloying. The more simple of these plates, such as the Cook, the Baumeister, and the Physician, are the most effective. One plate represents the Quacksalver, but it is not very successful. The text is new and increased in amount and strongly religious in tone. The book closes with a group of eight dance of death songs for four voices. The plate of the Physician is here reproduced (see Fig. 40). For the first time in the history of the Totentanz he is represented in a costume other than the medieval. He is an oldish man, with full beard. He is wearing a skull cap. He is attired in seventeenth century jerkin and knee-breeches. His sleeves have wide embroidered or lace-trimmed cuffs. He sits at his reading desk in an office which looks more like a kitchen, so numerous are the jars and other utensils upon table and shelves. On the wall

hang a water-container, a bleeding-basin and the physician's broad-brimmed flat hat. The floor is made of wide boards and no sleeping dog lies thereon. Death sits on a stool besides the physician's desk, and reaches to him a skull in his right hand, and a bunch of leaves in his left. He has a skeletonized head but a fleshy body around which a long shroud is wrapped. The physician raises his hands in astonishment, but the look in his face hints that his last hour has come. Behind the seated figure of death, through an open door, enters a bowed female carrying in her right hand the urine-basket. She, from her appearance of weakness, is undoubtedly the patient. There is no deep irony or satire in this conception of the situation. Death is simply surprising the physician in the midst of his professional activities. His time has come. But the thoughts expressed in the accompanying text are bitter enough.

Tod zum Artzt.

Darinn besteht dein tuhn/dasz du beschawest
harn;
beraubest Krankne leut/und jagest sie ins
garn
meins tödtlichen gewalts. Man fragt dich
um das leben;
so pflegest/was vor mich/dem Kranknen
eynzugeben.
Vermehrer meines Reychs; nicht zwar mit
mord und brand
jedoch mith artzeney und tollem unver-
stand;
Nun wird die Welt getröst/wann von dir
wird gesungen;
der Doctor ist (er muszt) auch an den Dantz
gesprungen.

If Death is speaking the common opinion of the Physician the reputation of the latter in the middle of the seventeenth century must have been dubious indeed. But listen to the cynicism of the Physician's answer.

Antwort

mit disem Todtensatz: du Meister und ich
Knecht.So bist du dann der Tod? ich aber bin der
Töder/

A second edition of the Sterbenspiegel



FIG. 45. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. MICHAEL RENTZ, 1753.

und ist noch ungewüsz/wer under uns der
schnöder.

Ohn mittel/hawest du des Menschen Leben
ab:

durch mittel bring ich Ihn mit feinem schein
zu grab.

Du hast den zweck/dasz er geledigt werd von
sünde;

und ich/dasz übel tuhn er forthin nichtmehr
künde.

So und erscheinen wir hiemit das Todt-
enrecht/

was brought out by Bodmer in 1657; and in 1704, under the title "Erbau-licher Sterb-Spiegel" copies in copper of Meyer's plates (57) were brought out in an edition of Redel's songs of death, printed in Augsburg. The copies are inferior to the originals and show some changes. In 1759 the original plates were again used, with additional new ones, in an edition published in Hamburg and Leipzig.

In 1654, under the title "De Doodt vermaskert," an edition of Holbein was brought out in Antwerp by [unintelligible] has the same text as the edition of 1654, but has 52 plates which show various changes. In Venice in 1669



D'après les dessins de J. Holbein.

gravé par Ches. de Mechel

FIG. 46. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. CHRETIEN DE MECHEL, BASEL, 1780.
BEAUTIFUL REPRODUCTION OF THE HOLBEIN, IN ETCHING ON COPPER.

Bellerus with text by Geeraerd van Wolsschaten. This contained 18 woodcuts, 14 of which were the original blocks retouched, preserved for more than a century after their first use. The other 4 engravings were very poor copies. As 7 of these blocks had the monogram AS (thought to be Ant. Sylvius), they probably were blocks used for the Birkmann edition of 1555. In 1698 an edition of copperplates with the same title, and with Wolschaten's name was brought out in Antwerp by Jan Baptist Jacobs. It

and in Milan in 1671, editions were issued in Italian of a curious work entitled "Varii e veri retratti della morte disegnati in imagini," by the Jesuit priest, Gio. Bap. Manni. Douce makes the error of spelling his name as Marmi. These editions contained a frontispiece and 29 plates engraved on copper, of which six, those of the Queen, Nobleman, Merchant, Gamblers, Physician, and Miser are fairly close copies of the original Holbein. The others are original, dealing with religious aspects of death, and possess

no artistic value. Copies of the Birckmann edition of Holbein of 1555, engraved on copper by And. Trost,

in any degree approaching his extraordinary skill in the execution of such subjects. His is probably best known



Medice, curate ipsum. LVCAE. III.

FIG. 47. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. REPRODUCTION OF HOLLAR'S PLATE, BY DAVID DEUCHAR, 1788.

were published in 1682 by Valvasor, under the title of "Theatrum mortis humanae tripartitum." Trost's name appears on a beautiful frontispiece and on the head of the other plates. They show no originality in treatment.

Wenceslaus Hollar, the Bohemian etcher, was born in Prague in 1607, and died in London in 1677. England had been his home for many years, and there he had produced a great portion of the twenty-seven hundred and forty plates ascribed to him. He was one of the greatest etchers the world has ever seen. Particularly are his plates of still life wonderful; no one has ever been able to reproduce fur, shells, or the wings of butterflies

for his mathematically exact, but wholly artistic, architectural plates. He had a varied career, was constantly imposed upon by the English booksellers, working for them for four pence an hour; and died in great poverty. Seven years before his death he produced one of his greatest plates, that of Edinburgh. In 1647 an edition of thirty beautiful copperplates of the "Dance of Death" was brought out in London. These were copies made by Hollar, partly of the Lyons edition, and partly of prints in the Cologne edition of 1555. Ten of these plates correspond to the Lyons woodcuts, with slight variations in five of them. All are reversed except one.

The remaining plates are reversed, with one exception, from the copies in the Cologne edition. Why Hollar at Antwerp. The plates for these ornamental borders fell into the hands of Petau and Van Morle, printsellers



FIG. 48. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. REPRODUCTION OF HOLLAR'S PLATE WITH DIEPENBEEKE'S BORDERS. DAVID DEUCHAR, LONDON, 1803.

used so many of the poor copies of the spurious edition can only be conjectured. It would seem probable that he had no perfect copy of the original woodcuts, and was obliged to use the spurious edition in order to fill out the set. At any rate, later in life, he seems to have discovered his error and to have begun another set of etchings from the original work, only four of which were completed before his death. Hollar's plates were again used in an edition printed in London in 1651, entitled "Mortali-um Nobilitas," with funereal borders engraved by Abraham A. Diepenbeeke, a pupil of Rubens, most probably

in Paris, who made proofs of them bearing their address. Their ultimate fate is unknown, as Hollar's etchings afterwards appeared without them. There was no text to the plates of Hollar's etchings, except the Latin scriptural passage under each. As a frontispiece to the work, Hollar transferred the Holbein Arms of Death from the end to the beginning, with the title of "Mortali-um Nobilitas." Other English editions of the Hollar plates without the borders appeared in 1682 and 1789. The copperplates apparently came into the hands of an English family of nobility, from whom the bookseller, Edwards, obtained

them, and who brought out in 1790 a French edition "Le Triomphe de la Mort," published in London. In 1794,

1794, 1796, and 1804, occurs the plate attributed to Hollar of a copy of an old woodcut prefixed to Lydgate's



FIG. 49. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. J. R. SCHELLENBERG, WINTERTHUR, 1785. ROCOCO PERIOD.

Edwards issued an English edition, "The Dance of Death painted by H. Holbein and engraved by W. Hollar," also published in London. This edition comprised poor proofs of the old copperplates of Hollar, with the first dissertation on the Dance of Death by Douce. About this time, according to Douce, Edwards had the original plates rebitten with great care. In 1796 and 1804, other editions of the same were brought out in London. In the editions of 1789,

"Dance of Machabree (see Fig. 2). In 1816, an edition with 33 plates, and descriptions in English and French, was printed for J. Coxhead of London. Editions of this, colored by hand, were also produced, and were apparently very popular in England. Numerous copies of these appear in the trade. This edition contains also the copy of the old woodcut in Lydgate's poem. The first editions of the Hollar plates are very beautiful. They are slightly smaller than the original woodcuts

(see Fig. 41). In the plate of the Physician, Hollar introduced a number of changes. The bookshelf on the wall behind the physician is extended around the corner to the door. It contains more books, bottles, and jars. Below it is a smaller rack which holds folded papers, prescriptions or bills. Two rows of bull's-eyes show in the window in place of the one row in the Holbein prints. The door through which death and the patient have just come is left open. It is closed in the Holbein woodcut. The construction of the door is quite different. The arch and transom are much smaller and the frame of the door shows a heavy molding. The plaster is broken from the wall above the door. The floor is untiled, and strewn with litter, presumably bones for the dog. The reading desk is altered in style. The physician's face is sharper, and has a wholly different expression. The figure of death is much altered. He has hair on his head; his ribs are less distinct; and flaps of skin hang down from the belly and back. His face has lost wholly its look of sly humor and deprecation which is such a feature of the Holbein plate. The urine flask has a much shorter neck. The Diepenbeeke border is appropriate and rather attractive. What became of all the early impressions of the Hollar plates is a mystery. There are very few of them in the print collections of Europe, and they are practically never offered by the dealers. The plate from the 1794 English edition was evidently printed before the rebiting took place, as it shows signs of much wear (see Fig. 42); while that from the English edition of 1804 is sharp and distinct, evidently printed after the plate had been rebitten (see Fig. 43). The later

French and English editions of the Hollar plates, with Douce's dissertation on the Dance of Death must have

THE PHYSICIAN.

Physician, heal thyself.

LUKE iv. 23.



Diseases well thou understand'st,
And cures canst well apply,
Which to the Sick, in Time of Need,
Will welcome Health supply.

But while, O dull and stupid Wretch,
Thou others Fates dost stay,
Thou art ignorant what fell Disease
'Shall hurry thee away.

FIG. 50. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. JOHN BEWICK, "EMBLEMS OF MORTALITY," LONDON, 1789.

been extremely popular as gift books in England about the beginning of the nineteenth century, particularly from aunts and uncles to their young nieces, as many copies the writer has seen testify. In 1657, an edition of 30 copper-plates, copied after Hol-

lar by Tho. Neale, was issued in Paris. They were smaller than the original plates, and reversed, but



No. XIX.—THE PHYSICIAN.
Physician, heal thyself.—*Luke. iv. 23.*

DEATH is leading to him a sick old man, whose urine he is presenting to him in a phial, and appears to be saying, in a jeering manner, Dost thou think that thou art able to save a man whom I have already in my power?

FIG. 51. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. THOMAS BEWICK, "THE DANCE OF DEATH OF THE CELEBRATED HANS HOLBEIN," LONDON, 1825.

were very well done. The arms of death was used for the frontispiece, and Hollar's title "Mortaliū Nobilitas" was used. At the bottom of the frontispiece is "Tho: Neale, Paris, 1657." Very few copies of this are known.

In a work entitled "Merck's Wien," printed at Vienna in 1680, there were eight copper-plates dealing with dance of death subjects evidently inspired by Holbein. It is a record of the plague in Vienna in the year 1679, by Father Abraham à St. Clara. One of the plates shows Death seated at a pipe-organ. At the end of each chapter is a tailpiece adapted from Holbein's arms of death. Father Abraham died in 1709, but in the next year there was published by Christ. Weigel at Nuremberg a work ascribed to him, contain-

ing 68 copper-plates on dance of death subjects. It was entitled "Todten-Capelle oder Allgemeiner Todten Spiegel." Three other editions were issued at Amsterdam in the years 1737, 1741, and 1764, these being copies and imitations of the German edition. The greater number of the plates are new and not appropriate to the subject; only a few suggest Holbein's influence. They are poorly executed. The text is a mixture of prose and poetry of a religious nature.

In 1707, an edition of 30 copper-plates by Solomon van Rusting, Med. Doct. in Amsterdam, was issued by Jan Ten Hoorn, under the title "Het Schouwtoonel des Doods." Six of the plates were copied from the designs of Holbein, the others are original in design and content. These plates were very popular; a second edition was issued in 1726, a third in 1735, a fourth in 1741, and a German edition in 1736 in Nuremberg, with the title "Schau-Platz des Todes, oder Todten-Tanz." The 1741 edition was reprinted in 1801 by Fock of Amsterdam. Many of the plates deal with biblical subjects. New subjects introduced are those of "The Skaters," "The Miller and Wind-Mill," "The Masquerade," and "The Tight-rope Walker." The frontispiece is a fantastic arrangement of Death crowned, sitting on a throne, with seven deaths dancing near a crowned skeleton lying on a couch. Rusting, like Glissent, appears to have been a medical man with strong religious convictions. Very little is known of him. In his early years he practiced as an army surgeon. His plates are clever and original; his text simple and naive. In the one of the Physician, the sick man lies near to death in a canopied four-poster bed (see Fig. 44). Around him

are the weeping members of his family. In the left foreground stands the physician examining the flask of urine. He is dressed in the costume of the early eighteenth century, knee-breeches, ruffled collar, and broad-brimmed hat. The text says:

. . . Der Patient soll leben;
Du aber soll't dich selbst vor ihm zu Grab
begeben.

The uncertainty of diagnosis and prognosis is here emphasized. The physician is reminded that many patients given up to die, recover either of their own accord, or through another's aid, and live many years longer than the physician himself.

In 1720, an edition of 19 plates of Holbein's "Imagines Mortis," engraved on copper by Nieuhoff Piccard was issued. The designs with slight variations correspond to those in the editions of the original woodcuts printed after 1545, as is shown by the inclusion of the Soldier, Fool, and Blind Man, which did not appear before that date. The Physician is not included. The plate of the Temptation had these lines on it:

All that e'er had breath
Must dance after Death

with the date 1720. These copies seem the work of an amateur, rather than of an artist. Piccard apparently presented sets of proofs of his plates to various friends. One of them addressed to "Mynheer Heymans" contains a reference to the burning of the palace of Whitehall, with the destruction of a *painting* of a Dance of Death by Holbein. In another dedication he mentions "that scarce little work of Hans Holbein neatly engraved on wood, and which he himself had painted as large as life in fresco on the walls of Whitehall." These references

constitute the chief literary evidence that Holbein painted a dance of death in Whitehall, although Douce,



DER ARZT

FIG. 52. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. DANIEL NICOLAUS CHODOWIECKI, 1792. ROCOCO PERIOD.

who accepts this story, interprets other literary allusions as referring to this same hypothetical painting. This positive evidence is overwhelmed by the greater negative proof. If Holbein had painted a fresco of the Dance of Death at Whitehall, surely in the extensive catalogues of his works extant, there would have been some mention of such a work. The plates of Piccard's etchings evidently came into the hands of English printsellers, as broken sets of them appear in the trade.

In 1753, an edition of "Geistliche Todt-Gedancken" by Michael Rentz was printed in Passau by F. G. Mangold and produced in Linz by F. A. Ilger. In 1759 a reimpression with

slight changes was made in Hamburg. Under the title "Der sogenannte Todentanz" there was published by von Trattner in Vienna in 1767 an edition of the same 52 copper-plates by Rentz accompanied by a poem by Patricius Wasserburger. The Passau-Linz edition had a prose text. From the prolix title-page we gather that these pictures by Rentz were also painted on the wall of the hospital in Kuckucksbad. Another edition was issued in 1777 in Linz, and one of unknown date probably in Prague. Rentz's plates are inspired by Holbein, present the same subjects, but in a wholly different style and treatment. They are full folio page in size, enclosed in ornamental frames, with rather heavy scrolls above the pictures and tablets below bearing the name of the individual represented, with a German quatrain. The style is baroque and the details are rather heavy, and in the majority of the plates over-done; yet some show originality and spirit. The Physician (see Fig. 45) sits by a low table on which there is a pair of scales. On the right through an open door there has just entered a patient, led by a child and leaning upon a cane, a tall, haggard woman, wrapped in flowing garments, but bare-footed, with ankles apparently swollen. The child has just given the urine flask into the physician's left hand, from which it drops, upside down, spilling its contents. For at the moment of receiving the flask, the physician has been surprised by Death, who appears behind him, seizes him by the right shoulder and holds out the hourglass in his extended left hand. The physician turns his head toward death. The physician's interest in anatomy is shown by the mounted skeleton of an animal on the bookcase behind him. On the wall near the

entrance door there hangs a large barometer. The progress of science is thus indicated for the first time in the dance of death pictures. The quatrain below the plate is:

Sprich nicht dasz diesem armen Weib der Tod
sitz auf den Nacken,
Er wird vielmehr dich augendblicks, trotz
deiner Kunst anpacken.
Sie lebt! du stirbst; brauch Gold-Tinctur
und alle Panaceen
Brich ich den Stab so ists um dich ja selbst
Galen gescheen.

Forty-six of the Holbein plates were engraved in copper by Chretien de Mechel, of Basel, and issued in 1780, under the title of "Le Triomphe de la Mort." This edition included prints of the design for the dagger sheath copied from Holbein's drawing in the library at Basel. The text is in French. Twenty-three of the plates are reversed, and there are slight differences in a number of them. The facial expressions are much altered. Nevertheless, they are one of the most beautiful reproductions of Holbein. De Mechel was an artist and engraver of the first rank, and this edition is a masterpiece. The plate of the Physician is an especially beautiful one, although it shows certain departures from the original. Half of the window is shown at the left, and the shelf upon the wall is enlarged. The physician himself has a plumper, more self-satisfied face, and that of the patient is less senile than in the original. The chief loss in this plate is in the altered expression of the face of death; it is serious and has entirely lost the sly deprecatory air it has in the original (see Fig. 46). Copies of the original de Mechel are very rare, but good modern reproductions of it appeared in Paris, about 1860, and in Uttweil in 1858. The original is a

royal quarto, the copies are small taken. Edinburgh, MDCCLXXXVIII." quartos. Preceding this very inaccurate title-

David Deuchar, a Scottish etcher, page are two frontispieces, one a



Dyden til Doctoren

Dr. Doctor, det er Tid, du Kunsten maa opgibe,
 Og ei methodice fleer Mennesker aflibe!
 Du paa Uringlas seer, som Stormand paa Kompas,
 Men glemmer derimod dit Lives Timeglas.

FIG. 53. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE "DET MENNESKELIGE LIVS FLUGT, ELLER DODE-DANDS," COPENHAGEN, 1814.

who etched many plates after the Dutch masters, and for this reason is often called the Scottish Worlidge, issued in Edinburgh, in 1788, an edition of 46 plates of Holbein's Dance of Death. It is a curious mixture of copies of Hollar and de Mechel, and is very inferior to their work. The title-page bears the following: "The Dances of Death through the various stages of human life, wherein the capriciousness of that tyrant is exhibited in forty-six copper-plates, done from the original designs, which were cut in wood and afterwards painted by John Holbein in the town house at Basle, to which is prefixed descriptions of each plate in French and English, with the scripture text from which the designs were

portrait of Deuchar with an ornamental border of medallions; the other is a copy of de Mechel's frontispiece with the name of David Deuchar and the date 1786 inserted. Thirty of the etchings are copies of Hollar's plates, with the distance altered; the others are taken from the woodcuts of the Cologne edition of 1555. According to Douce, the plates in the Edinburgh edition have copies of Diepenbeeke's borders, but this is not true of the copy belonging to the writer, in which the plates have no borders. De Mechel's descriptive text in French with an English translation is used. The design of the dagger sheath, copied from de Mechel, is introduced at the end without any explanatory text. The plate of the Physician is a reversed

copy of Hollar's plate, and decidedly inferior. There is more litter upon the floor (see Fig. 47). The paper used in

Under the title of "Freund Heins Erscheinungen in Holbein's Manier," J. R. Schellenberg produced in Winter-

⌘ 32 ⌘

Samtal emellan Döden och Doctorn.



D ö d e n.

Herr Doctor nu är tid, att konten din uppgifva,
Du får ej längre tid att fler resepter skriva.
Se att ditt timglas re'n till botten runnit är,
Som viltnar att ditt lif ej längre konas lär.

FIG. 54. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "DET MENSKLIGA LIFWETS," FAHLUN, SWEDEN, 1838.

the Edinburgh edition is extremely poor, which may account in part for the poor impressions of the plates. Two other editions of Deuchar were printed by S. Gosnell, London, in 1803, one with reversed and slightly altered Diepenbeeke's borders (see Fig. 48), the other without these. In other respects these editions are identical, and both bear the same date. The prints in these London editions are much better than those of the Edinburgh, and a better quality of paper is used. As late as 1887, an edition of Deuchar, with the borders, was brought out in London by Hamilton, Adams and Company. Many of the prints are poor.

thor in 1785 a dance of death with frontispiece and 24 original and clever plates. There is no imitation of Holbein in the choice of subjects or in the manner of presentation. The series is wholly original, in true baroque style, and includes death through ballooning, tight-rope walking, etc. This work marks the transition to the modern German treatment of the Dance of Death motive. The plates are accompanied by explanatory poems. The frontispiece contains portraits of Voltaire, Frederick of Prussia, and others. The costumes and manners represented are contemporary of the late eighteenth century. The first plate is a bold and indecent one of

Death throwing a net over a pair of young lovers caught in the act of love. The plate of the Physician (see Fig. 49) is modernized for the times represented. A crowd of patients is pouring from an ante-room into the inner office. The Physician has arisen from his armchair and stands talking with Death. The former wears a long cloak or gown over his tightly buttoned coat and knee-breeches. He wears a wig, and has on buckled shoes. He is plump and prosperous. At a table with a pair of scales a young assistant is seated. The doctor is apothecary as well, according to the custom of the times. The urine bottle is not in evidence. The shelves against the wall are filled with bottles and flasks. From the ceiling is suspended a stuffed crocodile, advertising the doctor's taste for natural history. Death has come for the physician, who argues with him to delay his taking-off, the gist of his argument being that it is poor policy and bad business to destroy one who sends him so many victims. But his argument is in vain.

In 1789, there was printed for T. Hodgson of London an edition of 51 woodcuts by John Bewick, brother of Thomas Bewick, under the title of "Emblems of Mortality, Representing, in Upwards of Fifty Cuts, Death seizing all rank and degrees of people; Imitated from a Painting in the Cemetery of the Dominican Church at Basil, in Switzerland: . . . Intended as well for the Information of the Curious as the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth." Here again is the old confusion of Holbein's woodcuts with the Totentanz of Basel. The engravings are preceded by a frontispiece representing a Dance of Death procession from a city gate to the open grave. There is an introductory dis-

sertation by J. S. Hawkins. The woodcuts are faithful copies of the original Holbein cuts, with the ex-

THE PHYSICIAN.

Physician, heal thyself.—Luke iv. 23.



Diseases well thou understand'st,
And cures canst well apply,
Which to the sick, in time of need,
Will welcome health supply.

But while, O dull and stupid wretch,
Thou others' fates dost stay,
'Thou'rt ignorant what fell disease
Shall hurry thee away.

FIG. 55. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "EMBLEMS OF MORTALITY," ALEXANDER ANDERSON, CHARLESTON, S. C., 1846. ORIGINAL BLOCKS CUT FOR AN EDITION SAID TO HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN NEW HAVEN, CONN., IN 1810.

ception of the first one containing the Deity, which was exchanged for another design. They are poorly executed and show slight variations. The cut of the Physician (see Fig. 50) is particularly poor, the Death having lost its original force. The window on the left is replaced by a cupboard containing bottles. In 1825, there was

published by William Charlton Wright in London, an entirely different edition, entitled "The Dance of Death" were evidently intended for popular and juvenile use. Rather strong meat for the latter! These prints have



FIG. 56. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM A LITHOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF DENECKER'S WOODCUTS OF 1544. BY C. HELLMUTH, MAGDEBURG, 1835.

of the Celebrated Hans Holbein; in a series of Fifty-two Engravings on Wood By Mr. Bewick; with Letter-Press Illustrations." This has a new frontispiece on the same subject as that in the preceding edition. The cuts with several exceptions are imitations of the original Holbein, but are absurdly modernized; both the costumes and properties are represented in the contemporary style. There was another edition of the same cuts, with two exceptions, published in London by Whittingham and Arliss, Juvenile Library. Both of these last editions

somewhat of the quality of caricature in them. The Physician (see Fig. 51) is an old man in gown, wig, and stock, seated in an armchair before his desk in a room with modern furnishings. Death holding a stoppered bottle leads in an old decrepit man. The round full face of the doctor contrasts with the emaciated one of the patient. If these cuts are Bewick's, which Douce seems to doubt, they are far inferior to his other work, and executed in a different style. They represent a far departure from the old medieval conceptions and treatment, and betray the tendency

of the early nineteenth century to use the Dance of Death motive for purposes of caricature.

The Totentanz mythus abandoned completely its medieval trappings and atmosphere in the series of twelve copper-plates etched by the German artist, Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki, published in the "Königlichen Grossbritannischer Historischen Genealogischen Calender for 1792." Of this artist, Goethe had once said to Eckermann that he succeeded wholly in the depiction of contemporary life, whereas he failed as completely when he attempted Greek or Roman subjects. The use of a Dance of Death for the adornment of a calendar may seem strange to us, but Chodowiecki was so successful with these etchings that many critics regard them as one of the best works of this master. The representation is bold and full of life, the invention of the subjects original, and the intellectual significance deep and powerful. There is no direct imitation of Holbein, yet it is evident that Chodowiecki knew his *Imagines Mortis*, and in the plate of the Pope the composition recalls strongly Holbein's engraving of the same subject. The plate of the Physician shows an entirely new and modern (late 18th century) conception of the subject (see Fig. 52). The scene is the bed-chamber of an old and wealthy patient, as shown by the spacious, lofty, molded, corniced ceiling, and the canopied bed. The patient, in dressing gown, night-cap, and slippers, sits in a winged armchair, his feet resting on a cushion. On the floor is a syringe. The physician is taking his pulse at the left wrist. He has a wig, wears a full-skirted long coat over a long tightly-buttoned waistcoat, knee-breeches, stockings, and low buckled shoes. He is

pompous, plump, and prosperous in appearance. At this moment Death steps in between patient and physician



FIG. 57. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. HULDERIC FRÖHLICH, BASEL, 1608.

and with his left hand seizes the doctor's precordium in a strangle hold. The latter, with eyes closed, is in the act of falling backwards. May this not be interpreted as an attack of angina pectoris! Chodowiecki's description of the plate is as follows: "Der Artzt hat seinen Kranken das Leben abgesprochen, der Tod lässt den Kranken sitzen und holt den Artzt."

A Danish version of the Dance of Death is given in a series of curious woodcuts issued in Copenhagen in 1814 under the title of "Det Menne-

skelige Livs Flugt, eller Dode-Dands.” There is an introductory cut of five skeletons playing musical instruments,

Der Todt zum Doctor.

Herr Doctor b'schaut die Anatomien
An mir / ob sie recht gmachtet sen/
Dann du hast manchen auch hing'richt/
Der eben gleich / wie ich jetzt / sicht.



Der Doctor.

Ich hab mit meinem Wasser b'schawen
Geholffen bende Mann und Frauen:
Wer b'schaut mir nun das Wasser mein/
Ich muß jetzt mit dem Tode dahin.

FIG. 58. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE 1724 EDITION OF CONRAD DE MECHEL, BASEL.

three of them wear the three-cornered military cap of the period. Each cut has two figures only, Death and his victim. They stand on a tiled floor, without background. The living figures are all in contemporary costume. The accompanying colloquies are by Thomas Larsen Borup. There is no direct imitation of Holbein, save in the rank of the personage represented. The Physician (see Fig. 53) wears the

long bell-skirted frock coat, with wig, stock, waist-coat, knee-breeches, and buckled shoes. He has a three-cornered hat under his right arm and a cane in his hand. He raises aloft in his left hand the urine flask. Death, in the form of a complete skeleton, prances before him, holding an hourglass in his right hand, while with his left he presents a paper to the doctor. Hour-glass is set up against urine-glass to the evident disadvantage of the latter. It is a simple, naive, conventional representation of the subject. In 1838, an edition, “Det Menskliga Lifwets” was published in Fahlun, Sweden. The same woodcuts used in the Danish edition are repeated, reduced in size, and reversed (see Fig. 54).

Apparently there was published in New Haven, Conn., in 1810, an edition of woodcuts, copies from John Bewick's 1789 edition, by Dr. Alexander Anderson, the noted American wood-engraver of his day. The author has been unable to obtain a copy of this edition, and has never seen one. It is not in the British Museum. The original wood blocks, having been preserved for nearly forty years in the Babcock printing office in New Haven, were taken to Charleston, S. C., and a new edition printed there by Babcock and Co. in 1846. It had paper covers, of which the author has seen two kinds, both bearing the same date. It has the same title as the Bewick book, “Emblems of Mortality,” and the same plates, save three of Adam and Eve, which the editor says: “it was thought advisable to omit,” an example of the Victorian prudery of the day. The plates are reversed, and there are slight changes in many. Anderson had a different technic from that of Bewick, but he is said to have been a great admirer of the art of the Bewick

brothers, and to have imitated them. At any rate, some of his plates are much superior to those in the 1789

middle-aged, and not particularly intelligent. The expression of Death is altered, an improvement upon Bewick;

Tod zum Doctor.
Herr Doctor b'schaut die Anatomien
 An mir, ob sie recht g'machet sey:
 Dann du hast manchen auch hing'richt,
 Der eben gleich, wie ich jetzt sieht.

35



Antwort des Doctors.
Ich hab mit meinem Wasserb'schauen,
 Geholfen beyde Mann und Frauen:
 Wer b'schaut mir nun das Wasser myn,
 Ich muß jetzt mit dem Tod dahin.
 ¶ 2

FIG. 59. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE COPPERPLATE EDITION OF THE BASEL TOTENTANZ. BY MATTHEW MERIAN, THE ELDER. FRANKFORT, 1649.

edition of John Bewick. In the print of the Thief, Anderson's background of trees and foliage is far superior to that of John's, and reminds us of Thomas Bewick's style. Anderson's plates are so uneven, however, and vary so in technic and style, that it is hard to believe that they all represent the work of one artist. One has the impression that he experimented with his blocks. His Physician has a round fat face,

so is the expression of the Patient. Other changes in details are seen in the door, in the larger keystone of the arch above it, the changed design in the transom, and the absence of the strap-hinge. Also the patient's hood is altered (see Fig. 55). Anderson's book is of especial interest as being the first American production dealing with the dance of death subject.

Der Todtentanz, a poem by Ludwig

Bechstein, with 48 copper-plates after Holbein, was published by Leo, in Leipzig, 1831. The beautiful plates

London by John R. Smith, with historical and literary introduction.

“The Dance of Death, Exhibited in



FIG. 60. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE LITHOGRAPHIC EDITION IN COLORS OF THE BASEL TOTENTANZ, BY WENTZEL. WISSEMBOURG, 19TH CENTURY.

were etched by M. Frenzel, Inspector of the print collection in Dresden. They are faithful contour copies of the originals, and have a delicate charm of their own. In 1832, a lithographed reproduction of 53 of the Holbein woodcuts, with an explanatory text, was produced by J. Schlotthauer, in Munich, as already mentioned. These lithographs were exquisitely done; and in 1842 a new edition was brought out in Paris, with explanatory text by Fortoul. The Munich edition is one of the best reproductions of the Holbein woodcuts, and the difference in medium adds greatly to their interest. In 1849, they were re-issued in

Elegant Engravings on Wood,” by Francis Douce, was published in London in 1833, by William Pickering. This has already been mentioned as one of the best facsimile copies. The 53 woodcuts were engraved by Bonner and Byfield. These were two of the best contemporary artists in the line of wood-engraving, and their blocks were executed with great skill. They are very faithful copies and have been described as scarcely distinguishable from the originals. This is a slight exaggeration, but the cuts are, nevertheless, extremely good copies. Douce’s book marks the beginning of the serious study of the Dance of Death

mythus. In it he collected an immense amount of data concerning the known editions of Dance of Death illustrations,

of this that the author has ever seen. They present slight variations from the original Denecker cuts, as the



FIG. 61. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE MODERNIZED EDITION OF THE BASEL TOTENTANZ, PUBLISHED AT LOCLE, GIRARDET LIBRAIRE. COPIES OF MERIAN'S PLATES.

and the greater part of this is quite accurate. His main thesis that Holbein was not the artist of the woodcut series of the *Imagines Mortis*, but had painted a *Dance of Death* in the palace at Whitehall, was founded upon insufficient data and fallacious reasoning. Nevertheless, his book is a mine of information for students of the *Dance of Death*. It has been reprinted several times, in the Bohn Library series by Bell and Daldy, London, in 1872; and by George Bell and Sons, London, 1902. Impressions from the blocks of Bonner and Byfield were used in an edition issued in 1892 by the latter firm with introduction by Austin Dobson. A lithographic edition of Denecker's woodcut copies of Holbein of 1544 was brought out in Magdeburg, by Robrahn and Co., in 1835. There were 46 plates, signed C. H. (Hellmuth). They included the famous *Adulterer* cut, the only reproduction

plate of the *Physician* shows (see Fig. 56), in which the man of medicine appears as an entirely different type of individual, full-faced, short and stocky, with an expression of self-assurance and importance.

In the 19th century, old wood blocks of a number of the Holbein designs were found in a printing office in the north of England. It is not known to which of the many editions of Holbein they belonged. Eleven of these were reproduced, one as a colored frontispiece, in a limited edition by T. T. Wildridge, published in 1887 by Redway of London. The cut of the *Physician* is included, and it certainly is a copy of Hollar's plate, without the borders. It is impossible within the limits of this work to enumerate and describe all of the reproductions and imitations of Holbein. The many editions in foreign languages other than those mentioned,

must be disregarded. The Holbein Society's facsimile reprint of 1869 has already been mentioned. Quaritch of London issued a series of phototype facsimiles in 1886, edited by Lippman. In 1916 there was privately printed in London a series of enlarged facsimiles of the first complete Holbein edition, that of Lyons in 1547. The cuts are enlarged to four times their area measurement, and are printed by hand from specially made line blocks, on handmade paper. This is an especially interesting facsimile reproduction. The enlargements acquire the coarseness and character of the old German woodcut book illustrations, and have a wholly different quality from the original Holbein cuts. Nevertheless, they gain in force what they have lost in delicacy, and have a certain virility lacking in the original. The print of the Physician is one of the best. The most recent reproduction of the Holbein cuts is contained in an edition issued by Amsler and Ruthardt, in Berlin, 1922. No attempt has been made in this work to consider the innumerable broken sets and single prints of Holbein that are scattered all through the literature and art productions of the last several hundred years. These reproductions and imitations are almost countless. It would require the work of years to collect and classify them.

HOLBEIN AND THE BASEL TOTENTANZ

It is not at all strange that the Basel wall paintings of the Totentanz and Holbein's woodcuts should have become confused, and that the artist should have come to be regarded as having produced both of these art works. The fact that Holbein lived in Basel, and produced the designs for the *Imagines Mortis* there, that

the wood blocks were cut there, and the first proofs printed there, naturally associated him with Basel. On the other hand the contemporary fame of the "Tod am Basel" was so great and widespread that any mention of the city called up this association, and most minds instead of differentiating two dances of death belonging to Basel, thought of them as one and the same. This confusion was further aided by the fact that Holbein's first proofs were anonymous, and that twelve years elapsed between their execution and the anonymous Lyons edition in 1538. The cause of this long delay can be reasonably explained by the free political and religious attitude shown in the Holbein woodcuts. The free speech exhibited in some of these was so bold as to be dangerous; and as we know, some of the later editions were under the ban of the Inquisition. It is also probable that when Holbein passed on the cuts to the Lyons printers, he conveyed also the right of ownership in them, so that his name did not appear in the publication. Moreover, the slowness of the diffusion of knowledge in that period, and the uncertainty of authority, make it seem to us easily explainable that Holbein should have been regarded for a long time as the artist of the Basel wall frescoes. So in the reproductions of these works, there arose a curious mixture or hybrid of the two, and editions of the wall-paintings were issued under Holbein's name. We have already noted this error in the English reproductions of Deuchar and Bewick, which attribute to Holbein wall paintings in the Town Hall at Basel.

In 1588, a curious mixture of subjects from the Holbein series and

those from the wall paintings at Basel and Berne was issued at Basel, by Hulderic Fröhlich. There were 44 subjects in all, of which 33 were taken from Holbein. This mixture of subjects led to the belief that Holbein painted the Basel wall paintings; and in the Fröhlich edition of 1608, and in the editions following, issued by Conrad de Mechel, and the de Mechel Brothers, there is perpetuated the same confusion between Holbein's work and the Basel frescoes. The engraving representing the Physician, taken from the 1608 edition, shows considerable variations from the Holbein woodcut. The Physician stands at the right, with both hands extended to receive the urine bottle from Death, who leads the old patient from an open door only partly indicated in the background. Through the door can be seen a mountainous landscape. The Physician's room is seen from an angle. On the wall to the right is a high bookshelf between two windows filled with bull's eyes. Below the shelf hangs a urine basket. Along the wall beneath the windows is a carved wooden bench. The physician wears a long gown with ruffled collar and voluminous sleeves. He has on a flat cap. He appears to be relatively young (see Fig. 57). The de Mechel editions are dated 1715, 1724, 1735, and 1740; those of the Frères de Mechel, 1769, 1786, and 1796. Most of these have 41 woodcuts, 27 from Holbein, 7 from the Basel Totentanz, and 7 probably from the Totentanz in Berne. The 1724 edition of Conrad de Mechel has an entirely different text from that of the 1608 edition (see Fig. 58). The cuts are arranged in different order in the editions of the Frères de Mechel, and the blocks show signs of use. Numerous cheap

reproductions of these were issued in Basel during the first half of the nineteenth century. In all of these the error on the title-page is repeated in "Der Todten-Tanz wie derselbe in der weitberühmten Stadt Basel zu sehen ist."

The true Basel Totentanz, however, was also reproduced in numerous editions, one of the earliest being a copperplate edition issued in Frankfurt in 1649, the work of Matthew Merian, the elder. These plates were faithful copies of the old wall frescoes (see Fig. 59). Reproductions of the Merian plates were issued in 1725, 1744, 1756, and 1789. Certain changes appear in these editions, but the plates are usually well printed. The 1744 edition was engraved by Chovin, text in both French and German. During the nineteenth century numerous small sized reproductions, many of them colored, were issued in Basel as guide-books to the city. Lithographic reproductions in colors of the Basel Totentanz were issued during the nineteenth century by Hasler and Company in Basel, and by Wentzel in Wissembourg. These are very interesting and were very popular (see Fig. 60). In some of these copies the colors are garish; in others they are very good, and the series artistically attractive. While these larger lithographic reproductions are rare, those of the Merian plates are the most frequently offered dance of death items in the book trade. Many of them are undated, and show slight variations. There must have been numerous editions printed.

The transition to the modern period is also shown in the later reproductions of the Basel Totentanz. In 1788, Merian's plates, burlesqued and modernized in a curious manner, were

copied by an unknown artist, and issued at Locle by the Girardet Libraire, with the title "La Danse des Morts, Pour Servir De Miroir, A La Nature Humaine, avec Le Costume Dessiné A La Moderne, Et Des Vers A Chaques Figuren." This is a very early example of presentation of an ancient subject in modern dress, and produces the same curious effect as did Hamlet when similarly presented. The Physician is a gentleman of the late eighteenth century in wig, long frock coat, waistcoat, knee-breeches, stockings and buckled shoes (see Fig. 61). He drops the urine-flask as the skeleton Death, as in the old Basel fresco, playing a fife and carrying the urine basket on his arm, seizes him by the skirt of his coat. The accompanying text is in verse, differing from the old quatrains. The author is unknown.

La Mort Au Médecin

Disciple d'Hipocrate, Esculape nouveau;
Toi qui contre la Mort, inventa cent remedes,
Il faut enfin que tu lui cédes:
Elle va de ce pas te conduire au Tombeau.
Apprends que de ton art, la docte experience
N'est que trop sujette au hazard;
Et que, malgré tes soins, tes drogues, ta
science,
Il faut toujours mourir, on plutôt, ou plus
tard.

Réponse Du Médecin À La Mort

Qui m'eut dit que la Mort auroit épouvanté
D'un expert Médecin la science assurée;
Et que mon art divin, si craint et si vanté,
Ne pourroit de mes jours prolonger la durée,
Ni me garantir de la Mort?
Il faut que du péché la mortelle racine
Soit un poison bien fort;
Puisqu'il n'est sur la terre aucune médecine
Qui puisse en arrêter l'effort.

MODERN REPRODUCTIONS OF THE DANSE
MACABRE

Interest in the Danse Macabre seems to have revived in the early

part of the eighteenth century, when the edition by Pierre Garnier was brought out in Troyes, in 1721. As has been stated before, interest in the Danse Macabre fell very low after the publication of the Holbein woodcuts, so that during the remainder of the sixteenth century, there were but four re-issues, three in Paris and one in Rouen. In the seventeenth century there were but two issues, one in 1616 in Rouen, the other in Troyes in 1641. All of these were editions of the "Danse Macabre des Hommes et des Femmes." In 1728 an undated edition of the same was produced in Troyes by Jean Ant. Garnier; and in 1729 another at Troyes by Jacques Oudot, with copies of the primitive woodcuts. Both of these were quartos. In 1800 a limited edition was printed in London by Bentley of de la Barre's Danse Macabre, printed in Paris in 1500. Later an undated folio edition of the old woodcuts of Garnier was brought out in Paris, and a small quarto in 1858. About 1860 a reimpression on vellum by the Baron Plinski process of the Danse Macabre printed at Paris by de Marnef in 1490 was brought out in Paris. It is undated. A reproduction of the Marchant edition of 1486 was published in Paris in 1868. In 1869 an edition was published in Paris of "La Grant Dance Macabre des Femmes" by Marcial d'Auvergne. Editions of Gerson's "Dance Macabre," were issued in Paris in 1875, one undated, in 1891, and 1925. All of the editions of the Danse Macabre were rigid reproductions of the Gerson original. The subject did not lend itself to imitations and original variations, as did the Holbein work; the motive and its presentation, therefore, remained unchanged through the cen-

turies, and the various reproductions have only a historical interest.

During this period of the "little artists," or imitators of Holbein, there was a gradual transformation of the Physician from the medieval urine-gazing practitioner to the rococo representation of him in wig, stock, frocked coat and knee breeches. The growing importance of drugs is shown in the frequency with which the apothecary's shop is depicted as the practitioner's field of action, and the prominent part played by the prescription. In Chodowiecki and Schellenberg this transformation from the medieval to the eighteenth century man of medicine is fully achieved, and in their representations of the Physician we have a fully-developed new type. We now see the practitioner of that artificial period in which the augural cane, the clyster, and the prescription for drugs became the chief distinguishing marks of the profession. Particularly did the syringe replace the urine flask as pictorial evidence of the practitioner's professional activities. In the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century, the clyster became as much the distinguishing badge of the practitioner as was the urine flask in the preceding ages. In the popular art of the period, particularly in the single prints showing a tendency to caricature, was this importance of the clyster as a diagnostic and therapeutic procedure emphasized. And this was fully in accord

with the actual medical practice of the times. This was true of all the representations of the contemporary physician; the urine flask and medical costume were retained only in the intentional reproductions of the older art. Moreover, the physical type of the medical man had also apparently changed. In the late rococo period he is usually depicted as a fat, short man, showing all too plainly evidences of overfeeding and overdrinking. He portrays in his own person such pathological conditions as obesity, gout, arteriosclerosis, angina pectoris, and perhaps diabetes. All of these characteristics furnished food for the caricaturist, and in the next period we shall see the extent to which the physician of the type described became the popular object of ribald and vulgar caricature. Three centuries were required for this change of type in the practitioner. In the art of this period there is nothing that would tend to reveal the tremendous development in anatomical science that was taking place. Only the faults and follies of the popular practitioner are represented. Nevertheless, such representations do throw light upon the popular conception of the physician of the time, and this popular view does present the medical man from the standpoint of his most unpleasant features, his pomposity, obesity, augural cane, fee-grasping propensity, the clyster, and the use of drugs. The elements of quackery still persist, although in an altered form.



PART V

THE PERIOD OF CARICATURE



IN some of the later imitators of Holbein, particularly Schellenberg, Chodowiecki, and Thomas Bewick, there is a tendency to caricature the subjects of the Dance of Death; and this tendency asserted itself predominantly in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century, and especially in England. This was the period in which hand-colored prints had such a vogue in that country. The great majority of these color-prints were aquatints to which the colors were applied by hand. Rowlandson, the most productive, if not the chief artist of this period, usually etched his plates himself, indicating with washes the aquatint tone desired. He would then color a proof from the aquatinted plate to serve as a copy for the colorist. Great numbers of colorists, mostly young women, were employed to color the prints, each one being carefully tinted by hand. As all of the prints of the same subjects were not always tinted by the same hand, great variation naturally occurred in the shades and depth of washes used; and this is an important point to be considered in collecting these prints. Rudolph Ackermann, the noted London publisher, played the chief rôle in the development and encouragement of

this medium for purposes of book illustration, and created an enormous business for their production. His "Repository of the Arts," 101, in the Strand, became the chief art center of the period, 1798 to 1830. Ackermann, himself, had a fine artistic taste and discrimination, and chose for his productions the best original artists and skillful reproducers. Of the artists employed by him, Rowlandson was certainly the most active, if not the most brilliant and original. The demand for the Ackermann publications was so great that the publisher had to employ an enormous staff of colorists to satisfy it. Books of every description were illustrated by him with color-prints, and innumerable architectural, sporting and coaching engravings issued from his establishment. Among the most celebrated of these are the "Microcosm of London," 1809, and the "Histories of the Universities," 1814-15. Because of the intrinsic historical interest of these plates, and their decorative value as pictures, an enormous vogue for collecting them has been created. So many of the books have been broken up that the prints might be sold separately that perfect copies have become very rare and expensive. Among the Ackermann publications which had a tremendous contemporary popularity was the semi-moral, semi-caricature species, so dear to the English mind, represented in the

“Doctor Syntax,” “English Dance of Death,” “English Dance of Life,” and other series.

exact date is not known. There were six of these plates, the satirical character being shown by the titles: 1,



FIG. 62. THE QUACK DOCTOR, FROM THE “ENGLISH DANCE OF DEATH,” ROWLANDSON, 1815-16. ACKERMANN.

“Newton’s Dances of Death” were published in July, 1796, by William Holland, of Oxford Street, London. These were engravings on copper by Richard Newton, executed in a grotesque fashion, and intended to be caricatures of the subjects, designed for popular fancy. There were 28 plates, some of the subjects being decidedly vulgar, and in bad taste. They have no artistic value. The Physician enters into two of the plates, Nos. 14 and 16. In the first, the Physician, Grave Digger, and Death are represented dancing a round, the implication of the partnership existing between the trio, of course, being the point of the plate. In the second, the Physician, sick Patient, and Nurse are represented, again with invidious implications as to the profession. Later, Newton issued a set of etchings entitled “Bonaparte’s Dance of Death.” The

Stabb’d at Malta. 2, Drown’d at Alexandria. 3, Strangled at Cairo. 4, Shot by a Tripoline Gentleman. 5, Devoured by Wild Beasts in the Desert. 6, Alive in Paris. These were also caricatures of no artistic value. Newton’s plates must, however, have had a great contemporary popularity, as it is practically impossible to secure a set, so rare have they become.

In 1800, “The Dance of Death Modernized” was designed and published by G. M. Woodward, of Oxford Street, London. It comprised 24 caricatures of poor invention, and badly executed. They represent a low form of wit and humor, and the legends accompanying the plates are particularly insipid. The Physician says: “Here’s fine encouragement for the faculty,” evidently in resentment at Death’s lack of appreciation of the profession’s cooperation with the latter.

The "English Dance of Death, from the designs of Thomas Rowlandson, with metrical illustrations" is carried to such an extreme as to lead simply to the grotesque. The taste of the English people at the time



FIG. 63. THE GOOD MAN, DEATH, AND THE DOCTOR. FROM THE "ENGLISH DANCE OF DEATH," ROWLANDSON, 1815-16. PUBLISHED BY ACKERMANN.

by the author of *Doctor Syntax*," was published in two octavo volumes by Ackermann in 1815-16. The work consisted of seventy-four full-page color-prints, with a poem by William Combe. Rowlandson's clever and humorous spirit found a congenial field in the depiction of these subjects. Many of his plates are very original and curious, and extremely interesting as revealing the morals and manners of the English people in the early nineteenth century. They are all intended to convey a powerful moral lesson, and the artist's efforts in this direction are supported by the poetical text of Combe, which, however, becomes mere drivel in some portions of it. Not all of the plates are equal, either in invention or treatment. Some are irrelevant and ill-chosen; some are feebly treated and devoid of humor. In many the spirit of carica-

ture must have been accustomed to strong fare indeed, if they could have been amused or pleased with Rowlandson's over-grotesque depiction of the human body. His art of caricature in this line is an apotheosis of obesity; his men and women are rounded masses of fat, bulging paunches and buttocks, and bulbous bosoms. Many of the physiognomies are hideous, reminding one of exaggerations of some of the grotesque heads of Leonardo Da Vinci. Human beings of the type depicted by Rowlandson must have been very much more common in the England of the first quarter of the nineteenth century than they are today, if Rowlandson is as accurate in the representations of living individuals as he undoubtedly was in his delineation of the English rural background. It is particularly in his representation of the aged that Rowland-

son's needle led him into such grotesque exaggerations, for his depictions of young individuals could be both

much reduced in size, and the coloring very poorly reproduced.

Four of Rowlandson's plates in the



FIG. 64. THE LIFE INSURANCE OFFICE. FROM THE "ENGLISH DANCE OF DEATH," ROWLANDSON, 1815-16. PUBLISHED BY ACKERMANN.

pleasing and attractive. The coloring of his plates is in excellent taste, as is true of all the color-prints produced by Ackermann. The edition must have had a tremendous popularity in England; a copy of it was found in every gentleman's library. Since the War numerous copies have been offered in the trade, but at relatively high prices. It is often sold as a three-volume set, combined with the "English Dance of Life" issued by Ackermann in 1817, with color-prints by Rowlandson and poetical text by Combe. There were twenty-six color-plates, in which the figure of Death does not appear. It was intended as a sequel to the Dance of Death. In 1903, Methuen and Company, of London, printed a facsimile reproduction of the two volumes of "The English Dance of Death," which was limited to fifty copies for Great Britain. The plates are, however,

"English Dance of Death" are devoted to the medical profession. The first, No. 11, represents the Quack Doctor. Beneath it is the legend:

I have a secret Art, to cure
Each Malady, which men endure.

The plate represents the Doctor's shop in which his quack medicines are compounded (see Fig. 62). Behind the counter stands the Quack, an obese, smug, bewigged individual, engaged in filling bottles with one of his compounds. Behind are shelves filled with jars, bottles, and flasks. From the ceiling a dried fish is suspended. In an armchair before the counter on the left sits an old woman whose expression of misery and illness is particularly well done. Behind her chair, crowd into the shop from the open door a group of as hideous human beings as ever artist depicted, all clamoring for drugs to cure their ills.

At the right end of the counter, in a low armchair, is seated a repulsive figure of an obese man who is gazing

No scene so blest in Virtue's Eyes,
As when the Man of Virtue dies.

The scene (see Fig. 63) is a bedcham-



FIG. 65. UNDERTAKER AND QUACK. FROM THE "ENGLISH DANCE OF DEATH," ROWLANDSON, 1815-16. ACKERMANN.

with horror at the figure of Death, the Quack's assistant, who wields a pestle behind the curtain which partly shuts off the inner office. To his lady customer the Quack advises the use of his remedies:

These *Pills* within your chamber keep,
They are decided friends to sleep.
And, at your meals, instead of wine,
Take this digestive *Anodyne*.
Should you invigoration want,
Employ this fine *Corroborant*.
These curious *Panaceas* will
If well applied, cure every ill.
So take them home; and read the bill,
Which with my signature at top,
Explains the medicines of my shop.
On these you may have firm reliance;
So set the college at defiance.
And should they not your health restore,
You now know where to send for more.

Plate No. 15 presents the "Good Man, Death, and the Doctor," with the legend:

ber with a low bed, on which the dead man of virtue lies. At the foot of the bed are the mourning members of his family. At the side of the head of the bed stands the Vicar in the act of prayer. The Physician, an ugly, obese creature, in the costume of the period, turns his back upon the dead, sniffs the head of his cane, and holds out his hand behind for his fee. Death, with his dart, seizes the doctor by the hair. The text is explanatory:

Thus, as the pious Churchman prayed,
The Doctor in a whisper said,
"My skill in vain its power applies;
"Tis Fate commands; the patient dies.
"No call requires me now to stay:
"I've something else to do than pray.
"I feel my Fee."—"Then hold it fast,"
said grinning Death,—"for tis your last."
The Doctor heard the dreadful sound;
The Doctor felt the fatal wound,
And hast'ning through the chamber door,
Sunk down, all breathless on the floor,

Ah, never more to rise again.—
Thus Doctors die like other men.

Plate 19 (see Fig. 64) shows the com-

—Doctor,—you'll now be pleas'd to scan
The features of that Gentleman;
And tell us, whether that round paunch



FIG. 66. DOCTORS THREE. FROM THE "ENGLISH DANCE OF DEATH," ROWLANDSON, 1815-16. ACKERMANN.

edy of the life insurance office. It bears the legend:

Insure his Life.—But to your Sorrow,
You'll pay a good, round Sum, tomorrow.

From the accompanying text we learn that the country Squire, by name Ned Freeman, in apparently the best of health, and little over thirty years of age, possessed a wife of good business instinct, and with an eye to her own interest. She reminds her husband of the embarrassed condition of his estate, and that should he die, she would receive from it barely a thousand pounds. She so works upon him, that he decides to insure his life, and up they go to London to accomplish this. We will let the poem tell the remainder of the story:

The Doctor's called—his eye to throw
On the good Squire from top to toe.
The sage Director stands beside
In dictatorial pomp and pride,
The important Scrutiny to guide.

Has been nurs'd up by ham and haunch:
Say, if that vast protuberance
Comes from ill habits, or from chance.
Think you that crimson glow is health,
Or formed by drink, or made by stealth.
Those legs, which now appear so stout,
Have they been tickled by the Gout,—
—And, Doctor, for your private ear,
Does not this Country Squire appear
Older, at least, by half a year
Than what he has been pleas'd to state?
—May we trust the Certificate?—
To this the Doctor sage agreed:—
The Office then was duly feed;
And signed and sealed each formal deed.
Now Death, who sometimes loves to wait
At an Insurance Office gate,
To baffle the Accountant's skill
And mock the calculating quill,
Had just prepar'd his cunning dart,
To pierce Ned Freeman's tranquil heart:—
But lest the stroke should cause dispute,
And Lawyer's conjure up a Suit,
Death was determined to delay,
Ned's exit to a future day:
And the dull moment to amuse,
He turned—and killed a pair of Jews.
Thus was the Husband's life insured,

And the Wife's future wealth secur'd.
And e'er, alas, ten days were past,
Honest Ned Freeman breath'd his last,

bitterly bewailed the loss of his good
friend the quack, and was reproved
by his wife, saying that the man is



FIG. 67. GIVING UP THE GHOST. PRINT BY ROWLANDSON. EARLY 19TH CENTURY.

The Doctor called, to certify,
His glowing health, now saw him die.
Thus she, who lately came to Town,
With not a dobt that was her own,
Weeping attends her Husband's hearse,
With many a thousand in her purse;
And proves that she's of Wives the best,
Who knows her *Real Interest*.

In Plate 23 (see Fig. 65) the partnership of the Undertaker and the Quack is indicated with the legend:

The Doctor's sick'ning Toil to close,
"Recipe Coffin," is the Dose.

The undertaker, looking from his window, sees old Nostrum, the quack, riding upon his hack, with Death sitting behind him. As they reached his door, "Death sneezed—and Nostrum was no more." The undertaker

dead, and that he has a job. To which the undertaker replied:

You foolish woman, . . .
Old Nostrum, there, stretched on the ground,
was the best friend I ever found.
The good man lies upon his back;
And trade, will now, be very slack.
—How shall we Undertakers thrive
With Doctors who keep folks alive?
You talk of jobs.—I swear 'tis true,—
I'd sooner do the job for you.
We've cause to grieve—say what you will;—
For, when Quaeks die,—they cease to kill.

Plate 32, in Volume 2, caricatures a consultation between three doctors (see Fig. 66). It bears the legend:

When Doctors three, the Labour share,
No wonder Death attends them there.

From the text it appears that the patient, who had reached the age of

fourscore, employed three physicians and a nurse. The doctors came each day, ordering draughts or pills, which, unpleasant scene are all examples of Rowlandson's disgusting big-bellied type, as indeed are all of his physi-



FIG. 68. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE "BRITISH DANCE OF DEATH," BY VAN ASSEN, LONDON, 1825.

as soon as they had departed, the nurse threw away, and replaced with kitchen physic. This practice at last came to the ears of the doctors, who cursed the bold intrusions of the nurse in doubting their knowledge, and in practicing treason against the College. They complained, and the nurse replied, with the result that a free-for-all fight resulted. In the midst of the rout and riot, Death appears and whispers in the ear of the shocked patient:

While these strange people disagree,
You shall receive my *Recipe*;
Nor feel a pang, nor give a Fee.

The three doctors pictured in this

caricatures. In addition to these illustrations for the "English Dance of Death," he produced a number of single plates and drawings dealing with the Physician and Death. All of these present unpleasant aspects of the practice of medicine, dealing with quackery, the cupidity of the physician, his supposed cooperation with the undertaker, his therapeutic pretensions, and his general coarseness. An unpleasant picture of the medical man of the early nineteenth century is given us in these caricatures. (See Fig. 67.) Undoubtedly, many of the English practitioners of the period justified Rowlandson's cruel satire. But it must be

remembered that this was the period of Jenner, who represented an entirely different type of physician. Rowland-

designs, which are issued in compliance with the wishes of many of his friends to possess them. The editor regards



FIG. 69. THE EMPIRIC. FROM "DEATH'S DOINGS," BY R. DAGLEY, LONDON, 1826.

son applied his satire equally to the follies of both town and country; but in his depiction of beauty in childhood and youth, he won and kept a very high place among the artists of his period. So he must not be judged by his caricatures alone.

No doubt stimulated by the great success and popularity of Rowlandson's work, there was published in 1825, by George Smeeton, Pall Mall, London, a series of engravings in color from drawings by Van Assen, with explanatory and moral essays. This bore the title of "The British Dance of Death." In the preface it is stated that the late Mr. Van Assen had no intention of publishing these

them as "in every respect conducive to the purposes of religion and morality." The frontispiece is signed by Robt. Cruikshank; it represents a sitting Death, crowned, holding a scythe in one hand, and with the other leaning on a globe. Over it are two small compartments containing figures of Death striking an infant in the cradle and a sick man. At the bottom are two figures of Death disposing of a glutton and a drunkard. The preface also states that the work is executed on the plan "of the celebrated designs of Holbein," to which however, it bears not the slightest resemblance. There are eighteen plates, with three subjects only suggesting Holbein, those

of the Physician, Miser, and Old Man. The other subjects are new and original, and the treatment is indi-

pulse, though not in the right place, while in the palm of his right hand is a large open-face watch. The patient,



FIG. 70. THE EMPIRIC. FROM THE AMERICAN EDITION OF "DEATH'S DOINGS," BY R. DAGLEY, BOSTON, 1828.

vidual. Death, with his dart, stands near the figures, apparently wholly unnoticed by any of them. They are well engraved and tinted, with less delicacy of coloring than in the Ackermann productions. The dresses of the women might well be taken from fashion plates of the time. The humor is rather dull, and the caricaturization very mild. In only two of the plates are the obese types of Rowlandson shown. These are "The Glutton" and "The Drunkard." The Physician is a bald-headed, smooth-faced, thin old man with tailed coat and stock. With his left hand he holds the right arm of the patient, apparently feeling the

in an attitude of complete prostration sits in an arm chair. Upon the floor is a green carpet with large red roses, the first appearance of this article of furnishing in prints of this nature. Behind the Physician stands a skeleton Death, aiming his dart at the Physician's back (see Fig. 68). As the satire is better expressed in the accompanying text, we will quote:

Lo! Doctors view of each degree,
Old Galen's sapient progeny,
Those worthy Esculapian dangles,
Men's constitutions dear entanglers;
Whose bushy wigs do first sustain
Great practice, backed by aug'ral cane.
With waste of purse, you may ensure
For galloping Consumption—cure:

By feeling pulse, they will explain
 The source of pulmonary pain;
 And while right hand embraces wrist,

Therefore, whatever be fate's fiat,
 Physicians on this head are quiet.
 Copies of the British Dance of Death

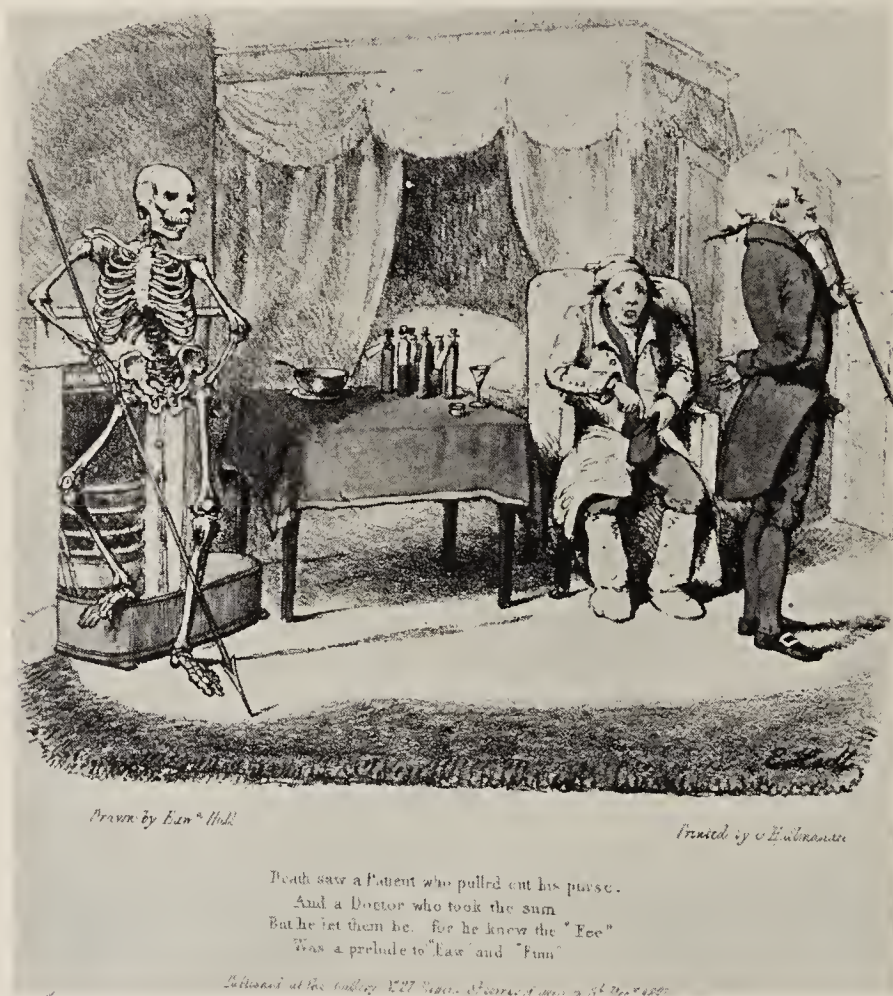


FIG. 71. THE PHYSICIAN, PATIENT, AND DEATH. FROM A SET OF LITHOGRAPHIC PLATES, ILLUSTRATING THOMAS HOOD'S "DEATH'S RAMBLE." EDWARD HULL, LONDON, 1827.

Behind back glides the other fist;
 Ready to grasp those dear definers
 Of Wisdom—pretty yellow shiners:
 (Tis sage physicians, when in pain)
 Send us to mother earth again.
 Wherefore great Alexander dying,
 Could not refrain from loudly crying,
 Stretched on the bed before the Quorum,
 "Pereo turbâ Medicorum."

.

Our modern men of this same calling,
 Lay consciences beneath tarpauling;
 For, with all ills they do their best,
 And if they do wrong, soul's at rest.
 So whether men live or die,
 In each case there's equality.
 Gaining one way health's restoration,
 By t'other, soul's emancipation;
 The one to stomach giving tone,
 And strength'ning jaws to pick a bone;
 T'other, enabling sprite to fly,
 And sing psalms to eternity.

are apparently very rare. They seldom come into the market, and even higher prices are asked for this little volume than for the Rowlandson two. The original issue must have been a limited one. It had board covers, printed with a border of skulls and crossbones, alternating with winged hourglasses. The original price was seven shillings. That these prints were issued separately, in 1822 and 1823, is shown by a set in the writer's possession, each print being dated differently. The coloring scheme is wholly different. They were apparently issued in a serial publication of some kind, but no information concerning it is available.

"Death's Doings," with 24 plates designed and etched by R. Dagley,

accompanied by numerous original compositions in prose and verse, contributed by various writers, was pub-

which may account for the latter's high opinion of it, as he says that it is "enriched with numerous elegant con-



FIG. 72. DEATH AND THE APOTHECARY. FROM A SET OF LITHOGRAPHIC PLATES, BY J. GRANDVILLE, "VOYAGE POUR L'ÉTERNITÉ," 1830.

lished in London, 1826, for J. Andrews and Andrew Cole. Evidently it was issued in a stock form and in one especially printed on better paper, taller, with broad margins, and in a different binding, probably intended to be used as gift books. The copy of the latter, owned by the author is bound in a contemporary cloth of a deep rose color. This work belongs to the species of "Annuals," which were so popular in England during the nineteenth century. It consists of numerous prose and poetical pieces, contributed by various writers, some of whom are anonymous, many of these written in explanation of the accompanying illustration. They are largely sentimental, or pseudo-tragic, and attempt to point a moral. The edition is dedicated to Francis Douce,

tributions, both in prose and verse, from some of the best writers of the age." Dagley's plates are fair, not very original or inspired, but much less coarse than Rowlandson's. They were much praised by the critics of that day, who described them as "humorous-pathetic," "occasionally tragic and serious, but more frequently in the way of satire and burlesque." They have more of the latter quality than the plates of Van Assen. The Physician represented is the "Empiric" (see Fig. 69). In fur-trimmed hat and cloak he sits feeling the pulse of his patient, who propped up in his armchair, looks the picture of the perfect hypochondriac. Death stands, fully dressed except for his skeleton feet, behind the doctor's chair, holding a stoppered bottle in his right hand.

On the floor is a book with "List of Cures" on the open page; on a stool near by is a scroll with the legend, the manner of the Rowlandson plates, perhaps by some of Ackermann's colorists, as the color-washes are more



FIG. 73. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM THE LITHOGRAPHIC SET "VOYAGE POUR L'ÉTERNITÉ," BY J. GRANDVILLE, 1830.

"The Only Infallible Remedy." We repeat here the first stanza of the accompanying poem.

Quacks! high and low—whate'er your occupation—
I hate ye all!—but, ye remorseless crew,
Who, with your nostrums, thin the population,
A more especial hate I bear tow'rds you—
You, who're regardless if you kill or cure,—
Who lives or dies—so that of fees you're sure!

So great was the popular success of this edition that a new one, greatly enlarged and with additional plates, was brought out the next year, in two volumes. This had thirty plates, and a new frontispiece, designed by Adrian Van Venne, the celebrated Dutch poet and painter. A portion of this edition was colored by hand, after

delicate than those used in the Van Assen edition. On the whole, the edition in colors is much more attractive than the uncolored one. In 1828, an American edition of the 1827 two-volume Dagley, was published in Boston by Charles Ewer. It was printed by Dutton and Wentworth of Boston. The type is different, as is the pagination, and the plates show minute differences in facial expressions and shading, indicating that new ones had been made for the American edition, or the old ones slightly altered (see Fig. 70). The plate entitled "The Phaeton" instead of appearing on page 347, as given in the list of illustrations, is used as a frontispiece for the second volume. This American edition is interesting, because it apparently is the second dance of death

work published in this country. The author has seen only the two volumes picked up by him many years ago in

The plate of the Physician is reproduced in Figure 71. The doctor is dressed in pigtail, long-tailed coat,



FIG. 74. THE DOCTOR TOO MANY FOR DEATH. PRINT DESIGNED BY COLLINGS, EARLY 19TH CENTURY.

an old book shop in Boston. There is no mention of this edition in any of the works dealing with the subject.

An edition of six lithographic plates by Edward Hull, illustrating Thomas Hood's "Death's Ramble" from his "Whims and Oddities," appeared in 1827. This was published in London by C. Hullmandel. The most interesting of these plates is one of a Quaker Meeting House, where Death gives up the Quakers as a bad job, because of his inability to make them suffer.

knee-breeches, and buckled pumps. He stands with his back to the patient, holding the head of his cane to his chin in his left hand, while his right with open palm is extended behind him, invitingly to the patient. The latter is reluctantly taking money from his purse, and is apparently engaged in a painful calculation as to how much he should pay. Death, with his dart, stands at the hearth, watching the scene with interest. From the stanza of Hood, below the

plate, he evidently decides to leave them alone.

A series of nine lithographic plates by J. Grandville, was issued in an oblong quarto, in 1830, under the title "Voyage pour l'Éternité, service général des omnibus accélérés, départ à tout heure et de tous les point du globe." The frontispiece shows Death conducting passengers in his omnibus to the cemetery of Père la Chaise. Two of the plates deal with the medical profession. Number five presents the Apothecary (see Fig. 72), who is filling a flask for an anxious husband and wife, who, with their little child, stand before his counter. He assures them to be tranquil, for he has an apprentice who never makes a mistake. The latter, seen through the door of the inner shop, proves to be Death wielding the pestle. This plate is undoubtedly imitated from Rowlandson's Apothecary in the English Dance of Death. Plate No. 8 shows Death in the disguise of an undertaker at the cemetery gate, through which the hearse has just entered. He is shaking hands with the old, bald, and spectacled, thin-shanked Doctor, and telling him that for a consultation he is always at his service (see Fig. 73). Grandville was a noted French illustrator of the period, whose animal and flower pictures are of especial interest to us, as it seems not improbable that both Tenniel and Walter Crane drew their inspiration from his work.

A Dance of Death for ladies' fans was etched by John Nixon Coleraine, which was published by Fores, Piccadilly, London. No impressions of this have been preserved. It appears to have been humorous and satirical

in character. Numerous single prints of the period satirize the Physician or Apothecary. They are mostly of the Rowlandson type, and exhibit no creative ingenuity or artistic value. The majority of them were cheap vulgar prints or broadsides, or cartoons. As an example of such prints, we reproduce a color print designed by Collings, entitled "The Doctor Too Many For Death" in which the Doctor, most fashionably attired and wearing a sword, turns the tables upon Death by discharging the clyster full in the latter's face (see Fig. 74). The doctor became a favorite object of such ridicule during the first half of the nineteenth century, but this attitude towards the medical profession has now almost passed away, as the science of medicine has asserted its value to the world in the prevention of disease. Even by 1850 the popularity of caricatures of the physician and his partnership with Death had greatly declined; and after this time, prints bearing this character were rarely issued. This change in popular taste may be taken as indicating the growth of an increased respect for the medical practitioner. About 1870 an entirely new type of popular print representing the Doctor began to appear, in the form of sentimental depictions of the Country Practitioner riding at midnight through snow and sleet to answer the call of a country patient; or, one of the most popular, the Physician sitting by the bedside watching the patient, usually a mother or a very ill child. Popular sentiment at last began to be sympathetic toward the practitioner; and to be willing to give him his due.



PART VI

THE MODERN DANCE OF DEATH



THE modern period of the Dance of Death evolution may be said to begin with the second half of the nineteenth century. From that time on the art creations that dealt with this theme no longer followed either the medieval model or that of Holbein, but struck out on a new path, that of a sentimental-realistic conception of the subject and of its treatment. Some artists employed the theme for decorative purposes only, so that it lost entirely its old spiritual significance. In these new forms the Dance of Death motive is no longer the expression through art of a universal psychologic experience, but becomes only the means by which an end-effect is produced. With very few exceptions the modern works have no psychologic entity, they are bound together by no unity of thought. In the majority of them each picture stands for itself, wholly unrelated to those that precede or follow. They represent combinations or complexes of incidents, or rather accidents; and most of them point only such a moral as that told by a newspaper account of a similar disaster. The elemental tragic atmosphere of the medieval Dance of Death is lost to this age. As Buchheit puts it, the modern Dance of Death is in short "only the transla-

tion of a great mythus into the plebeian diction of a century which has no God." The symbolized world horror expressed in the medieval Dance has become, in the modern exposition of the motive, only the terror of the single individual. This transformation of the motive from a general to an individual application was clearly foreshadowed in the works of Chodowiecki and Schellenberg in the rococo period, and was fully achieved in the compositions of the nineteenth century.

Alfred Rethel is the only artist of the nineteenth century whose art may be mentioned after Holbein's as being really great. By many German art critics he is ranked after Dürer and Holbein. He produced two great works, "Der Tod als Erwärger," und "Der Tod als Freund," which combine the medieval and modern spirit into a harmonious whole of the deepest spiritual significance and impressiveness. His "Auch Ein Todtentanz" inspired by the revolution of 1848, is wholly original in its conception, and expresses with deepest feeling and sympathy the tortured soul of a people in revolt. The six great woodcuts of this series reveal in naked truth the fact that the stirring words, "Liberty, Equality, and Brotherhood" often, if not always, mask deceptively underlying motives of deceit, treachery, madness, and lust of blood. Rethel pulled away the curtain covering the tragedy of revolution, and

showed that Death held the center of the stage. Revolution is, indeed, also a Dance of Death. Rethel was essen-

“Der Tod als Erwürger,” inspired by the account by Heine of the appearance of cholera at a masked ball given



Der Tod als Erwürger.

Erster Auftritt der Cholera auf einem Maskenball in Paris 1831.

FIG. 75. DER TOD ALS ERWÜRGER. ALFRED RETHEL, 1851.

tially a historical painter; he is regarded in Germany as the greatest historical painter of his times. His favorite subjects were Biblical, or were taken from the German sagas, or from Roman history. He possessed a great historical style. His works satisfied the imagination, as they did the intellect. He was more closely related spiritually to Dürer than to any other artist; and in his work the spirit of medieval German art bloomed once again. But only for a short time; Rethel's manhood was unhappy and clouded by mental disease. He died in 1859 at the age of forty-four. In 1851 he produced the woodcut of

in Paris in 1831. This might have come from the very hand of Dürer himself, so medieval is its spirit and atmosphere (see Fig. 75). In an ancient hall, decorated for the feast, a masked ball is taking place. Suddenly three of the dancers fall dead upon the floor. The other dancers flee, as do the musicians, in a wild rout. On the throne sits the spirit of pestilence, a mummy figure holding a scourge as a scepter. In the foreground, Death plays a new tune upon the cross-bones. The very apotheosis of sudden death! In its tragic simplicity and power this woodcut makes a tremendous appeal to one's imagination. As powerful, but

how different, is the impression made upon one's mind by Rethel's woodcut of "Der Tod als Freund," a later of the atmosphere of the Middle Ages is in it; but more than that there is the new conception of Death, not as a



Der Tod als Freund.

Originalgemälde von der Akademie der Disziplinärkunst von G. Böttcher
in Dresden.

Gezeichnet von Hermann Richter, Kupf. und Steinbr. v.
in Düsseldorf.

FIG. 76. DER TOD ALS FREUND. ALFRED RETHEL, ABOUT 1850.

creation, before the shadows of mental disease destroyed forever his creative powers (see Fig. 76). It is the bell-ringer's room in a cathedral tower, surely that of Freiburg in Breisgau, for as one looks through the arched opening, one sees in the distance over the broad valley of the Rhine, the Kaiserstuhl, with the sun setting behind it. A little bird sits on the parapet, and looks in expectantly. The old bell-ringer sits in his armchair, in his last sleep, his keys by his side. It is the hour for vespers. Death in a pilgrim's dress performs for him the friendly service of ringing the vesper bell. It is a beautiful composition. All

ruthless destroyer of life, but as a friend, bringing release to the weary soul. In this work Rethel struck the keynote of the modern outlook upon the world, in its changed attitude towards death. Such a conception would have been absolutely impossible to the medieval mind; and nowhere in the art of the Middle Ages is there anything other than the fear of death portrayed.

After Rethel, the nineteenth century produced no artist comparable to him in creative power or technical skill. The realistic sentimentalists held full sway during the remainder of the century. Their dances of death

are simply records of disasters overtaking certain individuals, and there is a monotonous sameness in the dance of death. From many the medical profession is omitted entirely; in others, the Physician is replaced by

3133.



Du sahst gar oft den Tod bei Andern sehn,
Nur, daß er dir so nah, kannst du nicht sehn.

FIG. 77. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "BILDER DES TODES," BY C. MERKEL, LEIPZIG, 1850.

individual types presented. The General, The Alpine Climber, the Railway Switchman, and others are repeated over and over. In nine dances of death appearing between 1848 and 1895 the railway accident, with Death acting as the treacherous Switch-tender, occurs in every one. Inasmuch as these modern dances no longer portray all classes and ranks of human life, but strive to depict new individuals with new (modern) occupations and professions, the Physician no longer plays a rôle in every

the Apothecary or the Anatomist. From now on to the end of the story, the Physician gradually disappears from the Dance of Death stage. The farther removed from quackery he becomes, the less interesting he is in art and caricature. Even in those dances of death inspired by the Great War, the Physician makes no appearance at all, in spite of his great service. This is explainable in that the horror of war monopolized all other interests in the minds of the artists producing such dances.

Under the title "Bilder des Todes, oder Todtentanz für alle Stände," there was issued in Leipzig, in 1850, the physician cannot foretell his own death, although able to do so for others. A woodcut series, of eight



ast viel gesonnen zu jeder Frist,
für mich „kein Kraut gewachsen ist.“

FIG. 78. DEATH AND THE PHYSICIAN. FROM "DIE ARBEIT DES TODES," BY FERDINAND BARTH, MUNICH, 1866.

a series of twenty-four woodcuts designed by C. Merkel. They are of the sentimental type, and have ornamental floral borders. They are wholly uninspired, and remind one of contemporary book illustrations. The Physician sits at a night table, preparing to write a prescription; the patient, a woman, is seen in bed. Death stands behind the doctor, with his right hand on the latter's shoulder (see Fig. 77). The verses beneath the picture express the old thought that

plates, designed by Ed. Ille, entitled "Die Sieben Todsünden" was published in Stuttgart in 1861. These were of a satirical and humorous nature, and the Physician is not represented. In 1862, twelve woodcuts and vignette by Franz Poggi, "Todtentanz in Bildern and Sprüchen" were issued in Munich. In 1920 this series of woodcuts was reproduced in an edition also published in Munich. These prints are fantastic and decorative. They have a definite charm. Poggi has

been classed with Rethel by some German critics. There is no Physician in the series. Poggi was the first to of Death form. "Die Arbeit des Todes, ein Todtentanz," by Ferdinand Barth, with twenty-five lithographic



L'AMPUTÉ

Sur un champ de bataille, bien des soins te manquent.
Ne compte pas sur une guérison complète. Tiens-toi prêt
à paraître devant Dieu.

FIG. 79. DEATH AND THE ARMY-SURGEON. THE AMPUTATION. FROM "LA PENSÉE DE LA MORT," BY R. P. LADISLAS, PARIS, 1885.

introduce the Alpine climber into the dance of death; and in this was imitated by the majority of those who followed him during the next fifty years. Wilhelm von Kaulbach and Max Klinger, the two most distinguished German artists of the middle and later portions of the century, essayed notable single productions dealing with death, but created no definite series comparable to the Dance

plates and title-page, was published in Munich in 1866. Two line verses accompany each plate. There are two plates illustrating the mountain-climber. Few of them show any originality of subject or composition. One of these, appearing for the first and only time in any Dance of Death series known to the writer, represents a death from carbon-monoxide asphyxiation. Death stands by the stove,

holding the damper in the stove-pipe tightly closed. The Physician is shown in Figure 78. Death has come to him,

dam. The plates were lithographs; of their content nothing is known to the author.



LE VIEUX MÉDECIN

Vous avez découvert, je le sais, un remède pour tuer les microbes, mais il en est quelques-uns qui vous ont échappé. Je les charge de vous exécuter.

FIG. 80. DEATH AND THE OLD DOCTOR. FROM "LA PENSÉE DE LA MORT," BY R. P. LADISLAS, PARIS, 1885.

as he sits in an easy-chair before his desk, on which lies a prescription signed by Dr. Hein (Death). Death stands by his side, with one hand on the doctor's head, the other holding the prescription unrolled before him. The verses underneath the picture introduce a somewhat new variation of the thought that the physician is unable to help himself. In 1875, "De Moderne Doodendans" by W. H. Kirberger was published in Amster-

About 1885 there appeared in Paris a small volume, undated, entitled "La Pensée de la Mort," by R. P. Ladislas, F. M. Capuchin. It was issued with the approval of the Superior. It contains one hundred and four line-engravings, with a curious mixture of subjects, ancient and modern, the majority belonging to the latter class, however. A few suggest Holbein, the great majority are wholly original in selection and treatment of

the subject. While there is a distinct religious flavor, especially in the legends to the prints, the majority of

prints. Medical subjects are presented a number of times. In Figure 79, the Army-Surgeon is amputating a leg



FIG. 81. DREI WÜRFEL: PEST-CHOLERA-TYPHUS. FROM "A MODERN DANCE OF DEATH," BY JOSEPH SATTLER, 1893.

these deal with secular subjects. For the first time the electric street-car appears as an agent of Death, who acts as the motor-man. Since one of the earliest electric tram-cars was exhibited in Paris in 1881, its introduction into this series speaks for its rapid development as a public utility in that city. Almost every field of human activity is introduced in these

on the field of battle, while Death peers at the group from over the rampart. This is probably a reminiscence of the Franco-Prussian War. For the first time also modern Medical Science appears in the Dance of Death, in the mention of microbes in the speech addressed by Death to the old Physician (see Fig. 80). The Pharmacist and various diseases as "Gan-

grene," and "Gout" also appear in these curious engravings. In all of them Death appears in skeleton form.

lished by Stargardt of Berlin, with photogravure plates, some of them in color. The subjects are original and



C. Weig linc

B. Köhler. M. Glabbech. reprodt.

Ihr Herren, warum eist ihr davon?
An manchem Lager wir trafen uns schon.
Schlecht wahrlich eurer Sunst ihr traut
Ihr wißt, für den Tod gibt es kein Straut.

FIG. 82. DEATH IN THE APOTHECARY'S SHOP. FROM "EIN MODERNER TOTENTANZ," BY TOBIAS WEISS, MUNICH, 1893.

In 1891, O. Seitz published in "Kunst für Alle" six small sketches of a Dance of Death, including in these the motives of the "Switchman" and the "General." In the same year Führich published a Todtentanz in large cartoons repeating the same motives. Joseph Sattler, in 1893, exhibited in the Salon of that year "A Modern Dance of Death," which was pub-

well designed, and are wholly in the modern style of the period. Especially striking is the plate entitled "Egalité," which presents in a different form the same thought as that expressed by Rethel. There is no Physician, but one plate has medical interest. It represents three skulls, with dice numerals on each, issuing from a dice-thrower, with the



T. Weiss invt.

B. Kühn, M. Glabbach, reprod.

Das ist des Todes reiche Mahd,
Von Leichen starren Weg und Pfad —
Und doch von Allen keiner fiel,
Dem nicht der Herr gesetzt das Ziel.

FIG. 83. CHOLERA FROM "EIN MODERNER TOTENTANZ." BY TOBIAS WEISS, MUNICH, 1893.

legend "Drei Würfel: Pest-Cholera-Typhus." (See Fig. 81.)

In the same year, 1893, Professor

editions up to 1899. For the first time the automobile and the airship appear as instruments of death. There



FIG. 84. DEATH THE LEECH. FROM THE "DOINGS OF DEATH," BY WILLIAM STRANG, LONDON, 1901.

Tobias Weiss published in Munich, "Ein Moderner Totentanz" with twenty-three plates from the "Bilderbuch des Todes." Weiss was the artist of the "Sceptra Mortis," a Biblical Dance of Death painted in 1885, on the walls of the Chapel of St. Michael in Mergentheim, copies of the cartoon for which were issued in book form in 1885, and went through several editions. Weiss intended his Modern Dance of Death to be a complementary work to his Biblical Dance, with subjects chosen with especial reference to modern conditions of life. He acknowledges that his representation of the Blind-man was suggested by Holbein, that of the Barricade by Rethel, and that of the Sweeper by Führich. Text and poems were written by Kreiten. This work passed through numerous

are two plates of medical interest, one showing the entrance of Death into the Apothecary's shop where two physicians are having their prescriptions filled (see Fig. 82); the other shows Death driving a cart piled high with coffins and corpses, with a sign bearing the word Cholera. (See Fig. 83.) Weiss certainly had no artistic imagination or creative genius; his subjects and compositions are truly plebeian and commonplace. His technical ability is, however, very good. Even in his secular Totentanz he shows his strong religious didactic tendency in the very sentimental picture of the missionary's death in Africa. Much more important than his "Modernier Totentanz" were his frescoes in St. Michael's chapel in Mergentheim, in which in fifteen scenes he pictured the history of the scepter of death

from Adam's Fall to the resurrection of Christ with his victory over death. The thirteenth scene, that of the

In 1901, twelve large lithographic plates entitled "The Doings of Death," by William Strang, were



Der Frank wird gut (hon/mein Freund ~

FIG. 85. DEATH THE APOTHECARY. FROM "EIN NEUER TOTENTANZ," BY HANS JENTZSCH, STUTTGART, 1904.

Crucifixion, with its crowd of jeering skeleton Deaths, is imaginative and the most impressive of the series.

A Totentanz in thirteen plates by Karl Steiger was issued in 1894, under the title of "Des Todes Ernte." This was again based upon disasters to the individual through various agents of Death, including the old motives of the Switch tender, the General, and the Mountain-climber. The author has been unable to obtain a copy of this work, so does not know whether the Physician was included.

issued by the Essex Press of London. In this series Strang has given us an entirely new and modern conception of the Dance of Death motive. Death is presented in an entirely new rôle, that of the Comforter, the Lover, and the Mourner. In one plate only, that of the Robber, does this strangely altered figure of Death assert his old cruel power. In all of the others Death is presented in a softened and chastened form, a gentle sorrowing spirit. Gone is the old malicious leer- ing demonic Death of the Middle

Ages. Gone is the old horror of Death. We have here in the place of the old implacable enemy of mankind, a re-

chill of death strikes through him; he walks by the side of the bier with bowed head and veiled face; with



La Mort et le Médecin.

Cher médecin, tu mis ta gloire
 A vouloir lutter contre moi ;
 Je guéris beaucoup mieux que toi ;
 A moi restera la victoire.

FIG. 86. LA MORT ET LE MÉDECIN. FROM "NOUVELLE DANSE MACABRE," BY AUGUSTE HOYAU, CHARTRES, 1904.

luctant spirit accomplishing his necessary duty in sorrow and sympathy for those about to die, and aiding their departure with gentleness and comforting hands. In the plate "Death and the Children" even his skeleton form is concealed, as he gathers the children with tenderness into his arms. He comforts the dying beggar by the roadside; he throws a coat over the old husbandman as the

sorrow he calls the artist as Fame approaches with the laurel wreath. But in the plate of "Death the Leech" is this new interpretation of the meaning of death brought out with fullest force (see Fig. 84). The dying patient, a woman, lies on her bed with hands crossed. Death in the robes of a monk, lets her head fall back gently on the pillow. In his left hand he holds the empty glass from which he has just

given her a soothing potion. Through an open window is seen a rural landscape. On the dresser in front of the

“Lasst euch sagen, lasst euch singen, wie der Tod ist!
Der Tod ist sanft. Schön is der Tod!”



FIG. 87. DEATH AT THE FOUNTAIN OF HYGEIA. FROM "EIN TOTENTANZ," BY HANS MEYER, BERLIN, 1911.

window are medicine bottles. This quiet picture of the last hour of the patient attended by Ministering Death as the comforting and solicitous physician is impressive, and significant of the change that had come over man's attitude towards death in the latter decades of the last century. And this changed psychology was well-nigh universal in the so-called Christian countries. One wonders in how many funeral sermons of this period, and on how many gravestones occurred the words "He giveth his beloved sleep." To many, if not the majority, of the modern world, Death had come to mean a release from pain and disability, a rest for the weary. This motive is repeated over and over again in both the secular and religious literature of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Habt ihr Angst vor ihm? Er ist genau so schön wie das Leben!
Er ist Leben."

To the believers in Christian doctrines Death meant only a rebirth into immortal life. To those who did not accept these, Death was also shorn of his terrors, in that the end of life was regarded as a natural and normal process, to be met with fortitude and reason.

"Ein neuer Totentanz," with eighteen plates, by Hans Jentsch, was published in Stuttgart in 1904. They are neither very decorative nor original. Old motives, such as the mountain-climber appear again. The progress of modern medical science is shown in the plate of the Apothecary (see Fig. 85). Before the counter sits a haggard ill man. On the counter are two large jars, one labelled poverty,

the other tuberculosis. On the shelves one reads such labels as pestilence, delirium tremens, bacillus of typhoid fever, etc. Death, behind the counter, leers at the patient as he fills his bottle with some one of his dangerous wares. The growing importance of the druggist in this period is shown by the predominance of plates representing him over those of the physician. In Jentsch's plate a double meaning is probably intended. In the dealing out and dispensing of quack medicines advertised to cure tuberculosis and other ills, Death only is dispensed. In the same year a "Nouvelle Danse Macabre" with designs and poetic quatrains by Auguste Hoyau was published in Chartres. It is a half-satirical, half-humorous production of no originality or artistic value. Many of the plates are evidently meant to be caricatures. In some of the pictures Death is represented in the form of a female skeleton. The plate of the Physician is reproduced in Figure 86. Death in a conjurer's hat and gown holds the physician's left wrist feeling his pulse, and addresses him in the words of the legend given beneath the picture. It is interesting to note that, aside from the early wall paintings of the Danse Macabre, France has never produced a Dance of Death that had any artistic value whatever.

"Ein Totentanz," by Hans Meyer, with thirty plates, was published in Berlin in 1911. In his preface Meyer expresses his modern attitude toward Death, when he says: "Seldom will Death be welcomed when he knocks at the door; but he comes also sometimes at one's call, earnestly desired and longed for. Thoughts of death have nothing fearful in them, to those earnest souls who have lived a long,

not wholly wasted life." Meyer's plates are typical of the German art of his period, sentimental-realistic, and technically well done, in a style that would now be regarded as antiquated. Most of the subjects are old ones; the blind man, the switch tender, the bicyclist, the airship, the miser, etc., again appear in different modes of treatment. There is no plate of the Physician or Apothecary; instead of these, the fountain of Hygeia. Death, kneeling before the fountain, distributes its waters to the crowd of health seekers about him, with the invitation, "Du willst dir Leben trinken? Komm her! Ich schenke cin" (see Fig. 87). The meaning evidently is, that he who drinks the cup given by Death finds everlasting life.

And then came the cataclysm! The Great War! And the medieval horror of Death returned to a people that had lost it. It came with stunning force. Death in a thousand new forms of poison-gas, liquid fire, air-raids, torpedo, submarine, and others, even more horrible! In the shell-torn desolate plain of the battlefield, in the foul mud of the trenches, behind the barbed wire entanglements, the old medieval specter waited for its victims, the youth of the nations. A striking drawing by Jean Veber, in 1918, shows us a young stripling, helmeted, with his feet sunk in the mire of the trench, and holding a hand grenade, staring into the face of Death, who has crept beneath the barbed wire and hangs his head over the edge of the trench leering at the young soldier with a cruel ghastly grin. In the boy's face is an expression of paralyzing fear. This drawing is signed "La Glorie." On the head of Death is a wreath of laurel leaves. (See Fig. 88.) It is a tragic represen-

tation of the way Death came to thousands and thousands of young men in the trenches. Is it any wonder

with the representation of Death. Raemaeker's cartoons are among the most noted of these. They ap-



FIG. 88. LA GLORIE. DRAWN BY JEAN VEBER, 1918.

that many minds cracked under the strain of such experiences and gave way; and that those who lived through such came out of the war emotionally burned out? Nor was it at all strange that the friends and relatives at home should turn again to the promises of medieval religion, or to the false consolations of mediumistic spiritism! With such emotional instability as characterized the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the modern psyche transformed. No wonder then that the Dance of Death motive received new life. Throughout the whole world, in newspapers, journals, and magazines, appeared cartoons

peared in numerous editions in Antwerp, Amsterdam, London, and New York. While of deep political significance, they nevertheless expressed the horrors of modern warfare in a most realistic manner. In these great picture-books of the war, the medical profession goes unnoticed. Disease is mentioned, but not the preventer of disease. And this is true of all of the Dances of Death that were produced during the war and immediately after it. In 1919 a collection of twenty woodcuts by Herman Paul under the title of "La Danse Macabre" was published in Paris. This has nothing at all to do with the war. The subjects

are grotesque, and have little originality or artistic value. The woodcuts are coarsely executed.

little river, illumined by exploding shells, with an enormous skull rising out of the water, opening wide its



FIG. 89. DEATH AIDING THE YOUNG WOUNDED SOLDIER. FROM "EIN TOTENTANZ, 1914-1918," BY CARL WIEGAND, ZÜRICH.

A "Totentanz, 1914-1918," with poem by Carl Wiegand was published in Zurich, undated. It is illustrated with eleven lithographs by Hans Witzig. Some of these are strikingly original and imaginative. The bayonet charge in the trenches, over which towers a giant figure of Death beating a drum; the army of naked young men on horses, halting on the bank of a

cavernous mouth to engulf them; and the cemetery of the battlefield, with its multitude of crosses, and Death, the gravedigger, in his shirt-sleeves, leaning on his spade: these are among the best. In one plate, Death appears as the Comforter, reminding us strongly of Strang's similar presentation of Death the Lcech. It is the deserted battlefield by moonlight. In

the barbed-wire entanglement a young naked boy is lying. Death in a monastic hood and robe lifts the boy's head

same time, but is also unknown to the writer.

The most inspired of the works



FIG. 90. DEATH AWED. FROM "THE DANCE OF DEATH, 1914-1918." BY PERCY SMITH, 1919.

and holds to his mouth a canteen. (See Fig. 89.) "XIII Danses Macabres," by Paul Vaillant-Couturier, and fourteen designs by Jeand'Espourg, dated Paris, 1920, present more realistic and less imaginative pictures of the war. Individuals and individual groups of soldiers are presented, more as studies of types, than with deep psychologic significance. There are two representations of dead soldiers caught in the barbed wire. The technic is of the type known as modern; the plates have no beauty, and lacking imagination, affect one unpleasantly. In the same year, Edmond Bille produced "Une Danse Macabre," with twenty engravings in color, published at Lausanne. This the writer has not seen. "In Flandern reit't der Tod," a dance of death by Erich Glas, in five woodcuts with colors, appeared about the

influenced by the Great War is the "The Dance of Death 1914-1918," in seven etchings by Percy Smith. It is dated 1919. These are dignified, original, imaginative compositions, entitled "Death Forbids; Death Marches; Death Awed; Death Refuses; Death Waits; Death Ponders; Death Intoxicated." In these terribly realistic but spiritually deeply significant plates the horror of modern warfare is shown as in no other art of the times. In the first plate Death holds out a restraining hand to the soldier caught in the barbed wire beneath a shell-torn fallen tree; in the second, Death watches the march to the front of the young helmeted soldiers. The third plate is reproduced here (see Fig. 90). The shrouded figure of Death stands alone on the abandoned, trench-scarred battle field. He

gazes with shocked face and uplifted hand at a pair of boots from which project the broken leg bones. In the

Walter Draesner, with text by Max von Boehm, was issued in Berlin. This represents a new technic, that



FIG. 91. DEATH AND THE ANATOMIST. FROM "EIN TOTENTANZ," BY WALTER DRAESNER, BERLIN, 1922.

fourth plate Death turns his back upon the tortured gassed soldiers in the dugout, begging for relief. The fifth plate is one of the most impressive of all; Death sits with chin on hands, waiting, behind the barbed wire. In the next plate, Death watches a wounded soldier attempting to crawl out of a shell hole. The final picture shows Death dancing madly, glutted with blood lust, as the wild bayonet charge goes on. This set of etchings is the one art work of the War period that in any degree can be said to rank in importance with the works of Holbein and Rethel. They tell their story of the Great Horror in the same direct realistic manner, but nevertheless, transformed by the magic of imagination into universal symbols.

In 1922, "Ein Totentanz," by

of silhouettes cut from black paper. These pictures are remarkably effective; they possess style and power of expression. His forms are living. The majority of the subjects are secular, very few are inspired by the war. In this work there is a return to the motives of the Totentänze of the imitators of Holbein. Old subjects reappear, such as the mountaineer. One of the most tragic is that of the young woman being burned at the stake. It could be Joan d'Arc. We reproduce here the picture of the Anatomist strangled by one of his own skeletons. This is the last appearance of the Medical Profession in the modern dance of death (see Fig. 91). The expression on the skeleton's face as he throttles the old Professor of Anatomy is that of tense and determined cruelty. It is remarkable that

such an expression could be achieved by so simple a medium. Draesner is certainly extremely clever in his new technic, even if we are reluctant to look upon it as capable of the highest artistic expression. In 1923, a work entitled "Gestalten Des Todes, Ein Totentanz des Weltkriegs," by Melchior Grosseck was published by Kurt Schroeder of Bonn and Leipzig. This is also in silhouette style, with the use of color in some of the plates. The work was dedicated to the two brothers of the artist who fell in the War. Originally planned as a Cycle in Three Parts, only the first part has ever been issued. This is the most imaginative and original German Totentanz inspired by the Great War. There are fifteen plates, each one of which represents some phase of the great conflict. The long-range gun, the marching German Host, the German Field Marshal, the battle, Zeppelin, airplane, and mine are all presented here in most original and effective manner. Great imagination and decorative taste are shown by the artist, and the black figures upon the light background produce the effect of a shadow play. The figure of Death in all of the plates is presented in the form of a gigantic and grotesque skeleton, anatomically exaggerated for purpose of effect. The last plate, with the legend "Kampfpause" shows us Death sharpening his dull and broken-edged scythe in preparation for the next war.

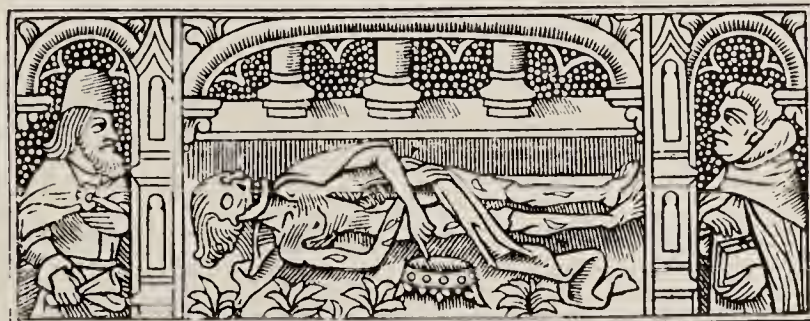
Some time, early in the twenties, "Ein Totentanz" by Alfred Kubin, was published in Berlin. It is undated. Although not directly inspired by the War, several plates show its influence, as the helmeted Death and the sinking ship. Others show Holbein or a medieval influence in the subjects

chosen. The technic is that of coarse pen-and-ink drawings. The plates are grotesque, not especially original or imaginative, and the series is not a very notable contribution to the Dance of Death. The last published Dance of Death of which the author has knowledge is "Ein Anatomischer Totentanz" by Albert Haszclwander, issued in Munich in 1926. In this work, the living body is contrasted with the skeleton, both posed in exactly the same manner. While designed primarily for anatomists and artists, these reproductions must have an interest for any one who has a knowledge of the mechanism of the human body, or an appreciation of its beauty of action. It is not properly a dance of death, but is only a series of anatomical actions and postures represented in the living body and in the skeleton. It has no significance connected with death.

So ends our study of the Physician of the Dance of Death, in a very marked decrescendo of importance as far as his position in the Modern Dance is concerned. During the first quarter of the twentieth century the Physician has stepped out of the picture. The reasons for this may be found in the changed attitude of modern times toward the man of medicine, and also toward the Dance of Death motive itself. In the Medieval Totentanz the Physician presented a definite type especially adapted to the satire of the old religious-didactic motive of the Dance. After the secularization of the motive by Holbein, he still retained a position of importance in its representations, in that the elements of quackery invested in him were exaggerated for the purpose of satire and caricature. The tendency of the modern

works to replace the Physician by the Apothecary shows a transference of the quality of importance from the doctor himself to his prescriptions. Not the physician, but the science of medicine assumed the responsibility for the failure of drugs to cure. The helplessness of medicine, not the pretension and dishonesty of quackery, came to be realized, and this theme is reflected in some of the modern dances of death. That the Physician had no place in the Dances created by the World War is wholly explainable by the complete change in motive. Their object was to present the horrors of modern warfare, and in these the Physician had no part. Types of individuals had no rôle in them; they were created for the express purpose of presenting Death, tremendous, horrible, and inevitable, himself intoxicated by the wild orgy of slaughter. On the other hand a new version of the Dance of Death motive might have been produced out of the emotions roused by the War, which would picture the conflict waged between Death and Medicine. In this the hero would be the Physician, the war-hospital the scene, and the actors opposed to Death would be the Army Surgeon and Physician, the Nurse, the Ambulance Driver, the Laboratory Worker, and even

the Medical Orderly. Out of this theme surely some inspired artist could create a Dance of Death that would serve as a memorial of the important part played by medicine in the great catastrophe. As long as the human race persists, Death, the end of all, will still be to the individual the event of deepest concern and interest. Not necessarily a morbid interest: Death can be conceived as a natural and physiologic process, necessary in the scheme of existence. It can be accepted as such, and happy is the man who can do so. The Dance of Death idea is as immortal as the life of the race; but in each new period of human thought it will express itself in new form corresponding to the predominant philosophy of that time. From the primitive wall-paintings of the Middle Ages as marking the period of religious superstition, to the intellectual creation of Holbein as characterizing the Renaissance, and following this the gradual decrescendo through the Rococo period to modern times, the Dance of Death motive has followed a definite evolution which now awaits the artist of the modern period, who will express adequately in some art form the changed philosophy of the twentieth century toward Death. The Totentanz mythus awaits a new birth.



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IN COLLECTION OF

DR. ALDRED SCOTT WARTHIN, ANN ARBOR

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It seems most strange that men should fear to die;
Seeing that Death, a necessary end,
Will come, when it will come.

Shakespeare.

INDEX

- Abraham à St. Clara, 76
 Ackermann, R., 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98
 Ackersmann, aus Böheim, 24, 38
 Aemylius, Georg, 49, 53
 Aldegrever, H., 67, 68
 Alphabet, Dance of Death, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, 53
 Alphabetum Mortis, 45
 Amicns, 13
 Amsler and Ruthardt, 88
 Amsterdam, 47, 68, 76, 113
 Anatomist, Death and, 125
 Anderson, Alex., 7, 81, 84, 85
 Andrews, J., and Cole, A., 103
 Angers, 13
 Annaberg, 20
 Antwerp, 71, 73
 Apocalypse, 6, 45
 Apothecary and Death, 27
 Death the, 118, 120
 Apothecary's Shop, Death in, 115, 117
 Arabic Medicine, 22
 Arbeit des Todes, 111, 112
 Arms of Death, 73
 Army-Surgeon and Death, 112
 Augsburg, 38, 59, 61, 70
 Aulendorf, 26
 Auvergne, 14
 Martial d., 12, 90

 Babcock and Company, 84
 Baldung, Hans, 40
 Barber-Surgeon, 20, 21
 Barre, de la, 29, 90
 Barth, F., 111, 112
 Basel, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 44, 45, 46, 47, 59, 71, 78, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89
 Bebelius, 46
 Bechstein, L., 86
 Beck, J. S., 21
 Bell and Daldy, 87
 Bell, G., and Sons, 87
 Bellerus, 71
 Bentley, R., 90
 Berlin, 7, 15, 25, 37, 44, 88, 115, 120, 121, 125, 126
 Berne, 7, 18, 19, 44, 45, 52, 89
 Bewick, John, 7, 75, 81, 84, 85, 86
 Bewick, Thomas, 7, 76, 81, 82, 85, 92
 Bibliothèque Nationale, 25
 Bignon, J., 31
 Bilder des Todes, 110
 Bille, Ed., 124
 Birckmann, A., 50, 64, 71, 72
 Block Books, 26, 27
 Bodleian Library, 32
 Bodmer, J. J., 69, 70
 Boehm, M. v., 125
 Bohn Library, 87
 Bonaparte's Dance of Death, 93
 Bonn, 126
 Bonner and Byfield, 86, 87
 Booke of Christian Prayers, 32
 Books of Hours, 29, 31, 47
 Borbonius, N., 47
 Borup, T. L., 84
 Bossert, 37
 Boston, 101, 104
 Brant, Seb., 42
 Büchel, 15, 16, 17, 44
 Buchheit, G., 37, 107
 Burgkmair, H., 39

 Camposanto, 5, 24
 Carrion, S. de, 24
 Cemetière Aux Innocents, 7, 10, 28, 29
 Chaise-Dieu, La, 7, 14
 Charleston, S. C., 81, 84
 Chartres, 119, 121
 Chevalier de libré, Le, 38
 Chodowiecki, D. N., 77, 83, 91, 92, 107
 Cholera, 108, 116
 Chorca ab eximio, 29
 Mortis, 47
 Chovin, 16, 89
 Chur, 20, 58
 Chytraeus, D., 64
 Clairvaux, B. von, 24
 Clusone, 7, 18
 Colerainc, J. N., 106
 Collings, 105, 106
 Cologne, 38, 45, 50, 64, 72, 73, 79
 Combe, William, 94
 Condé, B. de, 24
 Conflictus literature, 24, 38
 Constance, 20, 58
 Copenhagen, 33, 79, 83
 Corrozct, G., 48, 55
 Coxhead, J., 74
 Crane, Walter, 106
 Cratander, 46
 Croydon, 20
 Cruikshank, R., 100

 Dagger Sheath, 43, 44, 45, 50, 53, 78, 79
 Dagley, R., 8, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104
 Danca General, 3, 10, 24, 25
 Dance of Death, 2, 7, 12, 18, 20, 24, 28, 43, 46, 47, 51, 52, 57, 72, 74, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87, 107, 112, 114, 115, 118, 124
 Biblical, 117
 Bonaparte's, 93
 British, 99, 100
 English, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98
 for ladies' fans, 106
 Modern, 114, 115
 Modernized, 93
 Newton's, 93
 Dance of Life, English, 93, 95
 Danse des Morts, La, 90
 Danse Macabre, 3, 7, 10, 12, 18, 20, 28, 32, 36, 44, 47, 90, 121, 122
 des femmes, 12, 29, 90
 des hommes, 12, 29, 90
 Nouvelle, 119, 121
 Une, 124
 Danses des Morts, Les, 38, 51
 Danses Macabre, XIII, 124
 Daunce of Machabree, 20, 74
 Day, J., 32
 Death and Apothecary, 93, 103
 Death in the Apothecary's Shop, 115
 Death the Apothecary, 118
 Death the Leech, 117, 119
 Death's Doings, 100, 101, 102
 Death's Ramble, 102, 105
 Denecker, David, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 87
 de Necker, Hercule, 63
 Denecker, Jobst, 7, 72, 73, 79, 80, 88
 Der Doten Dantz, 26, 34, 35
 Des Dodes Dantz, 32, 34, 35
 Deuchar, D., 7, 72, 73, 79, 80, 88
 Dialogus Mortis, 24
 Diepenbceke, 65, 66, 73, 75, 79, 80

- Dietrich, 46
 Dijon, 13
 Dobson, Austin, 87
 Doings of Death, 117, 118, 119
 Doodendans, De moderne, 113
 Doodt Vermaskert, De, 71
 Dou, G., 22
 Douce, F., 47, 49, 74, 75, 77, 79, 82, 86, 103
 Draesner, W., 125, 126
 Dresden, 20, 46, 86
 Dürer, Albrecht, 32, 39, 107
 Dutton and Wentworth, 104

 Edinburgh, 79, 80
 Edwards, 73, 74
 Eglin, Gebr., 21
 Eitelkeit, Die, 40
 Elbigenalp, 58
 Emblems of Mortality, 75, 81, 84
 Empiric, The, 100, 101, 103
 Erbaulicher Sterb-Spiegel, 70
 Erfurt, 7, 20, 21, 22, 58
 Ernte, Des Todes, 118
 Escorial, 24
 Espourg, J. de, 124
 Ewer, C., 104

 Fahlun, 80, 84
 Ferri, D., 66
 Fèvre, J. le, 10
 Fock, 76
 Fores, 106
 Fortoul, M. H., 86
 Fountain of Hygeia, 12, 120
 Fox, John, 32
 Francis I, 52
 Frankfurt, 66, 85, 89
 Frederick of Prussia, 80
 Freiburg, 7, 20, 58
 Frellon, F., 48, 49
 Frellon, J., 48, 49, 50, 53
 Frenzel, M., 7, 86
 Frey, Agnes, 32
 Frobenius, 46
 Fröhlich, H., 16, 83, 89
 Führich, 115, 117
 Füssen, 20, 58

 Galen, Greek, 46, 54
 Garnier, P., 90
 Geistliche Todt-Gedancken, 77
 Gerson, J., 10, 90
 Gespräche in dem Reiche derer Todten, 2
 Gestalten des Todes, 126
 Girardet Libraire, 87, 90
 Glas, Erich, 124
 Glissent, F., 60, 61, 64, 65, 66, 76
 Glorie, La, 121, 122
 Godard, G., 31
 Goette, A., 15, 16, 19, 37, 44, 47, 51
 Gosnell, S., 80
 Graf, Urs, 39, 44
 Grandville, J., 103, 104, 106
 Grenoble, 10, 28
 Grien, Baldung, 39
 Gross Basel, 16, 17, 37

 Hamburg, 15, 20, 70, 78
 Hamilton, Adams and Co., 80
 Hardouin, G. and G., 31
 Haszelwander, A., 126
 Hawkins, J. S., 81
 Heidelberg, 25, 26, 27, 34
 Hein, Dr., 113
 Heins, Freund, 80
 Hellmuth, C., 82, 87
 Hervagius, 46

 Heures, 29, 30, 31, 44
 Hexham, 20
 Heymans, Mynheer, 77
 Hiersemann, 34
 Hippocrates, 54
 Hirth, 49
 Histories of the Universities, 92
 Holbein, H., 32, 37, 43, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 82, 84, 88, 107, 117, 125, 127
 Holland, W., 93
 Hollar, W., 7, 65, 66, 67, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 79, 80, 88
 Hood, Thomas, 102, 105
 Horae, 29, 30, 31
 Houppelande, 11
 Hoyau, A., 119, 121
 Hull, Edw., 8, 102, 105
 Hullmandel, C., 105

 Icones Mortis, 49, 62, 68
 Ilger, F. A., 77
 Ille, Ed., 111
 Images de la Mort, Les, 49, 50
 Imagines de Morte, 49
 Imagines Mortis, 37, 43, 45, 46, 49, 53, 54, 66, 77, 83, 87, 88
 Incunabula, Dance of Death, 28
 French, 28
 German, 32
 Inquisition, 88
 Isingrin, 46

 Jacobs, J. B., 71
 Jehannot, J., 29
 Jentzsch, Hans, 118, 120

 Karlsruhe, 34
 Kastner, G., 38, 47
 Kaulbach, W. v., 112
 Kermaria, 7, 13, 14
 Kerver, T., 30
 Khol, A., 67
 Kienzheim, 20
 Kieser, E., 7, 67, 68
 Kirbirger, W. H., 113
 Klauber, H. H., 17
 Klein-Basel, 15
 Klingenthal, 7, 15, 16
 Klinger, Max, 112
 Knoblochtzer, H., 34
 Königsegg, 26
 Kreiten, 117
 Kruspe, H., 21, 22
 Kubin, A., 126
 Kuckucksbad, 20, 58, 78
 Kunsthefte, Wasmuth's, 34

 Ladislas, R. P., 112, 113
 Langlois, E. H., 50
 Lausanne, 124
 Leipzig, 34, 61, 70, 86, 110, 111, 126
 Lempertz, H., 45, 46
 Leo, 86
 Leon x, 52
 Library, Bavarian State, 34
 Berlin, 34
 Bodleian, 32
 British Museum, 34
 Copenhagen, 33
 Darmstadt, 34
 Ducal, 32
 Karlsruhe, 34
 Munich, 34
 Royal, 33
 Wolffenbüttel, 34
 Lincy, Le Roux de, 12

- Linz, 77, 78
 Lippmann, F., 49, 88
 Livres d'heures, 29, 44
 Lochner, C., 68
 Locle, 87, 90
 Lödel, H., 45
 London, 20, 37, 65, 72, 74, 75, 76, 80, 82, 87, 93, 99,
 100, 102, 106, 117, 119
 Lübeck, 7, 13, 14, 15, 25, 32, 33, 37, 38
 Incunabula, 33
 Luther, M., 49, 53
 Lützelburger, H., 44, 47, 48
 Luzern, 7, 20, 21, 58
 Lyons, 29, 30, 31, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 67, 88

 Macabre (See Danse)
 Machabree, Daunce of, 20
 Magdeburg, 82, 87
 Mainz, 34, 37, 38
 Mangold, F. G., 77
 Manni, G. B., 71
 Mantels, W., 13
 Manuel, Niclaus, 18, 44, 45, 52
 Mapes, Walter de, 24
 Marchant, Guyot, 7, 10, 11, 12, 25, 28, 29, 96
 Marginal, N. de, 24
 Maria-Magdalena Church, 15
 Marienkirche, 14, 15, 33
 Marmi (See Manni)
 Marnef, G. de, 90
 Massmann, H. F., 27, 46, 47
 Maximilian, 52
 Mechel, Chr. de, 7, 16, 71, 78, 79, 84
 Mechel, Con. de, 89
 Frères, 89
 Meglinger, Kaspar, 20
 Meister, H. W., 38
 mit den Bandrollen, 38
 of the Amsterdam Cabinet, 6
 von Zwolle, 38
 Memento Mori, 4, 52
 Menneskelige Livs Flugt, 79, 83
 Mensklige Livwets, 80, 84
 Mercks Wien, 76
 Mergentheim, 117
 Merian, Mattheu, 7, 16, 85, 87, 89
 Merkel, C., 110, 111
 Meydenbach, J., 34, 37
 Meyers, C., 7, 64, 69
 Hans, 120, 121
 R., 69
 Microcosm of London, 92
 Milan, 71
 Montpellier, 22
 Montserrat, 25
 Mors Imperator, 24
 Mort et le Médecin, La, 119, 121
 Mortalium Nobilitas, 65, 73, 76
 Mühlenbrücke, 20
 Munich, 25, 26, 27, 37, 86, 111, 112, 116, 117
 Murner, T., 42
 Museum, Basel Historical, 15
 British, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35, 48, 50, 54
 Germanic National, 32
 Kunsthistorische in Wien, 40

 Narrenschiff, 42
 Neale, T., 76
 Negro in Danse Macabre, 29
 New Haven, Conn., 81, 84
 Newton, 93
 Nuremberg, 32, 33, 38, 64, 67, 68, 76

 Orcagna, Andrea, 8
 Orlean, J. d., 10
 Ostade, van, 22

 Oudot, J., 90
 Oxford, 32

 Padua, 65
 Paris, 10, 12, 14, 28, 29, 73, 76, 78, 86, 90, 112, 113,
 114, 124
 Passau, 77, 78
 Paul, Herman, 122
 Paul's Churchyard, 20
 Pelvis of Death, 53
 Pensée de la Mort, 112, 113
 Petau, 73
 Petrarch, 24
 Pfister, A., 24, 38
 Physician of Dance of Death, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18,
 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 45,
 48, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68,
 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82,
 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 110, 111, 112, 113, 126, 127
 Piccard, N., 77
 Pickering, W., 32, 86
 Pigouchet, P., 30
 Pisa, 5, 8, 24
 Pizzolo, 7
 Poggi, Fr., 111, 112
 Poiterin, J., 30
 Prague, 72, 78

 Quaritch, 88

 Raemaeker, 122
 Rechtsstreit des Menschen, 24, 38
 Redel, 70
 Reformation, 19, 52
 Regnault, F., 31
 Renaissance, Dance of Death of, 43, 127
 Rentz, M., 7, 55, 70, 77, 78
 Rethel, A., 8, 107, 108, 109, 115, 117, 125
 Reuter, Tod und Teufel, Frontispice, 39
 Reval, 15
 Robrahn and Company, 87
 Rococo period, 74, 77, 127
 Rouen, 13, 29, 90
 Rowlandson, F., 8, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98
 Rubens, P., 48, 73
 Rumohr, G. v., 47
 Rusting, S. v., 7, 68, 76

 Saint Gallen, 61
 Salisbury, 20
 Sandrart, J. v., 47
 Sattler, J., 114, 115
 Schau-Platz des Doods, 76
 Schedel, Dr., 38
 Schellenberg, J. R., 80, 91, 92
 Scheyt, C., 64, 67
 Schlotthauer, J., 49, 86
 Schnabel shoes, 11
 Schoutoonel des Doods, 76
 Sears, G. E., 66
 Seitz, O., 115
 Simulachres, Les, 47, 48, 49
 Smeeton, G., 100
 Smith, J. R., 86
 Society, Holbein, 49
 Spaziergang, 39
 Stargardt, 115
 Steiger, Karl, 118
 Sterbenspiegel, 69
 Stettler, 18
 Strang, W., 117, 118, 119
 Straub, L., 61
 Strauch, G., 67
 Strassburg, 7, 38, 46
 Stratford, 20
 Stuttgart, 25, 118, 120

- Sylvius, A., 71
 Syntax, Doctor, 93, 94

 Ten Hoorn, J., 76
 Teniers, 22
 Terborch, 22
 Theatrum Mortis, 72
 Tisserand, L. M., 12
 Tod als Erwürger, 107, 108
 Freund, 107, 109
 Würger, 39
 Der lauernde, 39
 Tod und Frau, 39
 Tod und Landsknecht, 39
 Todsünden, Die Sieben, 111
 Todten-Capelle, 76
 Todten-tanz (See Totentanz)
 Todtentanz in Bildern, 111
 Todt-Gedancken, Geistliche, 77
 Totentanz, 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21,
 22, 25, 26, 43, 46, 51, 59, 61, 63, 66, 78, 83, 86, 87,
 88, 89, 107, 118, 120, 121, 123, 125, 126
 Totentanz, Ein, 120, 121, 123, 125, 126
 Anatomischer, Ein, 126
 des Weltkriegs, Ein, 126
 Modernen, 115
 Neuer, 118, 120
 Tottell, 4
 Touszelle, Jeanne de, 48
 Trattner, V., 78
 Trechsel, Caspar, 46, 48
 Melchior, 46, 48
 Treperei, J., 29
 Triomphe de la Mort, Le, 74, 78
 Trionfo della morte, 5, 8, 18, 24
 Trois Vifz, Li, 5
 Tross, 46
 Trost, A., 7, 72
 Trübner, 46

 Ulm, 38
 Urine gazer, 22, 23

 Vado mori, 4, 24
 Vaillant-Couturier, P., 124
 Valgrisi (Vaugris), V., 50, 60, 64
 Valvasor, J. W., 72

 Van Assen, 8, 99, 100, 103
 Van Morle, 73
 Van Venne, Adrian, 104
 Vaugris (Valgrisi), V., 50, 60, 64
 Veber, Jean, 121, 122
 Venicc, 50, 64, 66
 Vcrard, A., 29, 30
 Vesalius, A., 17
 Vienna, 40
 Vienne, 61, 63
 Villanovanus, 22
 Vinci, L. da, 94
 Vision Fulbert's, 4, 24
 Vogel, Johann, 62, 63, 68
 Voltaire, 80
 Vostre, Simon, 30
 Voyage pour l'Eternité, 103, 104, 106

 Wackernagel, W., 47
 War, The Great, 121, 122
 Wasserburger, P., 78
 Weigel, Chr., 76
 Weiss, Tobias, 115, 116, 117
 Welack, M., 64
 Weltchronik, 38, 39
 Wentzel, 86
 Whitehall, 43, 77
 Whittingham and Arliss, 82
 Wiegand, C., 123
 Wismar, 15
 Wissembourg, 86
 Wittenberg, 64
 Witzig, H., 123
 Wohlgemuth, 38
 Wolffenbüttel, 32
 Wolgast, 58
 Wolsschaten, G. v., 71
 Woltmann, A., 47
 Woodward, G. M., 93
 Worlidge, Scottish, 79
 Wortley-Hale, 20
 Wright, W. C., 82
 Würfel, Drei, 114

 Yciar, J. de, 54

 Zimmern Totentanz, 25, 26
 Zurich, 123



