

**DEATH'S DOINGS; CONSISTING OF
NUMEROUS ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS,
IN VERSE AND PROSE, THE FRIENDLY
CONTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS WRITERS.
VOL. II; PP. 233-472**

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Death's doings; consisting of numerous original compositions, in verse and prose, the friendly contributions of various writers. Vol. II; pp. 233-472 by R. Dagley

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R. DAGLEY

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CONSISTING OF NUMEROUS

ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS,

OR

Verse and Prose,

THE

FRIENDLY CONTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS WRITERS:

PRINCIPALLY ILLUSTRATED BY

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THIRTY COPPER-PLATES,

DESIGNED AND ETCHED

BY R. DAGLEY,

AUTHOR OF "SELECT GEMS FROM THE ANTIQUE," &c.

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WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

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THE LAST BOTTLE.

THE LAST BOTTLE.

AN' if it be the last bottle, Death is quite welcome ; for then life hath run to the very dregs and lees, and there is nothing more in it which can be called enjoyment. Ah, whither have ye sped, ye jovial Hours, which on bright-winged glasses, far different from yon sandy remembrancer, floated away so blissfully ; as the bird poised high in air, the trouble of the ascent over, glides without effort or motion, through the brilliant pleasures of yielding space. How ye sparkled and ran on, like gay creatures of the element gifted with more than magic powers. Beautiful and slight ephemera, fragile as you seemed, what mighty loads of cares did you easily bear off in your aerial flight ! Ponderous debts which might weigh nations down ; the griefs of many loves, enough to drown a world ; the falsehoods of friends, the malice of enemies ; anxieties, fears, troubles, sorrows—all vanished as drinking ye proceeded in your mistic dance ! I picture ye in my

fancy, now, ye Hours, as sparkling, joyous, and exquisite insects, flitting past with each a burden of man's miseries on his shoulders sufficient to break the back of a camel, and borne from the lightened hearts of your true worshippers. But, alas! alas! for all things mortal—we must come to the last at last.

Yet let the grim tyrant approach at any time, sith it must be so, and at what time can he approach when we should less regard his frown. Like the unconscious lamb, which “licks the hand just raised to shed its blood,” we play with his bony fingers as he presents the latest draught; and, let his dart be dipped in the rosy flood, we die feeling that wine gives to Death itself a pang of joy. Herodotus must have been wrong when he told us that the *Maneros* of the Egyptians was a mournful and wailing song; and Plutarch's is the best authority, for he says it was a joyous chant. So believed the merry party assembled in our faithful picture: their round of song, of toast, of cheer, of laughter, and of shout, was such as Plutarch paints of the wisdom of antiquity, when the figure of a dead man was shown to the convivial souls, and they melodiously joined the chorus—

Behold that breathless corpse ;
 You'll be like it when you die :
 Therefore drink without remorse,
 And be merry, merrily.
 Ai-lun, Ai-lun, Ai-lun,* quo' he !
 Our only night, no sky light, drink about,
 quo' we.

Time, they tell us, waits for no man ;—

*Time and Tide
 for no man hide.*

But here we can make Death himself a waiter, while the cup is drained and the jocund catch goes round. Hark, whose voice among the happy set is that which sings—

While here we meet, a jovial band,
 No Son of Discord's impious hand
 Dare fling the apple, fire the brand,
 To mar our social joy :
 Free, as our glorious country free,
 Prospering in her prosperity,
 With wine, and jest, and harmony,
 We Pleasure's hours employ.

But lo, he whose face is half concealed by that arm uplifted with the sparkling glass, he has drank till

* Literally in the Greek, "Behold that corpse ; you will resemble it after your death : drink now, therefore, and be merry."—(See Herodotus and Plutarch, on the Egyptian Maneros, *passim*). The fine chorus of Ai-lun, "He is dwelling with the night," is, we trust, *pathetically rendered*.

the tender mood of philosophy steals over his melting soul. His maudlin eye would moisten with a tear at a tale of sorrow or a plaintive air; and it is thus he gives vent to his soothing melancholy sensations—

Death comes but once, the philosophers say,
 And 'tis true, my brave boys, but that once is a clencher:
 It takes us from drinking and loving away,
 And spoils at a blow the best tippler and wench.
 Sing Ai-lun, though to me very odd it is,
 Yet I sing it too, as my friend quotes Herodotus.

And Death comes to all, so they tell us again,
 Which also I fear, my brave boys, is no fable;
 Yet the moral it teaches, to me is quite plain:
 'Tis to love all we can and to drink all we'er able.
 Sing, again, Ai-lun, though to me odd it is;
 But 'tis Greek, very good I hope, and comes from
 Herodotus.

The old Trojan himself tucks his napkin under his arm, the whetting of his scythe is forgotten, and he wishes (miserable sinner), that, instead of sand, his double glass were wetted full with burgundy. How it would refresh and revivify his dry ribs! how it would re-create and beautify his filthy skeleton form! but he must do his thankless office, while he listens to that third glee which he with a plumed bounet trolls forth:—