

**DEATH: OR,
MEDORUS' DREAM**

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Death: Or, Medorus' Dream by Robert Tyler

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ROBERT TYLER

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OR,

MEDORUS' DREAM.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "AHASUERUS"

i. e.

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DEATH;

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“How sad the wan and melancholy hour,
When wintry night creeps o'er the dark'ning sky,
While the dull whisper of the gathering gale
Strikes like an omen on the shuddering soul!
So Death, with his chill breath, and bony hand
Press'd on the sinking heart, from our dim sense
Shuts out the fading world, until the Tomb,
With its dread shadows, steals upon the scene,
Where Hope lies buried in sepulchral gloom,
And Joy shall be no more.

“Midnight is dark,
When through the murky sky the thunder peals:
Yet heavier, blacker, is that sable veil
That Death draws o'er our unilluminated orbs—
A cloud intense, whose thick funereal shades
Whirl through the billowy void from earth to
heaven,
Shrouding our sphere, that star nor sun can reach!

“Upon yon lifeless form the taper gleams
With feeble, sickly ray; the shrunken breast
Feels not the pressure of the folded hands,
Or Grave's pale vestment now; the pulseless heart
Must moulder in dull clay, no more to beat
With ardent hopes or love! What matters this,
The ghastly drapery of the dead man's couch,
Or sign of wo, or dissolution's seal,
To him who lies in everlasting sleep?
Can he find joy in light? Shall morning's breath
Fan his pale brow, or flush his cheek again?

Shall dewy twilight, mantling o'er the earth,
While sunset lingers on the distant mount,
And viewless spirits, in the balmy air,
Hold revel mid the fleecy summer clouds,
Awake his soul once more, and bid it soar
Up on its snowy wings mid angels there ?

“Night comes and goes, and Day streams o'er the
east,

Or, like a glorious seraph, in the west
Sits on his cloudy pile of gold and gems,
While man admires, and earth, instinct with love,
Falls into slumber 'neath that happy smile,
Like a tired child, that sleeps with rosy dreams.
Alas ! no ray can pierce his charnel-house !
The music of the winds, the rustling leaves,
The song of birds, the perfume of the morn,
The bright meridian sun, the azure dome,
Through which the clouds on golden wings are
borne,

Where dwell those angel-ministers of love,
Intent on good, who from their vases pour

The dews and showers that fertilize the land,
And make it bloom in fragrance : gentle eve,
That, like a dove, on silent pinion stoops
From out the sky, and hovers o'er the world
As softly as the ring-dove o'er her nest—
Can these again, in all their happy power,
Invoke a spirit to his fading form,
Touch his dull brain, unbind his frozen heart,
Or through his breast a transient feeling pass,
To break the changeless slumber of the grave ?
No : Light no glory hath to gild the tomb,
And Time's drear wave flows soundless o'er his
head.

What matters it to him, the swelling dirge,
The raven plume, the tread of muffled feet,
The whisper'd tone that fears to hear itself ;
The agonizing cry of wife or child,
The prayer, the gasp of some lone sister sad,
The knell, the solemn service for the dead,
The coffin, clod, and faded turf, and mound
Heap'd up to mark his last, dark resting-place ?
These are thy many woes, barbaric Death !
Darkness and tears, oblivion, agony,

Are thy remorseless ministers of ill ;
Sad end thou art of Nature's lustrous course,
And mortal man shrinks 'neath thy angry frown,
E'en as a stricken star to ashes turn'd,
To dust and ashes, where once living rays
Stream'd forth in splendour, dazzling countless
worlds.

" Oh, whither shall we turn, how wo escape ?
E'en in the sunshine, basking on yon hill,
Sits mocking Death, counting his victims o'er.
E'en in the air that plays around my brow—
Yea, in its warmth, its fragrance, and its tones,
That hull with a low-breathing harmony,
More soft than notes of reed or dulcet flute,
Lurks there an unseen presence, and a voice
Whose whisper fills the icy heart with fear,
And horrifies the soul. Seek not the dance,
Ye virgins, gay with flowers and rosy smiles ;
Nor ye, bright youths, that quaff the purple cup,
List not the song that fires the quiv'ring soul,
Nor heed the glance from Beauty's love-lit eye ;

Let Joy, that bird of Paradise, no more
Stream like a sun-lit splendour through the sky :
For while the rushing tide of gladness swells,
While in the halls of revel Pleasure's glow
Kindles warm sympathy from heart to heart,
And from the stagnant terror of our fears,
We leap, exulting in our dream of hope :
In that bright hour starts Death asudden up,
Flaps his dark pall across the awe-hushed scene,
Then beckons with a jeering finger forth,
And leads unto the churchyard's silent shades,
And searches out the epitaph that tells
That Life is Death, and flesh but food for worms.

"Thus musing oft, such shadowy visions rise,
And freight my life with horror. Darkness still,
Impenetrable darkness, ever hangs
Like a thick curtain round my fainting soul,
While, as an hideous omen, Death sits there,
And points me ever, with a mouldering hand,
To his sad, eyeless aspect. Let me weep,
Let blist'ring tears roll always down my cheek,