

The general idea of the pomp and pageantry of Death, as pictured to us in those passages of the elder poets, fully accords with the conceptions embodied in the artistic production of contemporary painters and sculptors; but the obvious derivation, not only of this general idea, but of some of the most characteristic details of the favourite medieval depiction of Death's doings, can scarcely be disputed in relation to a curious passage which occurs in Chaucer's *Canterbury Pilgrimage*.

The passage to which we refer is to be found in "The Knight's Tale," and serves to show that "the Dance of Death" was familiar to the English readers of the 14th century.

The poet there describes, in accordance with the anacronisms common alike to the poets and the painters of medieval times, the lists erected by Theseus, wherein the rivals were to contend in tourney for the hand of the fair Emely; and whosoever was fortunate enough to

"Slay his contrary, or out of listés drive,
Him shall I yeven Emelie to wyve."

The narrator then goes on to tell:

"Of Theseus, that goeth so busily
To maken up the listés really,
That such a noble theatre as it was,
I dare well sayn in this world there n'as.
The circuite a milé was about,
Walléd of stone, and ditchéd all without.
Round was the shape, manére of a compass,
Full of degrees the height of sixty pace,
That when a man was set on o degree,
He letted not his fellow for to see."

Above the gates, and in the turrets of the wall, are further constructed "oratories" or chapels, dedicated to Venus, Diana, and Mars, each decorated with appropriate carving and "portraiture," or paintings. The oratory of Venus is adorned with

"Pleasance and hope, desire, foolhardiness,
Beauty and youth, bauderie and riches.
* * * * *
Feasts, instruments, and carols, and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstances of love."

The oratory of Diana is in like manner

"Depeinted by the wallés up and down,
Of hunting and of shamefaced chastitie."