



DEATH THE LEVELLER.

**THE GLORIES OF OUR CHURCH AND STATE
ARE SHADOWS, NOT SUBSTANTIAL THINGS;
THERE IS NO ARMOUR AGAINST FATE;
DEATH LAYS HIS ICY HAND ON KINGS:
SCEPTRE AND CROWN
MUST TUMBLE DOWN,
AND IN THE DUST BE EQUAL MADE
WITH THE POOR CROOKÈD SCYTHE AND SPADE.**

**SOME MEN WITH SWORDS MAY REAP THE FIELD,
AND PLANT FRESH LAURELS WHERE THEY KILL:
BUT THEIR STRONG NERVES AT LAST MUST YIELD;
THEY TAME BUT ONE ANOTHER STILL:
EARLY OR LATE
THEY STOOP TO FATE,
AND MUST GIVE UP THEIR MURMURING BREATH
WHEN THEY, PALE CAPTIVES, CREEP TO DEATH.**

**THE GARLANDS WITHER ON YOUR BROW,
THEN BOAST NO MORE YOUR MIGHTY DEEDS!
UPON DEATH'S PURPLE ALTAR NOW
SEE WHERE THE VICTOR-VICTIM BLEEDS.
YOUR HEADS MUST COME
TO THE COLD TOMB:
ONLY THE ACTIONS OF THE JUST
SMELL SWEET AND BLOSSOM IN THEIR DUST.**

James Shirley 1596–1666