

## ROBERT BURTON AND 'THE ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY.'

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Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* should be on every doctor's bookshelf for it is surely the finest curiosity-shop in English literature. Here's richness and charm. This is the 'commonplace book of commonplace books,' a patchwork quilt of almost half-a-million words of miscellaneous learning, an inexhaustible quarry of quotations, a rambling, often irrelevant, irregularly systematised commentary on the human comedy, always excessive and overspilling. The author seems largely detached, yet he is introspective and reveals a temperament and considers a disease. It is the life work of a melancholy philosopher who in spite of his depression found cheerfulness and waggery constantly breaking through. Burton wrote it, so he says, to beguile his melancholy, ease his mind and help other sufferers. Osler called the *Anatomy* 'a medical treatise, the greatest indeed written by a layman.' Dr. Johnson, whose copy was probably a heavy folio, said it was the only book that got him out of bed two hours before he wished to rise; but it is an ideal bed-book, for almost every page is curious and entertaining. You can browse in it for years and never finish it. It is an inexhaustible catalogue of human foibles. Although typical of a pedantic age, it owes something to precedent humorists, Rowlands, Dekker and others. Its author's gluttonous fondness for words and catalogues of words ranges him with Johnson, Rabelais and Urquhart, while his humanity, gusto and gravity place him with Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne. Burton loved words for their own sake, but he wrote good sense in a virile prose when he spoke his own mind. If this literary museum of his did not anticipate a great deal of modern psychology, it came very near doing so, but instead it grew into a work of genius, crammed with the jewels and spices of scholarship.

Naturally this quotation dictionary about a popular malady, 'green and yellow' melancholy, affecting kings and commoners, became the reference book of men of letters and remained so until Anne's reign when it lost popularity. Sterne re-discovered it and quarried in it for *Tristram Shandy* as was pointed out by the learned Dr. Ferrier of Manchester. Keats borrowed from it for *Lamia* and other poems. Even Milton was accused of taking hints from it. Byron thought it was a useful book, but Charles Lamb, who composed imitations of Burton, wrote of the 1813 edition, 'I do not know a more heartless sight than the reprint of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. What need was there of unearthing the bones of that fantastic old great man to expose them in a winding sheet of the newest fashion to modern censure?' But it is still in print in modern dress with translations of most of the Latin and Greek quotations.

## THE AUTHOR.

Robert Burton, the recluse of Christ Church, lived during one of the most glorious periods of English history, from the prime of Queen Elizabeth to the days of the Civil War. The work of the reformers and revolutionaries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries which had flowered in the Renaissance had by now reached in this country full efflorescence in the England of Elizabeth. The great Lord Bacon, 'wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind,' championed inductive reasoning, while believing that the best cure for warts was to nail a piece of mutton fat outside his bedroom window; as the fat melted in the sun, the warts dwindled. In Burton's Oxford, medicine was still read chiefly in the works of Galen and Hippocrates, but the pursuit of anatomy was fast revealing new knowledge and the future Archbishop Laud was soon to influence profoundly Oxford medical teaching.

William Clowes (1540-1604) was probably the greatest English surgeon of the day, and surgeon to the Queen. William Harvey (1578-1657), whose life covered Burton's, made the greatest contribution to medicine since Vesalius in Burton's lifetime. Peter Lowe, surgeon, founded the ancient Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow in 1599. In France, Ambroise Paré, surgeon to four kings and to Henri Quatre, died when Burton was a boy of fourteen.

Burton lived while Shakespeare, 'an elegant poet of ours,' was producing his greatest work and while Rembrandt and Velasquez were limning their immortal canvasses. Yet Burton, although he knew some of Shakespeare's work, went to antiquity for his magnificence and was probably sublimely unconscious of the real greatness of his own times.

There are few details of Burton's life and most of them are in his book. Like Shakespeare, he is scarcely referred to by contemporaries. He was born at Lindley in Leicestershire in 1576, fourth of a family of nine: 'I was born of worshipful parents in an ancient family.' He refers to members of his family in his book. His mother 'had excellent skill in chirurgery, sore eyes, aches, etc.' and practised homely medicine 'upon divers poor folk that were otherwise destitute of help.' One of her cures for ague was a spider in a nutshell wrapped in silk worn on the breast, a remedy of great antiquity, as Burton discovered with some glee. Perhaps his mother's amateur doctoring stimulated his taste for medicine.

He went to school at Sutton Coldfield whose excellent air he commends, and later to Nuneaton Grammar School. 'I was once a grammar scholar,' he writes, and adds that there was no slavery like it. In 1593, he followed his brother William (later the Leicestershire antiquary) to Brasenose College, Oxford, which was then very flourishing and popular. In 1599, he was elected a Scholar of Christ Church, graduated B.D. in 1614, took orders and became vicar of St. Thomas's, Oxford, in 1616. For forty years he lived in Christ Church, a bachelor, a water-drinker, a voracious

reader, relatively idle and at times very discontented with his lot. His patron, Lord Berkeley, to whom he dedicated the *Anatomy*, presented him to the living of Seagrove in Leicestershire about 1630, but probably he delegated his duties. His life was spent mostly in his Oxford rooms, where he led 'a silent, sedentary, solitary private life,' striving for wisdom and content, 'penned up most part in my study,' cloistered with his books and thoughts in what he calls his Minerva's tower, or prowling round the shelves of the Bodleian and Christ Church Library. Anthony Wood in *Athenae Oxonienses* says he was 'an exact mathematician, a curious calculator of Nativities, a general read scholar, a thro'-pac'd Philologist and one who understood the surveying of lands well.' Melancholy he may have been, but Wood adds, 'I have heard some of the Ancients of Christ Church often say that his company was very merry, facete and juvenile.' Sometimes he left his studies to admire the exotic plants in the Botanic Gardens, and occasionally he would sally out because 'nothing could make him laugh but going to the bridge-foot and hearing the ribaldry of the bargemen which rarely failed to throw him into a violent fit of laughter.' But he was often sad and reflected in his book, 'even in the midst of our mirth and jollity, there is some grudging complaint, our whole life is a glucopicron, a bitter-sweet passion, honey and gall mixed together; we are all miserable and discontent, who can deny it?'

When Robert Burton died in his Oxford rooms in January, 1639/40, the time was so near that calculated in his own Nativity, that, according to Wood, there were rumours that he 'sent up his soul to heaven thro' a slip about his neck,' but there is no sound evidence that he committed suicide. He took astrology seriously and had his horoscope carved on his tomb. He was buried in Christ Church Cathedral, the chapel of a college and the cathedral church of a diocese.

#### THE BOOK.

Burton called Melancholy his mistress, and wrote his book to cure one sorrow with another, to 'make an antidote out of that which was the prime cause of my disease.' Black waves of lethargy rose around him or black showers rained misery upon him. Being a clerk in holy orders, he apologises to the physicians, who must not feel aggrieved, for, he slyly remarks, have not many of that sect taken orders? He calls himself a plain man, a loose, plain, rude writer who would call a spade a spade—which he did. But he had a proper conceit and knew well what he was doing. He had thought of composing the work in Latin, but reflected that no bookseller would have accepted it. So it was in English, though heavily weighted with classical quotation, that it first appeared in 1621 as a thick quarto, under the pseudonymous authorship of 'Democritus Junior.' Burton's own name does not appear on any title-page of the

early editions. He explains how Hippocrates found Democritus at Abdera writing a treatise on Melancholy and cutting up animals to find the seat of *atra bilis*. This work was lost, so Burton will regard himself as the successor of Democritus, take his name, and prosecute his thesis. Democritus, surveying the affairs of men, found so much to laugh at, and Burton, following him, had also to laugh at the follies and foibles of mankind, though he admits he wept with Heraclitus.

The *Anatomy of Melancholy* ran through five editions in the author's lifetime. The famous pictorial title-page did not appear until the third, and is so apt to the work that Burton must have designed it. It consists of a ring of curious engravings emblematical of the kinds of melancholy, but includes a drawing of Democritus in his garden, a portrait of Democritus Junior and representations of borage and hellebore—sovereign medicines against melancholy. This title page is described in prefatory verses. The book became larger with each edition as the author added to it, until the posthumous sixth issue of 1651 which contains the last of Burton's emendations. As such it has been handed down, after a century of neglect, to 1800, when editions again began to appear. Not until the three volume edition of 1893 (Shillito's) was any critical editing attempted. Shillito tracked down many of Burton's obscure quotations and provided references.

Burton's extraordinary book is sped on its way with appropriate verses, which first appeared in the third edition, by Democritus Junior, having the burden, repeated variously,

'All my joys besides are folly  
None so sweet as Melancholy.'

until at full circle

'All my griefs to this are jolly  
Naught so damn'd as Melancholy.'

This 'large and multitudinous' work is difficult to describe. There is an address to the reader occupying about a tenth of the book, which is then divided into three main partitions, the first devoted to the causes, symptoms and prognostics of Melancholy, the second to the cure, with a large section on medical treatment; and the third to love melancholy (with jealousy)—in many ways the most curious and entertaining part—and religious melancholy. The various parts are divided synoptically into members, sections and subsections. Burton was always exploring side-tracks and bye-ways and there are several lengthy digressions on anatomy, on air rectified (a treatise on climatology), on the nature of spirits including good and bad angels and devils, and how they cause melancholy, and on the misery of scholars. There is also at the end of the first partition concluding prognostics, an essay on suicide, than which, comments Osler, I know of none finer except that of John Donne, the great Dean of St. Paul's.

Burton begins his long introduction, Democritus to the Reader, by explaining his pseudonym, how Hippocrates had described Democritus as 'a little wearish old man,' like himself, we imply. He apologises for his shortcomings and presents his qualifications, such as his omnivorous reading and his study of medicine. He warns sufferers not to read about symptoms and prognostics lest imagination magnify their troubles, which will do more harm than good. He considers all sorts and conditions of men, their anxieties, miseries and discontents, and writes 'Thou thyself art the subject of my discourse.' He excepts nobody, 'It is mid-summer moon still, and the dog-days last all the year round; they are all mad!'

Then he imagines himself carried to a vantage point from which he can survey the whole world, which he finds fundamentally melancholy—cities and creatures. However, he looks at men and manners, has something to say about good and bad government and notices the grievances which beset the body politic. After a wealth of quotation he concludes that our country is a 'blessed rich country and one of the Fortunate Isles; and for some things to be preferred to all other countries.' Among our towns, 'only London bears the face of a city, a famous emporium, a noble mart.' He sketches a sort of Utopia of his own, an ideal state in which he sites the towns and cities, makes the laws and statutes. He would provide public schools, especially for grammar and languages, ordain public governors, fit officers to each place. He will improve the roads and encourage farming, 'have no barren acre.' His government shall be monarchical, with few laws plainly set down in the mother-tongue.

There will be hospitals for all kinds of sickness and for orphans, old people and madmen. He hopes for modest physicians, charitable lawyers and priests who love Christ. He is in favour of old-age pensions, for he sees no reason why a poor labourer, a smith or a carpenter, should be left to beg, to starve and lead a miserable life. He is also against private monopolies and is sound on defence. There is a surprising modern ring about this scheme of social reform advocated four hundred years ago.

He forgets his melancholy when riding his hobby-horses, but not for long. He promises arguments to prove that most men are mad; poets are mad, lovers are mad, men need hellebore, not tobacco. The greatest cause of melancholy is idleness, he writes. Human stupidity and folly appal him. He concludes his address to the reader comically for fear of losing him if he is too free in his talk. He is anticipating critics, but he knows he will pursue his chosen course. Really the whole world needs dosing with hellebore.

Melancholy, supposed by foreigners to be the English national malady, may be of all grades, from a fit of the blues to suicidal depression; it is the commonest of all abnormal mental conditions, and was much written about then and later, especially in the eighteenth century. Burton tries to define it when he discusses the causes of Melancholy, but he never

succeeds, though he quotes the views of several of his favourite authors, Mercurialis, who thought melancholy the result of a life of pleasure, Fuschius, Montaltus. He begins his first partition with the fall of man, then surveys diseases in general, discusses anatomy (of both body and soul), physiology, quoting in every other line, and then proceeds with the digression on Spirits, evil and otherwise, with stories of possession and something about ghosts. Now he expands on the causes of Melancholy, almost everything from witches, magicians and stars to bad diet and too much study. The miseries of scholars are set out at great length, for they are prone to melancholy, much reading diverting constantly to the head blood needed by the stomach and liver, which results in ill-health. But the causes are innumerable, passions and perturbations of mind are deadly; too much Venus or too little Venus—both very depressing; sorrow, ambition, wine and women, gambling—and curiously enough heredity, on which he quotes Fernel 'It is the greatest part of our felicity to be well-born.'

The anatomy and physiology in Burton are largely Galenic, and belong to the sixteenth century, and even in his later editions he does not mention Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood. He speaks of the four humours of the body; blood, hot, sweet and temperate; phlegm, cold moist; choler (bile), hot dry, bitter, gathered to the gall, or melancholy (black bile), cold, dry, thick, black and sour; and serum. There is also spirit, a subtle vapour, 'the instrument of the soul,' a tie between body and soul. There are three sorts of spirit, natural, vital and animal, from the liver, heart and brain.

Burton is very thorough in this section. It is almost a psychological treatise with specimen cases from all history and literature. It is rambling and over-illustrated, and like the whole book, suggests that the author just escaped being overwhelmed by his material.

He discusses special kinds of Melancholy, Head Melancholy, Hypochondriacal or Windy Melancholy and melancholy proceeding from the whole body. Next come the symptoms, multitudinous and polymorphic, affecting every system of the body. He notes the influence of imagination and the special symptoms of melancholy in women, whether maids, nuns or widows. The most grievous and common symptoms are fear and sorrow, which are present without cause in the wisest and most discreet. Suspicion follows close. He talks of fears: fear of devils, fear of illness, fear of closed rooms or of open spaces, fear of fire and water, high places, crowds—in fact lists the phobias, well-known to modern psychiatry. Fear of want and of the future may be so great, that were the sufferers not loath to spend money on a rope, they would be hanged and 'die to save charges.' The patients may weep, sigh, laugh, itch, tremble, sweat, blush, hear noises and see visions, suffer from wind, rumblings in the gut, palpitation, heaviness and aching—and much more unpleasantness.

As for prognosis : if the illness be not hereditary and taken in hand early, there is good hope of cure. 'Seldom this malady procures death, except . . . . they make away with themselves, which is a frequent thing.' They fear death, yet many of them commit suicide. 'If there be a hell upon earth, it is to be found in the melancholy man's heart.'

Burton ends this partition with his essay on suicide but concludes, 'mercy may come, betwixt the bridge and the brook, the knife and the throat.' 'Who knows how he may be tempted? It is his case, it may be thine . . . charity will judge and hope the best; God be merciful unto us all.'

In the *Anatomy* Burton quotes almost every author in classical antiquity and every medical author of note from Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, Rhazes—he tapped all the schools—down to his own time. Some of his favourite authors closer to his own time were Felix Plater of Basle (1536-1614), one of the first to attempt to classify the psychoses and whom Montaigne consulted for his lithiasis; Timothy Bright (1551-1615) who wrote on Melancholy, but who was also the father of modern shorthand, publishing in 1588 a system which gave symbols for over five hundred words; Jerome Cardan (1501-1576) of Milan, professor of medicine at Pavia, a pioneer in psychiatry, a mathematician and a gambler, who saw the possibility of teaching the blind to read, and also visited Edinburgh in 1552 to treat Archbishop Hamilton, the virtual regent, for asthma; Jean Fernel (1497-1558), professor of medicine at Paris, who broke the authority of Galen in France (there is a recent monograph on Fernel, by Sherrington); Arnoldus of Villanova (1235-1311) who was at Montpellier and produced a commentary on the *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, in which Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet and Dr. Merryman figure; Mattioli (1501-1577); Daniel Sennert (1572-1637); Conrad Gesner (1516-1565).

The second partition of Burton's book, rather less than a third of the whole, is devoted to the Cure of Melancholy and is a medical treatise. All that he could find in authors ancient and modern about the treatment of mental disorders has been assembled here, and he quotes almost every medical author of any note as well as some obscure ones. Early in this section occurs the digression on air rectified in which he displays his interest in geography, his prowess as an arm-chair traveller and his fondness for traveller's tales. After discussing climates and soils, woods and waters, sea-air and most other airs, he concludes from one of his classics, 'Many other things helped, but change of air was that which wrought the cure.' Banal? perhaps; but the gusto of Burton and his profuseness make him very delightful reading.

He considers diet, exercise, environment, occupation, amusements, sleep, and strongly recommends the doctors Diet, Quiet and Merryman. He discusses at length the remedial qualities of outdoor sports and indoor games; hunting, hawking, fishing because it is still and quiet,

swimming, dancing, music, singing and even football. Gardening is a valuable panacea and helpful. Indeed he would have agreed with Kipling—'Dont frowst by the fire . . . . but dig till you gently perspire.' He has remedies against sleeplessness and bad dreams and commends Andrew Boorde's prescription of 'a good drink of strong ale before going to bed.' He gives a shower of maxims, 'Be not idle,' 'Be contented with thy lot,' 'Look before you leap,' 'Beware of, Had I wist,' 'Hear much, speak little,' or he enjoins the patient to be comforted by contemplating other people's defects. 'Hannibal had but one eye,' 'Horace was a little blear-eyed fellow, yet sententious and wise,' 'Aesop was crooked.' And, if you have a defect, speak of it, exhibit it, before other folk can jest at it.

In the section on medicinal physick he scours the whole pharmacopoeias of his time, and even writes prescriptions, which he handles like a physician. He deals with simples, alternatives, purges of all sorts, cordials and remedies against wind, because most melancholies are flatulent. Indeed he suggests removing gas by suction with a bellows through a clyster-pipe, observing instructively, 'Nature abhors a vacuum.' He speaks of phlebotomy, but warns, 'before you let blood, deliberate of it.' Of drugs the black hellebore beloved of Paracelsus is of great virtue, to which he would add borage, an infusion in wine; *Vinum mirabile*. But he rakes the old herbals, and dandelion, bugloss, mandrake, henbane, violets, parsley, fennel, senna, broom, pennyroyal all have their uses. There are also opium and mercury. As for surgery, cautery sometimes may be beneficial and in head-melancholy, trepanning has been used. Coffee he recommends as helping digestion and promoting alacrity. As for tobacco—'divine, rare, super-excellent tobacco, which goes far beyond all the panaceas, potable gold and philosophers' stones, a sovereign remedy to all diseases . . . . but as commonly abused by most men . . . . 'tis a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health, hellish, devilish and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul!'

In the end he says deprecatingly that his few remedies may do much good if used aright, and when they do not do it singly, they may together. Polypharmacy was the order of the day, in any case. But he has this also. 'For all the physick we can use, art, excellent industry, is to no purpose without calling on God . . . . Hippocrates, an heathen, required this in a good practitioner, and so did Galen.'

#### LOVE MELANCHOLY.

The third division of the *Anatomy* deals almost entirely with Love Melancholy, but includes a section on Jealousy, a 'bastard branch' of the subject, says Burton, and 'so furious a passion' that it merits treatment apart. An essay on Religious Melancholy closes the book.

It is of course love of women that the author considers chiefly, though conscientiously he mentions other objects, and has a chapter on Charity.

It is heroic love which causes most trouble, love of the 'comeliness and beauty which proceeds from women.' It affects the livers of men. This Love Melancholy is a delicate subject. He feels that 'an old, grave, discreet man' is well-fitted to discuss it, and he names many from Plato onwards who have written about it. Though he is startled and amazed at what his reading has uncovered, yet he is fascinated. And what a story he has to tell. No such writing on love and its effect on mankind exists in literature. In this section he certainly calls a spade a spade. Sitting among his books, a half envious old celibate, he tells story after story and day-dreams on what might have been. Are some of his stories indiscreet? If so, he refers the reader to the Bible stories—always an awkward comparison for censorious critics. He states plainly what he intends to do. 'I will examine all kinds of love, his nature, beginning, differences, objects, how it is honest or dishonest, a virtue or a vice, a natural passion or a disease, his power and effects, how far it extends—I will now more copiously dilate, through all his parts and several branches, so that it may better appear what love is, and how it varies, with its objects . . . . ' Copiously dilate ' indicates his scope. He proceeds with his regular ritual and for Attic salt pours all the learning of antiquity out of the old writers. He has collected all the love stories in the world into his net, ransacked the poets for images, considered sacred and profane love—with something on the anatomy of kisses, and on allurements in general—normal and abnormal loves, aberrations; and has passed under review all the noble, mean, glittering, sordid, plain and coloured trappings and panoplies associated with the worship of Aphrodite, with such enthusiasm that Melancholy is often crowded out. Love's power, tyranny and morbid effects are assessed and Love Melancholy classed as 'a passion of the brain by reasons of corrupt imagination,' though some authorities implicate the liver, heart and blood. Climate, diet, idleness are causes, but beauty is the prime and common cause though beauty does not last; Corinna, Cynthia, Lesbia, Lycoris—'One grows fat, another too lean, modest Matilda, pretty pleasing Peg, sweet singing Susan, mincing merry Moll . . . . will quickly lose their grace.'

'But beauty vanishes; beauty passes;  
However rare . . . . rare it be.'

In the matter of hair he prefers blondes. Venus was yellow-haired, so were Helen and Dido. Cupid himself is fair. He considers anatomy in general and analyses the perfect woman in sections, more than once, and naturally quotes the pert answer of Lais, the courtesan of Corinth, to the philosophers who pondered on the attractiveness of parts. He continues, quoting, 'Head from Prague, paps out of Austria, buttocks from Switzerland, hands out of England, feet from the Rhine . . . . let her have the Spanish gait, the Venetian tire, Italian compliment and endowments.' As for the blindness of lovers to their mistresses' defects,

his talent for describing blemishes is remarkable, so cumulatively offensive and abhorrent as to provide laughter by its exuberance. Like Rabelais he recognised that no body however beautiful is without excreta. However, he adds, blemishes are hidden at night, 'and many an amorous gull is fetched over by that means.' The famous section goes on to consider paints and powders—'anoint and paint their faces to make Helen of Hecuba'—clothes, songs and dances, pictures and poetry, philtres and excitements of all kinds, all lavishly illustrated with quotation and apposite anecdote.

The symptoms of Love Melancholy are of both body and mind. Pallor, wanness, leanness, dryness, hollow eyes, anorexia; in women, 'green-sickness or cachexia . . . besides their ordinary sighs, complaints and lamentations.' Sleeplessness is common and so is variability of the pulse. Avicenna agrees with Galen on the *pulsus amatorius*, inordinate and swift, especially when the object goes by. Their minds are in a perpetual flux, *angor animi*; love rages like Etna, a fire worse than Vulcan's flames or Nero's burning Rome—for this fire devours the soul. Truly the pains of love are terrible, but the pleasures block most of the pain paths, judging from the antics of lovers. Burton quotes heavily from the poets here, Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, Chaucer, Spenser, Drayton, Jonson, Daniel, but all his observations and the sum of the experiences of others amount to this, 'there is no end of love's symptoms, 'tis a bottomless pit . . . not to be surveyed by any art or engine,' and in any case, he himself is only a novice, a contemplator only.

On prognosis he hedges, but quotes several cases of suicide for love's sake, to say nothing of murder. He quotes Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Madness may follow. The prognosis is evidently bad.

Love Melancholy can be cured, however, he writes, despite the pessimists, if it be taken in time. It may certainly be helped and by many good remedies amended. Work, diet, fasting, physic, philtres, magic. He quotes a 'magical cure' of Cardan's, to micturate through a ring, which surely holds symbolism plain to Freudian students. Certain medicines, mostly sedatives, anti-spasmodics and so-called anaphrodisiacs are suggested; the well-tried hellebore of course, purges, camphor, coriander, wild lettuce, verbena, cannabis, salix. Blood-letting from below the ears to wash out the peccant humours is commended. The section on cure is long and discursive, the main object being smothered in a further instalment of stories, anecdotes and waggish allusions. Throughout the whole of his book, Burton piles quotation on quotation with a sort of erudite sauciness. In the end he has to admit that the best cure, indeed the only rational one is to let them have their desire. Marry them and let them 'kiss and coll,'

'*Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet*'—he comes to it at last, in the famous lines of the *Pervigilium Veneris*.

Jealousy comes next and Burton writes a marvellous description of the pangs of those plagued by the green-eyed monster. It is a dangerous disease. He compares it with gout and wonders it can be cured at all. He feels little hope 'if the nails of it be not pared before they grow long.' He even recommends astrologers. Some say that precious stones, beryls, diamonds have virtues to reconcile men and women, but he does not dilate on this. In the end he is reticent, unusual for him, for he says he knows of an excellent cure, 'but I am not now disposed to tell it.' Could it have been the simple advice that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it? If you really wish to know, 'when I meet you next, I will peradventure tell you what it is in your ear.'

The *Anatomy of Melancholy* ends with a treatise on Religious Melancholy, a condition not dealt with by physicians, so Burton deals with it in his own way. He discusses Christians, Jews, Turks, Mahomedans; heretics, schismatics, schoolmen, prophets, martyrs, anchorites, with all their absurdities, extravagances, and enthusiasms, their strivings after good and their liability to despair. He recognises Religious Melancholy as a spiritual sickness, but he has a few remedies, various herbs, amulets and precious stones to drive away devils and strengthen the Christian armour. He also sensibly suggests a draught of sulphur in water of white bryony—for devils are only diseases.

#### CONCLUSION.

There is no need to say more about the unique work of this 'fantastic old great man.' Burton is for the Burtonians. He is so tremendous, so profuse, so overwhelming with his cataracts of words that in reading him one is apt to suffer as McCarthy says from impercipience; the deluge destroys the power of discrimination. But let Osler speak:

'No book in any language presents such a stage of moving pictures—kings and queens in their greatness and in their glory, in their madness and in their despair; generals and conquerors with their ambitions and activities; the princes of the church in their pride and in their shame; philosophers of all ages . . . . criminals, small and great, from the petty thief to Nero with his unspeakable atrocities; the great navigators . . . . the martyrs and virgins of all religions . . . . the beauties frail and faithful . . . . the lovers old and young . . . . a motley procession of humanity sweeps before us on his stage, a fantastic but fascinating medley at which he does not know whether to weep or to laugh.'

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