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For printing

BURTON'S ANATOMY OF  
MELANCHOLY

A PAPER BY  
SIR WILLIAM OSLER

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## BURTON'S ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY

By SIR WILLIAM OSLER

MELANCHOLY may be defined as a state of mind in which a man is so out of touch with his environment that life has lost its sweetness. Galen speaks of it as "a malady that injures the mind, associated with profound depression and aversion from the things one loves best." Burton himself nowhere defines it, but quotes definitions from Fernelius, Fuschius, and other authors. And great minds are not free from it: "nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiæ," says Aristotle; to defend the truth of which thesis Reveille-Parise has written an interesting monograph. Unfortunately from birth melancholy marks some for her own: those unhappy souls who at every stage smell the mould above the rose, and sing, with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "With toilsome steps I pass thro life's dull road." From the transitory form, the "blues" or low spirits, "no man living," as our author says, "is free, no stoic known so wise, none so happy, none so patient, so generous, so godly, so divine that can vindicate himself; so well composed but more or less sometime or other he feels the smart of it." Life is a mixed "glukupieric passion." Into this infernal gulf we must all wade; happy those who do not get beyond the shallows; but when the habit becomes "a settled humor, a chronic or continue disease," the unfortunate victim cries aloud with the Psalmist, "All thy waves and storms have gone over me."

Of the "eighty-eight varieties" said to exist, Burton will treat only the severer, inveterate, fixed forms, not the passing melancholy which is more or less a character of mortality. Naturally a malady of such universal prevalence

has a literature of corresponding importance. A glance through the titles of the Index Catalogue of the Surgeon's General Library gives one some idea of its extent in medicine: books, monographs, journal articles by the score have been written on the subject. There is scarcely an ancient author of note who has not dealt with some aspect of it. But among them all one only has the touchstone of time declared to be of enduring, of supreme, merit; the centuries have made Burton's book a permanent possession of literature. Though called by the author a *cento*, a patchwork, this is by no means a correct designation. "The Anatomy of Melancholy" is a great medical treatise, orderly in arrangement, serious in purpose, and weighty beyond belief with authorities. Scores of works written by seventeenth-century worthies more learned than Burton, have long since sunk in the ooze. Neither system, nor matter, nor form, has sufficed to float them to our day. Nor would "The Anatomy" have reached a second edition if its vitality had depended upon the professional picture; but in it a subject of universal interest is enriched with deep human sympathy; and with its roots in this soil Burton's book still lives.

The main facts of Robert Burton's life are in the book. He was born at Lindley in Leicestershire of a family of which he was justly proud and to the members of which he not infrequently refers in his book. At the end of the "Digression of Air Rectified," mentioning pleasant high places in England, he speaks of Oldbury "in the confines of Warwickshire, where I have often looked about me with great delight, at the foot of which hill I was born." Possibly it was from his mother that he got his love for the study of medicine. He states that she had "excellent skill in chirurgery, sore eyes, aches, etc., and such experimental medicines, as all the country where she dwelt can witness, to have done many famous and good cures upon diverse poor folks that were otherwise destitute of help." He seems

delighted to have found that one of her cures for ague, an amulet of a spider in a nutshell lapped in silk, was mentioned by Dioscorides and approved by Matthiolus. After attending school at Nuneaton and Sutton Coldfield in Warwickshire, he followed his brother William, in 1593, to Brasenose College, Oxford, as a commoner. In 1599 he was elected a Student of Christ Church, which he calls the most flourishing college of Europe, and where he lived, as he says, "a silent, sedentary, solitary, private life," trying to learn wisdom, "penned up most part in my study." He never travelled, but he took a great delight in the study of cosmography; and for his recreation he would wander round about the world in map or card. He had neither wife nor children, good or bad, to provide for; he was neither rich nor poor; he had little and wanted nothing. All his treasure was in Minerva's tower. He was all his life *aquae potor*. He was a mere spectator of others' fortunes and adventures, and so he rubbed on through his forty-seven years of college life, "*privus privatus*; as I have still lived, so I now continue, *statu quo prius*, left to a solitary life, and mine own domestic discontents; saving that sometimes, *ne quid mentiar*, as Diogenes went into the city, and Democritus to the haven, to see fashions, I did for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and could not choose but make some little observation, *non tam sagax observator, ac simplex recitator*, not as they did to scoff or laugh at all, but with a mixed passion."

After his appointment at Christ Church, Burton took orders and did the ordinary work of a college tutor. He was also Vicar of St. Thomas in the West and Rector of Segrave in Leicestershire. "He was an exact mathematician," says Wood, "a curious calculator of nativities, a general-read scholar, a thorough-paced philologist, and one that understood the surveying of lands well. As he was by many accounted a severe student, a devourer of authors, a melancholy and humorous person; so by others, who knew

him well, a person of great honesty, plain dealing, and charity. I have heard some of the ancients of Christ Church often say, that his company was very merry, faceté, and juvenile; and no man in his time did surpass him for his ready and dexterous interlarding his common discourses among them with verses from the poets, or sentences from classic authors; which being then all the fashion in the University, made his company the more acceptable."

Burton's stay at Christ Church came under the deanship of Dr. Fell, whom he remembers in his will. That he took an active share in the college life is evidenced by the fact that he wrote many occasional verses and a Latin comedy called "Philosophaster," which was acted on Shrove Monday, February 16, 1617-18. We may infer from his will that he was an intimate friend of Dean Fell and his family; and he remembers a number of his friends, so that, though an old bachelor, he was well looked after and doubtless much beloved in the community. His will indicates also that he was on the best of terms with his family, to whom he left the greater part of his considerable estate. When the melancholy fits increased, "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." He died on the twenty-fifth of January, 1639-40, very near the time which he had some years before foretold from the calculation of his nativity; and Wood remarks that "being exact, several of the students did not forbear to whisper among themselves, that rather than there should be a mistake in the calculation, he sent up his soul to heaven through a noose about his neck." He was buried in the north aisle of Christ Church Cathedral; and there is a handsome monument with his bust, painted to the life, and the calculation of his nativity.

For the writing of the book we have Burton's full reasons. To escape melancholy he wrote upon it, to ease his mind, for he had *gravidum cor, fœdum caput*, a kind of impos-

thume in his head, of which he was desirous to be unladen, and he could imagine no fitter evacuation. He calls melancholy his mistress, his Egeria; and he would comfort "one sorrow with another, idleness with idleness, *ut ex Vipera Theriacum*, make an antidote out of that which was the prime cause of my disease." Many notable authors, he says, have done the same—Tully and Cardan, for example; and he can speak from experience, and could help others out of a fellow feeling. Though oppressed with a vast chaos and confusion of books, so that his eyes ache with reading and his fingers with turning, and though many excellent physicians have written elaborate treatises on this subject, he will venture to weave the same web and twist the same rope again. He has laboriously collected this *cento* out of divers writers and that *sine injuria*. He can say with Macrobius, "*Omne meum, nihil meum*, 'tis all mine and none mine." At any rate, like an honest man he cites and quotes his authors; but if, as Synesius says, "it is a greater offense to steal dead men's labors than their clothes," what shall become of most authors? He must plead guilty and hold up his hand at the bar with the rest. Still, the method and composition is his own and he hopes <sup>it</sup> shows a scholar. He realizes that this is a medical subject and that great exception may be taken that he, a divine, has meddled with physic. The apology must be given in his own words:

There be many other subjects, I do easily grant, both in humanity and divinity, fit to be treated of, of which had I written *ad ostentationem* only, to show myself, I should have rather chosen, and in which I have been more conversant, I could have more willingly luxuriated, and better satisfied myself and others; but that at this time I was fatally driven upon this rock of melancholy, and carried away by this by-stream, which, as a rillet, is deducted from the main channel of my studies, in which I have pleased and busied myself at idle hours, as a subject most necessary and commodious. Not that I prefer it before divinity, which I do acknowledge to be the queen of professions, and to which all the rest are as handmaids, but that in divinity I saw no such great need. For had I written positively, there be so many books in that

kind, so many commentators, treatises, pamphlets, expositions, sermons, that whole teams of oxen cannot draw them; and had I been as forward and ambitious as some others, I might have haply printed a sermon at Paul's Cross, a sermon in St. Mary's Oxon, a sermon in Christ Church, or a sermon before the right honorable, right reverend, a sermon before the right worshipful, a sermon in Latin, in English, a sermon with a name, a sermon without, a sermon, a sermon, etc. But I have been ever as desirous to suppress my labors in this kind, as others have been to press and publish theirs.

And the physicians, he says, must not feel aggrieved. Have not many of their sect taken orders—Marcellus Ficinus and T. Linaere, for example? And as this melancholy is "a common infirmity of body and soul," "a compound mixed malady," in which a divine can do little alone and a physician much less, he hopes it is not unbecoming in one who is by profession a divine, and by inclination a physician, and who was fortunate enough to have Jupiter in his sixth house, to write on the subject. But if the good reader be not satisfied and complains that the discourse is too medicinal or savors too much of humanity, he promises to make amends in some treatise of divinity. All the same, he hopes it may suffice when his reasons and motives are considered—"the generality of the disease, the necessity of the cure, and the commodity or common good that will arise to all men by the knowledge of it."

In explaining the adoption of the pseudonym, "Democritus Junior," Burton says that he laughed and scoffed with Lucian and again he wept with Heraclitus; and he tells of the visit of Hippocrates to Abdera, where he found Democritus sitting under a shady bower, with a book on his knees, the subject of which was melancholy, and about him lay the carcasses of many beasts newly cut up in order to find the seat of the *atra bilis*, or melancholy, and how it was engendered. As this book is lost, our author undertakes to revive it again, prosecute and finish it in this treatise. Burton's name does not occur in the title-page of any of the

seventeenth-century editions; but at the end of the post-script, which is only in the first edition, is the name, Robert Burton, "from my Studie in Christ Church, Oxon, Dec. 5th, 1620." His anonymity has been respected in all subsequent editions until the one issued in 1895. The work was dedicated to George, Lord Berkeley, who had presented him with the living of Segrave. It is not surprising that the book at once had a great success: "The first, second, and third editions were suddenly gone, eagerly read," as Burton says in one place, when discussing the peevishness of men's judgments and the diversity of tastes in readers—"*Pro captu lectoris habent sua fata libelli.*" A lucky fate has followed "The Anatomy," which has held its readers for well-nigh three centuries.

The frontispiece is one of the most Burtonian features of the work. In the absence of information as to its origin, we may well suppose that the author himself prepared the design which was carried out by the well-known engraver of the time, Charles Le Blond. The upper centre figure represents Democritus of Abdera as Hippocrates found him sitting in a garden in the suburbs with a book on his lap. Borage is growing in the garden, and on the wall there are pictures of animals—the cats and dogs of which he has made anatomy. The sign of Saturn is in the sky. To the left is a landscape of jealousy, and there are two fighting cocks (evidently bantams), a swan, a heron, and a kingfisher; and the verses state that there are two roaring bulls to be seen, but they are not visible in any of my folios. For the frontispiece of Tegg's edition, the engraver has taken liberties, as he has left out the fighting cocks and put in the tail, at any rate, of one of the bulls. A bird and a bat and a section of the moon appear in the sky. The third section at the top represents solitariness—animals alone in the desert with bats and owls hovering over them. In the next section is Inamorato inditing a ditty:



His lute and books about him lie,  
 As symptoms of his vanity.  
 If this do not enough disclose,  
 To paint him, take thyself by th' nose.

Opposite is the Hypochondriac:

About him pots and glasses lie,  
 Newly brought from's apothecary.  
 This Saturn's aspects signify,  
 You see them portray'd in the sky.

The next section represents the superstitious man, and opposite him is the madman naked in chains—a ghastly sight. Then below at the lower corners are borage and hellebore, which were “the sovereign plants to purge the veins of melancholy” and, if well assayed, the best medicine that God ere made for this malady. And lastly, a portrait of the author, which the verses tell us shows the habit which he wore and his image as he appeared to the world, though his mind would have to be guessed by his writings. It was neither pride nor vainglory made him put his picture here, but “the printer would needs have it so.”

With appropriate verses, Democritus Junior sends his book into the open day, hoping its pleasant vein may save those who con its lore in city—or country—from twitches of care. Surely Catos will not love it, and leudful matrons will cry “pish!” and frown and yet read on. For dainty damsels, whom he confesses to love dear as life, he would spread his best stories. The melancholy wight or pensive lover will in its pages find himself in clover and gain both sense and laughter. The learned leech may find here no trifling prize, but to the crafty lawyer he cries “caitiff, avaunt!” Of his faults he asks the ripe scholar to be oblivious, but not refuse praise to his merit, in lines which have the ring of Matt Prior. Flippant spouter and empty prater will search his pages for polished words and verse; and the doggerel poet, his brother, is welcome to the jests and stories. He

staid

Latin phrase

will fly from and not reply to sour critics and Scotch reviewers. To the friendly though severe censor who complains of his free and even smutty vein, he pleads with Catullus that his life is pure beyond the breath of scandal, and in any case he is ever willing to be improved by censure.

To use his own expression, Burton was a minion of the Muses. I have already mentioned that his play, "Philosophaster," was acted at Christ Church, and that there are a number of his occasional verses in the college collections of the period. In the third edition of "The Anatomy," 1628, appeared the well-known poem on melancholy, the author's address to his book, with its description of the frontispiece. The poem presents all the shifting phases of his sweet and bitter passion in alternate verses of praise and condemnation. Let me quote the first and the last of the twelve stanzas. The first runs:

When I go musing all alone,  
Thinking of divers things fore-knownn,  
When I build castles in the air,  
Void of sorrow and void of fear,  
Pleasing myself with phantasms sweet,  
Methinks the time runs very fleet.  
All my joys to this are folly,  
Naught so sweet as Melancholy.

And then the other picture:

I'll change my state with any wretch,  
Thou canst from gaol or dunhill fetch;  
My pain's past cure, another hell,  
I may not in this torment dwell!  
Now desperate I hate my life,  
Lend me a halter or a knife.  
All my griefs to this are jolly,  
Naught so damn'd as Melancholy.

Warton remarked upon the similarity of idea in the contrast between these two dispositions in Milton's famous poems,

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"—the "Hence loathed Melancholy" in the one, and the "Hail! thou Goddess sage and holy, Hail! divinest Melancholy," in the other; and the antithesis maintained throughout the two poems may possibly have been suggested to Milton by the lines of Burton.

Few writers show such familiarity as Burton with poetry ancient and modern; and his books at Christ Church and the Bodleian testify to his fondness for literature of this class. There are those who hold that Francis Bacon not only wrote Shakespeare's plays and Spenser's "Faerie Queene," but also Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy." With the bilateral cipher, the whole story of Queen Elizabeth, Essex, and Bacon may be found in the pages of Democritus Junior! Is it not just as reasonable to suppose, as the late Mr. Parker of Oxford suggested, that Burton himself wrote the plays of Shakespeare? Does he not quote him several times, and are there not fine original editions of "Venus and Adonis" and "The Rape of Lucrece" among his books in the Bodleian?

## II

"The Anatomy of Melancholy" consists of a long introduction, the subject-matter on melancholy, and three long digressions. The introduction occupies about one-fourth of the book. Burton states that he has had to do the whole business himself, that the book was composed out of a confused company of notes, that he had not time to lick it into shape as a bear does her whelps, and it was writ with as small deliberation as he ordinarily spoke, without any affectation of big words. He is a loose student, he says, a rude writer, and as free as loose. He calls a spade a spade, and his wit lacks the stimulus of wine, as he was a water-drinker. He warns those who are melancholy not to read the symp-

toms or prognosis, lest they should appropriate the things there spoken to their person and get more harm than good.

Then he is transported in imagination with Cyprian and Jerome to some place where he can view the whole world. He finds that "kingdoms and provinces are melancholy, cities and families, all creatures, vegetables, sensible and rational; that all sorts, sexes, ages, conditions, are out of tune." He promises to bring arguments to show that most men are mad and have more need of a pilgrimage to the Anticyrae than to Loretto, more need of hellebore than of tobacco. And this he proceeds to prove abundantly from the Scriptures and from the writers of all time. Incidentally he gives the interesting story, probably apocryphal, of the visit of Hippocrates to Democritus. If the sage of Abdera could return and see the religious follies, the bloody wars, the injustice, the oppression, he would think us as mad as his fellow-townsmen. Page after page he piles up with illustrations of human folly, and asks every now and then how would Democritus have been confounded. Would he think you or any man else well in their wits? Can all the hellebore in the Anticyrae cure these men—no, sure—an acre of hellebore alone could do it!

Burton was a warm advocate for home industries, a tariff reformer, and would not allow England to be made a dumping ground for foreign manufactures. The paragraph is worth quoting: "We send our best commodities beyond the seas, which they make good use of to their necessities, set themselves a work about, and severally improve, sending the same to us back at dear rates, or else make toys and baubles of the tails of them, which they sell to us again, at as great a reckoning as the whole." He is full of sensible suggestions about the improvements of roads, and the drainage of bad lands, and the neglect of the navigable rivers. Following the example of Plato and of More, he sketches his own Utopia, a new Atlantis, a poetical commonwealth. As his predecessor, Democritus, was a politician and

recorder of Abdera, why should not he presume to do as much? Then follows a delightful sketch, based in part upon More's "Utopia" and full of common-sense, practical suggestions. He is a strong advocate for old age pensions. Why should a smith, a carpenter, a husbandman, who has spent his time in continual labor and without whom we cannot live—why should he be left in his old age to beg or starve and lead a miserable life? The introduction ends with a serio-comical address to the reader, saying if he is denied this liberty of speech he will take it; he owes him nothing, he looks for no favor at his hand, he is independent, and may say anything he wishes in the guise of Democritus. Then of a sudden he comes to himself: "No, I recant, I will not, I care, I fear, I confess my fault, acknowledge a great offense"; and he promises a more sober discourse in the future. In a later edition a small section of a few lines follows the introduction, in which Burton again admonishes the reader at leisure, not to asperse, calumniate, or slander Democritus Junior; and this is followed by ten lines of blank verse, in which he concludes that a thousand Heraclituses and a thousand Democrituses are needed, and that all the world must be sent to Anticyra to graze on hellebore.

The treatise itself is divided into three main partitions, and each of these into sections, members, and subsections. A synopsis precedes each partition, bristling with the brackets which learned writers in his time loved to use. There are many books written entirely in this synoptical way, and Burton had many models in his own library. This is a feature of the book which at once attracts attention and is, I believe, unique among books reprinted at the present day. It is impossible to give more than the briefest sketch of the way in which Burton deals with the subject; but the first partition is taken up almost entirely with the causes, symptoms, and prognostics of melancholy. The second partition deals with the cure, and the third with love melancholy and religious melancholy. Three important digressions

occur on anatomy, on air rectified, and on the nature of the spirits.

The anatomy and physiology are those of the early part of the seventeenth century before the great discovery by Harvey; and it is remarkable that in the fourth or fifth edition he did not refer to the circulation of the blood. The four humors of the body—blood, phlegm, bile, and serum—play an important part, particularly the black bile which was supposed to cause melancholy. The natural, vital, and animal spirits of the old writers are everywhere evident. The subject is treated in a most systematic manner, and nothing could be more irrational than the criticism of Hallam that the volumes are apparently “a great sweeping of miscellaneous literature from the Bodleian library.” As it is very difficult to make a proper division of melancholy, Burton first deals with the subject in a general manner and then proceeds to speak of the particular species—head melancholy, hypochondriacal melancholy, and melancholy from the whole body. The third partition, as was said, is devoted entirely to the subjects of love and religious melancholy. The causes are discussed at great length and under fifteen subsections, ranging from bad diet to over-much study. This part of the work is really a psychological treatise with illustrations from history and literature. A most attractive section is on the love of learning as a cause, with a digression on the misery of scholars. For two main reasons students are more subject than others to this malady—the sedentary, solitary life in which health is neglected, and continuous meditation in the head, which leaves the stomach and liver destitute.

About one-fourth of the work—the second partition—is taken up with the cure of melancholy. This is a strictly medical treatise in which the author has collected all the known information about the treatment of mental disorders; the entire pharmacopœia is brought in, and Burton writes prescriptions like a physician. There is scarcely a medical

author of note who is not quoted. It is in this section that there occurs the delightful digression on air rectified, the first English tractate on climatology. Burton here shows that he was a great student of geography and revelled in traveller's tales. He starts off in a most characteristic way: "As a long-winged hawk, when he is first whistled off the fist, mounts aloft, and for his pleasure fetcheth many a circuit in the air, still soaring higher and higher till he be come to his full pitch, and in the end, when the game is sprung, comes down amain, and stoops upon a sudden: so will I, having now come at last into these ample fields of air, wherein I may freely expatiate and exercise myself for my recreation, a while rove, wander round about the world, mount aloft to those ethereal orbs and celestial spheres, and so descend to my former elements again. In which progress I will first see whether that relation of the friar of Oxford be true, concerning those northern parts under the Pole (if I meet *obiter* with the wandering Jew, Elias Artifex, or Lucian's Icaromenippus, they shall be my guides), whether there be such four Euripuses, and a great rock of loadstones, which may cause the needle in the compass still to bend that way, and what should be the true cause of the variation of the compass. Is it a magnetical rock, or the pole-star, as Cardan will?"

One would scarcely have expected from a student of Christ Church, much less from an old bachelor and a divine, the most elaborate treatise on love that has ever been written. It is not surprising that Burton apologizes that many will think the subject too light for a divine and too comical, a subject fit only for a wanton poet or some idle person; but he declares that an old, grave, discreet man is fittest to discuss of love matters, that he has had more experience, has a more staid judgment, and can give better cautions and more solid precepts. He says: "I will examine all the kinds of love, his nature, beginning, difference, objects, how it is honest or dishonest, a virtue or vice, a natural passion or a disease, his

power and effects, how far it extends: of which, although something has been said in the first partition, in those sections of perturbations (for love and hatred are the first and most common passions, from which all the rest arise, and are attendant, as Piccolomineus holds, or as Nich. Causinus, the *primum mobile* of all other affections, which carry them all about them), I will now more copiously dilate, through all his parts and several branches, that so it may better appear what love is, and how it varies with the objects, how in defect, or (which is most ordinary and common) immoderate, and in excess, causeth melancholy." And he keeps his promise.

There is no such collection of stories of love and its effect in all literature; no such tribute to the power of beauty; no such picture of the artificial allurements; no such representations of its power of debasement. And what a section on jealousy!—its causes, its symptoms, and its cure. One could almost write the history of every noted woman from his pages:

All the golden  
Names of olden  
Women yet by men's love cherished.

Burton says that after the harsh and unpleasant discourse of melancholy which had molested the patience of the reader and tired the author, he will ask leave to recreate himself in this kind, and promises to tell such pretty stories that foul befall him that is not well pleased with them. Nor does he propose to mince matters: "He will call a spade a spade, and will sound all the depths of this inordinate love of ours, which nothing can withstand or stave off." All the love stories, pure and impure, of literature are here. Jacob and Rachel, Sicheu and Dinah, Judah and Tamar, Samson and Delilah, David and Bathsheba, Am<sup>on</sup> and Thamar; the stories of Esther, Judith, and Susannah; the loves of the gods—the fopperies of Mars and Venus, of Neptune and Amymone; Jupiter and his amorous escapades. Modest



Matilda, Pretty Playful Pegg, Sweet Singing Susan, Mincing Merry Moll, Dainty Dancing Doll, Neat Nancy, Jolly Joan, Nimble Nell, Kissing Kate, Bouncing Bess with black eyes, Fair Phyllis with fine white hands,—all flit across Burton's pages as he depicts the vagaries of the great passion, not a single aspect of which is omitted.

Religious melancholy is a form which Burton made peculiarly his own. Many writers had dealt with other aspects of the subject, but he very rightly says of religious melancholy: "I have no pattern to follow, . . . no man to imitate. No physician hath yet distinctly written of it, as of the other." Then he deals with the varied effects of religion in a remarkable way. He says: "Give me but a little leave, and I will set before your eyes in brief a stupendous, vast, infinite ocean of incredible madness and folly: a sea full of shelves and rocks, sands, gulfs, Euripuses and contrary tides, full of fearful monsters, uncouth shapes, roaring waves, tempests, and Siren calms, halcyonian seas, unspeakable misery, such comedies and tragedies, such absurd and ridiculous, feral and lamentable fits, that I know not whether they are more to be pitied or derided, or may be believed, but that we daily see the same still practised in our days, fresh examples, *nova novitia*, fresh objects of misery and madness, in this kind, that are still represented unto us, abroad, at home, in the midst of us, in our bosoms." Heretics, old and new, schismatics, schoolmen, prophets, enthusiasts, martyrs, are all discussed with their several vagaries. This section concludes with the address to those who are in a state of religious despair, written at the instigation of his brother.

### III

Though it smells of the lamp, "The Anatomy" has a peculiar fragrance of its own, blended with that aroma so dear to the student of old times which suggests the alcoves in Duke Humphrey or the benches at Merton Library.

Burton himself acknowledges that he is largely the purveyor of other men's wits; but, as he says, he has wronged no author and given every man his own. He is certainly the greatest borrower in literature. Others perhaps have borrowed nearly as freely, but have concealed it. He has not the art of Ben Jonson, in whose "Discoveries" whole sentences from authors are woven together with such great skill that it is only lately that both thoughts and form have been assigned to their lawful owners. A careless reader might suppose that certain sections represented what Lowell called

A mire ankle deep of deliberate confusion  
Made up of old jumbles of classic allusion,—

but one has not to go far before seeing a method in this apparent confusion; and the quotations are marshalled in telling order. Page after page of "The Anatomy" is made up of what Milton would call "horse loads of citation," the opinions of authors in their own words, Burton acting as a conjunction. Take, for example, a page which I opened at random—page 300 of Tegg's edition. There are twenty-one references covering the whole range of ancient and modern learning. The Bible, the fathers of the church, particularly St. Augustine; the fathers of medicine, Hippocrates, Galen, the Alexandrians, the Arabians, and every fifteenth-century medical writer of note; Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, the poets of all ages, the travellers in all climes, the mystical writers, the encyclopedists—all are laid under contribution in this vast emporium. Well indeed could he say—"non meus hic sermo—'tis not my speech." What has become of his commonplace books? He says that the quotations are often made at random, but he must have kept some references. In no copies of the early editions can I find marginal notes, and there are very few of his books at Christ Church and in the Bodleian. *in*

His own style is often delightful, and one cannot but

regret that we have not more of Burton and less of Bodley. An apology which he makes gives a good idea of his vigor: "And for those other faults of barbarism, Doric dialect, extemporanean style, tautologies, apish imitation, a rhapsody of rags gathered together from several dung-hills, excrements of authors, toys and fopperies confusedly tumbled out, without art, invention, judgment, wit, learning, harsh, raw, rude, fantastical, absurd, insolent, indiscreet, ill-composed, indigested, vain, scurrile, idle, dull, and dry; I confess all ('tis partly affected), thou canst not think worse of me than I do of myself. 'Tis not worth the reading, I yield it, I desire thee not to lose time in perusing so vain a subject, I should be peradventure loath myself to read him or thee so writing." In another place he says that he is studying entirely to inform his reader's understanding, not to please his ear: "So that as a river runs, sometimes precipitate and swift, then dull and slow; now direct, then *per ambages*; now deep, then shallow; now muddy, then clear; now broad, then narrow; doth my style flow: now serious, then light; now comical, then satirical; now more elaborate, then remiss, as the present subject required, or as at that time I was affected. And if thou vouchsafe to read this treatise, it shall seem no otherwise to thee, than the way to an ordinary traveller, sometimes fair, sometimes foul, here cl ampaign, there enclosed; barren in one place, better soil in another: by woods, groves, hills, dales, plains, etc."

The result is that Burton often tells a story in a charming fashion. I do not know that there is anything much better in literature than the following tale of the poor scholar who would become a prebendary, a cathedral official with a good stipend:

In *Moroniam Pia*, or *Moroniam Felix*, I know not whither, nor how long since, nor in what Cathedral Church, a fat prebend fell void. The carcass scarce cold, many suitors were up in an instant. The first had rich friends, a good purse, and he was resolved to outbid any man before he would lose it, every man supposed he should carry it. The second was my Lord Bishop's chaplain (in whose gift it was) and he

thought it his due to have it. The third was nobly born, and he meant to get it by his great parents, patrons, and allies. The fourth stood upon his worth, he had newly found out strange mysteries in chemistry, and other rare inventions, which he would detect to the public good. The fifth was a painful preacher, and he was commended by the whole parish where he dwelt, he had all their hands to his certificate. The sixth was the prebendary's son lately deceased, his father died in debt (for it, as they say), left a wife and many poor children. The seventh stood upon fair promises, which to him and his noble friends had been formerly made for the next place in his lordship's gift. The eighth pretended great losses, and what he had suffered for the Church, what pains he had taken at home and abroad, and besides, he brought noblemen's letters. The ninth had married a kinswoman, and he sent his wife to sue for him. The tenth was a foreign doctor, a late convert, and wanted means. The eleventh would exchange for another, he did not like the former's site, could not agree with his neighbors and fellows upon any terms, he would be gone. The twelfth and last was (a suitor in conceit) a right honest, civil, sober, man, an excellent scholar, and such a one as lived private in the university, but he had neither means nor money to compass it; besides, he hated all such courses, he could not speak for himself, neither had he any friends to solicit his cause, and therefore made no suit, could not expect, neither did he hope for, or look after it. The good Bishop, amongst a jury of competitors thus perplexed, and not yet resolved what to do, or on whom to bestow it, at the last, of his own accord, mere motion, and bountiful nature, gave it freely to the university student, altogether unknown to him by fame; and, to be brief, the academical scholar had the prebend sent him for a present. The news was no sooner published abroad but all good students rejoiced, and were much cheered up with it, though some would not believe it; others, as men amazed, said it was a miracle; but one amongst the rest thanked God for it, and said, *Nunc juvat tandem studiosum esse, et Deo integro corde servire*—At last there is some advantage in being studious, and in serving God with integrity! You have heard my tale, but alas! it is but a tale, a mere fiction, 'twas never so, never like to be, and so let it rest.

No book of 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 their activities; the princes of the church in their pride and in their shame; philosophers of all ages, now rejoicing in the power of intellect,

and again grovelling before the idols of the tribe; the heroes of the race who have fought the battle of the oppressed in all lands; criminals, small and great, from the petty thief to Nero with his unspeakable atrocities; the great navigators and explorers with whom Burton travelled so much in map and card, and whose stories were his delight; the martyrs and the virgins of all religions, the deluded and fanatics of all theologies; the possessed of devils and the possessed of God; the beauties, frail and faithful, the Lucretias and the Helens, all are there. The lovers, old and young; the fools who were accounted wise, and the wise who were really fools; the madmen of all history, to anatomize whom is the special object of the book; the world itself, against which he brings a railing accusation—the motley procession of humanity sweeps before us on his stage, a fantastic but fascinated medley at which he does not know whether to weep or to laugh.

Which age of the world has been most subject to this feral passion, so graphically portrayed by Burton, is a question to be asked but not easily answered. I believe that the improved conditions of modern life have added enormously to the world's cheerfulness. Few now sigh for love, fewer still for money; and it is no longer fashionable to air our sorrows in public. In spite of this, the worries and stress of business, the pangs of misprized love, the anguish of religious despair, make an increasing number of unhappy ones choose death rather than a bitter life. With the exception of a monograph\* by the great Dean of St. Paul's, I know of no more interesting discussion on suicide than that with which the first part of the book closes. Only one who had himself made the descent into the hell could have written the tender passage with which the section closes: "Thus of their goods and bodies we can dispose; but what shall become of their souls, God alone can tell; his mercy may come *inter pontem et fontem, inter gladium et jugulum*, betwixt the bridge and the brook, the knife and the throat.

*Quod cuiquam contigit, cuivis potest.* Who knows how he may be tempted? It is his case, it may be thine. *Quæ sua sors hodie est, cras fore vestra potest.* We ought not to be so rash and rigorous in our censures, as some are; charity will judge and hope the best: God be merciful unto us all."

The greatest gift that nature or grace can bestow upon a man is the *æquus animus*, the even-balanced soul; but unfortunately nature rather than grace, disposition rather than education, determines its existence. I cannot agree with William King, the last of the Oxford Jacobean, in his assertion that it is not to be acquired. On the contrary, I maintain that much may be done to cultivate a cheerful heart, but we must begin young if we are to have the Grecian rather than the Hebrew outlook on life.

A recognition of the possible depths of this affection should make us bear with a light heart those transient and unavoidable disappointments in life which we are rather apt to nurse than to shake off with a smile. With the prayer of Themistocles for forgetfulness on our lips, let us bury the worries of yesterday in the work of to-day. Some little tincture of Saturn may be allowed in our hearts, but never in our faces. Sorrow and sadness must come to each one—it is our lot:

We look before and after  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

We can best oppose any tendency to melancholy by an active life of unselfish devotion to others; and with the advice with which Burton ends the book, I will close:

Sperate miseri;  
Cavete felices.  
If unhappy, have hope;  
If happy, be cautious.