

The Title of Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy"

Author(s): Edward Bensly

Source: *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jan., 1909), pp. 233-234

Published by: [Modern Humanities Research Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3713065>

Accessed: 25/06/2014 00:26

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at  
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Modern Humanities Research Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Modern Language Review*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

of Ireland, and he was away campaigning at the time of the Kenilworth festivities. He had some reputation, not only as a general, but as a man of letters; he was said to be particularly interested in the study of history, and there are extant certain poems which are ascribed to him. His house, Chartley Castle, was the next great estate Elizabeth visited on this progress. There she was entertained by Lettice, Countess of Essex, who had been present at Kenilworth, and who, according to the received interpretation of the passage in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, was the 'little western flower,' upon whom 'the bolt of Cupid fell.' It is certain that Leicester's attentions to her had by this time already begun to excite remark, and that he was secretly married to her within two years of her husband's death.

Mr Dover Wilson has suggested that in the prologue to *Pyramus and Thisbe* Shakspeare was parodying Gascoigne's prologue to *The Glasse of Governement*. It is in the same measure (? Bottom's 'eight and eight'), with the same arrangement of alternate rhymes ending with a couplet; and there is possibly an intentional echo of Gascoigne's unhappy phrases:

What man hath minde to heare a worthie Jest,  
Or seekes to feede his eye with vayne delight:  
That man is much unmeete to be a guest,  
At such a feaste as I prepare this night.

This disavowal of the intent to please might be ludicrously recalled by Quince's 'If we offend, it is with our good will'; and Shakspeare's later lines:

We do not come, as minding to content you,  
Our true intent is,

reproduced the very words of Gascoigne's prologue

Content you then (my Lordes) with good intent,

though the resemblance may be merely accidental.

JOHN W. CUNLIFFE.

MADISON, WIS. U.S.A.

#### THE TITLE OF BURTON'S 'ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY.'

Robert Burton in the first part of the title-page of his *Anatomy* (or *Melancholy*, as it should rather be called<sup>1</sup>) might seem to be indebted to a passage in Salustius Salvianus' *Variarum Lectionum de re medica*

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Appendix to Burton's Will, where he leaves 'half my Melancholy Copy' to be disposed of by his executors.

*libri tres*, lib. ii, cap. 1 ('De Melancholia & Mania morbo, & eius curatione'), p. 95, Rome, 1588 (the edition which Burton apparently used): 'Quinque a nobis veniunt considerata de Melancholia, & Mania, primo quid sit, secundo quatenam sint causae huius affectionis, tertio signa, quarto prognosticum, quinto, & ultimo curationem' [sic]. Compare 'The Anatomy of Melancholy: What it is. With all the Kindes, Causes, Symptomes, Prognosticks, and Severall Cures of it' (Second edition<sup>1</sup>, 1624). Burton frequently quotes from Salustius Salvanus.

But the division here employed was not uncommon. See Partition 1, sect. 1, memb. 1, subs. 3, 'which [sc. the diseases of the mind] I will briefly touch and point out, insisting especially in this of *Melancholy*, as more eminent then the rest, and that through all his Kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, cures: As *Lonicerus* hath done *de Apoplexiâ*, and many others, of many such particular diseases.'

In any case this division, like so much else in Burton's book, is no quaintness or peculiarity of the author, but something natural to anyone writing a serious and practical treatise on the subject.

EDWARD BENSLEY.

ABERYSTWYTH.

#### CHAUCER'S CAPTIVITY.

It will be remembered that Chaucer was taken prisoner in the French Campaign of 1359-60, and that he himself testifies, in the Scrope-Grosvenor case, that before his captivity he saw Sir Richard Scrope 'before the town of *Retters*.' This Sir Harris Nicolas would have identified with Retiers in Brittany; but modern editors had far more probably conjectured *Réthel* in the Ardennes. This conjecture is proved beyond doubt by a passage in Sir Thomas Gray's *Scalacronica*, which I here subjoin:

Le prince [de Galles] tient soun auant dit chemin par Seint Quyntrin & par Retieris, ou ly enemys meismes arderoint lour vile pur destourber lour passage, les gentz de qi conquistrent passage au chastel Purcien, ou passa par Champain, aprocha lost soun pier adeuant de Reyns. (*Scalacronica*, ed. Stevenson. Maitland Club, 1836, p. 188.)

Gray's information about Edward III's campaigns is unusually detailed and trustworthy; and from this passage it plainly appears (i) that *Retieris* = Réthel; for Château-Porcien is a large village in the *arrondissement* of Réthel, and (ii) that Chaucer was in the Black

<sup>1</sup> I quote from this edition as the first is not at hand.