

'purchased an estate (g).' There are but very few particulars recorded of this ingenious man, though his works were so much celebrated in his own time; and we can add nothing farther concerning him, excepting that the Oxford Historian says, that 'as he had a little body, so a great mind (b).' Even the time of his death is uncertain, though it probably happened in the year 1645 [G]. A new edition of his works (i), which were become extremely scarce [H], was published by T. Davies, in 1772, in three small volumes. In his Pastorals, there is much poetical imagery, and sometimes beautiful description, and his versification is often very harmonious: but there is too frequent a recurrence of false wit, and his ideas and representations are in many places extremely fantastical; which may, perhaps, have prevented his writings from being more generally read and admired. Some of the defects of Browne ought, however, to be attributed to the taste of the age in which he lived; nor can it justly be denied, that he possessed great poetical merit.]

(i) To this edition were added some short notes by the Rev. William Thompson, late of Queen's College, Oxford.

[G] It probably happened in the year 1645.] Wood says, 'In my searches I find that one Will. Browne of Ottery St. Mary in Devon, died in the winter time 1645, whether the same with the poet, I am hitherto ignorant (14).' It is very likely to have been the same person, as he was a native of Devonshire, and had a strong attachment to that county, and might therefore naturally be led to fix his residence there in the latter part of his life.

[H] His works, which were become extremely scarce.] It is said in the advertisement prefixed to the last edition of his Works, that 'this admirable collection of eclogues was become so very scarce, that if the Rev. Mr. Tho. Warton had not lent his own copy to be transcribed, the public might have been deprived of so valuable a treasure.'

Wood says, that 'as he had honoured his country with his elegant and sweet pastorals, so was he ex-

pected, and also entreated, a little farther to grace it, by drawing out the line of his poetic ancestors, beginning in Josephus Iscanus, and ending in himself; but whether ever published, having been all, or mostly written, as 'twas said, I know not (15).' Among Mr. Oldys's MSS. is also the following passage relative to this intended work of W. Browne: 'He was reputed a man not only the best versed in the works and beauties of the English poets, but also in the history of their lives and characters: wherefore he was pitched and prevailed upon to draw out the line of his poetic ancestors, from Josephus Iscanus down to himself, which must have been a delectable and useful labour, from a man not only of his learning and taste, but who had the advantage of living so much nearer the times when our most renowned cultivators of English poetry adorned this isle.'

(15) Athen. Oxon. ut supra.

B R O W N E (SIR THOMAS), an eminent English physician, and celebrated writer, of the XVIIth century, for whose memoirs we have very ample materials, though heretofore they have been but inaccurately written [A]. He was the son of Mr. Thomas Browne, merchant of London, descended from an ancient and genteel family of that name, seated at Upton in Cheshire. He was born October the 19th, 1605, in the parish of St. Michael, Cheapside, in the city of London (a), and had the misfortune to lose his father in his nonage, who left him however a considerable fortune, in which he was injured not a little by one of his guardians (b). He was first sent for education to Winchester College, and thence removed to the University of Oxford, where he was entered a Fellow-Commoner of Broadgate's-Hall, soon after styled Pembroke College, in the beginning of the year 1623 (c), took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, January the 31st, 1626 (d), proceeded in due time to his degree of Master of Arts, entered on the physic line, and practised that faculty (e) for some time in Oxfordshire. His mother having married Sir Thomas Dutton, a very worthy gentleman, who enjoyed an honourable post in the government of Ireland, Mr. Browne went over with him into that island, where he accompanied him in a visitation of all the fortresses of the kingdom, which heightening his natural inclination to travel, he went over to France, made some stay at Montpellier, and then making the tour of Italy, and residing some time at Padua, he returned into Holland, and took his degree of Doctor in Physic in the University of Leyden (f). We have no certain account when he came back into England; but it must have been earlier than most of our writers have placed it. I think it might be about the year 1634 (g); but I can say nothing as to the place of his residence, unless

(a) Life of Sir T. Browne, prefixed to his Antiquities of Norwich.

(c) Life of Sir Thomas Browne, before mentioned, p. 2.
(e) Wood's Ath. Oxon. Vol. i. col. 713.

(g) See this fact established in note [B].

[A] Inaccurately written.] The collections made by the industrious Anthony Wood, in reference to the life of Sir Thomas Browne, are remarkably full, and more regular than is common with that author (1). Dr. Tenison, who published part of our author's works, contents himself with saying something briefly as to his character, because it was expected that an intimate friend of Sir Thomas's would publish his life at large (2). This intimate friend was, very probably, the Rev. Mr. John Whitefoot, Rector of Heigham in Norfolk, whom I find mentioned as such by Sir Thomas himself (3), and who, in all probability, preached his funeral-sermon. His minutes for that life consisting chiefly of the facts made use of in his sermon, are still preserved, and were published by the editor of our author's Posthumous Works (4), who has also prefixed a short Life of Sir Thomas to that piece (5). Father Nicéron has likewise given us, in his manner, a sketch of this gentleman's life (6), which has been canvassed by many other foreigners, as will be shewn hereafter. My

reason for taking notice of these facts, is plainly this, that the reader may not be surpris'd at the unusual length of this article. The worth of this gentleman, and the excellency of his writings, might well justify the pains that have been taken to set his history in a true light, and to rectify the mistakes that have been made about them: but the principal motive which led us to this copious account, is, the notice taken by foreigners of our author and his works, which has been such as few Englishmen have met with; and it seems to be a reflection on his countrymen, that while his fame is so great abroad, there should be nothing of this sort worthy of his memory performed at home. In order to wipe off this reflection, the utmost industry has been used in collecting and digesting whatever might be necessary to satisfy the curious and intelligent peruser; and if this has grown to a greater bulk than is common, it must be ascribed to the author's extensive reputation, and to the numerous circumstances worthy of remembrance which occur in the history of his life and writings.

(6) Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Hommes Illustres. Tom. xxiii. p. 358.

(1) Fasti Oxon. Vol. i. col. 233.

(2) Athen. Oxon. Vol. ii. col. 713.

(3) In his Preface to certain Miscellaneous

Tracts by Sir Thomas Browne.

(4) Antiquities of Norwich, p. 20.

(5) Life of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his Posthumous

Works, p. xxiv.

(6) See the Posthumous Works of the learned Sir Thomas

Browne, M. D. London, 1712, &c.

&c.

(b) Memoirs of our author's Life by Mr. John Whitefoot, prefixed to the Antiquities of Norwich.

(d) Wood's Fasti Oxon. Vol. i. col. 233.

(f) Life of Sir Thomas Browne, p. 2.

(14) Athen. Oxon. Vol. i. col. 493.

(g) Athen. Oxon. ut supra.

(b) Id. ibid.

it was in London [B]. In 1635 he wrote his *Religio Medici*, or at least made the first sketch of it, which afterwards being handed about in manuscript, at last stole abroad (though very incorrectly) in print (b) [C]. In 1636 he settled himself at Norwich, by the persuasion of his old tutor, Dr. Thomas Lushington, who was Rector of Burnham-Westgate, not far from thence, and on the invitation of Sir Nicholas Bacon, and other principal persons of the county; and the year following, was incorporated as Doctor of Physic at Oxford (i). He had impaired his fortune pretty much while abroad, though he had increased his learning and experience; and, therefore, he applied himself with the more diligence to his practice, which soon became very extensive, not a little furthered perhaps by his marrying a lady, whose maiden name was Mileham, of a very considerable family in Norfolk (k). This change in his condition happened in 1641, and he enjoyed the society of this lady, equally distinguished by the graces of her body and mind, one and forty years. It does not appear that he had any inclination to be known to the world as an author, but was rather forced to it, by the unforeseen accident of the *Religio Medici*'s being printed surreptitiously, and being so much taken notice of, as to engage the Earl of Dorset to recommend it to the perusal of the famous Sir Kenelm Digby, who not only read it over, but also wrote notes upon it in the space of a night (l) [D]. There hardly ever was a book published in Britain, that made more noise than the *Religio Medici*. The novelty of the title, the brilliancy of its sentiments, and the neat turn of the language, struck the lovers of polite literature with unusual delight. But as we rarely see pieces of this nature received with great applause, and yet remain exempt from the attacks of envy, so in this case answers quickly appeared; and we may safely affirm, that few things have been more commended on the one hand, or on the other more eagerly censured (m) [E]. The translation of it into Latin, which was

(b) See Sir Thomas's complaint of this, in his Preface to that piece.

(i) Wood's Fasti Oxon. Vol. i. col. 273.

(k) See Mr. Whitefoot's Memoirs of our author, before cited.

(l) See this explained in the note [D].

(m) Remarks upon modern Authors, by J. D. p. 195.

(7) This letter is prefixed to the *Religio Medici*, in our author's Works.

(8) See the Epistle to the reader prefixed to the *Religio Medici*.

(9) *Religio Medici*, P. ii. § 11.

(10) *Ibid.* § 5.

(11) *Ibid.* § 8.

(12) *Ibid.* § 1.

(13) This letter stands before the *Religio Medici*, in the last edition of our author's Works, fol. 168b.

[B] *Unless it was in London.*] In a letter to Sir Kenelm Digby, dated from Norwich, March 3d, 1642, Sir Thomas himself says (7), that the *Religio Medici* was written many years before. In his epistle to the reader, he limits this to about seven years. In the piece itself he observes, that his life had been hitherto but a restless pilgrimage, and that he had but very lately leisure to make reflections; from all which it is evident, that he wrote this treatise in 1635; and therefore he must have been in England that year, or the year before. Mr. Wood seems to think, that he did not settle at Norwich till about the time of his being incorporated Doctor of Physic at Oxford: but the fact is otherwise; as appears by his monumental inscription, where it is said that he practised physick there forty-six years. These are, it must be confessed, but trivial circumstances; and yet there is no reason that we should not be right in these, as well as in matters of greater moment, and the rather, because hitherto these mistakes have passed unobserved.

[C] *Though very incorrectly, in print.*] This piece, which was the first essay of our author's pen, was written for his private exercise and satisfaction; then being communicated to one, it became, as he tells us, common to many; and was, by transcription, successively corrupted, until it arrived in a most depraved copy at the press (8). It contains abundance of curious particulars relating to himself. He tells us therein, that his life was a miracle of thirty years, which to relate, were not a history but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable (9). He observes, that he was at that time unmarried; nay, he says plainly, I never yet cast a true affection on a woman (10). He informs us likewise, that he understood six languages (11); that he had been a great traveller (12); and many other little circumstances, which abundantly shew the truth of his assertion, that he never intended it should appear in print. The consideration, however, of these peculiarities affords us such means of entering into his character, and of forming a true idea of the nature and excellency of that little treatise, as will enable us to understand it better than any commentary could have done.

[D] *In the space of a night.*] Whoever has read and considered the observations of this learned Knight, would be inclined to doubt the truth of the fact, if we had not Sir Kenelm's authority for it, in his answer to that letter from Sir Thomas Browne before cited, wherein he gives the following distinct and particular account of the matter (13). 'I verily believe there is some mistake in the information given you, and that what is printing must be from some other pen than mine: for such reflections as I made upon your learned and ingenious discourse, are so

far from meriting the press, as they can tempt nobody to a serious reading of them: they were notes hastily set down, as I suddenly ran over your excellent piece, which is of so weighty a subject, and so strongly penned, as requireth much time, and sharp attention but to comprehend it: whereas what I wrote, was the employment but of one sitting; and there was not twenty-four hours between my receiving my Lord of Dorset's letter, that occasioned what I said, and the finishing my answer to him: and yet part of that time was taken up in procuring your book, which he desired me to read, and give him an account of; for, till then, I was so unhappy as never to have heard of that discourse. If that letter ever comes to your view, you will see the high value I set upon your great parts; and if it should be thought I have been something too bold in differing from your sense, I hope I shall easily obtain pardon, when it shall be considered, that his Lordship assigned it me, as an exercitation to oppose in it for entertainment, such passages as I might judge capable thereof; wherein what liberty I took, is to be attributed to the security of a private letter, and to my not knowing (nor my Lord's) the person whom it concerned.' This letter is dated from Winchester-House, where the author was prisoner, March 20, 1642.

[E] *More eagerly censured.*] It may not be amiss to begin with a succinct and impartial character of this book, which so much alarmed the public at its first appearance, and which the learned have never ceased to talk of since (14). 'The *Religio Medici* may pass for a treatise, on which it is extremely hard to pass any judgment. It is to weak heads, perhaps, a dangerous, to proper judges a most salutary counsellor. It is the picture of the author's mind painted by himself; and who would not rejoice to see so fair a piece drawn by so fine a pencil? It is a noble representation of human nature as it is, and who can be untouched at the sight of what so nearly concerns him? It is a brave attempt to bring down those subjects, which have been supposed to be superior to man's intellects, within the view of his reason; and though not near enough to acquaint him with their nature, yet within such a space as to delight him with their prospect. Who then that considers this, but must own an obligation to the author? If singularities, prejudices, extravagancies, wild excursions, and sometimes gloomy reflections, strike us, let us strictly examine whether the fault lies in us or in him; we ought not too readily to exalt our own, at the expence of his judgment. If we meet with strange thoughts, free remarks, disagreeable discoveries, let us bring them to the touchstone of truth, and remember, that though

(14) A Century of Great Characters of Books and Authors, MS.

was the pure effect of a gentleman's value for the piece, though he had no knowledge of the author, spread the book throughout all Europe, first among the learned, who differed widely in their opinions, some applauding, others condemning it, and then through the general mass of readers, by various translations into most of the languages of Europe (n) [F]. As this contributed to raise the author's reputation, for wit, learning, and a singular solidity of judgment, it subjected him, at the same time, to the imputation of Atheism, especially amongst foreigners; some having charged it upon him as a crime, the proofs of which were to be found in this book (o); and others vindicating him from that aspersion; yet with such tenderness for themselves, that they are content to leave some stain upon him as to heresy, though, perhaps, never any man, of his abilities and learning, gave stronger proofs of sincere belief. Of these censurers we shall in the notes give some account [G]. It is sufficient to observe here, that the very dispute

(o) Reimmanni
Histor. Atheismi,
p. 446.

though anatomies of human bodies are frequent, yet we are rarely called to the dissection of a human soul. If his sentiments seem too fine spun, his conjectures brisk, his disquisitions daring, his descriptions astonishing, and his flights prodigious, let us consider that Columbus told strange tales when he returned first from his new world. In short, he has undertaken a hard task, viz. to make us, in some measure, acquainted with the essence as well as attributes of God, the nature of angels, the mysteries of Providence, the divinity of the Scriptures, and which is, perhaps, most difficult of all, with ourselves. How easily he might mistake, how often he must seem obscure, how frequently digress from vulgar tracks, every candid critic will conceive, and therefore more easily excuse. To conclude, our author shares the fortune of such as are distinguished by exalted merit: such as taste his excellencies, magnify him beyond measure, while those who want the power of digesting his strong sentences, revenge themselves on his character, and intimate such suspicions as are bred only in ignorant heads, and are published merely from malevolence of heart. With the pious and the wise, *Religio Medici* will always be esteemed the Gospel of Reason (15). The surreptitious edition of this book, which made the true one necessary, was printed in the winter of 1642, and the genuine edition did not come out till the spring following (16). By the year 1685, it had run through eight editions, and there have come out several since (17). The first annotations that were written upon it, fell from the pen of Sir Kenelm Digby, in the night of the 22d of December 1642. They are addressed to the Earl of Dorset, though to say the truth, it is rather a refutation, in many respects, than an explanation; and yet, upon the whole, he confesses the *Religio Medici* to be a very learned and excellent piece, and speaks everywhere with much veneration of its author's great abilities. The later editions of the book are usually accompanied with a very complete body of notes, originally written in 1644, though frequently retouched for ten years after. Who the author was of these annotations remains still a secret; but that they were not written under the direction of the author, as one might be easily tempted to think they were, from their being bound up in his works, appears from hence, that now and then he mistakes the sense of his author. Soon after it was published, it was attacked by Alexander Ross, who wrote an express treatise against it, under the title of *Medicus medicatus, or the Physician cured* (18); but it was far from meeting with success. There never were, indeed, men more unequally matched, than Dr. Browne and Mr. Ross; the former having all the advantages of strong parts and lively wit, the latter scarcely any other qualification than a confused erudition grounded on a laborious course of reading without taste, penetration, or judgment, at least in any degree of comparison with the author he censures.

[F] *Most of the languages of Europe.* As to the first version of it into Latin, it was made in 1644, and published in Holland, but with some difficulty, as appears from the following letter, written to Dr. Browne by the author of that translation, dated from Magdalen-College in Cambridge, October 1, 1649. It met with some demur in the first impression at Leyden, and upon this occasion, one Hays, a book-merchant there to whom I first offered it, carried it to Salmasius for his approbation, who, in

state, first laid it by for very near a quarter of a year, and then at last told him, that there were indeed in it many things well said, but that it contained also many exorbitant conceptions in religion, and would probably find but frowning entertainment, especially amongst the Ministers; which deterred him from undertaking the printing. After I shewed it two more, De Vogel and Christian, both printers; but they, upon advice, returned it also; from these I went to Hackius, who, upon two days deliberation, undertook it (19). It came quickly to a second edition, and in 1652 it was printed at Strasbourg, with a large body of notes written by a learned German, whose name was Levinus Nicolaus Moltkenius. In his preface this writer observes, that he was first led to the perusal of this book by the reception it met with from the best judges; that England, France, Italy, Holland, and Germany rung with its applause; and much more to the same purpose. About 1668 it was printed in French, having been before translated into Italian, High-Dutch, and Low, and is still read with the highest satisfaction by persons of true genius, though the sense and spirit of the author have been not a little injured by translations from translations; none but the Latin being made from the original, and that too having considerable deficiencies.

[G] *In the notes give some account.* The first writer of note that we find detracting from our author's merit, is the famous Guy Patin, who, in a letter of his, dated from Paris, April 7th, 1645, gives his judgment on the *Religio Medici* in the following words: 'The book intitled *Religio Medici* is in high credit here. The author has wit; there are abundance of fine things in that book; he is a humourist whose thoughts are very agreeable, but who, in my opinion, is to seek for a master in religion as many others are, and in the end, perhaps, may find none. One may say of him, as Philip de Comines did of the founder of the Minimes, a hermit of Calabria, Francis de Paula, *he is still alive, and may grow worse as well as better* (20).' I should not have cited this passage, but that I find it has made some impression on the French critics, and even upon (21) Mr. Bayle, which is the more wonderful, since he could not but know that Patin scarcely spoke well of any body, and was a smatterer himself; one who dipped into books, and then decided upon them, which easily accounts for his notions of the *Religio Medici* and its author. Yet this stroke of French censure is but gentle, in comparison of the correction given our author, and his writings, by German pens (22). One Tobias Wagner is pleased to say, that the seeds of Atheistical impiety are so scattered through this book, that it can hardly be read without danger of infection. Two other learned men of the same nation (23), Muller and (24) Reiser, agree with him in passing sentence on our author as an Atheist. The very learned John Francis Buddeus is a little more moderate: for though he puts Sir Thomas Browne's name into the list of English Atheists, in conjunction with Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Thomas Hobbes, and John Toland, yet he is pleased to add, that as for Thomas Browne, though he is not free from the suspicion of absolute indifference in religion, yet from the charge of Atheism he ought certainly to be acquitted (25). But the no less learned James Frederick Reimmannus, who also wrote very largely on Atheism, and of such as have been justly or unjustly suspected thereof, has taken great pains to

(19) See the Letter at large in the Life of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his Antiquities of Norwich, p. vi.

(20) Lettres Choises de feu M. Guy Patin, &c. Franckfort, 1683, 12mo. p. 12.

(21) Oeuvres de M. P. Bayle, Tom. i. p. 25, 26.

(22) In examine clenchien atheismi speculativi, cap. v. p. 11.

(23) Exam. Atheismi, c. vi, § 34.

(24) In Dissertatione de Atheismo, p. 35.

(25) Theses Theologicae de Atheismo & Superstitione, p. 136.

(n) See the Preface to the last edition.

(15) This appears from Dr. Browne's Letter to Sir Kenelm Digby, dated March 3, 1642. (16) Wood's Ath. Oxon. Vol. ii. col. 713. (17) These Observations corrected and enlarged, are to be found in the folio edition of Sir Thomas Browne's Works.

(18) Wood's Ath. Oxon. Vol. ii. col. 713.

learning, and penetration, of which abundant testimonies may be produced [K]. The profound learning discovered in this last book, induced some mercenary scribbler, of which that age; as well as this, wanted not one in every corner, to make free with our author's name, by prefixing it to a book, which he not only never wrote, but without all doubt would never have read, considering its bombast and foolish title [L]; and yet our author contented himself with hinting this deceit to the public in the softest and modestest terms, and without expressing the least resentment against so impudent an impostor (q). In 1658, he published *Hydriotaphia, Urne Burial; or, a Discourse of the Sepulchral Urnes, lately found in Norfolk. Together with the Garden of Cyrus, or the quincunxial Lozenge, or Net-Work Plantations of the Ancients, artificially, naturally, mystically considered. With sundry Observations.* The first of these treatises he dedicated to Thomas Le Gros, Esq; afterwards Sir Thomas Le Gros, of Croftwick; and the latter to Nicholas Bacon, of Gillingham, Esq. Both are dated from Norwich, May 1, 1658, and shew that he lived in the strictest intimacy and warmest friendship with the worthiest of his neighbours. These treatises are in themselves extremely curious, and abound with noble, uncommon, and useful observations (r) [M]; so that we need not wonder they have been so often cited, and so much admired. His readiness to afford any assistance in his power, to such of the learned as were engaged in great and laborious undertakings, procured him the correspondence of abundance of great men, both at home and abroad. Sir William Dugdale applied to him for his assistance, when he was composing that work of his which has been thought to do him most honour, and many of the letters that passed between them have been made public (s) [N]. His foreign correspondencies extended as far as Iceland, where dwelt his good friend and intimate acquaint-

(q) These are printed with his Antiquities of Norwich, in 8vo, 1712, under the title of The Posthumous Works of Sir Thomas Browne.

[K] *Abundant testimonies may be produced.* It is somewhat surprising, that so very learned a treatise as this, and which its author once thought to have published in Latin, should never have been translated into that language; which however has not hindered it from being very well known abroad. It was first translated into Low-Dutch by John Grondal, and printed at Amsterdam, in 1668, 8vo. It was afterwards published in High-Dutch by a noble author: for though in the title-page of the book, printed at Nuremberg, in 1680, 4to, the translator calls himself Christopher Peganus, yet this was only according to the mode of Germany, the true author being Christian Knorr, Baron of Rosenroth. The judicious Morhof (29) speaks of this work of our author's twice, with all possible marks of approbation and esteem. 'No modern author, says he, has treated this subject more accurately or copiously. In his first book he learnedly enquires into the general causes of error, and in his succeeding books he not only discourses of the mistakes which are crept into natural philosophy, but such also as have corrupted history, theology, mechanic arts, and physic.' The famous Reimmannus (30) delivers himself in these terms. 'As he excelled in theoretical and practical Divinity, so he shone no less in philosophy, wherein he emulated Hercules, and undertaking by his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* to clear the sciences from errors, he fell nothing short of the other's labour in cleansing the *Augean Stable*.' Father Nicéron (31) speaking of this book says, 'That it is an excellent work, and contains abundance of curious things.'

[L] *Considering its bombast and foolish title.* This book called itself *Nature's Cabinet unlock'd; wherein is discovered the natural Causes of Metals, Stones, precious Earths, &c.* London, 1657, 12mo. Mr. Wood's character of this book is, 'That it is a dull worthless thing, stole for the most part out of the Physics of Magirus, by a very ignorant person, a Plagiary so illiterate and unskilful in his author, that not distinguishing between *lapis* and *levis*, in the said Magirus, hath told us of the liver; that one part of it is gibbous, and the other light; and yet he had the confidence to call this scribble *Nature's Cabinet unlock'd*, an arrogant and fanciful title, of which our author's true humility would no more have suffered him to have been the father, than his great learning could have permitted him to have been the author of the said book (32).' Dr. Browne in an advertisement, as from the Stationer, disclaims it thus: 'I cannot omit to advertise, that a book was published not long since, intitled, *Nature's Cabinet unlock'd*, bearing the name of this author: if any man have been benefited thereby, this author is not so ambitious as to challenge the honour thereof, as having no hand in that work (33).'

[M] *Uncommon and useful observations.* The first

treatise concerning Urn Burial was occasioned by the digging up between 40 and 50 of these monuments of antiquity in a field of Old Walsingham, in the latter end of the year 1657, or the beginning of 1658. These urns were deposited in a dry and sandy soil not a yard deep, and at no great distance from each other. They were not exactly similar, nor much unlike. Some contained two pounds of bones, distinguishable in skulls, ribs, jaws, thigh-bones, and teeth, with fresh impressions of combustion, besides extraneous substance, like pieces of small boxes or combs handsomely wrought, handles of small brass instruments, brazen nippers, and in one some kind of opal. Near the same plot of ground, for about six yards compass, were dug up coals and incinerated substances, which begat conjecture that this was the *Uitina*, or place of burning their bodies, or some sacrificing place unto the manes, which was properly below the surface of the ground, as the ara and altars unto the gods and heroes were above it. That these were the urns of Romans, from the common custom and place where they were found, is no obscure conjecture; being not far from a Roman garrison, and but five miles from Brancaster, set down by ancient record under the name of Brannodunum; and where the adjoining town, containing seven parishes, in no very different sound, but Saxon termination, still retains the name of Burnham; which being an early station, it is not improbable the neighbour parts were filled with habitations, either of Romans themselves, or Britons romanised, who observed the Roman customs.

[N] *Have been made public.* These letters were written partly in the autumn of the year 1658, and partly in the spring of 1659, and contain abundance of curious particulars in relation to our antiquities. They were published among the posthumous works of Mr. Browne; and I mention them here only to take notice, that one of the pieces before published by Dr. Tenison, under the title of *Miscellanies*, belongs properly to this collection. The title of it is, *Of artificial Hills, Mounts, or Burrows, in many Parts of England*, what they are, to what end raised, and by what nations. Before it there is a quere in answer to which it is written, said to have come from his honoured friend Mr. E. D. This E. should certainly be a W. for without question the letters were intended for William Dugdale, as may be easily discerned by comparing the contents of this with those of the epistles before mentioned; and I take it to be the only letter amongst those *Miscellanies* of which any certain account can be given. It is manifest from hence, that he was regarded as an oracle in these matters, even by such a man as Sir William Dugdale, whose knowledge in British antiquities is unanimously confessed; and the answers given him by Sir Thomas Browne, are such as sufficiently demonstrate his having enquired narrowly even into the abstrusest subjects.

(q) Wood's Ath. Oxon. Vol. ii. col. 713.

(r) See the Life of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his Antiquities of Norwich.

(29) Polyhistor. li. 2, l. 9. Ill. 5, l. 10.

(30) Historia Universalis Aethiops, p. 418.

(31) Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire des Hommes Illust. Tom. xxiii. p. 357.

(32) Ath. Oxon. Vol. ii. col. 713.

(33) Printed at the end of his treatise, intitled, The Garden of Cyrus, &c.

(r) Printed also in his Posthumous Works.

(u) See this annexed to the Memoirs of our author by Mr. Whitefoot.

(x) See his Monumental Inscription.

ance, Theodore Jonas, from whose information, probably, he wrote that short account of this northern isle, which one may venture to pronounce the clearest and most authentic that is any where extant (r) [O]. His reputation in his profession, was equal to his fame for learning in all other respects; and, therefore, the Royal College of Physicians in London were pleased to take him into their number, as an Honorary Fellow, as appears by a very honourable diploma under the college seal, dated the twenty-sixth of June 1665 (u). In the month of September 1671, King Charles II. coming to Norwich, in his progress, was pleased to knight Dr. Browne, with very singular marks of favour and respect (w). This circumstance is mentioned by our author, in one of his pieces, with his usual modesty, and upon such an occasion, as did not only invite, but compel him to it; and yet his gratitude to the King is manifested therein, rather than any satisfaction in this addition of honour [P]. He spent the remainder of his days in the quiet practice of his profession, and the improvement of his mind, by a close and diligent pursuit of his studies, which he never intermitted, till, having attained the age of seventy-seven, for he died on his birth-day, he, in 1682, left this life for a better (x). In his person he was of a moderate stature, of a brown complexion, and his hair of the same colour. His picture in the College of Physicians, shews him to have been remarkably handsome, and to have possessed in a singular degree, the blessing of a grave and yet cheerful and inviting countenance. As to his temper, it was perfectly even and free from passions: he had no ambition beyond that of being wise and good, and no farther concern for money than as it was necessary; for otherwise he might certainly have raised a very large fortune in the way of his profession: but his charity, generosity, and tender affection for his children, to the expence of whose education he would set no bounds, contracted the wealth he left into a very moderate compass. His virtues were many, and remarkably conspicuous; his probity such as gained him universal respect, as his beneficence rendered him generally beloved: in respect to knowledge, he was extremely communicative in his conversation, and notwithstanding his rare abilities and established reputation, wonderfully modest. His religion was that of the Church of England, in which he shewed himself unaffectedly humble and sincere. As to sects in learning, he followed none, but thought and wrote with the utmost freedom, illustrating every subject he touched by such new and nervous remarks, as charmed every attentive reader, and has occasioned more care to be taken of the papers he left behind him, than has usually happened to the remains of learned men, a circumstance singular in itself, and which reflects on his memory the highest honour (y) [2]. There

(w) Antiquities of Norwich, p. 85.

(y) Taken from a Letter written to Lady Browne, when he proposed to write Sir Thomas's Life, by Mr. Whitefoot.

[O] *That is any where extant.*] This letter is dated Norwich, January 15th, 1663. Some particulars seem worthy of being transcribed, inasmuch as we scarcely find any thing in relation to this island elsewhere, which is not strongly mixed with fable. 'Great store of drift, or float-wood, says he, is every year cast upon their shores, brought down by the northern winds, which serveth them for fuel, and other uses, the greatest part whereof is fir. Of bears there are none in the country, but sometimes they are brought down from the north upon ice, while they follow seals, and are carried away. Two in this manner came over and landed in the north of Iceland this last year, 1662. No conies or hares, but of foxes great plenty, whose white skins are much desired, and brought over into this country. The last winter, 1662, so cold and lasting with us in England, was the mildest they have had for many years in Iceland. Two new eruptions with slime and smoke, were observed the last year in some mountains about Mount Hecla. Some hot mineral springs they have, and very effectual, but they make but rude use thereof. The rivers are large, swift, and rapid, but have many falls, which render them less commodious; they chiefly abound with salmon. They sow no corn, but receive it from abroad. They have a kind of large lichen, which dried becometh hard and sticky, growing very plentifully in many places, whereof they make use for food, either in decoction or powder, some whereof I have by me, different from any with us. In one part of the country, and not near the sea, there is a large black rock, which polished, resembleth touchstone, as I have seen in pieces thereof of various figures.—An exceeding fine russet down is sometimes brought unto us, which their great number of fowls afford, and sometimes store of feathers, consisting of the feathers of small birds. Besides stocks, and little hairy dogs, they bring another sort over, headed like a fox, which they say are bred betwixt dogs and foxes; these are desired by the shepherds of this country. Green plovers, which are plentiful here in the winter, are

found to breed there in the beginning of summer. Some sheep have been brought over, but of coarse wool, and some horses of mean stature, but strong and hardy; one whereof kept in the pastures by Yarmouth, in the summer, would often take the sea, swimming a great way, a mile or two, and return the same. When its provision failed in the ship wherein it was brought, for many days it fed upon hoops and casks; nor at the land would for many months be brought to feed upon oats. These accounts I received from a native of Iceland, who comes yearly into England; and by reason of my long acquaintance, and directions I send unto some of his friends against the elephantiasis or leprosy, constantly visits me before his return, and is ready to perform for me what I shall desire in his country: wherein, as in any other ways, I shall be very ambitious to serve the noble Society, whose most honouring servant I am, T. B.—This last paragraph shews, that this letter was written at the instance of the Royal Society, and is a proof how much he was considered by that learned body of men, who, at their first institution, were the glory of this island, and the wonder of Europe.

[P] *In this addition of honour.*] This passage occurs in his Antiquities of Norwich, where, speaking of the cathedral and city, he says, 'Though this church, for its spire, may compare, in a manner, with any in England, yet in its tombs and monuments it is exceeded by many. No Kings have honoured the same with their ashes, and but few with their presence. And it is not without some wonder, that Norwich having been for a long time so considerable a place, so few Kings have visited it: of which number among so many Monarchs since the Conquest, we find but four, viz. King Henry III., Edward I., Queen Elizabeth, and our gracious sovereign now reigning, King Charles II., of which I had a particular reason to take notice (34).'

[2] *The highest honour.*] The first who took the pains to digest and fit for the press the pieces our author left behind him in such a degree of perfection as seem to intimate his design of printing them, was Dr.

(34) Antiquities of Norwich, p. 35.

There may be, notwithstanding this, and indeed there is reason to believe; there are several little pieces of his which have not yet seen the light, which is the more to be regretted, because certainly never any thing fell from his pen which did not deserve it. His very letters were dissertations, and full of singular learning, though written upon the most common subjects. Of this we have a shining proof, in a letter of his to a young student, as to the method of reading physical authors [R]. His knowledge and charity made him dear to his contemporaries, as his excellent works have transmitted the fruits of his learning, and thereby secured him a high reputation with posterity: and as this has not been built on the slight foundation of lively thoughts; delivered in a graceful manner of expression, but on the more solid basis of communicating useful truths, and suggesting the properest means for avoiding despondency as well as error;

Dr. Thomas Tenison, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who published, from his manuscripts, at London 1684, 8vo, A collection of *Miscellaneous Tracts*, containing, 1. *Observations upon several plants mentioned in Scripture.* 2. *Of Garlands, and Coronary or Garland Plants.* 3. *Of the Fishes caught by our Saviour with his Disciples after the Resurrection.* 4. *An Answer to certain Queries relating to Fishes, Birds, and Insects.* 5. *Of Hawks and Falconry, ancient and modern.* 6. *Of Cymbals and other musical Instruments.* 7. *Of Ropalic or gradual Verses.* 8. *Of Languages, particularly the Saxon.* 9. *Of artificial Hills, Mounts, and Burrows, in many places of England.* 10. *Of Troas, what place is meant by that name. Also the Situation of Sodom, Gomorrah, and Zeboim.* 11. *Of the Answers of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphos to Cræsus.* 12. *A Prophecy concerning the future State of several Nations.* 13. *Museum Clausum, containing some Books, Antiquities, Pictures, and Rarities of several kinds scarce or never seen by any man now living.* These, with the other Treatises published in his lifetime, were printed in one folio Volume at London 1686. His son Dr. Edward Browne published in 1690, a single tract of his father's, intitled, *A Letter to a Friend, upon Occasion of the Death of his intimate Friend.* It contains about twenty-four pages in 8vo. and we meet therein with many curious things, and a conclusion to pious, that whoever reads it will discern with indignation the falsehood of such calumnies as have been spread in relation to his indifference in Religion. The third guardian of our author's fame was his grandson by marriage, Owen Brigstock, Esq; who communicated his remains to those who afterwards published them, under the title of, *Posthumous Works of the Learned Sir Thomas Browne, Knt. M. D. late of Norwich*, printed from his original manuscripts, viz. I. *Repertorium, or the Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Norwich.* II. *An Account of some Urns, &c. found at Brampton in Norfolk, anno 1667.* III. *Letters between Sir William Dugdale and Sir Thomas Browne.* IV. *Miscellanies.* Last of all, in 1716, there was published a book of his in 12mo, intitled, *Christian Morals, by Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, M. D. and Author of Religio Medici*, published from the original and correct manuscript of the author, by John Jeffery, D. D. Archdeacon of Norwich. It was dedicated by our author's daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Littleton, to David, Earl of Buchan. And Dr. Jeffery in his preface observes, that if any one, after he has read *Religio Medici*, and this discourse, can doubt whether the same person was the author of them both, he may be assured by the testimony of Mrs. Littleton above mentioned, who lived with her father, when it was composed by him, and who at the time read it written by his own hand, and also by the testimony of others, of whom the Doctor is one, who read the manuscript of the author immediately after his death, and who have since read the same; from which it was faithfully and exactly transcribed for the press. The reason why it was not printed before was, because it was unhappily lost by being mislaid among other manuscripts, for which search was lately made in the presence of Archbishop Tenison, of which his Grace by letter informed Mrs. Littleton, when he sent the manuscript to her. Dr. Jeffery likewise tells us, that there is nothing printed in the discourse, or in the short notes, but what is found in the original manuscript, except only where an oversight had made the addition or transposition of some words necessary.

[R] *As to the method of reading physical authors.* This letter was communicated to the world by a very learned and ingenious gentleman (35); but to whom

it was directed is not known. 'Τὸ Βιβλίον περιεχόμενον [i. e. Statesman from the book] is grown into a proverb; and no less ridiculous are they who think out of books to become Physicians. I shall therefore mention such as tend less to ostentation than use, for the directing a novice to observation and experience, without which you cannot expect to be other than βέλους ἀνθρώπου. Galen and Hippocrates must be had as fathers and fountains of the faculty. And indeed Hippocrates's *Aphorisms* should be conned for the frequent use which may be made of them. Lay your foundation in Anatomy, wherein οὐδὲν must be your *fidus Achates*. The help that books can afford, you may expect, besides what is delivered *sparsim* from Galen and Hippocrates, Vesalius, Spigelius, and Bartholinus. And be sure you make yourself master of Dr. Harvey's piece *De Circul. Sang.* which discovery I prefer to that of Columbus. The knowledge of Plants, Animals, and Minerals (whence are fetched the *Materia Medicamentorum*) may be your *παρρηγοῦν*; and so far as concerns Physic, is attainable in gardens, fields, Apothecaries and Druggists shops. Read Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Matthiolus, Dodonæus, and our English Herbalists: Spigelius's *Ifagoge in rem herbariam* will be of use. Wecker's *Antedatarium speciale*, Renodæus for composition and preparation of medicaments. See what Apothecaries do. Read *Morelli formulas medicas, Bauderoni Pharmacopœa, Pharmacopœa Augustana*. See chymical operations in hospitals, private houses. Read Fallopius, Aquapendente, Paræus, Vigo, &c. Be not a stranger to the useful part of Chymistry. See what Chymiflators do in their officines. Begin with *Tyrocinium Chymicum*, Crollius, Hartmannus, and so by degrees march on. *Materia Medicamentorum*, Surgery, and Chemistry, may be your diversions and recreations; Physic is your business. Having therefore gained perfection in Anatomy, betake yourself to Sennertus's *Institutiones*, which read with care and diligence two or three times over, and assure yourself, that when you are a perfect master of these Institutes, you will seldom meet with any point in Physic to which you will not be able to speak like a man. This done, see how Institutes are applicable to practice, by reading upon diseases in Sennertus, Fernelius, Mercatus, Hollerius, Riverius, in particular treatises, in counsels and consultations, all which are of singular benefit. But in reading upon diseases, satisfy yourself not so much with the remedies set down (although I would not have these altogether neglected) as with the true understanding the nature of the disease, its causes, and proper indications for cure. For by this knowledge, and that of the instruments you are to work by, the *Materia Medicamentorum*, you will often conquer with ease those difficulties, through which books will not be able to bring you; *secretum Medicorum est judicium*. Thus have I briefly pointed out the way, which, closely pursued, will lead to the highest pitch of the art you aim at. Although I mention but a few books (which, well digested, will be *instar omnium*) yet it is not my intent to confine you. If at one view you would see who hath written, and upon what diseases, by way of counsel and observation, look upon Moronius's *Directorium Medico-practicum*. You may look upon all, but dwell upon few. I need not tell you the great use of the Greek tongue in Physic; without it nothing can be done to perfection. The words of art you may learn from Gorræus's *Definitiones Medicæ*. This, and many good withes, from your loving friend. T. B.

so by degrees his writings have triumphed over all those prejudices, which naturally rise in weak minds at the appearance of a genius of the first rank; as appears by that eagerness, which even learned foreigners have expressed in his defence, and that applause which has been bestowed on his works, by such as were equal as well as candid judges [8]. His body was interred in the church of St. Peter's Mancroft, in Norwich, where,

[8] *Equal as well as candid judges.* The celebrated Hermannus Conringius, the glory of the German nation, professed himself always a great admirer of our author, and was wont to say, he always read his *Religio Medici* with fresh delight; and in respect to that imputation of Atheism, or indifferency in point of Religion, which had been circulated with such industry by certain supercilious Critics, he delivered his sentiments of it in these words: *Utinam nemo Medicorum, imo Theologorum, illo homine sit minus religiosus, i. e. I wish no Physician, I will go farther and say, none of our Divines, were less religious than this man* (36). If we consider the great character, and still greater merit, of Conringius, we cannot but allow his testimony to weigh down the prejudices of a multitude of minor Critics, who have no way of raising a reputation to themselves, but by attacking such of the learned as are in possession of it. The learned and judicious Frederic Heister (37), son of the celebrated Lawrence Heister, whose system of Surgery has made him known to all the learned world, thought himself obliged, on Buddæus's publishing a large work against Atheism and Superstition, to vindicate the Physicians in general, and our author in particular, from the injurious aspersions cast upon him in that book. His defence of Dr. Browne takes up the whole sixteenth section, in which, from a great variety of passages in our author's works, he demonstrates the cruelty of this calumny, as well as its notorious falsehood. It is true that Michael Lilienthal (38), in his dissertation on Literary Machiavelism, has a stroke at Sir Thomas Browne, as if he had been an enemy to antiquity; and the famous Peter Bayle (39) speaks but slightly of him in some part of his works; yet when the censures and characters of these Critics are compared and considered, they will be found to do as much honour to our author's memory, as the praises of other men. On the whole, we may safely say, that as his pen vindicated useful science by vanquishing and driving away a multitude of errors which had been long received; so his fame has triumphed over envy, and will appear in the eyes of posterity as clear and bright as the truths which he espoused; and it was with great justice this sentence was inscribed on his monument, *Scriptis quibus tituli, Religio Medici & Pseudodoxia epidemica, aliisque per orbem notissimus.*

printed without the author's knowledge; because it may be learned when it is repeated, or may be written out with very little trouble: but a long treatise, however elegant, is not often copied by mere zeal or curiosity, but may be worn out in passing from hand to hand, before it is multiplied by a transcript. It is easy to convey an imperfect book, by a distant hand, to the press, and plead the circulation of a false copy as an excuse for publishing the true, or to correct what is found faulty or offensive, and charge the errors on the transcriber's depravations.——This is a stratagem, by which an author panting for fame, and yet afraid of seeming to challenge it, may at once gratify his vanity, and preserve the appearance of modesty; may enter the lists, and secure a retreat: and this, candour might suffer to pass undetected as an innocent fraud, but that indeed no fraud is innocent; for the confidence which makes the happiness of society, is in some degree diminished by every man, whose practice is at variance with his words (40).

Dr. Johnson, speaking of the compliments which Dr. Browne and Sir Kenelm Digby paid to each other, in the letters that passed between them previously to the publication of Sir Kenelm's Observations, takes notice, that the reciprocal civility of authors is one of the most risible scenes in the farce of Life. 'Who would not, says he, have thought, that these two luminaries of their age had ceased to endeavour to grow bright by the obscuration of each other? Yet the animadversions thus weak, thus precipitate, upon a book thus injured in the transcription, quickly passed the press; and *Religio Medici* was more accurately published, with an admonition prefixed "to those who have or shall peruse the observations upon a former corrupt copy;" "in which there is a severe censure, not upon Digby, who was to be used with ceremony, but upon the Observer who had usurped his name: nor was this invective written by Dr. Browne, who was supposed to be satisfied with his opponent's apology; but by some officious friend zealous for his honour, without his consent (41)."

The assertion of Sir Thomas Browne, that his life had been a miracle of thirty years; which to relate, were not history but a piece of poetry, and would sound like a fable, hath drawn from Dr. Johnson the following acute reflections. 'There is, undoubtedly, a sense, in which all life is miraculous; as it is an union of powers of which we can image no connexion, a succession of motions of which the first cause must be supernatural: but life, thus explained, whatever it may have of miracle, will have nothing of fable; and, therefore, the author undoubtedly had regard to something, by which he imagined himself distinguished from the rest of mankind.—Of these wonders, however, the view that can be now taken of his life offers no appearance. The course of his education was like that of others, such as put him little in the way of extraordinary casualties. A scholastic and academical life is very uniform; and has, indeed, more safety than pleasure. A traveller has greater opportunities of adventure; but Browne traversed no unknown seas, or Arabian deserts: and, surely, a man may visit France and Italy, reside at Montpellier and Padua, and at last take his degree at Leyden, without any thing miraculous. What it was, that would, if it was related, sound so poetical and fabulous, we are left to guess; I believe, without hope of guessing rightly. The wonders probably were transacted in his own mind: self-love, co-operating with an imagination vigorous and fertile as that of Browne, will find or make objects of astonishment in every man's life: and, perhaps, there is no human being, however hid in the crowd from the observation of his fellow-mortals, who, if he has leisure and disposition to recollect his own thoughts and actions, will not conclude his life in some sort a miracle,

(36) Conringiana, p. 10.

(37) Elize Frederici Heisteri Laurentii filii Apologia pro medicis qua eorum depellitur cavillatio, qui Medicinam in Atheismum abissosque in Theologia errores abducere perhibent, & qua simul præcipui Medici & nominatim Hippocrates, Galenus, Cardanus, Taurrellius, Vannius, & Brownus, qui Atheismi crimine commaculati sunt, defenduntur. Amstelædami, 1736, 8vo.

(38) §. v. p. 39.

(39) See his Illustration upon the See ticks, § vi.

(40) Dr. Johnson's Life of Sir Thomas Browne, p. 144 to his 'Character of Mr. Bayle' p. 145.

(41) Ibid. p. 145.

* * [Concerning what is said of Guy Patin, in the note [G], it hath been observed to us, by a learned correspondent, that, though it is true that Patin was a smatterer, it is not to be supposed that he meant to reflect on the *Religio Medici* for the freedom of the notions contained in it; for he was a Free-thinker himself, to the best of his little judgment. In his account of the Straßburgh edition, he speaks highly of the merit of the original.

It hath, also, been remarked, by the same correspondent, that the fact, mentioned in note [O], in the Account of Iceland, of Bears coming over seas in floats of ice, is curious, and may serve to resolve some difficulties in the History of the peopling of the Globe.

In the year 1756, was published a second edition of Sir Thomas Browne's 'Christian Morals,' to which is prefixed a life of the author, by Dr. Samuel Johnson. This Life, though it contains few new facts, is written (as might be expected from Dr. Johnson) in so masterly a manner, and with such ingenuity and sagacity of observation, that, in making considerable extracts from it, we shall receive the thanks of our readers.

Upon occasion of the '*Religio Medici*'s' being printed, in 1642, without the consent of the author, his Biographer remarks as follows: 'This has, perhaps, sometimes befallen others; and this, I am willing to believe, did really happen to Dr. Browne: but there is, surely, some reason to doubt the truth of the complaint so frequently made of surreptitious editions. A song, or an epigram, may be easily

where, upon a mural monument, fixed to the south pillar of the altar, there are two inscriptions, one in Latin, the other in English, containing several particulars relating to

‘racle, and imagine himself distinguished from all the rest of his species by many discriminations of nature or of fortune (42).’

(42) Dr. Johnson's Life of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his Christian Morals, p. xi—xiii.

Dr. Johnson wishes that Sir Thomas Browne had longer delayed the publication of his *Treatise on Vulgar Errors*, and added what the remaining part of his life, spent in study and experience, would have afforded. He thinks, too, that it might now be proper to reprint it with notes, partly supplemental and partly emendatory; to subjoin those discoveries which the industry of the last age has made, and correct those mistakes which the author has committed, not by idleness or negligence, but for want of BOYLE's and NEWTON's Philosophy. ‘He appears, indeed,’ continues Dr. Johnson, ‘to have been willing to pay labour for truth. Having heard a flying rumour of sympathetic needles, by which, suspended over a circular alphabet, distant friends or lovers might correspond, he procured two such alphabets to be made, touched his needles with the same magnet, and placed them upon proper spindles: the result was, that when he moved one of his needles, the other, instead of taking by sympathy the same direction, “stood like the pillars of Hercules.” That it continued motionless, will be easily believed; and most men would have been content to believe it, without the labour of so hopeless an experiment. Browne might himself have obtained the same conviction by a method less operose, if he had thrust his needles through corks, and then set them afloat in two basons of water.—Notwithstanding his zeal to detect old errors, he seems not very easy to admit new positions; for he never mentions the motion of the earth but with contempt and ridicule, though the opinion, which admits it, was then growing popular, and was, surely, plausible, even before it was confirmed by later observations (43).’

(43) *Ibid.* p. xviii—xx.

Of Sir Thomas Browne's ‘Discourse on Sepulchral Urns,’ Dr. Johnson observes, that there is, perhaps, none of his works which better exemplifies his reading or memory. ‘It is scarcely, says he, to be imagined, how many particulars he has amassed together, in a treatise which seems to have been occasionally written; and for which, therefore, no materials could have been previously collected. It is, indeed, like other treatises of antiquity, rather for curiosity than use: for it is of small importance to know which nation buried their dead in the ground, which threw them into the sea, or which gave them to birds and beasts; when the practice of cremation began, or when it was disused; whether the bones of different persons were mingled in the same urn; what oblations were thrown into the pyre; or how the ashes of the body were distinguished from those of other substances. Of the usefulness of all these enquiries, Browne seems not to have been ignorant; and, therefore, concludes them with an observation which can never be too frequently recollected.’—“All or most apprehensions rested in opinions of some future being, which ignorantly or coldly believed, begat those perverted conceptions, ceremonies, sayings, which Christians pity or laugh at. Happy are they, which live not in that disadvantage of time, when men could say little for futurity, but from reason; whereby the noblest mind fell often upon doubtful deaths, and melancholy dissolutions: with these hopes Socrates warmed his doubtful spirits, against the cold potion; and Cato, before he durst give the fatal stroke, spent part of the night in reading the Immortality of Plato, thereby confirming his wavering hand unto the animosity of that attempt.—It is the heaviest stone that melancholy can throw at man, to tell him he is at the end of his nature; or that there is no further state to come, unto which this seems progression, and otherwise made in vain: without this accomplishment, the natural expectation and desire of such a state, were but a fallacy in nature; unsatisfied considerators would quarrel the justice of their constitution, and rest content that Adam had fallen lower, whereby, by knowing no other original, and deeper ignorance

“of themselves, they might have enjoyed the happiness of inferior creatures, who in tranquillity possess their constitutions, as having not the apprehension to deplore their own natures; and being framed below the circumference of these hopes or cognition of better things, the wisdom of God hath necessitated their contentment. But the superior ingredient and obscured part of ourselves, whereto all present felicities afford no resting contentment, will be able at last to tell us we are more than our present selves; and evacuate such hopes in the fruition of their own accomplishments (44).”

(44) *Ibid.* p. xxi—xxiii.

Dr. Johnson gives a very pleasing account of Sir Thomas Browne's ‘Garden of Cyrus, or Quincunxial Lozenge.’ ‘This discourse he begins with the Sacred Garden, in which the first man was placed; and deduces the practice of horticulture from the earliest accounts of antiquity to the time of the Persian Cyrus, the first man whom we actually know to have planted a Quincunx; which, however, our author is inclined to believe of longer date, and not only discovers it in the description of the hanging gardens of Babylon, but seems willing to believe, and to persuade his reader, that it was practised by the feeders on vegetables before the flood.—Some of the most pleasing performances have been produced by learning and genius exercised upon subjects of little importance. It seems to have been, in all ages, the pride of wit, to shew how it could exalt the low, and amplify the little. To speak not inadequately of things really and naturally great, is a task not only difficult but disagreeable; because the writer is degraded in his own eyes by standing in comparison with his subject, to which he can hope to add nothing from his imagination: but it is a perpetual triumph of fancy to expand a scanty theme, to raise glittering ideas from obscure properties, and to produce to the world an object of wonder to which nature had contributed little. To this ambition, perhaps, we owe the Frogs of Homer, the Gnat and the Bees of Virgil, the Butterfly of Spenser, the Shadow of Wowerus, and the Quincunx of Browne.—In the prosecution of this sport of fancy, he considers every production of art and nature, in which he could find any decussation or approaches to the form of a Quincunx; and as a man once resolved upon ideal discoveries, seldom searches long in vain, he finds his favourite figure in almost every thing, whether natural or invented, ancient or modern, rude or artificial, sacred and civil; so that a reader, not watchful against the power of his insinuations, would imagine that decussation was the great business of the world, and that nature and art had no other purpose than to exemplify and imitate a Quincunx.—To shew the excellence of this figure, he enumerates all its properties; and finds in it almost every thing of use or pleasure: and to shew how readily he supplies what he cannot find, one instance may be sufficient; “though therein (says he) we meet not with right angles, yet every rhombus containing four angles equal unto two right, it virtually contains two right in every one.”—The fanciful sports of great minds are never without some advantage to knowledge. Browne has interspersed many curious observations on the form of plants, and the laws of vegetation; and appears to have been a very accurate observer of the modes of germination, and to have watched with great nicety the evolution of the parts of plants from their seminal principles.—He is then naturally led to treat of the number five; and finds, that by this number many things are circumscribed; that there are five kinds of vegetable productions, five sections of a cone, five orders of architecture, and five acts of a play. And observing that five was the ancient conjugal or wedding number, he proceeds to a speculation, which I shall give in his own words; “The ancient numerists made out the conjugal number by two and three, the first parity and imparity, the active and passive digits, the material and formal principles in generative societies (45).”

(45) *Ibid.* p. xxiii—xxvii.

With

to his life, which, as they have been mentioned in the course of this article, and as those inscriptions have been published more than once, render it unnecessary to transcribe them

With regard to the posthumous pieces published by Dr. Tenison, we shall only insert what Dr. Johnson hath said concerning Sir Thomas Browne's Essay "On Languages, and particularly the Saxon Tongue." He discourses with great learning, and generally with great justness, of the derivation and changes of languages; but, like other men of multifarious learning, he receives some notions without examination. Thus he observes, according to the popular opinion, that the Spaniards have retained so much Latin, as to be able to compose sentences that shall be at once grammatically Latin and Castilian: this will appear very unlikely to a man that considers the Spanish terminations; and Howel, who was eminently skilful in the three provincial languages, declares, that after many essays he never could effect it.—The principal design of this letter, is to shew the affinity between the modern English and the ancient Saxon; and he observes, very rightly, that "though we have borrowed many substantives, adjectives, and some verbs, from the French; yet the great body of numerals, auxiliary verbs, articles, pronouns, adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions, which are the distinguishing and lasting parts of a language, remain with us from the Saxon."—To prove this position more evidently, he has drawn up a short discourse of six paragraphs, in Saxon and English; of which every word is the same in both languages, excepting the terminations and orthography. The words are, indeed, Saxon, but the phraseology is English; and, I think, would not have been understood by Bede or Ælfric, notwithstanding the confidence of our author. He has, however, sufficiently proved his position, that the English resembles its parental language, more than any modern European dialect (46).²

(46) Dr. Johnson's L. to of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his "Christian Morality," p. xxx—xxxii.

Sir Thomas Browne's personal character having been particularly delineated, by his friend Mr. Whitefoot, we shall lay before our readers that part of it which Dr. Johnson hath thought worthy of being transcribed. "For a character of his person, his complexion and hair was answerable to his name; his stature was moderate, and habit of body neither fat nor lean, but *inexpansive*.—In his habit of clothing, he had an aversion to all finery, and affected plainness, both in the fashion and ornaments. He ever wore a cloke, or boots, when few others did. He kept himself always very warm, and thought it most safe so to do, though he never loaded himself with such a multitude of garments, as Suetonius reports of Augustus, enough to clothe a good family.—The horizon of his understanding was much larger than the hemisphere of the world: All that was visible in the heavens he comprehended so well, that few that are under them knew so much: He could tell the number of the visible stars in his horizon, and call them all by their names that had any; and of the earth he had such a minute and exact geographical knowledge, as if he had been by Divine Providence ordained surveyor-general of the whole terrestrial orb, and its products, minerals, plants, and animals. He was so curious a botanist, that besides the specific distinctions, he made nice and elaborate observations, equally useful as entertaining.—His memory, though not so eminent as that of Seneca or Scaliger, was capacious and tenacious, inasmuch as he remembered all that was remarkable in any book that he had read; and not only knew all persons again that he had ever seen at any distance of time, but remembered the circumstances of their bodies, and their particular discourses and speeches. — In the Latin poets he remembered every thing that was acute and pungent; he had read most of the historians, ancient and modern, wherein his observations were singular, not taken notice of by common readers; he was excellent company when he was at leisure, and expressed more light than heat in the temper of his brain.—He had no despotical power over his affections and passions (that was a privilege of original perfection, forfeited by the neglect of the use of it); but no large

"a political power over them, as any Stoick, or man of his time, whereof he gave so great experiment, that he hath very rarely been known to have been overcome with any of them. The strongest that were found in him, both of the irascible and concupiscible, were under the controul of his reason. Of admiration, which is one of them, being the only product, either of ignorance, or uncommon knowledge, he had more, and less, than other men, upon the same account of his knowing more than others; so that though he met with many rarities, he admired them not so much as others do.—He was never seen to be transported with mirth, or dejected with sadness; always cheerful, but rarely merry, at any sensible rate; seldom heard to break a jest; and when he did, he would be apt to blush at the levity of it: his gravity was natural without affectation.—His modesty was visible in a natural habitual blush, which was increased upon the least occasion, and oft discovered without any observable cause.—They that knew no more of him than by the briskness of his writings, found themselves deceived in their expectation, when they came in his company, noting the gravity and sobriety of his aspect and conversation; so free from loquacity, or much talkativeness, that he was something difficult to be engaged in any discourse; though when he was so, it was always singular, and never trite or vulgar. Parsimonious in nothing but his time, whereof he made as much improvement, with as little loss as any man in it: when he had any to spare from his drudging practice, he was scarce patient of any diversion from his study; so impatient of sloth and idleness, that he would say, he could not do nothing.—Sir Thomas understood most of the European languages; *viz.* all that are in Hutter's Bible, which he made use of. The Latin and Greek he understood critically; the Oriental languages, which never were vernacular in this part of the world, he thought the use of them would not answer the time and pains of learning them; yet had so great a veneration for the matrix of them, *viz.* the Hebrew, consecrated to the Oracles of God, that he was not content to be totally ignorant of it; though very little of his science is to be found in any books of that primitive language. And though much is said to be written in the derivative idioms of that tongue, especially the Arabic, yet he was satisfied with the translations, wherein he found nothing admirable.—In his religion he continued in the same mind which he had declared in his first book, written when he was but thirty years old, his *Religio Medici*, wherein he fully assented to that of the church of England, preferring it before any in the world, as did the learned Grotius. He attended the public service very constantly, when he was not withheld by his practice. Never missed the sacrament in his parish, if he were in town. Read the best English sermons he could hear of, with liberal applause; and delighted not in controversies. In his last sickness, wherein he continued about a week's time, enduring great pain of the cholic, besides a continual fever, with as much patience as hath been seen in any man, without any pretence of Stoical apathy, animosity, or vanity of not being concerned thereat, or suffering no impeachment of happiness. *Nihil agis dolor.*—His patience was founded upon the Christian philosophy, and a sound faith of God's Providence, and a meek and humble submission thereunto, which he expressed in few words: I visited him near his end, when he had not strength to hear or speak much; the last words which I heard from him, were, besides some expressions of dearnefs, that he did freely submit to the will of God, being without fear: He had oft triumphed over the king of terrors in others, and given many repulses in the defence of patients; but when his own turn came, he submitted with a meek, rational, and religious courage.—He might have made good the old saying of *Dat Galenus opes*, had he lived in a place that could have afforded it.

But

(2) In the Life prefixed to the Antiquities of Norwich, p. xix.

them here (2). This monument was erected from the tender affection of Lady Dorothy Browne, his widow, to whose memory, on the opposite pillar, there is another mural monument, which informs us that she died February 4, 1685, in the sixty-third year of her age. By this Lady Sir Thomas had ten children, of whom only one son (who is taken notice of in the next article) and three daughters survived him; all of them remarkable for inheriting their parents virtues, and enjoying an uncommon share of that sprightly wit and solid sense, so conspicuous in their father's writings; as they have also been by expressing an affectionate and becoming zeal for preserving their father's memory, and securing his literary remains from oblivion.

" But his indulgence and liberality to his children, especially in their travels; two of his sons in divers countries, and two of his daughters in France, spent him more than a little. He was liberal in his house entertainments, and in his charity; he left a comfortable, but no great estate, both to his lady and children, gained by his own industry. — Such was his sagacity and knowledge of all history, ancient and modern, and his observations thereupon so singular, that it hath been said by them that knew him best, that if his profession, and place of abode, would have suited his ability, he would have made an extraordinary man for the privy-council, not much inferior to the famous Padre Paulo, the late oracle of the Venetian state. — Though he were no prophet, nor son of a prophet, yet in that faculty which comes nearest it, he excelled, i. e. the stoic, wherein he was seldom mistaken, as to future events, as well public as private; but not apt to discover any presages or superstition (47)."

Dr. Johnson's character of Sir Thomas Browne as a writer in general, and of his style in particular, is too just, as well as too masterly, to be omitted. " But it is not on the praises of others, but on his own writings, that he is to depend for the esteem of posterity; of which he will not easily be deprived, while learning shall have any reverence among men: for there is no science, in which he does not discover some skill; and scarce any kind of knowledge, profane or sacred, abstruse or elegant, which he does not appear to have cultivated with success. — His exuberance of knowledge, and plenitude of ideas, sometimes obstruct the tendency of his reasoning, and the clearness of his decisions: on whatever subject he employed his mind, there started up immediately so many images before him, that he lost one by grasping another. His memory supplied him with so many illustrations, parallel or dependent notions, that he was always starting into collateral considerations: but the spirit and vigour of his pursuit always gives delight; and the reader follows him, without reluctance, through his mazes, in themselves flowery and pleasing, and ending at the point originally in view. — To have great excellencies, and great faults, "*magna virtutes nec minora vitia*, is the poetry," says our author, " of the best natures." " This poetry may be properly applied to the style of Browne: It is vigorous, but rugged; it is learned, but pedantic; it is deep, but obscure; it strikes, but does not please; it commands, but does not allure: his tropes are harsh, and his combinations uncouth. He fell into an age, in which our language began to lose the stability which it had obtained in the time of Elizabeth; and was considered by every writer as a subject on which he might try his plastic skill, by moulding it according to his own fancy. Milton, in consequence of this encroaching licence, began to introduce the Latin idiom: and Browne, though he gave less disturbance to our structures and phraseology, yet pored in a multitude of exotic words; many, indeed, useful and significant, which, if rejected, must be supplied by circumlocution, such as commensality for the state of many living at the same table; but many superfluous, as a paralogical for an unreasonable doubt; and some so obscure, that they conceal his meaning rather than explain it, as arthritical analogies for parts that serve some animals in the place of joints. — His style is, indeed, a tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words, brought together from distant regions, with terms originally appropriated to one art, and drawn by violence into the service of another. He must, however, be confessed to have augmented our philosophical diction;

and in defence of his uncommon words and expressions, we must consider, that he had uncommon sentiments, and was not content to express in many words that idea for which any language could supply a single term. — But his innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy: he has many *verba ardentia*, forcible expressions, which he would never have found, but by venturing to the utmost verge of propriety; and flights which would never have been reached, but by one who had very little fear of the shame of falling (48)."

The last thing which Dr. Johnson hath done, in his life of Sir Thomas Browne, is to vindicate him from the charge of infidelity; and having fully shewn the falsity of this accusation, the ingenious Biographer concludes in the following words: " The opinions of every man must be learned from himself: concerning his practice, it is safest to trust the evidence of others. Where these testimonies concur, no higher degree of historical certainty can be obtained; and they apparently concur to prove, that Browne was *zealous adherent to the faith of CHRIST, that he lived in obedience to his laws, and died in confidence of his mercy* (49)."

We are told, in note [2], that Sir Thomas Browne's '*Christian Morals*' was the last of his works that was published (*). But we learn from Dr. Johnson, that the posthumous pieces, communicated by Owen Briggstock, Esq; did not appear till 1722 (50).

There is a famous passage in the *Religio Medici*, in which the Author gives a long detail of his attainments, and yet declares that, among those millions of vices he had inherited from Adam, he had escaped the first and father-sin of pride (51). This hath been censured by Dr. Watts, not only as a strange and thoughtless expression, but as an evidence, that Sir Thomas Browne conversed but little at home; and that he was not acquainted with himself; since, while he strongly denied that any vanity belonged to him, he could practise it in so public a manner (52). Dr. Johnson concurs in the same censure, and observes, that " a perusal of the *Religio Medici* will not much contribute to produce a belief of the Author's exemption from this FATHER-SIN. Pride is a vice, which pride itself inclines every man to find in others, and to overlook in himself (53)."

Nevertheless, though Sir Thomas Browne's assertion may be regarded as an instance of his indiscretion, and as betraying some degree of self-deceit, we cannot, on the whole, think that he was proud. He speaks with such apparent integrity of himself, and with such a sense of his defects, as well as of his excellencies, that, if pride had made a considerable part of his character, he could not so confidently have asserted his exemption from it.

Upon a re-perusal of the '*Religio Medici*,' we are clearly of opinion, that, as it hath been too much censured, it hath, likewise, been too much applauded. Every one must acknowledge in it the novelty of paradoxes, the dignity of sentiment, the quick succession of images, the multitude of abstruse allusions, the subtlety of disquisition, and the strength of language (54). But it abounds, at the same time, with weak and undigested notions and suppositions. Endued with a vigorous fancy, and possessed of multifarious reading, the author throws out at random whatever occurs to him, and treats on a variety of topics which he had not maturely considered. If he had accompanied what he read, with greater patience of thought and enquiry, he would have fallen into fewer errors, and, by that means, have appeared, as a solid and useful writer, to greater advantage: but then he might not, perhaps, have been equally entertaining. Upon the whole, his imagination and his learning seem, in no small degree, to have exceeded his judgment.]

K.

7 Z

B R O W N E

(47) Dr. Johnson's Life of Sir Thomas Browne, prefixed to his '*Christian Morals*,' p. xli—xlviii.

(48) *Ibid.* p. lii—lv.

(49) *Ibid.* p. lxi.

(*) In 1716.

(50) *Ibid.* p. xxxiv.

(51) *Religio Medici*, p. 152. sixth edition.

(52) Watts's *Miscellaneous Thoughts*, p. 133. fifth edition.

(53) Johnson, *ubi supra*, p. l.

(54) *Ibid.* p. viii.