

WILLIAM BULLEIN, ELIZABETHAN PHYSICIAN AND AUTHOR*

by

WILLIAM S. MITCHELL

IT is appropriate to consider the life and works of William Bullein during this year, the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of his first book, and in view of his connection with the North of England, it is fitting that a librarian in Newcastle should do so.

William Bullein, who was a kinsman of Anne Boleyn, was born in the Isle of Ely during the reign of Henry VIII, probably between the years 1520 and 1530. Most of our knowledge of his life comes from odd scraps of information scattered in his work. It is not known for certain where he was educated or where he took his degrees in divinity and medicine, for he was both parson and physician, but a reference in his *Bulwarke of Defence* to 'R. R. . . . under whose banner I served most and gat all I have' may indicate that he studied under Robert Recorde (1510?–1558), mathematician, astronomer and physician, who taught at both Oxford and Cambridge.

He may be the William Bullein mentioned as plaintiff in a Chancery suit which lasted from October 1547 to 1552 concerning the ownership of certain goods,⁶ but apart from that the first certain date in his career seems to be the 9 June 1550, when he became Rector of Blaxhall in Suffolk, where, as he says 'sometime I was nere kinsman unto ye chefest house of that toun'. (*Government*, f. 84.) The life of a country parson cannot have been pleasing to him, for by 5 November 1554 he had resigned the living.⁵

Thereafter he turned to the practice of medicine in the north of England. Whether he attended poor patients is not made clear, but he was certainly proud of his connections with the gentry of Northumberland and Durham, and mentions several of them by name. He became physician to Sir Thomas Hilton, Baron of Hilton and Captain of Tynemouth Castle, to whom he dedicated his *Government of Health*, published in 1558. Another of his patients was Sir John Delaval, of a well-known Northumberland family, who 'hath been a patron of worship and hospitalitie'. Another was a Bellasis of Jarrow, as we shall hear later. He was physician to Sir Richard Alie, whom he describes as architect and builder of the strong walls of Berwick.

Two years after the publication of his *Government of Health* Bullein went to London, for on 15 June 1560 he leased a house and garden in Grub Street in the parish of St. Giles Cripplegate, where his brother Richard was Rector.⁶ It was evidently a house of some size and importance, for he paid £40 for a lease of 21 years and a rent of £12 6s. 8d. per annum—considerable sums at that time.

Misfortune pursued Bullein to London, for his goods, which he had sent by

* Presidential address delivered to the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine, 26 April 1958.



VV. B.

Fig. 1

WILLIAM BULLEIN

*from the woodcut portrait in his Government of Health, 1558,
in the Library of King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*

189

ship from the Tyne, were shipwrecked. He was also persecuted by his former patient's brother, William Hilton, of Biddick in the County of Durham. The situation arose after Bullein had married the widow of Sir Thomas Hilton, and doubtless William, some of whose debts Lady Hilton had paid, was jealous of Bullein. Sir Thomas, who signed his will on 8 November 1558, had died before 17 January 1561/2, when probate was granted to Lady Anne (or Agnes) his widow and executrix. Among the bequests was one of £6 13s. 4d. to 'Master Bullein'. The full account of the persecution occurs in the *Book of Simples* (Pt. 1 of the *Bulwarke*) in, of all places, a discussion on the healthful properties of milk, when he mentions that those who drink much milk are of good temperament or complexion, as in Wales, Suffolk, Essex and in a place in the 'mountains of the north called Alsten Moore' (f. 84). This reference to the North is enough to remind him of his tribulations and of his oppressor, and he goes off at a tangent to tell the story.

One William Hilton gentleman, brother to the said sir Thomas Hilton, accused me of no lesse crime then of moste cruell murder, of his own brother, which died of a fever, (sent onely of God) among his owne friendes; finishyng his life in the christen faith. But this William Hilton, causing me to be arained before that noble Prince, the Duke's grace of Norfolke, for the same: to this ende, to have had me died shamefully; That with the covetous Ahab, he might have through false wnesse and perjurie, obtained by the counsaill of Jezabell, a Vine yarde, by the price of blood. But it is written, *Testis mendax peribit*, a false wnesse shall come to nought, his wicked practise, was wisely espied, his folie derided, his bloodie purpose letted, and finally, I was with justice delivered. Notwithstanding, yet by the same William Hilton still molested & troubled asmoche as lieth in him, to shorten my daies, by some meanes or accidence. Which with neither lawfull policie, nor false testimonie, could hetherto accomlishe his wicked intent.

He goes on to say that it is for this reason that his book is shorter than it would otherwise have been, and then he continues:

. . . he have vexed a lady, whiche was his own brothers wife, whose shame, losse, yea and blood he hath sought which brothers wife redemed muche of his lande, from losse, in lending him a greate somme of money. And when this man should thankfully have repaid this lady her money, then he gratified her as he did me (f. 84^v).

The reference to the Duke of Norfolk is rather puzzling, as the only court in which he had any authority was that of Chivalry.⁶

The name of another of his persecutors occurs to Bullein when he is writing of the daisy (*belis*) for this reminds him of a certain Bellises or Belasyse (a Durham family) whom Bullein had cured of the palsy and of a quarten fever.

And afterwards the same Bellises, more unnaturall than a viper, sought divers waies to have murdered me: taking parte against me with my mortall enemies, accompanied with ruffins, for that bloody purpose . . . a dweller in the place whereas holy Bede was borne [Jarrow] but yet possessing none of his vertues. And thus of Belis the herb I make an ende; and of Bellises, which would have ended me (*Book of Simples*, f. 39^v).

Bullein and Dame Anne had already been involved in a lawsuit with William Hilton over 350 marks which William alleged were due to him but which Sir

Thomas had not handed over. This case was heard at York Assizes, but Bullein claimed that he was prevented from attending by threats on his life and that the verdict was given against him by a corrupt jury. After he reached London in 1560 he applied for a writ to overturn the York verdict. The murder charge appears to have been quashed, and the imprisonment was probably the result of the York verdict.⁶ Bullein and his wife were still in prison on 13 October 1561, for on that day the Bishop of Durham (James Pilkington) writing to Sir William Cecil, says 'the ladie Hilton and Bullein her husband be and have bene prisoners long in London & there may be found at your pleasure.'⁶ Bullein employed his time in prison in writing his *Bulwarke of Defence*, actually four works.

His first wife had died before 30 September 1566, for on that date his second marriage, to Anne Doffield, took place at St. Giles Cripplegate. His only child was of this marriage—a daughter, Margaret, baptized on 12 October 1567 at the same church. She married Sir Thomas Ridley, D.C.L., LL.D., Headmaster of Eton, Chancellor of Winchester, Vicar General to the Archbishop of Canterbury and a Member of Parliament.⁵

A further event is recorded before Bullein's death, for at Christmas 1570 the Yule log was lighted too copiously, with the result that the house went on fire, and Bullein had to answer in Court for his carelessness. The only excuse he could offer was that the chimney 'was builded upon a floor of timber quite unknown to the plaintiff or his family'.⁶

Bullein died on 7 January 1575/6 and was buried on the 9th, at St. Giles Cripplegate in the same grave as his brother Richard, and John Foxe, the martyrologist.

The works of William Bullein are: *The Government of Health*, 1558; *The Bulwarke of Defence*, 1562; *A Comfortable Regiment against the Pleurisi*, 1562; and *Regiment against the Fever Pestilence*, 1564. The dates are of the first publication of each work.

The Government of Health

The titlepage reads:

A newe booke, entituled the Governement of Health, wherin is uttered manye notable Rules for mannes preservation, with sondry symples and other matters, no lesse fruiteful then profitable: colect out of many approved authours. Reduced into the forme of a Dialogue, for the better understanding of thunlearned. Wherunto is added a sufferain Regiment against the pestilence.

This was first printed by John Day in London in 1558. A corrected edition, entitled *A newe Booke of Phisick*, appeared in the same year, and others in 1559 and 1595. It is dedicated, as has been mentioned, to 'Sir Thomas Hilton, Knight, Baron of Hilton and Captain of King and Quenes Majesties Castell of Tinmoth', whose arms are on the verso of the titlepage. At the beginning is a poem in praise of the work signed R. B., that is to say Richard Bullein, brother of the author, and on the verso of this page a woodcut of the author himself. (Fig. 1.) In the introductory epistle to the reader Bullein describes himself as a

young man (though he does not look it!) who supports his own small experience by his reading of authors ancient and contemporary.

The book is concerned with the virtues of moderation in eating and drinking, and it is in the form of a dialogue between John, the gourmand, and Humphrey, evidently Bullein himself, who counsels moderation, declaring that John makes his belly his God, and that he might have aspired to office at the court of Heliogabalus, the Roman Emperor notorious for his profligacy. John eventually is persuaded to seek instruction from Humphrey, who breaks into song, accompanying himself on the lute, on the subject of the four humours:

The bodies where heat & moister dwel
Be sanguen folkes as Galen tell
With visage faire and chekes rose ruddy
The sleses is much, & dremes be bluddy . . .

He describes the properties of foods, the four ages of man, and the members of the human body. Instructions for bloodletting are given, though Bullein does not believe in indiscriminate phlebotomy:

Old men, children or women with childe ought not to be lette bloode, nor also those people that dwelle in colde regions may not be lette bloude, because the bloode is the chief warmer of nature: the people that dwel on hoote regions, if they be letten bloude, it will dry there bodies, for bloode is the cheife moister of nature (f. 28).

On fol. 23^v is a cut of a zodiac man with instructions for bloodletting and on fol. 26^v is a figure of a skeleton, copied from Vesalius.

Directions for bathing and washing are given, and the importance of diet in health and disease, of good air and bad are emphasized; the best situation for a house is recorded, and suitable exercises recommended are tennis, dancing, running, wrestling and riding. When John quotes a friend as telling him of three good doctors, 'Doctor Diet and Doctor Quiet and Doctor Merryman', an echo of the *Regimen* of the School of Salerno, Humphrey, the tutor, enlarges on this, saying that a quiet mind is to be preferred to glory and riches.

In dede the poor silly shepehard, doth pleasantly pipe with his shepe, whan mighty princes do fight amonge their subiectes, & break many sleses in golden beds, whan bakers in bags, & brewers in bottels, do snorte upon hard strawe, fearing no sodaine misshappe (f. 42).

This is almost Euphuism, with its alliteration and marked rhythm, but Lyly's *Euphues* was not published until 1579, 20 years later. Suddenly John turns his attention to simples, and a long discussion follows on the virtues and vices of plants, meat, fish, bread, ale, wine and other foods. In treating of geese Bullein mentions that 'There be great gese in Scotland which bredeth upon a place called the Basse' (f. 93), that is to say the solan geese, which still breed on the Bass Rock. He also tells of the strange breeding of the 'Bernacles', or Barnacles, the trees which bear shells, from which are hatched barnacle geese, 'as the people of the Northe partes of Scotland knoweth'. This tale, though discredited

by Albertus Magnus in the thirteenth century, survived even after Bullein's time, and a picture of the tree can be seen in Gerard's *Herball* of 1597—and Gerard claimed to have confirmed its existence by his own observations! Many of the descriptions of plants are shorter versions of those given in the *Book of Simples* which forms part of the *Bulwarke*. A discourse on pestilence follows, including such directions as the avoidance of marshy ground and of sleeping at noon; fish and flesh should not be mingled in the diet, and moderation in diet is recommended. In the final epistle to the reader, which is dated 1 March 1558, the author promises another book, on 'Healthfull Medicins'.

The author, it will be remembered, describes himself as young in the first epistle to the reader, and for that reason, he says, he has quoted from many learned authors such as Hippocrates, Galen, Avicenna, and contemporary writers such as Fuchs and Gesner. He also quotes extensively from one Simeon Sethi, or Seth, a Greek of Constantinople who lived in the eleventh century A.D., and whose only work, *Syntagma peri trophon dynameon*, or *Syntagma de alimentorum facultatibus*, though a mere compilation from the works of Galen and other authors, seems to have had a vogue about the time of Bullein, who must have known the Basel edition of 1538; another followed in 1561.

The Bulwarke of Defence

The promised book on Healthful Medicines was in fact written within a year, but the manuscript was among the goods which perished on the voyage from the Tyne to London, and in Bullein's words 'So my Labour was loste!' Bullein, however, took the opportunity of rewriting the work when he was in prison, with the result that the book, now known as *The Bulwarke of Defence*, was published in 1562, while another edition followed in 1579. From a bibliographical point of view the titlepage is interesting, as it illustrates one of the practices of sixteenth-century printers, namely the use of the same woodcut border in different books. This border was used from as early as 1548, first of all with the arms of Catherine Parr in the oval at the foot and the initials E. W. (for Edward Whitchurch, the original owner) in the tablets at the sides. It was used in this state until 1554, and then, with the arms and initials removed, from 1559 and 1577.⁴

The title, *The Bulwarke of Defence*, comes from the author's conceit that the book is like a fort to defend men from sickness and wounds, and so he calls it his Bulwark. It is dedicated to Lord Henry Carey, first Baron Hunsdon, whose mother was a sister of Anne Boleyn. He was, incidentally, Governor of Berwick from 1568 until 1587, and was one of the Commissioners appointed to try Mary Queen of Scots in 1588.

The book consists of four works, with a fifth represented by a token page only, namely *The Book of Simples*, *A Dialogue betwene Sorenes and Chyrurgi on Apostumacions and Wounds*; *The Anatomie* (of one page only); *The Booke of Compoundis*; and *The Booke of the Use of Sick Men and Medicens*.

The Book of Simples (herbs and plants of medicinal use, though Bullein uses the word in a wider sense) is in the form of a dialogue between Marcellus, the

questioner, and Hilarius, the instructor. The doctrine of humours is, of course, the basis for the qualities of the simples treated of. Bullein has much to say of the virtues of honey and breaks into verse in writing of 'the king of the bees and his armie'. His experiences in the north of England are recorded several times, as when he mentions sorrel, which 'in the north is called sower Dockens' (f. 7^r). Barley sodden with milk, water and sugar to make a wholesome pottage for choleric persons or young people, is much used in the north, where it is called 'bigge Keale' (f. 8). Of maidenhair he says that 'great plentie growe aboute the Chiveat hills in the north'—showing that he used the pronunciation still current on the Southern side of the Cheviots.

'Lettice', says Bullein, 'bringeth sleppe', just as more recently Beatrix Potter has reminded us that they are soporific. Barnacles are mentioned, and the story of their engendering 'though to the incredible [incredulous] and ignorant it semeth untrue' (f. 12). He has the propensity of his time for punning, and a good example occurs at the end of his discourse on the virtues and qualities of the herb thyme, when he says:

And thus I doe conclude of Tyme, desiryng God that we maie spende the tyme well to his glory, and profite of our neighbour, for tyme cannot be called again, but by little and little slippes awaie, thei whiche Godly observe the tyme, in tyme to come, shall receive the frutes of their owne labours, with happie lives, quiete myndes, and blessed endes: whereas the shamefull abusers of tyme, and misusers of themselves, although evill spent time, seme well unto them, yet their lives be wicked, their labor fruitlesse, and their ende horrible: as ones [once] shall appere when death doeth come, which is thende of every tyme (f. 18^r).

His tale of the false Bellasis, prompted by his discourse on *belis*, the daisy, has already been mentioned.

He mentions mandragora, and mandrakes (which he distinguishes from it), and says of mandrake juice that it 'bringeth slepe, & casteth men into a trauns on a deep tirrible dreame, untill he be cut of the stone' (f. 44). Though these words are actually a translation of Pliny, Bullein is probably the first writer in English to mention an anaesthetic agent. A glimpse of the ways of beggars is seen in his declaration that they use crowfoot to blister their legs and faces 'which maketh them to seeme Leperous' (f. 44^v). He praises the botanist William Turner (a Morpeth man) whom he describes as 'a jewell among us English men, as well as among the Germans, as Conradus Gesnerus reporteth of him for his singular learning, knowledge and judgements' (f. 67). He mentions the making of salt at the 'shiles [shields, as in North and South Shields] by Tinmouth Castle' and records that he himself still owns a pan of salt upon the same water (f. 75^v).

At the end of the *Book of Simples* are three pages of illustrations, mostly of plants, but with a few stills included, probably to fill up space, though stills and herbs are associated on the titlepage of Roesslin's *Kreutterbuc* of 1533. It is well known that there are two main streams of herbal illustrations, the earlier tracing their origin to the manuscripts of Dioscorides, the later to the exquisite drawings in Fuchs's great herbal, *De historia stirpium*, 1542. Most of

the woodcuts in the works of Dodoens, Turner, Bock, Lyte and other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors are copied from Fuchs or printed from the actual blocks of the octavo version of his work. It is not difficult to trace the origin of Bullein's illustrations, since a comparison of the cuts in the herbals of Fuchs (1542), Turner (1551), Dodoens (1554), and Bullein (1562) shows that those of Turner and Dodoens are reversed, indicating that they have been copied from Fuchs on to the wood, while those in Bullein resemble the originals in Fuchs's *De historia stirpium* to a remarkable degree.

The second part of the *Bulwarke* is a dialogue on apostumations and wounds. The previous one, on simples, took place, appropriately enough, in summer and out of doors, but this one takes place indoors, since it is winter. Sorenes asks to be cured of his sores, which are illustrated, and the surgeon begins with a history of his art, not only mentioning among contemporaries Caius, Turner, Thomas Phayre, Andrew Boorde, William Cunningham and Robert Recorde, but also giving an alphabetical list of writers on surgery. There follows a discourse on the art suggested by the derivation of the word ('Greek chir a hand and ergon ministerie') and an attack on quacks and ignorant surgeons, the author breaking into verse on the subject, concluding

So of all knowledge, Chyrurgi is moste beste.
For no treasure or arte, can helpe the wounded man:
When the Chyrurgian, by his cunningy onely can.
Now let this rime passe, God send us of his grace; (f. 7^v)

On the virtues of the surgeon he adds 'But Nature is the worker, the Phisicion is but her minister. Therefore the Chyrurgicall phisicion is natures servaunt.' (f. 8.)

On incisions Bullein points out that these should be made in the lowest part 'so that the matter maie the better avoide [fall]'. The incision must be made in the form of a half or crescent moon except near sinews, when it should be made parallel to them (f. 14^v). There are two kinds of wounds, the author tells us, simple and compounded. The simple wounds, where no substance is lost, can be cured by 'cobblers, carters and women', but the compounded wounds need the attention of the surgeon. An Edinburgh surgeon, Pate Hardie, is mentioned by Bullein as saving at Berwick the life of a captain who had been wounded in the neck; this surgeon was among those who volunteered to protect Edinburgh when invasion was threatened in 1558, and he signed a medico-legal report on 27 June 1569. (Comrie, 169, 172.)² Two of Bullein's aphorisms are perhaps worth quoting; 'Visite your patient again with a glad-some countenance' (f. 21^v) and 'Make your medicenes yourself, and trust not so moche the Apothecaries' (f. 27^v).

The Anatomie, which was to have been the third work in the book, is represented by one page only, showing a skeleton, because 'unfortunate happe have prevented me with lettes [hindrances]' (Ii 4).

The fourth work is *The Booke of Compoundis*, again in dialogue form, between Sickness, the questioner, and Health. The recipes include not only medicinal

prescriptions, but conserves, such as a conserve of violets and sugar, included for its curative properties, for it cures inflammations of choler, quenches the thirst and 'moveth a man to the stoole' (f. 4^v). Two recipes with a modern sound are for *Emplastrum diachilon album* (fenugreek, linseed, holyoak and litharge) and *Emplastrum diachilon magnum*, which includes 'the fat in the belly of the seele fish' (f. 10^v).

Sympathetic medicine is seen in his *Loche de pulmone vulpis*, compounded of the dried lungs of a fox, liquorice, maidenhair, fenell seed and sugar, and prescribed for consumptions and diseases of the stomach 'as it doth both comfort and cleanseth the lunges' (f. 14). Recipes are given for pills, syrups, lozenges and ointments, and the author's orderly mind is seen in the alphabetical arrangement of these according to the Latin terminology *pilule—syrupi—trochisci—unguenta*. A subject index of recipes according to their uses and a dictionary of technical terms conclude the work.

The last work included in the *Bulwarke* is *The Book of the Use of Sick Men and Medicens*, which deals with the use and abuse of medicines, rules of health and so on. Bullein's fondness for punning is seen in a passage on boxing, that is to say cupping, for he adds a few words on the usefulness of boxing in defending oneself against any 'loitring lubber within your house' (f. 68). He treats of such subjects as fasting, sleep, fear and other disturbances of the mind, of joy and shame as causes of death, and after mentioning how Lucrece had killed herself for shame, he adds 'But fewe women now a daies will take the matter so unkindly, or putte them selves to soche daunger' (f. 78). The causes of death are mainly, according to Bullein, the want of unity among the humours:

When one humor doe greatly abounde his thre felowes, gettingyng the victorie, then for lack of unitie or agrement among themselves, the whole bodie is a daunger to give place to one, and yelde to death (f. 79).

Signs of sickness of the four humours are given in tabulated form, and some of the Aphorisms of Hippocrates are quoted, the work ending with Sickness expressing his thanks to Health for his discourse. Finally there is a verse, signed W. B.:

Though our giftes be never so small,
Yet let us give thanks to God for all:
And who of talentes have great store,
Their accomptes to God shalbe the more (f. 82).

Regiment against Pleurisi

A very short work which appeared separately in the same year as the *Bulwarke* is *A comfortable Regiment and a very wholesome Order against the most perilous Pleurisi wherof many doe daily die within this City of London and other Places*. A short history of the disease since Biblical times begins the work, and then follows a description of the disease and a note that there are two kinds of pleurisy, the true 'when it cometh of blood or mingled with blood and choler', the false 'when it cometh of flegme or melancholie'. The prime cause of the

disease, according to Bullein, is when for want of good ale, beer or wine poor people are forced to drink cold water! The signs are five in number: pricking in the side, sharp fever, short breath, cough with headache, and swift pulse 'without order or tyme'. The causes, apart from cold water, may include fear, dread, care, and 'sharp things as vinegar'. Prescriptions for the disease are given, and include clysters, fomentations (of camomile, melilot and dill), ointments (including Montanus's ointment of camomile, oils of lilies and red roses, and goose grease), and lozenges. General directions as to health conclude the little work of 36 small pages. This is the scarcest of all Bullein's works—not that any are common—for only one copy, that in the British Museum, is available in libraries in this country.

Regiment against the Fever Pestilence

Bullein's last work, *A Dialogue bothe pleasaunte and pietifull, wherin is a goodly Regimete against the Fever Pestilence, with a Consolation and Comfort against Death*, appeared in 1564, printed by John Kingston, and though it bears on the title-page the words 'newly corrected', it appears to be the first edition. Later editions came out in 1569, 1573 and 1578, but copies of all four are now remarkably scarce. There is a modern reprint of the work, edited in 1888 by Mark and A. H. Bullen for the Early English Text Society, though unfortunately the promised volume of commentary never materialized. That the book was fairly well known in its day is shown by an allusion in Thomas Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron Walden*, 1596, where he mentions that he has written the book in the form of a dialogue 'much like Bullen and his Doctor Tocrub'. Nashe therefore knew the editions of 1573 or 1578, for the name of Doctor Tocrub (of whom more later) does not occur in that of 1564.

The book differs in kind, though not in form, from Bullein's other works, in that it is more of a medical novel in dialogue form than a medical work only. Though described as 'a dialogue' it is actually a series of dialogues, or a dialogue-novel in eight scenes, dealing with the flight from plague-stricken London of a citizen, his wife and a servant. The immediate origin of the book was the outbreak of plague in London in June, 1563, exacerbated by the return of Elizabeth's already infected troops from her ill-fated attack on Le Havre in August of the same year. The weekly figures of the deaths from plague in London are available, and can be seen most readily in Creighton's *History of Epidemics in Britain* (I, 305). They rose from 17 in the week ending 12 June to 299 in that ending 6 August, and to 976 (27 August), the highest figure being 1,828 (1st October). Thereafter the incidence began to decrease, but the epidemic did not abate until January 1564. The total number of deaths from the disease was nearly 18,000.

Bullein's Dialogue is described in the introduction to the 1888 edition as 'merry tales (pills to purge melancholy at plague-time)' and much of it is taken up with stories told by one or other of the characters to pass the time on the journey. The scenes are these: 1, in the house of the citizen, named simply *Civis*, and his wife, *Uxor*; 2, in the house of Antonius, who is dying of plague; 3, in Antonius's garden (the Doctor and the Apothecary); 4, also in the garden,

when two rascally lawyers plan to get Antonius's money; 5, in Antonius's bed-chamber; 6, on the road to Barnet; 7, at an inn; 8, on the road again.

The first scene opens with the arrival at the citizen's house of a beggar from Redesdale, who is most indignant when his accent is thought to be that of a Scot (Bullein's knowledge of the Northumberland dialect is shown in the speech of the beggar). He describes how the people of London are flocking into the country to escape the plague. He says:

I met with wagoes, cartes and horses full laden with young barnes, for fear of the black Pestilence, with them boxes of medicens and sweete perfumes. O God! how fast did they run by hundredes, and were afraied of eche other for fear of smityng [mod. Scots 'smitting'].

The citizen tells how he sent his children into the country some weeks before. He sends the beggar on to the house of Antonius, a rich man, on whom Dr. Tocrub was called to attend two hours ago. Tocrub is accepted as an anagram for Dr. Burcot or Burchard, a German physician and metallurgist who was evidently well-known in London but whom Bullein disliked for some unknown reason. There are references to Burcot in the State Papers some years later, in 1577, when he was asked to report on the contents of the gold and silver ore brought back by Frobisher from his second expedition. It is worth noting that in the first edition of the *Dialogue* the name of the doctor is given as Antonius Capistranus, and that the name Tocrub appears only in the editions of 1573 and 1578.

The second dialogue is between Antonius and the doctor. Antonius has not yet given up hope, but the doctor knows that the patient has no chance of recovery. Antonius affects to believe that it is all a matter of money whether the doctor will cure him or not, and, referring to a chain of one hundred angels (an angel was a gold coin worth 10s. bearing the figure of St. Michael) that he gave to the doctor during his previous illness he says 'Who is able to resist such a multitude of angels? I think few doctours of Phisicke'. (p. 11, E.E.T.S. ed.)

In the garden scene the interlocutors are the doctor and Crispin the apothecary. A description of the garden shows that it is full of flowers and herbs, and that it contains statues of the nine Muses and of past and contemporary poets among them Gower, Chaucer, Skelton, Lydgate, 'Bartlet', who was born 'on the colde side of Tweede' (Alexander Barclay, author of *The Ship of Fools* and *Eclogues*) and, in the first edition only, 'Sir Davie Linse uppon the mounte, an auncient knight in orange Tawnie, bearing upon his breast a white lion with a crown of rich gold upon his head breaking asonder the cross keys of Rome' that is to say Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, the poet, and Lyon King of Arms from 1542 until 1555.

Avarus and Ambodexter, described as 'two Pettifoggers in the lawe' show Bullein satirizing lawyers; they plot to trick the dying man into allowing them to execute his will or otherwise rob him.

In the fifth scene Dr. Tocrub and the Apothecary attend the sick man. The doctor discourses on the plague and on the means of combating it, giving a number of prescriptions against the disease. He names the causes as corruption

of the air and evil diet or repletion, and he declares that winds can carry the pestilence from stinking places or dead bodies. Prescriptions are given for syrups, pills (of aloes, myrrh, etc.), ointments, and for the making of a pomander. The doctor takes his leave before the death of Antonius, for, says he, 'Thei which are preservers of the life of manne, ought not to be present at the death or buriall of the same man.'

In the fifth colloquy we return to the citizen, his wife and their servant Roger. They have decided to leave London and join their children in the country. They ride ten miles in the morning and reach Barnet. Beyond this the wife sees smoke rising and is astonished to learn that charcoal is being made, as she thought that everything was made in London and that charcoal grew upon trees. Bullein's marginal gloss on this is 'A wise cockney.' Roger tells various tales, such as that of the lion caught in a net and released by a mouse, the ducks and hens in the water, and others, to while away the journey, while the citizen tells of monsters presaging famine and pestilence. At length they arrive at an inn, where they dine.

Here they examine the Latin sayings and the pictures which adorn the inn walls. The pictures are for the most part allegorical, including a university, represented by a female figure from whose right breast flows milk and from her left breast blood; the Romish church; the ship of fools; youth and age, and so on. They invite a fellow-guest, Mendax, to dine with them, and he regales them with tales of his travels in strange lands. These are the usual stories current at the time and include the land of Mandragasta, where there are men with no heads but with eyes in their breasts (Shakespeare's

men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders)

and men who shelter from the sun by lying down and holding their one foot over their heads. In Selenetide there are women who lay eggs and hatch children fifty times the normal size. He tells of Ethiopia, and land of Prester John, and of the Antipodes, where there is an ideal state.

The citizen, his wife and Roger the servant then leave the inn to continue their journey, but before they have gone far Roger sees a black cloud approach; within this is Death, who appears to the citizen. Death carries three arrows, one pale (famine), one blood red (war), and the third black (pestilence) with which he will strike the citizen, who offers him gold to be spared. The words which Bullein puts into the mouth of Death are worth quoting:

You are well overtaken, I am glad that wee are mette together; I have seen you since you were borne; I have threatened you in all your sicknesse, but you did never see me nor remembred me before this daie; neither had I power to have taken you with me untill now. For I have Commission to strike you with this black dart, called the pestilence; my maister hath so commaunded me; and as for gold I take no thought for it; I love it not. No treasure can keepe me back the twinkelyng of an eye from you; you are my subject, I am your lorde. I will cut of your journey, and separate your mariage, but not cut of your yeeres; for thei are determined when I should come; this is your appoincted tyme. And when the tyme shal be appoincted me,

I will smite your wife, children and servauntes; thei shall not be hidden from me. I will finde them forthe, be thei hidden never so secret, or flie never so swift or farre of; for I am so swifte that in a moment of an eye I can compasse the whole worlde, and am of so wonderful a nature, that I can bee in sondrie places at once, and in sondrie shapes. In flames of fire I often tymes doe consume mankinde; in the water I doe kill them; I am marvellous in woorke. I spare nothing that hath life, but I bring all to an ende, & to mine own nature, which is death (pp. 115–16).

The citizen asks for time to return home in order to settle his affairs, but Death cannot permit this, as he has other work to do. The wife is for calling Dr. Tocrub, but her husband will have none of this, declaring that only Theologus can comfort him now. The remainder of the work is the consolation offered by the theologian to the citizen, whose last words are 'Amen. Amen. Lord, receive my soul into thy handes, thou God of truth.'

As appendices there are letters from the author to four persons, among them the surgeon Thomas Gale and the Protestant divine Richard Turner.

It should be added that another work has been attributed to Bullein, namely, *A Brief Discourse of Vertue and Operations of Balsame and Diet for Healthe*, 1585, but it is doubtful if he is really the author.

A. H. Bullen, in his essay on his earlier namesake¹ sums up thus:

Bullein was a man of parts, who could tell a merry tale with infinite jest, while in his graver utterances he may be compared—not to his discomfiture—with the acknowledged great masters of English prose.

One other distinction I venture to claim for him, that he was the earliest writer in English on any aspect of the history of medicine. It is little enough, certainly, but in his work on surgery he gives a short history of the subject, and a list of the writers on it, and the first few pages of his opusculum on pleurisy consist of a history of the disease from Egyptian and Biblical times. He cannot be called an original writer, but he is an interesting one, who deserves to be recalled—even if only briefly—from the neglect which has overtaken him.

REFERENCES

1. BULLEN, A. H., *Elizabethans*, London, 1924.
2. COMRIE, J. D., *History of Scottish Medicine*, 2nd edition, 2 vols., London, 1932.
3. CREIGHTON, C., *A History of Epidemics in Britain*, 2 vols., Cambridge, 1891–4.
4. MCKERROW, R. B. and FERGUSON, F. S., *Title-page Borders used in England and Scotland, 1485–1640*, London, 1932.
5. *Dictionary of National Biography*.
6. WELPLEY, W. H., 'An unanswered question: Bullein and Hilton', *Notes and Queries*, 1957, cccii, 3–6.