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THE MEDICINE IN SHAKESPEARE.*

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"ALL the world's a stage, and men and women merely players," and from time to time in the tragedy of this world's history there appears amongst the actors of this earthly theatre some wonderful performer who embodies, perhaps, the inventive genius of a whole decade. Perhaps some new and startling religious truth is acted out, or some great literary achievement. Amongst these wonders of mental development there will be one who stands out as clear and full of glory as the cameo cut upon the finest gem, and this superlative genius, this god amongst men, leaves his foot-prints on the sands of time, for after-ages to wonder at. Usually he is centuries before his age and is misunderstood by his fellow-man. But time brings education; and at last the truth which was at first the butt, becomes the arrow, and winged with its wisdom flies unerringly to the white centre. Such a man, whoever he may have been, was the author of the plays which lie before me. His stupendous genius was not recognized in his own day, yet under the cover of "a despised weed he has done the greatest good to mankind," teaching them to know themselves, and holding up before them the looking-glass of truth, teaching, as he did, a new language, and aptly illustrating each new thought with visible actors, who, picturing the action, taught the word. So universal was his brain that the lawyer, the astronomer, and the physician, each claims him for his own. The priest denies their claims, the scientist is sure that he belongs to him, the mystic throws aside each claim with quotations of his own, and so through, the whole category of men the brotherhood is found. But the lecturer to-night being first and foremost a member of that great profession which a god has delighted to follow, will not allow the honor to be taken from

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the medical profession, and will try to show he must have been (if not a doctor of medicine) a close student of our learned art. Was he an anatomist? Every portion of the human body known to his day is mentioned. Was he a student of physiology? Physiological functions are given in detail. Had he knowledge of *materia medica*? He speaks of many medicines, and in *Romeo and Juliet*, page 60, writes as follows :

“I must up fill this osier cage of ours,
 With baleful weedes, and precious-juiced flowers.
 The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tombe;
 What is her burying grave that is her wombe:
 And from her wombe children of divers kind
 We sucking on her natural bosom find;
 Many for many vertues excellent,
 None but for some, and yet all different.
 O'mickle is the powerful grace that lies
 In herbs, plants, stones and their true qualities,
 Or nought so vile, that on the earth doth live,
 But to the earth some special good doth give,
 Nor ought so good, but, strain'd from that faire use,
 Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse;
 Vertue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
 And vice sometime by action dignified.
 Within the infant rin'd of the weak flower,
 Poison hath residence, and medicine power,
 For this being smelt, with that part chears each part,
 Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart;
 Two such opposed kings encampe them still
 In man as well as herbs grace and rude will;
 And, where the wonder is predominant,
 Full soone the canker death eates up that plant.”

Was he a neurologist? It might be called his specialty, and I must confess I feel hardly competent to analyze his wonderful descriptions and delineations in this great field of our science. All this lecture might be taken up with abstracts upon this one theme, for all the types of insanity are fully described and in the most beautiful language. I will but call your attention to characters and plays and leave you to study them as they should be studied, and if you will read them in the order I shall name, their greatness, grandeur and depth will appear as it is, phenomenal.

The sleep-walking dementia of lady Macbeth is paralleled by the suicidal insanity of Ophelia. King Lear's delirium is a good foil to Hamlet's feigned madness. The tragical jealousy of Othello, is a counter-foil to the comical jealousy of Master Ford. Richard the Third, Macbeth, Edmund, Malvolio, the different fools, Gonerill, Timon of Athens, and Titus Andronicus, will, in the order named, show types of either real or feigned madness, or mental instability. Notice, if you please, where Macbeth, tied to the stake rages like a chained bear, he counterparts Richard the Third's frenzy of despair. Hamlet's knowledge "that when the wind is north north-east he knowes a hawke from a handsaw" is aptly

parodied by Touchstone, who, under the cover of his folly shoots his wit, for he uses his folly as a stalking horse and shoots his quips and wisdom from that cover in an inimitable manner. Othello's "trifles light as air are confirmations strong as holy writ," for like the Tartar's bow, they fly backward to Master Ford who "searches a hollow walnut" for his wife's lover. Ophelia's pitiful singing, while floating down the stream to her death, is plainly opposite to Gonerill's mad and frantic appeal to Edgar before her suicide. When Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep, wrings her hands and in invisible water washes them, she shows quite another phase of mental disturbance than that of Titus Andronicus who sees in the queen Tamora and her two sons, the living pictures of murder, revenge and rape. Timon's melancholy madness which leads him to dig up roots and herbs with his nails to live upon, and Malvolio incarcerated in a dungeon in his full wits are beautiful specimens of different conditions of real or feigned madness.

The author of the plays must have, at sometime in his life, taken up the study of these diseases; how else could he have shown them to us in so varied a form? No member of the laity could have seen and so accurately written of them; the descriptions are too verbose not to have been the study of years. The thoughts are too widely different to have emanated from a brain that had not at one time thoroughly mastered the subject in all its branches. Bedlam was not a pleasant place to visit in his day, and even if one did visit it he could not in the darkness and stench of the noisome dungeons have seen much more than a number of raging, human animals. He would needs have gone again and again, before he could draw conclusions from his examinations. This man, however, does draw such conclusions and never makes a mistake. Hamlet rages but once in the whole play, and that is when his passion at Ophelia's brother draws him out, and he for a moment forgets his part. Ophelia lives and dies without having once given way to rage. She remains from first to last the sweet and pitiful woman, and even when her brain gives way her gentle disposition shows through the veil of madness. King Lear, on the other hand, spouts fire and thunder from beginning to end, and Timon curses his enemies without one ray of pity. His dark and morbid mind remains the same whether sane or insane. Each case is held up to the light as distinct as a sunbeam, and each type is taken from a living, breathing model, for if King Lear had at any time dropped into melancholia, or had Ophelia raged, or Master Ford committed murder, the plays would not have been worth a thought, but the great mind that conceived and wrote them, knew too much to fall into such an error, and he made the descriptions as accurate as the best text-books of the present day.

A great specialist of our own day says "one of the first symptoms of insanity is continual smiling." Turn to Twelfth Night and see how Malvolio is adjudged insane, because he came before his mistress cross-gartered and smiling. See how this master of medicine gave this truth to the world three hundred years ago. How did he know it? Where did he find it if not from the study of the insane? Do not men differ to-day as to Hamlet's mental condition? Did he not ape the real article so well that the picture is too life-like not to be misunderstood? Was he really or only feignedly insane? I might go on with this interesting study all the evening but as there are other things hidden in this box of wonders, I shall be forced to let it lie as it is, and turn to the next subject.

SIR WALTER SCOTT said, "the death-bed scene of poor old Jack Falstaff is the

most pathetic and pitiful death-scene ever written." The bishop of Winchester died from poison, Humphrey of Gloster was strangled, and George, Duke of Clarence, was first hit upon the head and then drowned in a butt of malmsey. I will read you portions of these three death scenes and turn to the next, the Aspic's Trail and bite, the death by drowning, Caesar's falling sickness, Henry the Fourth's stroke of apoplexy, the death of Katherine, the accouchment of Ann Boleyn, the descriptions of wounds, examination of urine, the divisions of ague into tertian and quotidian, the descriptions of fevers, gout, syphilis, senility, blindness, hunger, use of plaster, bleeding, the exhibition of aconite, hemlock, rue, parmequita, sulphur, mercury, iron and a host of other medical terms, descriptions and thoughts can only be mentioned, as the time is too limited to enter into their complete reading, for I wish to open up a comparatively new question—the circulation of the blood as found in the plays. With it I shall have to give you a little anatomical knowledge from the plays, for the author must have either dissected the human body or at least seen it done, and that he was perfectly familiar with the experiments and proofs of the circulation I think I can show to the satisfaction of all my hearers. For we find it scattered through all the thirty-six plays contained in this volume, and in so plain and elaborate a manner that I cannot believe but that I can show you he was either the original discoverer of the great anatomical and physiological truth or knew intimately the experiments and dissections upon which it is based. Here I make an extraordinary statement which is, if WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE wrote the plays bearing his name, he discovered the circulation instead of DR. WILLIAM HARVEY. And further, if SHAKESPEARE did write the plays, HARVEY stole the discovery from SHAKESPEARE. One of these statements must be correct if it is allowed for an instant that WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE wrote the plays, and I will now proceed to prove my statement, and I must commence it or preface it with a short epitome of both HARVEY and SHAKESPEARE.

DR. WILLIAM HARVEY took his literary degree at Caius college, Cambridge, and his medical degree at the great school of medicine at Padua. He returned to London and was, in the year 1615, appointed Lumlian professor at Bartholomew hospital. In the year 1616, about the latter part, he made his first discovery of the circulation, but did not make it public until the year 1619, when he published his first little monograph upon the subject, but it was not until the year 1628 that he became fully sure the world was ready for the announcement. In that year he published the work which makes him famous at the present day.

MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE finished writing, so his biographers tell us, in the year 1612, and although the works bearing his name were not published until 1623, and although they were double in amount, all of them having been re-written, still, the gentlemen referred to, say he did nothing after 1612. Master William, having finished his work, thought it best to depart from this vale of tears, and did so in April, 1616. Notice the last of his writing, done in 1612, and his death occurring in the April before HARVEY makes his discovery.

If there is one word in the plays of the circulation, then there is a great discrepancy between SHAKESPEARE and HARVEY. For if HARVEY did make it SHAKESPEARE must have risen from his grave to write it in the 1623 edition. If, on the other hand, SHAKESPEARE wrote it before his death, then HARVEY must have stolen it. The first thought that arises is, get the early editions of the plays and see if it

was in them. But here steps in a difficulty which we cannot overcome, namely, six of the plays never appear except in the 1623 edition, and all the others are completely rewritten and enlarged to about double their original size. For instance, Richard Third's whole opening speech, commencing "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this son of York" is not found in any of the early editions of the plays. So of them all, they are so changed from the first printed copies that there is no use in citing them in any way, so that we are forced to abide by the 1623 edition and no other.

This being the case, and as the 1623 is the only edition having all the so-called SHAKESPEARE plays, we will use that as the basis of comparison. If my hearers will, when they go home, take their *fac similia* of the 1623 and turn to Coriolanus, page 2, they may read the first of the quotations I shall make:

"Your most grave belly was deliberate,
Not rash like his accusers and thus answered:
True is it, my incorporate friend, quoth he,
That I receive the general food at first
Which do you live upon: and fit it is;
Because I am the store-house and the shop
Of the whole body: but if you do remember,
I send it through the rivers of your blood,
Even to the court the heart—to th' seat o' th' braine;
And, through the cranks and offices of man,
The strongest nerves, and small inferiour veines,
From me receive that natural competencie
Whereby they live: and though that all at once,
You, my good friends (this says the belly) mark me,

Now please turn to Romeo and Juliette, page 53, and read:

With purple fountains issuing from your veins.

Then the same, page 71:

Take thou this, viole being then in bed,
And this distilling liquor drink thou of,
When presently through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humor, for no pulse
Shall keep his native progress but surcease;
No warmth nor breath shall testify thou livest;
The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade.

Next turn to Love's Labour Lost, page 135:

Why, universal plodding poisons up
The nimble spirits in the arteries:
As motion, and long during action, tires
The sinewy vigor of the traveller.

Now drop down the same column and read:

Lives not alone emured in the brain;
But with the motion of all elements,

Courses as swift as thought in every power;
 And gives to every power a double power,
 Above their functions and their offices.
 It adds a precious seeing to the eye;

Turn to the same play, page 134, and read:

When a hand, a foot, a face, an eye, a gait, a state, a brow, a breast a
 [waist, a leg, a limb.

Now Twelfth Night, page 255:

Liver, brain and heart,
 These sovereign thrones are all supplied and filled.

The same, page 266:

If he were opened and you find so much blood in his liver
 As will clog the foot of a flea, I will eat th' rest of th' anatomy.

Now turn to Henry the Sixth, part II, page 134:

See how the blood is settled in his face
 Oft have I seene a timely-parted ghost
 Of ashy semblance, meagre, pale, and bloodless
 Being all decended to the labouring heart
 Who in the conflict that it holds with death
 Attracts the same for aydance 'gainst the enemy.
 Which with the heart there cools and ne're returneth
 To blush and beautifie the cheeke againe.
 But see his face is blacke and full of blood,
 His eyeballs further out than when he lived,
 Staring full gastly like a strangled man;
 His hayre up rear'd, his nostrils stretched with struggling;
 His hands abroad display'd as one that graspt,
 And tugged for life.

Now read Henry the Fourth, part II, page 92:

The vitall commoners and inland pettie spirits
 Muster me all to their capitaine, the heart, who great
 And puft up with his retinue, doth any deed of courage.

Winter's Tale, page 302, reads:

Let be, let be would I were dead but that methinks alreadie
 [What was he that did make it] see [my Lord] would you not deeme
 It breathed and that those veines
 Did verily beare blood?
 Masterly done.
 The very life seems warm upon her lippe;
 The fixture of her eye has motion in it, as we
 Are mock'd with art.

Merchant of Venice, page 179, reads:

A messenger with letters from the doctor, new come from Padua.

And just below it read :

My flesh, blood, bones and all
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

As You Like It, page 204, William, Sir;
And Henry the Fourth, part first, page 50 :

Falstaff, Harvey Rossil.

Merry Wives of Windsor, page 42 :

Master Doctor Caius.

Love's Labour Lost, page 122 :

The which I hope well is not enrolled there.

Much Ado About Nothing, page 121, reads :

A college of witcrackers.

Page 144 :

Ile change my blacke gowne.
You shall this twelve months terme from day to day
Visite the speechlesse sicke and still converse
With groaning wretches with all the fierce endeavour of your wit
To enforce the pained impotent to smile ;
To move wild laughter in the throate of death
A twelve month well befall what will befall
Ile jest a twelve month in an hospitall.

Now, Henry the Fourth, part II, page 84 :

Little Tydie Bartholomew.

Midsomers Night's Dreame, page 151 :

If I cut my finger I shall make bold with you.

All's Well That Ends Well, page 235 :

When our most learned doctors leave us and
The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransome nature
From her inaydible estate.

The same, page 238 :

Strange it is that our bloods
Of colour, waight, and heat pour'd all together would quite confound
[destinction.

Winter's Tale, page 278 :

I have tremor cordis on me, my heart daunces
But not for joy, not joy.

King John, page 11 :

Had bak'd thy blood and made it thicke and heavy
Which else runs tickling up and downe the veines.

As You Like It, page 193:

My lungs began to crow like chanticleere
The same
That in civility thou seemst so emptie
You touched my veines at first the thorny point.

Richard the Second, page 27:

But lanceth not the sore.

Henry the Fifth, page 73:

Some say knives have edges.

Henry the Fourth, second part, page 85;

And changes fill the cup of alteration with divers liquor.

If my hearers will now read these quotations all together I think they will be obliged to admit that the author of the plays had a very good knowledge of the great discovery. See how the words meet and join, arteries, veins, inferior veins, spirits run through the veins pulse surcease mocked with art. Purple distilling liquor lanceth blush and beautifie the cheek nimble spirits through the arteries, et cetera. Is this chance? If it were in one place it might be, but as it recurs again and again it must have been put there for some purpose and as the author was in his grave, that is if SHAKESPEARE was the author of the plays, HARVEY must have stolen the great discovery. But as a member of the medical profession I will not admit that our great brother of the seventeenth century was indebted to a man who, we are told by the best of his biographers, never went to school in his life. And I am sure that no one within sound of my voice to-night but will uphold me in the following statement, that no ignorant man could by any possibility have made the necessary experiments for the finding out of this wonderful discovery. Further, how could a man not a member of a hospital or college have had the chance to make the experiments necessary to prove his theory? He could not have gained admittance to the dissecting room unless he become a student, for in those days the student of medicine was compelled to take a long course of preliminary training before he was allowed to practice upon the public. If you will now permit me to place these quotations together I think I can amuse you for a moment; see if it will not read about as follows:

"I have oft seene DR. WILLIAM HARVEY, the new doctor at Bartholemew hospital, in the presence of the learned doctors, force a purple, distilling liquor through the veines of a dead body, and, after it had descended to the heart, liver, and lungs, the blood-colored liquor returneth againe to the face which blacke and full of blood, or pale, meagre, and bloodless before, doth blush and beautifie, as if with life; you would think the body breathed; the very lippe is warme to look upon; but we are mock'd with art as there is no pulse gainst the finger and though the arteries seeme full yet no life is present. The legs, waist, arms, hand, brow, and limes seem alive, but we can never ransome nature. The Doctor was enrolled at Caius college."

And now, in conclusion, I will be very glad to answer any questions that the

members of the society wish to ask me, and will be glad to have them examine the *fac similie* of the 1623 edition of the playz that I have with me; you can understand that I cannot in this lecture read all the quotations to be found in the play regarding medicine, but I am in hopes that I have given you something new, and for the most part never before given to the world, and thanking you for your kind attention, I will, like the epilogue to an old play, make my bow and exit.