

urine. Antony, during the hardships of war, drank "the stale of horses". —*Antony and Cleopatra*, i, 4). It is unthinkable that in this picture Shakespeare intended to portray the learned and dignified Dr. Caius, President of the College of Physicians, physician to three English Sovereigns, and benefactor of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The name may have been adapted from the eminent physician of Queen Elizabeth, while the personality of the character might have been suggested by that of Sir Theodore Mayerne, a Frenchman (according to some, a Swiss), who was expelled from the College of Physicians in Paris, and settled in London, where he became eminent. That Shakespeare meant to represent a quack, and not the learned Dr. Caius, is shown by Sir Hugh Evans referring to him as "Master Caius, that calls himself Doctor of Physic." In a similar way, the name of Dr. Cornelius in *Cymbeline* was possibly suggested by that famous physician of Charles V, and simply adapted for dramatic purposes.

(ii) The English doctor in *Macbeth* makes the speech referring to the curing of scrofula by the royal touch:—

Doctor. Ay, Sir; there are a crew of wretched souls,
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but, at his touch,
Such sanctity hath Heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.
. . . . But strangely-visited people,
All Swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures.

Macbeth, iv, 3.

To show how long this superstition endured, we may remind ourselves that Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was "touched" for scrofula by the royal finger of Queen Anne.

(iii) The Scottish doctor in *Macbeth* is often quoted as an illustration of native caution. ("I think but dare not speak".) It has been suggested that he was a timid man, declining to treat the case, saying: "This disease is beyond my practice", and trying to pass Lady Macbeth on to another court functionary as "more needs she the divine than the physician". It has also been suggested that this astute Scotch medico did not wish to be mixed up with disagreeable State secrets ("Foul whisperings are abroad"), and that, alarmed at the terrible secrets disclosed to him, he regarded Lady Macbeth as a great criminal and declared himself unable to minister to a mind diseased.

I cannot see that there is anything surprising in Macbeth's oft-quoted expression of contempt for physic, nor that it conveys any disparagement of the art and science of medicine. To "pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow; raze out the written troubles of the brain", and "cleanse the stuff'd bosom of the perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart", what treatment could possibly be better or could ever take pre-