

I'll serve that God and that King so long as I live, with all thankfulness.'"

The ceremony of "touching" was continued under James II., he, on one occasion, August 28, 1687, having healed as many as three hundred and fifty persons; even when in exile, at the Court of France, he would frequently perform the ceremony.

William III. refused utterly to countenance the superstition, and could not be persuaded to exercise the gift, being of the opinion that he would do no injury to the sufferers by withholding from them the royal touch.

Queen Anne is the last English sovereign of whom we have authentic proof that she performed this ceremony. On one occasion, she "touched" two hundred people, among whom was the child Samuel Johnson, sent by the advice of his physician, all other means having failed of relief. But in his case success did not attend the operation, for during his whole life he was afflicted with the disease. The gold coin which on that day was given to him by Queen Anne and hung around his neck, is said to be still extant in the British Museum.

"A set form of prayer to be used at the ceremony of touching for the King's Evil was originally printed upon a separate sheet of paper, but the form itself was subsequently introduced into the Book of Common Prayer in the year 1684. It appears in the editions of 1707 and 1709, but was altered in the folio edition printed at Oxford by Baskett in 1715."

Even so late as the first quarter of the present century, people came from far and near to touch for the King's Evil the shirt which Charles I. wore at his execution, preserved in the Church at Ashburnham.

The gift of healing was not confined to the sovereigns of England, but could be exercised by any regularly anointed monarch. In France, the origin of the practice was ascribed