

Thou hast spoke for us, madonna, as if they eldest son should be a fool, whose skull Jove cram with brains! for here he comes, one of thy kin, has a most weak *pia mater*.

Twelfth Night, I, 5.

Not few, outside students of anatomy, could have ever heard of the *pia mater*, and the mode in which Shakespeare may have obtained his knowledge of it is ingeniously suggested by Benjamin Ward Richardson ('*Lancet*,' October 20th, 1888, p. 757). He points out that an imperial quarto volume of 1,111 pages on Anatomy, by Helkiah Crooke, was published in 1615. In it the *pia mater* takes a very distinct place, and the brain is described with a clearness which would excite no small wonder in one who for the first time studied the book, even in our day. Now, this book was printed by W. Jaggard, of the Barbican in London, and this same man was the printer for Shakespeare. His printing office was within easy walking distance of the Globe Theatre, and the plates and letterpress of Crooke would for long seasons be the most remarkable press work of the time. The indefatigable playwright would often repair to Jaggard's office on his own business, and this work on anatomy would readily appeal to his ever-absorbing brain.

Considerable notice is often taken of the diseases which are referred to through the pages of Shakespeare. The most frequent of these are ague (evidently as common formerly as it is rare now-a-days), rheumatism, plagues, pestilence, fever, measles, the sweat, and leprosy. More casual mention is made of apoplexy, boneache, colic, consumption, convulsions, cramps, dropsy, ecstacy, epilepsy, gout, green sickness, somnambulism, tetter and visual spectra; but there seems to be nothing remarkable or worthy of any wonder in the simple mention of the affections. Our present-day literature could show us many references to appendicitis, neuralgia, neurasthenia, tuberculosis, gout, fever, tonsils, adenoids, and so forth. The mere mention of these diseases in Shakespeare is of no moment; what should give us pause are the frequent flashes of genius which are revealed by the insight sometimes given of the appearances, character, and progress of the disease, or of the patient. Thus, the wise distinction between early disordered function and established disease is well shown in the following dialogue, which also accentuates the prime importance of sound advice and little medicinal treatment—

King Henry. Then you perceive, the body of our kingdom,
How foul it is; what rank diseases grow,
And with what danger, near the heart of it.

Warwick. It is but as a body, yet, distemper'd,
Which to his former strength may be restor'd,
By good advice, and little medicine.

Henry IV, Part II, iii, 1.

That the poet should so often ascribe *mental characteristics to pathological states* is surprising when we remember the age in which he lived.