

## ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

SHAKESPEARE AS AN AID IN THE ART AND PRACTISE OF  
MEDICINE.\*

BY SIR ST. CLAIR THOMPSON, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., London, Eng.

*Syphilis*.—It has been suggested that this disease was frequent, and the symptoms familiar, since the common name for it is so frequently used in the plays as a form of oath. Falstaff exclaims:—

A pox of this gout! or, a gout of this pox!

*Henry IV*, Part II, i, 2.

and even ladies used it, as when Katharine exclaims—

A pox of that jest!

*Love's Labour's Lost*, v, 2.

Syphilis was frequently called the "French disease", as in the following lines:—

*Pistol*. Doth fortune play the huswife with me now?  
News have I that my Nell is dead i' the spital  
Of malady of France.

*Henry V*, v, 1.

*Lucio*. Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes!

I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to—

*2nd Gent*. To what, I pray?

*Lucio*. Judge.

*2nd Gent*. To three thousand dollars a year:

*1st Gent*. Ay, and more

*Lucio*. A French crown more.

*Measure for Measure*, i, 2.

The expression the "French crown", so often introduced in the description of syphilis, not only meant the "French disease", but indicated the common rupia, or the arrangement of syphilides on the temples, forehead, or neck, so frequently arranged in the form of a ring or crown that in France it has been called "le chapelet". This French crown is spoken of again, associated with the alopecia of syphilis:—

*Quince*. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play bare-faced.

*Midsummer Night's Dream*, i, 2.

Also:

*Clown*. As fit as ten groats is for the hand of an attorney, as your French crown for your taffetapunk.

*All's Well that Ends Well*, ii, 2.

Syphilis was also called the Neapolitan disease, as I have already mentioned when discussing the voice (p. 284)—

*Thersites*. After this, the vengeance on the whole camp! or rather, the Neapolitan bone-ache! for that, methinks, is the curse dependant on those that war for a placket.\*

*Troilus and Cressida*, ii, 3.

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