

ART. XXVI.—*On Touching for the King's Evil.* By HENRY BARNES, M.D., F.R.S.E.

Read at Lakeside, Windermere, June 13, 1894.

THE miraculous healing of some diseases has attracted a good deal of attention, and the records go back to a very early period. It is not necessary to enter into a discussion of those which took place at such a remote period that the evidence of their authenticity is open to question, but if we take those only which occurred during the first three centuries of the Christian era, we find much difference of opinion, especially as to the period when the miraculous gifts of the Apostolic age ceased to operate. Some of the best informed writers have divided miracles of healing into four distinct classes or periods. The first contains those which are related in the New Testament and reaches to about A.D. 70. Of these there can be no doubt among Christians. The next period may be of 37 years and ends about A.D. 107. There is reason to think that some miracles were performed by those who preached and planted the Gospel in pagan countries. The third reaches from A.D. 107 to the time of Constantine, and the last is from Constantine to when you please, and abounds in miracles. From the third century to Gregory the Great (540-604) there are many scattered cases of healing. Such are recorded in the fourth century by Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Augustine; in the fifth by Hilary and Jerome; and in the sixth by Gregory the Great, Augustine of Canterbury, and Cyril. During the middle ages the use of charms and amulets, idols and relics, and various superstitious practices too numerous to mention were widely accepted as articles of faith by a large proportion of the people. Even in the present day it is not unusual to find people who believe in charms. Only about two
years

years ago a patient came to me from a remote village on the shores of the Solway with some disfigurement of the face which had persisted in spite of a charm which had been used and which was supposed to be infallible. We frequently read of the doings of people who place their reliance on most extraordinary remedies. Underlying all these impostures, wheher they be ancient or modern, there is generally to be found an element of faith. Sometimes the cures have been obtained by faith in the personal power of an individual, or it may be in the magnetic influence of a man, and at others we find that they have been effected by faith in medical remedies or in appliances wholly ineffectual or inadequate in themselves.

Among the inhabitants of the mixed races settled in this country one of the most common and distressing diseases was scrofula. It was a perfect scourge in the country, and still continues to afflict large numbers in our day. Its first outbreaks are seen generally in the glands; they swell, become inflamed, and the skin ulcerates. In mild cases the mischief is soon over, but in all its phases it is lingering and it often causes considerable personal disfigurement. One cannot therefore wonder that any procedure which offered a reasonable prospect of success in its treatment should obtain a great hold on the minds of the community. During the middle ages the most popular and effectual remedy was considered to be the Royal Touch, and it was sought for by rich and poor alike, young and old, beautiful or deformed. It is for this reason that the disease came to be called *Morbus Regius*, or King's Evil, a name which it holds to the present day, and many people know it by no other. It is not quite certain at what period the practice of Touching for the Evil first came into use by the Kings of England. Most writers seem agreed that the first monarch who possessed the gift of healing was Edward the Confessor, although but one instance is recorded

recorded of his using it, and that by a historian (William of Malmsbury) who wrote his history about 80 years after the king's death. The story given by the writer is that a young woman, with a painful swelling in her neck, was directed, in a dream, to apply to the King to wash the affected part, that the King complied with her request, and that within the space of one week she was perfectly cured. Dean Stanley* writes:—

There was a kind of magical charm in his thin white hands and his long transparent fingers, which not unnaturally led to the belief that there resided in them a healing power of stroking away the diseases of his subjects.

This belief survived his death, and we are further told (p. 132, *Op. Cit.*) that beneath his shrine

the arches underneath were ready for the patients, who came to ensconce themselves there for the sake of receiving from the sacred corpse within the deliverance from the 'King's Evil' which the living sovereign was believed to communicate by his touch.

So far as I can find, there is no mention in contemporary chronicles that the power of healing was possessed by Edward the Confessor, and it is not mentioned among his other gifts in the Bull of Canonization of Pope Alexander III. about 100 years after his death. Shakespeare, however, describes him as fully exercising the power. The description is probably based on what occurred in Shakespeare's own day, as he speaks of the king using prayers and giving gold, which was probably not in circulation before the time of Edward III. The account will be found in *Macbeth*, Act IV. Scene III.

Malcolm (a fugitive from his own kingdom after the murder of his father, and residing at the court of Edward the Confessor) enquires of the doctor :

* Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey, 2nd Ed. p. 13.

“ Comes

" Comes the king forth, I pray you ?

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.

MALCOLM : I thank you, Doctor. (Exit Doctor).

MAID : What's the disease he means ?

MALCOLM : 'Tis called the Evil
A most miraculous work in this good king ;
Which often, since my here remain in England,
I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven
Himself best knows : but strangely visited people
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures,
Hanging a golden stamp about their necks
Put on with holy prayers : and 'tis spoken
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction."

There is no record of the immediate successors of the Confessor exercising this miraculous gift of healing. William the Conqueror was probably too much occupied, as one historian* remarks, with killing those who were well, and the uproarious sons of the Conqueror

affected no share in the sacred mesmerism of their saintly predecessor. They manipulated the sword, the lance, and the wine cup—occasionally knocked healthy people at head, but carefully eschewed the company of the sick.

Their scholarly brother, Henry, described as the Ulysses of the Norman dynasty, married a saint's niece and a saint's daughter, who brought with her something like a title to the throne. Saintly Queen Maude, or Matilda the Atheling, used her best endeavours to ameliorate the "new poor laws" of the roystering Norman usurpers,

* Miss Strickland's *Queens of England*, vol. xi, p. 105.

and

and chronicles speak of the washing and healing the wounds and sores of the poor by her, but we can trace no imposition of hands. Soon after this however the practice seems to have been notorious, and mention is made of it by Petrus Blesensis, Archdeacon of Bath and afterwards of London, chaplain to Henry II. about 1180. About a century later, in the time of Edward I., the healing power of the king was fully recognised and was frequently exercised both in public and in private. This king is said to have healed 182 persons. As the name-child of his Saxon ancestor he affected a good deal of St. Edward's piety, and the reconciliation between the Plantagenet kings and the poor commonalty was unquestionably strengthened by the honours paid to their beloved saint. From this time onward the power was claimed by successive monarchs, and formed an important part of their duties. The kings of England from the time of Edward I. to Edward III. kept an alchemist, Raymond Lully, who made gold for them at the Tower. This fact is handed down to us in the Chaillot MSS. where we are told that Raymond the alchemist's Tower gold was the purest angel gold, and the coins were called angels because the reverse side was impressed with the figure of an angel. On account of its superior purity it was used as the healing gold, each person touched receiving one coin from the royal hands during the ceremony. In the time of Henry VIII. all royal offices were carefully observed, and in addition to his observance of the healing by touch he insisted on his numerous queens performing a religious office of blessing cramp-rings, some of his antiquaries having discovered that this privilege had been enjoyed by Queen Edith, Consort of Edward the Confessor. The royal ceremonies of healing by touch and consecration of cramp-rings were duly recognised by the Tudor Queens, Mary and Elizabeth. It is said that for a time Queen Elizabeth discontinued the practice, but there are many instances

instances on record of her having exercised the supposed power. Although Cromwell claimed and exercised many of the royal functions he never attempted this. During the rising in the West of England the Duke of Monmouth, claiming to be the rightful king, touched several persons, and among the accusations made against him on his trial at Edinburgh for high treason we find that he was charged with having "touched children of the King's Evil." Two witnesses prove this as having been done at Taunton.* On the accession of William III. the healings ceased for a time, the king being persuaded, as Rapin says (*History of England*, vol. iv.,) that the sick would not suffer by the omission. Macaulay says of him he had too much sense to be duped and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture. "It is a silly superstition," he exclaimed, when he heard that at the close of Lent his palace was besieged by a crowd of the sick, "Give the poor creatures some money and send them away." On one solitary occasion he was importuned into laying his hand upon a patient and he said, "God give you better health and more sense." The last English monarch to touch was Queen Anne, in whose reign the ritual of the Royal Healing Service was first added to the Book of Common Prayer, just after the Thanksgiving for her accession. Her adoption of the practice gave great offence to the Jacobites, and it is said she was urged thereto by the success of her brother's healing establishment at St. Germain's, where vast numbers of diseased persons went to seek the touch of the disinherited heir to the throne. His success was much greater than hers, and has been described as marvellous, but we must not forget that his patients had the advantage of a sea voyage, change of air, and change of food. Among the latest, if

* Howell's *State Trials*, vol. xi.

not the last, for whom the royal touch was used may be mentioned the celebrated Dr. Johnson, and in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (London, 1824, vol. i, pp. 17-18,) we find a full account of the case.

Young Johnson had the misfortune to be much affected with the scrofula, or King's Evil, which disfigured a countenance naturally well formed, and hurt his visual nerves so much that he did not see at all with one of his eyes, though its appearance was little different from that of the other. His mother, yielding to the superstitious notion which, it is wonderful to think, prevailed so long in this country, as to the virtue of the royal touch,—a notion which our kings encouraged, and a man of such enquiry and such judgment as Carte could give credit,—carried him to London, where he was actually touched by Queen Anne. Mrs. Johnson, indeed, as Mr. Hector informed me, asked the advice of the celebrated Sir John Floyer, then a physician at Lichfield. Johnson used to talk of this very frankly, and Mrs. Piozzi has preserved his very picturesque description of the scene as it remained upon his fancy. Being asked if he could remember Queen Anne,—‘he had’ (he said) ‘a confused but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds and a long black hood.’

This touch, however, was without any effect. On the same day 200 persons were presented at the Healing Service. Soon after the accession of George I. an English gentleman applied to the king on behalf of his son, and was referred to the Pretender. The gentleman acted upon the hint, took his son to the Continent, got him touched, and the lad got well. By this means the King lost a good subject and the Pretender gained a new adherent.* We are further told that the Pretender used to exercise his gift in the Paris hospitals and his son, Charles Edward, once touched a child in Edinburgh in 1745. He was unwilling at first to listen to the entreaties of the mother, but at last he allowed the child to be brought to him. A circle was formed by his attendants, the child was introduced, a

* Chambers' *History of the Rebellion*, 1827, vol. i, p. 183.

clergyman

clergyman offered up an appropriate prayer, the Prince approached the kneeling girl and on touching the diseased parts pronounced with great solemnity the words, "I touch, God heal." In twenty-one days the child was completely healed.

The numbers touched in some reigns were enormous, and afford a good idea of the prevalence of the disease. In some years many thousands of persons received the royal touch. In the time of Charles II. a register of cases was kept by the Serjeant of the Chapel Royal, and afterwards by the Keeper of the Closet. Upon the Restoration public healings were held three times a week till September, 1664, when the Court upon the approach of the plague removed from London. They were resumed however in 1667, and it appears from this register that the total number touched by Charles II. amounted to 90,798. The greatest number touched in one year was in 1682 when 8,447 were registered. The cost in money alone which these healings caused must have been considerable. In the time of Henry VIII. the angel, the name given to the coin which each person received, was of the value of seven shillings and sixpence. In the time of Queen Elizabeth it was ten shillings. In 1663 the annual charge for touch pieces was at least £3,000. The substitution of silver touch pieces by James II. rendered the ceremony less expensive. The Rev. James Wilson has called my attention to some Mint papers published from the MSS. of Sir Reginald Graham by the Historical MSS. Commission: 6th Report, part I., p. 333, and dealing with the period 1664-1677. Details are given of a project for increasing the revenue by debasing the metal from which "Healing Medals" were made.

Besides the number of them spent one year with another being about 5,600, which amounts unto but £2,500, there would not be saved by such alteration more than about £1,000 yearly.

There



Charles II. (Gold.)



(Gold.)



(Silver.)



James II.



Anne. (Gold.)



The Pretender, as James III.
(Silver.)



The Cardinal of York, as Henry IX.
(Silver.)

There is another entry in the same MSS.:

1675 March 20. £92 4 8 for 200 Healing Pieces weighing 22 oz.
11 dwt. 18 gr.

It appears that

the former gold made for healing was a 10/- piece of current money made of fine gold, which, after his Majesty's raising the value of the gold coins, became worth 11/6.

In the time of Henry VII. the angel noble was the smallest gold coin in circulation, and it was in this reign the ritual service was first instituted. The touch piece had on one side the angel Michael overcoming the dragon and on the other a ship on the waves. The coins of the period generally bore some religious inscription, and the angel had *PER CRUCEM TUAM, SALVA NOS, CHRISTUS REDEMPTOR*. Queen Mary's and Queen Elizabeth's angels bore *A DOMINO FACTUM EST ISTUD, ET EST MIRABILE*. The angels of James I. and Charles I. are smaller. James I. have *A DOMINO FACTUM EST ISTUD*. Charles I. have *AMOR POPULI PRÆSIDIIUM REGIS*. During his troubles he had not always gold to bestow and he substituted silver, and indeed often touched without giving anything. During the residence of Charles II. abroad the patients who came to be touched brought their own gold. After the Restoration the touch pieces were of less pure gold. They bear round the angel a still shorter legend, *SOLI DEO GLORIA*, which is continued on the touch pieces of succeeding reigns. There are none of William III. or Queen Mary. The Pretender as James III. had two, both of silver, one of better workmanship and probably Italian. Those of Charles Edward are very rare. Several touch tokens were exhibited in the Stuart Exhibition, one being a copper one, eight-tenths of an inch in diameter. Obv: An open hand issuing from the clouds touching one of a group of four bearded heads.

HE

HE TOUCHED THEM. Rev: Crown, beneath it rose and thistle entwined. AND THEY WERE HEALED. The medal is not perforated. I am doubtful if this kind of token was used at the healing services. See *Notes and Queries*, 7th S. vii, '89, p. 84. Recently I visited the coin department in the British Museum and examined the Touch pieces. They have one of Charles II. in gold, of James II. one in gold and one in silver, one of James III. in gold, and one of Anne in gold, said to have been the one which belonged to Dr. Johnson. In the collection of Mr. Hawkins, F.S.A., there is one of the Cardinal of York as Henry IX., but it is doubtful if he ever exercised or even claimed the power of healing. Through the courtesy of the Council of the Royal Archæological Institute I have been permitted to reproduce the illustration of the touch tokens in this gentleman's possession which appeared in vol. x. of the Archæological Journal. I am not aware of the existence of any touch pieces in Cumberland or Westmorland, but I think it probable that some may exist in private collections. With the aid of the illustration and of the full description of the pieces given above I am in hopes that hitherto unrecognised tokens may be identified, and if such should be the case, I hope that they may find a resting place in Tullie House, Carlisle, where I am sure they would find a welcome from its honorary curator, Chancellor Ferguson. There are several cases of local interest in which the royal touch has been obtained for residents in Cumberland or Westmorland, and this makes me think it possible that some unrecognised tokens may exist in private collections. Among the lists of collections for briefs in the Registers of Crosthwaite Church, near Kendal, Mr. Wilson, our invaluable and energetic secretary, informs me that the following entries occur.

1629, 14 Feby. Given to John Rig of Staveley who hath the King's Evil to go vp to be cured thereof 1/-.

Given

Given to Nathaniel Glover of Kirkland towards ye carrying vp of two children to London 7^d Eod. die.

11 April 1629. Given to Geo. Sigswick towards the carrying vp of his two sonnes iii^s 5^d.

In the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic) of Charles II. there is an entry at p. 447 to which my attention was called by the Rev. James Wilson, of Dalston. It is as follows :

Sep. 6, 1667.

Cockermouth. 83. John Lamplugh, George Lamplugh, rector of Lamplugh, George Williamson and Pickering Hewer, to William-son. Desire him to procure His Majesty's touch to John Dixon, a neighbour and parishioner, who is troubled with the Evil.

Sir Joseph Williamson was Secretary of State, and a native of Bridekirk, near Cockermouth. In Hutchinson's History of Cumberland (vol. ii, p. 244,) there is a short notice of his life. We are told that he was particularly attentive and friendly to his countrymen, and we can readily imagine that he would lend a willing ear to the petition of the rector and two justices of a parish near to that from which he had himself sprung.

There is a notice in the Grasmere parish register referring to the subject. My attention was called to it by Mr. George Browne, of Troutbeck, Windermere, and through the kindness of the present rector, the Rev. W. Jennings, I am able to give it as follows :

Wee the Rector & Churchwardens of the Parish of Grasmere in the County of Westmorland do hereby certify that David Harrison of the s^d Parish aged about ffourteen years, is afflicted as wee are credibly informed with the disease comonly the King's Evill ; & (to the best of o^r knowledge) hath not heretofore been touched by His Majesty for y^e s^d Decease.

In Testimony whereof wee have hereunto set o^r hands & seals the ffourth day of ffeb: Ano Doi 1684.

Henry ffleming, Rector.

John Benson, }

Joⁿ. Mallinson, }

Churchwardens.

Registered by John Brathwaite, Curate.

There

There is a memorandum on a fly-leaf of the Penrith parish registers in the handwriting of the Rev. John Child, vicar, as follows :

Memorandum that I certified for Isaac Threlkeld to get the King's touch under my hand and seal the 25 Aprill Anno Regis Jacobi Secundi Tertio, Anno que Domi 1687.

Mr. Whitehead, whose knowledge of parish registers no one in this Society can doubt, and to whom I am indebted for the above extract, informs me that it is the only entry of its kind in a Cumberland parish register known to him. Mr. Child was vicar of Penrith from 1670 to 1694, and Mr. Watson in his paper on "Notabilities of Old Penrith" in the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Association for the advancement of Literature and Science, No. xvi, p. 67, tells us that Mr. Child greatly improved the form of registration, and that he was a man of great exactness and neatness in the keeping of the registers. To this love of exactness we are probably indebted for the notice quoted above. It is fair to assume that there were other cases from Cumberland and Westmorland, but those above-mentioned are the only ones of which I can find any trace. The records of the Corporation of Preston contain two votes of money to enable persons to go from Preston to be touched for the Evil. Both are in the reign of James II. There are no traces in our local municipal records of such payments.

In order to obtain the Royal Touch it was at one time necessary to obtain the intercession of some of the king's nobles. Certain days were appointed by proclamation for a "Public Healing," and officers were appointed to make selection of suitable candidates. In course of time certificates were needed, signed by the vicar and churchwardens of the parish to which the patient belonged that he had never been touched before. This was rendered the
more

more necessary as patients were thought to apply a second time more for the sake of the gold than with the hope of obtaining relief of their sufferings, and by a proclamation ministers and churchwardens were enjoined

to be very careful to examine into the truth before they give such certificates and also to keep a register of all certificates they shall from time to time give.

This accounts for some of the notices given from local parish registers. The faith in the healing power of the Royal Touch was general in all classes, and especially among the physicians and surgeons of the day,—men not very ready in admitting that cures may be effected without making use of the remedies which they themselves prescribe. Gilbertus Anglicus, a physician of the time of Henry III. and Edward I., alludes to the exercise of the power, and says scrofula is called King's Evil because the kings have power to cure it. John of Gadsden, physician to Edward II., advises recourse to the Royal Touch in desperate cases. Dean Tooker, one of Queen Elizabeth's chaplains, testifies that many wretched sufferers were restored to health by the Queen's touch, aided by the prayers of the whole church. Clowes, surgeon to St. Bartholomew's and Christ's Hospitals, and surgeon to Queen Elizabeth, in writing of scrofulous ulcers, says

These kinds do rather presage a divine and holy curation, which is most admirable to the world, that I have seen and known performed and done by the sacred and blessed hands of the Queen's Most Royal Majesty.

Wiseman, chief surgeon to the army of Charles I. and afterwards surgeon to Charles II. writes :

I myself have been a frequent eye witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his Majesty's touch alone, without any assistance of chirurgery, and not only from the several parts of this nation, but also from Ireland, Scotland, Jersey and Garnsey.

Dean

Dean Swift, writing in 1711 of a visit to the Duchess of Ormond, says :

I spoke to her to get a lad touched for the evil, the son of a grocer in Capel St, one Bell—the ladies have bought sugar and plums of him.

These quotations are sufficient to show the opinions of eminent physicians and ecclesiastics, and could readily be multiplied.

There were both public and private Healings. At the latter the number touched was only small. The *cure* of the patient did not always follow upon the Healing; it advanced by degrees and often required a considerable time to be completed. In many instances it failed altogether. The numbers flocking to the Court rendered frequent Healings necessary, and the time and place varied with different monarchs. In 1683 a proclamation was ordered to be published in every parish in the kingdom enjoining that the time for presenting persons for the "Public Healing" should be from the Feast of All Saints till a week before Christmas, and after Christmas till the first day in March, and then to cease till Passion Week. The Healings were held wherever the Court happened to be. If in London they were held at Whitehall, and we have record of them at Langley by Henry VIII., at Kenilworth by Queen Elizabeth, at Newmarket by Charles II., and at Bath by James II.*

The following extract from Bishop (then Archdeacon)

* In the London Gazette for May 6, 1667, there appears an advertisement which Mr. Cranston, of the Carlisle Patriot Office, informs me is one of the earliest known advertisements. It is repeated in several subsequent Gazettes and is as follows :

AN ADVERTISEMENT.

We are, by his Majesty's command, to give notice that, by reason of the great heats which are growing on, there will be no further *touching for the evil* until Michaelmas next, and accordingly all persons concerned are to forbear their addresses till that time.

Nicolson's

Nicolson's Journal, for which I am indebted to Chancellor Ferguson, will be of interest as referring to the service :

July 14, 1684.

In ye morning King's* musick at ye bed chamber, as usuall on Mundayes. Touching for ye Evill in ye guard chamber.† Dr. Montague held ye gold. Water brought to ye King by the Vice Chamberlain.

It does not appear that there was any regular form of religious service used before the time of Henry VII. and the new ritual introduced by that monarch was in Latin, the rubric being in English. It was taken from two forms in use in the Roman Catholic Church, "The Blessing for Sore Eyes" and the "Exorcismus Adversus Spiritus Immundos." The Rev. W. Sparrow Simpson, F.S.A., has collected a series of services used "at the Healing" by different monarchs. It is published in the *British Archæological Journal*, vol. xxvii, 1871. In it a copy is given of the office used by Queen Mary. In this reign when the sick were presented the sore on the patient's neck was crossed with an angel noble, which was then hanged about the neck to be worn (in the words of the rubric) till they were "full hoole." The use of the sign of the Cross in giving the gold gave rise to some jealousies, as if some mysterious operation were imputed to it. James I. discontinued the use of the Cross, but it was revived by James II. In the time of Charles I. the office was first published in English, and in the time of Queen Anne the service was materially shortened. The following is a list of the services used "At the Healing."

In 1686 a small volume was published which purports to contain the office used by Henry VII. (See below James II.)

* Charles II.

† At Windsor.

There

There is no copy, written or printed, in the reign of Henry VIII. of the "Prayers at the Healing," but the copy used by Queen Mary is probably a copy of the one used by this monarch as it does not modify the rubrics, and the word "King" appears in all the rubrics.

There is no copy of the reign of Edward VI.

The copy used by Queen Mary was in the possession of Cardinal Manning. On the fly-leaf, in the handwriting of Cardinal Wiseman, is written

Queen Mary's Manual for blessing cramp-rings and Touching for the Evil.

Queen Elizabeth's differs from Queen Mary's in the versicles and responses.

Charles I. The same as Queen Elizabeth's, but with more extended rubrics.

Charles II. The service "At the Healing" is contained in a volume published at the Hague, MDCL.

James II. In 1686 Henry Hills, printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, for his household and chappel, published two volumes.

The Ceremonies for the Healing of them that be diseased with the King's Evil, used in the time of King Henry VII. Published by His Majesty's command.

Four copies of this are known, one being in the British Museum and another in the Lambeth Palace Library.

The second volume contains the same office, but in it the rubrics are still in English, the Prayers and Gospels in Latin. There are two copies in the British Museum, one of which belonged to George III. and has a picture representing the ceremony.

Queen Anne. The copies of Queen Anne's ritual are five in number :

1. 4to. London, 1707. By Charles Bill and the Executor of Thomas Newcomb deceased. The office is immediately after the accession

sion service. Lathbury says the service first appeared in 1709, but this is two years earlier.

2. 4to. London, 1708. Bound up at the end of a Bible printed in 1708 by Charles Bill and the Executor of Thomas Newcomb deceased.
3. 4to. London, 1709. Printed by Charles Bill and the Executor of Thomas Newcomb, deceased, Printers to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty. This volume is illustrated. (British Museum).
4. 8vo. London, 1709. With the same imprint, and also in British Museum. Another copy is said to be annexed to the Prayer Book printed at Oxford University Press in 1712.
5. 8vo. London, 1713. *Liturgia seu Liber precum Communium*.

George I. In four editions of the Prayer Book published in the reign of George I. the office is found :

1. Folio. Oxford, 1715. Printed by John Baskett, printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty and to the University.
2. 4to. Oxford, 1721. With the same imprint.
3. Folio. Oxford, 1721. Printed by John Baskett, printer to the University.
4. 8vo. London, 1727. *Liturgia seu Liber precum Communium*.
5. A reprint of the English version is in the appendix to the edition of L'Estrange's *Alliance of Divine Offices*.

George II. In a Latin Prayer Book published in 1744 the "*Forma Strumosos Attrectandi*" appears.

No one has been able to discover any authority for including the office in the Book of Common Prayer. There are some local copies in existence, and some time ago Canon Matthews lent me one bearing the date of 1709, similar to the one in the British Museum.

A short description of the service, as used by Charles II., will probably be of interest. The certificates were first of all examined by the surgeon and countersigned by him. The Clerk of the Closet, generally one of the bishops, had charge of the gold distributed at the Healings. Under him was a Closet Keeper, who kept the register. He received the gold from the Exchequer and attended the

the Healings with the gold ready strung on his arm, and presented it to the Clerk of the Closet. On the day appointed, usually a Sunday or some other festival, the time generally after morning prayer, the sick people are placed in order by the chief officer of the Yeomen of the Guard. The King enters and is surrounded by his nobles and many other spectators. One of his chaplains then begins to read the Gospel, taken from St. Mark, xvi, 14, the Gospel for Ascension Day. At the 18th v.: "They shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover," the surgeons in waiting, after making their obeisances, bring up the sick in order. The chief surgeon delivers them one by one on their knees to the King, and as Evelyn, a spectator of the proceedings on one occasion, says :

The king strokes their faces, or cheeks with both his hands at once. Another surgeon then takes charge of the patients to be brought up afterwards to receive the gold. The words of the 18 v. are repeated by the chaplain between every healing, till all the sick are touched, which being done the Gospel is continued to the end of the chapter. The second Gospel is then begun and is taken from St. John, I. 1. After the eighth verse, the surgeons, making their obeisance as before, bring up the sick in their order, the Clerk of the Closet then on his knees delivers to the King the gold strung on white silk ribbon and the King puts it about their necks as the chaplain reads the 9th v: "That was the true light, which lighteth every man which cometh into the world," which he repeats as each one receives his gold. The Gospel is then continued, ending with the 14th verse. This being finished, the chaplain, with the rest of the people on their knees pronounce the following prayers :

Vers. Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Resp. Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Vers. Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Resp. Christ, have mercy upon us.
 Vers. Lord, have mercy upon us.
 Resp. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Then the Chaplain reads the Lord's Prayer, after which these versicles, the responses being made by those who come to be healed.

Vers.

Vers. O Lord, save thy servants.

Resp. Which put their trust in thee.

Vers. Send help unto them from above.

Resp. And Evermore mightily defend them.

Vers. Help us, O God, our Saviour.

Resp. And for the Glory of thy Name deliver us and be
merciful to us sinners for thy Name's sake.

Vers. O Lord hear our Prayers.

Resp. And let our cry come unto thee.

The Chaplain then reads the following prayer: "O Almighty God, who are the giver of all health, and the aid of them that seek to Thee for succour, we call upon Thee for thy help and goodness, mercifully to be showed to these thy servants, that they being healed of their infirmities, may give thanks to Thee in thy Holy Church, through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen."

The "Gratia Domini" concludes the service. After the service, the Lord Chamberlain and two other nobles, having brought up the linen, with a basin and ewer to wash the King's hands, he takes leave of the people and they joyfully and thankfully every one return home, praising God and their good King.

The Kings of France also claimed the right to dispense the gift of healing. Laurentius, first physician to Henry IV., who is indignant at the attempt to derive its origin from Edward the Confessor, asserts the power to have commenced with Clovis I., the first Christian king, and other writers also declare that this monarch exercised the power by gift from heaven. Fuller, in his Church History, I-227, says :

The Kings of France share also with those of England in this miraculous cure.

In a MSS. in the Cambridge University Library is this memorandum :

The Kings of England and France by a peculiar guift cure the King's Evil by touching them with their handes and so doth the seventh sonne.

There

There is some evidence to show that the practice of the touch was in use in the time of Philip I. of France, and it continued until 1776. On his coronation in 1775 Louis XVI. touched 2,400 individuals. He touched each one by making a cross on the face and saying "Le roi te touche, Dieu te guérisse," the King touches thee, may God cure thee.*

In such widely separated districts as Cornwall and the North-West Highlands of Scotland the belief still lingers that the touch of the seventh son can cure scrofula. Sir Arthur Mitchell, in a paper read before the Scottish Society of Antiquaries in 1860, says he has seen more than one poor idiot with strumous complications, for whom this magic touch had been obtained. A Lewis gentleman to whom he referred says it is customary in Lewis for the seventh son to give the patient a sixpenny piece with a hole in it, through which a string is passed. This the patient wears constantly round his neck. In the event of its being removed or lost the malady breaks out again. Adults have been known to resort to a seventh son of not more than two years of age. A person caught hold of the bairn's wrist and applied his little hand to the patient's sore. Sir Arthur Mitchell considers that the custom probably owes its origin to the story of the seven sons of Sceva, the Jew (Acts, xix, 13). It is true that all the seven sons claimed the power of casting out evil spirits, and possibly this claim may have rested upon the

* The Kings of England, France, Jerusalem and Sicily were *sacred* at their coronations, and so were possessed of a clerical character. See *The Sacring of the English Kings*, by J. Wickham Legg, F.S.A., *Archæological Journal*, vol. 51, p. 29-32. Notwithstanding the clerical character of the King of England in the middle ages, yet no priest-like functions seem to have been assigned to him: no ministering either of God's Word or of the Sacraments. The nearest approach to such functions seems to have been the touching for the king's evil, and the blessing of cramp rings on Good Friday. See W. Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ*, London, 1847, vol. iii, pp. 330-340: cited in *Archæological Journal*, *ut supra*. One would thus expect to find all these four kings touching for the king's evil. At a later time by special papal dispensation the King of Scotland was also sacred.—EDITOR.

fact

fact that there were seven, which is the chief mystical number in the East. It is easy to understand that the gift which the seven claimed eventually came to be regarded as the possession of the seventh alone. The gift does not appear until the seventh is born. He brings it. It seems likely then that with an ignorant people they would soon acknowledge that it belongs only to him.

In conclusion I beg to express my obligations to Chancellor Ferguson and other members of the Society for valuable help in connection with this paper. I am also indebted for many references to an interesting paper in vol. x. of the *Archæological Journal*, by Mr. Hussey, of Oxford. The subject has not hitherto come under the notice of the Society, and I hope what I have written may be of some service.
