

**MEDICINE & KINDRED  
ARTS IN THE PLAYS  
OF SHAKESPEARE**

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Medicine & Kindred Arts in the Plays of Shakespeare by John Moyes

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**JOHN MOYES**

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Medicine & Kindred Arts  
in the  
Plays of Shakespeare

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

BY

DR. JOHN MOYES

LARCS<sup>H</sup>

FELLOW OF THE FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS  
GLASGOW

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## PREFACE.

THE late Dr. John Moyes presented his Thesis for the Doctorate of Medicine to Glasgow University in 1886; it was entitled "Medicine and its Kindred Arts in the Plays of Shakespeare." He had worked at the subject for years, but after the completion of the thesis, when he contemplated publishing it, he tried, if possible, to make it better. Professor Gairdner, to whom he had arranged, just before his death, to dedicate this little work, had himself read the manuscript, and had suggested that it should be revised by some recognized Shakespearean scholar; he named an old fellow student of his own, the late Dr. Brinsley Nicholson, as one who had the requisite qualifications for the work, and, at Professor Gairdner's request, that gentleman undertook the task. Numerous annotations in pencil showed the care and the knowledge he brought to bear on the subject,—knowledge both of the Shakespearean writings and of the medicine of that time. It was some guarantee of the value of this thesis that it came out of such a revision so well. Dr. Nicholson suggested that the work of "Batman upon Bartholome his Booke *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, newly corrected, enlarged, and amended," Lond., 1582, should be carefully studied,

in connection with Shakespearean medicine, as showing the notions of physiology and disease then current. Dr. Moyes found this volume in our Hunterian Library in Glasgow, and his MSS. bear evidence of extracts he had made from it. But living at a distance from Glasgow, he was unable to devote the time necessary for consulting this book in the library (as the books there are not lent out), and he regretted that he had not been able to study it sufficiently.

In working at his subject, Dr. Moyes deliberately avoided reading any attempts previously made in depicting Shakespeare's relation to medicine, as he was anxious to work out his own idea of the subject. He made up a list of books which he had used in the preparation of his Thesis; these were all calculated to throw light on the state of the profession and of medicine at the time, and this list does not contain a single essay of the kind he attempted.

The following is his list:—

JOHN COTTA [of Northampton].—A Short Discoverie of the unobserved dangers of severall sorts of ignorant and unconsiderate Practisers of Physicke in England. Lond. 1612.

[CHRISTOPHER MERRETT].—The Accomplisht Physician, the honest Apothecary, and the Skilful Chyrurgeon. London, 1670.

ROBERT GODFREY.—Various injuries and abuses in Chymical and Galenical Physick, committed both by Physicians and Apothecaries, detected. Lond. 1674.

RICHARD GRIFFITH.—A-la-Mode Phlebotomy, no good fashion. Lond. 1681.

NATHANIEL HODGES.—Vindiciæ Medicinæ et Medicorum. Lond. 1666.

M[ARCHMONT] N[EDHAM].—Medela Medicinæ: a plea for the free profession and renovation of the Art of Physick. Lond. 1665.

RICHARD WALKER.—Memoirs of Medicine. Lond. 1799.

JOHN MASON GOOD.—History of Medicine. Lond. 1795.

SAMUEL FERRIS.—General View of . . . Physic. Lond. 1795.

*Medicina flagellata*; or The doctor scarify'd. Lond. 1721.  
[Anon.]

J. M. RICHARDS.—A Chronology of Medicine, Ancient, Mediaeval, and Modern. Lond. 1880.

H. HANSEN.—Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Medicin. 1875-81.

In preparing this Thesis for the press, I thought it would add to its interest and value if a pretty full bibliography of productions similar to it were appended. This I have done as well as I can, beginning with Farren in 1826; but, as stated in the list itself, I have not been able to see many of these works, and I have had to give not a few of them on the authorities there quoted.

A glance at that list shows that a very considerable part of this literature bears on the delineations of insanity in Shakespeare's plays. This was a part of the subject which Dr. Moyes decided to leave untouched, partly because there were available, amongst many others, the admirable essays of Dr. J. C. Bucknill in this country on *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare*, and partly, no doubt, because he felt that if such subjects were to be taken up at all, the authority of an expert in insanity was required to give their discussion any serious value.

Just at the time when his fatal illness seized him in December, 1894, Dr. Moyes had decided, at last, on publishing his Thesis, although he intended, I believe, to rewrite or to extend the introductory chapter. As already stated, he had obtained from Professor Gairdner his acceptance of the dedication; a portion was in proof to estimate its size, and he meant to push the work forward to a completion. A new phase of his illness, however, made it imperative that the MS. be put away from him, and so it was left imperfectly prepared.

The difficulties experienced in sending it to the press arose from some ambiguity as to how he intended to



finish the introductory chapter and how to begin the next; and from doubt how far he meant to act upon some of the suggestions in Dr. Nicholson's annotations.

On surveying the various MSS., I thought it a pity to have so much careful and interesting work lost to the public view, knowing how many different kinds of people are attracted by such studies. Certain things in the MS. obviously required correction on revision for the press, but these were generally trifling. It seemed clear that even if the services of a competent editor, with adequate time, could be secured, the process of revision, if carried very far, would destroy the individuality of Dr. Moyes' work. As I had frequently been consulted on the subject of the Thesis and its publication, it seemed natural that, when leisure permitted, I should undertake the preparation of the MS. for the press, although I could not bring to the task any very special qualifications for it. I duly considered, however, all the annotations of Dr. Nicholson; when they seemed important, or when they did not imply any extensive alterations, I have usually given effect to them, just as I believe Dr. Moyes himself intended to do.

No doubt if Dr. Moyes had been resident near good libraries, or if a competent editor had undertaken to revise and annotate this work, many important suggestions might have been obtained from the numerous commentaries on Shakespeare as regards the meaning of special passages or the allusions they contain. Or again, a critical study of some of the books and papers contained in the bibliography appended might have supplied much matter for supplementary or corrective remarks. But for the reasons already stated, this was not attempted by the author, and it has not been attempted now in editing this Thesis. A few references and supplementary notes, however, have

been added when these seemed desirable for the elucidation of the subject or the supplying of omissions detected in the revision.

It only remains to add that Dr. Moyes had intended to write a supplementary chapter, by way of comparison, on the medical allusions found in the writings of Marlowe and Ben Jonson; but of this a mere fragment exists in his MSS., and although an obviously important part of the subject, this must be left for other hands.

JAMES FINLAYSON, M.D.

2 WOODSIDE PLACE,  
GLASGOW, June, 1896.

