

13 Norham Gardens,
Oxford,

(Jan. 20, 1917).

Dear Jacobs;-

I am sending you thro the Embassy as they were refused into the post or doubtfull^y a cast of the Elizabethan Touch-piece of which I told you. Brett-Smith has written the enclosed account which is very interesting. I am sending one to Storer who will I suppose send it on to Boston to his collection - if he does not, let me know as I have another which I could send direct. I take it he still keeps up the collection.

I suppose your Cabinet grows. I have not seen anything special of late. Revere writes in good spirits, but they have been hard at it - salvos, barrages and mud! It is a devil of a business for a nice laddie to get mixed up with, but it is fortunate that he is with nice fellows & keenly interested. The broken nights are hard on them all - some of the men have had 72 hours on stretch. The peace prospects are nil. We are in for another year or even two!

Mrs. Chapin is still with us. I am all right again after an influenzal bronchitis, but am taking it easy for six weeks.

Love to you both. So sad to hear of Mrs. Frick's death.

Yours ever,

Wm. Osler.

from Prof. Osler.

Department of Medicine,
Oxford University,Elizabethan Touch-piece.

This cast is taken from a unique specimen of a silver touch-piece of Queen Elizabeth, struck in 1601, and preserved among the heirlooms of the family of Harington, direct descendants of Sir John Harington of Kelston, the Queen's godson. There is therefore every probability that the touch-piece was a gift from the Queen to Sir John, whose relations with his royal god-mother were intimate; other gifts from her are also preserved by the family, and Harington wrote his well-known version of the Orlando Furioso as a penance for having translated one of Ariosto's less moral episodes and circulated it among the maids of honour. When the Queen punished him with banishment from court until he should have translated the whole poem, he completed the task, and dedicated the book to her.

There is no evidence that Sir John ever suffered from the King's Evil, and though this is possible enough, it does not seem necessary to assume it in order to account for his possession of the touch-piece, which bears a fine portrait of the Queen, and might perhaps have been obtained on no stronger grounds. The piece is mounted on a flat copper band, terminating above the Queen's head in a hollow four-ribbed crown, and intended for convenience in wearing, a ribbon being passed through the ribs of the crown. This mount is probably quite modern, and as a small hole has been roughly punched in the rim of the touch-piece above the Queen's head, the mark being visible on the casts, it is likely that the piece was actually worn by some patient, whether Harington or another, since the boring would probably have been less roughly performed had it been pierced for wearing as an ornament.

Harington took much interest in medical questions - witness his Metamorphosis of Ajax and his medical version of the School of Salerne - and the cure of the King's Evil would certainly have intrigued his active and inquisitive mind.

H. F. B. Brett-Smith.
Oxford.

(Not to be published)

Jan. 19/17.