AN ITEM OF OPHTHALMOLOGICAL INTEREST

English. In either case the name of the abstractor will be acknowledged in the text and payment will be made at the rate of thirty shillings per thousand words. Since the literature from January 1, 1947, is being dealt with, an early notification by potential abstractors would be much appreciated.

MR. SURPHLETE, AN ITEM OF OPHTHALMOLOGICAL HISTORY

BY

R. R. JAMES

WOODBRIDGE

In Sloane MS. 3801 at the British Museum is mentioned the man whose name heads this paper. In my "Studies in Ophthalmological History" I gave a transcript of the manuscript in question, and may here repeat the lines dealing with Mr. Surphlete.

"Then ther was one Mr. Surphlete a man of axeolente Dyet and crusty fasion of bodye. He lived till he was fouere score yeares of age lived moste in Norfolke & dyed at Linn and in good estate. He lay 2 or 3 yeares at a barber's house at Linn to whom he taught som skille, who nowe professethe it with weak Understandinge and gyven to drinke. I cannot com'end this Mr. Surphlete for any extraordinarye skille though of longe experience."

Mr. Arnold Sorsby has called my attention to the fact that Richard Banister refers to the following oculists in the preface to his Breviary: "Henry Blackborne, famous for the forenamed cures; my kinde acquaintance Robert Hall, of Worcester; Master Velder, of Fennie-Stanton; Master Surflet, of Lynne and Master Barnabie, of Peterborough, all excelling in these operations." He goes on to say that "in their case I noticed much practice but little theorie."

The name Surflet is very rare. Research has established the following facts. A small market town named Surflet is near Spalding in Lincolnshire. A Richard Surflytte married at Maplebeck, Notts., Isabel Lynne on 13, October 1563. A man of the same name (but spelt Surffet), matriculated sizar from Trinity College, Cambridge, at Michaelmas, 1576 (Venn). Richard Surflet, Practitioner in Physicke, translated Andreas Laurentius's "A Discourse of the Preservation of the Sight, and a Treatise of Melancholike Diseases, of Rheumes, and of Old Age." This book was printed by Felix Kingston, for Ralph Iacson, dwelling in Paules Churchyard at the Signe of the Swan, 1599. It is dedicated to Lord La Ware and Ladie Anne, his wife.
Mr. Arnold Sorsby, to whose research I am indebted for my acquaintance with this book, informs me that at the British Museum there are three editions of a book on farming by Richard Surflet, the last of which is edited by Gervase Markham and was published in 1616.

The book is dedicated to Lord Willoughby, and consists of servile sentiments, classical tags and some Hebrew phrases. Mr. Surflet's preface, addressed to the "gentle reader," is largely a tirade against the female sex.

Mr. Sorsby tells me that the book itself is composed of extracts from classical authors and is a sort of compendium for farmers. Such human and animal medicine as occurs is largely drawn from the herbals.

Markham's only reference to Surflet is in the dedication to Lord Willoughby's heir. The previous edition "belonged to your . . . father, as the gift of a learned and well experienced gentleman, who in the translation took a long and well merited labour."

The will of a Richard Surflet which was proved June 26, 1606, will be given later.

Mr. Sorsby* has suggested to me that the anonymous author of Sloane MS. 3801 may have been Richard Banister himself. I am convinced that he is correct and that I was in error in dating it 1630-40; for in the "Craft of Surgery" by Flint South, edited by Sir D'Arcy Power, I find that on July 8, 1602, Richard Banester of Sleaford, Surgeon, was examined and approved by the Court of the Barber Surgeons' Company. It will be recalled that the author of the MS. in question wrote from Sleaford. I think that the man who translated the book of Laurentius may be the Richard Surflet whose name occurs in Venn. It is possible that he may have been the son of the gentleman who was married in 1563. If the will (v. infra) be his he would appear to have been unmarried and to have left his money in trust to apprentice the most godly of the sons of three other members of the Surflet family to some honest and profitable trade. These may have been his brothers, though he does not say so. The will which follows is according to the common form of the time; it is chiefly remarkable for religiousness amounting to fanaticism. Richard Surflet was obviously a Calvinist of the most fanatical type, at the same time he was evidently a scholar, familiar with Greek, Latin and Hebrew. The inventory of his goods shews him to have been rather a dandy, and his library must have been rich in works on divinity and medicine. He was going to sea, possibly to Spain as he took Spanish money with him. At the same time he must have been anticipating cold weather, or he would hardly have noted the stockinges "very thick and hayrie, bought at Craconia (Cracow) by a Transilvanian embassadour."

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I hardly think that Surflet was going to sea as a naval surgeon. At this date James the First had just ascended the English throne; Spain had not recovered from the Armada; and I should surmise that Surflet was simply going abroad. One can imagine the difficulty the executor would have had in deciding which of the sons was the most godly; and if either of them were the ophthalmic quack I think he would have probably been ruled out at once.

I have given footnotes to elucidate the various odd terms which will be found in the inventory, as well as such books as I have been able to identify.

I am obliged to Mr. Harvey Bloom for the transcript of the will.

The Will of Richard Surflet (P.C.C. Stafford, 434)

As I came from the earth the common mother of all mankind: see I knowe I shall return unto the same againe, and with others the works of God be resolved into my first matter, and seeing the time as a thinge moste uncertaine, is unknowne, but nowe upon this goinge to Sea more probablye approachinge, by reason of the longe and dangerous occurences dependinge theeren. I thoughte it my parte to set my thinges in order, that soe if God doo call me hence, I maye be the freer to wayne myselfe from worldly and transitorie thinges. And to have my mynde onlye intente upon these wherein true felicite is placed. And first I bequeathe myselfe sowle and bodye to that most lovinge and mercifull God who hath given his sonne Jesus Christ, borne of a woman, to suffer death upon the crosse for me and all the elect, notwithstanding that as he hath numbered my daies and is of all sufficient power to restore me agayn in health and safetie to my Native Soyle (ife soe it seeme good to him in his infinite wisdome) soe he will after my dissolution (whether by land or sea) receave me for the same his Christes sake, into eternall bliss; forgivinge me all my synnes originall and actuall, imputinge unto me the full and perfect obedience of his deare and onely begotten sonne whereby I shall stande unspotted and blameless before his thronne of justice, never to be called into judgement but to passe from death to life; as for the goodes which God of his mercie hath blessed me with all my desire is that they be all sould and turned into money, of the money I give to William Bingham, a carver dwelling in Gleane Alley in Southwark, thre pounde six shillinges eight pence. To Maister Travers and Maister Egerton twenty shillinges a pence. To Maister Bandeforde and Mr. Faget of Detford tenne shillinges at pence. To Mr. Crosley, whom I make Supervisor for the discharging of this my will, and to receive whatsoever moneys may any manner of waye be due unto me, the somme of fiftie three shillinges and fower pence. To his wief e tenne shillinges. And to every one of his daughters six shillinges eight pence. The Rest of all such moneys as shall remaine, I desire to be layed out in some leasse as maye be most profitable either in the Citty or Countrye: And the yearelye revenue growinge therefor of the space of every six yeres to be bestowed in the placinge and stockinge thereof all the goodes of Richard Surflete John Surflete or Robert Surflete suche as shall be of moste hope for Godlines or towardlines, with some Religious and honest man, in some good and commendable trade; But the Revenue of the seaventh yeare I desire to be bestowed upon the godly distressed and afflicted and this by mutuall intercourse to be continuyed from seaven yeres to seaven yeres to the full expiracion of such of twentie one yeres, and if it should please God to call Maister Crosley away by death before such tymes expired. Then my desire is that he would commend these partes and offices to be performed by some other honest frende of his feareinge God, or else to gett Maister Travers or Maister Egerton or some other faithfull minister such as shall then be of good reporte like unto them here in the Citty to procure one to doe the same to which my last will and Testament made the first of March one thousand six hundred and three I putt my hande and seale in the presence of us Hugh Evans, William Tilney, William Shambrooke, Abraham Webbe. By me Richard Surflete——Left in the Citty.

An Inventorye of such goodes as I carie with me to the Sea or otherwise leave
with my friends in London made the day and yeare within wrytten. Imprimis one
great vessell of booke at Maister Theralde the Lynnen Draper his house in Fryday
Streeete at the Signe of the Maydens head and Unicorne, and in the same place one
old hampear with nothing but trash. Item at Maister Crosley his house at the
Goulden Lyon at the Stockes one hamper and in it a clock called an alarum, a great
box with Surgery instrumentes a lesser box called a playste or box with surgery
instrumentes, also some of silver and some of iron, a box with my letters of orders,
a license to præstise Physique my clocke plummettes and a canvas bag with sundry
sortes of things in it. Item one raper and a dagger a grograine gowne\(^1\) with a
velvet face cape and gurding, a velvet jerkin, a satten doublet. two stuff doublets,
two paire of rounde cloth hose, one paire of hose of velvet panes and cannions,\(^1\) one
paire of new Jerseie stockinges of fourtene shillinges prye, one peece of dorsinix\(^1\)
with curtaines ringes at it, one ball ol velvett gurding, one newe clark\(^2\) faced with
velvet, one rydinge clark and an old paire of bases,\(^1\) one paire of bootes and spurrere
one cloth saule with thre githes a petterell\(^1\) and crupper, one bridile with bytt and
bosses, six ruffe bandes of cambrick, one newe hatt faced with velvet, one course
sheete to wrap my apperrel in, one velvet miff, one velvet cape for a clark upon
cloth.

Taken with me to sea First one Truncke, one mayl thre boxes with lockes whereof
one is made deskwyse, two gownes the one of stuffe the other of cloth, one clark
faced with velvet, one hat one Dutch cap, one sicle quillete cap, one other headed
Sparta velvet, two fustian nightcappes seaven lynnen cappes, whereof one is a lyttle
wrought with black silcke in a border about the edges and thre of the other are newe,
five dozen and a halfe of falling bandes two dozen newe hande towelles and as many
tablenapkins handkerchers, two dozen and a halfe cufves thre newe paire with black
and white edging lace, and as many payres of old ones, two doublettes of stuffe, fower
jerkins, one of silcke another of cloth, the two other of stuffe, one newe the other
olde, two crane feathered fustian mandillions,\(^1\) two paire of drawinge breeches of the
same, fower paire of clote breeches, two trusses of canvass six paire of lynnen
breeches six fustian wastcoates, eightene newe shirts, and six olde, thre paire
of oiled leather lyninges five paire of lynnen stockinges whereof fower are newe, one
paire of worsted stockinges blacke and newe, two paire of Jersey but old, a fowerth
paire of woollen yarne newe, a fiftie pair of russet cloth, and a sixte of whyte knytt
ones very thick and hayrie, bought at Craconia\(^1\) by a Transilvanian Embassadour,
newe shoes three paire, old shoes two paire one paire of pumppes and pantoffes\(^1\)
olde, a paire of slippers and olde paire of lyneden moyles, but lyttle or nothing worne,
one paire of newe Pennyston\(^6\) blanketes, three newe paire of hose garters, two of
crewell and one of silcke, one bedrugg newe, one woolded and two pillowes, two
fustian pillowberes\(^1\) newe, one mat, one brush for clothes, one headbrushe, a lookinge
glasse, two combes of box in cases, a paire of snuffers, an extinguisher a wooden
standish\(^1\) with penknife etc a fayre Inchhorne with a penner and sandbox two, and
of the same, fower newe paire of gloves, an old motley clokebagge, books a hundred
and eight or thereabouts and of nameless followeth, one hebrew bible a Tremley\(^1\) in
fol. one English bible gylled and pryned at Geneva, a French bible, one Greeke
Testament, one French Testament, Calvine on Deuteronomy and Job, Calvine upon
the Psalms in Latin, one Institution and epistles, Beysa his epistles, and confessions,
Du Plessy against the Masse, Grinous works Packins\(^13\) works fol. Daneus on the
Lords Prayer his ethicks and Isageo Christiana in 2 vol. One Polain Theses, and
Theses Geneuses one Perkins\(^1\)\(^1\) problem, his booke, de predestinatione his prophetica
and Specimen degestri, one Ursinus Catechisme Sentetti medulla patrum, Flores
Doctorum, one small Tablebooke the drum of doomesday. Kestwysb \(^1\)\(^1\) on the
Commandementes. Deaneue's lectures, Virel's dialogues, Bakers\(^1\) lectures on the
Creede, the harmony of confessions. Fenner's\(^1\)\(^6\) Theologia, the Councell of Trent.
One Perkins of Sathan's sophistrie. Hunter's Cosmographiche, one sermon of repen-
tance six small catechimes the gouden booke of the leaden Godes. Brocad on the
Cantacles. Finch his divynitie, one treatise of fastinge set forth in Scotlande, one
Immycanon of Christ. One forme of comon prayere, one monomachie of motives,
Cartwright's\(^1\)\(^7\) little Catechisme wrytten, one other booke of the forme of common
prayere etc, one other Catechisme with the text of the Quotations, Stephanus his
condoncance Fenners household discipline one destruction of smale vices, one other
smale Catheduchism. Fornelius\(^1\)\(^5\) his workes fol. Piso his methodus etc. Valverda\(^1\)

\(^*\) Cloak
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his Anatomicall tables, Bannasters\textsuperscript{20} Anathomy, Weckers\textsuperscript{21} special Antidotane, Parry\textsuperscript{22} his surgery, Schenkens\textsuperscript{23} his observations 2 vol. Penotus\textsuperscript{24} \textit{de vera prepar-} \textit{atione medicamentorum chymicorum}, The Cure of diseases in remote Regions, Gratias \textit{ab horto} of East Indian Simples. Laurentius\textsuperscript{25} de Cresibus, Clowes\textsuperscript{26} his practise of Surgery, Botellus\textsuperscript{27} \textit{de missione sanguinis}, Willichus\textsuperscript{28} \textit{de Urinarum probationsibus} Wecker's surgery in English, Rouseus\textsuperscript{29} \textit{de magnis hipp ieniib}, one great lexicon, one Thom: dictionary one \textit{dictionarium poeticum}, Martinus Gramer, Paginus Epitome, Scotus Greek gramer, Mathiolius of the facultyes of simples. decimo sexto, one Taleus Rethorick, Cartwrightes Treatise of Fastinge, Phregius his pedagogus one Licesthenes Apothegmes, Aristotles Sentences, Tullyes Sentences, \textit{Flores poetaeum}, the small Greek poets. Verons Phisickes, Daneus his Physicke, Ovids Metamorphosis, one dictionary one \textit{dictionarium poeticum}, Martinus Gramer, Paginus Epitome, Scotus Greek gramer, Mathiolius of the facultyes of simples.

Commission to administer was granted to William Crosley, June 26. 1606.

A search of the Parish Register of King's Lynn by the Verger gave the burial of the daughter of a physician there in 1630, which seemed at first sight as if it might be a name like Surphlet; but the tracing which he sent makes it more likely to have been Curtis:—"Margaret Curtes d. of Mr. Richard Curtys, a phisitian."

I do not of course pretend that this paper settles the question as to who Mr. Surphlet, the quack oculist was. The testator may have been the translator of Laurerntiues, but it is odd that he did not mention his own work in his inventory. We know that the quack died at Lynn; and it is to be assumed that the testator lived in London or Southwark. He probably died abroad, and proof of death must have been forthcoming for administration to be granted to his executor.

The will is of interest in many ways and partly as shewing what a medical man at that date thought fit to take to sea with him.

FOOTNOTES

1. A red silk gown.
2. Usually spelt Dornick, a species of linen table-cloth, used in Scotland, and originally made at Deornick, in Flanders.
3. Probably braces.
4. A horse's breastplate.
5. A soldier's coat.
6. Cracow, capital of Poland.
7. Slippers.
8. Possibly Penistone in Lancashire.
9. Pillow beer, a cover for pillow-case.
10. A writing desk for ink, sand, wafers, etc.
11. Panels and lappets.
12. William Parkins (1558-1602). A staunch Calvinist whose works were translated into Dutch, Spanish, Welsh and Irish. The most famous, his \textit{Armilla Aurea} (1590) went to its 15th edition in 20 years. \textit{Dict. Nat. Biog.}
The most terrible disaster which can occur to the ophthalmic surgeon and to his patient is "removal of the wrong eye."

It might be thought that this accident was merely a possible but unlikely danger about which teachers should warn students but which has never actually occurred. That was my impression when I wrote in 1916 that by the use of local analgesia "the possibility, however remote, of such a calamity as its (the wrong eye's) removal is totally avoided." At that time I imagined that removal of the wrong eye was a hypothetical possibility rather than an actual fact, a view which had been to some extent previously expressed by Hermann Knapp when he wrote in 1898 "... we should be on our guard lest we take the good eye out. This awful mistake is sensationally mentioned in text-books and periodicals; I do not know whether it has actually occurred, but the possibility is undeniable."

Knapp's statement was based on the literature before 1898. Of over sixty text-books on ophthalmology and ophthalmic surgery...
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R. R. James

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