

Transcript

Editorial comments:

BL Lansdowne MS 18 f. 18r - 19v. William Herle to Lord Burghley.

Address leaf:

[fol. 19v]

[Superscription:] To the right honorable mi very good lorde, the L. of Burghleye the Thresuror of England &c. [give] these with all spede.

[Endorsement by unknown hand:] 29. Aug. 1573. William Herle to my L.

[Note:] The new surgion ophthalmist.

[Note:] Towching the preservation of the eyesight

Letter text:

[fol. 18r] Departing from your good L. att the Cowrt, on Satterday last att after noone, I was home the next mornyng betyme, & delyverd your L. lres to the L. Mayor, to Sir Harry Perrys, & to master Fowler. I have allso nott only ~~confirmed~~ conferred att large with this Allmaigne surgion, towching his skyls for preserveng of eye sight, & for ~~the~~ restoring of the same being loste; but have examined his other cures & workmanship besyde: his maner of proceding & deling: & lastly I have perused som of his Testimonalles bothe made abrode & here, & talked with suche wittnesses, as have bin present att his workes since his coming over, whereof som ar men of good knowledge & creditt fyndeng certainly that he hath don & doth things (in mi oppinion), of rare effect daylye. & hath noles felicitye in that he attemptes (namely in matters of surgerye) than facility, & is comended of his pacyents to dele very honestly & spedily with them, & that he hath a speciall regard to that he takes in hande, to discharge it accordingly with Credite. Butt the Phisicyens & Surgions do envye this, & have used mani wayes & speches to difface hym, which the L. mayor hath now forbydden by open proclamatyon: And among other things, he had restored on Jone wynter a wydowe to her sight, who hath bin blynde these viij yeres, & is of th'aige of 66 yeres; which when the Towne surgions perceived, they sent on to her, as though he had bin this strangers man, to applye contrary plasters to her eyes, inowgh to have eten owtt the sight of the strongest persons that were; with which woman I spake mi self (though with much ado, she was so harde to be found owtt) who sayd that this new surgion, after som handling of her eye ^eye^, whatt with instrument & otherwise, & then applying som juices & powder to the same, had made her to se in an instant well nye & to discerne his face & chayne of golde perfectly, with another colour that was presented. Butt when ^the^ sight is thus restored, he accustomes ~~to~~ to dyett ~~them~~ ^his pacyents^ & to kepe them with plasters owtte of the ayre to confirme the tendernes of their sight for a moneth or vj wekes after this cure: having now in cure att his own howse within Bisshops gate street, on Ales Burton the wife of George Burton of fullam who was blynde, of th'one eye ij yeres, & of the other eye 3 wekes, & hath made her to se with that spede & facility which he did the other, butt he entertaynes her in a darke parlor with plasters till the sight be confirmed against the ayre, whereof she made the reporte her selfe unto me; besyde that Doctor Turner & others were present att this acte, to whom he expownded sondry things owtt of Galene, making ~~hym~~ to

~~perceve~~ the sayd Doctor Turner to perceve in this woman sondry deffects of the eyes, which Galiene treated of, & nott hable to be discerned by Turner, till the [fol. 18v] bookes of galiene & the eyes were confronted together; opening withall a nombre of other diseases of the eyes, & of their cawses whereof they grew, which ~~the latter~~ bothe the later & elder Philosophers & Phisicyens had nott made mencyon of, which induceth D. Turner to ascribe unto this surgion a Singuler knowledge for the eyes, & an experience therin above other men. Whereupon I delte with the sayd surgien to understand whither he wolde undertake the Cure of an olde gentillwoman, that had impediment in her sighte, butt whither it proceded I sayd of her aige, or of som other by accydent, I knew nott: Wherunto he replyed that ~~whither~~ bothe aige, & wekenes, as allso that impediment which cam by accident were easely holpen, as I might beholde amonge his Testimonalls if I perused them. Among which att Koningsburg in Prussia, he had heled on melchior monsterburgh of his sight, of the aige of 70. yeres, who had bin trobled with his eyes ix. yeres, but in vj yeres had sene nothing att all; to which Cure the Duke hym self had subscribed as a witnesss whatt had bin don. Again att Hamburgh, he had holpen a wydowe of 80. yeres olde, misseng her sight 3. yeres, which is confirmed by the seals of th'english merchants there. butt that which is most to be wondered att, on Ales Amelde att Groninghen in west friseland, who had bin blynde from the 23. yeres of her aige, to the 53. was heled by hym: And of such Cures of the eyes he had an infinite number of Testimonialles, to confirme whatt he had don therin, mary he added that there were som cawses & effect of blyndenes (which he described per quedam [vucabula] artis) that were utterly incurable in whatt aige or body soever it were, ye though the cure is taken in hande, assoone as the deffecde began to appere. Butt this he wolde warrante that if he might se the gentillwoman, he wolde straight declare whither she were to be holpen or no, & in undertaking the matter, she sholde by Gods help, be well restored to her sight again, for theruppon stode his Credite & estimatyon, to avowe nothing in this his cheeff Conyng (for he wrytes himself Ophthalmiste) butt that he wolde well discharge; alledging that for those deffecdes which came accidentally to the sighte, they were derived (among other cawses) ether of the Hemeroydes, or of the obstructyons of those synewes, called Nervi optici, or otherwise of to grett a fluxe that passed by those Nervi optici, which were to be deciphered by propper colowres belonging to the [cause] & disease; ether whyte, grene, yelow, or blew, & somtymes by other tokens & observatyon, whereatt I axed hym, if he cowd nott be content to ryde do[wn] a 60. miles to se this gentillwoman, which were butt ij dayes travayll in [fol. 19r] & owtt, & were a matter bothe to raise his credite muche, & to be well consydred for his travaill; butt I cowd nott encline hym by ani mene to ryde down, for that he had a nombre of cures here in hande, whom in Conscyens & dutye he was bownd to contynew with he sayd./ Now it may plese your L. to consyder hereof & of the partyes sufficyencye, according to your own wisdom. And incase that ye vowchsave to employe me herin ani waye, I shall with that humble galdnes & care, discharge that mi dutye towards your good L. as I in most humble dutye & service am bownd to do all the dayes of mi life, hoping that your L. will consider that I have stayed the longer to wryte hereof, till I might fully & substancially be instructed of as / muche as I cowd lerne in every circumstance: & with all I most still thank your L. for your exceding goodnes towards me, being made privey by the L. mayor, how favorable a Ire (unrequested) your L. had wrytten to hym wherin he wissheth that there were ani office to bestowe uppon me, to satisfye your L. requeste, as in dede (he saith) that therebe somani reversiones passed allredy in the Cittye, as it is scarce credible to beleve: butt it is your good words that may avayll me more than all offices, for I seke Credit, & by them,^ those words & your cowntenance^ I am sure to acheve Credite, chusing rather to lese life than to lese it, mening moreover to sett forth mi jorney towards the wydowe, assone as I have gotten a lytell

money to furnish me withall, which I loke for very shortly, the good successe wherof (as of all other mi things) is next to God to be ascribed only to your good L. wherwith I most humbly take mi leve/ From london in haste. the 29. awguste. 1573. your L. most humblye./ W. Herlle.