

for it has been remarked by several experienced Vaccinators, that the influenza of last year did make it necessary to repeat Vaccination more than once or twice before it took its proper effect.

Merely to have been vaccinated has satisfied multitudes of those who apply to our establishment for this protection against Small-pox; and we cannot help lamenting that it is so difficult to prevail upon parents to bring back their children, at a proper distance of time, to ascertain whether the operation has been successful, or requiring to be repeated to ensure its efficiency.

This Board has been unremittingly occupied, and has supplied 20,000 charges of lymph more this year than it has sent out in the course of any former one; and not only have our Army and Navy, and the Colonies, been supplied, but most of the capitals of Europe have availed themselves occasionally of our resources, in which they express their entire confidence. We have, &c.

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METALLIC TRACTORS.—ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—Within the last few days a set of the "Metallic Tractors" (purchased in the year 1800 for five guineas), with a work of 100 pages, full of wonderful cures performed by them, have been placed in my hands, and such appears to have been the credulity of the day, that I find documents in their favour from Lord Rivers, Dr. Fuller, Rev. Dr. Rippon, *cum multis aliis*, in this country; and also from 42 physicians and surgeons, 22 clergymen, two professors of natural philosophy, &c. &c., in America; in short, it appears "all the ills that flesh is heir to" have been effectually cured; so that nothing but the tractors were required to render an easy passage through life, both to "man and horse." The party whom these tractors belonged to, believed them of so much service, that she ordered a second five-guinea set in order to lend them to her less opulent neighbours. May I ask,—Where are now either tractors or credulity enough to believe in their efficacy? They are absorbed in the all-empowering "animal magnetism;" and some of your readers may not find the following extracts (on this head) uninteresting.

In the "Life of Benjamin Franklin," the following passage occurs:—"In the year 1784, when animal magnetism made a great noise in the world, particularly at Paris, it was thought a matter of such importance that the King appointed Commissioners to examine into the foundation of this pretend-

ed science; Dr. Franklin was one of the number."—"After a fair and diligent examination, in the course of which Mesmer repeated a number of experiments in the presence of the Commissioners, some of which were tried upon themselves, they determined that it was a mere trick intruded upon the ignorant and credulous. Mesmer was thus interrupted in his career of wealth and fame, and a most insolent attempt to impose upon the human understanding baffled."—P. 150, Vol. I., London, 1806.

Jefferson, who succeeded Franklin at the court of France, in a letter to Dr. Smith, of Philadelphia, says, "about this time also the King of France gave him (Franklin) a signal testimony of respect, by joining him with some of the most illustrious men of the nation, to examine that ignis fatuus of philosophy, the animal magnetism of the maniac Mesmer, the pretended effects of which had astonished all Paris. From Dr. Franklin's hand, in conjunction with his brethren of the learned committee, that compound of fraud and folly was unveiled and received its death wound."—Page 547, appendix.

The following, however, I think worth adding:—

Valentine Greatraks, in the year 1666, published a letter to Mr. Boyle, in which he says,—“About four years since I had an impulse, or a strange persuasion in my own mind (of which I am not able to give any rational account to another) which did very frequently suggest to me that there was bestowed on me the gift of curing the king's evil, &c.” He accordingly cured several cases, by laying on his hands, and “stroking” the parts, as he terms it. Some time after he had another *impulse*, which enabled him to cure ague, gout, violent headach, dropsy, ulcers, &c. One of the reasons he gives for “so vile and humble an instrument” being gifted with the power of curing diseases, is “to abate the pride of the papists (who make miracles the undeniable manifest to the truth of their church), and make use of a protestant to do such strange things in the face of the sun, which they pretend to do in cells.” When he laid on his hands and “stroked” any pained part, the pain instantly fled to another, although cloaks, coats, &c., of any thickness were interposed. He cured thus, those possessed of “dumb devils,” “deaf devils,” and “talking devils.” He gives a number of cases certified by Robert Boyle, and other respectable men. The following is one of them:—

“Elinor Dickson, aged 45 years, had a dropsy twelve years in her belly only, without any tumour in her legs, but with a drought, was stroked by Mr. Greatraks, about sixteen days since, at 7 o'clock at night, and drank at the same time about six spoonfuls of his water, and rubbed some of it on her body, which she did of her own accord; the same night she felt a queasiness

in her stomach, and about midnight she felt a rumbling in her belly and stomach, and brake great store of wind, *per anum et per partem domesticam*, and then she made water in very great quantity, as four, five, or six gallons in twenty-four hours, and continued making water, though in lesser quantity, so that at this present day the skin of her belly is as empty as a glove or purse, and wraps over, and hath no drought, and her belly quite down.

“Examined 26th April, 1666, by

“ROBERT BOYLE,

“W. SMITH, Baronet,

“W. DENTON, M.D.

“JAS. FAIRCLOUGH, M.D.”

I am yours, &c.,

WM. TIFFIN ILIFF.

Newington, March 19, 1838.

THE MAN BURIED ALIVE FOR A MONTH IN INDIA.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—In your number of the 13th of May last, you have inserted from the “India Journal of Medical Science,” an account, by Mr. H. M. Twedell, “of a man who was buried alive for a month, and then exhumed alive.” The paper is, as you observe, apparently well authenticated, and certainly deserves the place which it has obtained in several periodicals. Lieutenant Boileau, of the Bengal Engineers, whose account is quoted, is a distinguished scientific officer, employed on the great trigonometrical survey of India; and the other gentlemen, whose names are mentioned in the paper, are public men, who are extensively known over our eastern empire. The facts stated are therefore undoubted. Shall we then, admit that the account furnished in that paper, “may be only interesting to future philosophers, as the first of a series, showing that air, food, and water are not entirely necessary to sustain existence, and that a man may betake himself to the grave and pass away a month comfortably, if assured that a shovel may be exerted to release him at the appointed hour.”—(LANCET, 257.) I believe that we cannot admit so strange a supposition, and that an explanation of the mystery which is more accordant with our common notions may be found.

An officer of distinguished talents, a traveller, and an acute observer of man and of nature, told me, many years ago, that he had seen a Hindoo in the northern cincars, lying on the road side *with his head buried in the earth*, and receiving the alms of the native troops as they passed; that he stepped across the man's body, and that he was sure that no deception was employed. Other gentlemen, and the Sepoys also, gave the same account. The explanation may be found in a short extract from a paper published in

the “Fanam Magazine” (Penny Magazine of Madras), for April 1834, which was written at the request of the Editor (the present Archdeacon of Madras) to recommend the study of anatomy as one means of enlightening the natives of India. It is as follows:—

“The removing of any one gross superstition, the clearing away of any one kind of successful deception, is conferring more permanent good on a people, than feeding a starving multitude. An almost infinite number of these grind down and smother the intellect of this unhappy land; the forms in which they represent themselves are innumerable, and many have not yet been described. I had sometimes heard, with wonder, accounts of native devotees burying their heads in the earth, and in this situation receiving money from passengers. It was impossible to doubt the persons who spoke of it, but it was evident that there was some trick, which had escaped the observation even of gentlemen of intelligence, and was never suspected by the natives, who rewarded liberally the successful cheat. At length an opportunity of witnessing the thing occurred. It was at new-moon, on a little headland, near Visagopatam, where a crowd of Hindoos were bathing in the sea, and the mendicant par took largely of their alms, as he lay with a large heap of sand piled, as it were, on his head. The appearance was startling; but observing the chest to rise and fall at regular intervals, I found that the heap of sand was too far from the shoulders to be over the mouth. The sand was removed from the face, which was covered with a cloth, and from the termination of this on his neck, he breathed. This will illustrate the manner in which even superficial knowledge can be brought to bear on the rude deceptions under the tyranny of which the high and low of this country groan; and how much might be done to eradicate the evil, which will for ever resist all mere political expedients.”

After a brief description of the mechanism of respiration, the following sentence occurs:—“We have seen that the devotee could not exist without enlarging his chest and contracting it; nor is there any means by which he could conceal his doing so.”

It is evident that the fakeer of Jaisulmoir, enclosed in a small building, in a cavity only covered with loose stones, had the means of breathing even more freely than my cincar friend; but this will not explain the long-continued abstinence from food, in which there was, probably, no deception, and which is a fact of great physiological interest. It is stated that “he abstains from solid food for some days previous to his interment.”—(P. 257.) “For seven days preceding the burial, the man lived entirely upon milk, regulating the quantity so as to support life, whilst