

An examination of the imposture of Ann Moore, called the fasting woman, of Tutbury : illustrated by remarks on other cases of real and pretended abstinence / by Alexander Henderson.

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AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
IMPOSTURE OF ANN MOORE,
CALLED
The Fasting Woman,
OF TUTBURY;
ILLUSTRATED BY REMARKS ON OTHER CASES
OF
REAL AND PRETENDED ABSTINENCE.

BY ALEXANDER HENDERSON, M. D.

Physician to the Westminster General Dispensary.

LONDON:

Printed by J. Moyes, Greville Street, Hatton Garden,
FOR UNDERWOOD AND BLACKS, FLEET STREET,

1813.

EXAMINATION

TO

OF THE

SAMUEL JOHNSON SIMMONS, M.D. F.R.S.

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE

CALLED

The Faculty of Physicians

Dear Sir,

OF TUBERCLES

is the paper concerning the

case of Ann Mace which I published some time

ago in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical

Journal, was so fortunate as to meet with your

attention, and appeared to you to contain such

a view of the subject as might with propriety be

sent before the public, in a form more adapted for

general circulation. I have now translated it with

a few corrections, and with those additions, which

I have thought proper to make, and a more careful con-

sideration of other analogous cases, have enabled

me to make. The acquisition of the pamphlet by

you, which I had formerly done only from

a desire to see it in your hands, has given me

an opportunity of presenting it to you, and the

TO

SAMUEL FOART SIMMONS, M.D.F.R.&A.S.

Physician Extraordinary to the King.

DEAR SIR,

As the paper concerning the case of Ann Moore, which I published some time since, in the Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal, was so fortunate as to meet with your approbation, and appeared to you to contain such a view of the subject as might with propriety be laid before the public, in a form more adapted for general circulation; I have now reprinted it, with a few corrections, and with those additions, which subsequent intelligence, and a more careful consideration of other analogous cases, have enabled me to make. The acquisition of the pamphlet by GRUNER, which I had formerly quoted only from memory, has, in particular, furnished me with several important illustrations: and the extracts

that are given from it, will be found, if I mistake not, to impart to the argument on the watching a degree of force, which must stagger, if it do not convert, the most credulous. Such, however, as the whole now is, I submit it to your judgment.

I remain, with the greatest respect,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

A. HENDERSON.

Golden Square,
March 9, 1813.

EXAMINATION, &c.

ABOUT four years ago, considerable interest was excited, by various notices in the newspapers and journals, respecting a woman of the name of Moore, an inhabitant of an obscure village in Staffordshire, who, from long illness, and other causes, was reported to have lost all desire of food, and after subsisting, for many months, on remarkably small quantities of liquid aliment, to have at length acquired the art of living without any nourishment whatever. Though her bodily strength was represented as somewhat impaired, and her person was described as exhibiting several marked proofs of prolonged abstinence; yet her countenance was said to retain the ap-

pearance of health; her mental faculties were admitted to be entire; her memory was even stated to be uncommonly strong; and her piety was held up as extremely edifying. As these accounts were attested by certain medical gentlemen, who had seen and examined her, they were received as entitled to some credit. There were, it is true, several circumstances in the documents alluded to, which, to a person of ordinary understanding, seemed not a little suspicious; but all doubts on the subject were supposed to be removed, and all objections answered, by the watching of the patient, during a term of sixteen days and nights, which took place in the month of September, 1808. From that time she continued to attract a crowd of visitors, from all parts of the country, who witnessed her condition with a sort of religious awe; and who, in commiseration of her sufferings, or to reward her devoutness, seldom quitted her without exercising their generosity towards her.

Last summer I was passing through Staffordshire, along with my friend, Mr. Lawrence, Assistant Surgeon to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and another gentleman, on a tour to the Lakes; when, finding ourselves within a few miles of her residence, it was agreed, that we should visit her. As the observations which we made, differ, in many essential particulars, and lead to a very opposite conclusion from the majority of those which have been hitherto published; I shall endeavour to give such an account of them, as may convince the believers in the story, of the illusion which has imposed upon them, and enable them to estimate the true character of her who has dared to practise it, in order that she might reap the harvest of their credulity.

Previously to our visit, we had endeavoured to collect the opinions of the neighbourhood, concerning this case of alleged extraordinary abstinence. Of the medical gentlemen to whom we addressed ourselves, the majority seemed

sceptical on the subject, and pointed out to us many equivocal circumstances in the conduct of the patient; though it did not appear, that any very decisive means had been used by them to prove the fact of imposture: but, among the common people, there was the most implicit belief in the truth of her assertions; and, whenever we ventured to express any doubts, we were invariably referred to the watching, to which she had been subjected, as a full and satisfactory refutation of our suspicions.

We arrived at Tutbury at an early hour of the day, when visitors could hardly be expected; and immediately proceeded to the dwelling of Ann Moore, accompanied by a medical gentleman of the place, who told us, that he saw no reason to question her veracity, or to discredit the fact of her abstinence; and who advised us to announce our profession to her, as the most likely means to obtain us the information which we wanted. We found her sitting up in a

bed so constructed as scarcely to admit of her using the recumbent posture, her back being partly supported by a pillow. A large Bible lay before her. She did not seem in the least discomposed by our abrupt entrance; though, on reaching the house, some bustle was heard in the upper story, as if preparations had been making for our reception. From the appearance of her countenance, which was natural, and even healthy, and from that of her upper limbs, abdomen, and back, which we examined very carefully, she might be called rather thin; but many persons of her age, in perfect health, are much thinner. The abdomen was *not* contracted, nor did it present any peculiar appearance; nor was the pulsation of the aorta more distinctly perceptible than it is in the generality of persons. The lower extremities, however, seemed, to a certain extent, wasted and paralytic; the pulse was 94, firm and regular; the heat natural; both the hands and feet were moist; her mouth, as far

as we were permitted to examine it, shewed no deficiency of saliva; and, on holding a mirror before her face, it was immediately covered with copious moisture. She spoke to us in a distinct and tolerably strong voice, and moved her arms and fingers with considerable force. There was an offensive urinous smell about the bed.

In answer to the questions which we put to her, she told us that, on the 31st of October, she would be just fifty-one years old; that she had tasted no solid food for upwards of five years, and no drink for nearly four years, and had no desire for either; that she never even wetted her lips, except when she washed her face, which happened about once a week; that she had voided no urine since the week before Easter three years, and no feces since that day (August 3) five years; that she had not slept, or lain down in bed, for more than three years; that she sometimes dozed, with her head reclining on the pillow, but never so as

to forget herself; that she had frequently blisters applied to the back of her neck, on account of a giddiness in her head, and that they rose and discharged plentifully; but that, in general, she did not experience much uneasiness, or feel pain, except on pressure of the left hypochondrium; that when she took snuff, which she did habitually, it produced a flow of mucus from the nostrils; that her hands were generally moist; and that she perspired freely over the whole surface of the body, when she had fits. The nature of these fits she did not explain*. Her mouth, according to her own declaration, she was unable to open, because it occasioned severe pain behind the jaws; but the lower jaw acted freely enough within the sphere in which she chose to move it in our presence, to shew that there was nothing defective in the articulations; the masseter and temporal

* To Mr. Corn she described them as hysterical. Month. Mag. Oct. 1811. Mr. Bourne calls them epileptic. Med. and Phys. Journ. XX. p. 529.

muscles were soft, and could not, therefore, resist its descent: besides, it was evident, when she spoke, that she could separate her teeth to some extent, and that without giving any indications of uneasiness. Of all the fingers of the left hand, except the index, she said that she had lost the use; the middle finger, indeed, she admitted, could be moved by external force, though not by volition. But, while Mr. Lawrence was examining the spot, where she complained of pain on opening her mouth, she was observed to use the finger in question without any difficulty. On attempting to raise the two remaining fingers, which were bent, she made some resistance, and complained of my hurting her. The left hand, she affirmed, was hotter than the other. In her lower extremities she declared, that she had no feeling whatsoever.

We deemed it unnecessary to pursue our inquiries further; and left her, fully satisfied, that the history of her long

fasting, and inability to eat and drink, was a mere fabrication, which she had contrived with a view to excite wonder and compassion, and which she had been enabled to support by the collusion of those about her person.—The following arguments may be adduced, as tending to establish this conclusion.

I. THE NATURAL AND HEALTHY APPEARANCE OF THE FACE affords a presumption, that no serious disease can exist in the digestive organs.

II. THE STRENGTH OF THE PULSE, MUSCLES, AND VOICE, which has been admitted by all the reporters of the case, contradicts the assertion of protracted abstinence. “*Nimia fames, sive inedia,*” says Hoffmann*, “*hominum vires insigniter prosternit, et non nunquam in summum vitæ discrimen adducit, cujus rei indubia experientia locuples testis est.*” Of the truth of this remark, though it hardly require illustration, I shall have occasion to offer ample proof in the sequel.

* Opera, I. p. 116.

III. THE MOISTURE OF THE MOUTH, NOSTRILS, EYES, AND WHOLE SURFACE OF THE SKIN, shews that her body is constantly sustaining a certain loss, to repair which we know of no other channel, than the alimentary canal. If the functions of the stomach were entirely suspended, or even materially deranged, it is not likely that the saliva would continue to be regularly supplied; since the flow of it depends so much on the healthy state of that organ: and, without taking into account the occasional discharges from blisters and other causes, it is obvious, that the exhalation from the lungs and surface of the body, which we ascertained beyond the possibility of doubt, must occasion a correspondent drain from the internal parts. But these excretions have been found to amount, in a healthy person, to several pounds, in the course of the day. The experiments of Seguin fix the quantity of matter perspired from the skin, in twenty-four hours, at 52.89 ounces, and of the hydrocarbon

disengaged from the lungs, during the same period, at 12.23 ounces*. If we allow, that these evacuations may be so far reduced by disease, as not to exceed thirty ounces in the whole, it is clear, that they would still be sufficient to consume the whole substance of Ann Moore, in a very few weeks.

IV. THE SOUNDNESS OF HER INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES proves, at least, that her condition differs from that of those fasters, whose history may be regarded as authentic. In a case recorded by Tulpius†, delirium supervened on the twelfth day. The same occurrence, accompanied by derangement of vision, took place in that related by Dr. Currie‡, where the patient laboured under a complete stricture of the œsophagus. In the case of the hypochondriac, described by Dr. Willan§, much imbecility and con-

* Memoires de l'Academie des Sciences, 1789.

† Obs. Med. I. 43.

‡ Medical Reports, vol. i. p. 304.

§ Medical Communications, vol. ii. p. 113.

fusion of mind was observable in the latter periods of the fast. Among the manuscripts of the British Museum*, there is an interesting letter from Dr. Fairfax to Mr. Oldenburg, giving an account of a lady who attempted to starve herself to death, because she could not live comfortably; and who, after subsisting for six weeks, on small quantities of beer and vegetable acids, became “wild in the head, so as she could not lie down, —her head fared so confusedly.”

V. THE DISSOLUTE CONDUCT of Ann Moore, in the former part of her life, and HER CONFESSION, THAT SHE ONCE, THROUGH IMPOSITION, PASSED FOR A RELIGIOUS PERSON, MERELY FOR THE SAKE OF WORLDLY INTEREST, are circumstances by no means calculated to inspire confidence in her statements. “It is well known,” observes one of her historians, “that in her younger days she was a *notorious immoral character*, which

* Sloanian MSS. 4482.

appears not only by the accounts of her neighbours, but from the corroboration of her own testimony. It seems that she *never* possessed any real religious principles, before she was attacked with this extraordinary affliction; but which, happily for her, has now brought her to a state of true repentance. *She confesses, that she has once, through imposition, passed for a religious person, merely for the sake of worldly interest, under the mask of hypocrisy; but her natural disposition tended so much to evil, she was unable to conceal the deceit from the eyes of religious persons, with whom she had formed acquaintance. Her present state of mind is of such calmness and serenity, and her doctrinal knowledge so clear and unimpeachable, that it must be highly pleasing to every lover of religion to converse with her*.*" This has been the way with all such impostors, from the Holy

* Account of the Extraordinary Abstinence of Ann Moore. By J—— L———. Uttoxeter, 1809, pages 8, 9.

Maid of Kent*, down to her present imitator. To raise admiration, to conceal their vices, and to cover their deceit, they have assumed a hypocritical piety, and practised whatever degree of devotion they thought most likely to answer these purposes †. The pomp and circumstance, with which Ann Moore dis-

* “ Cette pucelle fut tenue long temps pour sainte et pour prophetesse par la subtile invention des Cordeliers; qui mesmes faisoient aeroire qu’ell’ estoit descendue du ciel, et donnoit à entendre (afin que cela fust plus vraisemblable) *qu’elle ne mangeoit ne beuvoit, combien qu’en cachette elle banquetast et paillardast fort et ferme avec les saintetez des beauxperes.*” H. Estienne, Apologie pour Herodote, chap. xxxix. She received the holy wafers with great pomp and ceremony, at the high altar, and pretended to require no other sort of nourishment. Several of the other supposed fasters commenced their system of imposition, after partaking of the eucharist.

† Yet the illusions in question were, for a long time, believed to be the work of the devil. Delrius, who advocated this doctrine, went even the length of accusing Roger Bacon of *impiety*, because he ascribed them to the influence of the stars.

plays her pretensions to superior sanctity, have been already noticed. That the mask is not always so impenetrable, as her abettors imagine, will, I think, be evident from the following short anecdote. A gentleman from Derby, knowing her previous history, contrived to engage her in very free conversation, into which she entered very readily, and which she seemed to relish very much: but, upon another visitor being announced, she instantly resumed a serious air; abandoning it only when the intruder on her gaiety had withdrawn.

VI. THE INTEREST WHICH SHE AND HER ATTENDANTS HAVE IN SUPPORTING THE DECEPTION, is sufficiently obvious. From the published accounts of her case, it appears, that, before she began to attract the attention of the public, she had been “labouring under the greatest distresses,” and “had not even sufficient clothes to cover her bed;” but, since the watching, she is said to have been very comfortable, and all

necessary attendance has been provided for her. "The number of people," observes J. L., "who go to see her, is astonishing; and, every one giving her a trifle for the benefit of her children, she has by this time received something very handsome for them*." Indeed, according to the report of the gentleman who accompanied us on our visit, she has turned the exhibition of her person to such account, as to be able, in the course of the last summer, to place the sum of £400 in the public funds.

VII. THE DECLARATION, "THAT SHE THINKS A TIME MAY COME WHEN GOD WILL RESTORE HER APPETITE," prepares her for giving in, when it may suit her convenience, or for any accidental exposure that may take place; so that she can never be surprised at her meals, or her potations, without a ready excuse.

VIII. THE GRADUAL CONCEALMENT OF THE EVACUATION OF URINE IS AN-

* Account, &c. p. 11.

other suspicious circumstance in her proceedings. At the time of the watching, it is admitted that she passed urine to the amount of a pint in every two days: she has since found it convenient to diminish the quantity by degrees, till at last she voids none at all. But there were several pretty strong presumptive proofs of the falsity of this assertion. One of us, in approaching her bed, happened to overturn an utensil which was placed under it, obviously for her use, and which was partly filled with urine. There was also, as I have before remarked, an offensive urinous smell about the bed; to lessen the perceptibility of which, is probably the reason of her insisting upon the window being kept always open

On these particulars I am disposed to lay the more stress, as they led to the detection of a similar imposture which was practised, about twelve years ago, by a girl, in a village near Osnaburg. Like Ann Moore, this girl was watched by persons appointed for the purpose; and like her,

too, she escaped the ordeal with her integrity unimpeached. But a second watching having been undertaken by two medical gentlemen, Dr. Gruner and Dr. Schelver, her tricks were very soon discovered. It was observed, for instance, that her linen was generally in a damp state, and had a strong urinous smell; to conceal which, she used to have heated stones introduced into her bed, under pretence of cold, and insisted upon the window being kept open during the night, as well as day. She objected to the shifting of her clothes, and counterfeited faintings upon any attempt to move her. At last, one day, when she had given out her warming apparatus to be heated, and seemed more than usually uneasy from the want of it, the bed-clothes were suddenly removed, and she was found "swimming in urine." On examining the bed where she had been lying, marks of feces also were perceived; and, after some prevarication, she confessed, that she had all along had regular alvine dis-

charges, though she had pretended to have none for two years ; but had concealed them by mixing them with the straw of the bed, and, occasionally, when not watched, had thrown them out of the window*.

IX. The proof afforded by the WATCHING of Ann Moore will be found, when examined, to be far from conclusive. The author of the "Account" tells us, that, Ann Moore "having consented to be removed, Mr. Taylor (a surgeon of the neighbourhood) went round the town to procure a number of the most respectable inhabitants for the watch ; and he made it his first principle, to expunge those who, in his *opinion*, were in the least degree liable to be imposed on, or of a disposition that might be suspected would connive at imposture. He ad-

* Authentische aktenmässige Erzählung der Betrügerei eines angeblichen Wundermädchens im Hochstift Osnabrück, das seit zwei Jahren ohne Speisen und Getränke gelebt haben wollte. Von Justus Gruner. 12mo. Berlin, 1800. p. 82, 181.

mitted no persons but such as most vehemently objected to the verity of the fact."—"Mr. H. Jackson," we are further assured, "having a *thorough knowledge* of the inhabitants, took upon himself the trouble of setting the watch; and he being of the most invincible incredulity, was well qualified for the purpose. When it was known that Nanny had been under watch for forty hours, and was challenging the investigation, *great numbers of people*, merely from curiosity, *came to offer their service*; so that there was not the least difficulty in procuring a sufficient number for the purpose. The principal care that remained to Mr. Jackson, was the matching of people of different qualifications together, in such a manner as to afford a greater security, and that the watch should be constantly and faithfully kept. In order to which, such as man and wife, brother and sister, &c. were never suffered to attend at the same time, nor any persons that were likely to be influenced in her favour. The watch

was generally changed every four hours, and, for further satisfaction, placards were stuck up in different parts of the town, announcing, ‘ This is to maintain, that Ann Moore has taken no nourishment since Tuesday afternoon, at three o’clock, and is truly and constantly watched. All persons are hereby challenged to disprove the fact, and may watch for themselves, during the further period of time that shall, by medical consultation, be determined to establish the same*.’” The truth is, that almost every one, who “ came to offer” his service, was permitted to undertake the task ; and, during the sixteen days that the watch continued, not fewer, as we were credibly informed, than from eighty to ninety different persons officiated. Among this number, is it not highly probable that there may have been some of Ann Moore’s private friends, who supplied her with food, and connived at her eating and drinking? We are not

* Loc. cit. p. 21, 22.

told what were the respective characters of the individuals employed—whether they were persons of known probity and veracity; no security is given for their vigilance; no information is afforded as to the mode in which they were superintended: but we are called upon to place unlimited confidence in Mr. Taylor's "opinion" of their liability to be imposed upon, in Mr. Jackson's "knowledge" of their characters, and his skill in "matching them together;" in other words, we are called upon to believe an improbable fact upon the most suspicious of all testimony, upon the *opinion* which A has of the dispositions of B, C, D, E, &c. and of the *knowledge* and *care* which X has displayed in *matching* B with D, C with E, and so on. Can any thing be more unsatisfactory?

Most of the watchings which have been undertaken in similar cases, appear to have been managed in the same imperfect and negligent manner. Apollonia Schreier, for example, whose fictions, notwith-

standing the many improbable circumstances with which they were blended, obtained implicit credit with Lentulus, was consigned to the observation of the *nurses* of the Berne infirmary; and that, too, in company with her mother, from whom she had vehemently objected to be separated. At the end of two days, however, her mother was taken into custody: the day following, she passed a large quantity of urine in bed, though she pretended to have voided none during the eleven months that she was said to have fasted. Yet, even then, her innocence was not called in question; the mother was released, and permitted to revisit her; and, at the end of two weeks more of such watching, she was supposed to have fully established her innocence, and allowed to return home*. Margaret Seufrit, the girl of Spire, who was believed to have fasted three years, was

* *Historia admiranda de Apolloniæ Schreieræ inedia; a Paulo Lentulo, M. D. &c.* 4to. Bernæ, 1604. p. 9—13.

subjected to a watching of ten days and nights, in the year 1541, and, in the following year, to another trial of twelve days, by desire of the Emperor Ferdinand; each time, under the care of two persons. But that there must have been some fallacy in their observations, is evident from the description given of her by Buccoldianus; for he tells us, that “the girl continued in good health, *grew*, retained her natural heat, respired freely, had the usual excretions from the eyes, nostrils, and ears, walked, spoke, cried, laughed, and did all things suitable to her age and situation*.” It also appears, that she occasionally allowed some wine, water, or other liquors, to be introduced into her mouth, which she is said to have immediately spit out again; but of which it is probable, that she swallowed a certain portion; though Buccoldianus protests, that she did not swallow a drop.

* Ger. Buccoldiani, de Puella quæ sine cibo et potu vitam transigit, brevis narratio. Ap. Lentul. p. 32.

Catherine Binder, after continuing her alleged fast during five years, was separated from her parents, sorely against her inclination, and placed under the superintendence of four women, who, with much entreaty, “ *multis argumentis, ac rationibus,*” were prevailed upon to undertake the task ; and who affirmed, that she had not eaten, or drunk, or had any evacuation, or slept a moment, during fourteen days and nights that they remained with her*. But it is acknowledged, that she was in the habit of washing her mouth with brandy and water, “ *to comfort her head and heart ;*” and there were other proofs, that she dieted on something more than mere air : her countenance was in every respect healthy, “ *bene colorata, et utcumque succolenta ;*” she retained full possession of her senses, and spoke clearly and distinctly, though she pretended to be unable to open her mouth further than just to admit the little finger ;

* De Catherinæ Binder inedia. Ap. Lentul. p. 71.

“ *mammæ quoque, præterquam in aliis virginibus fieri solet, satis protuberantes, longæ, molles, et pendulæ* *.” It ought also to be mentioned, that she was stated to have lost her reason and speech, during the first three years, and to have had both suddenly restored to her, by a Lutheran preacher, who came to her, and repeated the Lord’s prayer, the creed, the decalogue, and other parts of the liturgy.

But, when these trials have been conducted with proper care, and by persons fully qualified for the task, they have generally ended in complete detection. The young girl of Unna, who, according to the narrative of her parents, had remained without eating, drinking, or speaking, from the 12th of May to the 24th of October 1573, was watched nine days, by order of the magistrates of the town, but nothing was discovered. Wierus, remarking, that she grew con-

* De Catherinæ Binder inedia. p. 61.

siderably during her supposed disease; and arguing against the credibility of the story, from the loss that her body must have sustained by the insensible perspiration; concluded, that the whole was a deception, and determined to take her into his own house, that he might be able to observe her more closely. This he accordingly did in the following spring. *The first night after her removal, she was caught drinking a large cup of ale.* The same author gives an account of another impostor, in the time of the Emperor Maximilian, who carried on the deception by means of food concealed under her clothes, but was at length betrayed by her feces. “Sunt qui dicant,” he adds, “fuisse scortum, et vix cum amasio submersionis poenam fugã prævertisse*.” The fallacy of such experiments will be still more clearly evinced, by the discoveries which were made with regard

* G. Wierus de Lamiis et Jejuniis Commentitiis, 4to. Basil, 1582. p. 119, 130.

to the artifices of Kinker, the Osnaburg girl above mentioned ; between whose proceedings and those of Ann Moore there are a number of very curious coincidences*. Six persons, sworn for that purpose, had watched her from the 11th to the 25th of May, 1799 ; and their declaration was, “ that the patient had taken neither meat nor drink, during the whole of that period ; nor had they observed her to have any the least evacuation †.” The gentlemen who voluntarily undertook the second watching, in the following year, could not help noticing many inconsistencies in her actions and assertions, from the first day that they were with her : the urinous smell of her linen, the frequent demands for the warming apparatus, and for a wet sponge to wipe her face, &c. all conspired to increase their suspicions ; but no direct discovery could be said to take place till the sixth

* See the Parallel at the end of this tract.

† Gruner, loc. cit. p. 6.

day, when she was found as before described. With some difficulty, they now brought her to confess, *that, from the second day of their attendance, she had contrived to allay her thirst, by squeezing a portion of water into her mouth, from the sponge which she had to wash her face.* They then made her swallow some mouthfuls of water, which she did with affected uneasiness. She afterwards became sulky and obstinate: but her thirst soon overcame her perverseness; and, as if to make up for past privations, she drank eight beer-glasses of water in the course of three hours. Each glass served as a bribe for some new confession. At length she acknowledged, *that, even during the first watching, she had sucked water from a wet cloth, which she had placed under the right side of her face, under pretence of an uneasy feeling of heat; and that, in the last week of it, her mother had taken an opportunity of conveying into her bed a small bottle of water, which she had drunk, when the*

lamp was so placed, that she could not readily be observed by the persons in the room !*

To return to Ann Moore. Should we grant, for the sake of argument, that the watching was conducted with the utmost strictness and regularity, what would the inference amount to? Why, that she had fasted sixteen days and nights, a period of time during which it is certainly not impossible that she may have endured the privation;—not, that she has lived five whole years, and odd months, without any nutriment whatsoever.

That the human body can be brought to subsist on very small quantities of food, has been long known; and if we consult the records of medicine, we shall find, that there are not wanting well-authenticated instances of even more protracted abstinence, than is said to have been exhibited on this occasion. In 1559, a bishop of Spire, who had

* Gruner, loc. cit. p. 83, 126.

fallen into a deep melancholy, persisted in refusing any sustenance during forty days; standing or walking all the while. On his returning to food, his feet swelled to such a degree, that he was unable to use them; and he recovered his reason during a short interval. But relapsing into his former state, he determined, in the following year, to repeat the experiment. This time, however, it was not so successful: for, on the thirty-fifth day of his fast, he was seized with such debility, that he found himself compelled to take to his bed; and, on the forty-eighth day, after having twice tasted some Saurbrunn water, died*. A canon of Liege attempted to imitate the example of this prelate, but was with difficulty saved from death, by a supply of food, on the seventeenth day†. A fanatic, of the name of Elliot, made the same experiment, in 1789, and lived till the sixteenth

* Joh. Pontanus, ap. Lentul. p. 87.

† Wierus, ut supra.

day*. The lady, whose case has been already noticed, subsisted on small quantities of beer, and vinegar, and the juices of lemons and oranges, from the end of March to the 16th of June, when she was persuaded to relinquish her design. Dr. Willan's patient persevered in the disuse of solid food, till the sixty-first day; taking only a little water slightly flavoured with the juice of oranges, to moisten his mouth: the case soon afterwards terminated fatally. A French officer of infantry, who had retired from service, and become deranged, took it into his head to refuse food, and continued in that determination from the 25th of December till the 9th of February, drinking only about a pint and a half of water daily, with a few drops of aniseed-liqueur in each glass, till the thirtieth day; from which time, till the forty-seventh day, he took nothing whatever. Till the thirty-eighth day, too, he

* Gentleman's Mag. Obituary, 1789.

remained out of bed; but weakness at length obliged him to lie down. The return to food was followed by a temporary cure of his insanity*. In the Philosophical Transactions we have an account of four colliers, who were confined twenty-four days in a coal-pit, at Herstol, near Liege, with nothing to support them but water; and in the Medical Commentaries †, there is a history of a girl, who had lost her way, and remained eighteen days on a barren moor, in the Island of Lewis, where she could not possibly have had any other kind of sustenance. Mr. Millar, who relates the case, saw her two hours after she was found, and describes her as much emaciated. In fact, proofs abound, as to the possibility of maintaining life, for a considerable time, and under the most unfavourable circumstances, on small quantities of water, or other

* Histoire de l'Academie des Sciences, 1769. p. 45.

† No. 158.

‡ II. Dec. vol. iv. p. 360.

liquids*. *Jejuni magis sitiunt, quam esuriunt*—The feeling of hunger, if not appeased by food, often ceases altogether. But the feeling of thirst becomes constantly more urgent; and, if the body be at the same time under the influence of heat, it produces the most aggravated distress:

———“*Torrentur viscera flamma,
Oraque sicca rigent squamosis aspera linguis.
Jam marcent venæ, nulloque humore rigatus
Aëris alternos angustat pulmo meatus;
Rescissoque nocent suspiria dura palato.
Pandunt ora tamen, nocturnumque aëra captant†.*”

That Anne Moore did not altogether refrain from drinking, during the watch

* See a paper on the subject, by Dr. Percival, in the second volume of the *Memoirs of the Manchester Society*.

† *Lucan. IV. 324.* The Narrative of the Sufferings of the Persons confined in the Black Hole of Calcutta, (*Gent. Mag. Feb. 1758*), and the Narrative of the Sufferings of Lieutenant Spearing, who remained seven days at the bottom of a coal-pit, (*Gent. Mag. Aug. 1793*), furnish striking examples of this fact. See, also, *Park's Travels in Africa*.

of sixteen days, is admitted even by Mr. Taylor. "In the course of the first three days of the investigation," says that gentleman, "she swallowed, in the whole, about an ounce and a half of water; but happening to step into the room while she was swallowing it, the extreme misery of deglutition, and the violent rising of wind resisting its passage to a degree that almost seemed to threaten suffocation, induced me to dissuade her from taking any more, while the experiment that was to vindicate her veracity continued*." The only fact, therefore, that can be learned from this imperfect trial, is, that Ann Moore was not seen taking any *solid* food during the space of sixteen days and nights. Before that time, it is acknowledged, that "she had *abundant* opportunities" of eating; and since the watching, which has so unaccountably allayed all suspicions with regard to her proceedings, she can be at no loss to procure sufficient aliment, from the quan-

* Medical and Physical Journal, Vol. XX.

tity that is introduced into the house for her daughter, and the other female who lives with her.

X. HER DREAD OF A REPETITION OF THE WATCHING would seem to imply, that she had narrowly escaped detection. On Mr. Thompson's proposing to her a second watching, she said, "that she had been upon her *trial* once, which she would not then have submitted to, but to oblige the *minister*, and for nobody in the world would she undergo a repetition of it. Her attendant," Mr. T. adds, "who is as well-educated a hypocrite as her mistress, was pleased to style it, '*a trial for her life.*'"

XI. HER DREAD OF ALL EXPERIMENTS WHATEVER tells much against her. On one occasion, she refused to allow Dr. Darwin to hold a mirror before her face, in order to examine her respiration; exclaiming, "No more experiments for me! I have suffered enough already from experiments." At another time, she contrived to break a thermometer, which

a gentleman had put into her hand, in order to ascertain the heat of her body. It is probably from a similar motive, that she now keeps her mouth shut; apprehending, either, that her visitors might put her powers of deglutition to the test, or, that the mere inspection of her tongue might prove the recent introduction of food. She is also said to have occasionally betrayed great jealousy of medical men. Though we did not experience this in our own case, unless the artifice just mentioned should be considered as a proof of it, but found her more communicative than we expected; the fact has been stated to us, from so many quarters, that there appears no reason to doubt it. When Dr. Darwin first visited her, he introduced himself as a physician, and could get nothing out of her: the next time, he went in another character, and met with a much better reception. The same thing happened to some medical gentlemen, who went to see her, from Birmingham.

XII. THE VARIATIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS IN HER STATEMENTS alone are sufficient to throw discredit on every thing she says. It would appear from Mr. Taylor's narrative, that she continued the use of solid food, in small quantities, till the end of June 1807; but to Mr. Corn she positively averred, that she had taken none since the 17th of March in that year*. In reply to a question by the same gentleman, she asserted, that she *never perspired*; but to us she admitted, that she perspired freely when she had fits. To the gentleman whose thermometer she demolished, she complained of pain, and cried out upon the slightest touch of the abdomen; whilst she allowed us to use considerable pressure, without expressing the least uneasiness. On the contrary, she repeatedly assured us, that we gave her no pain by the force which we employed.

XIII. HER ACTIONS ARE OFTEN VERY INCONSISTENT WITH HER

* Month. Mag. ut sup.

STATEMENTS. If the attempt to eat and drink really caused her such "misery of deglutition," as Mr. Taylor expresses it, why did she do either; especially as she had lost all desire of food so early as November 1806? Her deceit respecting the contraction of the middle finger of her left hand, and inability to use it, has been already noticed. To Mr. Thompson she pretended to be in a state of such weakness, as made it great labour, and even pain, for her to attempt to move; but upon his threatening her with a repetition of the watching, "she so completely forgot her situation," says Mr. T. "that she raised herself upright in bed; a position in which, we had *previously* learned, she had not been for more than a year, griped her fists, threw her arms and head about with as much strength and ease as the most healthy woman of an equal age could possibly do, and talked at the same time most loudly and incessantly, from the effect of violent passion."

XIV. THE ACKNOWLEDGED FACT, THAT SHE IS NOW IN THE SAME, OR NEARLY THE SAME, CONDITION OF BODY, AS WHEN SHE COMMENCED HER SUPPOSED FAST, appears, of all the proofs of her falsehood, the most conclusive and incontrovertible. “It is apparent,” says Mr. Granger*, “that abstinence *qua* abstinence has no effect upon her system. The existence of the patient, after having fasted two years, with a countenance not far removed from the appearance of health, will not be looked upon as an effect of abstinence. For many months together, no wasting is observed.” Nay, what is more extraordinary, if the descriptions which have been given of her person by Mr. Granger and others, be correct; it will follow, that latterly she must have increased considerably in bulk: for we did not find the abdomen “so remarkably sunk in,” as Mr. G. saw it; we did not succeed, like

* Edinburgh Medical Journal, vol. v. p. 321.

Mr. Taylor, in tracing, with the finger, the grand trunk of the aorta “from the place most immediately under the ensiform process of the sternum, where the loose integument is drawn upon it, nearly to its bifurcation,” in pulling it “from its situation over the spine,” and “holding the skin across it,” so as to shew “both its shape and pulsation* ;” nor did Ann Moore appear to us, as she did to J. L., “the most emaciated creature that ever existed †.” Now, it has been shewn, that a considerable evaporation is constantly taking place from her lungs and skin: nothing, therefore, short of an actual miracle, can solve the problem of her increased size of body under these circumstances.

Such an occurrence, however, seems to have been not uncommon in other cases of fictitious abstinence. When Lentulus revisited Apollonia Schreier,

* Medical and Physical Journal, vol. xx.

† Loc. cit. p. 25.

more than a year after the watching, he found, that her face had become more plump—"Quin et mentum ipsum, et collum, et guttur, tumore præternaturali affecta conspiciebantur; quæ etiam omnia, ex levi contactu, valde dolebant. Pectus item totum, quod, superiore anno, emaciatum valde, atque arida cute obtectum, costis prominentibus, conspexeramus, tunc prætumidum apparuit: *et mammæ, QUÆ FERÈ NULLÆ ANTEA ERANT, turgidulæ cernebantur.*" She also complained of great pain on her abdomen being touched. Eight months afterwards, he found her improved in strength*. The abstinence of Seufrit, as we have already seen, did not impede her growth; and the fasting woman of Confolans, at the end of three years, had become more fleshy—"aliquanto carnosior†." In Janet Mac Leod's case‡, too, we are told, that "the doctor discovered

* Loc. cit. pp. 18, 22.

† Ibid. p. 185.

‡ Phil. Trans. lxvii. p. 11.

a very great improvement in her looks and health, since the period of his having seen her last, as she now walked tolerably upright, with a little hold by the wall." And Dr. Schelver, on visiting Kinker, previously to the watching, "was astonished to find her in a much more blooming, and, to all appearance, healthy condition; though many of the external signs of the malady were the same as before*."

Let us now examine the state of those persons, in whose abstinence nothing miraculous was pretended, and no fraud could be suspected. After Dr. Fairfax's patient had pursued her plan of starvation for a fortnight, "her arms grew decayed and winterly, which, before, were fair enough; and so continued her face wan, except when passion had stirred her."—"Nearer the month's end, her mouth grew scorbutical, and her gums bleeding." In two weeks more, says Dr. F., "her flesh wasted sensibly; the skin

* Gruner, l. c. p. 11.

shrunk, and scurf peeled off; she was always cold to the touch, and her feet, she told me, colder than her hands, to her own sense; her pulse very low." In the beginning of June, she had "frequent faintings," and "several agonies and throes, night and day." On the 10th, "her throes increased, which she had hitherto borne like a Roman; now they extorted outcries." Dr. Currie's patient wasted rapidly. "He seems to have wasted about five pounds in four days; and on the second of December, when his delirium commenced, he probably weighed one hundred and thirty-eight, or one hundred and thirty-nine pounds, having lost upwards of one hundred pounds of his original weight." During the delirium, "the eyes lost their common direction, the axis of each being turned towards the nose*." Dr. Willan, when he visited the subject of his case, (on the sixty-first day) found

* Loc. cit. pp. 308, 311.

him “ emaciated to a most astonishing degree, the muscles of the face being entirely shrunk ; his cheek bones and *processus zygomatici* stood prominent and distinct, affording a most ghastly appearance : his abdomen was concave, the umbilicus seeming to be retracted, from the collapsed state of the intestines ; the skin and abdominal muscles were shrunk below the brim of the pelvis, and under the ribs, leaving the space vacant betwixt the *ossa ilia*, the lower ribs, and spine. His limbs were reduced to the greatest possible degree of tenuity ; the *ossa ischia*, the internal trochanters, and all the processes of the bones, being easily distinguishable. His whole appearance suggested the idea of a skeleton, prepared by drying the muscles upon it, in their natural situation*.”— Such is the marked difference between the two descriptions of cases.

I have thus, I trust, collected a suffi-

* Loc. cit. p. 115.

cient body of evidence to shew, that there are no solid grounds for believing, that the order of nature is subverted in the person of Ann Moore; but, on the contrary, that there is every reason to consider her abstinence as feigned, and to denounce her as an artful impostor. That she may be partially diseased, and that she may subsist on small quantities of food, I will not venture to deny: but that she does eat, and drink, and sleep, will, I imagine, be allowed by all who peruse the foregoing statement; and, indeed, must be apparent to every person of common discernment who witnesses her present condition.

With respect to the various hypotheses, which have been advanced by the narrators of her case, to explain how she might be supported without any of the ordinary means of nutrition, I am persuaded, that my readers will agree with me in thinking, that it would be an idle waste of time to enter into a refutation of

them. To the authors of them I would recommend the shrewd maxim of Bierling: *Necessarium circa judicium historicum observatu est, ut, antequam in causas factorum inquiratur, de ipsis factis certo constet. Nihil enim ineptius est, quam rationes rei anxie indagare, quæ vel prorsus non contigit, vel latentes habet fraudes aut fallacias.*

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PARALLEL of the Cases of ANN MOORE and ANNA
MARIA KINKER.

ANN MOORE.

“ Her countenance is fresh and animated.”—“ She is naturally of a cheerful and talkative disposition.”—*Med. and Phys. Journ., and Account, &c. by J. L.*

“ Possesses great strength of mind.”—“ This circumstance convinced me of the powers of her memory.”—*Account, &c. Month. Mag.*

“ Several remarkable expressions, which have fallen from her lips, during the course of conversation with different people, tend much to show the pious state of her heart.”—*Account.*

“ The number of people who go to see her is astonishing; and every one giving her a trifle for the benefit of her children, she has by this time received something very handsome for them.”—*Ibid.*

She was watched from the 13th to the 29th of September, by a number of persons selected for that purpose, who affirmed, that she had not eaten, or drunk any thing

ANNA MARIA KINKER.

“ She had an agreeable physiognomy, and a very fair complexion: her cheeks were rather florid.”—“ She appeared cheerful.”—*Gruener, p. 7, 18.*

“ She displayed great strength and quickness of memory on all occasions, and no common degree of curiosity.”—P. 36.

“ The pious resignation with which the mother and daughter spoke of her extraordinary condition, contributed not a little to heighten the effect of the scene.”—P. 7.

“ There was no want of visitors, even from among the higher ranks; and they seldom took leave without making a present to the girl or her parents.”—P. 8.

A. M. K. was watched from the 11th to the 25th of May, by six persons on oath, who declared, “ that she had taken no solid food or drink, during that period, nor been

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thing during that time, except about an ounce and a half of water.

On Mr. Thompson's proposing a second watching, she said, "that she had been upon her trial once, which she would not then have submitted to, but to oblige the minister, and for nobody in the world would she undergo a second watching. Her attendant was pleased to style it a trial for her life."—"The young women being asked, if they would consent to her being removed to another house, at first hesitated; saying, that it would be very likely to kill her."—*Account*.

"She cannot endure people in the room who have taken the smallest quantity of malt or spirituous liquors; the fumes of their breath affect her in such a manner as to cause a giddiness of her head."—*Ibid*.

Of all the fingers of the left hand, except the index, she said, that she had lost the use: the middle finger, indeed, she admitted, could be moved by external force, though not by volition. But, when not attending to it,

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been observed to have any evacuation."—P. 6.

Dr. Schelver, when he intimated the design of a second watching, "was surprised to find, that not only the patient, but her parents, appeared very unwilling to submit to it; although the father had repeatedly assured him, that he would be glad to see a repetition of the watching, and would consent to the removal of his daughter, if she could be cured without expense to him." The father said, "It was enough that his daughter had been watched once, and that she would not be able to bear the removal."—P. 10, 20.

"She seemed to have an acute smell, for she requested us not to smoke, because she could not bear it; and she complained that the lavender-water, at which she was smelling, was too strong for her."—P. 18.

"Although she asserted, that she had no feeling but in the breast and head, we remarked, that while she was looking at us, she rolled a riband round her fingers, and also reached behind her pillow for two sheets of paper which were placed

ANN MOORE.

it, she was observed to use the finger in question without any difficulty.

In her lower extremities she declared, that she had no feeling whatever.

“She cannot endure without a fresh current of air continually admitted into her room, for which purpose the chamber window is always open, even in the coldest weather.”—*Account*.

She told Mr. Corn, “I feel no hunger or disposition for food, neither did I for many years before I declined eating.”—*Month. Mag.*

When Dr. Darwin proposed to hold a mirror before her face, in order to examine her respiration, she exclaimed, “No more experiments for me! I have suffered enough already from experiments.”

“She sleeps well.”—*Taylor*.
“Her head and left side are never free from pain, so that she has no sound sleep night or day.”—*Account*.

She expressed her “willingness to submit to any thing that was thought necessary for the satisfaction of the public.”—*Ibid*.

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placed there, without being able to see them.”—P. 19.

“She affirmed, that she had no feeling in her legs.”—*Ibid*.

“Notwithstanding the dismal, cold weather, which we had at that time, she desired, that the window, which had been open all the day, might be kept open also during the night.”—P. 38.

“While we were at breakfast, she assured us, that she loathed food.”—P. 42.

“Some days before, she said, a merchant had come from Os-naburg, and told, that they wished to make experiments with her, advising her father not to consent to them.”—P. 43.

“She appeared to sleep soundly; yet she averred, that she only slumbered, and had heard all that was spoken.”—P. 45. “Com-plained of a pain in the left hypo-chondrium.”—P. 112.

“She told us her relation was true, and that we were at liberty to publish it.”—P. 60.

ANN MOORE.

“ She finds every good effect attained from the occasional cleansing her mouth with a moistened rag.”—*Taylor*.

“ In the course of the first three days of the investigation, she swallowed in the whole about an ounce and a half of water; but happening to step into the room, while she was swallowing it, the extreme misery of deglutition, and the violent rising of wind resisting its passage to a degree that almost seemed to threaten suffocation, induced me to dissuade her from taking any more, while the experiment that was to vindicate her veracity continued.”—*Ibid*.

“ She constantly begs not to be urged to take any thing, as the attempt to swallow gives her grievous pain.”—*Allen*.

“ Convulsions have come on from so slight an excitement as surprise.”—*Granger*.

ANNA MARIA KINKER.

She confessed, “ that since the second day of our watching, she had contrived to convey a certain quantity of water into her mouth, by squeezing the sponge;—that, during the first watching, she had sucked some water from a wet cloth, which was placed under the left side of her face, under pretence of heat.”—P. 83-4.

Confessed, “ that, during the last eight days of the first watching, her mother had secretly conveyed into her bed a small bottle of water; and that she had drunk it in the night, when the lamp was so placed, that the watch could not observe her.”—P. 126.
“ She was now made drink some mouthfuls of water, which she swallowed with affected difficulty.”—P. 84.

She said, “ that, when her father, at any time, asked her to eat, she had always begged him not to put her to that pain.”—P. 150.

Confessed “ that she had two or three times counterfeited fainting, in order to deter us from attempting to move her.”—P. 152.



