

The extraordinary case of Joseph Lockier : who was struck by lightning, and existed three weeks in a wood near Bath, on water only! / [Joseph Lockier and Thomas Creaser].

Contributors

Lockier, Joseph.
Creaser, Thomas.

Publication/Creation

Bath : Printed by William Meyler in the Grove, [1806]

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/z7qpxz3m>

License and attribution

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.


You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

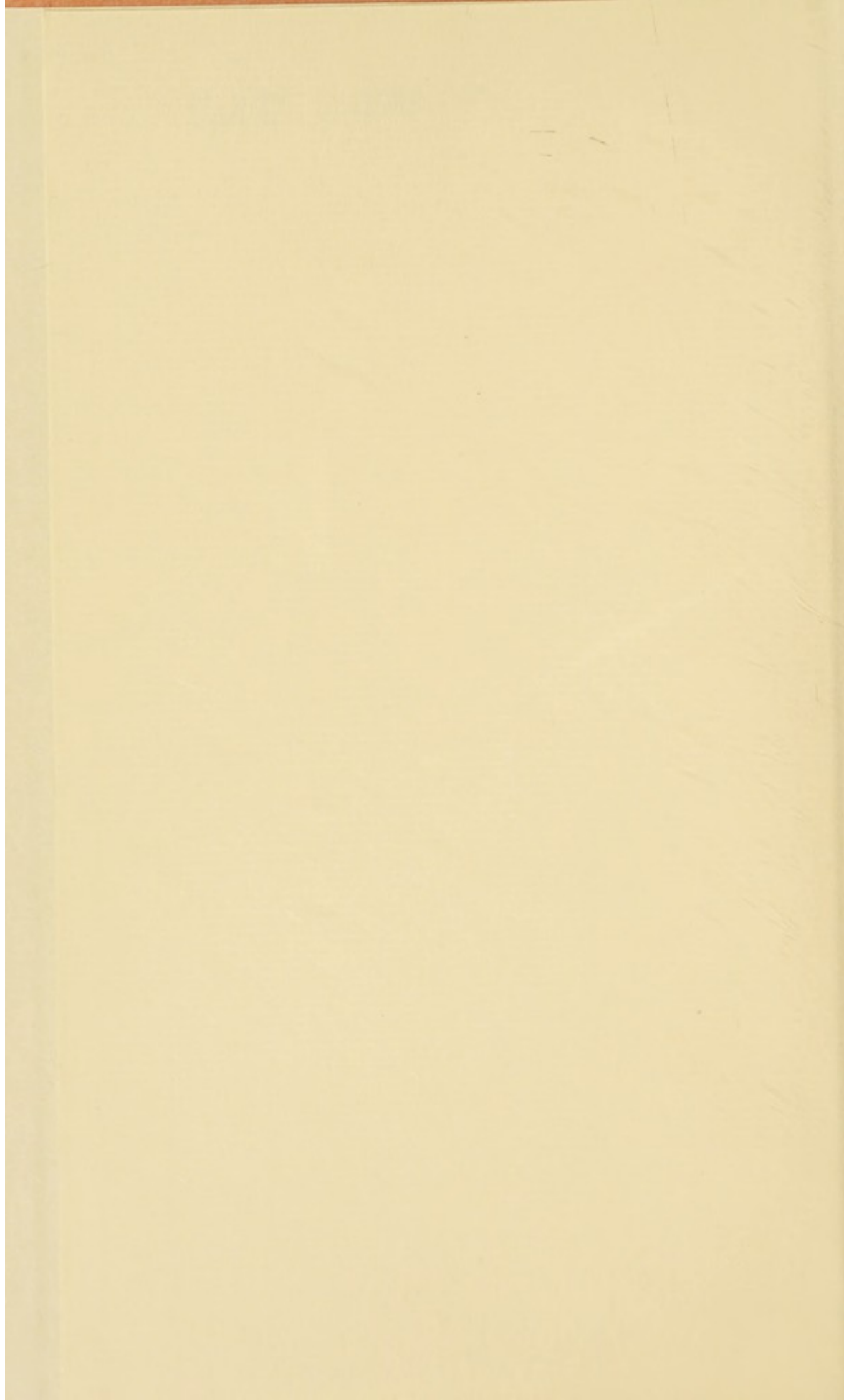


Supp. 59788/13



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2016 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b28751103>



*Somerset's — 11
The Family Annals 1808 p. 1. Ac*

THE *6x*

EXTRAORDINARY CASE

OF

JOSEPH LOCKIER,

of Monasterton Harleigh, in Wiltshire
WHO

WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING,

AND

Existed Three Weeks in a Wood near Bath;

ON WATER ONLY!

ILLUSTRATED BY ANALOGOUS INSTANCES.

Published for his Benefit,

BY

THOMAS CREASER,

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, LONDON, AND SURGEON

TO THE BATH CITY DISPENSARY.

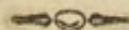
See Gent mag 1806 p 869

BATH:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM MEYLER, IN THE GROVE;

AND

SOLD BY HIM AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS,



PRICE ONE SHILLING.

1806

EXTRAORDINARY CASE

JOSEPH LOCKIER

WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING

Related Three Weeks in a Wood near Bath

ON WATER ONLY

ILLUSTRATED BY ANALOGOUS INSTANCES

By Thomas Crasner

THOMAS CRASNER

Member of the Royal Society of Medicine, London, and Secretary

to the Bath City Dispensary

Printed by W. B. ... Bath

BATH

PRINTED BY WILLIAM NEALE, IN THE GROVE

AND

SOLD BY HIM AND OTHER BOOKSELLERS

—o—

PRICE ONE SHILLING

PREFACE.

IN the introduction to the Public of the succeeding Narrative, I am prompted by a desire of benefiting from its publication a remarkable and deplorable object of suffering; the circumstances of whose history have been received with much scepticism. I am also solicitous to confer a very trivial addition to our knowledge of the powers of the Animal Economy, in sustaining, for a long time, the deprivation of the common articles of subsistence.

Man, and the more imperfect animals, are organised so as to endure more material changes in respect to the quantities and qualities of food than we might

previously conceive. Carnivorous, omnivorous, and graminivorous animals are all capable of sustaining the greatest deviations from those habits of nourishment which Nature obviously intended by their structure that they should prefer, and they are also enabled to accommodate themselves, (the carnivorous animals especially) to the abstraction of food for a very long period. During the time which certain animals, as the hedge-hog, &c. remain during the winter in a state of sleeping, no nourishment is required; but if they do not obtain food in a short time after awaking, they die.— In the many instances on record of persons recovering from the long continuance of the state termed a trance, it is seen that life, without the ordinary vital actions, is long supported without food.

But in most of the instances authenticated of the protraction and support of human existence under these circumstances, Water alone has supplied nutrition, and it

appears to have been sufficiently adequate. When we consider chemically the elementary and constituent parts of water, and that these form an elementary and considerable portion of the solids and fluids of animal bodies, the fact will appear less extraordinary in a physiological view.

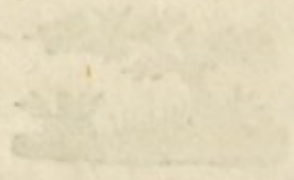
After these few prefatory remarks, I shall introduce the very singular subject of this publication in the form under which it has been considered necessary to give it the sanction of an oath.



appears to have been sufficiently adequate.
 When we consider chemically the elements
 and constituent parts of water, and
 that these form an elementary and con-
 siderable portion of the solids and fluids of
 animal bodies, the fact will appear less
 extraordinary in a physiological view.

After these few preliminary remarks, I
 shall introduce the very singular subject
 of this publication in the form under which
 it has been considered necessary to give it

the sanction of an oath.





BATH, SEPT. 30, 1806.

JOSEPH LOCKIER, aged 48, residing lately in the service of Mr. Batchelor, publican, of Monckton-Farleigh, near Bath, but now a patient in the Bath City Dispensary, maketh oath to the best of his memory of the truth of the following particulars, viz.

“That he, the said Joseph Lockier, had come to Bath on the 19th of August last in the morning, and was returning to Monckton-Farleigh in the afternoon, through a wood called Ashley wood, which is a nearer way than the usual road. Whilst he was in this wood, between six and seven o’clock in the evening, a violent thunder storm came on, by which he believes he was struck down and rendered insensible, as he is not conscious of any thing more which occurred at the time. He remembers that his senses returned gradually and imperfectly, so that at first he was barely capable of perceiving and distinguishing surrounding objects, and that it was a little time before he was in the full possession of his faculties. He now felt excessively cold, his cloaths wet, his hands and feet swelled, the powers of his lower extremities totally gone, and those of his arms much impaired. He was also entirely incapable of articulating, or of uttering any sound whatever, though he frequently attempted it. He remembers

that very soon after the restoration of his senses, another thunder storm occurred, that it happened in the night, and frightened him excessively.* He had in his pocket a pocket-book and a shaving dish;† he placed out the latter to receive the rain which fell abundantly about this period. Till the subsequent time when he was discovered and removed, he subsisted entirely on the water so caught, and on the grass within the reach of his arms, which he gathered and chewed. He also made the memorandums in his pocket-book, of which the following is a copy:§

“I am just able to pencil this. I believe the fatal thunder storm (to me) was on the 18th|| of August. I should not have known how the time went on only by hearing the guns go off for partridge-shooting the first of September, and it is now the 4th I am pencilling this—from the above time till now I have not had any thing to put in my mouth.”

“As I was going across this wood to Farleigh, I was struck down by a violent clap of thunder, where I lay senseless for God knows how long. When I came to myself my hands and feet were swelled very much, so that I could not stand; nor have I eat any thing for three weeks past—God only knows my sufferings.”

“The said Joseph Lockier also deposes, that his voice was restored so as to enable him to call for assistance, and that some time in the commencement of the month of September, he heard persons in the wood with dogs and called to them for assistance, that they approached within a short distance of him and heard

* This second thunder storm is known to have occurred on the night of the 29th of August, so that he must have been insensible for nearly ten days.

† It was one part of his occupation to shave persons in the village where he lived.

§ The pocket-book inclosed two slate leaves; it is soiled and rumpled by the rain.

|| It was on the 19th.

his story, but told him he was an impostor and went away. On the evening of the same day, the said Joseph Lockier deposes, that his late master, Mr. Batchelor, of Monckton Farleigh, came to his assistance, and had him removed in a cart to the Swan-Inn, on Kingsdown. Joseph Lockier also declares, that during the time he lay in the wood, hunger was the most distressing sensation at first, which afterwards subsided and yielded entirely to thirst, the distress from which was intolerable, and which he appeased in the mode before-mentioned. After the recovery of his senses he slept much during the warmth of the day, but was kept awake by the cold of the night; during sleep he dreamed of eating and drinking, but on awaking suffered violent commotion and internal agitation at the disappointed idea. On being taken up from the ground and conveyed to the Swan-Inn, Kingsdown, he was immediately put under the care of Mr. Mason, surgeon, of Batheaston."

30th Sept. 1806.

"JOSEPH LOCKIER."

Sworn before me, one of his Majesty's Justices
of the Peace for the County of Somerset,
and Vice-President of the Bath City Dis-
pensary,

GEORGE ROBINSON.

The next in succession as connected testimony is the account furnished by Mr. Mason, surgeon, of Batheaston, of whose judicious and humane professional conduct it also exhibits a proof.

"I was sent for to attend on Joseph Lockier on the 8th of September, and found him in the following situation:—When I first saw him he was in a cart, in some straw; I ordered him to be taken into the house, and

placed in a large room. He was carried up stairs by four men, who attempted to put him on the bed, so that he might sit up by being supported; but I found that it was impossible, his limbs being all paralyzed, and not the least motion in them. We placed him on a bed, and took off his clothes; I cannot say took them off, for they were so rotten as hardly to be touched: his leather barns were entirely rotten, and his shirt was wet all over, and was stained with the appearance of muddy water having been poured into it. When his body was exposed, the extremities appeared flaccid, and looked like a washerwoman's hand, without motion, circulation or warmth. He could hardly articulate, and that in a whisper for some time, but frequently was fainting. He had not sufficient strength to raise his arm, or to support it so as to have his pulse felt, which was almost imperceptible at first, and afterwards did not beat more than ten in a minute. After waiting some time, and seeing him so long motionless, I gave him a few drops of volatile etherial spirit in a little water; it produced in a moment a convulsive motion over the whole body, and evacuated torrents of wind. He said, "do not give me any more of it, it will kill me, it has burned my bowels and set them in a flame." After this he lay quiet, and I gave him some warm milk and oatmeal gruel; he swallowed it most eagerly, and asked for more—he said his thirst was intolerable. After waiting three hours, I found his pulse increased to 20 in a minute, and his upper extremities warm, but his lower extremities as cold as ice, and all his toes had the appearance of mortification, one being in a gangrenous state. I ordered him a milk diet with gruel and broth, and gave him those medicines I thought most fit to restore animation. I seriously believe that

the man had not any sustenance for the long time he himself says."

"R. MASON,

Sept. 27, 1806.

SURGEON, BATHEASTON."

In the order of the narrative next occurs the deposition of Mr. Batchelor, of Monckton-Farleigh, as communicated to Mr. Coward, linen-draper, of Bond-street, who with much zeal and humanity, assisted by Mr. Meyler, of the Grove, has interested himself not only in the investigation of the whole circumstances of the case, but in the procuring pecuniary assistance for the subject of it.

"Mr. Batchelor, a reputable farmer, and master of the King's-Arms Inn at Monckton-Farleigh, states, that on Monday, Sept. 8th, early in the morning, a man whose name is Gibbon, and another whose name is Powell, were shooting in the woods near Kingsdown, they discovered a man lying under a maple bush, who begged their assistance, and told them he was almost perishing, having been struck by lightning, and had lain there nearly three weeks, and was unable to move from the spot. They, disbelieving his story, called him a lying impostor, and left him to his unhappy fate. About ten o'clock Gibbon and Powell called at the King's-Arms and drank some liquor, but did not mention a word about poor Lockier, but pursued their sport. They called again at one o'clock, and while sitting at their dinner with Mr. Batchelor, one of them said, "It rains very hard, we are much more comfortably situated than the drunken fellow we saw lying in

the wood this morning." This remark caught the attention of Mr. Batchelor, and they describing his dress and the place in the wood where he lay, Mr. B. exclaimed "This surely must be my labourer, poor Lockier, who has been missing so long—I can eat no more," and dropping his knife and fork, instantly went in search of him, accompanied by the clerk of the parish and a lad—they were soon successful and found Lockier, who stated his misfortunes as before-mentioned. Mr. Batchelor was very much shocked with his wretched appearance, being almost exhausted, particularly he found his feet much swelled, and very black. The place where he lay was quite bare as far as he could reach. He earnestly entreated them to get him some cold water, and said he was dying with thirst. Mr. Batchelor replied that water would be very improper for him, and ordered the lad to return immediately to his wife at Farleigh, and get a bottle of warm milk and water, with which he quickly returned, and Lockier drank the whole. Several other persons soon arrived at the place, and Mr. B. proposed to remove him in an arm-chair; Lockier said he could not possibly sit up in the chair, and requested they would get a cart, with some straw for him to lie on, as he was too ill to be removed in any other position. A cart was soon procured, and the poor sufferer taken to the Swan-Inn, Kingsdown. During his removal, Mr. B. hastened with all possible speed to Mr. Mason, surgeon, at Batheaston, who immediately set off, and was at the Swan rather before Lockier arrived, to whom he paid the most humane and constant attention, and by his judicious treatment the poor man so far gained strength as to be able to bear being removed to the Bath City Dispensary, as he belonged to the parish of St. James."

BATH, November 17, 1806.

We, the Physicians and Surgeons of the Bath City Dispensary, do declare, that the above-mentioned Joseph Lockier was admitted an in-patient the 15th of September, 1806; that at this time his whole body was much emaciated, his legs and thighs motionless, shrivelled and flaccid: on his legs were several livid spots, and one of his toes was completely gangrenous. He has suffered amputation of this toe, and at this time the powers of his lower extremities are nearly restored. From minute attention to his story, and a comparison of it with his appearance and symptoms, we have no doubt of its truth and accuracy.

J. MOODIE,	}	PHYSICIANS.
J. T. MURRAY,		
S. CRAWFORD,		
T. CREASER,	}	SURGEONS.
W. WHITE,		



THE relation detailed by Joseph Lockier of his condition and sensations, has all the internal evidence of truth, even if it were not supported by collateral circumstances. In the rigid examinations to which he has been submitted by several gentlemen and myself, there has been no apparent effort to prove too much, or to account for any part of the facts except by the simplest explanation.

It will serve to enlarge our knowledge on this subject, as well as to render more easily credible the preceding history, if I bring together some analogous instances. Of these I shall altogether omit several of almost miraculous description, which are to be found in Schenck, in Fabricius, in Melancthon, in Johnson's Natural History, in Wierns, in Ticetus, and in several of the older foreign authors, and which, however well attested, are too irreconcilable with modern experience to be cited as present illustrations.

Amongst events of more recent date, and of satisfactory proof, is the interesting and philosophical narrative given by Dr. Somis, physician to the King of Sardinia, concerning three women who were saved out of the ruins of a stable, where they had been buried thirty-seven days by a heavy fall of snow from one of the mountains of the Alps, called an Avalanche. The inhabitants of the Alps give the name of Avalanche to a very considerable quantity of snow whirled about with

great impetuosity by the wind, and of sufficient force to tear up the stoutest trees from the ground, to beat down animals, and to overwhelm houses. They are also formed of snow, driven by the winds against the highest and most protuberant parts of mountains, where they harden and cohere till a prodigious mass is sometimes formed—when the support fails, the Avalanche falls at once, carrying with it large portions of loosened rock, and rolling down with amazing force. Such an event took place near Piedmont, in Italy, on the 19th of March, 1755, and by which thirty houses and twenty-two inhabitants were buried. Amongst these, three women and a child two years old took shelter in a stable, over which the snow was lodged forty-two feet in height, two hundred and seventy in length, and about sixty in breadth. Every person who was missing was found dead, except the family above-mentioned, and every exertion to penetrate the snow which covered them was fruitless, till the warm winds prevailed in the middle of April. By this time the pit of snow which inclosed them was penetrated, and they were taken out. In the stable where they lay, they fortunately took up their abode in the manger, which afterwards appeared to be the only place of safety allotted for them: it was about twenty inches broad, and upheld by an arch, was enabled to withstand the shock, and supported the chief

beam of the roof, in such a manner as to prevent the poor women from being crushed by the ruins. Their position in the manger during the period of their confinement, was with their backs to the wall, their toes under their hams, and their knees to their noses. Their stomachs were so much affected, that for a long time they could not take any solid food, and their eyes were unable to bear the rays of the sun. Dr. Somis observes, that considering the sufferings which these poor women had undergone, and several years after to be still alive, was an event, the like of which he did not remember to have ever heard or read of.

One of the women happened to have fifteen chesnuts in her pocket, and there were two goats in the stable, with some hay above the manger, within reach of the women, sufficient to feed them for a short time. One of the goats was in kid, the other one of those that used to supply the family with milk, which was now milked by the women, and yielded about two pints daily, and this, with the fifteen chesnuts above-mentioned, and the snow which they melted with the heat of their hands to quench their thirst, was the sole means of their subsistence during thirty-seven days — and their sufferings were greatly increased by filth, extreme cold, the uneasy posture in which they were confined, with the snow continually melting upon them, by

which their clothes were entirely rotten.—Dr. Somis, in his narrative, gives further notices of persons who had been lost in Avalanches, and dug out alive, after they had lain several days under a considerable depth of snow. In accounting for people surviving so long under snow, he observes that nothing more is requisite, than that the snow should be sufficiently loose and soft for the free admission of air for the purpose of respiration.—These poor sufferers were relieved by the munificence of the King of Sardinia, and all afterwards enjoyed perfect health, except one who suffered a dimness of sight from too rapid exposure to light.

*Joanna Crippen, of Chardstock, Dorset, on returning home the 24th of January, 1708, was overtaken by snow, and lay down under a hedge. In this place she lay from Monday evening until Sunday following, and was supported by snow water alone, *which appeased her excessive thirst*. She suffered mortification of one of her toes, but got well.

An instance peculiarly similar to the preceding is very circumstantially related in a pamphlet by Mr. Okes, a respectable and eminent surgeon, of Cambridge. Elizabeth Woodcock, returning from Cambridge to Impington on the evening of the 2d of February, 1799, was dismounted by the starting of her horse, who ran away. In this

* Philosophical Transactions Abridged, vol. V. page 358.

situation, after excessive fatigue, she sat down on the ground, and was rapidly overwhelmed with snow, which arose to six feet in a perpendicular direction. *The sensation of hunger ceased almost entirely after the first day, and thirst was the predominant feeling*, which she allayed by sucking the surrounding snow, and she had no other nourishment whatever. On the 10th of February she was discovered and removed, having suffered an extensive mortification of her toes, which she recovered.

The identity of circumstances in the two preceding cases is strikingly obvious, and demonstrates the general uniformity of Nature's operations.

*On the 17th of December, 1760, as nine labourers were working in a mine of pit coal, near Charleroy, one of them chanced to make a breach in a place which contained all the collected waters of an old pit they knew nothing of, and these waters came upon them so suddenly and with so much impetuosity, that two of them had scarcely time to make their escape by getting to the well for drawing up the coals. The seven others were carried away by the torrent, amidst the rubbish it swept along with it. One of them was fortunate enough to escape death by climbing up to a more elevated place, near the opening for supplying the mine with air: in this state he

* Universal Magazine, vol. XXXVIII. page 119.

remained nine days, existing on water alone, till found by his companions.

Several examples of persons who lived for a long time on water alone, may be found in the memoirs of the Academy of Sciences at Paris.

*Some colliers working in a coal-pit at Hors tol, about half a league from Siege, one of them, in February 1683, pierced a vein of water, which gushing in violently drowned one of them.—Those who were near the mouth of the pit were drawn out, but four of them, being farther within, saved themselves in a little ascent within the mine. Twenty-four days were spent in drawing off the water, and on the twenty-fifth they were drawn out. “I saw and examined them myself,” says the author of this account, “they had not a morsel of bread with them, but lived on the water of a little fountain which broke out near them; two bottles of this water I caused to be evaporated, but nothing except a scarcely perceptible calx remained.”

Sir William Hamilton, in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, in the 73d volume of the Philosophical Transactions, giving an account of the dreadful earthquakes which happened in Calabria in 1783, relates several instances of the existence of human beings and animals, during a period of deprivation of food. “At the barracks near the town of Oppido,” Sir Wm. H. says, “I found

* Philosophical Transactions Abridged, vol. III. page 111.

the Baron of his Country, the Prince of Cariati, usefully employed in the assistance of his unfortunate subjects. He shewed me two girls—one of about sixteen years of age, who had remained eleven days without food under the ruins of a house at Oppido; she had a child of five or six months old in her arms, which died the fourth day. The girl gave me a clear account of her sufferings; having light through a small opening, she had kept an exact account of the number of days she had been buried: she did not seem to be in bad health, drank freely, but has got a difficulty in swallowing any thing solid. The other girl was about eleven years of age, she remained under the ruins six days only, but in so very confined and distressful a posture, that one of her hands pressing against her cheek, had nearly worn a hole in it.”—Speaking of the earthquakes at Messina, Sir Wm. H. observes, “A curious circumstance happened here also to prove that animals can remain long alive without food. Two mules, belonging to the Duke of Belviso, remained under a heap of ruins, one of them twenty-two, and the other twenty-three days. They would not eat for some days, but drank plentifully, and are now quite recovered. There are numberless instances of dogs remaining many days in the same situation, and a hen, belonging to the British Vice-Consul at Messina, that had been closely shut up under the ruins of his house,

was taken out the twenty-second day, and is now recovered ; it did not eat for some days, but drank freely : it was emaciated and shewed little signs of life at first. From these instances, from those related before of the girls at Oppido, and the hogs at Sorriano, and from several others of the same kind that have been related to me, but which being less remarkable, I omit ; we may conclude that long fasting is always attended with great thirst and total loss of appetite."

A sheep, belonging to Mr. John Woolley, of Matlock, in Derbyshire, during a heavy snow in the night of the 7th of January 1776, was covered by it. On the 14th of February following (being thirty-eight days) this sheep was found alive, and on inspecting the place, it appeared that the animal had stood between two large stones, parallel to each other, at about the distance of two feet and a half, which probably were the means of protecting it from the great weight of snow.

It would be easy to amplify my collection by histories of existence under the deprivation of food, so much more extraordinary and protracted than the preceding, as to appear most suspiciously fabulous. The foregoing, as being within the pale of common experience and belief, are enough for the purpose ; but I cannot resist the addition of another case, which however apparently incredible, was read before our Royal Society, December 9, 1742 :—

John Ferguson, a native of the parish of Killmellfoord, Argyleshire, happened *about eighteen years ago* to overheat himself on the mountains in pursuit of cattle, and in that condition drank excessively of cold water from a rivulet, near to which he fell asleep. He awaked about twenty-four hours after in a high fever, during the paroxysms of which, his stomach could retain no aliment but water or clarified whey, and this has continued to be the case ever since that time: whey however he uses but seldom, there being no such thing to be had by persons of his condition in that country for many months in the year. Archibald Campbel Invertiver carried him to his own house, and locked him up in a chamber for twenty days, and supplied him himself with fresh water in greater quantity per day than an ordinary man could use for common drink. At the same time he took particular care that it should not be possible for his guest to supply himself with any other aliment without his knowledge, yet after that space of time he found no alteration in his countenance or strength.

THE consideration of these facts impresses us with increased confidence in the powers of the Animal Œconomy, and with admiration of the extensive resources of nature. If this hasty collection answers a better purpose than the gratification of curiosity, by exciting these reflexions, and by being productive of relief to the impoverished subject of the narrative, on whose account it was compiled, the writer will be satisfied.



THE consideration of these facts impresses
 us with increased confidence in the powers of
 the Animal Economy; and with admiration of the
 extensive resources of nature. If this hasty collec-
 tion answers a better purpose than the gratifica-
 tion of curiosity, by exciting these reflexions,
 and by being productive of relief to the im-
 proved subject of the narrative, on which
 account it was compiled, the writer will be
 satisfied.



