

not alone sufficient to preserve the lives of its Natural Animals. Hence it follows, that in Ponds, when the Water comes to be frozen over with a pretty thick Ice, the Fishes in the said Ponds are very likely, if not certain to perish, upon the continuance of such a Congelation for some time on their Surfaces; unless (as in the latter part of the Experiments) the Impediment, which hinder'd the immediate Contact of the Air to the Surface of the Water, be remov'd; that is, by breaking Holes in the Ice, whereby it is restored, and undoubtedly will perform the same thing as my Removal of the Brass Plate. This is to be understood only in Ponds, where the Water is stagnant; for where there are Springs, or a current of Water constantly succeeding under the Ice, the effect most likely will not be the same.

VI. *Part of a Letter from Mr. Patrick Blair to Dr. Hans Sloane, R. S. Secr. Giving an Account of the Asbestos, or Lapis Amiantus, found in the High-lands of Scotland.*

I Take leave to communicate the Relation of a Gentleman in the *High-lands*, not many Miles hence, who has lately built an House of a singular kind of Stone, digg'd out of a Quarry not far from him. This Stone, after the Rubbish, which is not very deep, is done away, lyes Horizontally in a Bed endu'd with parallel Fibres, with few Interstices, soft at the beginning, and easy to be smooth'd and polish'd without any Tool, but rather with Sand, or an other hard Stone of a blewish Colour, which afterwards hardens so, that it resisteth the injuries of Air or prejudice of Fire. When
 first

first the Quarrier began to dig it, he was at a mighty loss; for endeavouring to cut and raise it after the ordinary manner with Wedges, and other usual Instruments, it broke and crumbled all to pieces: But afterwards, observing more narrowly the Duct of its Fibres, so to speak, he endeavour'd to cut it with Spades lengthways; and by this means he procured Stones as big as he had a mind, which smoothed very easily along the Tract of their Fibres; but when cut transverse, no Means nor Methods could render them smooth, but their Surface remain'd unequal as the Extremities of a piece of Wood. Although, as I said, this Quarry has but few Interstices, yet in those it has the true *Asbestos*, of a whitish Silver Surface, consisting of several *fasciculi* with parallel Fibres, like to those of the muscular Fibres of salted Beef, easily separable from each other, pure white, till it becomes so small as the finest Flax, and so ductile, that it may be spun into the finest Thread, whereof it were easy to make the incombustible Cloth, so famous for Shrines among the Ancients. In other places of those Interstices, was likewise to be observed a reddish Substance, near to the colour of *Sanguis Draconis*; but whether Fibrous or not, I cannot inform you; since the Gentleman could not shew me any of it; but added, he believed it might be good for dying. I got a small parcel of the *Asbestos* from him; and he told me, if he had known its value, he could have preserv'd some Pounds of it. I am ready to think the second kind was Fibrous too, which might make a very beautiful Cloth, being striped with the other. The Quarry is at present full of Rubbish; but he tells me, he is to build again this ensuing Summer; and you may be assur'd, if any such Substance be hereafter found, it shall be carefully preserved. In a Word, this whole Quarry may be said to be *Asbestos* of different Colours, the blackish being of a much courser, and the white and red of

a finer Grain. I have been at the Gentlemans House, of whom I have this Account, and you may look upon it as Authentick.

Coupar of Angus,
March 15. 1712.

Yours,

P. BLAIR.

VII. *The Dimensions of some Human Bones, of an extraordinary Size, which were dug up near St. Albans in Hertfordshire. Communicated by Mr. W. Cheselden, Surgeon, F. R. S.*

THE Circumference of the Scull, according to its length, is 26 Inches; and according to its breadth, 23 Inches.

The greatest Diameter of each *Os Innomminatum*, is 12 Inches.

The Left *Os Femoris* is 24 Inches long, having only one (and that the great) *Trochanter*. The Right *Os Femoris* is 23 Inches long, having three *Trochanter Processus*.

Each *Tibia* is 21 Inches long.

If all the Parts bore a due proportion, this Man must have been eight foot high.

These Bones were found near an Urn, inscrib'd *Marcus Antoninus*, in the Place of the *Roman Camp* near *St. Albans*.

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