

V. *A Relation of an extraordinary sleepy Person, at Tinsbury, near Bath. By Dr William Oliver, F. R. S.*

*MAy* the 13th, Anno 1694, one *Samuel Chilton*, of *Tinsbury* near *Bath*, a Labourer, about 25 years of age, of a robust habit of Body, not fat, but fleshy, and a dark brown Hair, happen'd, without any visible cause, or evident sign, to fall into a very profound Sleep, out of which no Art us'd by those that were near him, cou'd rouze him, till after a months time; then rose of himself, put on his Cloaths, and went about his business of Husbandry as usual; slept, cou'd eat and drink as before, but spake not one word till about a month after. All the time he slept Victuals stood by him; his Mother fearing he would be starv'd, in that sullen humour, as she thought it, put Bread and Cheese and Small Beer before him, which was spent every day, and suppos'd by him, tho no one ever saw him eat or drink all that time.

From this time he remain'd free of any drowsiness or sleepiness till about the 9th of *April* 1696, and then fell into his Sleeping fit again just as he did before. After some days they were prevail'd with to try what effect Medicines might have on him, and accordingly one *Mr Gibs*, a very able Apothecary of *Bath*, went to him, Bled, Blister'd, Cupp'd and Scarifi'd him, and us'd all the external irritating Medicines he could think on, but all to no purpose, nothing of all these making any manner of impression on him; and after the first fortnight he was never observ'd to open his Eyes. Victuals stood by him

him as before, which he eat of now and then, but no body ever saw him Eat or Evacuate, tho he did both very regularly, as he had occasion ; and sometimes they have found him fast asleep with the Pot in his Hand in Bed, and sometimes with his Mouth full of Meat. In this manner he lay for about ten weeks, and then could eat nothing at all, for his Jaws seem'd to be set, and his Teeth clincht so close, that with all the Art they had with their Instruments they cou'd not open his Mouth, to put any thing into it to support him. At last, observing a hole made in his Teeth, by holding his Pipe in his Mouth, as most great Smokers usually have, they through a Quill pour'd some Tent into his Throat now and then : And this was all he took for six weeks and four days, and of that not above three pints or two quarts, some of which was spilt too ; he had made water but once, and never had a stool all that time.

*August* the 7th, which is seventeen weeks from the 9th of *April*, ( when he began to sleep, ) he awaked, put on his Cloaths, and walkt about the Room, not knowing he had slept above a night, nor cou'd he be perswaded he had lain so long, till going out into the Fields he found every body busy in getting in their Harvest, and he remember'd very well, when he fell asleep they were sowing of Barley and Oats, which he then saw ripe and fit to be cut down.

There was one thing observable, That tho his Flesh was somewhat wasted with so long lying in Bed, and fasting for above six weeks, yet a worthy Gentleman his Neighbour assured me, when he saw him, which was the first day of his coming abroad, he lookt brisker than ever he saw him in his life before ; and asking him whether the Bed had not made him sore, he assured him and every body, that he neither found that, nor any other inconvenience at all ; and that he had not the least remembrance

brance of any thing that past or was done to him all that while. So he fell again to his Husbandry as he used to do, and remain'd well from that time till *August* the 17th, *Anno* 1697, when in the morning he complain'd of a shivering and coldness in his Back, vomited once or twice, and that same day fell into his Sleeping fit again.

Being then at the *Bath*, and hearing of it, I took Horse on the 23d, to inform my self of a matter of fact I thought so strange. When I came to the House, I was by the Neighbours ( for there was no body at home at that time besides this sick man, ) brought to his Bed-side, where I found him asleep, as I had been told before, with a Cup of Beer and a piece of Bread and Cheese upon a Stool by his Bed within his reach : I took him by the Hand, felt his Pulse, which was at that time very regular ; I put my Hand on his Breast, and found his Heart beat very regular too, and his breathing was easie and free ; and all the fault I found was, that I thought his Pulse beat a little too strong : He was in a breathing Sweat, and had an agreeable warmth all over his Body. I then put my Mouth to his Ear, and as loud as I cou'd called him by his Name several times, pull'd him by the Shoulders, pincht his Nose, stopt his Mouth and Nose together, as long as I durst, for fear of Choaking him, but all to no purpose, for in all this time he gave me not the least signal of his being sensible. I lifted up his Eye-lids, and found his Eye-balls drawn up under his Eye-brows, and fixt without any motion at all. Being baffled with all these tryals, I was resolv'd to see what effects *Spirit* of *Sal Armoniac* would have, which I had brought with me, to discover the Cheat, if it had been one ; so I held my Viol under one Nostril a considerable time, which being drawn from Quick-lime, was a very piercing Spirit, and so strong I could not bear it under my own Nose a moment without making my Eyes water ; but he felt it not at all. Then I  
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threw it at several times up that same Nostril, it made his Nose run and gleet, and his Eye-lids shiver and tremble a very little, and this was all the effect I found, tho I pour'd up into one Nostril about a half ounce Bottle of this fiery Spirit, which was as strong almost as Fire itself. Finding no success with this neither, I cramm'd that Nostril with Powder of *White Hellebore*, which I had by me, in order to make my farther trials, and I can hardly think any Impostor cou'd ever be insensible of what I did. I tarried some time afterwards in the Room to see what effects all together might have upon him; but he never gave any token that he felt what I had done, nor discover'd any manner of uneasiness, by moving or stirring any one part of his Body, that I could observe. Having made these my Experiments I left him, being pretty well satisfied he was really asleep, and no sullen Counterfeit, as some people thought him.

Upon my return to *Bath*, and relating what I had observ'd, and what proofs this Fellow had given me of his Sleeping, a great many Gentlemen went out to see him, as I had done, to satisfy their Curiosity in a Rarity of that Nature, who found him in the same condition I had left him in the day before; only his Nose was inflamed and swelled very much, and his Lips and the inside of his Right Nostril blister'd and scabby, with my *Spirit* and *Hellebore*, which I had plentifully dos'd him with the day before: His Mother upon this for some time after wou'd suffer no body to come near him, for fear of more Experiments upon her Son. About ten days after I had been with him, Mr *Woolmer*, an Experienc'd Apothecary at *Bath*, called at the House, being near *Tinsbury*, went up into the Room, finding his Pulse pretty high, as I had done, takes out his Launcet, lets him Blood about fourteen ounces in the Arm, tyes his Arm up again, no body being in the House, and leaves him as he found him; and

and he assured me he never made the least motion in the world when he prickt him, nor all the while his Arm was bleeding.

Several other Experiments were made by those that went to see him every day from the *Bath*, but all to no purpose, as they told me on their return: I saw him my self again the latter end of *September*, and found him just in the same posture, lying in his Bed, but remov'd from the House where he was before about a furlong or more; and they told me, when they remov'd him, by accident, carrying him down Stairs which were somewhat narrow, they struck his Head against a Stone, and gave him a severe knock, which broke his Head, but he never mov'd any more at it than a dead man wou'd. I found now his Pulse was not quite so strong, nor had he any Sweats, as when I saw him before. I try'd him again the second time, by stopping his Nose and Mouth, but to no purpose; and a Gentleman then with me ran a large Pin into his Arm to the very Bone, but he gave us no manner of tokens of his being sensible of any thing we did to him. In all this time they assured me no body had seen him either eat or drink, tho they endeavour'd it all they could, but it always stood by him, and they observ'd sometimes once a day, sometimes once in two days all was gone. 'Tis farther observable, he never foul'd his Bed, but did his necessary occasions always in the Pot.

In this manner he lay till the 19th of *November*, when his Mother hearing him make a noise, ran immediately up to him, and found him Eating; she askt him how he did? He said, Very well, thank God: She askt him again, Which he lik'd best, Bread and Butter, or Bread and Cheefe? He answer'd, Bread and Cheefe: Upon this, the poor Woman overjoy'd left him to acquaint his Brother with it, and they came strait up into the Chamber to discourse him, but found him as fast asleep again as

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ever, and all the Art they had cou'd not wake him. From this time to the end of *January* or the beginning of *February*, (for I cou'd not learn from any body the very day) he slept not so profoundly as before, for when they call'd him by his name he seem'd to hear them, and be somewhat sensible, tho he could not make them any answer. His Eyes were not now shut so close, and he had frequently great tremblings of his Eyelids, upon which they expected every day when he would wake, which happen'd not till about the time just now mention'd, and then he wak'd perfectly well, not remembring any thing that happen'd all this while. 'Twas observ'd he was very little altered in his Flesh, only complain'd the Cold pinch'd him more than usually, and so presently fell to Husbandry as at other times.

I have no reason to suspect this to be any Cheat, because I never heard of any gain to the Family by it, tho so near the *Bath*, and so many People went thither out of Curiosity to see the Sleeper, who when awake was a support to his old Mother by his Labour, but now a certain charge to her. Besides there was seldom any body in the House to attend any profit might be made by it, he being left alone in the House, and every body at liberty to go up to his Bed-side.