

XLII. *A Letter from David Macbride, M. D. to John Walsh, Esq; F. R. S. accompanying two Letters from Mr. Simon to Dr. Macbride, concerning the Reviviscence of some Snails preserved many Years in Mr. Simon's Cabinet.*

To JOHN WALSH, Esq;

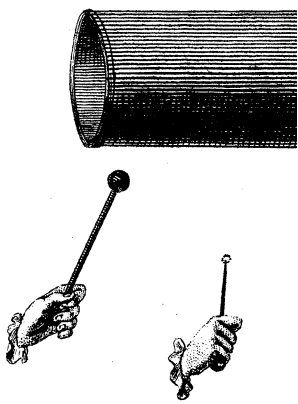
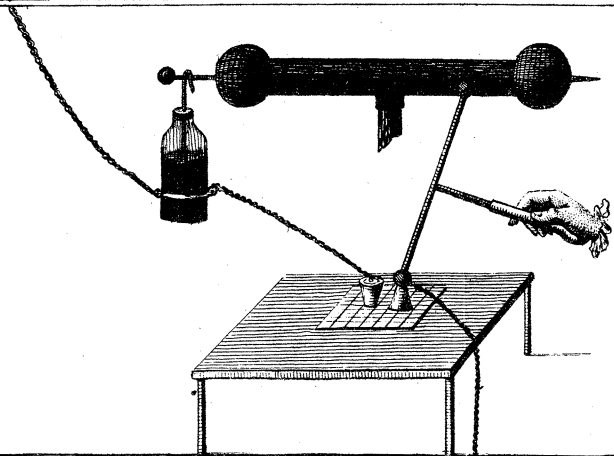
DEAR SIR,

Dublin, 23 Jan. 1774.

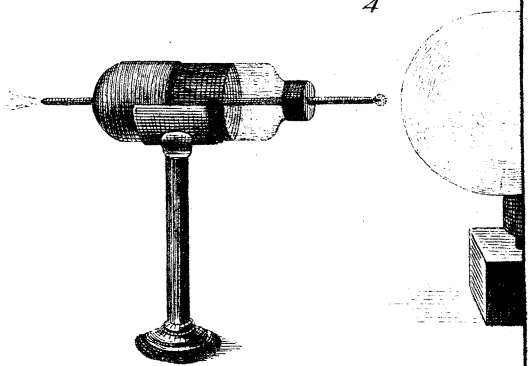
Redde, May 5, 1774. **I** Inclose to you two letters, which I received from Mr. STUCKEY SIMON, concerning that extraordinary fact in Natural History, which you seemed to regret had not been sufficiently authenticated to be communicated to the public, in the Philosophical Transactions of last year.—The Royal Society are undoubtedly in the right to be extremely cautious of allowing any thing, so very much out of the hitherto-observed course of nature, as this is, to appear in their publications, without the fullest evidence.

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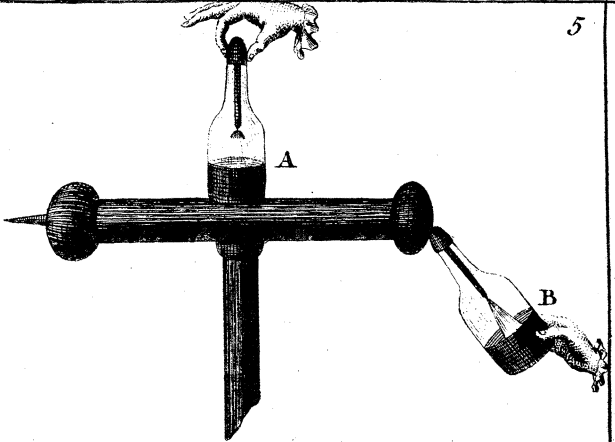
Fig. 1.



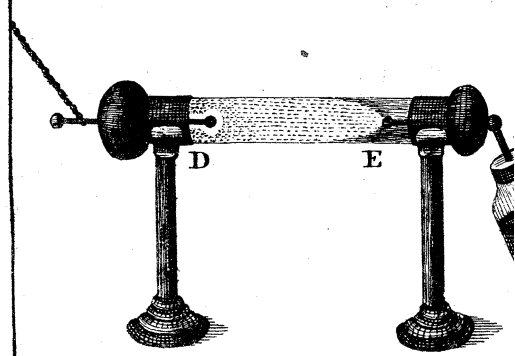
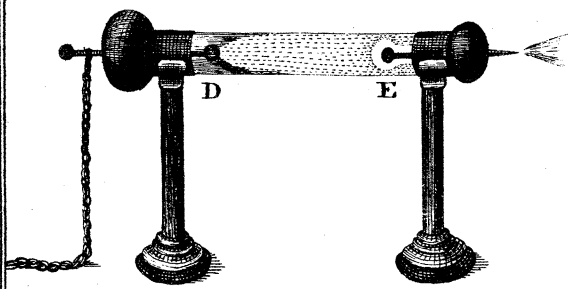
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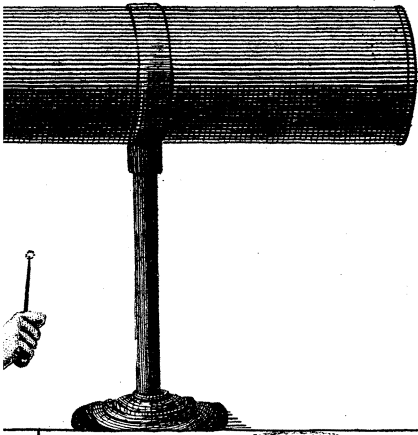


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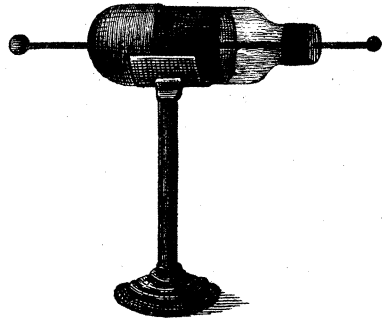


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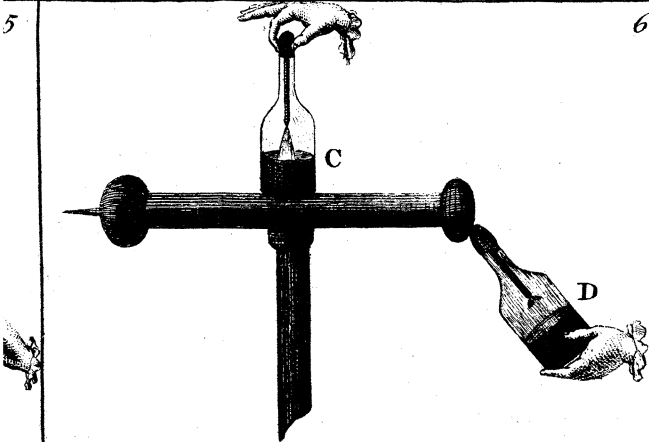




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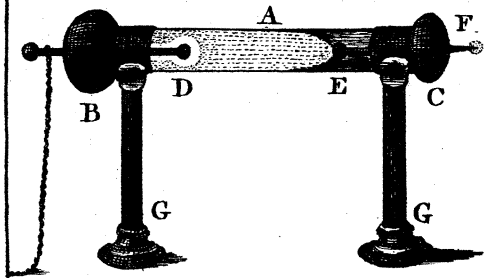


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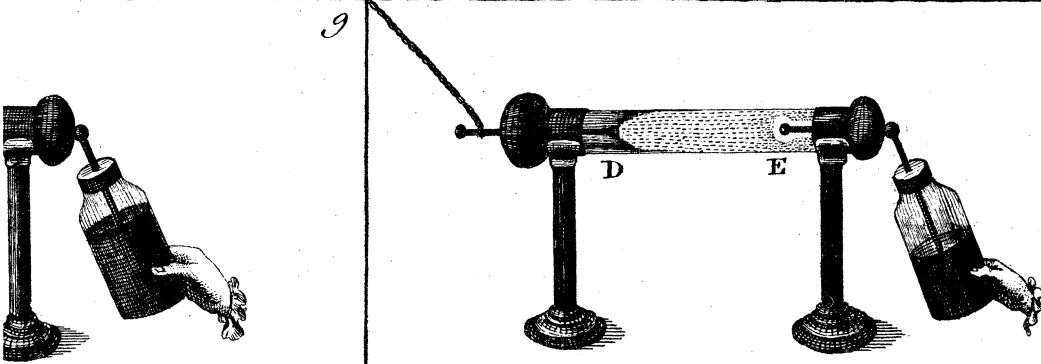


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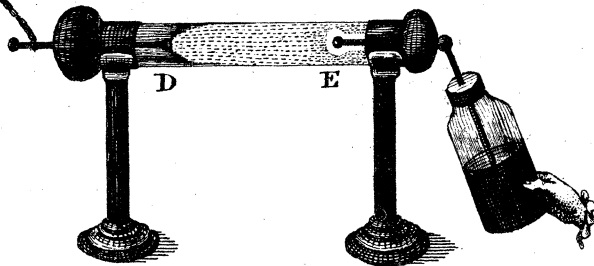


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In Mr. SIMON's letter of the 26th of November, you will please to observe, that he mentions a particular shell, whose snail had come out repeatedly four different times, in the presence of different people; each of whom have assured me that they saw it. That gentleman having done me the favour to dine with me, a day or two after the date of that letter, he brought the identical shell (as he declared), in order that we might try if the snail would again make its appearance.

The company were not disappointed; for, after the shell had lain about ten minutes in a glass of water that had the cold barely taken off, the snail began to appear; and in five minutes more we perceived half the body fairly pushed out from the cavity of the shell. We then removed it into a basin, that the snail might have more scope than it had in the glass: and here, in a very short time, we saw it get above the surface of the water, and crawl up towards the edge of the basin. While it was thus moving about, with its horns erect, a fly chanced to be hovering near, and, perceiving the snail, darted down upon it. The little animal instantly withdrew itself within the shell, but as quickly came forth again, when it found the enemy had gone off. We allowed it to wander about the basin for upwards of an hour; when we returned it into a wide-mouthed phial, wherein Mr. SIMON had lately been used to keep it. He was so obliging, as to present me with this remarkable shell; and I observed, at twelve o'clock, as I was going to bed, that the snail was still in motion: but, next morning, I found it in a torpid state, sticking to the side of the glass.

In a few weeks after the time above-mentioned, I took an opportunity of sending this shell to Sir JOHN PRINGLE, who shewed it at a meeting of the Society; but, as he has been pleased to inform me, some of the members could not bring themselves to believe, but that Mr. SIMON must have suffered himself to be imposed on by his son, who, as they imagined, substituted fresh shells, for those which he had got out of the cabinet.

When Sir JOHN PRINGLE acquainted me with this difficulty, I wrote to Mr. SIMON, and that produced his letter of the 4th of February. I afterwards also examined the boy myself; and could find no reason to believe, that he either did, or could impose on his father.

Mr. SIMON is a merchant of this place, of a very reputable character, and undoubted veracity. He lives in the heart of the city, a circumstance which rendered it almost impossible for the son (if he had been so disposed) to collect fresh shells. The father of Mr. STUCKEY SIMON was Mr. JAMES SIMON, a Fellow of the Royal Society; who, being a lover of Natural History, as well as an Antiquarian, made a little collection of fossils, which is still in the son's possession, and contains some articles that are rather uncommon.

Should Mr. SIMON's letters be inserted in the Transactions, they will no doubt be the means of exciting Naturalists to enquire into the extent of vitality in the lower orders of animals.

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient,
and very humble servant,

DAVID MACBRIDE.

Mr.

Mr. STUCKEY SIMON to Dr. MACBRIDE.

S I R,

Dublin, 26 Nov. 1772.

AN accident having brought to light what some Naturalists have not had an opportunity to examine into, and which has been a subject of some conversation amongst gentlemen to whom I have mentioned it, has made me commit to writing the simple facts, in order to put others on making further experiments on the subject.—About three months since, I was settling some shells in a drawer; amongst which were some snail-shells. I took them out, and gave them to my son (a child about ten years old), who was then in the room with me. The Saturday following, the child diverted himself with the shells, put them into a flower-pot, which he filled with water, and next morning put them into a basin. Having occasion to use it, I observed the snails had come out of the shells. I examined the child. He assured me they were the same I gave him some days before; and said he had a few more, which he brought me. I put one of them in water; and, in half an hour after, I observed him put out his horns and body, which he moved with a slow motion, I suppose from weakness. I then informed Major Vallancy and Dr. Span of this surprising discovery. They did me the favour to come to my house the Saturday following, to examine the snails; and, on putting them in water, found that only one had life,

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which

which was that I put in water, for he came out of his shell, and carried it on his back about the basin. The rest, I suppose, died by being kept too long in water; for, on the first discovery, I let them remain in the water until the Monday following, when I poured off the water, the snails being still out of their shells, and seemingly dead. They lay in that state until Tuesday night, when I found they had all withdrawn into their shells; and, though I several times since put them into water, they shewed no signs of life. Dr. Quin and Dr. Rutty did me the favour, at different times, to examine the snail that is living; and were greatly pleased to see him come out of his solitary habitation in which he has been confined upwards of fifteen years, for so long I can with truth declare he has been in my possession; as my father died in January 1758, in whose collection of fossils those snails were, and for what I know they might have been many years in his possession before they came into my hands. The shells are small, and of one kind; white, striped with brown. — Since this discovery, I have kept this snail in a small phial, with a cover with holes, to let in air; and he seems at present very strong, and in health. I shall be extremely glad, if this plain account I have given you would induce gentlemen to make some further experiments on this subject. I am, Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

STUCKEY SIMON.

Mr. STUCKEY SIMON to Dr. MACBRIDE.

DEAR SIR,

Strand-street, 4 Feb. 1773.

I RECEIVED your letter ; and see that Sir JOHN PRINGLE received the snail safe. You say, that some gentlemen are inclined to think, my son has imposed on me fresh shells, in the stead of those I gave him. He had no opportunity to get any other shells, being, at the time and for several days after, confined to the house with a cold. I am positive they are the same I gave him, having more of the same sort of shells in my cabinet, and nearly the same size.

The nine shells, which produced the snails, are of the same kind as the one you sent to Sir JOHN PRINGLE ; and I now send you one of them, with the snail in it, which I take to be dead. Having put it in water several times, it became soft ; and a part of it pushed out of the shell, but shewed no other sign of life. I would have sent you a few more of the shells, but that the Bishop of Derry, and some other friends, have begged of me to give them a share.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most obedient,

humble servant,

STUCKEY SIMON.