

PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS.

May 22. 1676.

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Two Instances of something Remarkable in Shining Flesh, from Dr. J. Beal of Yeavel in Somersetshire, in a Letter to the Publisher.

S I R,

AFTER you have been tired with the noise of a piece of Fresh Beef, which shined in the Strand in London, within few hours after it was bought in the Market; it may seem superfluous, or tedious, to discourse more of such matters. But for something, which I have not seen formerly remarked, and which fell out in this Town, and in the House where I dwell, within my own knowledg, I shall give you the Instances, as briefly as I can.

I i i i

1. Upon

1. Upon Friday (*Febr. 25. 1675.*) a Woman of this Town, bought in the Market a Neck of *Veal*, which seemed well coloured, and well conditioned in every respect: The Calf, a cow-calf, was killed in the evening the day before; it was hung to a Shelf in a little Chamber, where she and her Husband lay: Upon the following Saturday, about 9 in the night, the Neck of Veal shined so bright, that it did put the Woman into a great affrightment. She calls up her Husband; he hastens to the Light, as fearing fire and flames, and seeing the light come only from the Flesh, he caught the Flesh in his left hand, and beat it with his right hand, as endeavouring to extinguish the flame, but without effect. The Flesh shined as much, if not more, than before, and his hand, with which he did beat the Flesh, became all in a flame, as bright, and vivid, as the Flesh of the Veal was, and so it continued, whilst he went from place to place, shewing it to others. Then he thrusts his blazing hand into a pail of pure water; this could not extinguish the flame at all, but his hand shined through the water: at last he took a napkin, and wiped his hand, till he wiped off all the Light. The next day (being *Febr. 27.*) the Veal was dressed, and some of the Neighbours, who saw it shining, were invited to eat of it; all esteemed it as good, as any they had eaten. A part of it was kept for *Febr. 28,* and *29.* in which time it lost nothing of its sweetness. Other circumstances I omit for brevity.

2. And now I want not a parallel in consort for that part of this Relation, which seemeth strangest: For on Tuesday (being *Apr. 4. 1676.*) a fat Pork was killed for my Family; within two days, the Guts, or (as some call them) the *Chitterlings*, and feet of the Pork were boyled, and after they were thoroughly cold, they were put, in due order, in souse-drink, or pickle, in a low room, on the North-side, which had little light at mid-day, and was very dark, as soon as night began. *Apr. 8.* all those parts of the guts, and the claws of the feet, which floated on the top of the pickle, began to shine, and the parts immersed under water gave no light; the light increased daily more and more in all the parts that floated. *Apr. 13.* the light seem'd as bright as the brightest Moon-shine; thus it continued to shine (but fainter and fainter, and in fewer parts) almost a week longer; for, being often tumbled up and down, by slow degrees all sunk into the pickle, and then all the light expired. Whilst the light was vivid, I caus'd a Maid-servant to rub one of her hands upon the shining part; after which, she came through three rooms, into the

the place where I sat, between a great fire on one side, and a candle or two on a Table near at hand, on the other side; and in this place she shew'd me her hand, all over shining, as bright as Moon-shine; one indeed stood between her hand and the fire, another between her and the candles. Thence I went into another room, where there was but a small fire, and no candle, but (at that time) a little Moon-shine through a window, there the shining parts of her hand, or indeed her hand all over appear'd to me very bright flames. Then I caused some of the shining Pork to be brought into the same room, and examined, whether the pickle did not shine, and so might give the flaming tincture to the Maids hand; but by wiping the Pork diligently with a napkin, till it was perfectly dryed, we found, that the flame of the Pork was rather increased, (as we all thought) than diminished. Then I desired all the company, (whereof some were young children, which have the tenderest touch) to try, whether the most flaming parts had any perceptible degree of tepidity; all agreed, that they could feel no warmth. But I continued to direct them all to compare the dark parts with the most luminous, by that part of their fore-fingers, which hath the most tender perception; after 3 or 4 trials, all agreed still, that all parts of the Pork were manifestly gelid; but some thought, they perceived the luminous parts less gelid than the dark parts, others denied it: for my own part, I found not so much difference, as could clear me from suspecting a prepondering fancy. After these Tryals, the Maid wiped off the light from her hand, by rubbing her hand strongly with a napkin, three or four times over.

3. Then I suffer'd my Servants to call in several Neighbours to see it, night after night, and particularly the Mother and Sister of the Woman, which had the shining Veal. This I did partly to prevent, that they might not raise stories of Ghosts in my House; yet some were forward at it. If we had had a mind to a Pageant, or to spread a story of Goblins, you see how easily it might have been done, by smearing ones hands and face all over with the tincture of light, which adhered so permanently. And besides, I noted, that by this acquired blaze, the face and hands would appear a great deal larger than they were, and the manner how it was done being concealed, the learned and ingenious might be at a loss to discover what it might be.

4. If others think fit to vilifie these Observations, yet I must acknowledg, That I never heard nor read of the like, till Honourable

Mr. Boyle was pleas'd to oblige us with an accurate accompt of a Neck of Veal, and a Pullet, which were luminous, as you have published it in *N. 89.* of your *Tracts*, *p. 5107.* Histories report of a sudden and short fulgor about the countenance of the *living*, which they interpreted to presage something extraordinary, by which those persons became Illustrious; but of *dead carcases*, which became thus luminous, I have read nothing in old Records. That Mackrels, in their pickle, did cast a shining blaze, some days before they were ill tasted, or ill sented, I gave you notice *May 5. 1665.* as 'tis in your *First Vol. n. 13. p. 226.* Since which time I tryed often to obtain the like, but without success, though I know not what circumstance was wanting. The pickle in which the Pork was put, was made only of pure Water, Bran, and bay-Salt, and was far from shining: It quencht the light by degrees of the shining Flesh. The Mackrel-pickle (which was boyl'd with a mixture of sweet herbs) by a little stirring became so luminous, that a drop of it in the palms of childrens hands appeared as broad as a shilling, or broader, so that a wash of it might too fitly serve for Imposture.

5. For the difficulty of obtaining the same, and for many other considerables, I refer to Mr. Boyle's Pneumatical Experiment 37. by him observ'd about 18 years ago. And I think, shining *Worms* are seldom found in Oysters, as was observ'd by Monsieur *Auzout*, in your *n. 12. p. 203.* And perhaps one may wait a long day, before he shall see such a long-lasting Light in the *Irish* Seas, as was remarked in your *Vol. 9. n. 111. p. 240.* So that I cannot wonder, if expert Chymists do by some Chance obtain more, than by Art and much diligence they can repeat again, since they deal with such fickle agents, as Fire and Flame. I have heard of some Dews on Meadows, shining in the early morning, before day-light; but those more frequently. These and much better, some of Mr. Boyle's Instances in your forementioned *Experiment 37.* and more in his Discourse of Luminous Gems at the end of his elaborate *Treatise of Colors*, may, at least, by resemblances, instruct us to apprehend the nature of some shining Meteors among the Clouds, or in our lower Region, of which, they say, some have a singeing heat, and do blast, and that some are to the touch gelid, yet do poyson or corrupt our flesh. And I have read in our Chronicles, That in *England*, for many days together, there hath been a fiery incalcescence with light, as if all the air had been in a flame. Thus we have flaming Air, and flaming

ming Water, in Seas, and in Clouds, and in Pickle ; yet not so frequent, as to escape always the suspicion of being Prodigies. But in the forefaid references more is faid of Light, than I am able to exprefs ; I fhall only add, That I gave full warning to obferve, whether the Light in my two Inftances had any blewifh or greenifh tincture ; all that faw both, affirmed the Light to be as clear as the brighteft Moon-fhine, and fo it appeared to my own eyes ; and I can perfectly remember, that I really thought the beams which came from the Mackrel, and the ftirred pickle, to be bright Moon-fhine, till a Servant brought me to the Veffel, to fee the contrary.

Postscript. We had the report here (whether true or falfe, you may beft know) of the fhining Beef in the *Strand*, about the fame time, when the Neck of Veal, firft mention'd, fhined here. And it was here obferved, That the Stars had that night a glaring brightness and largenefs, more than ordinary, and for fome moneths before, and ever fince, the weather hath been more gentle, warm, and dry, than is ufual in thofe months ; but 'tis above my skill to demonftrate, how this belongs to the matter in hand. Note, that the Mackrel-pickle was thick and not transparent, till it was ftirred and flaming ; the Pork-pickle was clear, or transparent, yet fhined not in any part.

A Difcourfe concerning the Spiral, inftead of the fupposed Annular, ftructure of the Fibres of the Inteftins ; discover'd and fhewn by the Learn'd and Inquifitive Dr. William Cole to the R. Society.

Difcourfing (near two years fince) with a very ingenious Perfon, concerning the Mechanical reason of the *Periftaltick* motion of the Inteftines, which is by Anatomifts deduced principally from *Annular* fibres, conftituting, according to the received doctrine (with the right fibres immediately investing them, though, by the by, I take thefe to make a diftinct coat) one of the coats of them ; his fence was (which he told me was that likewife of fome others of his acquaintance) that they might be rather numerous, though fmall, Sphincter-mufcles, than fingle fibres, to which that motion is to be attributed ; Mufcles being in moft, if not all, other inftances owned to be the adequate inftruments of motions analogous to this ; and fibres, though abfolutely neceffary, yet being no otherwife fo, than as (a number of them being collected, and fitly difpofed) they conftitute a Mufcle.

The Conjecture feemed to me more probable than the vulgarly received