

for some time becomes warm and rarified to a certain degree; after which this spring of the fibres thus dilated re-acts upon this light fluid, and expels it from the lungs. Instead of undertaking to explain the causes of the alternate motion of respiration, we shall confine ourselves to an elucidation of its effects. This function is essential to the existence of man and of several species of animals. It is by respiration that life is preserved; and when it is once begun, it never ceases till death. Yet there is reason to believe that the foramen ovale is not closed immediately after the birth; and of consequence a part of the blood may continue to pass through that aperture. All the blood cannot, therefore, at first have a communication with the lungs; and it is probable a new-born child might sustain a privation of air for a considerable time without losing its existence. Or at least the possibility of this, I once seemingly confirmed by an experiment upon some young dogs. I put a pregnant bitch, of the large greyhound species, just as she was about to litter, into a tub filled with warm water, where after fastening her in such a manner that the lower parts were covered with some water, she brought forth three puppies, which were accordingly

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