

NATURAL MAGIC.

One of the most remarkable and inexplicable experiments relative to the strength of the human frame, which you have yourself seen and admired, is that in which a heavy man is raised with the greatest facility, when he is lifted up the moment that his own lungs and those of the persons who raised him are inflated with air. This experiment was, I believe first shown in England a few years ago by Major. H., who saw it performed in a large party at Venice under the direction of an officer of the American army. As Major. H. performed it more than once in my presence, I shall describe as nearly as possible the method he prescribed. The heaviest person in the party lies down on two chairs, his legs being supported by one, and his back by the other. Four persons one at his legs, and one at each shoulder, then try to raise him, and they find his dead weight to be very great from the difficulty they experience in supporting him. When he is replaced in the chair, each of the four persons takes hold of the body as before, and the person to be lifted gives two signals by clapping his hands. At the first signal he himself and the four lifters begin to draw a long and full breath, and when inhalation is completed, or the lungs filled, the second signal is given, for raising the person from the chair. To his own surprise and that of his bearers, he rises with the greatest facility as if he were no heavier than a feather. On several occasions I have observed that when one of the bearers performs his part ill, by making the inhalation out of time, the part of the body which he tries to raise is left as it were behind.

At Venice the experiment was performed in a much more imposing manner. The heaviest man in the party was raised and sustained upon the points of the forefingers of six persons. Major. H. declared that the experiment would not succeed if the person to be lifted were placed upon a board and the strength of the individuals applied to the board. He conceived it necessary that the bearers should communicate directly with the body to be raised. I have not had an opportunity of making any experiments relative to these curious facts; but whether the general