



THE TIMES.

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SINGULAR DISCOVERIES.

A Chapter of Incidents.

GIVEN inclination to undertake, and leisure to perform the task, any one who would hunt up records of unexpected finds, remarkable in their nature, or by reason of the circumstances under which they were made, might easily fill a goodly sized volume with the result of their researches. Pending such a complication, we have made note of some things not generally known in the way of singular finds, and hope a little chat about them will prove acceptable to our readers.

An interesting discovery, at least from an archeological point of view, was strangely brought about several years ago. Two men were tried before the Court of Assizes of the Basses-Pyrenees for a series of burglaries and highway robberies. The evidence against them was irresistible; but none of the plunder could be traced, until one of them, Rivas, gave a hint toward solving the mystery, which sent a commissary of police to a cavern in the mountains. To scale the precipitous sides of the mountains was no easy task; but the officers persevered, and were rewarded by finding an enormous quantity of stolen property. The commissary having shown that the cavern was accessible, some savants soon found their way there, and exploring it thoroughly, brought to light the remains of animals of enormous size, flint hatchets, ornamented pottery, and a number of Roman medals of the third century. The advocate of Rivas tried to turn this to account, and asked the jury to look upon the prisoner as a pioneer of science; but they did not see the force of the argument, and he and his fellow in crime received their deserts.

Londoners do not look to stumble upon strange reptiles on their way to business, or be startled by rare birds taking the air in the streets. Yet within the last twenty years a snake was found "at large" in Fleet Street among some woodwork; a chameleon was rescued from death at the wheels of a Holburn omnibus; and a kingfisher captured in the courtyard of a British Museum,—snake, chameleon and kingfisher being as much out of their latitude as the poor pig that fell into the saving hands of the crew of a Lowestoft lugger, while battling bravely with the waves six miles from land.

A shark, eleven feet in length, which was caught off the Scotch coast was found to contain a whole ling, a man's bonnet, sundry remnants of fish, and a soda-water bottle corked and sealed. The bottle was smashed and a paper, signed Annette Gordon, was found. It ran thus: "On board the *Beautiful Star*, Sunday, 1st September, 1872. We have crossed the line, and all's well. Last night the captain's lady had a pretty little boy.

"Heaven bless the little stranger,
Rocked on the cradle of the deep!
Save it, Lord, from every danger!
The angels bright their watch will keep.
Oh, gently sooth its tender years,
And so allay a parent's fears,—
A father's love, a mother's joy!
May all that's good attend their boy!"

How long a time it took for that communication to come to land, we are unable to say. Messages committed to Neptune's charge are apt to be long delayed. The *London* was lost in the Bay of Biscay in January, 1866; it was not till near the close of the following year that a bottle was picked up in Exmouth harbor, contained a tailor's bill, on the back of which was written, "Lost in the ship *London*, Francis Day.

Advertise to my friends that I have three thousand pounds in the London and Westminster Bank." Welcome as the information may have been to those concerned, there was probably greater gratitude felt for that conveyed in the slip of paper inclosed in a bottle cast ashore on the coast of Wexford: "The finder of this is to tell Elizabeth Granton, of Ashton Grange, on the borders of London, E. C., that the secret of her birth will be found behind the picture of the Earl of Warwick in the drawing-room; and receive the blessing of a dying man."

The Bank of England has had no end of valuables committed to its keeping. The vaults of its establishment hold mouldering chests, deposited there for safety's sake, and apparently forgotten by their owners. In 1872 one fell to pieces from sheer rotteness, exposing to sight a quantity of massive plate and a bundle of yellow papers. The latter proved to be a collection of love-letters of the period of the Restoration, which the directors were enabled to restore to the lineal descendants of the original owners.

In 1875 a tin box was fished out of the Seine containing more than five hundred letters addressed to divers persons in Paris. The box—set afloat several miles above Paris—had been hermetically sealed, and was furnished with metal sails, that it might catch the current of the river at every point; but it had failed to achieve a successful voyage, and lain at the river's bottom for years with its freight of letters for the besieged Parisians, some of whom, however, had the gratification of receiving them five years after date.

The betrothed of a young watchmaker, living at Prescott, had to wait even longer for one of his love letters. He posted it in Coventry, in August, 1867; but the fair one did not receive it.— Luckily, no mischief arose between the pair in consequence; the course of true love ran smoothly for once, and they were soon afterward married and settled, taking up their abode in the street in which the lady had lived before the marriage. One day in 1878, a worn, crumpled letter came to her. It was the lost love letter. It had slipped down a niche in a mail-van, and been discovered upon the condemnation and breaking up of the vehicle.

At Highgate, near London, stands a public-house, from the window of which a skeleton cat challenges the notice of the passers-by. In its teeth it hold a skeleton rat, caught no one knows how long ago. Just as we see them now, cat and rat were taken from the chimney, where the house was undergoing alteration. A more grisly chimney-find fell to some workmen a few years since in the old house in the High Street of Hull, notable as the birth-place of Wilberforce, the slave emancipator, for the skeleton they disturbed was a human one. A banking business was at one time carried on in the house, so the bones were set down to belong to a thief who, hiding in the chimney, either preliminary to committing felony, or to escape pursuit after committing it, had been suffocated.

Burglars and robbers sometimes get into tight places, and fall a sacrifice to their evil ways. Nunez, the Spanish banker, had a strong room in his bank at Lerida which was never entered unless some heavy payment in gold had been made. To this there were originally two keys, but one of them mysteriously disappeared. One day it became necessary for the cashier to visit the reserve safe, and he was not a little startled at finding that there was a key already in the lock. He hurried to Nunez with the news; and the banker himself opened the strong-room door. Inside lay the body of a man,—the corpse of a discharged bank servant. He had stolen the missing key, and availed himself of an opportunity to rife the safe; but too eager perhaps to finger the coin, had forgotten that the door fastened with a spring, and letting it close behind him, had wrought his own punishment.

In January, 1878, the soda-laden ship *Irvine* arrived in the Thames from Peru, and discharged her cargo at Rotherhithe. Imbedded in the soda was found the well-preserved body of a woman, supposed—we know not on what evidence—to be one of the victims of an earthquake occurring many centuries ago.

There was not such utter uncertainty respecting a wooden coffin containing a guano effigy of a man, discovered in 1845, some seventeen feet from the top of the guano mound in Ichaboe; for although the coffin and its contents crumbled to dust after an hour's exposure to the air, the finders managed to decipher all that remained of a rude inscription,—namely, "berman," and "680," and to come to the conclusion that the remains were those of the carpenter or *tomberrmann* of a Dutch sailing ship, who had departed this life in 1689.

The child of a Dutch farmer at the Cape was wont to spend his idle hours on the river-bank searching for pretty pebbles. One of the youngster's acquisitions attracted his mother's notice as something out of the common, and she showed it to a neighbor curious in such things. He would have bought it; but Mrs. Jacobs ridiculed the idea, and made him a present of it. He kept it a little while and then as readily parted with it to somebody wiser than himself, who passed it on to a friend having sufficient curiosity to post it in an ordinary unregistered letter to Dr. Atherstone, a mineralogist in Graham's Town. The expert declared the boy's pebble to be a veritable diamond; as such it was exhibited in the Paris Exhibition of 1867, and purchased by an English gentleman for five thousand pounds.

Some five or six years ago, a young man was traversing the mountains, canons, and valleys of Esmeralda county, Nevada, prospecting for gold and silver. As he looked down on the valley of Teel's Marsh, he saw a vast bed of white sand or something like it, and was tempted to examine it. He found the place to be a bed of dry lagoon, five miles in length, and about half as wide; and what had been taken for white sand proved to be a clay-like deposit, in which he sank ankle-deep as he cautiously walked over it. Filling his pockets with the curious stuff, he mounted his horse again and rode to his home in Columbus. There an assayer pronounced the contents of his pockets the finest samples of crude borax he had ever seen. The astonished prospector—one of the large family of Smiths—lost no time in making formal claims to his find; and that obtained, he and his brother went to work with tanks, boilers, crystallizers, and all necessary appliances, and are at the present writing, the masters of an immense establishment, driving a very profitable trade, one likely to be as permanent as profitable, since the deposit of borax in Teel's Marsh reproduces itself every two or three years, so that Smith Bros., have no fear of the supply failing.

The Mysterious Pants.

ON Monday a gentleman of Xenia, who has a comely wife, left home to transact some business in Cincinnati. It was his expressed intention to remain absent from his home several days.— He found upon reaching Cincinnati that he could finish his business much more speedily than he had anticipated. He came home. He got back much sooner than he was expected by his wife. It was well he was able to return so promptly, for he found his life-partner in the midst of a serious illness. It was at night when the husband came home, and his wife had retired. She apparently slept. Disrobing, the husband also "turned in." The wife, for a time, was so helplessly sick she couldn't speak, and the husband kindly restrained from disturbing her, as he presumed she was asleep.

After a short time the wife recovered sufficiently to acquaint her lord with the fact that she was so seriously ill that he would have to hurry out to the drug store for some medicine. Of course the husband instantly prepared to obey. He knew just what to get for the lady, because she had frequently been attacked by a certain kind of spell, or spasm, and no doubt that was the nature of the trouble that had overtaken Madame during Monsieur's absence. It was the work of but a few seconds to dress and start for the drug store. There was no time to strike a light, but none was needed, for the gentleman easily found sufficient clothing to fit him out for the trip.

At the apothecaries he procured the necessary medicine, and running his

hand down into his pocket, and felt for some cash to pay for it. He was a little surprised to run foul of a knife in his pocket. He was astonished, because he had no knife of his own, and he hadn't borrowed any of late. Upon exploring the pocket he hauled out a pocket-book containing \$70 or \$80. His surprise increased at this, because the pocket-book was a strange one to him, and the money wasn't his.

The gentleman was very busy for the following few minutes. He was busy thinking. There was something wrong. The pantaloons he had on just then were not the ones he laid aside on retiring. Yet he had got the unmentionables in his wife's room, and contiguous to her bed. The drug clerk recognized the stranger's pants as a pair worn by a prominent citizen of Xenia. That settled it. But, to make the affair more binding, the husband's own breeches were not to be found when he returned home with the medicine for his sick wife. They were gone.

Hereupon the husband took a slate and commenced to figure. He calculated that some one had taken advantage of the loneliness of his wife during his absence, or that his wife had taken advantage of his absence during her loneliness, and that the owner of the strange pants had been concealed in the bed-chamber when he (the husband) returned. Also, that the trip to the drug store had been mapped out in order to allow the interloper to retreat. In retreating the interloper had made a mistake as to pantaloons also. Hence the scandal.

The Deacon Won Her.

"YAAS, there's money made in stocks, no doubt," said the old man, as he removed his hat and ran his fingers through his gray locks, "but it's a reesky bizness; it's suthin' like betting on whar lightning's going to strike with the odds in favor of hitting the tree you stand under."

"Then you never speculate?"
"Never, I dig along on the old farm, takin' one crop with another, and pulling out stumps when I've nothing else to do, and if I don't make any great shakes, I haven't anything to worry over. I had a purty solemn warning during the coal-ile excitement, and it cured me of speculatin'."

"How is that?"
"Waal, I was a widower then; wife fell down the well and was drawn out as stiff as a poker. I had a big farm, lots of stock, and was called purty solid. We all got excited about ile, and all of us dug more or less holes in search of the stuff. All of a sudden a wider livin' about two miles from me found ile in a dozen places on her farm. She was a widder with a bad nose, freckles all over her face, eyes on the squint, and built up like a camel. But when she struck ile that was a different thing. Old Deacon Spooner, who was a widower, got mashed right away. Our preacher, who had lost his third wife, saw the spec. I thought it over and thought she was an angel. I guess some six or seven of us begun courtin' that widder within sixteen hours after the first sign of ile. I know the procession reached from the gate to the house."

"And you got her?"
"Not much I didn't, and that's what I'm thankful for. Somehow or other I couldn't work up to the pint. That nose kinder stood in the way every time I was ready to pop the question. She acted like she wanted me, but Deacon Spooner got the best of us all, and they made a hitch."
"And what?"
"Nothing, except she had dosed that farm with a barrel of ile, and thus got a husband for herself and a home for her five children. When the news came out I was so cold along the back bone that they had to kiver me up with a hoss-blanket, and since that time I haven't had the nerve to buy eggs at seven cents a dozen and hold 'em for a rise."

How Women Travel by Rail in Russia.

A lady smoker on a railway train in the United States, we can thankfully say, is a curiosity, always looked upon with disgust. But in Russia, feminine smokers seem to rule the day on rail-

roads, as the following story will show: "The other day," says a correspondent to a German newspaper, "I accompanied a lady relative to the Nicholas Railway Depot, St. Petersburg, Russia, from which place she wanted to take the evening express for Moscow, and on showing her first class ticket, she applied to the conductor for a seat in a ladies' coup or compartment, which generally seats from eight to ten persons. To our great surprise we found this coup the only apartment 'For Ladies,' on the train, was occupied by lady smokers, and the apartment was so filled with smoke that even a tobacco using man would have felt miserable in it. When I asked whether smoking was permitted the conductor gave me an answer in the affirmative; thereupon I went to the chief agent at the depot and politely asked him whether he could not furnish me with a seat in a ladies' coach, where smoking was prohibited, but I received this answer: 'There are gentlemen's coaches for those who do not smoke in which women may sit, but apartments expressly for ladies where smoking is prohibited do not exist on our trains.' 'Why, how is a lady traveling alone to do when she cannot stand such smoke?' 'Why let her go in the car for gentlemen marked 'No Smoking.'"

The Sailor on Shore.

An old East Indian captain gave up sea-faring, and was having a house built in which to end his days in peace. One morning, while watching the carpenters, he noticed that they let bits of lath and the like drop down between the partitions, and he ordered them to take all the loose pieces out. The workmen obeyed, grumbling that they did not see what difference it made. "All the difference in the world, you lubbers!" retorted the irate captain. "Do you think I want to be annoyed, whenever she rocks, by the rattle of the rubbish in the partitions?"

The *Glasgow Herald* states that while some workmen were engaged about half a mile east from Fort William in deepening the dam which supplies the Nevis Distillery with water, one of the men came upon a large shell in a complete state. It was embedded in the moss, and it was found to be fifteen inches in diameter and weighed about 100 pounds. The powder was quite fresh-looking, only the portion of it near the fuse being damp. The fuse itself was burnt out. The shell is supposed to be one of those fired from the fort in April, 1746, at a battery raised by the young Pretender's ("Prince Charlie's") men at the Craigs, within 500 yards of the fort.

There was a church fair at Muncie, Ark., and photographs of the young women who were to serve at the stands were displayed in the windows of the stores, including those who were in character costumes. A traveling burlesque company came along at the same time, and portraits of blondes in tights were placed alongside the others. The pastor hastily removed the pictures of the Muncie girls. Then the theatrical managers placarded the actresses' pictures with: "These artists have no connection whatever with the amateur performance at the Baptist church, and can only be seen at Tabor hall."

Henry Holtenburg had black hair and a ruddy complexion when he married Miss Schwarz, at Nashville, a year ago. She supposed he was about forty, though he made no statement on that point. The honey moon was scarcely over before his hair became gray, his cheeks lost their color, and he showed at least sixty years. The fact was that he had discontinued the use of dye and rouge. The angry wife wanted to sue for divorce, but the lawyer told her that the grounds were not sufficient. The worst she could do was to desert him, which she lost no time in doing.

Female printers pop the question to the mate types by simply handing to them an? If the latter intends to embrace the opportunity and accept, they return a brace, thus ---, but if they wish to decline and dash the cup of happiness from the fair one's lips, they hand over a —.