

## Curious Matters.

### A singular Character.

Hannah Snell was born at Worcester, England, in 1728. At twenty, being an orphan, she married a Dutch sailor, who soon abandoned her. Without any resources, she took the strange resolution of putting on male attire and enlisting as a soldier. After a few months, the arrival of a young recruit from Worcester making her dread detection, she deserted, and enlisted as a marine on board one of the vessels of Admiral Boscawen's fleet, bound for the East Indies. She manifested her activity, presence of mind and courage during many tempests and in several engagements. At Pondicherry she was dangerously wounded, and to avoid discovery extracted the ball herself. After having been exposed to many dangers, she returned to England, where her adventures soon became known. The government gave her a pension of £20. She ended her days in an inn, near Wapping.

### A large Saw-Mill.

An exchange paper thus describes a monstrous saw-mill at Orono, Maine:—"The little village of Orono, on the Penobscot River, about eight miles above Bangor, contains a saw-mill, which is not only the largest on the river, but probably the largest in the world. It takes one hundred men to run it, and is called the 'Basin Mill.' It is situated between an island on the Penobscot and the right bank of the river, and extends nearly across the stream, its length being 450 feet, and its breadth 65 feet. There are in this mill four gang-saws, eight upright saws, two large circulars, two lath machines, one clapboard machine, and one shingle machine—all propelled by water-power. The capacity of this mill is thirty millions of lumber each season."

### Curious.

A person belonging to Grangemouth, England, in getting change for a shilling, was struck with something uncommon in one of the pence. On examination, it was found that the obverse and reverse of the coin were divided, but united with a fine screw. Being opened, a half-penny was enclosed, which was also divided; being opened, a farthing was enclosed, and also divided; and being opened, a half-farthing was enclosed. This elaborate penny is the same as the old heavy penny of George III.; date, 1799.

### A Swarm of Bees on a Man's Head.

A most singular incident occurred in Bridgewater a short time since, illustrating the peculiar habits of bees. Mr. A. P. Benson, noticing an unusual stir among his hives, proceeded to examine into the cause, whereupon an entire swarm withdrew from their old hive, and settled upon his head and shoulders. Mr. B., without any serious inconvenience, succeeded in transferring the swarm safely to a new hive.

### Curiosities of Nature.

Among the papers published in costly style by the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, is one on the microscopic plants and animals which live on and in the human body. It describes quite a number of insects. The animal which produces the disease called the itch, is illustrated by an engraving half an inch in diameter, which shows not only the ugly little fellow's body and legs, but his very toes, although the animal himself is entirely invisible to the naked eye. When Lieutenant Berryman was sounding the ocean, preparatory to laying the Atlantic telegraph, the quill at the end of the sounding line brought up mud, which, on being dried, became a powder so fine that on rubbing it between the thumb and finger, it disappeared in the crevices of the skin. On placing this dust under the microscope, it was discovered to consist of millions of perfect shells, each of which had a living animal.

### Remarkable Discovery.

A scientific person by the name of Monturiol, living in or near Madrid, has, it appears, overcome the great natural obstacle of human respiration below the surface of the water, without communication with the atmosphere, by appliances of art which constitutes the secret of his invention in the submarine boat or ship, which he denominates the "Ictineo." The navigator of the machine and the crew can subsist for any length of time desirable below the surface, and the generation of atmospheric air goes on as fast as is required for use; they can elevate or depress at pleasure, and move in any direction they choose, and the machine may be large or small, to float upon the surface or dive to the bottom of the ocean.

### A Smuggler's Trick.

A novel way of smuggling is reported in the French papers. A watchmaker of Alencon having lately offered some Swiss watches at exceedingly low prices, was asked how he could afford to sell them so cheap. "O, that is simple enough," he replied; "I bought them of a wild beast showman who had just come from Switzerland." Before leaving Geneva he bought a quantity of watches, which he concealed under the litter of his lion's cage. It is hardly necessary to mention that the custom-house officers at the frontier did not venture to search there for contraband goods.

### Curious Invention.

Among the other curious instruments exhibited in the Philosophical Instrument Department in the London Great Exhibition, is a machine, exhibited by Mr. Peters, for microscopic writing. With this machine of Mr. Peters', it is stated that the words "Matthew Marshall, Bank of England," can be written in the two and a half millionth of an inch in length; and it is actually stated that calculations made on this data show that the whole Bible can be written twenty-two times in the space of a square inch.

**A queer Story.**

A short time since a citizen of Philadelphia, in order to prevent his creditors from getting his property, signed off some \$20,000 in real estate to his stepsons. Stepsons had deeds recorded, and in about three days had real estate converted into money, without stepfather knowing anything of the matter. Having converted real estate into money, stepsons started for the West, leaving stepfather to "grin and bear it" as best he can. Stepfather having put all his property out of his hands, now finds himself without sufficient funds to go in pursuit of stepsons. It now looks as if stepsons had sold stepfather, and got stepfather into a tight place. Stepfather begins to think that he might better have settled with his creditors. In endeavoring to be "smart," he has reduced himself to two shirts and a bootjack.

**Strange Freaks of a Lunatic.**

A German named Metzke, residing in West Rutland, Vt., a man of high education and highly respectable connections, has recently been engaged in the production of a National Air. He is said to have produced a piece of remarkable merit, which is about to be produced at the Academy of Music at New York. But this effort, it is alleged, has affected his reason, and he recently passed through Albany on his way to his home, in charge of his friends, entirely bereft of his reason. He imagines that the governors of all the States are interesting themselves in making his a popular national thing.

**A Second Moses.**

A Harrisburg paper states that during the recent terrible freshet a cradle was seen coming down the rushing waters near Manadaville, and being suspected of containing something, it was watched by several persons for three or four miles, expecting it would at some part of its journey come near enough to the shore that it would be safe in venturing after in a boat. At last, at a bend in the swollen stream, the cradle came sufficiently near to be secured, when lo! and behold, upon lifting up a light covering, a beautiful babe looked up and smiled.

**Death from the Smoker's Cancer.**

The Salem Observer learns from a reliable source that a case of death by cancer in the mouth and throat recently occurred in a neighboring State, which was no doubt caused by excessive smoking. The deceased was a gentleman highly respected and esteemed for his many virtues. His sufferings were most dreadful; at last the cancer, eating into the jugular vein, soon terminated his life.

**A Dwarf.**

Barnum has found somewhere in Ohio a remarkable male dwarf, which, although eight months old, weighs but one pound and seven ounces. A man's finger-ring would go over its hand to the elbow, or over its foot to the knee. The mother of the child is a healthy woman, and has other children of the ordinary size.

**The House Fly.**

The formation of the wings of a fly is curious, enabling it to attain a velocity of from thirty to thirty-five feet in a second. In this space of time a race-horse would clear only ninety feet, which is at the rate of more than a mile per minute. Now, our little fly in her swiftest flight will in the same space of time go more than a third of a mile. If, therefore, we compare the infinite difference in the size of the two animals, how wonderful will the velocity of this minute creature appear! The foot of a fly is equally curious. It is subdivided into five joints, the final one being furnished with that remarkable apparatus which enables the insect to walk upon what appears to us perfectly smooth or polished surfaces, and also to progress in a position opposite to the laws of gravity.

**A French Fire-King.**

A Paris letter states that a curious exhibition takes place every evening at the Rue Ville Just and the Avenue de St. Cloud. In a small field there is situated a wooden house, covered with pitch and other combustible matters, which is erected daily, and set fire to at about eight o'clock each evening. The flames in the course of a few moments reach a gigantic height; and when they are most ardent, a man jumps into the midst of them, rolls about, and pulls down blazing rafters, which he carries away. This salamander can stay in the fire from five to seven minutes. When he comes out, the clothes which enable him to do so smoke like a steam engine; they are said to be made of asbestos, covered with sponges freshly imbued in some chemical preparation.

**A fat Man.**

The Middleborough Gazette tells of a man in the alms-house of that town, said to weigh over three hundred pounds. Not long since he was quite sick, and the physician prescribed a very light diet; he was therefore furnished with as much rice as could be placed on a large dining-plate, together with six crackers, every morning, noon and night, but after trying it a day or two he rebelled, declaring that it was impossible to keep from starving on such short rations. He cannot raise himself from a reclining posture without assistance. Last winter he caught a fall, and it required the united assistance of two men with levers and blocks, to get him on his feet again!

**Antiquity of Gunpowder.**

The first Englishman who mentioned gunpowder is Roger Bacon, who, about the year 1274, described it as then in common use all over the world for making squibs to amuse children. It is mentioned by Philostratus, 355 years before Christ; and in the code of Hindoo laws it is referred to a period coincident with the time of Moses. The military use of rockets in the armies of India reaches to a period beyond record.