

A SINGULAR CASE OF PETRIFICATION.—A correspondent of the Lowell Courier, writing from Georgia, thus notices a singular case of petrification, recently discovered in Chickasaw county, in that state :

"A singular petrification was discovered in an adjoining county (Chickasaw) some months since—a human body changed to rock. The subject was a woman aged seventy, who died in full health, five years since, of apoplexy. She was a large and fleshy person. It appears that her daughter, wishing to remove her remains, caused the grave to be opened, and upon attempting to lift the coffin out, it was found impossible to do so. It was opened, and to the amazement of all, the body was found petrified, and the features so perfect that persons who knew the woman could have recognized her. No portion of the face was missing except the tip of the nose. It required the strength of six men to get the *statue* out, and it was estimated to weigh 600 pounds. The woman was buried on the top of a limestone ridge, and when the grave was dug the rock was found at a few feet from the surface. This, not being very hard, was hollowed out to receive the coffin, and when the grave was opened it was found full of water. The water, I suppose, held the earthy articles in solution, and they were deposited *gradatim* as the animal matter was removed. The body was kept out of the ground some days before re-burial, and I am told the surface when exposed became somewhat softened, but when first taken from the ground it was literally as hard as a rock."

More probably, if the above narrative is true, the body was converted into the substance called "adipocere." Had the body been petrified or turned into limestone, it would scarcely have become softened upon exposure to the air. The transformation of human remains into adipocere is not an uncommon occurrence. Some years since we remember having read of the disinterment of three bodies in Canada, which had been converted into this substance. As in the above instance, the grave was so situated as to become saturated with water.

More recently, it was the privilege of the writer of this to inspect an adipocere body in this city. It was that of a woman who had been many years dead, and was disinterred in the course of cutting a street or avenue through a burying ground in the upper section of the city. Like the subject of the Chickasaw narrative, this woman was "large and fleshy," and died suddenly, after an illness of an hour or two. So also the body was in a state of perfect preservation when uncoffined, with the single exception of the tip of the nose, and every lineament of the face was readily recognised by her surviving relatives.

The general appearance of the body was not that of conversion into stone, but into a substance more resembling spermaceti which had been allowed to remain in a damp place until a light blue mould had partially encrusted it.