TRADES IN SKELETONS.

A PHILADELPHIA FRENCHMAN'S GREWSOME BUSINESS.

A Dealer Who Has Handled Over Five Thousand Skeletons Having His Legitimate Career—Hideous Decorations of a Bedroom—A Being That Loves Bones.

To deal in the bones of human beings would be an occupation repugnant to most men. Yet in the vicinity of Ninth and South streets lives an old Frenchman who finds more pleasure in this occupation than anything else in his life. His store is a veritable den of skeletons. The weather beaten sign swinging over the door, creaking dismally with every gust of wind, bears this simple legend, "M. Le Mistaque, Herboriste," from which it is evident nonchalant would have the world believe that he deals almost exclusively in those perfumed waters so dear to the feminine heart. Every family has a skeleton in the closet, however, and monsieur's family, which consists only of himself, is no exception to the general rule. He has his skeleton—in fact he has scores of them—in closet and otherwise, the majority otherwise. The truth of the matter is, the old Frenchman deals in skeletons.

The second floor boasts of only two small rooms, the rear one being used as a workshop, while the other, directly over the store and fronting on the street, serves the double purpose of bedchamber and sitting room.

Such another bedchamber as the one occupied by the old Frenchman probably does not exist, and how monsieur manages to sleep the sleep of the just among such gruesome surroundings is an insoluble mystery to the few who have been admitted to it.

The walls of the small room are covered with skulls and crossbones and red life size skeletons, or rather death size skeletons, in all sorts of grotesque positions. Four hideous skulls grin from their positions on top of the four posts of the bed, and close to the head of the bed stands a skeleton with arms outstretched doing duty as a clothes rack. The whole is dimly lighted up by a faint glimmer of light emanating from a lamp made of a plaster skull suspended from the ceiling by the ceiling with things of horrid human bones.

THE HOLLOWED HEADS.

Dr. Mistaque doesn't look an old fashioned man, and the resemblance between him and one of his skeletons is marked and striking. He has small, wiry features, his chin wears tufts and long chin being shaved with an item gray moustache and imperial.

For a second time he has been carrying on his business in the old place, having emigrated from France in 1851, coming direct to Philadelphia, where he established himself in business. For a time he had a hard struggle to keep body and soul together, owing to the number of competitors in his field, together with the dilapidated premises. It was because necessary for him, in addition to his other trade, to sell himself up as a drugget, but he still runs his little shop, though principally on a decay.

Late in the states, when the Knights of Pythias were organized in this state, the demand for skeletons increased, as they were used in a great deal in the lodgerooms. Dr. Mistaque prospered, as a consequence, since most of his competitors had given up the business.

Old and decrepit the following twenty years Mistaque was full and hale in form, but the old man had amassed a small fortune, and there is no reason why he should longer continue in the business except that he has taken a liking to his work, that so every time artist does. He is an artist in the full sense of the word. There is traditionally no one who can articulate a skeleton as neatly as he, and it is no idle boast on his part when he claims that with eyes blindfolded he can take a mass of bones, presenting the human frame and build up the skeleton as it was originally, without one bone out of place.

WHAT THE "DOCTOR" SAYS.

The "doctor," while standing in his workshop a few days ago with his sleeves rolled up over his sinewy arms, thus held forth on the subject nearest his heart: "This skeleton you see I am operating on I have imported from France. You will notice its high points on the bones, due to a method of preparation practiced only by the French. They clean the bones by a process of maceration with muriatic acid, the whole operation requiring two or three months time, while in this country the bones are hastily and carelessly boiled and come out rough and dirty. In all my twenty years' service I have never come across a Chinese skeleton. This is due to the fact that a Chinaman believes he will not reach heaven unless his bones rest in the Flowery Kingdom.

"The different prices of skeletons are based upon their degree of hardness and whiteness, upon the development of the bones and the amount of absence of fat in their extremities. For this reason the French article is decidedly of more value than the American or German. Up to this year over 2,000 skeletons have been imported into this country, but they have become scarce of late for some reason, and to supply the demand I find it necessary to manufacture them of paper.

"Of course I have a stock of them in my bedroom, but I would not part with any of them. Men Dead I have come to look upon them as dear friends and companions. Here you see my artificial skeleton, made of paper mache, with artificial teeth, and in the corners of the eyes with a white paste which gives the appearance of the genuine article. I can sell these of these made work, and they bring from ten to fifteen dollars, while the imported genuine article costs from thirty to thirty-five dollars and the domestic twenty dollars. But then the imitations are longer lasting in every respect.

"Yes, I have grown old in the business and with it. I have accumulated and handled over 5,000 skeletons in my time."—Philadelphia Record.

The society anti-vivisectionist who would find for the asking instances of more excess by making coffins in which they intended dogs and cats were born a chance to see one of the white lions.

The creature having the greatest number of enlarged eyes is the shrimp, a species of mollusk, in the shell of which has been found as many as 11,000 separate lenses eyes.

IN AN EGYPTIAN APARTMENT HOUSE.

Interesting Scenes in a Lodging Place in the Ancient City of Cairo.

The two young ladies, as belonged to El Amber students on Mustapha street. He could speak no English, but he imparted the information in Arabic to our acquaintance. Seeing that we were more interested in the general scene than in his old face, Mustapha left the Amount wars to its fate, and lighting a cigarette seated himself on the railing with a disengaged air, as much as to say: "Two more such women! But it's nothing to me."

One of the students was evidently an artist. His room contained piles of books and pamphlets, and almost nothing else. His one rug was spread out close to the front to enter to get the light, and placed upon it we saw his upon instead, his pens and a page of freshly copied manuscript. When we asked who he was, Mustapha replied that he had gone down to the fountain to wash himself, so that he could say his prayers.

The second chamber belonged to a student of another disposition, the arrangement being one but three rings clothes hung from pegs upon his walls, and he possessed an extra pair of brown velvet slippers, in addition to our cups and saucers upon a shelf. Only two books were visible, and these were put away in a corner, instead of being on the floor, the whole place was adorned with three pots containing plants in full bloom were standing on the floor round the walls of his largely exposed abode, and were also drawn up in two rows in the passageway outside, where he himself, sitting on a mat, was sewing. His blouses were so gay that we instantly we called. Wherefore Mustapha explained that they belonged to his wife.

Opposite the suites of the students there was a large chamber almost entirely filled with white tubes, like small cotton tubes; in a niche between these high piles an old Moor kneeling at the threshold was warding something in a large earthenware tub of a pink tint. His body was bow from the waist upward, and as he bent over his task his short chest, with all the ribs clearly visible, was thrust out in other directions, the curves of the spine standing out, and his face, measuring arms hung in distance like, while his head, supported on a small wizened throat, was adorned with a white turban and a long cotton cloth gown in hue, not in material resembling one of some serious school colleague. Directly behind him, close to the threshold, squatted a large gray bulbous object which we at first mistook for a huge bale of rags.

Every now and then the creature who was seated by a long pole and, ascended slowly to the top of the tubes and came down in the other side, feeding the monster. He is a boiler despite his tub for several reasons, foremost one being carefully with his small pink hand, whenever it and lowered the pole, and then wrinkled gravely, and with a sudden jerk, either to the monster or to the tubes, to rouse his patience at the door, with looking as if he could not understand the folly of such unnecessary and silly toil.

In another chamber large very black negro, dressed in pale white, was spread upon the floor, with his feet stretched out in front of him, his hands placed stiffly on his knees, his eyes staring straight before him. He was motionless to a degree that made us feel uncomfortable to be so near lonely to breathe.

"What is he doing?" I said to the dragoman.

"Ah! Oh, he being good man; he prayer."

In a chamber next to the negro two grave old dames were playing chess. They were perched upon one of those Cairo settees which look like square chicken coops. The other and three beds in the room spread for interesting pots and potters, and for some time I took them for mere chicken coops, and wondered why they were always empty. Chickens might well have inhabited the place, and, by the time we had reached the central court upon which all these chambers opened was covered with a layer of rubbish and dirt several inches thick, which contained many of their feathers. —Cosmopolitan Prominent Wisdom in Harper's.

Reciting Bibles.

The popular impression that every family possesses a Bible as well as a dictionary and a copy of Shakespeare, like many other popular impressions, seems to be an erroneous one, for there is in Boston a firm that makes a business of renting out Bibles of an expensive and handsome kind, suitable to lend to a bishop or fashionable clergyman on the occasion of a christening, wedding or funeral, or to a lawyer, if on the occasion of those religious splendors in the family the high church dignitary should turn to the black leaves between the Old and New Testaments he would find them devoid of genealogical records, to the consternation of the family. A deposit is demanded when the Bible is hired, and a charge of two dollars a night is the regular price.—New York Sun.

Authors' Wrists.

A statistician in Paris has the patience to count the number of words employed by the most celebrated writers. The works of Corneille do not contain more than 2,000 different words, and those of Molière 3,000. Shakespeare, the most subtle and varied of English authors, wrote all his tragedies and comedies with 15,000 words; Voltaire and Goethe employ 20,000. "Paradise Lost" only contains 8,000, and the Old Testament says all that he has to say with 5,642 words.—Cor. Baltimore American.

London's Yearly Fruit Supply.

In one year the quantity of fruit imported into London weighs was no less than 17,118,000 bushels, the value of which was estimated at $28,000,000. This chiefly consisted of apples, oranges, lemons, onions and potatoes, the vegetables, though not entirely coming under the definition of "fruit," being included in with the rest.—Exchange.

For fourteen years a "Son of the Member" in Sussex, Eng., has been trying to get a sight of a will buried in the act of guarding in young in time of danger, the line managed for after days for the purpose, but without success.

Books to lending the inhabitants in England, notwithstanding the efforts made to prevent thefts, have to be complained. It is stated that the notice to the effect is a general forbidder, and so it will be a blessing rather than a punishment.

A Dangerous Game.

This habit of naming boys after some friend and bawling two "first" names is a bad, as it has also a short played out. At least, this is what Mr. Barney Dunn, of this city, thinks about it. He lately lost his cramps the other night, and prospects did not seem to have the slightest effect upon the little cullinan, so Mr. Dunn flew to the nearest drug store. He pulled the bell with a smashing jerk. Up went the sash window, and the pharmacist's voice called excitedly, "Who's there?"

"Shaver Cook," hurriedly cried the anxious father.

"Now my sock, did you? Well, what the dickens do I care if you saw the cook, the chambermaid, the butler and the stable boy? You let that bell alone, you hear, or I'll break your face! Get out of that!"

"But I tell you I'm an issue. I'm Shaver Cook!"

"Confound it, when do I care if you did not say your name? Have you business? If you want to pull down a street at night, I send my business, she whole lots, and you had better go about your if you want to keep out of trouble. Hear me?"

"I don't know anything about a new arrival, doctor, and I am not dreaming but my baby is sick, and if you don't hurry up she will die!"

"Your baby's sick! Why can you? Why didn't you say so at first? Wait a minute, I'll be right down!"

"Why, I'm Mr. Shaver Cook, of 343 Grove street, as I tell you before, and my baby's dying with the cramp," cried the agonized father.

"Why, why, why,