

## NOTHING BUT BONES.

If our readers want to see a curious and weird sight, they should take a trip to Hythe, a little town on the Kentish coast, and there they would find a most remarkable collection of human bones. There are two or three towns in the country, notably Ripon and Rothwell, where large numbers of human bones are to be found, but few, if any, bear the romantic history attached to the Hythe collection.

In the crypt of the old parish church there are said to be the remains of no fewer than 30,000 persons. Of course, the number is greatly exaggerated, but at first sight one can quite believe, in the mass of bones facing the visitor as he enters, that the original owners must have numbered several thousands at least. As you enter the crypt, you notice through the light proceeding from the open door a small table on which are two or more skulls. On either side, in recesses, are shelves on which are placed a large number of skulls in rows. There they stand apparently grinning at you in fiendish delight at your very evident surprise and discomfiture.

A glance at them is, as a rule, sufficient for most visitors, but if there be any more curious than others, who understand anything at all about the formation of the human frame, it is no difficult matter to note that, for the most part, the owners must have been full-grown men. Amongst them is to be found the skull of one woman at least, and on the same side is the skull of a boy apparently about sixteen years of age.

Running nearly the whole length is one solid mass of bones, with a passage down close to the side. The walls of this mass are carefully built up of arm and leg bones, alternating with skulls, and behind these walls are bones of every description. One skull tells its own tale: the owner was clearly killed by a blow from a heavy instrument, which crushed a portion of the bone on to the brain; probably a battle-axe was the weapon used. Another shows quite plainly that death was caused by a sharp instrument striking the owner in one eye. A third must have been badly handled, as the bone is completely shattered. Many of them bear evidence of spear or lance wounds, while in several other cases the fatal injuries were probably caused by arrows.

The bones show that the owners must have been men of very different heights, though the majority of them were considerably above what we now consider the "average." In more than one case the bones, as seen by the writer, must have belonged to men of quite 7 ft. in height, while one leg-bone, at least, is generally shown to the visitor, said to have been part and parcel of a man taller even than that high limit.