

neighbourhood levelled with the ground. The cause was attributed to one of the residents having omitted to let the water run out of his tank. Ever since that time, one of the first things a man does after he has decided on abandoning his house, is to empty his reservoirs of water.

We observe from the newspapers that *Ætna* is still fearfully and dangerously awake.

FALSE HAIR: WHERE IT COMES FROM.

FROM THE LONDON REVIEW.

WE are told that when the gentleman on horse-back the other day paraded up and down Rotten-row, with a lady's *chignon* on the top of his riding-stick, all the fair, as he passed them, involuntarily placed their hands at the back of their heads to see if theirs was missing. No circumstance could afford a better illustration of the universal use of false hair among womankind than this. Of old a woman must have arrived at a certain age before her pride would permit her to don the regulation "front" which at once placed her in the category of old women. Now Hebe herself is perfectly indifferent whether we know or not that she is indebted to other heads for her flowing locks. The consequence is, that the trade in human hair has of late assumed very large proportions, and its value has increased at a prodigious rate. Where does it all come from? a spectator naturally asks, as he surveys the harvest of locks hanging in the windows of the fashionable hairdressers, or disposed in every conceivable form on the heads of waxen dummies. And little does the spectator think of the Bluebeard's cupboard he is asking admittance to, in putting this query. As a matter of course, all products required for the artificial decoration of the person find their way principally to Paris, and we accordingly find that city is the emporium of the trade in human hair. One hundred tons weight of this precious ornament is, we are informed, annually taken there, whence it is distributed in a raw and manufactured state over the whole of Europe. If we could watch in secret the rape of each lock, we should be able to give a series of pictures of human agony such as life but rarely presents, for we may be sure that as a rule a young woman would almost as soon lose her life as that glorious appendage, on which so much of her beauty depends. The collectors of hair on the Continent are generally pedlars, or persons moving about the country on some other business to which they add the trade of hair-purchasing. It is a singular fact that heretofore, the agents employed in the collection of this precious material have generally been ostensibly employed in some other occupation. Arkwright, it will be remembered, did a little business in this line when travelling about the country collecting the spun yarn from the cottagers; and a few years since the most extensive purchasers of hair abroad were a company of Dutch farmers, who supplemented their own business in this manner. Perhaps the trade would be considered too infamous to be openly practised, hence this convenient mask. In one department of France, however, there appears to have been no false shame on the part of the women with respect to parting with their hair, and this for a very obvious reason. The peasant girls of Brittany cover the head with a picturesque white cap, which wholly hides the hair, hence from this quarter the sale of the article has been for a long time openly carried on. Mr. Francis Trollope, in his "*Summer in Brittany*," published a few years since, describes a most amusing scene at a fair in Collenée, where, he says, he saw several hair dealers shearing the peasant girls like so many sheep. A crowd of fair Bretonnaises surrounded each operator, and, as fast as sheared, he threw the long hair, tied up in a wisp, in a basket beside him. Whilst he was operating on one, the other girls stood waiting for their turn with their caps in their hands. The fashion which enforces the wearing of these close caps of course rendered these damsels callous to the loss of their hair, for which they generally get but a few sous, or a bright-coloured cotton handkerchief. We have no doubt that even the simple Bretonnaises have by

this time become awake to the increased value of the article they have to sell, and that silk has taken the place of cotton in the exchange. Spain and the north of Italy also furnish considerable contributions to the collectors of these jet-black locks. The main crops of the golden hair now so much prized come from Germany, and the yellow hair from Holland. The splendid tresses the devotee dedicates to God somehow get back into the world again, and are offered up at the shrine of vanity. This hair is known in the trade as church hair. In visiting a wholesale warehouse and manufactory lately we were shown some of these vestal tresses fresh from an English convent. Vanity of vanities—its next appearance in all probability will be on the head of some fast maiden of Belgravia, deftly woven with her own in order to enslave some eligible elder son.

The *chiffonniers* who go about in Paris, morning and evening, picking out prizes from the gutter, have not overlooked human hair. By their agency the combings of the fair Parisienne are returned once more to the human head; no doubt there is a dust-heap odour the hair merchant knows well. But there is still another kind of hair about which there is a deep mystery. A grim smile passes over the features of the hair merchant as he tells you that the long "leech" of hair (for that is the trade name for the small parcels in which they are done up for sale, after being prepared and cleansed) is known as churchyard hair! As he draws attention, with a certain subdued manner, to the squared end of the "leech," you perceive that they have not been cut, but pulled out of the head with the bulb adherent; sometimes this class of hair comes to market with pieces of the scalp skin at the end. How this hair is obtained is a mystery which the trade does not care to fathom. When we so often hear of the desecration of churchyards, and the shovelling away of the old bones and decayed coffins, we may perhaps make a shrewd guess at the source from which this hair comes. It must be remembered that hair is almost indestructible. The beautiful wig of auburn hair now in the British Museum, had lain in the tomb of a Theban mummy for upwards of two thousand years before it found its way to the national collection, yet that hair is as fresh as though it had just come from the hands of the hair-dresser, and the curl is so strong in it that it cannot be taken out even by the application of heat. Churchyard hair is brought into the market by home as well as foreign collectors, and we cannot help suspecting that the grave-digger is no mean member of that craft. The English woman *very rarely sells her hair*—she must be reduced to the last condition of poverty before she would consent to this sacrifice. But there is a class who are compelled to do so. There can be little doubt that the majority of the long English tresses come from the heads of criminals. It is a cruel and a brutal thing to do—the ostensible reason is cleanliness—but an enforced cleanliness, bought at the expense of the last remnant of self-respect left to the woman, and a cleanliness the more rigorously looked to because its results form the perquisite of the warders. If it is necessary that the charming locks of our fair should be supplemented from this source, they should at least be informed that they are never obtained without oaths, prayers and blasphemous imprecations upon the despoilers, which the drawing-room belles little dream of, as those purchased tresses dance pendulous upon their cheek in the heated saloon.

Fever, also, places his contributions in the hands of the hair merchant, and there is a sad suspicion that the mysterious woman that hovers about the house of the dead to perform its last offices does not, when an opportunity offers, allow it to escape. There are still other sources from which human hair is obtained, of a yet more repulsive nature; but we have said enough to show that when a lady buys false locks she little knows the curious and mysterious tale each individual hair possibly could tell her.

The orator who "carried away his audience" is earnestly and humanely requested to bring it back, by persons who had friends present.

TWILIGHT.

THE night-flowers open; days are short;
The red is palling in the west;
Even the wayward flickering bat
Is once again at rest.
Between the netted apple-boughs
Shine out once more the welcome stars;
I dream in twilight of a slave
Glaring through prison bars.

No sound but when the beetles fall
Through darkening leafage of the elm;
The blackness gathers o'er my eyes,
And would my soul o'erwhelm,
But that a pallor in the east,
That still continuous spreads,
Tells me that mellow darks like these
Will blossom into morning rods.

HORRIBLE MISTAKE.

IT was in the autumn of 185— that an old priest finished his course in a lovely village nestled in the bosom of the Pyrenees. I had visited the place regularly for many summers, and had known him well, better, indeed, than almost any one in the place, for he shunned society, and dreaded making new acquaintances, which each year had to be broken off. Having come to C. originally for health, he had for many years taken up his abode there, and did duty as resident Curé—a good simple old man, not "passing rich, but living comfortably on forty pounds a year, with a little garden and meadow on a slope of a mountain so steep that the mowing of his hay was to me an annual miracle. An old deaf housekeeper and a couple of immense Pyrenean dogs were his sole companions. Many a cigar had I smoked at the good old man's fireside; many a long talk had I had with him; and many a time had I been shamed out of my Protestant intolerance by the simplicity and charity of the old Curé. And now he was gone, and I was truly grieved. I followed the remains of my poor old friend to the grave, and then returned to try to console poor inconsolable old Julie, who met every attempt in that direction with the reply, "*Jo n'entends pas, en j'ai pas besoin d'entendre puisque M. le Curé est mort.*" The young Abbé who had performed the funeral, at last persuaded Julie to give him her master's keys, and allow him to look over his papers and see if there were any of importance, and he invited me, as an older friend, to join him in the examination. There were not many to go through; one or two requests—a provision for Julie—a few letters, and several papers, bearing date many, many years before, relating to histories imparted to him in the confessional. The young priest glanced at these at first as if he feared to commit sacrilege by doing so; but they all began with the words, "Since every person connected with these events is dead, I consider that this history is no longer under the seal of the confessional."

I easily persuaded him to bestow them upon me, the more easily as they evidently savoured too much of the "shop" to be valuable possessions to himself. On returning to my hotel I examined these papers; they proved to be chiefly memoranda, uninteresting to one to whom the persons were unknown; but there was one story longer than the rest, which I thought worth preserving, and now offer to my readers. It was in a woman's hand, and was headed by a few words in the good Curé's writing, to the effect that the emotion of his penitent Madame de M. rendered her spoken narration so unintelligible, that he had been compelled before giving her absolution, to beg her to state her case in writing, pledging his priestly honour, at the same time, that all she might write should be considered equally "under the seal." That seal is now removed. Here is the record of a sad little tragedy, which took place years ago in this corner of the globe, unsuspected by all the world save the priest and the two or three persons immediately concerned. May they all have got happily through their al-