

"Many a Breton mother brings her sick child to this chapel of St. Anne, and goes away happy, because the priest, who sits all that day beside the altar, has placed his stole upon the head of the little sufferer, and pronounced a blessing upon it. No wonder the students fought bravely in the vicinity of Auray; brought up, as they were, from their fancy, in such feelings as these. They were not only feelings founded on picturesque associations, but on a firm belief that devotions paid in particular places had a special efficacy about them. So natural is this feeling, that it is really wonderful how it has been possible so thoroughly to root it out of the English mind. Cruel and hard hearted indeed were those who made the baneful attempt, and have gained such a mournful victory. They have robbed the English peasant of a source of consolation which he needs more than ever, now that evils so unheard of are pressing him down to the earth. Processions and pilgrimages are used, if only because they are visible links which bind the soul to the unseen world, because they are actions of religion formalizing and embodying acts of the soul, and thus creating habit within us." . . . "Who knows what might have happened had St. Thomas's bones remained undisturbed at Canterbury? Who knows that the dead faith of some slumbering churchman might not have been warmed by their vicinity, just as the dead man was raised to life by contact with the bones of Elshah. Henry's rage was not impotent; he succeeded in cutting off a real power from the church." (p. 283)

INTERESTING FACTS IN CHEMISTRY.—

Of water.—Ice, when converted into water, absorbs and combines with 140 deg. of caloric. Water, then, after being cooled down to 22 deg., cannot freeze until it has parted with 150 deg. of caloric; and ice, after being heated to 32 deg. (which is the exact freezing point), cannot melt till it has absorbed 140 degrees more of caloric. This is the cause of the extreme slowness of the operations. There can be no doubt, then, that water owes its fluidity to its latent caloric, and that its caloric of fluidity is 140 degrees.

However long we may boil water in an open vessel, we cannot make it the smallest degree hotter than its boiling point, or 212 degrees. When arrived at this point, the vapor absorbs the heat, and carries it off as fast as it is generated. Hence in cooking, we attain the general heat at the boiling point; though by increasing the fire, we increase the evaporation.

Owing to the quantity of caloric that liquors require to convert them into vapor, all evaporation produces cold. An animal might be frozen to death in the midst of summer, by repeatedly sprinkling ether upon him. The evaporation would shortly carry off the whole of this vital heat. Water thrown on hot bodies acts in the same way; it becomes in an instant converted into vapor, and this deprives these bodies of a great portion of the caloric they contain.

This explains why wet grounds have the coldest atmospheres, and are subject to the latest and earliest frosts: the evaporation is greatest here, as is also the consequent loss of caloric. And it explains how draining wet grounds ameliorates the climate, and promotes the health of a neighbourhood—the water, instead of being evaporated from a broad surface, is concentrated in narrow drains, and carried off.

From the London Times.

CHURCH-YARD HORRORS IN LONDON.

The public in general, we believe, have no suspicion of the exceeding importance which attaches to the subject of interment in thickly-peopled districts. Both as it relates to the health of the living and as it concerns the decency due to the dead, it merits deep attention, and that without delay. The proofs of the evil, and many materials for the remedy, are collected in the report of a committee of the House of Commons, which was appointed last March, on the motion of Mr. Mackinnon. From that report it is our intention to extract the substance of the main evidence, and of the committee's principal recommendations adding such remarks of our own as are compelled by the gross exigency of the case.

The witnesses examined as to the state of the burial grounds in London, and other large towns, are of several descriptions chiefly grave-diggers, undertakers, medical men, clergymen, and parochial or municipal officers; and the general result of their testimony is, that the present state of these burial grounds is shocking to the feelings of human nature, and dreadfully injurious to the health of the poorer classes, who generally inhabit the neighbourhood of the nuisance.

According to the evidence of the first witness, Mr. H. Helsdon, who acts as an "Assistant Minister of the Baptist persuasion," the plan "generally adopted throughout London" is that of "opening what is called a public grave, thirty feet deep perhaps." The first corpse is surmounted by another, and so on, "up to sixteen or eighteen, and all the openings between the coffin boards filled up with smaller coffins, of children. When this grave is crammed as full as it could be, so that the topmost coffin is within two feet of the surface, that is banked up, and that piece of ground is considered as occupied." The banks makes two or three feet more; so that, "to all appearance, it looks four or five feet; but when the works are all removed, and the earth is again levelled with its common surface, I am quite certain, beyond all mistake, the coffins have not been more than two feet below the surface of the ground."—Where the ground is a speculation of some private proprietor, the next grave is opened alongside of the prior one, "to make the most of every inch of the speculation;" and thus the sides of the prior pile of coffins are laid open to sight. The same thing happens even in the churchyards and parish burial grounds where the population is very dense. The witness, speaking of the proprietary ground in Golden-lane, Barbican, where he himself had officiated, describes the putrid effect of these re-openings:—"I have been witness from Sunday to Sunday" (the burials of the poor being usually on Sunday afternoon) "of from sixteen to eighteen coffins, rising one above another; and the stench from those, and the swarms of insects" (some kinds of black fly, generated in this corruption), "it is horrible to conceive: and I have gone away sometimes so loathing and disgusted as scarcely to be able to endure

myself." He adds, that he is acquainted with several other proprietary burial places in London, and has found the same evil prevailing in every one of them; for that the ground is a monopoly of one or two irresponsible individuals, a private piece, which they may either keep devoted to purposes of burial, "or they may sacrifice every feeling of humanity and honor by appropriating that to building purposes, or any purposes in which it may be more profitable."

We are the more particular in our details, because infinite pains are taken to impose upon persons attending the remains of their relatives and friends to these pestilential repositories. Mr. Helsdon states, that his sleeping-room commands "a side-view-glance" into the St. Martin's burial-ground behind Little Russell-street, which has an iron gate into Drury-lane. We have ourselves, in passing, stopped to look through that gate into the enclosure, and certainly have perceived nothing that could shock the sense of decency; but Mr. Helsdon lets us into the secret. The grave, he says, is banked up "in the presence of the parties, who wait to see that every thing in their judgment is safe and sound." To all appearance, the coffin is four or five feet below the surface. In that state the grave is left for a few days, while the freshness of grief leaves a probability that the spot may be revisited by the friends of the deceased; but, "after two or three weeks, it is all levelled and raked over, as comfortable as a garden to look at; and though that ground has been about a century opened, there is no trace of more than some sixty or seventy persons having been buried there at all, though I have no doubt there have been as many thousands."

Now, what is the space in which these 60,000 or 70,000 corpses have been interred? The witness says, "it might be, perhaps, 200 feet square," or considerably less than one acre. Sixty thousand corpses in the course of one century—that is, on an average, 600 each year—buried in less than one acre of ground! The first impulse is to reject the account as impossible. But the evidence is so direct, and concerns too many different and unconnected spots, to be thrown out of consideration so lightly. In another burial place, near Drury-lane, opening from Russell-court and belonging to the new church in the Strand, a witness, resident in Vinegar-yard, who has a window looking upon the grave-ground, tells us that the burials are, on the average, one a day, and that at the lowest computation 20,000 bodies have been interred there! "What is the size of it? I suppose better than half an acre!" But more marvellous still seems the evidence given by Pitts, a cabinet-maker, and Whittaker, an undertaker, touching a cemetery which belongs to a certain Baptist Meeting-house called Enon Chapel. In this foul pit, whose dimensions are less than 60 feet by 40, or about the twentieth part of an acre, there have been buried from ten to twelve thousand bodies! And other information, equally incredible on the first

impression, is communicated by other deponents. Thus constrained to believe that such things are, we go on to search how they can be; and then we come to the appalling fact, that where the body has been laid it is not suffered to repose—that the corpse, which

"—yet but green in earth

"Lies fastering in its shroud."

is expelled from its tenement before the lapse of one year—nay, sometimes even of one month—from the day when it received what seemed the title to a final and a sacred resting-place. Room is wanted for more bodies, and the gravedigger is ordered, if he cannot find space, to make it.

Michael Pye, formerly a gravedigger in St. Clement Dance, is asked about the state of the Portugal-street burying-ground, where he worked under the sexton. The witness answers thus:—

"The ground in Portugal-street is full, and frequently, in getting a grave, I have been compelled to cut away coffins five feet under ground. In some part of the ground I can positively say that there is not above three feet to the outside extremity but what is full up to three feet from the surface.

"Do you mean to say that, whether they were fresh coffins or not, you have cut through?"—"Yes, we have been ordered by the sexton to do so, to make room and when we have been at work, and said that he could not get a grave, the expression has been, 'd—n your lazy eyes! you shall get it and make it;' that is an expression he has frequently used to me."

Is it the common practice to break up the wooden coffins?—Yes, it is the common practice of late, because the ground has been so full, that, in fact, you cannot get a grave without doing it.

"What do you do with the remains?"—The remains are put down at the bottom of the grave, and the coffin that is coming is put on it.

"The remains are put at the bottom without any coffin?"—Yes, there is just a small piece of ground put over it to hide it.

The evidence of Lane, a chair-cane worker, lodging in a house that overlooks the Portugal-street burial-ground, is yet more remarkable. He has heard knocking before day-light among the graves; and when he has got out of bed at dawn, he has seen men at work with handkerchiefs over their noses and mouths, breaking in the coffins to make room, and taking away the wood in sacks. They do it "as carefully as they can, to prevent people seeing it;" but the witness, from the situation of his window, has seen it "very frequently." They have a tool like the face of a hammer at one end, tapering to a sharp point at the other, of about nine pounds in weight, to break the coffins with "What made me look more particular than anything," says Lane, "was that I had a child buried there, and if they had broken that grave open, I should have gone and given them in charge to a policeman." "My wife and I have remarked a particular spot, and we have said, we will see whether that is disturbed. When