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SKELTON MARKET.

UNCLE SAM IS THE CHAMPION BONE COLLECTOR OF THE WORLD.
 Specimens From the Lowest Fishes to the Human Species Found in the National Museum—Bones Used as Fertilizers—Market Value of Skeletons.
 Funk Island—that is, a part of it—has been reported for exhibition at the National museum at Washington. It was on that lonely rock, 33 miles off the coast of Newfoundland, that the now extinct great auk had its principal roost. Fifty years ago the last individual of the species perished. It is represented now by a skeleton, worth \$600, standing by a heap of bird remains such as chiefly compose the surface soil of Funk Island, while alongside is an egg of the fowl, valued at \$1,500, together with the inner skin of another egg. The National museum possesses nearly all of the great auk bones in existence. They are the most costly bones in the world.
 The finest collection of skeletons in the world is also stored at the National museum. They run upward from the lowest fishes, through the reptiles and birds, to man. Human bones are much cheaper than those of many other animals. One can buy a nicely articulated skeleton of a man for \$40 or of a woman for \$50—sex makes some difference in the price—whereas the skeleton of a gorilla costs \$300, of a whale \$150, of an elephant \$400, of a lion \$75, of a horse \$70, of a cat \$13 and of a python \$75.

The bones of a human being are nearly one-quarter water during the life of the individual. They are chiefly composed of phosphate of lime, but contain a good deal of animal matter and other elements. In the skeleton of a man are nearly four pounds of the metal calcium, which is many times more valuable than gold, being worth \$300 an ounce. Thus in the osseous framework of the average tramp may be found material with a market value of about \$18,000, if it could be separated.
 It is only in bones that phosphate of lime is found in anything like a pure state. Everybody knows the value of that material as a fertilizer, but it is only recently that human skeletons have been imported into this country to grow crops with. Not long ago a shipment was made from Mexico to the United States of 10 carloads of human bones, said to have been obtained from ancient mounds in southern Mexico, but more probably gathered from various old and abandoned cemeteries. As these remains were fragments of unsorted skeletons, it was estimated that 30,000 individuals were represented in the lot.

This would not be considered a novelty in Europe. Years ago English farmers used human bones to some extent to fertilize their land. The battlefields of Waterloo was for a time the base of supplies, and this was supplemented by cargoes of mummies from Egypt ground to a fine powder.

In ancient Egyptian tombs are found great numbers of copper boxes, opening at one end by a slide, which contain mummies of cats, hawks, ibises and now and then snakes and small crocodiles. Mummies are a recognized commercial article in that country today. For a long time locomotives were run between Cairo and Suez with no other fuel. Corpses of royal fatch high prices. A year ago the Austrian bark *Vila* was deserted by her crew. Later she was picked up at a desolate Cape Flatteras. Her cargo was found to consist in large part of bones, and of these one-fourth were human. The rest was composed mainly of the bones of horses and cattle. In one corner of her hold was a great heap of the bones of the crew deserted the vessel in midocean. She was worth \$40,000, including her freight. The bones had been collected in deserts and cemeteries of Egypt. The preparation of human skeletons for market is quite an industry. The chief center for this branch of commercial activity is Paris, where three concerns are engaged in the business on a considerable scale. They obtain the requisite supplies of raw material in the shape of bodies from public institutions, most of them being those of paupers and criminals. In the United States the existing laws would not permit the establishment of a factory for bleaching and preparing human skeletons. The only sort of skeleton produced here is of the family type, which is kept in the closet.

To supply the demand in this country about 1,500 skeletons are imported annually. This reckoning does not include minor parts, such as skulls and thigh bones. These are in great request by occult societies, being absolutely indispensable for initiatory ceremonies. One may purchase a cranium and crossbones for only \$10. But if you want something really fancy in the way of a skull you must pay \$40. It is worth the money, however, being beautifully disarticulated, so that each particular bone may be studied separately, including even the little bones of the ear skeleton complete for \$40. A plain skull costs only \$6. By students of osteopathy there is a special demand for the pelvis, which costs at \$7. Clubs organized to defy superstitions believe that the use of skulls for drinking cups, and young men who are studying for the medical profession indulge a ghastly humor by employing similar receptacles to hold tobacco. The demand for human bones always exceeds the supply.—New York World.

An Inspiring Judge.
 In a patent case in New York recently one of the lawyers consumed two days in describing the difference between two scientific appliances. When he had finished the judge said to him, "Now, Mr. —, you will please tell me what is the difference." The lawyer, it is said, hasn't recovered yet—his change.

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ARMOUR'S POOR RELATIONS.

The Big Packer Tells a Funny Story About One He Hasn't Made Rich.
 It has been a matter of current report for years among board of trade men that Phil Armour has no poor relations, says a Chicago newspaper man. "He will not allow any of them to remain poor," a veteran of the board remarked by way of explanation of this unusual good fortune of a rich man. "He makes them all rich."
 "I have heard that story before," Mr. Armour remarked, with a smile, when one of his friends asked him about it the other day. "But it's a mistake. I have enough of them."
 Then the big packer burst out in a laugh, and his friends knew a good story was coming.

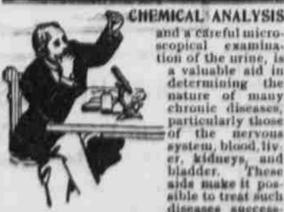
"One of the poor kind—he lives down in Illinois—is one of the most persistent men I ever knew. He keeps writing and writing for money all the time. He is not a bad fellow, only improvident, and if he displayed the same energy in attending to business that he does in writing to me he would have been rich a long time ago. Well, he kept sending one letter after another, saying that if he only had \$500 he would be all right. He repeated this so often that one day I told my secretary to send a letter saying that if he would't bother me for a year I would send him \$500."
 "Well, sir," and Mr. Armour's sides shook with laughter, "as soon as the mails could bring a reply I got it. He said, 'Make it \$1,000 and two years,' and I thought it was such a clever turn that I sent the money."
 "What happened next?"
 "In about three months he wrote again, saying the agreement was off because his wife hadn't been included."
 Mr. Armour seemed to think the whole thing was a great joke and especially enjoyed the shrewdness of his poor relation.

ENCOURAGING SIGNS.
 They Relate to the Business Outlook and Are Seen by the Coal Barons.
 At the Fifth Avenue hotel yesterday and at the Hamburg-American dock in Hoboken there was a large gathering of Leisenring, Kemmerers, Wentzes, Richters and other "coal barons" of the Lehigh valley to say goodbye to Mr. E. B. Leisenring, president of the Lehigh Coal Navigation company, whose failing health has at length caused him to lay down the immediate supervision of his vast business interests and go to Europe for recuperation and recreation.
 Talking with these coal barons, I was much interested to find that they are taking a very hopeful view of the business situation and that quite apart from the fact that the great anthracite coal industry in which they are more specially interested has had more than its share of prosperity during the long season when the bituminous coal regions all over the country were blighted by a strike of most comprehensive proportions.

Mr. M. S. Kemmerer said that the most encouraging sign to his mind was the improvement in the iron industry, a branch of business closely allied to coal mining, and the two together having much to do with the general prosperity of the country. A day or two ago came a order from Brazil for the manufacture of 60 locomotives, a big thing in itself, since the building of locomotives has been practically suspended for a long while. At the Schenectady works orders from American railroads are coming in for railroad iron. At Bethlehem, where little beyond the manufacture of armor plate for the government has been going on, there is perceptible activity, and one of the great iron companies has looked more orders within the last six weeks than in the preceding six months.—M. P. Handy.

The pastor of a church in the state of Washington when a boy stole a ride on the cowcatcher of a locomotive on an eastern railroad. His conscience recently pricked him, and he sent the company \$3.45, the amount of the passage, with interest.

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