

and the continual change of scene, together with the wild delight which attends the overcoming of any danger, are sources of pleasure sufficient to compensate for all the privations and hardships attending such a state of existence.

Mr. Ruxton, one of the many who have passed from settlers to wanderers, has given us the following description of the enjoyments of a life in the wilderness:

"Although liable to an accusation of barbarism, I must confess that the very happiest moments of my life have been spent in the wilderness of the Far West; and I never recall, but with pleasure, the remembrance of my solitary camp in the Bayou Solade, with no friend near me more faithful than my rifle, and no companions more sociable than my good horse and mules, or the attendant cayute which nightly serenaded us. Seldom did I ever wish to change such hours of freedom for all the luxuries of civilized life; and unnatural and extraordinary as it may appear, yet such is the fascination of the life of the mountain hunter, that I believe not one instance could be adduced of even the most polished and civilized of men, who had once tasted the sweets of its attendant liberty and freedom from every worldly care, not regretting the moment when he exchanged it for the monotonous life of the settlements, nor sighing and sighing again once more to partake of its pleasures and allurements."

To this class of voluntary wanderers belong those who *take* to the streets, glad to exchange the wearisomeness and restraint of a settled occupation for the greater freedom and license of a nomad mode of life. As a class, they are essentially the non-working, preferring, as I said before, to *collect*, rather than *produce*, what they eat. If they sell, they do so because for sundry reasons they fear to infringe the law, and as traders their transactions certainly are not marked by an excess of honesty. I am not aware that any of them are professional thieves (for these are the more daring portion of the same vagrant fraternity), though the majority assuredly are habitual cheats—delighting in proving their cleverness by imposing upon simple-minded citizens—viewing all society as composed of the same dishonest elements as their own tribes, and looking upon all sympathy and sacrifice, even when made for their own benefit, as some "artful dodge" or trick, by which to snare them.

It should be remembered, however, that there are many grades of vagrants among us, and that though they are all essentially non-producing and, consequently, predatory, still many are in no way distinguished from a large portion of even our wealthy tradesmen—our puffing grocers and slopsellers. To attempt to improve the condition of the voluntary street-sellers by teaching of any kind, would be to talk to the wind. We might as well preach to Messrs. Moses, Nicol, and Co., in the hope of Christianising them. Those who *take* to the streets are *not*, like those who are *bred* to it, an uneducated

class. They are intelligent and "knowing" enough, and it is this development of their intellect at the expense of their conscience which gives rise to that excessive admiration of mere cleverness, which makes skill the sole standard of excellence with them. They approve, admire, venerate nothing but what is ingenious. Wrong with them is mere folly—right, cunning; and those who think the simple cultivation of the intellect the great social panacea of the time, have merely to study the characteristics of this class to see how a certain style of education can breed the very vice it seeks to destroy. Years ago, I wrote and printed the following passage, and every year since my studies have convinced me more and more of its truth:

"Man, if deprived of his intellect, would be the most miserable and destitute,—if of his sympathy, the most savage and cunning, of all the brute creation: consequently, we may infer that, according as solely the one or the other of these powers is expanded in us, so shall we approximate in our nature either to the instinct of the brute or to the artifice of the demon, and that only when they are developed in an equal degree, can Man be said to be educated as Man. We should remember that the intellect simply executes; it is either the selfish or moral propensity that designs. The intellectual principle enables us to perceive the means of attaining any particular object; it is the selfish or else the moral principle in us, that causes us originally to desire that object. The two latter principles are the springs, the former is merely the instrument of all human action. They are masters, whereas the intellect is but the servant of the will; and hence it is evident that in proportion as the one or the other of these two predominant principles—as either the selfish or the moral disposition is educed in man, and thus made the chief director and stimulus of the intellectual power within him, so will the cultivation of that power be the source of happiness or misery to himself and others."

The third and last class, namely, those who are *driven* to the streets, is almost as large as any. Luckily, those who *take* to that mode of life, are by far the least numerous portion of the street-folk; and if those who are bred to the business are worthy of our pity, assuredly those who are driven to it are equally, if not more, so. With some who are deprived of the means of obtaining a maintenance for themselves, the sale of small articles in the streets may, perhaps, be an excuse for begging; but in most cases, I am convinced it is adopted from a horror of the workhouse, and a disposition to do, at least, *something* for the food they eat. Often is it the last struggle of independence—the desire to give something like an equivalent for what they receive. Over and over again have I noticed this honourable pride, even in individuals who, from some privations or affliction that rendered them utterly incompetent to labour for their living, had a just claim on our sympathies and assistance. The blind—the cripple—the maimed—

the very old—the very young—all have generally adopted a street-life, because they could do nothing else. With many it is the last resort of all. The smallness of the stock-money required—for a shilling, it has been shown, is sufficient to commence several street-trades—is one of the principal causes of so many of those who are helpless taking to the street-traffic. Moreover, the severity of the Poor-laws and the degradation of pauperism, and the aversion to be thought a common beggar by all, except the very lowest, are, I have no doubt, strong incentives to this course. There are many callings which are peculiar, as being followed principally by the disabled. The majority of the blind are musicians, or boot-lace or tape-sellers. The very old are sellers of water-cresses, lucifers, pincushions, ballads, and pins and needles, stay-laces, and such small articles as are light to carry, and require but a few pence for the outlay. The very young are sellers of flowers, oranges, nuts, onions, blacking, lucifers, and the like. Many of those who have lost an arm, or a leg, or a hand, turn showmen, or become sellers of small metal articles, as knives or nutmeg-graters; and many who have been born cripples may be seen in the streets struggling for self-support. But all who are *driven* to the streets have not been physically *disabled* for labour. Some have been reduced from their position as tradesmen or shopmen; others, again, have been gentlemen's servants and clerks; all, dragged down by a series of misfortunes, sometimes beyond their control, and sometimes brought about by their own imprudence or sluggishness. As we have seen, many are reduced to a state of poverty by long illness, and on their recovery are unable, from want of clothes or friends, to follow any other occupation.

But a still larger class than all, are the beaten-out mechanics and artisans, who, from want of employment in their own trade, take to make up small things (as clothes-horses, tin-ware, cutlery, brushes, pails, caps, and bonnets)

on their own account. The number of artisans in the London streets speaks volumes for the independence of the working-men of this country; as well as for the difficulty of their obtaining employment at their own trades. Those who are unacquainted with the sterling pride of the destitute English mechanic, know not what he will suffer before becoming an inmate of a workhouse, or sinking to the debasement of a beggar. That handicraftsmen do occasionally pass into "lurkers" I know well; but these, I am convinced, have gradually been warped to the life by a long course of tramping, aided by the funds of their societies, and thus becoming disused to labour, have, after forfeiting all claims upon the funds of their trade, adopted beggary as a means of subsistence. But, that this is the exception rather than the rule, the following is sufficient to show:

"The destitute mechanics," said the Master of the Wandsworth and Clapham Union to me, "are entirely a different class from the regular vagrants; they have different habits, and indeed different features. During the whole of my experience I never knew a distressed artisan who applied for a night's shelter, commit an act of theft; and I have seen them," he added, "in the last stage of destitution. Occasionally they have sold the shirt and waistcoat off their backs before they applied for admittance into the workhouse, while some of them have been so weak from long starvation that they could scarcely reach the gate, and indeed had to be kept for several days in the Infirmary before their strength was recruited sufficiently to continue their journey." "The poor mechanic," said another of my informants, "will sit in the casual ward like a lost man, scared. Its shocking to think a decent mechanic's houseless. When he's beat out he's like a bird out of a cage; he doesn't know where to go, or how to get a bit."

I shall avail myself of another occasion to discuss the means of improving the condition of the street-people.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MANUFACTURED ARTICLES.

THESE traders consist of: (1) The vendors of metal articles; (2) Of chemical articles; (3) Of China, glass, and stone articles; (4) Of linen, cotton, and other textile fabrics; and (5) Of miscellaneous articles. In this classification I do not include second-hand articles, nor yet the traffic of those who make the articles they sell, and who are indeed street-artisans rather than street-sellers.

Under the first head are included, the vendors of razors, table and penknives, tea-trays, dog-collars, key-rings, articles of hardware, small coins and medals, pins and needles, jewellery, snuffers, candlesticks, articles of tin-ware, tools, card-counters, herring-toasters, trivets, gridirons,

pans, tray-stands (as in the roasting of meat), and Dutch ovens.

Of the second description are the vendors of blacking, black-lead, lucifer matches, corn-salves, grease-removing compositions, china and glass cements, plating-balls, rat and beetle poisons, crackers, detonating-balls, and cigar-lights.

Under the third head come all street-sold articles of China, glass, or stone manufacture, including not only "crockery," but vases, chimney-ornaments, and stone fruit.

The fourth head presents the street-vending of cotton, silken, and linen-manufactures; such as sheetings, shirtings, a variety of laces, sew

ing cotton, threads and tapes, articles of haberdashery and of millinery, artificial flowers, handkerchiefs, and pretended smuggled goods.

Among the fifth class, or the "miscellaneous" street-sellers, are those who vend cigars, pipes, tobacco and snuff-boxes and cigar-cases, accordions, spectacles, hats, sponge, combs and hair-brushes, shirt-buttons and coat-studs, "lots," rhubarb, wash-leather, paper-hangings, dolls, Bristol and other toys, saw-dust, fire-wood, and pin-cushions.

There are many other manufactured articles sold in the streets, but their description will be more proper under the head of Street Artisans.

The street-sellers of manufactured articles present, as a body, so many and often such varying characteristics, that I cannot offer to give a description of them as a whole, as I have been able to do with other and less diversified classes.

Among them are several distinct and peculiar street-characters, such as the pack-men, who carry their cotton or linen goods in packs on their backs, and are all itinerants. Then there are duffers, who vend pretended smuggled goods, handkerchiefs, silks, tobacco or cigars; also, the sellers of sham sovereigns and sham gold rings for wagers. The crockery-ware and glass-sellers (known in the street-trade as "crocks"), are peculiar from their principle of *bartering*. They will sell to any one, but they sell very rarely, and always clamour in preference for an exchange of their wares for wearing-apparel of any kind. They state, if questioned, that their reason for doing this is—at least I heard the statement from some of the most intelligent among them—that they do so because, if they "sold outright," they required a hawker's license, and could not sell or "swop" so cheap.

Some of the street-sellers of manufactured articles are also patterers. Among these are the "cheap Jacks," or "cheap Johns;" the grease and stain removers; the corn-salve and plate-ball vendors; the sellers of sovereigns and rings for wagers; a portion of the lot-sellers; and the men who vend poison for vermin and go about the streets with live rats clinging to, or running about, their persons.

This class of street-sellers also includes many of the very old and the very young; the diseased, crippled, maimed, and blind. These poor creatures sell, and sometimes obtain a charitable penny, by offering to sell such things as boxes of lucifer-matches; cakes of blacking; boot, stay, and other laces; pins, and sewing and knitting-needles; tapes; cotton-bobbins; garters; pin-cushions; combs; nutmeg-graters; metal skewers and meat-hooks; hooks and eyes; and shirt-buttons.

The rest of the class may be described as merely street-sellers; toiling, struggling, plodding, itinerant tradesmen.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MANUFACTURED ARTICLES IN METAL.

THESE street-sellers are less numerous than might be imagined, when—according to my present division—the class is confined to the sellers of articles which they do not manufacture. The metal wares thus sold I have already enumerated, and I have now to describe the characteristics of the sellers.

The result of my inquiries leads me to the conclusion, that the street-vendors of any article which is the product of the skill of the handicraftsman, have been, almost always, in their first outset in a street life, connected in some capacity or other with the trade, the manufactures of which they vend.

One elderly man, long familiar with this branch of the street-trade, expressed to me his conviction that when a mechanic sought his livelihood in the streets, he naturally "gave his mind to sell what he understood. Now, in my own case," continued my informant, "I was born and bred a tinman, and when I was driven to a street-life, I never thought of selling anything but tins. How could I, if I wished to do the thing square and proper?—it would be like trying to speak another language. If I'd started on slippers—and I knew a poor man who was set up in the streets by a charitable lady on a stock of gentlemen's slippers—what could I have done? Why, no better than he told me he did. He was a potter down at Deptford, and knew of nothing but flower-pots, and honey-jars for grocers, and them red sorts of pottery. Poor fellow, he might have died of hunger, only the cholera came quickest. But when I'm questioned about my tins, I'm my own man; and it's a great thing, I'm satisfied, in a street-trade, when there's so many cheap shops, and the police and all again you, to understand the goods you're talking about."

This statement, I may repeat, is undoubtedly correct, so far as that a "beaten-out" mechanic, when driven to the streets, in the first instance offers to the public wares of which he understands the value and quality. Afterwards, in the experience or vagaries of a street-life, other commodities may be, or may appear to be, more remunerative, and for such the mechanic may relinquish his first articles of street-traffic. "Why, sir," I was told, "there was one man who left razors for cabbages; 'cause one day a costermonger wot lived in the same house with him and was taken ill, asked him to go out with a barrow of summer cabbages—the costermonger's boy went with him—and they went off so well that Joe [the former razor-seller] managed to start in the costering line, he was so encouraged."

The street-trade in metal manufactured articles is principally itinerant. Perhaps during the week upwards of three-fourths of those carrying it on are itinerant, while on a Saturday night, perhaps, all are stationary, and almost always in the street-markets. The itinerant



THE BLIND BOOT-LACE SELLER.

[From a Photograph.]

trade is carried on, and chiefly in the suburbs, by men, women, and children; but the children are always, or almost always, the offspring of the adult street-sellers.

The metal sold in the street may be divided into street-hardware, street-tinware, and street-jewellery. I shall begin with the former.

The street-sellers of hardware are, I am assured, in number about 100, including single men and families; for women "take their share" in the business, and children sell smaller things, such as snuffers or bread-baskets. The people pursuing the trade are of the class I have above described, with the exception of some ten or twelve who formerly made a living as servants to the gaming-booths at Epsom, Ascot, &c., &c., and "managed to live out of the races, somehow, most of the year;" since the gaming-booths have been disallowed, they have "taken to the street hardware."

All these street-sellers obtain their supplies at "the swag-shops;" of which I shall speak hereafter. The main articles of their trade are tea-boards, waiters, snuffers, candlesticks, bread-baskets, cheese-trays, Britannia metal tea-pots and spoons, iron kettles, pans, and coffee-pots. The most saleable things, I am told by a man who has been fifteen years in this and similar street trades, are at present 18-in. tea-boards, bought at "the swags" at from 10s. 6d. a doz., to 4s. each; 24-in. boards, from 20s. the doz. to 5s. each; bread-baskets, 4s. 6d. the doz.; and Britannia metal tea-pots, 10s. the doz. These tea-pots have generally what is called "loaded bottoms;" the lower part of the vessel is "filled with composition, so as to look as if there was great weight of metal, and as if the pot would melt for almost the 18d. which is asked for it, and very often got."

I learned from the same man, however, and from others in the trade, that it is far more difficult now than it was a few years ago, to sell "rubbish." There used to be also, but not within these six or eight years, a tolerable profit realised by the street-sellers of hardware in the way of "swop." It was common to take an old metal article, as part payment for a new one; and if the old article were of good quality, it was polished and tinkered up for sale in the Saturday evening street-markets, and often "went off well." This traffic, however, has almost ceased to exist, as regards the street-sellers of hardware, and has been all but monopolised by the men who barter "crocks" for wearing-apparel, or any old metal. Some hardware-men who have become well known on their "rounds"—for the principal trade is in the suburbs—sell very good wares, and at moderate profits.

"It's a poor trade, sir, is the hardware," said one man carrying it on, "and street trades are mostly poor trades, for I've tried many a one of them. I was brought up a clown, I may say; my father died when I was a child, and I might have been a clown still but for an accident (a rupture). That's long ago,—I can't say how long; but I know that before I was fifteen, I

many a time wished I was dead, and I have many a time since. Why the day before yesterday, from 9 in the morning to 11 at night, I didn't take a farthing. Some days I don't earn 1s., and I have a mother depending upon me who can do little or nothing. I'm a teetotalter; if I wasn't we shouldn't have a meal a day. I never was fond of drink, and if I'm ever so weary and out of sorts, and worried for a meal's meat, I can't say I ever long for a drop to cheer me up. Sometimes I can't get coffee, let alone anything else. O, I suffer terribly. Day after day I get wet through, and have nothing to take home to my mother at last. Our principal food is bread and butter, and tea. Not fish half so often as many poor people. I suppose, because we don't care for it. I know that our living, the two of us, stands to less than 1s. a day,—not 6d. a piece. Then I have two rents to pay. No, sir, not for two places; but I pay 2s. a week for a room, a tidy bit of a chamber, furnished, and 1s. a week rent,—I call it rent, for a loan of 5s. I've paid 1s. a week for four weeks on it, and must keep paying until I can hand over the 5s., with 1s. for rent added to it, all in one sum. If I could tip up the 5s. the day after I'd paid the last week's 1s., I must pay another shilling. The man who lends does nothing else; he lives by lending, and by letting out a few barrows to costermongers, and other street-people. I wish I could take a farewell sight of them."

The principal traffic carried on by these street-sellers is in the suburbs. Women constitute their sole customers, or nearly so. Their profits fluctuate from 20 per cent. to 100 per cent. The bread-baskets, which they buy at 4s. 6d. the doz., they retail at 6d. each; for it is very difficult, I have frequently been told, to get a price between 6d. and 1s. This, however, relates only to those things which are not articles of actual necessity. Half of these street-sellers, I am assured, take on an average from 20s. to 25s. weekly the year through; a quarter take 15s., and the remaining quarter from 7s. 6d. to 10s. Calculating an average taking of 15s. each per week, throughout the entire class, men, women and children, we find 780l. expended in street-sold hardwares. Ten years ago, I am told, the takings were not less than 2,000l.

The following is an extract from accounts kept, not long ago, by a street-seller of hardware. His principal sale was snuffers, knives and forks, iron candlesticks, padlocks, and bed-screws. His stock cost him 35s. on the Monday morning, and his first week was his best, which I here subjoin:

|   | Receipts. | Profits. |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Monday . . . . .  | 8s.       | 3s. 0d.  |
| Tuesday . . . . .   | 5         | 2 3      |
| Wednesday . . . . .   | 4         | 1 6      |
| Thursday (always a slack day)                               | 3         | —        |
| Friday (a better day about the docks, when people are paid) | 7         | 3 0      |
| Saturday Morning and Even.                                  | 23        | 6 1      |
|   | 50        | 15 10    |
|   |           | 2 1 2    |

The following is the *worst* week in the account-books. The street-seller after this (about half a year ago) sold his stock to a small shopkeeper, and went into another business.

|   | Receipts. |    | Profits. |    |
|---|-----------|----|----------|----|
|   | s.        | d. | s.       | d. |
| Monday (very cold) a common bed-screw . . . . . | 0         | 4  | 0        | 1½ |
| Tuesday . . . . .                               | —         | —  | —        | —  |
| Wednesday . . . . .                             | 1         | 0  | 0        | 5  |
| Thursday (sold cheap) . . . . .                 | 1         | 1  | 0        | 3  |
| Friday . . . . .                                | —         | —  | —        | —  |
| Saturday . . . . .                              | 1         | 7  | 0        | 8  |
|   | 4         | 0  | 1        | 5½ |

#### OF THE CHEAP JOHNS, OR STREET HANSELLERS.

THIS class of street-salesmen, who are perhaps the largest dealers of all in hardware, are not so numerous as they were some few years ago—the Excise Laws, as I have before remarked, having interfered with their business. The principal portion of those I have met are Irishmen, who, notwithstanding, generally “hail” from Sheffield, and all their sales are effected in an attempt at the Yorkshire dialect, interspersed, however, with an unmistakable brogue. The brogue is the more apparent when cheap John gets a little out of temper—if his sales are flat, for instance, he’ll say, “By J—s, I don’t believe you’ve any money with you, or that you’ve lift any at home, at all, at all. Bad cess to you!”

There are, however, many English cheap Johns, but few of them are natives of Sheffield or Birmingham, from which towns they invariably “hail.” Their system of selling is to attract a crowd of persons by an harangue after the following fashion: “Here I am, the original cheap John from Sheffield. I’ve not come here to get money; not I; I’ve come here merely for the good of the public, and to let you see how you’ve been imposed upon by a parcel of pompous shopkeepers, who are not content with less than 100 per cent. for rubbish. They got up a petition—which I haven’t time to read to you just now—offering me a large sum of money to keep away from here. But no, I had too much friendship for you to consent, and here I am, cheap John, born without a shirt, one day while my mother was out, in a haystack; consequently I’ve no parish, for the cows eat up mine, and therefore I’ve never no fear of going to the workhouse. I’ve more money than the parson of the parish—I’ve in this cart a cargo of useful and cheap goods; can supply you with anything, from a needle to an anchor. Nobody can sell as cheap as me, seeing that I gets all my goods upon credit, and never means to pay for them. Now then, what shall we begin with? Here’s a beautiful guard-chain; if it isn’t silver, it’s the same colour—I don’t say it isn’t silver, nor I don’t say it is—in that affair use your own judgment. Now, in the reg’lar way of trade, you shall go into any shop in town, and they will ask you 17. 18s. 6d. for an article

not half so good, so what will you say for this splendid chain? Eighteen and sixpence without the pound? What, that’s too much! Well, then say 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10 shillings; what, none of you give ten shillings for this beautiful article? See how it improves a man’s appearance” (hanging the chain round his neck). “Any young man here present wearing this chain will always be shown into the parlour instead of the tap-room; into the best pew in church, when he and—but the advantages the purchaser of this chain will possess I haven’t time to tell. What! no buyers? Why, what’s the matter with ye? Have you no money, or no brains? But I’ll ruin myself for your sakes. Say 9s. for this splendid piece of jewellery—8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1—a shilling, will anybody give a shilling? Well, here 11d., 10d., 9d., 8d., 7d., 6d., 6d.! Is there ever a buyer at sixpence? Now I’ll ask no more and I’ll take no less; sell it or never sell it.” The concluding words are spoken with peculiar emphasis, and after saying them the cheap John never takes any lower sum. A customer perhaps is soon obtained for the guard-chain, and then the vendor elevates his voice: “Sold to a very respectable gentleman, with his mouth between his nose and chin, a most remarkable circumstance. I believe I’ve just one more—this is better than the last; I must have a shilling for this. Sixpence? To you, sir. Sold again, to a gentleman worth 30,000l. a year; only the right owner keeps him out of it. I believe I’ve just one more; yes, here it is; it’s brighterer, longerer, strongerer, and betterer than the last. I must have at least tenpence for this. Well then, 9, 8, 7, 6; take this one for a sixpence. Sold again, to a gentleman, his father’s pet and his mother’s joy. Pray, sir, does your mother know you’re out? Well, I don’t think I’ve any more, but I’ll look; yes, here is *one* more. Now this is better than all the rest. Sold again, to a most respectable gentleman, whose mother keeps a chandler’s shop, and whose father turns the mangle.” In this manner the cheap John continues to sell his guard-chain, until he has drained his last customer for that particular commodity. He has always his remark to make relative to the purchaser. The cheap John always takes care to receive payment before he hazards his jokes, which I need scarcely remark are ready made, and most of them ancient and worn threadbare, the joint property of the whole fraternity of cheap Johns. After supplying his audience with one particular article, he introduces another: “Here is a carving-knife and fork, none of your wasters, capital buck-horn handle, manufactured of the best steel, in a regular workmanlike manner; fit for carving in the best style, from a sparrow to a bullock. I don’t ask 7s. 6d. for this—although go over to Mr. —, the ironmonger, and he will have the impudence to ask you 15s. for a worse article.” (The cheap Johns always make comparisons as to their own prices and the shopkeepers, and sometimes mention their names.) “I say 5s.

for the carving-knife and fork. Why, it’s an article that’ll almost fill your children’s bellies by looking at it, and will always make 1 lb. of beef go as far as 6 lb. carved by any other knife and fork. Well, 4s., 3s., 2s., 1s. 11d., 1s. 10d., 1s. 9d., 1s. 8d., 1s. 7d., 18d. I ask no more, nor I’ll take no less.” The salesman throughout his variety of articles indulges in the same jokes, and holds out the same inducements. I give a few.

“This is the original teapot” (producing one), “formerly invented by the Chinese; the first that ever was imported by those celebrated people—only two of them came over in three ships. If I do not sell this to-day, I intend presenting it to the British Museum or the Great Exhibition. It is mostly used for making tea,—sometimes by ladies, for keeping a little drop on the sly; it is an article constructed upon scientific principles, considered to require a lesser quantity of tea to manufacture the largest quantity of tea-water, than any other teapot now in use—largely patronised by the tea-totalers. Now, here’s a fine pair of bellows! Any of you want to raise the wind? This is a capital opportunity, if you’ll try. I’ll tell you how; buy these of me for 3s. 6d., and go and pawn them for 7s. Will you buy ’em, sir? No! well, then, you be blowed! Let’s see—I said 3s. 6d.; it’s too little, but as I have said it, they must go; well—3s.” &c. &c. “Capital article to chastise the children or a drunken husband. Well, take ’em for 1s.—I ask no more, and I’ll take no less.”

These men have several articles which they sell singly, such as tea-trays, copper kettles, fire-irons, guns, whips, to all of which they have some preamble; but their most attractive lot is a heap of miscellaneous articles:—“I have here a pair of scissors; I only want half-a-crown for them. What! you won’t give 1s.? well, I’ll add something else. Here’s a most useful article—a knife with eight blades, and there’s not a blade among you all that’s more highly polished. This knife’s a case of instruments in addition to the blades; here’s a cork-screw, a button-hook, a file, and a picker. For this capital knife and first-rate pair of scissors I ask 1s. Well, well, you’ve no more conscience than a lawyer; here’s something else—a pocket-book. This book no gentleman should be without; it contains a diary for every day in the week, an almanack, a ready-reckoner, a tablet for your own memorandums, pockets to keep your papers, and a splendid pencil with a silver top. No buyers! I’m astonished; but I’ll add another article. Here’s a pocket-comb. No young man with any sense of decency should be without a pocket-comb. What looks worse than to see a man’s head in an uproar? Some of you look as if your hair hadn’t seen a comb for years. Surely I shall get a customer now. What! no buyers—well I never! Here, I’ll add half-a-dozen of the very best Britannia metal tea-spoons, and if you don’t buy, you must be spoons yourselves. Why, you perfectly

astonish me! I really believe if I was to offer all in the shop, myself included, I should not draw 1s. out of you. Well, I’ll try again. Here, I’ll add a dozen of black-lead pencils. Now, then, look at these articles”—(he spreads them out, holding them between his fingers to the best advantage)—“here’s a pair of first-rate scissors, that will almost cut of themselves,—this valuable knife, which comprises within itself almost a chest of tools,—a splendid pocket-book, which must add to the respectability and consequence of any man who wears it,—a pocket-comb which possesses the peculiar property of making the hair curl, and dyeing it any colour you wish,—a half-dozen spoons, nothing inferior to silver, and that do not require half the usual quantity of sugar to sweeten your tea,—and a dozen beautiful pencils, at least worth the money I ask for the whole lot. Now, a reasonable price for these articles would be at least 10s. 6d.; I’ll sell them for 1s. I ask no more, I’ll take no less. Sold again!”

The opposition these men display to each other, while pursuing their business, is mostly assumed, for the purpose of attracting a crowd. Sometimes, when in earnest, their language is disgusting; and I have seen them, (says an informant), after selling, try and settle their differences with a game at fisticuffs: but this occurred but seldom. One of these men had a wife who used to sell for him,—she was considered to be the best “chaffer” on the road; not one of them could stand against her tongue: but her language abounded with obscenity. All the “cheap Johns” were afraid of her.

They never under-sell each other (unless they get in a real passion); this but seldom happens, but when it does they are exceedingly bitter against each other. I cannot state the language they use, further than that it reaches the very summit of blackguardism. They have, however, assumed quarrels, for the purpose of holding a crowd together, and chaff goes round, intended to amuse their expected customers.

“He’s coming your way to-morrow,” they’ll say one of the other, “mind and don’t hang your husbands’ shirts to dry, ladies, he’s very lucky at finding things before they’re lost; he sells very cheap, no doubt—but mind, if you handle any of his wares, he don’t make you a present of a Scotch fiddle for nothing. His hair looks as if it had been cut with a knife and fork.”

The Irishmen, in these displays, generally have the best of it; indeed, most of their jokes have originated with the Irishmen, who complain of the piracies of other “cheap Johns,” for as soon as the joke is uttered it is the property of the commonwealth, and not unfrequently used against the inventor half an hour after its first appearance.

A few of them are not over particular as to the respectability of their transactions. I recollect one purchasing a brick at Sheffield; the brick was packed up in paper, with a knife tied on the outside, it appeared like a package of

knives, containing several dozens. The "cheap John" made out that he bought them as stolen property; the biter was deservedly bitten. A few of the fraternity are well-known "Fences," and some of them pursue the double calling of "cheap John" and gambler—keeping gambling tables at races. However the majority are hard-working men, who unite untiring industry with the most indomitable perseverance, for the laudable purpose of bettering their condition.

I believe the most successful in the line have worked their way up from nothing, gaining experience as they proceeded. I have known two or three start the trade with plenty of stock, but, wanting the tact, they have soon been knocked off the road. There is a great deal of judgment required in knowing the best fairs, and even when there, as to getting a good stand; and these matters are to be acquired only by practice.

In the provinces, and in Scotland, there may be 100 "cheap Johns," or, as they term themselves, "Han-sellers." They are generally a most persevering body of men, and have frequently risen from small hawkers of belts, braces, &c. Their receipts are from 5*l.* to 30*l.* per day, their profits from 20 to 25 per cent.; 20*l.* is considered a good day's work; and they can take about three fairs a week during the summer months. "I have known many of these men," a man well acquainted with them informs me, "who would walk 20 miles to a fair during the night, hawk the public-houses the whole of the day, and start again all night for a fair to be held 20 miles off upon the following day. I knew two Irish lads, named —, and I watched their progress with some interest. Each had a stock of goods worth a few shillings; and now each has a wholesale warehouse,—one at Sheffield, in the cutlery line, and the other at Birmingham, in general wares."

The goods the han-seller disposes of are mostly purchased at Sheffield and Birmingham. They purchase the cheapest goods they can obtain. Many of the han-sellers have settled in various parts of England as "swag-shop keepers." There are two or three in London, I am told, who have done so; one in the Kent-road, a large concern,—the others I am not aware of their locality. Their mode of living while travelling is rather peculiar. Those who have their caravans, sleep in them, some with their wives and families; they have a man, or more generally a boy, to look after the horse, and other drudgery, and sometimes at a fair, to hawk, or act as a *button* (a *decoy*), to purchase the first lot of goods put up. This boy is accommodated with a bed made between the wheels of the cart or wagon, with some old canvas hung round to keep the weather out—not the most comfortable quarters, perhaps,—but, as they say, "it's nothing when you're used to 'it.'" The packing-up occurs when there's no more chance of effecting sales; the horse is put to, and the caravan proceeds on the road towards the next town intended to visit. After a sufficient days' travel, the "cheap

John" looks out for a spot to encamp for the night. A clear stream of water, and provender for the horse, are indispensable; or perhaps the han-seller has visited that part before, and is aware of the halting-place. After having released the horse, and secured his fore-feet, so that he cannot stray, the next process is to look for some *crack* (some dry wood to light a fire); this is the boy's work. He is told not to despoil hedges, or damage fences: "cheap John" doesn't wish to offend the farmers; and during his temporary sojourn in the green lanes, he frequently has some friendly chat with the yeomen and their servants, sometimes disposes of goods, and often barter for a piece of fat bacon or potatoes. A fire is lighted between the shafts of the cart,—a stick placed across, upon which is suspended the cookery utensil. When the meal is concluded, the parties retire to bed,—the master within the caravan, and the boy to his chamber between the wheels. Sometimes they breakfast before they proceed on their journey; at other times they travel a few miles first.

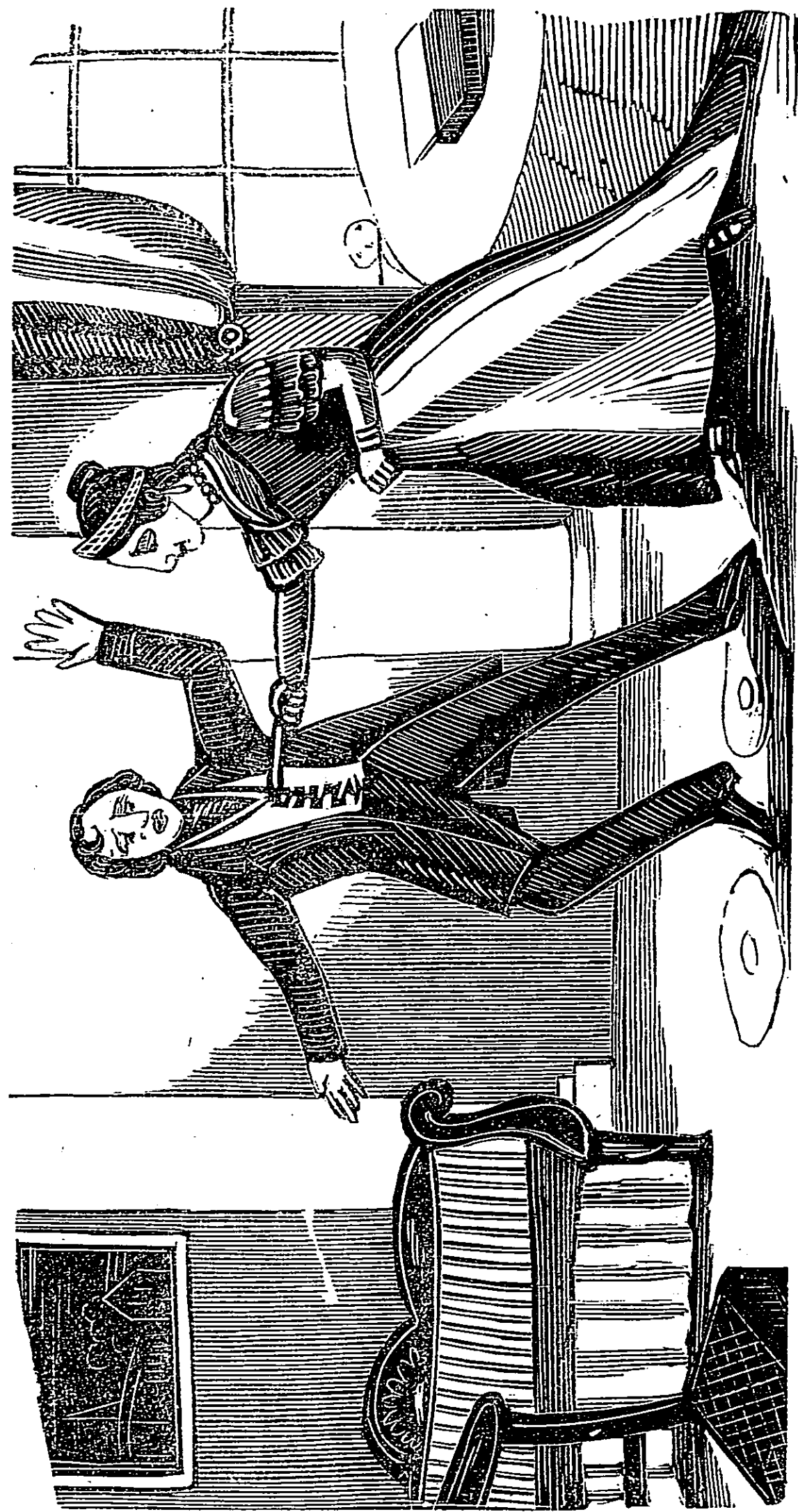
Those who have children bring them up in such a manner as may be imagined considering their itinerant life: but there are very few who have families travelling with them; though in most cases a wife; generally the children of the "cheap John" are stationary, either out at nurse or with relatives.

Some of the "cheap Johns" have wagons upon four wheels, others have carts; but both are fitted up with a wooden roof. The proprietor invariably sleeps within his portable house, both for the protection of his property and also upon the score of economy. The vans with four wheels answer all the purposes of a habitation. The furniture consists of a bed placed upon boxes, containing the stock in trade. The bed extends the whole width of the vehicle, about 6 ft. 6 in., and many generally extend about 5 ft. into the body of the van, and occupies the farthest end of the machine from the door,—which door opens out upon the horse. The four-wheeled vans are 12 ft. long, and the two-wheeled carts 9 ft. During business hours the whole of the articles most likely to be wanted are spread out upon the bed, and the assistant (either the wife or a boy) hands them out as the salesman may require them. The furniture, in addition to the bed, is very scarce; indeed they are very much averse to carry more than is really necessary. The pail, the horse takes his corn and beans from (I don't know why, but they never use nose-bags,) serves the purpose of a wash-hand basin or a washing-tub. It is generally painted the same colour as the van, with the initials of the proprietor painted upon it, and, when travelling, hangs upon a hook under the machine. They mostly begin with a two-wheeled machine, and if successful a four-wheeler follows. The tables and chairs are the tea-boxes in which the goods are packed. A tea-kettle and saucepan, and as few delf articles as possible, and corner-cupboard, and these comprise the whole of the furniture of the van.



Horrible and Bar-barious Murder of Poor

J A E L D E N N Y,  
THE ILL-FATED VICTIM OF THOMAS DRODY.

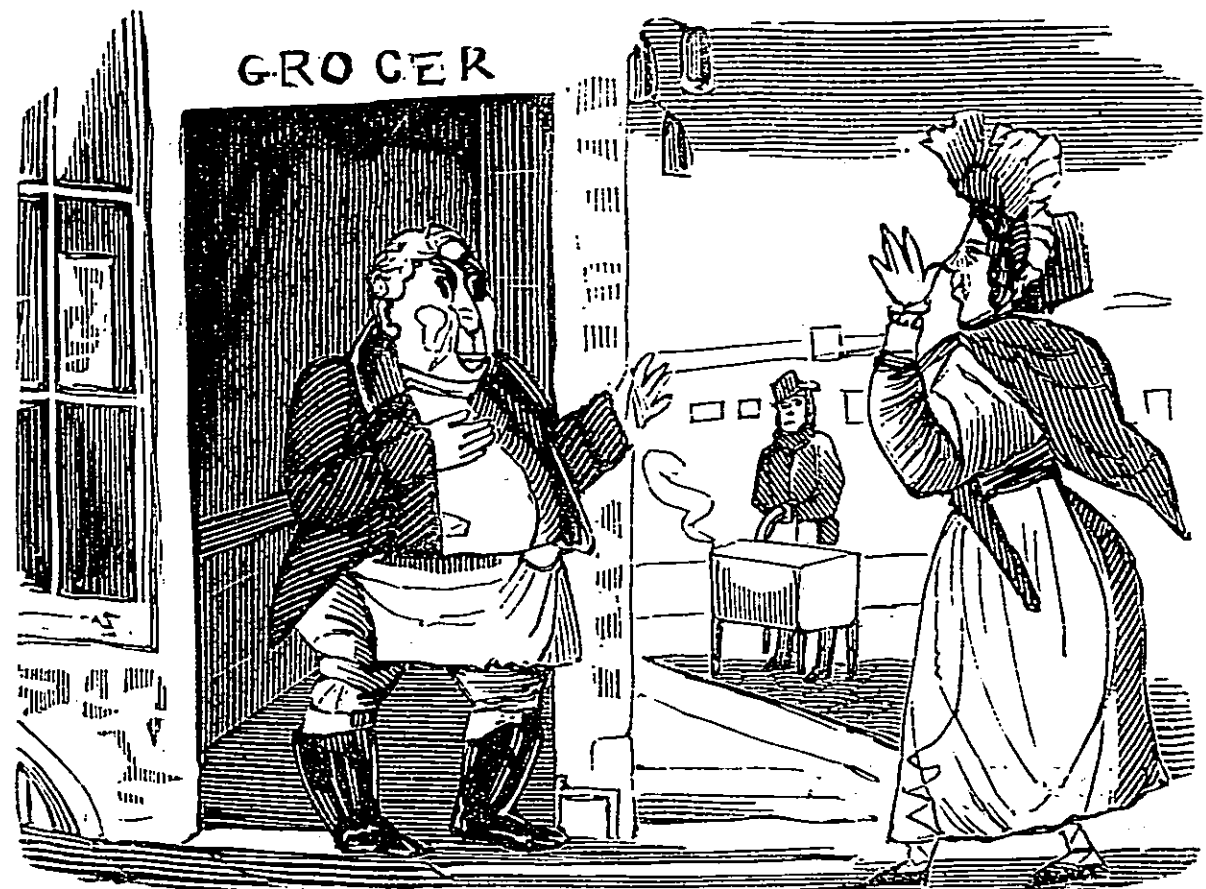


Murder of Captain Lawson.  
(A "COOK.")



MR. PATRICK CONNOR.\*

ILLUSTRATIONS TO STREET BALLADS.



THE  
AMOROUS WATERMAN  
Of St. John's Wood.

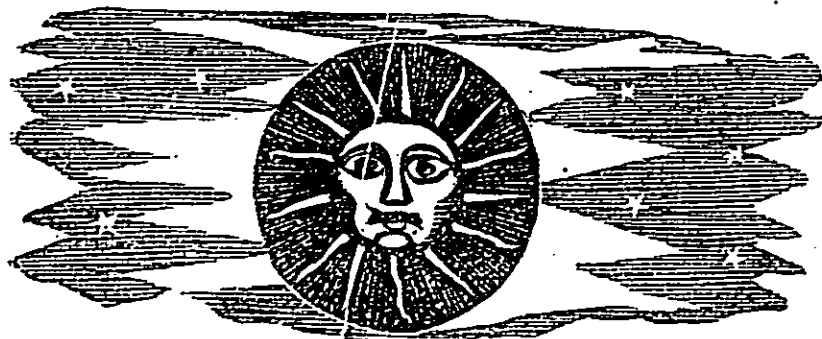
\* This is evidently a rude copy of Lawrence's picture of George the Fourth. F'



THE QUEEN'S GLORIOUS SPEECH



The Miller's Ditty.

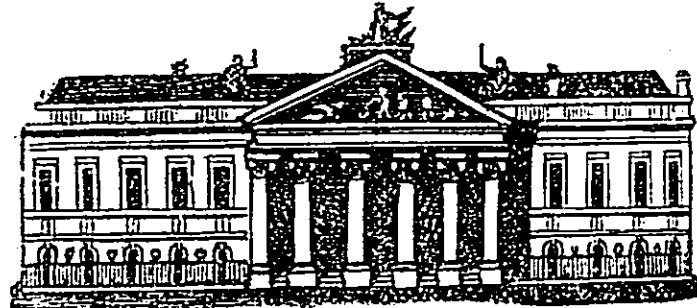


ROBIN THE BEAU.

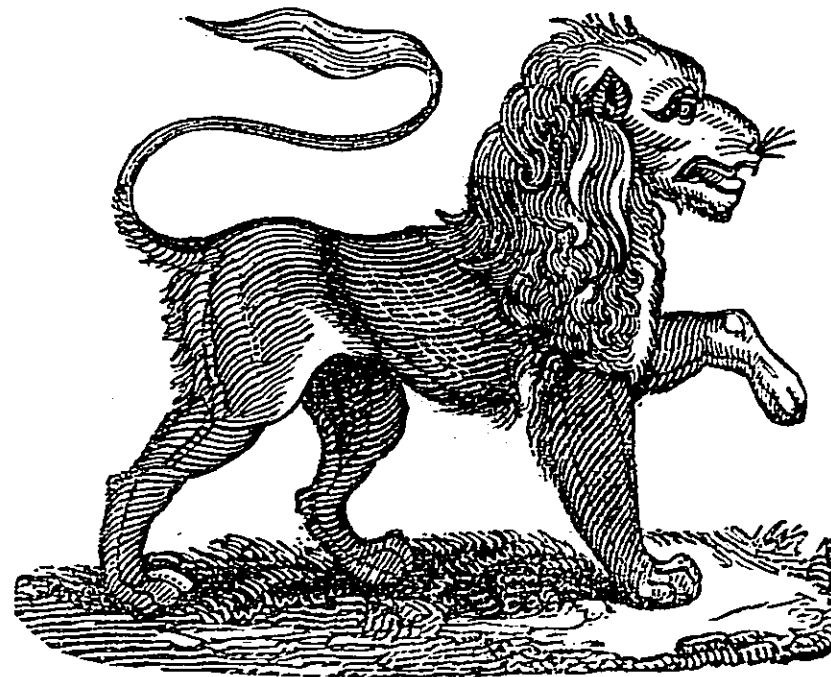
\* This originally was an illustration to "Thump'em the Drummer," in one of Fairburn's Song-books.



GENERAL HAYNAU.\*



THE POACHERS.



The Heart that can feel for Another.



Broken Hearted Gardener.

In the four-wheeled wagons there is always a fire-place similar to those the captains of ships have in their cabins, but in the two-wheeled carts fire-places are dispensed with. These are mostly brass ones, and are kept very bright; for the "cheap Johns" are proud of their van and its contents. They are always gaudily painted, sometimes expensively; indeed they are most expensive articles, and cost from 80*l.* to 120*l.* The principal person for making these machines is a Mr. Davidson of Leeds. The showman's caravans are still more expensive; the last purchased by the late Mr. Wombwell cost more than 300*l.*, and is really a curiosity. He termed it, as all showmen do—the living wagon; viz. to live in—it has parlour and kitchen, and is fitted up most handsomely; its exterior presents the appearance of a first-class railway-carriage. The front exterior of the van during the trading operations of the "cheap Johns," is hung round with guns, saws, tea-trays, bridles, whips, centre-bits, and other articles, displayed to the best advantage. The name of the proprietor is always prominently displayed along the whole side of the vehicle, added to which is a signification that he is a wholesale hardwareman, from Sheffield, Yorkshire, or Birmingham, Warwickshire, and sometimes an extra announcement.

"The original cheap John."

I do not know any class of men who are more fond of the good things of this life than "cheap John;" his dinner, during a fair, is generally eaten upon the platform outside his van, where he disposes of his wares, and invariably consists of a joint of baked meat and potatoes—that is where they can get a dinner baked. As little time as possible is occupied in eating, especially if trade is good. At a hill fair (that is where the fair is held upon a hill away from a town), a fire is made behind the cart, the pot is suspended upon three sticks, and dinner prepared in the usual camp fashion. The wife or boy superintends this. Tea and coffee also generally find their way to their table; and if there's no cold meat a plentiful supply of bacon, beef-steaks, eggs, or something in the shape of a relish, seem to be with "cheap John" indispensable. His man or boy (if John is unmarried) appears to be upon an equality with the master in the eating department; he is not allowanced, neither has he to wait until his superior has finished. Get it over as quick as you can seems to be the chief object. Perhaps from the circumstance of their selling guns, and consequently always having such implements in their possession, these men, when they have time on their hands, are fond of the sports of the field, and many a hare finds its way into the camp-kettle of "cheap John." I need not say that they practise this sport with but little respectful feeling towards the Game-laws; but they are careful when indulging in such amusement, and I never heard of one getting into a hobble.

During the winter (since the "cheap John" has been obliged to become a licensed auctioneer), some of them take shops and sell their goods by auction, or get up mock-auctions. I have been told by them that sometimes its a better game than "han-selling."

The commencement of the "cheap John's" season is at Lynn in Norfolk; there is a mart there commencing 14th February, it continues fourteen days. After this, there is Wisbeach, Spalding, Grantham, and other marts in Norfolk and Lincolnshire; which bring them up to Easter. At Easter there are many fairs—Manchester, Knott Mill, Blackburn, Darlington, Newcastle, &c., &c. The "cheap Johns" then disperse themselves through different parts of the country. Hill-fairs are considered the best; that is cattle-fairs, where there are plenty of farmers and country people. Hirings for servants are next to them. It may appear curious, but Sheffield and Birmingham fairs are two of the best for the "cheap John's" business in England. There are two fairs at each place during the year. Sheffield, at Whitsuntide and November; Birmingham, Whitsuntide and September. Nottingham, Derby, Leeds, Newcastle, Bristol, Glasgow—in fact, where the greatest population is, the chances for business are considered the best; and if I may judge from the number of traders in this line, who attend the largest towns, I should say they succeed better than in smaller towns.

If we calculate that there are 100 "cheap Johns" in London and in the country, and they are more or less itinerant, and that they each take 4*l.* per day for nine months in the year, or 24*l.* per week; this amounts to 2,400*l.* per week, or about 90,000*l.* in nine months. Supposing their profits to be 20 per cent., it would leave 18,000*l.* clear income. Say that during the winter there are seventy-five following the business, and that their receipts amount to 15*l.* each per week, this amounts to 3,500*l.* additional; and, at the rate of 20 per cent. profit, comes to 700*l.*,—making throughout the year the profits of the 100 "cheap Johns" 25,000*l.*, or 250*l.* a man.

The "cheap Johns" seldom frequent the crowded thoroughfares of London. Their usual pitches in the metropolis are, King's-cross, St. George's-in-the-East, Stepney, round about the London Docks, Paddington, Kennington, and such like places.

THE CRIPPLED STREET-SELLER OF NUT-MEG-GRATERS.

I now give an example of one of the classes driven to the streets by utter inability to labour. I have already spoken of the sterling independence of some of these men possessing the strongest claims to our sympathy and charity, and yet preferring to *sell* rather than *beg*. As I said before, many ingrained beggars certainly use the street trade as a cloak for alms-seeking, but as certainly many more, with every title to our assistance, use it as a means of redemption from

beggary. That the nutmeg-grater seller is a noble example of the latter class, I have not the least doubt. I have made all due inquiries to satisfy myself as to his worthiness, and I feel convinced that when the reader looks at the portrait here given, and observes how utterly helpless the poor fellow is, and then reads the following plain unvarnished tale, he will marvel like me, not only at the fortitude which could sustain him under all his heavy afflictions, but at the resignation (not to say philosophy) with which he bears them every one. His struggles to earn his own living (notwithstanding his physical incapacity even to put the victuals to his mouth after he has earned them), are instances of a nobility of pride that are I believe without a parallel. The poor creature's legs and arms are completely withered; indeed he is scarcely more than head and trunk. His thigh is hardly thicker than a child's wrist. His hands are bent inward from contraction of the sinews, the fingers being curled up and almost as thin as the claws of a bird's foot. He is unable even to stand, and cannot move from place to place but on his knees, which are shod with leather caps, like the heels of a clog, strapped round the joint; the soles of his boots are on the upper leathers, that being the part always turned towards the ground while he is crawling along. His countenance is rather handsome than otherwise; the intelligence indicated by his ample forehead is fully borne out by the testimony as to his sagacity in his business, and the mild expression of his eye by the statements as to his feeling for all others in affliction.

"I sell nutmeg-graters and funnels," said the cripple to me; "I sell them at 1d. and 1½d. a piece. I get mine of the man in whose house I live. He is a tinman, and makes for the street-trade and shops and all. I pay 7d. a dozen for them, and I get 12d. or 18d. a dozen, if I can when I sell them, but I mostly get only a penny a piece—it's quite a chance if I have a customer at 1½d. Some days I sell only three—some days not one—though I'm out from ten o'clock till six. The most I ever took was 3s. 6d. in a day. Some weeks I hardly clear my expenses—and they're between 7s. and 8s. a week; for not being able to dress and undress myself, I'm obliged to pay some one to do it for me—I think I don't clear more than 7s. a week take one week with another. When I don't make that much, I go without—sometimes friends who are kind to me give me a trifle, or else I should starve. As near as I can judge, I take about 15s. a week, and out of that I clear about 6s. or 7s. I pay for my meals as I have them—3d. or 4d. a meal. I pay every night for my lodging as I go in, if I can; but if not my landlady lets it run a night or two. I give her 1s. a week for my washing and looking after me, and 1s. 6d. for my lodging. When I do very well I have three meals a day, but it's oftener only two—breakfast and supper—unless of Sunday. On a wet day when I can't get out, I often go without food. I may have a bit of bread and butter give me, but that's all—then I lie a-bed.

I feel miserable enough when I see the rain come down of a week day, I can tell you. Ah, it is very miserable indeed lying in bed all day, and in a lonely room, without perhaps a person to come near one—helpless as I am—and hear the rain beat against the windows, and all that without nothing to put in your lips. I've done that over and over again where I lived before; but where I am now I'm more comfortable like. My breakfast is mostly bread and butter and tea; and my supper, bread and butter and tea with a bit of fish, or a small bit of meat. What my landlord and landlady has I share with them. I never break my fast from the time I go out in the morning till I come home—unless it is a halfpenny orange I buy in the street; I do that when I feel faint. I have only been selling in the streets since this last winter. I was in the workhouse with a fever all the summer. I was destitute afterwards, and obliged to begin selling in the streets. The Guardians gave me 5s. to get stock. I had always dealt in tin ware, so I knew where to go to buy my things. It's very hard work indeed is street-selling for such as me. I can't walk no distance. I suffer a great deal of pains in my back and knees. Sometimes I go in a barrow, when I'm travelling any great way. When I go only a short way I crawl along on my knees and toes. The most I've ever crawled is two miles. When I get home afterwards, I'm in great pain. My knees swell dreadfully, and they're all covered with blisters, and my toes ache awful. I've corns all on top of them.

"Often after I've been walking, my limbs and back ache so badly that I can get no sleep. Across my lines it feels as if I'd got some great weight, and my knees are in a heat, and throbs, and feel as if a knife was running into them. When I go up-stairs I have to crawl upon the back of my hands and my knees. I can't lift nothing to my mouth. The sinews of my hands is all contracted. I am obliged to have things held to my lips for me to drink, like a child. I can use a knife and fork by leaning my arm on the table and then stooping my head to it. I can't wash nor undress myself. Sometimes I think of my helplessness a great deal. The thoughts of it used to throw me into fits at one time—very bad. It's the Almighty's will that I am so, and I must abide by it. People says, as they passes me in the streets, 'Poor fellow, it's a shocking thing;' but very seldom they does any more than pity me; some lays out a half-penny or a penny with me, but the most of 'em goes on about their business. Persons looks at me a good bit when I go into a strange place. I do feel it very much, that I haven't the power to get my living or to do a thing for myself, but I never begged for nothing. I'd sooner starve than I'd do that. I never thought that people whom God had given the power to help themselves ought to help me. I have thought that I'm as I am—obliged to go on my hands and knees, from no fault of my own. Often I've done that, and I've over and over again laid

bed and wondered why the Almighty should send me into the world in such a state; often I've done that on a wet day, with nothing to eat, and no friend to come a-nigh me. When I've gone along the streets, too, and been in pain, I've thought, as I've seen the people pass straight up, with all the use of their limbs, and some of them the biggest blackguards, cussing and swearing, I've thought, Why should I be deprived of the use of mine? and I've felt angry like, and perhaps at that moment I couldn't bring my mind to believe the Almighty was so good and merciful as I'd heard say; but then in a minute or two afterwards I've prayed to Him to make me better and happier in the next world. I've always been led to think He's afflicted me as He has for some wise purpose or another that I can't see. I think as mine is so hard a life in this world, I shall be better off in the next. Often when I couldn't afford to pay a boy, I've not had my boots off for four or five nights and days, nor my clothes neither. Give me the world I couldn't take them off myself, and then my feet has swollen to that degree that I've been nearly mad with pain, and I've been shivering and faint, but still I was obliged to go out with my things; if I hadn't I should have starved. Such as I am can't afford to be ill—it's only rich folks as can lay up, not we; for us to take to our beds is to go without food altogether. When I was without never a boy, I used to tie the wet towel round the back of one of the chairs, and wash myself by rubbing my face up against it. I've been two days without a bit of anything passing between my lips. I couldn't go and beg for victuals—I'd rather go without. Then I used to feel faint, and my head used to ache dreadful. I used then to drink a plenty of water. The women sex is mostly more kinder to me than the men. Some of the men fancies, as I goes along, that I can walk. They often says to me, 'Why, the sole of your boot is as muddy as mine;' and one on 'em is, because I always rests myself on that foot—the other sole, you see, is as clean as when it was first made. The women never seem frightened on me. My trade is to sell brooms and brushes, and all kinds of cutlery and tin-ware. I learnt it myself. I never was brought up to nothing, because I couldn't use my hands. Mother was a cook in a nobleman's family when I were born. They say as I was a love-child. I was not brought up by mother, but by one of her fellow-servants. Mother's intellects was so weak, that she couldn't have me with her. She used to fret a great deal about me, so her fellow-servant took me when she got married. After I were born, mother married a farmer in middling circumstances. They tell me as my mother was frightened afore I was born. I never knew my father. He went over to Buonos Ayres, and kept an hotel there—I've heard mother say as much. No mother couldn't love a child more than mine did me, but her feelings was such she couldn't bear to see me. I never

went to mother's to live, but was brought up by the fellow-servant as I've told you of. Mother allowed her 30l. a-year. I was with her till two years back. She was always very kind to me—treated me like one of her own. Mother used to come and see me about once a-year—sometimes not so often: she was very kind to me then. Oh, yes; I used to like to see her very much. Whatever I wished for she'd let me have; if I wrote to her, she always sent me what I wanted. I was very comfortably then. Mother died four years ago; and when I lost her I fell into a fit—I was told of it all of a sudden. She and the party as I was brought up with was the only friends as I had in the world—the only persons as cared anything about a creature like me. I was in a fit for hours, and when I came to, I thought what would become of me: I knew I could do nothing for myself, and the only friend as I had as could keep me was gone. The person as brought me up was very good, and said, while she'd got a home I should never want; but, two years after mother's death, she was seized with the cholera, and then I hadn't a friend left in the world. When she died I felt ready to kill myself; I was all alone then, and what could I do—cripple as I was? She thought her sons and daughters as I'd been brought up with—like brothers and sisters—would look after me; but it was not in their power—they was only hard-working people. My mother used to allow so much a year for my schooling, and I can read and write pretty well." (He wrote his name in my presence kneeling at the table; holding the pen almost as one might fancy a bird would, and placing the paper sideways instead of straight before him.) "While mother was alive, I was always foraging about to learn something unbeknown to her. I wanted to do so, in case mother should leave me without the means of getting a living. I used to buy old bedsteads, and take them to a man, and get him to repair them, and then I'd put the sacking on myself; I can hold a hammer somehow in my right hand. I used to polish them on my knees. I made a bench to my height out of two old chairs. I used to know what I should get for the bedsteads, and so could tell what I could afford to give the man to do up the parts as I couldn't manage. It was so I got to learn something like a business for myself. When the person died as had brought me up, I could do a little; I had then got the means. Before her death I had opened a kind of shop for things in the general line, I sold tin-ware, and brass-work, and candlesticks, and fire-irons, and all old furniture, and gowns, prints as well. I went into the tally business, and that ruined me altogether. I couldn't get my money in; there's a good deal owing to me now. Me and a boy used to manage the whole. I used to make all my account-books and everything. My lodgers didn't pay me my rent, so I had to move from the house, and live on what stock I had. In my new lodging

I went on as well as I could for a little while; but about eighteen months ago I could hold on no longer. Then I borrowed a little, and went hawking tin-ware and brushes in the country. I sold baking-dishes, Dutch ovens, roasting-jacks, skewers and gridirons, teapots, and sauce-pans, and combs. I used to exchange sometimes for old clothes. I had a barrow and a boy with me; I used to keep him, and give him 1s. a week. I managed to get just a living that way. When the winter came on I gave it up; it was too cold. After that I was took bad with a fever; my stock had been all gone a little while before, and the boy had left because I couldn't keep him, and I had to do all for myself. All my friends was dead, and I had no one to help me, so I was obligated to lay about all night in my things, for I couldn't get them off alone; and that and want of food brought on a fever. Then I was took into the workhouse, and there I stopped all the summer, as I told you. I can't say they treated me bad, but they certainly didn't use me well. If I could have worked after I got better, I could have had tea; but 'cause I couldn't do nothing, they gave me that beastly gruel morning and night. I had meat three times a week. They would have kept me there till now, but I would die in the streets rather than be a pauper. So I told them, if they would give me the means of getting a stock, I would try and get a living for myself. After refusing many times to let me have 10s., they agreed to give me 5s. Then I came out, but I had no home, and so I crawled about till I met with the people where I am now, and they let me sit up there till I got a room of my own. Then some of my friends collected for me about 15s. altogether, and I did pretty well for a little while. I went to live close by the Blackfriars-road, but the people where I lodged treated me very bad. There was a number of girls of the town in the same street, but they was too fond of their selves and their drink to give nothing. They used to buy things of me and never pay me. They never made game of me, nor played me any tricks, and if they saw the boys doing it they would protect me. They never offered to give me no victuals; indeed, I shouldn't have liked to have eaten the food they got. After that I couldn't pay my lodgings, and the parties where I lodged turned me out, and I had to crawl about the streets for four days and nights. This was only a month back. I was fit to die with pain all that time. If I could get a penny I used to go into a coffee-shop for half-a-pint of coffee, and sit there till they drove me out, and then I'd crawl about till it was time for me to go out selling. Oh! dreadful, dreadful, it was to be all them hours—day and night—on my knees. I couldn't get along at all, I was forced to sit down every minute, and then I used to fall asleep with my things in my hand, and be woke up by the police to be pushed about and druv on by them. It seemed like as if I was walking on the bare bones of my knees. The pain in them was like the cramp,

only much worse. At last I could bear it no longer, so I went afore Mr. Secker, the magistrate, at Union Hall, and told him I was destitute, and that the parties where I had been living kept my bed and the few things I had, for 2s. 6d. rent, that I owed them. He said he couldn't believe that anybody would force me to crawl about the streets, for four days and nights, cripple as I was, for such a sum. One of the officers told him I was a honest and striving man, and the magistrate sent the officer, with the money, to get my things, but the landlady wouldn't give them till the officer compelled her, and then she chucked my bed out into the middle of the street. A neighbour took it in for me and took care of it till I found out the tinman who had before let me sit up in his house. I should have gone to him at first, but he lived farther than I could walk. I am stopping with him now, and he is very kind to me. I have still some relations living, and they are well to do, but, being a cripple, they despise me. My aunt, my mother's sister, is married to a builder, in Petersham, near Richmond, and they are rich people—having some houses of their own besides a good business. I have got a boy to wheel me down on a barrow to them, and asked assistance of them, but they will have nothing to do with me. They won't look at me for my affliction. Six months ago they gave me half-a-crown. I had no lodgings nor victuals then; and that I shouldn't have had from them had I not said I was starving and must go to the parish. This winter I went to them, and they shut the door in my face. After leaving my aunt's, I went down to Ham Common, where my father-in-law lives, and there his daughter's husband sent for a policeman to drive me away from the place. I told the husband I had no money nor food; but he advised me to go begging, and said I shouldn't have a penny of them. My father-in-law was ill up-stairs at the time, but I don't think he would have treated me a bit better—and all this they do because the Almighty has made me a cripple. I can, indeed, solemnly say, that there is nothing else against me, and that I strive hard and crawl about till my limbs ache enough to drive me mad, to get an honest livelihood. With a couple of pounds I could, I think, manage to shift very well for myself. I'd get a stock, and go into the country with a barrow, and buy old metal, and exchange tin ware for old clothes, and, with that, I'm almost sure I could get a decent living. I'm accounted a very good dealer."

In answer to my inquiries concerning the character of this man, I received the following written communication:

"I have known C—A— twelve years; the last six years he has dealt with me for tinware. I have found him honest in all his dealings with me, sober and industrious.

"C—H—, Tinmac."

From the writer of the above testimonial I

received the following account of the poor cripple:—

"He is a man of generous a disposition, and very sensitive for the afflictions of others. One day while passing down the Borough he saw a man afflicted with St. Vitus's dance shaking from head to foot, and leaning on the arm of a woman who appeared to be his wife." The cripple told my informant that he should never forget what he felt when he beheld that poor man. "I thought," he said, "what a blessing it is I am not like him." Nor is the cripple, I am told, less independent than he is generous. In all his sufferings and privations he never pleads poverty to others; but bears up under the trials of life with the greatest patience and fortitude. When in better circumstances he was more independent than at present, having since, through illness and poverty, been much humbled.

"His privations have been great," adds my informant. "Only two months back, being in a state of utter destitution and quite worn out with fatigue, he called at the house of a person (where my informant occupied a room) about ten o'clock at night, and begged them to let him rest himself for a short while, but the inhuman landlady and her son laid hold of the wretched man, the one taking him by the arms and the other by the legs, and literally hurled him into the street. The next morning," my informant continued, "I saw the poor creature leaning against a lamp-post, shivering with the cold, and my heart bled for him; and since that he has been living with me."

#### OF THE SWAG-SHOPS OF THE METROPOLIS.

By those who are not connected with the street trade, the proprietors of the swag-shops are often called "warehousemen" or "general dealers," and even "slaughterers." These descriptions apply but partially. "Warehousemen" or "general dealers" are vague terms, which I need not further notice. The wretchedly underpaid and over-worked shoe-makers, cabinet-makers and others call these places "slaughter-houses," when the establishment is in the hands of tradesmen who buy their goods of poor workmen without having given orders for them. On Saturday afternoons pale-looking men may be seen carrying a few chairs, or bending under the weight of a cheffonier or a chest of drawers, in Tottenham-court Road, and thoroughfares of a similar character in all parts. These are "small masters," who make or (as one man said to me, "No, sir, I don't make these drawers, I put them together, it can't be called making; it's not workmanship") who "put together" in the hastiest manner, and in any way not positively offensive to the eye, articles of household furniture. The "slaughterers" who supply all the goods required for the furniture of a house, buy at "starvation prices" (the common term), the artificer being often kept waiting for hours, and treated with every indignity. One East-end "slaughterer" (as I ascertained in a

former inquiry) used habitually to tell that he prayed for wet Saturday afternoons, because it put 20l. extra into his pocket! This was owing to the damage sustained in the appearance of any painted, varnished, or polished article, by exposure to the weather; or if it had been protected from the weather, by the unwillingness of the small master to carry it to another slaughter-house in the rain. Under such circumstances—and under most of the circumstances of this unhappy trade—the poor workman is at the mercy of the slaughterer.

I describe this matter more fully than I might have deemed necessary, had I not found that both the "small masters" spoken of—for I called upon some of them again—and the street-sellers, very frequently confounded the "swag-shop" and the "slaughter-house." The distinction I hold to be this:—The slaughterer buys as a rule, with hardly an exception, the furniture, or whatever it may be, made for the express purpose of being offered to him on speculation of sale. The swag shop-keeper orders his goods as a rule, and buys, as an exception, in the manner in which the slaughterer buys ordinarily. The slaughterer sells by retail; the swag-shop keeper only by wholesale.

Most of the articles, of the class of which I now treat, are "Brummagem made." An experienced tradesman said to me: "All these low-priced metal things, fancy goods and all, which you see about, are made in Birmingham; in nineteen cases out of twenty at the least. They may be marked London, or Sheffield, or Paris, or any place—you can have them marked North Pole if you will—but they're genuine Birmingham. The carriage is lower from Birmingham than from Sheffield—that's one thing."

The majority of the swag-shop proprietors are Jews. The wares which they supply to the cheap shops, the cheap John's, and the street-sellers, in town and country, consist of every variety of article, apart from what is eatable, drinkable, or wearable, in which the trade class I have specified can deal. As regards what is wearable, indeed, such things as braces, garters, &c., form a portion of the stock of the swag-shop.

In one street (a thoroughfare at the east-end of London) are twenty-three of these establishments. In the windows there is little attempt at display; the design aimed at seems to be rather to crowd the window—as if to show the amplitude of the stores within, "the wonderful resources of this most extensive and universal establishment"—than to tempt purchasers by exhibiting tastefully what may have been tastefully executed by the artificer, or what it is desired should be held to be so executed.

In one of these windows the daylight is almost precluded from the interior by what may be called a perfect wall of "pots." A street-seller who accompanied me called them merely "pots" (the trade term), but they were all poi

ornaments. Among them were great store of shepherdesses, of greyhounds of a gamboge colour, of what I heard called "figures" (allegorical nymphs with and without birds or wreaths in their hands), very tall-looking Shaksperes (I did not see one of these windows without its Shakspeare, a sitting figure), and some "pots" which seem to be either shepherds or musicians; from what I could learn, at the pleasure of the seller, the buyer, or the inquirer. The shepherd, or musician is usually seated under a tree; he wears a light blue coat, and yellow breeches, and his limbs, more than his body, are remarkable for their bulk; to call them merely fat does not sufficiently express their character, and in some "pots," they are as short and stumpy as they are bulky. On my asking if the dogs were intended for Italian greyhounds, I was told, "No, they are German." I alluded however to the species of the animal represented; my informant to the place of manufacture, for the pots were chiefly German. A number of mugs however, with the Crystal Palace very well depicted upon them, were unmistakably English. In another window of the same establishment was a conglomeration of pincushions, shaving-brushes, letter-stamps (all in bone), cribbage-boards and boxes (including a pack of cards), necklaces, and strings of beads.

The window of a neighbouring swag-shop presented, in the like crowding, and in greater confusion, an array of brooches (some in coloured glass to imitate rubies, topazes, &c., some containing portraits, deeply coloured, in purple attire, and red cheeks, and some being very large cameos), time-pieces (with and without glasses), French toys with moveable figures, telescopes, American clocks, musical boxes, shirt-studs, backgammon-boards, tea-trays (one with a nondescript bird of most gorgeous green plumage forming a sort of centrepiece), razor-strops, writing-desks, sailors' knives, hair-brushes, and tobacco-boxes.

Another window presented even a more "miscellaneous assortment;" dirks (apparently not very formidable weapons), a mess of steel pens, in brown-paper packages and cases, and of black-lead pencils, pipe-heads, cigar-cases, snuff-boxes, razors, shaving-brushes, letter-stamps, metal tea-pots, metal tea-spoons, glass globes with artificial flowers and leaves within the glass (an improvement one man thought on the old ornament of a reel in a bottle), Peel medals, Exhibition medals, roulette-boxes, scent bottles, quill pens with artificial flowers in the feathery part, fans, side-combs, glass pen-holders, and pot figures (caricatures) of Louis Philippe, carrying a very red umbrella, Marshal Haynau, with some instrument of torture in his hand, while over all boomed a huge English seaman, in yellow waistcoat and with a brick-coloured face.

Sometimes the furniture of a swag-shop window is less plentiful, but quite as heterogeneous. In one were only American clocks,

French toys (large), opera-glasses, knives and forks, and powder-flasks.

In some windows the predominant character is jewellery. Ear-drops (generally gilt), rings of all kinds, brooches of every size and shade of coloured glass, shawl-pins, shirt-studs, necklaces, bead purses, small paintings of the Crystal-palace, in "burnished 'gold' frames," watch-guards, watch-seals (each with three impressions or mottoes), watch-chains and keys, "silver" tooth-picks, medals, and snuff-boxes. It might be expected that the jewellery shops would present the most imposing display of any; they are, on the contrary, among the dingiest, as if it were not worth the trouble to put clean things in the window, but merely what sufficed to characterise the nature of the trade carried on.

Of the twenty-three swag-shops in question, five were confined to the trade in all the branches of stationery. Of these I saw one, the large window of which was perfectly packed from bottom to top with note-paper, account and copy-books, steel-pens, pencils, sealing-wax, enamelled wafers (in boxes), ink-stands, &c.

Of the other shops, two had cases of watches, with no attempt at display, or even arrangement. "Poor things," I was told by a person familiar with the trade in them, "fit only to offer to countrymen when they've been drinking at a fair, and think themselves clever."

I have so far described the exterior of these street-dealers' bazaars, the swag-shops, in what may be called their head-quarters. Upon entering some of these places of business, spacious rooms are seen to extend behind the shop or warehouse which opens to the street. Some are almost blocked up with what appears a litter of packing-cases, packages, and bales—but which are no doubt ordered systematically enough—while the shelves are crammed with goods in brown paper, or in cases or boxes. This uniformity of package, so to speak, has the effect of destroying the true character of these swag store-rooms; for they present the appearance of only three or four different kinds of merchandise being deposited on a range of shelves, when, perhaps, there are a hundred. In some of these swag-shops it appears certain, both from what fell under my own observation, and from what I learned through my inquiries of persons long familiar with such places, that the "litter" I have spoken of is disposed so as to present the appearance of an affluence of goods without the reality of possession.

In no warehouses (properly "swag" or wholesale traders) is there any arranged display of the wares vended. "Ve don't vant people here," one street-seller had often heard a swag-shopkeeper say, "as looks about them, and says, 'Ow purty!—Vot nice things!' Ve wants to sell, and not to show. Ve is all for business, and be d—d." All of these places which I saw were dark, more or less so, in the interior, as if a customer's inspection were uncared for.



THE STREET COMB SELLER.

[From a Photograph.]

Some of the swag-shop people present cards, or "circulars with prices," to their street and other customers, calling attention to the variety of their wares. These circulars are not given without inquiry, as if it were felt that one must not be wasted. On one I find the following enumeration:—

|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| One quart .....    | s. d. |
| Three pints .....  | 1 2   |
| Two quarts .....   | 1 8   |
| Three quarts ..... | 2 0   |
| Four quarts .....  | 3 0   |
| Five quarts .....  | 3 9   |
| .....              | 4 0   |

Shopkeepers and Dealers supplied with the following Articles:—

- CLOCKS—American, French, German, and English eight-day dials.
- WATCHES—Gold and Silver.
- MUSICAL BOXES—Two, Four, Six, and Eight Airs.
- WATCH-GLASSES—Common Flint, Geneva, and Lunettes.
- MAIN-SPRINGS—Blue and Straw-colour, English and Geneva.
- WATCH MATERIALS—Of every description.
- JEWELLERY—A general assortment.
- SPECTACLES—Gold, Silver, Steel, Horn, and Metal Frames, Concave, Convex, Coloured, and Smoked Eyes.
- TELESCOPES—One, two, and three draws.
- MATHEMATICAL INSTRUMENTS.
- COMBS—Side, Dressing, Curl, Pocket, Ivory, Small-Tooth, &c.
- MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS—Violins, Violincellos, Bows, &c., Flutes, Clarionets, Trombones, Ophocliedes, Cornopeans, French-Horns, Post-Horns, Trumpets, and Passes, Violin Tailboards, Pegs, and Bridges.
- ACCORDIONS—French and German of every size and style.

It must not be thought that swag-shops are mainly repositories of "fancy" articles, for such is not the case. I have described only the "windows" and outward appearances of these places—the interior being little demonstrative of the business; but the bulkier and more useful articles of swag traffic cannot be exposed in a window. In the miscellaneous (or Birmingham and Sheffield) shops, however, the useful and the "fancy" are mixed together; as is shown by the following extracts from the Circular of one of the principal swag-houses. I give each head, with an occasional statement of prices. The firm describe themselves as "Wholesale, Retail, and Export Furnishing Ironmongers, General Hardwaremen, Manufacturers of Clocks, Watches, and Steel Pens, and Importers of Toys, Beads, and other Foreign Manufactures."

*Table Cutlery.*

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Common knives and forks, per doz. ....                            | s. d. |
| Ivory-handle table knives and fork, per set of fifty-pieces ..... | 2 0   |
| Tables, per doz. ....   | 30 0  |
| Desserts, per doz. ....   | 15 0  |
| Carvers, per pair .....   | 11 3  |
| .....   | 4 0   |

*Fire-Irons.*

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Strong wrought-iron for kitchens, per set 2s. to 4s. 6d. to ..... | 6 0 |
| Ditto for parlours or libraries, bright pans, .....               | 7 0 |

*Fenders.*

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Kitchen fenders, 3 ft. long, with sliding bar ..  | 3 0 |
| Green ditto, brass tops, for bed rooms .....  | 1 8 |
| "Britannia Metal Goods" (tea-pots, &c.), "German Silver Goods" (tea-spoons, 1s. to 2s. per dozen, &c.). |     |

*Bellows.*

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Kitchen, each .....  | 10d. to 2 0    |
| Parlour ditto, brass pipes and nails .....   | 2s. 3d. to 3 0 |
| Japaned goods, brass goods, iron saucepans, oval iron pots, iron tea-kettles, &c., iron stew-pans, &c. The prices here run very systematically:— |                |

Patent enamelled saucepans, oval tin boilers, tin saucepans, tea-kettles, coffee-pots. In all these useful articles the prices range in the same way as in the iron stew-pans. Copper goods (kettles, coal-scoops, &c.), tin fish-kettles, dish-covers, rose-wood workboxes, glass, brushes (tooth, hair, clothes, scrubbing, stove, shoe, japanned hearth, banister, plate, carpet, and dandy), tools, plated goods (warranted silver edges), snuffers, beads, musical instruments (accordions from 1s. to 5s., &c.). Then come dials and clocks, combs, optics, spectacles, eye-glasses, telescopes, opera glasses, each 10d. to 10s., China ornaments, lamps, sundries (these I give verbatim, to show the nature of the trade), crimping and goffering-machines, from 14s., looking-glasses, pictures, &c., beads of every kind, watch-guards, shaving-boxes, guns, pistols, powder-flasks, belts, percussion caps, &c., corkscrews, 6d. to 2s., nut-cracks, 6d. to 1s. 6d., folding measures, each 2s. to 4s., silver spoons, haberdashery, skates per pair 2s. to 10s., carpet bags, each 3s. to 10s., egg-boilers, tapers, flat and box irons, Italian irons and heaters, earthenware jugs, metal covers, tea-pots, plaited straw baskets, sieves, wood pails, camera-obscuras, medals, amulets, perfumery and fancy soaps of all kinds, mathematical instruments, steel pens, silver and German silver patent pencil-cases and leads, snuff-boxes "in great variety," strops, ink, slates, metal eyelet-holes and machines, padlocks, braces, belts, Congreves, lucifers, fuzees, pocket-books, bill-cases, bed-keys, and a great variety of articles too numerous to mention.

Notwithstanding the specific character and arrangement of the "Circulars with prices," it is common enough for the swag-shop proprietors to intimate to any one likely to purchase that those prices are not altogether to be a guidance, as thirty-five per cent. discount is allowed on the amount of a ready-money purchase. One of the largest "swags" made such an allowance to a street-seller last week.

The swag-shops (of which I state the numbers in a parenthesis) are in Houndsditch (their principal locality) (23), Minories (4), Whitechapel (2), Ratcliffe-highway (20), Shoreditch (1), Long-lane, Smithfield (4), Fleet-lane (2), Holywell-street, Strand (1), Tothill-street (4), Compton-street, Soho (1), Hatton-garden (2), Clerkenwell (10), Kent-street, Borough (8), New-cut (6), Blackman-street (2), Tooley-street (3), London-road (3), Borough-road (1), Waterloo-road (4)—in all 101; but a person who had been upwards of twenty years a frequenter of these places counted up fifty others, many of them in obscure courts and alleys near Houndsditch, Ratcliffe Highway, &c., &c. These "outsiders" are generally of a smaller class than those I have described; "and I can tell you, sir," the same man said, "some o' them—ay, and some of the big ones,"

too—are real *swag*-shops still,—partly so, that is; you understand me, sir.” The word “*swag*,” I should inform my polite readers, means in slang language, “plunder.”

It may be safely calculated, then, that there are 150 *swag*-shops to which the different classes of street-sellers resort for the purchase of stock. Among these establishments are pot *swag*, stationery *swag*, haberdashery *swag*, jewellery *swag*, and miscellaneous *swag*—the latter comprise far more than half of the entire number, and constitute the warehouses which are described by their owners as “Birmingham and Sheffield,” or “English and Foreign,” or “English and German.” It is in these last-mentioned “*swags*” that the class I now treat of—the street-sellers of metal manufactures—find the commodities of their trade. To this, however, there is one exception. Tins for household use are not sold at the general *swag*-shops; but “fancy tins,” such as japanned and embellished trays, are vended there extensively. The street-sellers of this order are supplied at the “tin-shops,”—the number of the wholesale tinsmen supplying the street-sellers is about fifty. The principle on which the business is conducted is precisely that of the more general *swag*-shop; but I shall speak of them when I treat of the street-sellers of tins.

An intelligent man, who had been employed in different capacities in some of the principal *swag*-shops, told me of one which had been carried on by the same family, from father to son, for more than seventy years. In the largest of the “*swags*” about 200 “hands” are employed, in the various capacities of salesmen, buyers, clerks, travellers, unpackers, packers, porters, &c., &c. On some mornings twenty-five large packages—some of small articles entirely—are received from the carriers. In one week, when my informant assisted in “making up the books,” the receipts were upwards of 3000*l.* “In my opinion, sir,” he said, “and it’s from an insight into the business, Mr. —’s profit on that 3000*l.* was not less than thirty-five per cent.; for he’s a great capitalist, and pays for everything down upon the nail; that’s more than 1000*l.* profit in a week. Certainly it was an extra week, and there’s the 200 hands to pay,—but that wouldn’t range higher than 300*l.*, indeed, not so high; and there’s heavy rent and taxes, and rates, no doubt, and he (the proprietor is a Jew) is a fair man to the trade, and not an uncharitable man—but he will drive a good bargain where it’s possible; so considering everything, sir, the profits must be very great, and they are mostly made out of poor buyers, who sell it to poor people in the streets, or in small shops. It’s a wonderful trade.”

From the best information I could obtain I come to the conclusion that, including small and large shops, 3000*l.* yearly is the average receipt of each—or, as it is most frequently expressed, that sum is “turned over” by the *swag*-shop keepers yearly. There is great competition in the trade, and much of what is called “cutting,” or one tradesman underselling another. The profit consequently varies from twenty to thirty-five and

(rarely) fifty per cent. Sometimes a *swag*-shop proprietor is “hung-up” with a stock the demand for which has ceased, and he must dispose of it as “a job lot,” to make room for other goods, and thus is necessarily “out of pocket.” The smaller *swag*-shops do not “turn over” 500*l.* a year. The calculation I have given shows an outlay, yearly, of 450,000*l.* at the *swag*-shops of London; “but,” said a partner in one of these establishments, “what proportion of the goods find their way into the streets, what to the shops, what to the country, and what for shipping, I cannot form even a guess, for we never ask a customer for what purpose he wants the goods, though sometimes he will say, ‘I must have what is best for such or such a trade.’ Say half a million turned over in a year, sir, by the warehousemen who sell to the street-people, among others, and you’re within the mark.”

I found the street-sellers characterize the “*swags*” as hard and grinding men, taking every advantage “in the way of trade.” There is, too, I was told by a man lately employed in a *swag*-shop, a constant collision of clamour and bargaining, not to say of wits, between the smarter street-sellers—the pattering class especially—and the *swag*-men with whom they are familiar.

The points in which the “*swag*-shops” resemble the “slaughter-houses,” are in the traffic in work-boxes, desks, and dressing-cases.

#### OF THE LIFE OF A CHEAP-JOHN.

THE following narrative, relative to this curious class, who, in many respects, partake of the characteristics which I have pointed out as proper to the mountebank of old, was taken from one of the fraternity. It may be cited as an example of those who are bred to the streets:—“My father and mother,” said he, “both followed a travelling occupation, and were engaged in vending different things, from the old brimstone matches up to clothes lines, clothes props, and clothes pegs. They never got beyond these,—the other articles were thread, tapes, nutmeg graters, shoe-ties, stay-laces, and needles. My father, my mother used to tell me, was a great scholar, and had not always been a travelling vagrant. My mother had never known any other life. I, however, did not reap any benefit from my father’s scholarship. At a very early age, five or six perhaps, I recollect myself a poor little neglected wretch, sent out each day with a roll of matches, with strict injunctions not to come home without selling them, and to bring home a certain sum of money, upon pain of receiving a sound thrashing, which threat was mostly put into execution whenever I failed to perform the task imposed upon me. My father seldom worked, that is, seldom hawked, but my mother, poor thing, had to travel and work very hard to support four of us—my father, myself, and a sister, who is since dead. I was but little assistance, and sometimes when I did not bring home the sum required, she would make it up, and tell my father I had been a good boy. My father was an inveterate drinker, and a very violent temper. My mother, I am sorry to

say, used to drink too, but I believe that ill-usage drove her to it. They led a dreadful life; I scarcely felt any attachment for them; home we had none, one place was as good another to us. I left my parents when scarcely eight years old. I had received a thrashing the day before for being a defaulter in my sale, and I determined the following morning to decamp; and accordingly, with my nine-pennyworth of matches (the quantity generally allotted me), I set out to begin the world upon my own account. Although this occurred 25 years ago, I have never met my parents since. My father, I heard, died a few years after my leaving, but my mother I know not whether she be living or dead. I left my parents at Dover, and journeyed on to London. I knew there were lodging-houses for travellers in every town, some of them I had stopped at with my father and mother. I told the people of these houses that my parents would arrive the following day, and paid my 2*d.* for the share of a third, fourth, fifth, or even sixth part of a bed, according to the number of children who inhabited the lodging-house upon that particular night. My matches I could always sell if I tried, but I used to play my time away, and many times night has arrived before I thought of effecting sales sufficient to pay my expenses at the beggar’s hotel. Broken victuals I got in abundance, indeed more than sufficient for my own consumption. The money I received for the matches, after paying my lodging, and purchasing a pennyworth of brimstone to make more (the wood I begged at the carpenters), I gambled away at cards. Yes, young as I was, I understood Blind Hookey. I invariably lost; of course I was cheated.

“I remained in a lodging house in Mill-lane, Deptford, for two years, discontinued the match-selling, and, having a tidy voice, took to hawking songs through the public-houses. The sailors used to ask me to sing, and there were few days that I did not accumulate 2*s.* 6*d.*, and from that to 4*s.*, especially when I chose to be industrious; but my love of pitch and toss and blind hookey always kept me poor. I often got into debt with my landlady, and had no difficulty in doing so, for I always felt a pride in paying. From selling the printed songs, I imbibed a wish to learn to read, and, with the assistance of an old soldier, I soon acquired sufficient knowledge to make out the names of each song, and shortly afterwards I could study a song and learn the words without any one helping me. I stopped in Deptford until I was something more than twelve years old. I had then laid the songs aside, and taken to hawking small wares, tapes, thread, &c.; and in the winter season I was a buyer of rabbit and hare skins. I kept at this for about three years, sometimes entirely without a stock. I had run it out, perhaps gambled it away; and at such times I suffered great privations. I never could beg. I have often tried, but never could. I have approached a house with a begging intention, knocked at the door, and when it has been opened I have requested a drink of water. When I was about 16 I joined in partnership with

a man who used to make phosphorus boxes. I sold them for him. A piece of phosphorus was stuck in a tin tube, the match was dipped into the phosphorus, and it would ignite by friction. I was hawking these boxes in Norwich, when the constable considered they were dreadful affairs, and calculated to encourage and assist thieves and burglars. He took me before the magistrate, at the beak’s own private house, and he being equally horrified, I was sent to prison for a month. I have often thought since that the proceeding was illegal. What would be said now if a man was to be sent to jail for selling lucifer matches? In Norwich prison I associated with the rest, and if I had been inclined to turn thief I had plenty of opportunities and offers of gratuitous instruction. The separate or silent system was not in vogue then. I worked on the treadmill. Dinner was allowed to be sent in on the Sunday by the prisoner’s friends. My dinner was sent in on the first Sunday by the man I sold the boxes for, as it was on the second, third, and fourth; but I had lost it before I received it. I had always gambled it away, for there were plenty of opportunities of doing so in the prisons then. On leaving the jail I received 1*s.*; with this I purchased some songs and travelled to Yarmouth. I could do best among sailors. After a few weeks I had accumulated about 8*s.*, and with that sum I purchased some hardware at the *swag*-shop, commenced hawking, and cut the vocal department altogether; still I gambled and kept myself in poverty. In the course of time, however, I had amassed a basket of goods, worth, perhaps, 3*l.* I gambled and lost them all in one night. I was so downcast and unhappy from this circumstance, that it caused me to reflect seriously, and I made an oath that I never would gamble again. I have kept it, and have reason to bless the day that I made so good a resolution. After losing my basket of goods, the winner gave me articles amounting to a few shillings, and I began the world once more. Shortly afterwards I commenced rag gatherer, and changed my goods for old rags, of course not refusing cash in payment. My next step was to have some bills printed, whereon I requested all thrifty wives to look out their old rags or old metal, or old bones, &c.; stating at the bottom that the bill would be called for, and that a good price in ready money would be given for all useless lumber, &c. Some months at this business realized me a pretty sum of money. I was in possession of nearly 5*l.* Then I discontinued the rag-gathering; not that the trade was declining, but I did not like it—I was ambitious. I purchased a neat box, and started to sell a little Birmingham jewellery. I was now respectably dressed, was getting a living, and had entirely left off stopping at common lodging-houses; but I confined my visits to small villages—I was afraid of the law; and as I was pursuing my calling near Wakefield, a constable inquired for my hawker’s licence. I had none to produce. He took me into custody, and introduced me to a magistrate, who committed me to prison for a

month, and took away my box of goods. I endured the month's imprisonment upon the silent system; they cut my hair short; and at the expiration of the term I was thrust out upon the world heart-broken, without a shilling, to beg, to steal, or to starve.

"I proceeded to Leeds, the fair was on at this time. I got engaged to assist a person, from whom I had been accustomed occasionally to purchase goods. He was a 'Cheap-John.' In the course of the day he suggested that I should have a try at the hand-selling. I mounted the platform, and succeeded beyond my own expectations or that of my master. He offered me a regular engagement, which I accepted. At times I would help him sell, and at other times I hawked with his licence. I had regular wages, besides all I could get above a certain price that he placed upon each of the goods. I remained with this person some fifteen months, at the end of which period I commenced for myself, having saved nearly 25*l.* I began at once the hand-selling, and purchased a hawker's licence, which enabled me to sell without danger. Then I always called at the constable's house, and gave a louder knock at his door than any other person's, proud of my authority, and assured of my safety. At first I borrowed an empty cart, in which I stood and sold my wares. I could chaff as well as the best, and was as good a salesman as most of them. After that I purchased a second-hand cart from a person who had lately started a waggon. I progressed and improved in circumstances, and at last bought a very handsome waggon for myself. I have now a nice caravan, and good stock of goods, worth at least 500*l.* Money I have but little. I always invest it in goods. I am married, and have got a family. I always travel in the summer, but remain at home during the winter. My wife never travels. She remains behind, and manages a little swag-shop, which always turns in at least the family expenses."

#### THE STREET-SELLERS OF CUTLERY.

THE cutlery sold in the streets of London consists of razors, pen-knives, pocket-knives, table and carving-knives and forks, scissors, shears, nail-files, and occasionally (if ordered) lancets. The knives are of various kinds—such as sailors' knives (with a hole through the handle), butchers' knives, together with choppers and steels (sold principally at Newgate and Billingsgate Markets, and round about the docks), oyster and fish-knives (sold principally at Billingsgate and Hungerford Markets), bread-knives (hawked at the bakers' shops), ham and beef knives (hawked at the ham and beef shops), cheese-knives with tasters, and ham-triers, shoemakers' knives, and a variety of others. These articles are usually purchased at the "swag-shops," and the prices of them vary from 2½*d.* to 1*s.* 1½*d.* each. They are bought either by the dozen, half-dozen, or singly, according to the extent of the street-seller's stock-money. Hence it would appear that the street-seller of cutlery can begin business with only a few pence; but it is only when the swag-shop keeper

has known the street-seller that he will consent to sell one knife alone "to sell again;" to street-sellers with whom he is unacquainted, he will not vend less than half-a-dozen. Even where the street-seller is known, he has, if "cracked-up," to beg hard, I am told, before he can induce the warehouseman to let him have only one article. "The swag-shops won't be bothered with it," say the men—"what are our troubles to them? if the rain starves us out and makes us eat up all our stock-money, what is it to such folks? they wouldn't let us have even a row of pins without the money for 'em—no, not if we was to drop down dead for want of bread in their shops. They have been deceived by such a many that now they won't listen to none." I subjoin a list of the prices paid and received by the street-sellers of cutlery for the principal articles in which they deal:

|                          | Lowest price paid per half-dozen. | Sold at in streets. | Highest price paid per half-dozen. | Sold at in streets. |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Table-knives and forks.. | s. d. 1 3                         | s. d. 2 0           | s. d. 5 0                          | s. d. 7 6           |
| Ditto, without forks     | 0 9                               | 1 3                 | 4 0                                | 6 0                 |
| Pocket-knives .....      | 1 0                               | 1 6                 | 4 0                                | 6 0                 |
| Pen-knives.....          | 1 9                               | 2 6                 | 5 6                                | 3 9                 |
| Razors.....              | 1 9                               | 2 6                 | 5 0                                | 7 6                 |
| Scissors .....           | 0 3½                              | 0 6                 | 1 9                                | 2 6                 |

Their usual rate of profit is 50 per cent., but rather than refuse a ready sale the street cutlery-seller will often take much less. Many of the sellers only pursue the trade for a few weeks in the year. A number of the Irish labourers take to it in the winter-time when they can get no work. Some few of the sellers are countrymen, but these mostly follow the business continuously. "I don't see as there is hardly one upon the list as has ever been a cutler by trade," said one street-seller to me, "and certainly none of the cutlery-sellers have ever belonged to Sheffield—they may say so, but it is only a dodge." The cutlery street-sellers are not one-quarter so numerous as they were two years back. "The reason is," I am told, "that things are got so bad a man can't live by the trade—mayhap he has to walk three miles now before he can sell for 1*s.* a knife that has cost him 8½*d.*, and then mayhap he is faint, and what's 3½*d.*, sir, to keep body and soul together, when a man most likely has had no victuals all the day before." If they had a good bit of stock they might perhaps get a crust, they say. "Things within the last two or three years," I quote the words of one of my informants, "have been getting much worse in the streets; specially in the cutlery line. I can't give no account for it, I'm sure, sir; the sellers have not been half as many as they were. What's become of them that's gone, I can't tell; they're in the work-house, I dare say." But, notwithstanding this decrease in the number of sellers, there is a greater difficulty to vend their goods now than formerly. "It's all owing to the times, that's all I can say. People, shopkeepers, and all says to me, I can't tell why things is so bad, and has been so bad in

trade; but so they is. We has to walk farther to sell our goods, and people beat us down so terrible hard, that we can't get a penny out of them when we do sell. Sometimes they offers me 9*d.*, yes, and often 6*d.* for an 8½*d.* knife; and often enough 4*d.* for one that stands you in 3½*d.*—a ½*d.* profit, think of that, sir. Then they say, 'Well, my man, will you take my money?' and so as to make you do so, they'll flash it before your eyes, as if they knew you was a starving, and would be sure to be took in by the sight of it. Yes, sir, it is a very hard life, and we has to put up with a good deal—a good deal—starvation and hard-dealing, and insults and knockings about, and all. And then you see the swag-shops is almost as hard on us as the buyers. The swag-men will say, if you merely makes a remark, that a knife they've sold you is cracked in the handle, 'Oh, is it; let me see whereabouts;' and when you hands it to 'em to show it 'em, they'll put it back where they took it from, and tell you, 'You're too particular by half, my man. You'd better go and get your goods somewhere else; here take your money, and go on about your business, for we won't sarve you at all.' They'll do just the same with the scissors too, if you complains about their being a bit rusty. 'Go somewhere else,' they'll say, 'We won't sarve you.' Ah, sir, that's what it is to be a poor man; to have your poverty flung in your teeth every minute. People says, 'to be poor and seem poor is the devil;' but to be poor, and be treated like a dog merely because you are poor, surely is ten thousand times worse. A street-seller now-a-days is looked upon as a 'cadger,' and treated as one. To try to get a living for one's self is to do something shameful in these times."

The man then gave me the following history of himself. He was a kindly-looking and hearty old man. He had on a ragged fustian jacket, over which he wore a black greasy-looking and tattered oilskin coat—the collar of this was torn away, and the green baize lining alone visible. His waist-coat was patched in every direction, while his trousers appeared to be of corduroy; but the grease and mud was so thick upon them, that it was difficult to tell of what material they were made. His shoes—or rather what remained of them—were tied on his feet with pieces of string. His appearance altogether denoted great poverty.

"My father was a farmer, sir. He had two farms, about 800 acres in all. I was one of eleven (ten sons and one daughter). Seven years before my father's death he left his farm, and went to live on his money. He had made a good bit at farming; but when he died it was all gone, and we was left to shift as we could. I had little or no education. My brothers could read and write, but I didn't take to it; I went a bird's-nesting, boy-like, instead, so that what little I did learn I have forgot. I am very sorry for that now. I used to drive the plough, and go a harrowing for father. I was brought up to nothing else. When father died, I thought as I should like to see London. I was a mere lad—about 20—and so I strolled up to town. I had 10*s.*

with me, and that, with a bundle, was all that I possessed in the world. When I got to London I went to lodge at a public-house—the Red Lion—in Great Wild-street; and while I was there I sought about for work, but could not get any; when all was gone, I was turned out into the streets, and walked about for two days and two nights, without a bed, or a bit to eat, unless what I picked out of the gutter, and eat like a dog—orange-peel and old cabbage-stumps, indeed anything I could find. When I was very hard put to it, I was coming down Drury-lane, and I looked in, quite casual like, to ask for a job of work at the shop of Mr. Bolton, the needle-maker from Redditch. I told him as how I was nigh starving, and would do anything to get a crust; I didn't mind what I put my hand to. He said he would try me, and gave me two packets of needles to sell—they was the goolden-eyed ones of that time of day—and he said when I had got rid of them I was to come back to him, and I should have two packets more. He told me the price to ask—sixpence a paper—and away I went like a sand-boy, and got rid of the two in an hour and a half. Then I went back, and when I told him what I'd done, he shook hands with me, and said, as he burst out laughing, "Now, you see I've made a man of you." Oh, he was an uncommon nice gentleman! Then he told me to keep the shilling I had taken, and said he would trust me with two more packets. I sold them, and two others besides, that day. Then, he says, 'I shall give you something else, and he let me have two packets of tailors' needles and half a dozen of tailors' thimbles. He told me how to sell them, and where to go, and on them I did better. I went round to the tailors' shops and sold a good lot, but at last they stopped me, because I was taking the bread out of the mouths of the poor blind needle-sellers what supplies the journeymen tailors at the West-end. Then Mr. Bolton sent me down to one of his relations, a Mr. Crooks, in Fetter Lane, who was a Sheffield man, and sold cutlery to the hawkers; and Mr. Crooks and Mr. Bolton sot me up between them, and so I've followed the line ever since. I dare say I shall continue in it to my dying day. After I got fairly set agoing, I used to make—take good and bad, wet and dry days together—18*s.* a week; three shillings a day was what I calculated on at the least, and to do that I was obligated to take between 2*l.* and 3*l.* a week, or about eight or nine shillings each day. I went on doing this for upwards of thirty year. I have been nearly forty years, altogether, in the streets, selling cutlery. I did very tidy till about 4 years back—I generally made from 18*s.* to 1*l.* a week up to that time. I used to go round the country—to Margate, Brighton, Portsmouth—I mostly travelled by the coast, calling at all the sea-port towns, for I always did best among the sailors. I went away every Spring time, and came to London again at the fall of the year. Sixteen year ago, I married the widow of a printer—a pressman—she had no money, but you see I had no home, and I thought I should be more comfortable, and so

I have been—a great deal more comfortable—and so I should be now, if things hadn't got so bad. Four year ago, as I was a telling you, it was just after the railways had knocked off work, things began to get uncommon bad—before then, I had as good as 30s. or 40s. stock, and when things got slack, it went away, little by little. I couldn't make profit enough to support me and my old woman—she has got the rheumatics and can't earn me a halfpenny or a farden in the world; she hasn't done so for years. When I didn't make enough to live upon, of course I was obliged to break into my stock; so there it kept going shilling by shilling, and sixpence by sixpence, until I had got nothing left to work upon—not a halfpenny. You see, four or five months ago, I was took very bad with the rheumatic fever and gout. I got wet through in the streets, and my clothes dried on me, and the next day I was taken bad with pains in my limbs, and then everything that would fetch me a penny went to the pawn-shop; all my own and my old woman's clothes went to get us food—blankets, sheets and all. I never would go nigh the parish; I couldn't bring myself to have the talk about it. When I got well and out into the streets again, I borrowed 2s. or 3s. of my landlady—I have lived with her these three years—to get my stock again, but you see that got me so few things, that I couldn't fetch myself up. I lost the greater portion of my time in going backards and forrards to the shop to get fresh goods as fast as I sold them, and so what I took wasn't enough to earn the commonest living for me and my missus. Since December we have been nearly starving, and that's as true as you have got the pen in your very hand. Sunday after Sunday we have been without a bit of dinner, and I have laid a-bed all day because we have had no coal, and then been obliged to go out on Monday morning without a bit of victuals between my lips. I've been so faint I couldn't hardly walk. I've picked the crusts off the tables of the tap-rooms where I have been to hawk my goods, and put them in my pocket to eat them on the sly. Wet and dry I'm obliged to be out; let it come down ever so hard I must be in it, with scarcely a bit of shoe, and turned 60 years old, as I am. Look here, sir," he said, holding up his foot; "look at these shoes, the soles is all loose, you see, and let water. On wet days I hawk my goods to respectable shops; tap-rooms is no good, decent people merely get insulted there. But in most of the shops as I goes to people tells me, 'My good man it is as much as we can do to keep ourselves and our family in these cutting times.' Now, just to show you what I done last week. Sunday, I laid a-bed all day and had no dinner. Monday, I went out in the morning without a morsel between my lips, and with only 8½d. for stock-money; with that I bought a knife and sold it for a shilling, and then I got another and another after that, and that was my day's work—three times 3½d. or 10½d. in all, to keep the two of us. Tuesday, I sold a pair of small scissors and two little pearl-handled knives,

at 6d. each article, and cleared 10½d. on the whole, and that is all I did. Wednesday, I sold a razor-strop for 6d., a four-bladed knife for a shilling, and a small hone for 6d.; by these I cleared 10d. altogether. Thursday, I sold a pair of razors for a shilling, clearing by the whole 11½d. Friday, I got rid of a pair of razors for 1s. 9d., and got 9d. clear." I added up the week's profits and found they amounted to 4s. 3½d. "That's about right," said the man, "out of that I shall have to pay 1s. for my week's rent; we've got a kitchen, so that I leave you to judge how we two can live out of what's remaining." I told him it wouldn't average quite 6d. a day. "That's about it," he replied, "we have half a loaf of bread a day, and that thank God is only five farthings now. This lasts us the day, with two-penny-worth of bits of meat that my old woman buys at a ham-shop, where they pare the hams and puts the parings by on plates to sell to poor people; and when she can't get that, she buys half a sheep's head, one that's three or four days old, for then they sells 'em to the poor for 1½d. the half; and these with ¾d. worth of tea, and ½d. worth of sugar, ¼d. for a candle, 1d. of coal—that's seven pounds—and ¾d. worth of coke—that's half a peck—makes up all we gets." These items amount to 6½d. in all. "That's how we do when we can't get it, and when we can't, why we lays in bed and goes without altogether."

#### OF THE BLIND STREET-SELLERS OF TAILORS' NEEDLES, ETC.

It is customary with many trades, for the journeymen to buy such articles as they require in their business of those members of their craft who have become incapacitated for work, either by old age, or by some affliction. The tailors—the shoemakers—the carpenters—and many others do this. These sellers are, perhaps, the most exemplary instances of men driven to the streets, or hawkking for a means of living; and they, one and all, are distinguished by that horror of the workhouse which I have before spoken of as constituting a peculiar feature in the operative's character. At present I purpose treating of the street-sellers of needles and "trimmings" to the tailors.

There are, I am informed, two dozen "broken-down" journeymen tailors pursuing this avocation in and around London. "There may be more," said one who had lost his sight stitching, "but I get my information from the needle warehouse, where we all buy our goods; and the lady there told me she knew as many as twenty-four hawkers who were once tailors. These are all either decayed journeymen, or their widows. Some are vicapitated by age, being between sixty and seventy years old; the greater part of the aged journeymen, however, are inmates of the tailors' almshouses. I am not aware," said my informant, "of there being more than one very old man hawkking needles to the tailors, though there may be many that I know nothing about. The one I am acquainted with is close upon eighty, and he is a very respectable man, much esteemed in St.

James's and St. George's; he sells needles, and 'London Labour and the London Poor' to the journeymen: he is very feeble indeed, and can scarcely get along." Of the two dozen needle-sellers above mentioned, there are only six who confine their "rounds" solely to the metropolis. Out of these six my informant knew two who were blind beside himself (one of these sells to the journeymen in the city). There are other blind tailors who were formerly hawkers of needles, but being unable to realize a subsistence thereby, have been obliged to become inmates of the workhouses; others have recently gained admission into the almshouses. Last February, I am assured, there were two blind needle-sellers, and two decrepit, in St. James's workhouse. There are, moreover, two widows selling tailors' needles in London. One of these, I am told, is wretchedly poor, being "eat up with the rheumatics, and scarcely able to move"—she is the relict of a blind journeyman, and well known in St. James's. The other widow is now in St. Pancras Workhouse, having been unable, to use the words of my informant, "to get anything to keep life and soul together at the needle trade;" she, too, I am told, is well known to the journeymen. The tailors' needle-sellers confining themselves more particularly to London consist of, at present, one old man, three blind, one paralyzed, and one widow; besides these, there are now in the almshouses, two decrepit and one paralyzed; and one widow in the workhouse, all of whom, till recently, were needle-sellers, and originally connected with the trade.

"That is all that I believe are now in London," said one to me, "I should, I think, know if there were more; for it is not from one place we get our articles, but many; and there I hear that six is about the number of tailors' hawkers in town; the rest of the two dozen hawkers that I spoke of go a little way out into the suburbs. The six, however, stick to London altogether." The needle-sellers who go into the country, I am told, travel as far as Reading, westward, and to Gravesend, in the opposite direction, or Brentwood, in Essex, and they will keep going backards and forrards to the metropolis immediately their stock is exhausted. These persons sell not only tailors' needles, but women's needles as well, and staylaces and cottons, and small ware in general, which they get from Shepherd's, in Compton Street; they have all been tailors, and are incapacitated from labour, either by old age or some affliction. There was one widow of a tailor among the number, but it is believed she is now either too old to continue her journeys, or else that she is deceased. The town-sellers confine their peregrinations mostly to the parishes of St. James's and St. George's (my informant was not aware that any went even into Marylebone). One travels the City, while the other five keep to the West End; they all sell thimbles, needles, inch-measures, bodkins, inch sticks, scissors ("when they can get them," I was told, "and that's very seldom"), and bees'-wax, basting cotton, and, many of them, publications. The publications vended by these men are princi-

pally the cheap periodicals of the day, and two of these street-sellers, I am informed, do much better with the sale of publications than by the "trimmings." "They get money, sir," said one man to me, "while we are starving. They have their set customers and have only to go round and leave the paper, and then to get their money on the Monday morning."

The tailors' hawkers buy their trimmings mostly at the retail shops. They have not stock-money sufficient, I am assured, to purchase at the wholesale houses, for "such a thing as a paper of needles large tradesmen don't care about of selling us poor men." They tell me that if they could buy wholesale they could get their goods one-fourth cheaper, and to be "obligated" to purchase retail is a great drawback on their profits. They call at the principal tailors' workshops, and solicit custom of the journeymen; they are almost all known to the trade, both masters and men, and, having no other means of living, they are allowed to enter the masters' shops, though some of the masters, such as Allen, in Bond-street; Curlewis, Jarvis, and Jones, in Conduit-street, and others, refuse the poor fellows even this small privilege. The journeymen treat them very kindly, the needle-sellers tell me, and generally give them part of the provisions they have brought with them to the shop. If it was not for this the needle-sellers, I am assured, could hardly live at all. "There's that boy there," said a blind tailor, speaking of the youth who had led him to my house, and who sat on the stool fast asleep by the fire,—"I'm sure he must have starved this winter if it hadn't been for the goodness of the men to us, for it's little that me and his mother has to give him; she's gone almost as blind as myself working at the 'sank work' (making up soldiers' clothing). Oh, ours is a miserable life, sir!—worn out—blind with over work, and scarcely a hole to put one's head in, or a bit to put in one's mouth. God Almighty knows that's the bare truth, sir." Sometimes the hawkers go on their rounds and take only 2d., but that is not often; sometimes they take 5s. in a day, and "that is the greatest sum," said my informant, "I ever took; what others might do I can't say, but that I'm confident is about the highest takings." In the summer three months the average takings rise to 4s. per day; but in the winter they fall to 1s., or at the outside 1s. 6d. The business lasts only for three hours and a half each day, that is from eight till half-past eleven in the morning; after that no good is to be done. Then the needle-sellers, I am told, go home, and the reason of this is, I am told, if they appear in the public streets selling or soliciting alms, the blind are exempted from becoming recipients of the benefits of many of the charitable institutions. The blind man whom I saw, told me that after he had done work and returned home, he occupied himself with pressing the seams of the soldiers' clothes when his "missus" had sewed them. The tailors' needle-sellers are all married, and one of the wives has a mangle; and "perhaps," said my informant, "the blind

husband turns the mangle when he goes home, but I can't say." Another wife is a bookfolder, but she has no work. The needles they usually sell five a penny to the journeymen, but the most of the journeymen will take but four; they say "we can't get a living at all if we sell the needles cheaper. The journeymen are mostly very considerate—very indeed; much more than the masters; for the masters won't hardly look at us. I don't know that a master ever gave me a farden—and yet there's some of them very soothing and kind in speaking." The profit in the needles, I am told, is rather more than 100 per cent.; "but," say the sellers, "only think, sir, we must get rid of 150 needles even to take 3s. The most we ever sell in one shop is 6d. worth—and the usual amount is 2d. worth. You can easy tell how many shops we must travel round to, in order to get rid of 3s. worth." Take one shop with another, the good with the bad, they tell me they make about 1d. profit from each they visit. The profit on the rest of the articles they vend is about 20 per cent., and they calculate that all the year round, summer and winter, they may be said to take 2s. a day, or 12s. a week; out of which they clear from 5s. to 5s. 6d. They sell far more needles than anything else. Some of the blind needle-sellers make their own bees'-wax into "shapes," (pennyworths) themselves, melting into and pouring into small moulds.

The blind needle-seller whom I saw was a respectable-looking man, with the same delicacy of hand as is peculiar to tailors, and which forms so marked a contrast to the horny palms of other workmen. He was tall and thin, and had that upward look remarkable in all blind men. His eyes gave no signs of blindness (the pupils being full and black), except that they appeared to be directed to no one object, and though fixed, were so without the least expression of observation. His long black surtout, though faded in colour, was far from ragged, having been patched and stitched in many places, while his cloth waistcoat and trousers were clean and neat—very different from the garments of street-sellers in general. In his hand he carried his stick, which, as he sat, he seemed afraid to part with, for he held it fast between his knees. He came to me accompanied by his son, a good-looking rough-headed lad, habited in a washed-out-blue French kind of pinafore, and whose duty it was to lead his blind father about on his rounds. Though the boy was decently clad, still his clothes, like those of his father, bore many traces of that respectable kind of poverty which seeks by continuous mending to hide its rags from the world. The face of the father, too, was pinched, while there was a plaintiveness about his voice that told of a wretched spirit-broken and afflicted man. Altogether he was one of the better kind of handicraftsmen—one of those fine specimens of the operatives of this country—independent even in their helplessness, scorning to beg, and proud to be able to give some little equivalent for the money bestowed on them. I have already given accounts of the "beaten-out" mechanic from those

who certainly cannot be accused of an excess of sympathy for the poor—namely the Poor Law Commissioners and masters of workhouses; and I can only add, that all my experience goes fully to bear out the justice of these statements. As I said before, the class who are *driven* to the streets to which the beaten-out or incapacitated operative belongs, is, of all others, the most deserving of our sympathy; and the following biography of one of this order is given to teach us to look with a kindly eye upon the many who are forced to become street-sellers as the sole means of saving themselves from the degradation of pauperism or beggary.

"I am 45 years of age next June," said the blind tailor. "It is upwards of 30 years since I first went to work at the tailoring trade in London. I learnt my business under one of the old hands at Mr. Cook's, in Poland-street, and after that went to work at Guthrie's, in Bond-street. I belonged to the Society held at the Old White Hart. I continued working for the honourable trade and belonging to Society for about 15 years. My weekly earnings then averaged 1l. 16s. a week while I was at work, and for several years I was seldom out of work, for when I got into a shop it was a long time before I got out again. I was not married then. I lived in a first-floor back room, well-furnished, and could do very comfortably indeed. I saved often my 15s. or 16s. in a week, and was worth a good bit of money up to the time of my first illness. At one period I had nearly 50l. by me, and had it not been for "vacations" and "slack seasons" I should have put by more; but you see to be out of work even a few weeks makes a large hole in a journeyman's savings. All this time I subscribed regularly to Society, and knew that if I got superannuated I should be comfortably maintained by the trade. I felt quite happy with the consciousness of being provided for in my old age or affliction then, and if it had not been for that perhaps I might have saved more even than I did. I went on in this way, as I said before, for 15 years, and no one could have been happier than I was—not a working man in all England couldn't. I had my silver watch and chain. I could lay out my trifle every week in a few books, and used to have a trip now and then up and down the river, just to blow the London smoke off, you know. About 15 years ago my eyes began to fail me without any pain at all; they got to have as it were a thick mist, like smoke, before them. I couldn't see anything clear. Working by gas-light at first weakened and at last destroyed the nerve altogether. I'm now in total darkness. I can only tell when the gas is lighted by the heat of it.

"It is not the black clothes that is trying to the sight—black is the steadiest of all colours to work at; white and all bright colours makes the eyes water after looking at 'em for any long time; but of all colours scarlet, such as is used for regimentals, is the most blinding, it seems to burn the eye-balls, and makes them ache dreadful. After working at red there's always flying colours before the eyes; there's no steady colour to be seen in anything for some time. Everything

seems all of a twitter, and to keep changing its tint. There's more military tailors blind than any others. A great number of tailors go blind, but a great many more has lost their sight since gas-light has come up. Candle-light was not half so pernicious to the sight. Gas-light is so very heating, and there's such a glare with it that it makes the eyes throb, and shoot too, if you work long by it. I've often continued working past midnight with no other light than that, and then my eyes used to feel like two bits of burning coals in my head. And you see, sir, the worst of it was, as I found my sight going bad I was obliged to try it more, so as to keep up with my mates in the shop. At last my eyes got so weak that I was compelled to give up work, and go into the country, and there I stopped, living on my savings, and unable to do any work for fear of losing my sight altogether. I was away about three years, and then all my money was gone, and I was obligated, in spite of my eyes, to go back to work again. But then, with my sight defective as it was, I could get no employment at the honourable trade, and so I had to take a seat in a shop at one of the cheap houses in the city, and that was the ruin of me entirely; for working there, of course I got "scratched" from the trade Society, and so lost all hope of being provided for by them in my helplessness. The workshop at this cheap house was both small and badly ventilated. It was about seven foot square, and so low, that as you sat on the floor you could touch the ceiling with the tip of your finger. In this place seven of us worked—three on each side and one in the middle. Two of my shopmates were boys, or else I am sure it would not have held us all. There was no chimney, nor no window that could be opened to let the air in. It was lighted by a skylight, and this would neither open nor shut. The only means for letting out the foul air was one of them working ventilators—like cockades, you know, sir—fixed in one of the panes of glass; but this wouldn't work, so there we were, often from 5 in the morning till 10 at night, working in this dreadful place. There was no fire in the winter, though we never needed one, for the workshop was over-hot from the suffocation, and in the summer it was like an oven. This is what it was in the daytime, but mortal tongue can't tell what it was at night, with the two gas-lights burning away, and almost stifling us. Many a time some of the men has been carried out by the others fainting for air. They all fell ill, every one of them, and I lost my eyes and my living entirely by it. We spoke to the master repeatedly, telling him he was killing us, and though when he came up to the workshop himself, he was nearly blown back by the stench and heat, he would not let us have any other room to work in—and yet he'd plenty of convenience up stairs. He paid little more than half the regular wages, and employed such men as myself—only those who couldn't get anything better to do. What with illness and all, I don't think my wages there averaged

above 12s. a week: sometimes I could make 1l. in the week, but then, the next week, maybe I'd be ill, and would get but a few shillings. It was impossible to save anything then—even to pay one's way was a difficulty, and, at last, I was seized with rheumatics on the brain, and obliged to go into St. Thomas's Hospital. I was there eleven months, and *came out stone blind*. I am convinced I lost my eyesight by working in that cheap shop; nothing on earth will ever persuade me to the contrary, and what's more, my master robbed me of a third of my wages and my sight too, and left me helpless in the world, as, God knows, I am now. It is by the ruin of such men as me that these masters are enabled to undersell the better shops; they get hold of the men whose eyes are just beginning to fail them, like mine did, because they know they can get them to cheapwork, and then, just at the time when a journeyman requires to be in the best of shops, have the best of air, and to work as little by gas-light as possible, they puts him into a hole of a place that would stifle a rat, and keeps him working there half the night through. That's the way, sir, the cheap clothes is produced, by making blind beggars of the workmen, like myself, and throwing us on the parish in our old age. You are right, sir, they not only robs the men but the ratepayers too.

"Well, sir, as I said, I come out of the hospital stone blind, and have been in darkness ever since, and that's near upon ten years ago. I often dream of colours, and see the most delightful pictures in the world; nothing that I ever beheld with my eyes can equal them—they're so brilliant, and clear and beautiful. I see then the features and figures of all my old friends, and I can't tell you how pleasureable it is to me. When I have such dreams they so excite me that I am ill all the next day. I often see, too, the fields, with the cows grazing on a beautiful green pasture, and the flowers, just at twilight like, closing up their blossoms as they do. I never dream of rivers; nor do I ever remember seeing a field of corn in my visions; it's strange I never dreamt in any shape of the corn or the rivers, but maybe I didn't take so much notice of them as of the others. Sometimes I see the sky, and very often indeed there's a rainbow in it, with all kinds of beautiful colours. The sun is a thing I often dream about seeing, going down like a ball of fire at the close of the day. I never dreamt of the stars, nor the moon—it's mostly bright colours that I see.

"I have been under all the oculists I could hear of—Mr. Turnbull, in Russell-square, but he did me no good; then I went to Charing-cross, under Mr. Guthrie, and he gave me a blind certificate, and made me a present of half-a-sovereign; he told me not to have my eyes tampered with again, as the optic nerve was totally decayed. Oh, yes; if I had all the riches in the world I'd give them every one to get my sight back, for it's the greatest pressure to me to be in darkness. God help me! I know I am a sinner, and believe I'm so afflicted on account of my sins. No, sir, it's nothing like when you shut your eyes; when I had my sight, and closed mine, I remember I

could still see the light through the lids, the very same as when you hold your hand up before the candle; but mine's far darker than that—pitch black. I see a dark mass like before me, and never any change—everlasting darkness, and no chance of a light or shade in this world. But I feel consoled some how, now it is settled; although it's a very poor comfort after all. I go along the streets in great fear. If a baby have hold of me, I am firm, but by myself, I reel about like a drunken man. I feel very timid unless I have hold of something—not to support me, but to assure me I shall not fall. If I was going down your staircase, sir, I should be all right so long as I touched the bannister, but if I missed that, I'm sure I should grow so giddy and nervous I should fall from the top to the bottom. After losing my sight, I found a great difficulty in putting my food into my mouth, for a long time—six months or better—and I was obliged to have some one to guide my hand, for I used often to put the fork up to my forehead instead of my mouth. Shortly after my becoming quite blind, I found all my other senses much quickened—my hearing—feeling—and reckoning. I got to like music very much indeed; it seemed to elevate me—to animate and cheer me much more than it did before, and so much so now, that when it ceases, I feel duller than ever. It sounds as if it was in a wilderness to me—I can't tell why, but that's all I can compare it to; as if I was quite alone with it. My smell and taste is very acute” (he was given some violets to smell)—“Oh, that's beautiful,” he cried, “very reviving indeed. Often of an evening, I can see things in my imagination, and that's why I like to sit alone then; for of all the beautiful thoughts that ever a man possessed, there's none to equal a blind man's, when he's by hisself.

“I don't see my early home, but occurrences that has recently took place. I see them all plain before me, in colours as vivid as if I had my sight again, and the people all dressed in the fashion of my time; the clothes seem to make a great impression on me, and I often sit and see in my mind master tailors trying a coat on a gentleman, and pulling it here and there. The figures keep passing before me like soldiers, and often I'm so took by them that I forget I'm blind, and turn my head round to look after them as they pass by me. But that sort of thinking would throw me into a melancholly—it's too exciting while it lasts, and then leaves me dreadful dull afterwards. I have got much more melancholly since my blindness; before then, I was not seriously given, but now I find great consolation in religion. I think my blindness is sent to try my patience and resignation, and I pray to the Almighty to give me strength to bear with my affliction. I was quick and hot-tempered before I was blind, but since then, I have got less hasty like; all other troubles appears nothing to me. Sometimes I revile against my affliction—too frequently—but that is at my thoughtless moments, for when I'm calm and serious, I feel thankful that the Almighty has touched me with his cor-

recting rod, and then I'm happy and at peace with all the world. If I had run my race, and not been stopped, I might never have believed there was a God. My wife works at the 'sank work.' She makes soldiers' coats; she gets 1s. 1d. for making one, and that's nearly a day and a half's work; then she has to find her own trimmings, and they're 1d. It takes her 16 hours to finish one garment, and the over-work at that is beginning to make her like as I was myself. If she takes up a book to read to me now, it's all like a dirty mass before her, and that's just as my sight was before I lost it altogether. She slaves hard to help me; she's anxious and willing—indeed too much so. If she could get constant work, she might perhaps make about 7s. a week; but as it is, her earnings are, take one week with another, not more than 3s. Last week she earned 5s.; but that was the first job of work she'd had to do for two months. I think the two of us make on an average about 8s.; and out of that there is three people to keep—our two selves and our boy. Our rent is 2s. 6d., so that after paying that, we has about 5s. 6d. left for food, firing, and clothing for the whole of us. How we do it I can't tell; but I know we live very, very hard: mostly on pieces of bread that the men gives to me and my boy, as we go round to the workshops. If we was any of us to fall ill, we must all go to the parish; if my boy was to go sick, I should be left without any one to lead me about, and that would be as bad as if I was laid-up myself; and if anything was to happen to my wife, I'd be done clean altogether. But yet the Lord is very good, and we'd get out of that, I dare say. If anything was to drive me to the parish, I should lose all hopes of getting some help from the blind institutions; and so I dread the workhouse worse than all. I'd sooner die on the step of a door, any time, than go there and be what they call well kept. I don't know why I should have a dislike to going there, but yet I do possess it. I do believe, that any one that is willing to work for their bread, hates a workhouse; for the workhouse coat is a slothful, degrading badge. After a man has had one on his back, he's never the same. I would 'nt go for an order for relief so long as I could get a half-penny loaf in twenty-four hours. If I could only get some friend to give me a letter of recommendation to Mr. Day's Charity for the Blind, I should be happy for the rest of my days. I could give the best of references to any one who would take pity on me in my affliction.”

#### THE PUBLIC-HOUSE HAWKERS OF METAL SPOONS, ETC.

THE public-house hawkers are never so prosperous as those who confine their calling to private houses; they are often invited to partake of drink; are not the most industrious class of hawkers, and, to use their own language, are more frequently *hard up* than those who keep away from tap-room selling. The profits of the small hawkers in public-houses vary considerably. Some of them, when they have earned a shilling or two,

are content to spend it before they leave the tap-room, and so they lose both their stock and profit. I do not mean to infer that this is the case with the whole of the public-house hawkers, for some among them strive hard to better their condition, and occasionally succeed; but there are too many who are content to drawl out their existence by always suffering to-morrow to provide for itself. The man who gave me the routine of small hawkers' business I found in a tap-room in Ratcliffe Highway. He was hawking tea-spoons, and all the stock he possessed was half-a-dozen. These he importuned me to purchase with great earnestness. He prayed of me to lay out a trifle with him. He had not taken a penny the whole day he said, and had nothing to eat. “What's much worse for such as me,” he added, “I'm dying for a glass of rum.” I might have his tea-spoons, he told me, at any price. If I would but pay for a glass of rum for him they should be mine. I assured him some bread and cheese would do him more good, as he had not eaten anything that day; but still he would have the rum. With a trembling hand he threw the liquor down his throat, smacked his lips, and said “that there dram has saved my life.” A few minutes afterwards he sold his spoons to a customer for sixpence; and he had another glass of rum. “Now,” said he, “I'm all right for business; if I'd twopence more I could buy a dozen tea-spoons, and I should earn a 'bob' or two yet before I went to bed.” After this he grew communicative, and told me he was as good a hawker as there was in London, and he thought he could do more than any other man with a small stock. He had two or three times resolved to better himself, and had ‘*put in the pin*,’ meaning he had made a vow to refrain from drinking; but he had broken out again and gone on in his old course until he had melted the whole of his stock, though twice it had, during his sobriety, amounted to 5l., and was often worth between 2l. and 3l. It was almost maddening when he came to his senses, he said, to find he had acted so foolishly; indeed, it was so disheartening to discover all the result of his good resolutions dissipated in a moment, that he declared he never intended to try again. After having drunk out his stock, he would if possible commence with half-a-dozen Britannia metal tea-spoons; these cost him 6d., and would sell for 9d. or 1s. When one half-dozen were disposed of he would procure another, adding a knife, or a comb or two. If entirely destitute, he would stick a needle in a cork, and request to know of “the parties” assembled in some tap-room, if they wanted anything in the ironmongery line, though the needle was all the stock he had. This was done for the purpose of “raising the wind;” and by it he would be sure to obtain a glass or two of ale if he introduced himself with his “ironmongery establishment” among the sailors. Sometimes he would manage to beg a few pence, and then he would purchase a knife, pair of braces, or half-a-dozen tea-spoons, and begin to practise his trade in a legitimate manner. In answer to my inquiry he said he had not always been a hawker. His father had been a soldier,

and he had worked in the armoury. His father had been discharged upon a pension, and he (the hawker) left the army with his parents. He had never enlisted while his father was a soldier, but he had since. His mother adopted the business of a hawker upon the receipt of his father's first quarter's pension; and then he used to accompany her on her rounds. With the pension and the mother's exertions they managed to subsist tolerably well. “Being the only child, I was foolishly spoiled by my parents,” he said; “and when I was a very young man—15 or 16—I became a great trouble to them. At 18 I enlisted in the 7th Fusileers, remained in the regiment three months, and then, at my own request, was bought off. My mother sold off most of her stock of goods to raise the money (twenty pounds). When I returned home I could not think of trudging by my mother's side, as I had been used to do when carrying the goods; nor did I feel inclined to exert myself in any way for my own support. I considered my mother had a right to keep me without my working, and she, poor thing, thought so too. I was not only supported in idleness, but my mother would give me many a shilling, though she could ill afford it, for me to spend with my companions. I passed most of my time in a skittle ground. I was not what you might term a skittle sharp, for I never entered into a plot to victimise any person, although I confess I have often bet upon the ‘greenness’ of those who were silly enough to make wagers that they could not possibly win. Sometimes, after I had lost the trifle supplied me by my mother, I would return, and be blackguard enough to assume the bully unless my demands on her for a further supply were attended to. Poor thing, she was very meek, and with tears in her eyes she would grant my request. I often weep when I think how I treated her” (here the tears trickled down the man's cheek), “and yet, badly as I used her, in my heart I loved her very much. I got tired of the skittle grounds in consequence of getting into a hobble relative to a skittle swindle: some sharpers had obtained a flat; I was speculating in a small way, betting pennies and twopences in such a manner as always to win; I was practising upon the flat upon my own account, without having any connection with the others; they fleeced their dupe out of several pounds, and he made a row about it. The police interfered, and I was singled out as one of the gang; the principals were also apprehended; they got six months each, and I was accommodated with a month's board and lodging at the expense of the nation. I thought this at the time unjust, but I was as culpable as any of them, for at the time I only regretted I had not more money to stake larger wagers, and envied the other parties who were making a better thing of the business than I was. When I came out of jail, my poor mother treated me as a martyr. She thought I was as innocent as a child. Shortly after my release from prison my father died, and with him went the pension of course. I was then obligated to do something for myself. A few shillings' worth

of goods only were procured—for my father's funeral and my extravagances had sadly crippled my mother's means. I behaved very well for a short time. My mother then was often ill, and she never recovered the death of my father. In about a year after my father died I lost my mother; our stock of goods had dwindled down to a very poor lot, and I was obligated to ask relief of the parish towards her funeral expenses. When all was over, the value of my goods and cash did not amount to 20s. Ten years have elapsed since my mother's death, and I don't think I have ever been, during the whole period, sober for a month together."

While I sat in this tap-room, I counted in the course of an hour and a quarter,—4 hawkers of sheep's trotters, who visited the place; 3 sellers of shrimps, pickled whelks, and periwinkles; 2 baked potato-sellers; 8 song-hawkers; the same number with lucifer matches; and 3 with braces, &c. Not one of these effected a sale.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF JEWELLERY.

THE jewellery now sold in the streets far exceeds, both in cheapness and quality, what was known even ten years ago. Fifty years ago the jewellery itinerant trade was almost entirely, if not entirely, in the hands of Jews, who at any rate professed to sell really gold articles, and who asked large prices; but these traders have lost their command over this, as I have shown that they have over other street callings, as not a twelfth of the street-jewellers are now Jews. A common trade among such street and country itinerant jewellers was in large watch seals, the bodies of which were of lead, more or less thickly plated with gold, and which were unsaleable even as old metal until broken to pieces,—but not always saleable then. The street or itinerant trade was for a long time afterwards carried on only by those who were regularly licensed as hawkers, and who preferred "barter" or "swopping" to actual sale, the barter being usually for other and more solid articles of the goldsmith's trade.

The introduction of "mosaic" and other cheap modes of manufacturing quasi gold ornaments, brought about considerable changes in the trade, pertaining, however, more to the general manufacture, than to that prepared for the streets.

The itinerants usually carry their wares in boxes or cases, which shut up close, and can be slung on the shoulder for conveyance, or hung round the neck for the purposes of sale. These cases are nearly all glazed; within them the jewellery is disposed in such manner as, in the street-seller's judgment, is the most attractive. A card of the larger brooches, or of cameos, often forms the centre, and the other space is occupied with the shawl-pins, with their globular tops of scarlet or other coloured glass: rings, armlets, necklaces, a few earrings and ear-drops, and sometimes a few side-combs, small medals for keepsakes, clasps, beads, and bead-purses, ornamental buttons for dresses, gilt buckles for waist-belts, thimbles, &c., constitute the street jeweller's stock-in-trade. The usual prices are from 2d. to

1s. 6d.; the price most frequently obtained for any article being 3d. It will be seen from the enumeration of the articles, that the stock is such as is required "for women's wear," and women are now almost the sole customers of the street-jewellers. "In my time, sir," said one elderly street-trader, "or rather, when I was a boy, and in my uncle's time—for he was in jewellery, and I helped him at times—quite different sorts of jewellery was sold, and quite different prices was had; what's a high figure now was a low figure then. I've known children's coral and bells in my uncle's stock—well, I don't know whether it was real coral or not—and big watch keys with coloured stones in the centre on 'em, such as I've seen old gents keep spinning round when they was talking, and big seals and watch-chains; there weren't no guards then, as I remember. And there was plated fruit-knives—silver, as near as a toucher—and silver pencils (pencil-cases), and gilt lockets, to give your sweetheart your hair in for keepsakes. Lor' bless you! times is turned upside down."

The disposition of the street-stalls is somewhat after the same fashion as that in the itinerant's box, with the advantage of a greater command of space. Some of the stalls—one in Tottenham-court Road, I may instance, and another in White-chapel—make a great show.

I did not hear of any in this branch of the jewellery trade who had been connected with it as working jewellers. I heard of two journey-men watchmakers and four clockmakers now selling jewellery (but often with other things, such as eye-glasses) in the street, but that is all. The street mass selling jewellery in town and country are, I believe, composed of the various classes who constitute the street-traders generally.

Of the nature of his present trade, and of the class of his customers, I had the following account from a man of twelve years' experience in the vending of street jewellery:—

"It's not very easy to tell, sir," he said, "what sells best, for people begins to suspect everything, and seems to think they're done if they give 3d. for an agate brooch, and finds out it ain't set in gold. I think agate is about the best part of the trade now. It seems a stone as is easy imitated. Cornelians, too, ain't so bad in brooches—people likes the colour; but not what they was, and not up to agates. But nothing is up to what it once was; not in the least. Sell twice as much—when you can, which often stands over till to-morrow come-never—and get half the profit. I don't expect very much from the Great Exhibition. They sends goods so cheap from Germany, they'll think anything dear in London, if it's only at German prices. I think it's a mistake to fancy that the cheaper a jewellery article is the more you'll sell of it. You won't. People's of opinion—at least that's my notion of it—that it's so common everybody'll have it, and so they won't touch it. It's Thames water, sir, against beer, is poor low-priced jewellery, against tidy and fair-priced; but then the low-priced has now ruined the other sorts, for they're all thought to go under the same name."

brilla,—all of a sort; 1s. or 1d. Why, as to who's the best customers, that depends on where you pitches your pitch, or works your round, and whether you are known, or are merely a upstart. But I can tell you, sir, who's been my best customers—and is yet, but not so good as they was—and that's women of the town; and mostly (for I've tried most places) about Ratcliff Highway, Whitechapel, Mile-end-road, Bethnal-green, and Oxford-street. The sailors' gals is the best of all; but almost all of them is very particular, and some is uncommon tiresome. 'I'm afeard,' they says, 'this colour don't suit my complexion; it's too light, or it's too dark. How does that ring show on my finger?' I've known some of the fat and fair ones—what had been younger, but would be older—say, 'Let me have a necklace of bright black beads; them things shows best with the fat 'uns—but in general them poor creatures is bad judges of what becomes them. The things they're the most particular of all in is necklaces. Amber and pearl sells most. I have them from 6d. to 1s. 6d. I never get more than 1s. 6d. Cornelian necklaces is most liked by children, and most bought for them. I've trusted the women of the town, and trust them still. One young woman in Shadwell took a fancy the t'other week for a pearl necklace, 'it became her so,' which it didn't; and offered to pay me 6d. a week for it if I wouldn't sell it away from her. The first week she paid 6d.; the second nothing; and next week she full tip, 'cause her Jack had come home. I never lost a halfpenny by the women. Yes, they pays you a fairish price, but nothing more. Sometimes they've beat me down 1d., and has said, 'It's all the money I has.'"

"It's not very long ago that one of them offered me a fine goold watch which I could have bought at any price, for I saw she knew nothing of what it was worth. I never do anything that way. I believe a very few in my line does, for they can't give the prices the rich fences can. It's common enough for them gals to ask any street-jeweller they knows how much a watch ought to pop for, or to sell for, afore they tries it on. But it isn't they as tries it on, sir; they gets some respectbel old lady, or old gent, to do that for them. I've had cigars and Cavendish of them; such as seamen had left behind them; you know, sir, I've never given money, only jewellery for it. Plenty of shopkeepers is glad to buy it of me, and not at a bad price. They asks no questions, and I tells them no lies. One reason why these gals buys free is that when the jewellery gets out of order or out of fashion, they can fling it away and get fresh, it's so cheap. When I've had no money on a day until I has sold to these women, I've oft enough said, 'God bless 'em!' Earrings is hardly any go now, sir; nothing to what they was; they're going out. The penny jewellery's little good; it's only children what buys, or gets it bought for them. I sell most of brooches from 3d. to 6d., very seldom higher, and bracelets—they calls them armlets now—at the same price. I buys all my goods at a swag-shop: there's no other market. Watchguards was middling sale,

both silver and goold, or washed white and washed yellow, and the swags made money in them; but instead of 1s., they're not to be sold at a Joey now, watchguards ain't, if a man patters ever so."

I am informed that there are not less than 1000 individuals who all buy their jewellery at the London swag-shops, and sell it in the streets, with or without other articles, but principally without; and that of this number 500 are generally in London and its suburbs, including such places as Gravesend, Woolwich, and Greenwich. Of these traders about one-tenth are women; and in town about three-fifths are itinerant, and the others stationary. One-half, or thereabouts, of the women, are the wives of street-sellers; the others trade on their own account. A few "swop" jewellery for old clothes, with either the mistress or the maids. Four or five, when they see a favourable opportunity, offer to tell any servant-maid her fortune. "Buy this beautiful agate brooch, my dear,' the woman'll say, 'and I'll only charge you 1s. 6d.'—a German thing, sir, costing her seven farthings one street-jeweller informed me,—and I'll tell you your fortune into the bargain."

One "old hand" calculated, that when a street-jeweller could display 50s. worth of stock, he could clear, all the year round, 15s. a week. "People," said this man, "as far as I've known the streets, like to buy of what they think is a respectable man, and seemingly well to do; they feel safe with him." Those, however, who cannot boast so large a stock of jewellery as 50s. worth, may only clear 10s. instead of 15s. weekly. One trader thought that the average earnings of his fraternity might be taken at 12s. a week; another—and both judged from their own experience—thought 10s. 6d. was high enough. Calculating, then, at a weekly profit of 10s. 6d., and a receipt of 18s. per individual, we find 23,410l. expended in the street-trade, including the sales at Gravesend, Woolwich, and Greenwich; where—both places being resorted to by pleasure-seekers and seamen—the trade is sometimes considerable; watches, which now are almost unknown in a regular street-trade, there forming an occasional part of it.

#### OF THE PEDLAR-JEWELLERS.

I HAVE heard a manufacturer of Birmingham jewellery assert, that one pound of copper was sufficient to make 10l. worth of jewellery; consequently, the material to provide the unmanufactured stock in trade of a wholesale dealer in Birmingham jewellery, is not over expensive. It may be imagined then that the pedlars who hawk jewellery do not invest a very great capital in the wares they sell; there are some few, however, who have very valuable stocks of goods, pedlars though they be. This trade is principally pursued by Jews, and to a great extent (especially in a small way) by foreign Jews. The Jews are, I think, more attentive to the wants of their poorer brethren than other people; and instead of supplying them with trifling sums of money, which must necessarily soon be

expended, they give them small quantities of goods, so that they may immediately commence foraging for their own support. Many of these poor Jews, when provided with their stock of merchandise, can scarcely speak a word of English, and few of them know but little respecting the value of the goods they sell; they always take care to ask a good price, leaving plenty of room for abatement. I heard one observe that they could not easily be taken in by being overcharged, for according what they paid for the article they fixed the price upon it. Some of these men, notwithstanding their scanty knowledge of the trade at starting, have eventually become excellent judges of jewellery; some of them, moreover, have acquired riches in it; indeed from the indomitable perseverance of the Hebrew race, success is generally the result of their untiring industry. If once you look at the goods of a Jew pedlar, it is not an easy matter to get out of his clutches; it is not for want of perseverance if he does not bore and tease you, until at length you are glad to purchase some trifle to get rid of him. One of my informants tells me he is acquainted with several Jews, who now hold their heads high as merchants, and are considered very excellent judges of the wares they deal in, who originally began trading with but a small stock of jewellery, and that a charitable donation. As well as Jews there are Irishmen who deal in such commodities. The pedlar generally has a mahogany box bound with brass, and which he carries with a strap hung across his shoulder; when he calls at a house, an inquiry is made whether there is any old silver or gold to dispose of. "I will give you a full price for any such articles." If the lady or gentleman accosted seems to be likely to buy, the box is immediately opened and a tempting display of gold rings, chains, scent-boxes, lockets, brooches, breast-pins, bracelets, silver thimbles, &c., &c., are exposed to view. All the eloquence the pedlar can command is now brought into play. The jewellery is arranged about the persons of his expected customers to the best advantage. The pedlar says all he can think of to enhance their sale: he will chop and change for anything they may wish to dispose of—any old clothes, books, or useless lumber may be converted into ornaments for the hair or other parts of dress. The Irish pedlar mostly confines his visits to the vicinity of large factories where there are many girls employed; these he supplies with earrings, necklaces, shawl-pins, brooches, lockets, &c., which are bought wholesale at the following prices:—Earrings and drops at from 3s. 6d. to 12s. per dozen pairs; the 3d. earring is a neat little article says my informant, and those sold at 1s. each, wholesale, are gorgeous-looking affairs; many of the latter have been disposed of by the pedlars at 1l. the pair, and even a greater price. Necklaces are from 5s. to 1l. per dozen. Locketts may be purchased wholesale at from 2s. to 10s. per dozen; guard chains (German silver) are 4s. per dozen; gilt heavy-looking waistcoat chains 6s. per dozen: and all other articles are equally low in price. The pedlar jeweller can begin busi-

ness "respectably" for two pounds. His box costs him 7s. 6d.; half-a-dozen pairs of earrings of six different sorts, 3s.; half-a-dozen lockets (various), 1s. 9d.; half-a-dozen guard chains, 2s.; half-a-dozen shawl brooches, 2s. 6d.; one dozen breast-pins (different kinds), 3s.; one dozen finger rings of various descriptions, 3s. 6d.; half-a-dozen brooches at 4d. each, 2s.; one dozen necklaces (a variety), at 6s.; three silver pencil-cases at 1s. 9d. each, 5s. 3d.; half-a-dozen waistcoat chains, 3s.; one silver toothpick, at 1s. 6d. These make altogether two pounds. If the articles are arranged with taste and seeming care (as if they were very valuable), with jeweller's wadding under each, and stuck on pink cards, &c., while the finger rings are inserted in the long narrow velvet-lined groove of the box, and the other "valuables" well spread about the little portable shop—they may be made to assume a very respectable and almost "rich" appearance. Many who now have large establishments commenced life with much less stock than is here mentioned. The Jews, I do not think, continues my informant, are the best salesmen; and the fact of their being Israelites is, in many instances, a bar to their success; country people, especially, are afraid of being taken in by them. The importunities and appeals of the Hebrew, however, are far more urgent than any other tradesman; and they always wait where they think there's the slightest chance of effecting a sale, until the door is slammed in their face. I believe there are not, at the present time, many (especially small traders) who deal exclusively in jewellery; they mostly add other small and light articles—such as fancy cutlery, side combs, &c. There may, at a rough guess, be 500 of them travelling the country; half the number are poor foreign Jews; a quarter are Jews, who have, perhaps, followed the same calling for years; and the remaining quarter, a mixture of Irish and English, with a small preponderance of Irishmen. All these "swop" their goods for old gold and silver, and frequently realize a large sum, by changing the base metal for the sterling article. Their goods are always sold as being gold or silver—If asked whether a particular article be gold, they reply "It's jewellers' gold;" "Is this ring gold?" inquires the customer, taking one from the box—"No, ma'am, I wouldn't deceive you!" is the answer, "that is not gold; but here is one," adds the pedlar (taking up one exactly of the same description, and which cost the same price) "which is of a similar shape and fashion, and the best jeweller's gold that is made." The profits of the pedlar-jewellers it is almost impossible to calculate, for they will sell at any price upon which the smallest amount of profit can be realized. The foreign Jews, especially, will do this, and it is not an unusual circumstance for one of these men to ask 5s. for an article which originally cost them 3d., and which they will eventually sell for 4d.

In London there are about 200 hawkers of jewellery, who visit the public-houses; but few of these have boxes—they invite customers by displaying some chains in their hands, or having one or two arranged in front of their waistcoats, while



SCENE IN PETTICOAT LANE.

the smaller articles are carried in their waistcoat pockets. The class of persons who patronize the public-house hawkers are those who visit the tap-rooms of taverns, and countrymen in the vicinity of Smithfield upon market days, (one of the hawkers tells me, that they succeed better upon the hay-market days than at the cattle sales, for the butchers, they say, are too "fly" for them. Sailors are among their best customers, but the coster-girls are very fond of drop earrings and coral beads; the sailors, however, give the best prices of all. I am told that the quantity of old gold and silver which the country pedlars obtain in exchange for their goods is "astonishing," and there have been occasions on which a pedlar has been enriched for life by one single transaction of barter; some old and unfashionable piece of jewellery, that they received for their goods, has been composed of costly stones, which had lain by for years, and of which the pedlar's customer was unacquainted with the value. The more respectable jewellery pedlars put up at the better class of public-houses, and, even after their day's travels are over, they still have an eye to business; they open the box upon the table of the tap-room where they are lodging, and, under the pretence of cleaning or arranging their goods, temptingly display their glittering stock. The bar-maid, kitchen-maid, the landlady's daughter, or perhaps the landlady herself, admires some ornaments, which the pedlar declares would become them vastly. He hangs a necklace upon the neck of one of them; holds a showy earring and drop to the ear of another; facetiously inquires of the girls whether they are not likely to want something of this sort shortly—as he holds up first a wedding-ring, and then a baby's coral; or else he exhibits a ring set with Turquoise, or pearls and small diamonds in a cluster, to the landlady, and tries it on her finger; and by such arts a sale that will cover his expenses is generally effected. There is one peculiarity these men have when bartering their goods. A worn-out ornament of jewellery is brought to them, and, although it be brass, the pedlar never attempts to undeceive the possessor, if he finds it is considered to be genuine. Of course he never gives cash for such articles; but he offers a large price in barter. "I will take 10s. for this ring, and allow you 5s. for the old one," says the pedlar. It would never do to say the ornament was not gold; the customer bought it years ago for such, and no one ever disputed its being the precious metal; should our pedlar do so, he might as well shut up shop immediately. The lady would be angry and suspicious; neither would she believe him, but rather suspect that he wanted only to cheat her; consequently the pedlar barter, obtains the old ring, or some other article, and 5s., for his commodity; and though the article he has taken in exchange is worth only a few pence, he very likely profits to the amount of 200 per cent. upon the cash received. The pedlars of lesser consequence put up at humble private or public-houses, and some of them at the common lodging-houses. Those who have only small stocks confine their visits to farm-houses and villages.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CARD COUNTERS, MEDALS, ETC.

THE "card-counters," or, as I have heard them sometimes called by street-sellers, the "small coins," are now of a very limited sale. The slang name for these articles is "Jacks" and "Half Jacks." They are sold to the street-people at only two places in London; one in Holborn, and the other at Black Tom's (himself formerly a street-seller, now "a small swag"), in Clerkenwell. They are all made in Birmingham, and are of the size and colour of the genuine sovereigns and half sovereigns; but it is hardly possible that any one who had ever received a sovereign in payment, could be deceived by the substitution of a Jack. Those now sold in the streets are much thinner, and very much lighter. Each presents a profile of the Queen; but instead of the superscription "Victoria Dei Gratia" of the true sovereign, the Jack has "Victoria Regina." On the reverse, in the place of the "Britanniarum Regina Fid. Def." surrounding the royal arms and crown, is a device (intended for an imitation of St. George and the Dragon) representing a soldier on horseback—the horse having three legs elevated from the ground, while a drawn sword fills the right hand of the equestrian, and a crown adorns his head. The superscription is, "to Hanover," and the rider seems to be sociably accompanied by a dragon. Round the Queen's head on the half Jack is "Victoria, Queen of Great Britain," and on the reverse the Prince of Wales's feather, with the legend, "The Prince of Wales's Model Half Sovereign."

Until within these five or six years the gilt card-counters had generally the portraiture of the monarch, and on the reverse the legend "Keep your temper," as a seasonable admonition to whist players. Occasionally the card-counter was a gilt coin, closely resembling a sovereign; but the magistracy, eight or nine years back, "put down" the sale of these imitations.

Under another head will be found an account of the use made of these sovereigns, in pretended wagers. A further use of them was to add to the heaps of apparent gold at the back of the table-keeper in a race booth, when gambling was allowed at Epsom, and the "great meetings."

There are now only two men regularly selling Jacks in the streets. There have been as many as twelve. One of these street-sellers is often found in Holborn, announcing "30s. for 1d. ! 30s. for 1d. ! cheapest bargain ever offered; 30s. for 1d. !"

The Jacks cost, wholesale, 4s. 6d. the gross; the half Jacks 2s. 9d. The two are sold for 1d. If the sale be not brisk, the street-seller will give a ring into the bargain. These rings cost 1s. the gross, or the third part of a farthing each.

If there be, on the year's average, only two street-sellers disposing of the Jacks, and earning 9s. a week—to earn which the receipts will be about 20s.—we find 104l. expended in the streets on these trifles.

Of medals the street sale is sometimes considerable, at others a mere nothing. When a

popular subject is before the public, many of the general paterers "go to medals." I could not learn that any of the present street-people vended medals in the time of the war; I believe there are none at present among the street folk who did so. I am told that the street sale in war medals was smaller than might reasonably have been expected. The manufacture of those articles in the Salamanca, Vittoria, and even Waterloo days, was greatly inferior to what it is at present, and the street price demanded was as often 6*d.* as a smaller sum. These medals in a little time presented a dull, leaden look, and the knowledge that they were "poor things" seems to have prevented the public buying them to any extent in the streets, and perhaps deterred the street-sellers from offering them. Those who were the most successful of the medal-sellers had been, or assumed to have been, soldiers or seamen.

Within the last eighteen years, or more, there has hardly been any public occurrence without a comparatively well-executed medal being sold in the streets in commemoration of it. That sold at the opening of London-bridge was, I am told, considered "a superior thing," and the improvement in this art or manufacture has progressed to the present time. Within the last three years the most saleable medals, an experienced man told me, were of Hungerford Suspension (bridge), the New Houses of Parliament, the Chinese Junk, and Sir Robert Peel. The Thames Tunnel medals were at one time "very tidy," as were those of the New Royal Exchange. The great sale is at present of the Crystal Palace; and one man had heard that there were a great many persons coming to London to sell them at the opening of the Great Exhibition. "The great eggs and bacon, I call it," he said; "for I hope it will bring us that sort of grub. But I don't know; I'm afraid there'll be too many of us. Besides, they say we shan't be let sell in the park."

The exhibition medal is as follows:—

What the street medal-sellers call the "right-side"—I speak of the "penny" medal, which commands by far the greatest sale—presents the Crystal Palace, raised from the surface of the medal, and whitened by the application of aqua fortis. The superscription is "THE BUILDING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1851." On the "wrong side" (so called) is the following inscription, occupying the whole face of the medal:

THE CONSTRUCTION IS OF  
IRON AND OF GLASS,  
1848 FEET LONG,  
ABOUT HALF IS 456 WIDE.  
THE REMAINDER 408 FEET WIDE,  
AND 66 FEET HIGH;  
SITE, UPWARDS OF 20 ACRES.  
COST £150,000.  
JOSH. PAXTON, ARCHT.

The size of this medal is between that of a shilling and a half-crown.

A paterer, who used to sell medals on Sunday mornings in the park, informed me that he told his customers the Crystal Palace part was dead silver, by a new discovery making silver cheap; but for all that he would risk changing it for a four-penny bit!

The two-penny medal is after the same style, but the letters are more distinct. On my stating, to a medal-seller, that it was difficult to read the inscription on his "pennies," he said, "Not at all, sir; but it's your eyes is dazzled." This was said quietly, and with a touch of slyness, and I have no doubt was the man's "cut-and-dried" answer.

The paterer whom I have mentioned, told me, that encouraged by a tolerably sale and "a gathering of the aristocrats," on a very fine Sunday in January or February—he could not remember which—he ventured upon 6 "sixpenny medals," costing him 1*s.* 9*d.* He sold them all but one, which he showed me. It was exactly the size of a crown-piece. The Crystal Palace was "raised," and of "dead silver," as in the smaller medals. The superscription was the same as on the penny medal; but underneath the representation of the palace were raised figures of Mercury and of a naked personage, with a quill as long as himself, a cornucopia, and a bee-hive: this I presume was Industry. These twin figures are supporters to a medallion, crown-surmounted, of the Queen and Prince Albert: being also in "dead silver." On the reverse was an inscription, giving the dimensions, &c., of the building.

The medals in demand for street-sale in London seem to be those commemorative of local events only. None, for instance, were sold relating to the opening of the Britannia Bridge.

The wholesale price of the medals retailed in the street at 1*d.* is 7*s.* the gross; those retailed at 2*d.* are 12*s.* the gross, but more than three-fourths of those sold are penny medals. They are all bought at the swag-shops, and are all made in Birmingham. It is difficult to compute how many persons are engaged in this street trade, for many resort to it only on occasions. There are, however, from 12 to 20 generally selling medals, and at the present time about 30 are so occupied: they, however, do not sell medals exclusively, but along with a few articles of jewellery, or occasionally of such street stationery as letter stamps and "fancy" pens, with coloured glass or china handles. A fourth of the number are women. The weather greatly influences the street medal trade, as rain or damp dims their brightness. One seller told me that the day before I saw him he had sold only four medals. "I've known the trade, off and on," he said, "for about six years, and the greatest number as ever I sold was half-a-gross one Saturday. I cleared rather better than 3*s.* I sold them in Whitehall and by Westminster-bridge. There was nothing new among them, but I had a good stock, and it was a fine day, and I was lucky in meeting parties, and had a run for sets." By a "run for sets," my informant meant that he had met with customers who bought a medal of each of the kinds he displayed; this is called "a set."

An intelligent man, familiar with the trade, and who was in the habit of clubbing his stock-money with two others, that they might buy a gross at a time, calculated that 15 medal sellers were engaged in the traffic the year through, and earned, in medals alone, 6*d.* a day each, to clear

which they would take 6*s.* 6*d.* weekly, giving a yearly outlay of 253*l.* 10*s.* It must be remembered, to account for the smallness of the earnings, that the trade in medals is irregular, and the calculation embraces all the seasons of the trade.

On occasions when medals are the sole or chief articles of traffic, they are displayed on a tray, which is a box with a lid, and thus look bright as silver on the faded brown velvet, with which the box is often lined. Among the favourite pitches are Oxford-street, the approaches to London, Blackfriars, Westminster, and Waterloo-bridges, the railway stations, and the City-road.

Of small coins (proper) there is now no sale in the streets. When there was an issue of half-farthings, about seven years ago, the street-sellers drove a brisk trade, in vending them at four a penny, urging on the sale before the coins got into circulation, which they never did. "It's not often," said one paterer to me, "that we have anything to thank the Government for, but we may thank them for the half-farthings. I dare say at least 30 of us made a tidy living on them for a week or more; and if they wasn't coined just to give us a spurt, I should like to know what they was coined for! I once myself, sir, for a lark, gave one to a man that swept a capital crossing, and he was in a thundering passion, and wanted to fight me, when I told him they was coined to pay the likes of him!"

There was afterwards a tolerable sale of the "new silver pennies, just issued from the Mint, three ha'pence each, or 7 for 6*d.*;" also of "genuine models of the new English florin, only 1*d.*:" both of these were fictitious.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF RINGS AND SOVEREIGNS FOR WAGERS.

This class is hardly known in the streets of London at present. Country fairs and races are a more fitting ground for the ring-seller's operations. One man of this class told me that he had been selling rings, and occasionally medals, for wagers for this last fifteen years. "It's only a so-so game just now," he said; "the people get so fly to it. A many hold out their penny for a ring, and just as I suppose I'm a going to receive it, they put the penny into their pockets, and their thumb upon their nose. I wish I had some other game, for this is a very dickey one. I gives 3*d.* a-dozen for the rings at the swag shop; and sometimes sells a couple of dozen in a day, but seldom more. Saturday is no better day than any other. Country people are my best customers. I know them by their appearance. Sometimes a person in the crowd whispers to others that he bought one the other day and went and pawned it for 5*s.*, and he'd buy another, but he's got no money. I don't ask for such assistance; I suppose it's done for a lark, and to laugh at others if they buy. Women buy more frequently than any one else. Several times since I have been on this dodge, women have come back and abused me because the ring they bought for a penny was not gold. Some had been to the pawnshop, and was quite astonished that the pawn-

broker wouldn't take the ring in. I do best in the summer at races: people think it more likely that two sporting gents would lay an out of the way wager (as you know I always make out) then than at any other time. I have been interfered with at races before now for being an impostor, and yet at the same time the gamblers was allowed to keep their tables; but of course theirs was all fair—no imposition about them—oh no! I am considered about one of the best paterers among our lot. I dare say there may be twenty on us all together, in town and country, on rings and sovereigns. Sometimes, when travelling on foot to a race or fair, I do a little in the *Fawney dropping* line;" (fawneys are rings;) "but that is a dangerous game, I never did it but two or three times. There were some got lagged for it, and that frightened me. In ring-dropping we pretend to have found a ring, and ask some simple-looking fellow if it's good gold, as it's only just picked up. Sometimes it is immediately pronounced *gold*: 'Well it's no use to me,' we'll say, 'will you buy it?' Often they are foolish enough to buy, and it's some satisfaction to one's conscience to know that they think they are a taking you in, for they give you only a shilling or two for an article which if really gold would be worth eight or ten. Some ring-droppers write out an account and make a little parcel of jewellery, and when they pick out their man, they say, 'If you please, sir, will you read this for me, and tell me what I should do with these things, as I've just found them?' Some people advise they should be taken to the police office—but very few say that; some, that they should be taken to the address; others, that they should be sold, and the money shared; others offer a price for them, stating that they're not gold, they're only trumpery they say, but they'll give half-a-crown for them. It's pleasant to take such people in. Sometimes the finder says he's in haste, and will sell them for anything to attend to other business, and he then transfers his interest at perhaps 200 per cent. profit. This game won't friz now, sir, it's very dangerous. I've left it off long since. I don't like the idea of quod. I've been there once." Another plan of dropping rings is to write a letter. This is the style:—

"My dear Anne,

"I have sent you the ring, and hope it will fit.—Excuse me not bringing it. John will leave it with you.—You know I have so much to attend to.—I shall think every minute a year until the happy day arrives.

"Yours devotedly,

"JAMES BROWN."

This love epistle containing the wedding-ring was most successful when it first came up, but the public now are too wide awake. According to another informant, the ring-dropping "lark" is now carried on this way, for the old style is "coopered." "A woman" he says, "is made up so as to appear in the family-way—pretty far gone—and generally with a face as long as a boy's kite. Up she goes to any likely ken, where she knows there are women that are married or expect to get married, and commences begging. Then comes the tale of woe, if she can get them to

listen—"I'm in the family-way," she says, "as you can plainly see *young ladies* (this she says to the *servants*, and that prides them you know). My husband has left me after serving me in this way. I don't know where he is, and am forced to solicit the ladies' charity." Well, the servants will bring broken victuals and make a little collection among themselves for the 'unprotected female,' for which in return, with many thanks for their kindness, she offers her gold wedding-ring for sale, as she wants to get back to her suffering kids to give them something to eat, poor things, and they shall have the gold ring, she says, for half what it's worth; or if they won't buy it, will they lend 2s. or 3s. on it till she can redeem it, as she hasn't been in the habit of pledging! The girls are taken off their guard (she not being in the habit of pledging is a choker for them) by the woman's seeming simplicity, and there's a consultation. One says to the other—"Oh, you'll want it, Mary, for John;" and another, "No, you'll want it first, Sally, for William." But the woman has her eye on the one as says the least, as the likeliest of all to want it, and so she says to the John and William girls, "Oh, you don't want it; but *here* (touching the silent one), *here's a young lady* as does," (that sweetens the servant girl up directly.) She says, "I don't want it, bless you (with a giggle), but I'll lend you a trifle, as you are in this state, and have a family, and are left like this by your husband—aint he cruel, Sally (she adds to her fellow-servant)?" The money the ring-woman gets, sir, depends upon the servant's funds; if it is just after quarter-day, she generally gets a tidy tip—if not, 4 or 5 bob. I've known one woman get 10s. and even 12s. this way. The ring is made out of brass gilt buttons, and stunning well: it's faked up to rights, and takes a good judge even at this day to detect it without a test."

"The best sort of rings for *fawney dropping* is the Belchers. They are a good thick looking ring, and have the crown and V. R. stamped upon them. They are 7d. a dozen. I takes my stand now, in my ring-selling, as if I was in a great hurry, and pulls out my watch. I used to have a real one, but now it's a dummy. "Now, ladies and gentlemen," says I, "I am not permitted to remain more than ten minutes in one spot. I have rings to sell to decide a wager recently made between two sporting noblemen, to the effect that I do not sell a certain quantity of these rings in a given time, at a penny a piece. I can recommend the article as being well worth the money I ask for it, perhaps something more. I do not say they are gold; in fact, I must not say too much, as there is a person in this company watching my proceedings, and seeing that I do not remain more than ten minutes in this spot,"—here I always looks very hard at the most respectable and gentlemanly-looking person among my hearers, and sometimes gives him a wink, and sometimes a nod,—"but if you should hear anything more about these rings, and you want to purchase, don't be vexed if I am gone when you want me. The ten minutes has nearly expired; three minutes

more; any more buyers? It makes no difference to me whether I sell or not—I get my pay all the same; but, if you take my advice, buy; and perhaps if you was to call at the sign of the Three Balls, as you go home, you may be agreeably surprised, and hear something to your advantage. Perhaps I have said too much. I have one minute more, before I close the establishment. After shutting the box, I dare not sell another in this spot, if you were to offer me 5l. for it; therefore, if you wish to purchase, now is your time." I make many a pitch, and do not sell a single ring; and the insults I receive used to aggravate me very much, but I do not mind them now, I'm used to it. The flyest cove among all us ring-sellers is little Ikey, the Jew. There were two used to work the game. They had a real gold ring, just like the ones they were selling, and they always used to pitch near a pawnbroker's shop. Ikey's pal would buy a ring for a penny, of the street-seller, and would then say, loud enough to be heard by the bystanders, "There's a pawn shop—I'll go and ask them to take it in." A crowd would follow him. He would enter the pawnbroker's—present a real gold ring—obtain a loan of 5s., and would present the ticket to the bystanders, who would then buy very fast. When the pitch was over, Ikey's pal would take the ring out of pawn, and away the two would go to work near some other pawnbroker's. I have heard Ikey say they have pawned the ring thirty-five times in a day. I tried the same caper; but my pal cut with the gold ring the first day, and I've never had another go at that *fake* since.

"Before I commenced the jewellery line," continued my candid informant, "a good many years ago, I used to hold horses about Bond-street. Afterwards I was taken as an errand boy at a druggist's, was out of an errand one day and got 6d. for holding a gentleman's horse, which kept me nearly an hour; when I went back to my master's I was told I wasn't wanted any more. I had been cautioned about stopping of errands two or three times before; however I didn't like the situation, it was too confining. I next got a place as pot-boy, in Brick Lane. Here I was out one day gathering in the pots. I hung the strap of pots to a railing to have a game at chances (pitch and toss), somebody prigged my strap of pots, and I cut. A few weeks after I was grabbed for this, and got a month at the mill; but I was quite innocent of priggig—I was only careless. When I came out of prison, I went to Epsom races, thinking to get a job there at something or other. A man engaged me to assist him in 'pitching the hunters.' Pitching the hunters is the three sticks a penny, with the snuffboxes stuck upon sticks; if you throw your stick, and they fall out of the hole, you are entitled to what you knock off. I came to London with my master the pitcher-hunter, he went to a swag shop in Kent-street, in the Borough, to purchase a new stock. I saw a man there purchasing rings, this was little Ikey, the Jew; some days afterwards I saw him making a pitch, and selling very fast. I had fourpence

in my pocket; went to Kent-street, to the swag shops, bought a dozen rings, and commenced selling them. I sold that day three dozen; that wasn't bad considering that my toggery was very queer, and I looked anything but like one who would be trusted with ten pounds' worth of gold rings. This wager between the two sporting noblemen has been a long time settling. I've been at it more than fifteen years. The origin of it was this here: when sovereigns were first coined, the Jew boys and others used to sell medals and card-counters upon particular occasions, the same as they do now, and shove them in a saucepan lid, with silver paper under them. Captain Barclay, and another of the same sort, bet a wager, that one of these Jew-boys could not dispose of a certain number of real sovereigns in a given time, supposing the Jew-boy cried out nothing more than 'here's sovereigns, only a penny a piece.' The number he was to sell was 50 within the hour, and to take his station at London Bridge. The wager was made, the Jew-boy procured, and the sovereigns put into the pot lid. 'Here are real sovereigns a penny a piece, who'll buy?' he cried; but he sold only a few. The number disposed of, within the hour, I have heard, was seventeen. Those who purchased, when they found that they had really bought sovereigns at a penny a piece, returned for more, but the salesman was gone. A good harvest was afterwards reaped among the Jews, who got up a medal something like a sovereign, and sold them in every quarter of London, for the Captain's wager soon spread about everywhere. It's a stale game now; it was so before my time, but I've heard the Jews talk about it. The second day I tried the ring dodge, I was a little more successful; indeed every day for some time exceeded the day before, for, as I improved in patter, my sales increased. My appearance, too, was improving. At one time I was a regular swell, sported white kid gloves, white choker, white waistcoat, black ribbon, and a quizzing glass. Some people used to chaff me, and cry out 'there's a swell.' I never was saving, always spent my money as fast as I got it. I might have saved a goodish bit, and I wish I had now. I never had a wife, but I have had two or three broomstick matches, though they never turned out happy. I never got hold of one but what was fond of lush. I live in Westminster, at a padding-ken. I'd rather not tell you where, not that I've anything to fear, but people might think I was a *nose*, if anybody came after me, and they would crab me. I'd rather get something else to do if I could, but I think this is the best street game I could follow. I don't believe any of the ring-sellers dispose of more than myself, except little Ikey; he now adds other articles, a silver thimble (he calls it), some conundrums, a song-book and a seal, and all for a penny. I tried the same thing, but found I could do just as well with the rings alone. We all expects to do great things during the Exhibition. I think all on us ought to be allowed to sell in the parks. Foreigners are invited to witness specimens of

British Industry, and it's my opinion they should see all, from the highest to the lowest. We *did* intend petitioning the Prince on the subject, but I don't suppose it would be any go, seeing as how the slang coves" (the showmen), "have done so, and been refused."

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CHILDREN'S GILT WATCHES.

THESE articles were first introduced into general street sale about 10 years ago. They were then German made. The size was not much larger than that of a shilling, and to this tiny watch was appended as tiny a chain and seal. The street-price was only 1d., and the wholesale price was 8s. the gross. They were sold at eight of the swag-shops, all "English and foreign," or "English and German" establishments. From the price it would appear that the profit was 4d. a dozen, but as the street-sellers had to "take the watches as they came," the profit was but 3d., as a dozen watches in a gross had broken glasses, or were otherwise damaged and unsaleable. The supply of these watches was not equal to the demand, for when a case of them was received, "it could have been sold twice over." One street-seller told me that he had sold 15 and even 16 dozen of these watches on a day, and that once on a Saturday night, and early on Sunday morning, he had sold 2 gross, or 24 dozen. Such, however, was not the regular sale; a "good week" was a profit of 15s.

About six years ago gilt watches of a very superior kind were sold in the streets in a different way. They were French made, and were at first vended at 1s. each. Some were displayed in case-boxes, fitted up with divisions, in which were placed the watches with the guard-chains, about three-quarters of a yard long, coiled round them. There were also two or three keys, one in the form of a pistol. The others were hung from a small pole, sometimes a dozen, and sometimes two, being so suspended, and they had a good glittering appearance in a bright light; this street fashion still continues. The street-sellers, however, are anxious not to expose these watches too much, as they are easily injured by the weather, and any stain or injury is irreparable. The shilling sale continued prosperously for about six weeks, and then the wholesale price—owing, the street-sellers were told at the swag-shops, to "an opposition in the trade in Paris,"—was reduced to 4s. 6d. the dozen, and the retail street-price to 6d. each. When the trade was "at its best" there were thirty men and twenty women selling these watches, all May, June, and July, and each clearing from 12s. to 20s. (but rarely the latter sum) a week. Last "season" there were for the same period about half the number of sellers mentioned, averaging a profit of about 15d. a day each, or 9s. a week. The cry is—"Handsome present for 6d. Beautiful child's watch and chain, made of Peruvian metal, by working jewellers out of employ. Only 6d. for a handsome present."

The vendors of these watches are the regular

street-sellers, some of them being tolerably good patters. One of these men, in the second year of the street-sale of watches, appeared one morning in an apron and sleeves, to which brass and copper filings were made to adhere, and he announced himself as an English working jeweller unemployed, offering his own manufactures for sale, "better finished and more solid than the French." The man's sale was greatly increased. On the following day, however, four other English working jewellers appeared in Leicester-square and its approaches, each in besprinkled apron and sleeves, and each offering the productions of his own handicraft! The apron and sleeves were therefore soon abandoned.

Among the best "pitches,"—for the watch-sellers are not itinerant, though they walk to and fro—are the Regent's-park, Leicester-square, the foot of London-bridge, and of Blackfriars-bridge, and at the several railway stations.

The principal purchasers, I was told by an intelligent patterer, who sometimes "turned his hand to the watches," were "fathers and mothers," he thought, "and them as wished to please such parties."

Calculating that twenty-five persons now vend watches for twelve weeks in the year, and—as they are 10 per cent. cheaper than they were at the swag-shops—that each clears 8s. weekly, we find 360*l.* yearly expended in London streets in these toy watches.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF TINWARE.

The sellers of tins, who carry them under their arms, or in any way on a round, apart from the use of a vehicle, are known as hand-sellers. The word hand-seller is construed by the street-traders as meaning literally *hand-seller*, that is to say, a seller of things held or carried in the *hand*; but the term is clearly derived from the Scotch *hand-sell*, as in "handsell penny." Handsell, according to Jamieson, the Scotch etymologist, means, (1) "The first money that a trader receives for goods; also a gift conferred at a particular season." (2) "A piece of bread given before breakfast." Thre, the Gothic lexicographer, views the term handsell as having sprung from the Mæso-Gothic *hunstla* (sacrifice or offering). This is the same as the Anglo-Sax *hustl* (the Eucharist), whence comes the English *housel* and *unhousel*; and he considers the word to have originally meant a gift or offering of any kind. Hence, the hand-sellers of tin and other wares in the street, would mean simply those who offered such tin or other wares for sale. The goods they dispose of are dripping-pans (sometimes called "square pans"), sold at from 3*d.* to 18*d.*, the 3*d.* pans being "6 inch," and the 18*d.* "15 inch;" cullenders, 6*d.* to 9*d.*; hand-bowls, for washerwomen, 1*s.* (now a very small portion of the trade); roasting-jacks, with tin bodies, 6*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* (this used to be the best article for profit and ready sale in the trade, but "they are going out of date"); and the smaller articles of graters, &c.

The hand-sellers also trade in other articles which are less portable—the principal sale, how-

ever, is at "stands," and there chiefly on a Saturday night, the great business-time of street-commerce! These less portable articles are tea-kettles, 10*d.* to 18*d.*; saucepans of all sizes, the smallest being the "open pints" at 2*d.* or 2½*d.* each (they cost them 20*d.* a dozen; it's a bargain to get them at 18*d.*), and the largest the "nine quart;" but the kinds most in demand are the "three pints" and "two quarts," sold at 6*d.* and 8*d.* There are also fish-kettles in this street-traffic, though to a very limited extent—"one fish-kettle," I was told, "to four-and-twenty saucepans;" the selling price for the fish-kettles is 5*s.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* each; candlesticks are sold at 4*d.* to 1*s.*; and shaving-pots, 4*d.* A few tin things used to be sold at the news, but the trade is now almost entirely abandoned. These were tins for singeing horses, 2*s.* 6*d.* each when first introduced, ten or twelve years ago, but now 1*s.*, and stable lanterns, of punched tin, which cannot be sold now for more than 1*s.* each, though they cost 10*s.* per dozen at a tin-shop.

There are other tin articles vended in the streets, but they will be more properly detailed in my account of street-artisans, as the maker and the street-seller are the same individual. Among these are Dutch ovens, which are rarely offered now by those who purchase their goods at the tin-shops, as the charge there is 6*d.* "Why," said a working tinman to me, "I've had 10*d.* many a week for making ovens, and the stuff found. It takes two plates of tin to make an oven, that's 3*d.* at any tin-shop, before a minute's labour is given to it, and yet the men who hawk their own goods sell their ovens regularly enough at 4*d.* It's the ruin of the trade." The tin-shops, I may observe, supply the artisans with the materials they require, as well as the ready-made articles, to the street-seller.

One of the largest street-stands "in tin" is in St. John-street, Clerkenwell, on Saturday evenings, but the proprietor pertains to the artisan class, though he buys some of his goods at the tin-shops.

The hand-sellers of tin are about 100 in number, and 60 of that number may be said to be wives and children of the remaining 40; as the majority of the itinerant vendors of tinware are married men with families. "Tins" are not a heavy carriage, and can very well be borne from house to house by women, while children sell such things as nutmeg-graters, pepper-boxes, extinguishers, and save-alls. Those who sell the larger tin articles in the streets are generally the makers of them. "A dozen years back or more, perhaps, there was," I was informed, "some prime block-tin tea-pots sold in the streets; there's none now. Metal's druv out tin."

Among the street tin-sellers I heard many complaints of the smallness, and the constantly diminishing rate of their earnings. "Our people has bad luck, too," said one man, "or they isn't wide awake. You may remember, sir, that a few weeks back, a new save-all came in, and was called candle-wedges, and went off well. It was a tin thing, and ought by rights to have been started by the tin-shops for us. But it was first put out by the

swag-men at 3*s.* the gross. The first and second days the men were soon sold out. Then as could patterer did the best—I tried, but you see, sir, I'm no scholar. Well, they went at night to Mr. —'s, in Houndsditch, I think it is, and he says, 'I'm out of them, but I'll have some in the morning.' They goes in the morning, and the swag says: 'O, I can't afford 'em at three shillings, you can have 'em at four.' He put 1*s.* extra on the gross, cause they sold, nothing else, sir; and a relation of mine heard the swag shopkeeper say, 'Why, they're cheap at four; Jim (the street-seller) there made 3*s.* 3*d.* on 'em yesterday. I ain't a going to slave, and pay rent, and rates, and taxes, to make your fortens; it ain't likely.' You see, sir, they was sold at ½*d.* each, and cost ¼*d.*, which is 3*d.* a dozen, and so the swag got a higher profit, while the poor fellows had to sell for less profit."

From the most reliable information which I could acquire, it appears that these tin-sellers, taken altogether, do not earn above 6*s.* a week each, as regards the adult men, and half that as regards the children and women. To realize this amount, the adults must take 13*s.*, and the women and children 7*s.*, for the latter are less "priced down." Thus, if we calculate an average receipt, per individual, of 10*s.* weekly, reckoning 100 sellers, we find a yearly expenditure on tins, bought in the street, of 2500*l.* The trade is greatest in the suburbs, and some men, who have become "known on their rounds," supply houses, by order, with all the tins they require.

There is a branch of the tin-trade carried on in a way which I have shown prevailed occasionally among the costermongers, viz., the selling of goods on commission. This system is now carried on among all the parties who trade "from" swag-barrows.

The word "swag" which has been so often used in this work of late, is, like many other of the street-terms, of Scotch origin (as *handseller*, and *buster*). The Scotch word is *swag* or *swack*, and means, according to Jamieson, a quantity, a considerable number, a large collection of any kind. (The root appears to be an ancient German term, *swag*—a flock, a herd.) Hence a Swag Warehouse is a warehouse containing a large collection of miscellaneous goods; and a Swag Barrow, a barrow laden with a considerable assortment of articles. The slang term *swag* means booty, plunder—that is to say, the collection of goods—the "lot," the "heap" stolen.

Of these swag-barrowmen, there are not less than 150, and the barrows are mostly the property of three individuals, who are not street-sellers themselves. One of these men has 50 barrows of his own, and employs 50 men to work them. The barrow proprietor supplies not only the vehicle, but the stock, and the men's remuneration is 3*d.* in the 1*s.* on the amount of sales. Each article they sell is charged to the public 1*d.* The tin-wares of the swag-barrows are nutmeg-graters, bread-graters, beer-warmers, fish-slices, goblets, save-alls, extinguishers, candle-shades, money-boxes, children's plates, and rattles. In addition

to the tin-wares, the swag-barrows are stocked with brooches, rings, pot-ornaments, plates, small crockeryware, toys, &c., each article being also vended at 1*d.* The trade is so far stationary, that the men generally confine themselves to one neighbourhood, if not to one street. The majority of the swag-barrowmen have been costermongers, and nearly the whole have been engaged in street vocations all their lives. One man familiar with the trade thought I might state that the whole were of this description; for though there was lately a swag-barrowman who had been a tradesman in an extensive way, there was, he believed, no such exception at the present time. These barrowmen are nearly all uneducated, and are plodding and persevering men, though they make few exertions to better their condition. As the barrow and stock are supplied to them, without any outlay on their part, their faculties are not even sharpened, as among many of the costermongers, by the necessity of providing stock-money, and knowing how to bargain and buy to advantage. They have merely to sell. Their commission furnishes little or nothing more than the means of a bare subsistence. The great sale is on Saturday nights at the street-markets, and to the working people, who then crowd those places, and, as one said to me, "has a few pennies to lay out." At such times as much as 3*l.* has been taken by a swag-barrowman. During the other days of the week their earnings are small. It is considered a first-rate week, and there must be all the facilities for street-trade afforded by fine weather, to take 2*s.* a day (clearing 6*d.*), and 3*l.* on a Saturday night. This gives the swag-barrowman a commission of 18*s.*; but I am informed, by competent persons, that the average of the weekly profits of these street-traders does not exceed 10*s.* a week. This shows a yearly receipt, by the men working the barrows, of 3900*l.* as their profit or payment, and a gross receipt of 11,700*l.* Of this large amount nearly two-thirds, I am assured, is expended on tin-wares.

The prime cost, at the tin-shops, of these wares, to the barrow proprietors, are 7*s.* and 7*s.* 6*d.* the gross, leaving from 1½*d.* to 2*d.* profit on every shilling, over the 3*d.* commission paid to the salesman. The tins are all made in London. The jewellery, and other stock of the swag-barrows, are bought at the general swag-shops, of which I have before spoken.

#### OF THE LIFE OF A TIN-WARE SELLER.

The following street-biography was communicated to me in writing. It is, I believe, a striking instance of the vicissitudes and privations to which a street-life is subject. It forms, moreover, a curious example of those moral contradictions which make the same individual at one time give way *hopelessly* to the force of circumstances, and at another resolutely control them.

"My object," says my correspondent, "for writing this, what some folks no doubt will call a nonsensical epistle, is merely to show how much human nature is capable of enduring in the shape of privations. People in easy circumstances will

scarcely credit what I am about to relate; and many of the poor will smile at what I have termed hardships, and at my folly in endeavouring to paint the misery I have endured, which will appear slight when compared to what they themselves have suffered.

"I am the son of a mechanic who was accidentally drowned some weeks previous to my birth. My mother, through industry and perseverance, endeavoured to support me and my sister till we arrived at the ages of 15 and 18, I being the younger. I entered a gentleman's service as pantry-boy, where I continued until I considered myself competent to take a higher situation. Still a servant's life was not the bent of my inclinations; martial music and viewing soldiers on parade made me think that a rifle was a more graceful tool than a toasting-fork. I resolved to serve his Majesty, and for that purpose enlisted in the 60th Rifles on the route for India, but Providence ordained it otherwise. On the afternoon on which I listed I fell by accident and broke my leg, and as I was not sworn in I was entitled to no pension. I was six months confined to my bed, and it was three years before I could go without my crutch. Grief for my misfortunes had borne my mother to an early grave, and I was left a cripple and destitute. Whether by design or accident I do not recollect, but I met with the lady (Lady M——) in whose service I first entered as pantry-boy; she took pity on my forlorn condition, and kindly invited me to her Mansion, where I remained until completely restored to health, but still crippled. After this I was employed painting and glazing, &c., and, considering myself competent to get my living in that line, I resolved to go to London—the theatre of all my misery to come, for I was disappointed. On reaching the metropolis my paint-brush was turned into a shovel, my paint-pot into a dust sieve, for I could only get employed by a man to work in a dust-yard at 10s. a week. From thence I went to a firm belonging to a friend at Beckenham, near Croydon, as working time-keeper, or foreman; but during a fair in that village I neglected to back the time, and being discharged was cast upon the world again with only 3s. in my pocket, which I eat and drank up, having no idea of street trading. Then came my trials; but having had sufficient food during the day, I did not feel much the effects of my first night in the streets. The next day I had no food, and towards dusk began bitterly to feel my situation; that night I slept, or rather lay, in an empty house. Towards noon of the next day I felt weak, and drank large quantities of water, for I had no particular desire for food. Passing by a shop where old clothes were offered for sale, I saw a man wretched in appearance disposing of an old vest for a few pence. I caught the malady and was instantly spoiled of my coat, having received in exchange for it 2s. and an old frock—such as are generally worn by waggoners or countrymen. I more than once smiled at my novel appearance. A penny loaf, a drink of water, and a threepenny lodging was the first assault upon my

2s. I regretted, however, the 3d. paid for my lodging, and determined not to risk another, for my bedfellows were so numerous, and of such teasing propensities, that they would not allow me to sleep; truly indeed is it said that 'poverty makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows.' At this time I formed an acquaintance with a man whose condition was similar to my own; he engaged to put me 'fly to a dodge' or two; an explanation from him was necessary to make me acquainted with the sense of his words, which I soon found simply meant artful manoeuvres. One of these dodges was to snooze (a term for sleeping) in the Adelphi arches; I felt grateful for such a mark of disinterested friendship, and next day my friend and me fared sumptuously on the produce of my coat, and at night we repaired to the Arches in question, and there found a comfortable lodging in a hay-loft. I lay for some time, but did not sleep. I was several times addressed by my companion in an under tone, 'Are you asleep,' he whispered, 'ain't it a stunning dos?' (which means a good bed). I was not in a mood for conversation, and made no reply; to silence him completely I affected to snore, and this had the desired effect. For a few minutes he was quite quiet, and then he commenced with great caution to unlace my boots, with a view to stealing them. I perceived his object, and immediately left my lodging and companion. I felt grieved and disappointed at the loss of one in whom I placed all confidence; but this time wisdom was purchased cheaply, inasmuch as I suffered no loss except that my money might have lasted me a little longer. The remainder of that night I strayed about the Strand and Charing-cross, after a drink of water; I took a seat on a curb surrounding the pump; many wretched beings came and seated themselves beside me, and a conversation ensued respecting their several destinations during the day. One proposed going to Hungerford-market to do a feed on decayed shrimps or other offal laying about the market; another proposed going to Covent-garden to do a 'tightener' of rotten oranges, to which I was humorously invited; I accepted the invitation, and proceeded with my new companion. I fared well; I filled my hat, took a seat, and made a most delicious breakfast. I remained strolling about the Garden all day, and towards evening was invited by my companions to a 'dos' in an open shed in Islington; this I declined, alleging that I had a lodging, but that night I slept amongst a heap of stones near the pillar at Charing-cross. I continued to attend the Garden for several weeks, subsisting entirely on the offal of that market. One day I took notice of a man there selling chestnut leaves; I enquired how he obtained them: he told me he plucked them from the trees without hindrance, and directed me to where I could obtain some. I went to a grove in the vicinity of Kilburn, and by there all night. Next morning I found no leaves, so I returned disappointed to town, and on going through the market a woman employed me to carry a bushel of pears some little distance for her for a penny. I felt quite elevated in anticipation of

such a treat as a penny loaf, but alas! I fell down under the weight of the fruit and poverty; my employer, however, kindly gave me the penny, though some of her pears were injured, and I had not taken them half the required distance. With the money I purchased a loaf, and sat on a stone near the pump in Covent Garden and began my meal. Here I soon had a companion, who after ransacking a lettuce at the pump, began to devour it. I shared my loaf with him. 'O God!' said he, 'what are we destined to suffer. I have escaped the bullets of the Carlists in Spain to die in the streets of London with hunger.' I felt an interest in the poor fellow, who I discovered in the course of conversation had been a gentleman's servant in his time; he assured me he had been living in the same way for several weeks as I myself had been. Towards night my companion asked me where I slept. I told him my different haunts, he told me I'd better go to the straw-yard with him; this was a place I had not yet heard of; it was the nightly refuge for the houseless poor. I accompanied him without hesitation; my confidence was not misplaced; I slept there several nights. Bread was distributed to us night and morning, and this was fortunate, for the Garden began to fail. In the course of conversation with some of the inmates of the Refuge, we found that we could obtain employment at stone-breaking; this we tried the next morning, and succeeded. We worked all day, and received 6d. each on leaving work. We then made up our minds to go to lodgings that we might have an opportunity of washing what were once shirts.

"Misery had not had that wasting influence on my companion as it had on me. I was at this time a complete skeleton; a puff of wind would cause me to stagger. I continued stone-breaking, but about noon of the third day I sunk exhausted on the heap of stones before me. Poverty had done its work, and I anticipated with pleasure approaching dissolution. I was assisted to my lodging by my companion, and went to bed. When the woman at the lodging-house discovered that I was ill, she ordered some of her domestics to dress me and put me in the street, alleging that she was under a penalty of 20l. were it discovered that she lodged a sick stranger. I was, therefore, cast into the street at 12 o'clock at night. My companion then gave me the 3d. he had earned that day to procure me a lodging if possible, and he slept in the streets the remainder of the night. I went to another lodging, concealing as much as possible my illness; my money was taken, and I was conducted to bed. I spent a wretched night, and next morning I was very bad. The landlady led me to the workhouse; I was admitted directly; had they detained me asking questions I should have sunk on the floor. My disorder was pronounced English cholera. I lay three weeks in a precarious state, but at the end of seven weeks was recovered sufficiently to walk about. I was then discharged; but on going towards the Abbey in Westminster I fainted, and on recovery found myself surrounded by a number of persons. I was advised to return to the

house; I did so, and was admitted for a short time, after which I was again discharged, but I received out-door relief twice a week; and for some time a small portion of bread and cheese as well. *I had now lost not only all hope, but even desire of bettering my condition;* during these trials I made none acquainted with my privations, save those situated as I was. I now altered my condition as regards sleeping; I walked about during the night, and slept a portion of the day on a heap of sand near Westminster-bridge. I then remembered to have a poor relative in Kensington; I did not plead distress, but merely asked whether she knew where I might procure employment. I had a cup of tea, the first I had tasted since I was in the workhouse, a period of five weeks. Being asked some question by my relative, I could not help making reference to some of my sufferings. At this place I found a young man of whom I had had a previous acquaintance; I told him of my inability to procure a lodging, and he allowed me without the knowledge of his parents to sleep in the stable-loft; the bed was hard, but the coal sacks kept me warm. Here I had many opportunities of earning a few pence, and I began to regain my spirits. On one occasion, seeing a lad ill-treated by a young man who was much his superior in size and strength, I interposed, and it may be conjectured in what manner. This circumstance procured me a friend, for, with the assistance of the lad I had protected, I was enabled to live tolerably well, and after a short while I got a situation at a coal-shed at 10s. a week. I continued in this place eighteen months, but, my master giving up the business, I was again cast on the world. I then began to think seriously of some way of living, and for the first time asked for the loan of 15s. With this I purchased a few articles of furniture, laid out 7s. 6d. for two hundred of oranges, with which I walked and hawked about two days, taking but 4d. during the time. I disposed of the remainder of my stock, wholesale, for 6s.; with this I purchased a small tin saucepan, a piece of marble slab, and commenced sugar-boiling. I retailed my manufacture in the streets. By dint of perseverance and economy I managed to live this way through the winter and a portion of the spring; but summer being now come, people needed none of my compounds to warm their mouths, so it was necessary for me to change my hand. What should I do? Thoughts came and vanished at their births. I recollected having seen a person selling rings at a penny each; I made up my mind to try the same. I laid out 5s. in a tray and stock; after arranging the goods to the best advantage I sallied into the streets. The glittering baubles took for a while, but when discoloured were useless. Having once a considerable stock of these soiled rings, I was prompted to begin "lot selling." After calculating the profits, I commenced selling in that line. As this continued for seven weeks I managed to get a living. The system then became general; every street in the metropolis contained a lot seller, so I was determined to change my hand. One day in the street I saw a

girl with a bundle of old umbrellas going towards a marine store shop; I asked if the umbrellas were for sale; she replied in the affirmative; the price she asked was 4d.; I became a purchaser. With these old umbrellas I commenced a new life. I bought some trifling tools necessary for repairing umbrellas, and, after viewing well the construction of the articles, I commenced operations. I succeeded, and in a little time could not only mend an old umbrella, but make a new one. This way of living I followed three years. In one of my walks through the streets crying old umbrellas to sell, I saw a street tinker repairing a saucepan; he seemed so very comfortable with his fire-pan before him, that I resolved from that moment to become a tinker, and for that purpose I bought a few tools, prepared a budget, and sallied into the streets with as much indifference as if I had been at the business since my birth. After a little practice I fancied I was fit for better things than mending old saucepans, and flattered myself that I was able to make a new one. This I resolved to attempt, and succeeded so well, that I at once abandoned the rainy-day system, and commenced manufacturing articles in tin-ware, such as are now sold in the streets, namely funnels, nutmeg-graters, penny mugs, extinguishers, slices, savealls, &c. I soon became known to the street-sellers and swag-shop proprietors. The prices I get are low, and I am deficient in some of the tools necessary to forward the work, with the required speed to procure returns adequate to my expenses; but thanks to the Lord I am better off than ever I expected to be, with the difference only of a somewhat shattered constitution. There are many at the present day suffering as I have done, and they may be found in and about the different markets of the metropolis."

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF DOG-COLLARS.

OF these street-traders there are now regularly twelve; one man counted to me fourteen, but two of these only sold dog-collars occasionally, when they could not get employment in their trade as journeymen brass-founders. Of the regular hands, one, two, and sometimes three sell only dog-collars (with the usual adjuncts of locks, and sometimes chains, and key-rings), but even these, when their stock-money avails, prefer uniting to the collars some other trifling article.

Two of the most profitable pitches for the sale of these articles are in the neighbourhood of the Old Swan Pier, off Thames-street, and at a corner of the Bank. Neither of these two traders confines his stock to dog-collars, though they constitute the most valuable portion of it. The one sells, in addition to his collars, key-rings, keys and chains, dog-whistles, stamps with letters engraved upon them, printer's type, in which any name or initials may be set up, shaving-brushes, trowser-straps, razors, and a few other light articles. The other sells little more than "dog" articles, with the addition of brass padlocks and small whips. But the minor commodities are frequently varied, according to the season and to the street-seller's opinion of what may "sell."

Some of these traders hang their wares against the rails of any public or other building in a good situation, where they can obtain leave. Others have stalls, with "a back," from the corners of which hang the strings of dog-collars, one linked within another. The manner in which one street-seller displays his wares is shown in the illustration before given. Of the whole number, half are either itinerant on a round, or walk up and down a thoroughfare and an adjacent street or two. "Dog-collars," said one man, "is no good at Saturday-night markets. People has said to me—for I was flat enough to try once—'Dogs! pooh, I've hardly grub enough for the kids.' For all that, sir, some poor people has dogs, and is very fond of them too; ay, and I've sold them collars, but seldom. I think it's them as has no children has dogs."

The collars most in demand are brass. One man pointed out to me the merits of his stock, which he retailed from 6d. each (for the very small ones) to 3s.—for collars seemingly big enough for Pyrenean sheep dogs. Some of the street-sold collars have black and red rims and linings; others are of leather, often scarlet, stitched ornamentally over a sort of jointed iron or wire-work. A few are of strong compact steel chain-work; "but them's more the fashion," said one seller, "for sporting dogs, like pointers and greyhounds, and is very seldom bought in the streets. It's the pet dogs as is our best friends."

The dog-collar sellers have, as regards perhaps one-half, been connected in their youth with some mechanical occupation in metal manufacture. Four, I am told, are or were pensioners to a small amount, as soldiers or sailors.

Some further particulars of the business will be found in the following statement given me by a man in the trade. He was sickly-looking, seemed dispirited at first, but to recover his spirits as he conversed, and spoke with a provincial (I presume a Warwickshire or Staffordshire) accent.

"I served my time, sir; my relations put me—for my parents died when I was a boy—to a harness furniture maker, in Walsall (Walsal), who supplied Mr. Dixon, a saddler's ironmonger, in a good way. I had fair makings, and was well treated, and when I was out of my time I worked for another master, and I then found I could make my pad territs" (the round loops of the harness pad, through which the reins are passed), "my hooks, my buckles, my ornaments (some of 'em crests), as well as any man. I worked only in brass, never plated, but sometimes the body for plating, and mostly territs and hooks. Thinking I'd better myself, I came to London. I was between five and six weeks before I got a stroke of work, and my money had gone. I found that London harness makers and coachmakers' names was put on Walsall-made goods, and 'London made' and 'town made' was put too. They might be as good, but they wasn't town made no more nor I am. I can't tell what I suffered, and felt, and thought, as at last I walked the streets. I was afraid to call at any brass-worker's—for I can do many sorts of brass work—I was so shabby. I called once at

Mr. A—'s, near Smithfield, and he, or his foreman perhaps it was, says to me, 'Give that tug-buckle a file.' I'd had nothing to eat but an apple I found in the street that day, and my hand trembled, and so he told me that drunkards, with trembling hands, wouldn't do there. I was never a drinking man; and at that time hadn't tasted so much as beer for ten days. My landlady—I paid her 1s. a week for half a bed with a porter—trusted me my rent, 'cause I paid her when I had it; but I walked about, nervous and trembling, and frightened at every sudden sound. No, sir, I've stood looking over a bridge, but, though I may have thought of suicide, I never once had really a notion of it. I don't know how to tell it, but I felt stupified like, as much as miserable. I felt I could do nothing. Perhaps I shouldn't have had power of mind to drown myself if I'd made up my resolution; besides, it's a dreadful wickedness. I always liked reading, and, before I was fairly beaten out, used to read at home, at shop-windows, and at book-stalls, as long as I dared, but latterly, when I was starving, I couldn't fix my mind to read anyhow. One night I met a Wa's'll friend, and he took me to his inn, and gave me a good beef-steak supper and some beer, and he got me a nice clean bed in the house. In the morning he gave me what did me most good of all, a good new shirt, and 5s. I got work two days after, and kept it near five years, with four masters, and married and saved 12l. We had no family to live, and my poor wife died in the cholera in 1849, and I buried her decently, thank God, for she was a good soul. When I thought the cholera was gone, I had it myself, and was ill long, and lost my work, and had the same sufferings as before, and was without soles to my shoes or a shirt to my back, 'till a gentleman I'd worked for lent me 1l., and then I went into this trade, and pulled up a little. In six weeks I paid 15s. of my debt, and had my own time for the remaining 5s. Now I get an odd job with my master sometimes, and at others sell my collars, and chains, and key-rings, and locks, and such like. I'm ashamed of the dog-collar locks; I can buy them at 2d. a dozen, or 1s. 6d. a gross; they're sad rubbish. In two or three weeks sometimes, the wire hasp is worn through, just by the rattling of the collar, and the lock falls off. I make now, one way and another, about 10s. a week. My lodging's 2s. a week for a bed-room—it's a closet tho', for my furniture all went. God's good, and I'll see better days yet. I have sure promise of regular work, and then I can earn 30s. to 40s. I do best with my collars about the docks. I'm sure I don't know why."

I am told that each of the street-sellers of dog-collars sell on the average a dozen a week, at a medium receipt of 12s. ("sometimes 20s., and sometimes 6s."), though some will sell three and even four dozen collars in the week. Any regular dog-collar seller will undertake to get a name engraved upon it at 1d. a letter. The goods are bought at a swag-shop, or an establishment carried on in the same way. The retailer's profit is 35 per cent.

Reckoning 12s. weekly taken by twelve men, we find 374l. expended yearly in the streets in dog-collars.

#### OF THE LIFE OF A STREET-SELLER OF DOG-COLLARS.

FROM the well-known vendor of these articles whose portrait was given in No. 10 of this work, I had the following sketch of his history:—

"I was born in Brewer-street, St. James," he said, in answer to my questions; "I am 73 years of age. My father and mother were poor people; I never went to school; my father died while I was young; my mother used to go out charing; she couldn't afford to pay for schooling, and told me, I must look out and *yearn* my own living while I was a mere chick. At ten years of age I went to sea in the merchant service. While I was in the merchant service, I could get good wages, for I soon knowed my duty. I was always of an industrious turn, and never liked to be idle; don't you see what I mean. In '97 I was pressed on board the INCONSTANT frigate; I was paid off six months arterwards, but hadn't much to take, and that, like all other young men who hadn't larned the dodges of life, I spent very soon; but I never got drunk—thank God!" said the old man, "I never got drunk, or I shouldn't ha been what I am now at 73 years of age. I was drafted into the Woolwich 44-gun ship; from her to the OVERISAL." I inquired how the name of the ship was spelt; "Oh I am not scholar enough for that there," he replied, "tho' I did larn to read and write when aboard a man of war. I larned myself. But you must look into a *Dutch dictionary*, for it's a Dutch name. I then entered on board the AMPHINE frigate, and arter I had sarved some months in her, I entered the merchant service again, and arter that I went to Greenland to the whale-fishery—they calls me here in the college" (he is now an inmate of Greenwich Hospital) "'Whaler Ben,' but I arnt affronted—most on 'em here have nicknames. I went three voyages besides to the West Ingees. I never got drunk even there, though I was obliged to drink rum; it wouldn't ha done to ha drunk the water NEAT, there was so many insects in it. When my sailor's life was over I comes to Liverpool and marries a wife—aye and as good a wife as any poor man ever had in England. I had saved a goodish bit o' money, nearly 300l., for I was not so foolish as some of the poor sailors, who yearns their money like horses and spends it like asses, I say. Well we sets up a shop—a chandler shop—in Liverpool: me and my old 'ooman does; and I also entered into the pig-dealing line. I used to get some of my pigs from Ireland, and some I used to breed myself, but I was very misfortunate. You recollect the year when the disease was among the cattle, in course you recollects that; well, sir, I lost 24 pigs and a horse in one year, and that was a good loss for a poor man, wer'n't it? I thought it werry hard, for I'd worked hard for my money at sea, and I was always werry careful, arter I knowed what life was. My poor wife too used to trust a good deal in the shop and by-and-

by, behold you, me and my old 'ooman was on our beam ends. My wife was took ill too—and, for the purpose of getting the best advice, I brings her to London, but her cable had run out, and she died, and I've been a poor forlorned creatur' ever since. You wouldn't think it, but arter that I never slept on a bed for seven years. I had blankets and my clothes—but what I means is that I never had a bed to lie on. I sold most of my bits o' things to bury my wife. I didn't relish applying to the parish. I kept a few sticks tho', for I don't like them ere lodging-houses. I can't be a werry bad kerackter, for I was seven years under one landlord, and I warrant me if I wanted a room agin he would let me have one. Arter my wife died, knowing some'at about ropes I gets work at Maberley's, the great contractors—in course you knows *him*. I made rope traces for the artillery; there's a good deal of leather-work about the traces, and stitching them, you see, puts me up to the making of dogs'-collars. I was always handy with my fingers, and can make shoes or anythink. I can work now as well as ever I could in my life, only my eyes isn't so good. Ain't it curious now, sir, that wot a man larns in his fingers he never forgets? Well being out o' work, I was knocking about for some time, and then I was advised to apply for a board to carry at one of them cheap tailors, but I didn't get none; so I takes to hawking link buttons and key rings, and buys some brass dog-collars; it was them brass collars as made me bethought myself as I could make some leather ones. Altho' I had been better off I didn't think it any disgrace to get a honest living. The leather collars is harder to make than the brass ones, only the brass ones wants more implements. There are about a dozen selling in the streets as makes brass-collars—there's not much profit on the brass ones. People says there's nothing like leather, and I thinks they are right. Well, sir, as I was a telling you, I commences the leather-collar making,—in course I didn't make 'em as well at first as I do now. It was werry hard lines at the best of times. I used to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning in the summer time, and make my collars; then I'd turn out about 9, and keep out until 7 or 8 at night. I seldom took more than 2s. per day. What profit did I get out of 2s.? Why, lor' bless you, sir! if I hadn't made them myself, I shouldn't have got no profit at all. But as it was, if I took 2s., the profits was from 1s. to 1s. 6d.; howsomever, sometimes I didn't take 6d. Wet days too used to run me aground altogether; my rheumatics used to hore me always when the rain come down, and then I couldn't get out to sell. If I'd any leather at them times I used to make it up; but if I hadn't none, why I was obligated to make the best on it. Oh, sir! you little knows what I've suffered; many a banyan day I've had in my little room—upon a wet day—aye, and other days too. Why, I think I'd a starved if it hadn't a been for the 'bus-men about Hungerford-market. They are good lads them there 'bus lads to such as me; they used to buy my collars when they didn't want them. Ask any on 'em

if they know anything about old Tom, the collar-maker, and see if they don't flare up and respect me. They used sometimes to raffle my collars and give 'em back to me. Mr. Longstaff too, the laudlord of the Hungerford Arms—I believe it's called the Hungerford Hotel—has given me something to eat very often when I was hungry, and had nothing myself. There's what you call a hornary there every day. You knows what I mean—gentlemen has their grub there at so much a head, or so much a belly it should be, I says. I used to come in for the scraps, and werry thankful I was for them I can assure you. Yes, Mr. Longstaff is what you may call a good man. He's what you calls a odd man, and a odd man's always a good man. All I got to say is, 'God bless him!' he's fed me many time when I've been hungry. I used to light upon other friends too,—landlords of public-houses, where I used to hawk my collars; they seemed to take to me somehow; it wer'n't for what I spent in their houses I'm sure, seeing as how I'd nothing to spend. I had no pension for my sarvice, and so I was advised to apply for admission to 'the house here' (Greenwich Hospital). I goes to Somerset-House; another poor fellow was making a application at the same time; but I didn't nothing till one very cold day, when I was standing quite miserable like with my collars. I'd been out several hours and hadn't taken a penny, when up comes the man as wanted to get into the house, running with all his might to me. I thought he was going to tell me he had got into the house, and I was glad on it, for, poor fellow, he was werry bad off; howsomever he says to me, 'Tom,' says he, 'they wants you at the Admiralty.' 'Does they?' says I, and 'cordingly away I goes; and arter telling the admiral my sarvice, and answering a good many questions as he put to me, the admiral says, says he, 'The order will be made out; you shall go into the house.' I think the admiral knowed me or somethink about me, you see. I don't know his name, and it would'n't ha' done to have axed. God bless him, whoever he is, I says, and shall say to my dying day; it seemed like Providence. I hadn't taken a ha'penny all that day; I was cold and hungry, and suffering great pain from my rheumatics. Thank God, 'er claimed the old man in conclusion, "I am quite comfortable now. I've everythink I want except a little more tea and shuggar, but I'm quite content, and thank God for all his mercies."

The old man informed me moreover that he did not think there were more than half-a-dozen street-sellers besides himself who made leather collars; it was a poor trade, he said, and though the other makers were younger than he was, he "could lick them all at stitching." He did not believe, he told me, that any of the collar-sellers sold more than he did—if as many—for he had friends that perhaps other men had not. He makes collars now sometimes, and wishes he could get some shopkeeper to sell them for him, and then maybe he says, he could obtain a little more tea and shuggar, and assist a sister-in-law of his whom he tells me is in great distress, and whom he has been

in the habit of assisting for many years, notwithstanding his poverty. The old man, during the recital of his troubles, was affected to tears several times—especially when he spoke of his wife, and the distress he had undergone—and with much sincerity blessed God for the comforts that he now enjoys.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF TOOLS.

THESE people are of the same class as the sellers of hardware articles, though so far a distinct body that they generally sell tools only.

The tools are of the commonest kind, and supplied by the cheapest swag-shops, from which establishments the majority of the street-traders derive their supplies. They are sometimes displayed on a small barrow, sometimes on a stall, and are mostly German-made.

The articles sold and the price asked—and generally obtained, as no extravagant profit is demanded—is shown by the following:—

Claw hammers, 6d. Large claw, black and glaze-faced, 1s. Pincers, 4d.; larger ones, 6d. Screw-drivers, from 2d. to 1s. Flat-nose pliers, 6d. a pair; squares, 6d. to 1s. Carpenters' oil-cans, from 9d. to 1s. 3d. Nests of brad-awls (for joiners, and in wooden cases), 6d. to 2s. Back saws, 1s. to 2s. 6d.

While many of the street-sellers of tools travel the several thoroughfares and suburbs of the metropolis, others vend tools of a particular kind in particular localities. These localities and sellers may be divided into four distinct classes:—(1) The street-sellers of tools in the markets; (2) The street-sellers of tools at the docks and warehouses; (3) The street-sellers of tools at mews, stable-yards, and job-masters'; and (4) The street-sellers of tools to working men at their workshops.

The markets which are usually frequented by the vendors of tools are Newgate and Leadenhall. There are, I am informed, only five or six street-sellers who at present frequent these markets on the busy days. The articles in which they deal are butchers' saws, cleavers, steels, meat-hooks, and knives; these saws they sell from 2s. to 4s. each; knives and steels, from 9d. to 1s. 3d. each; cleavers, from 1s. 6d. to 2s. each; and meat-hooks at 1d., 2d., and 3d. each, according to the size. It is very seldom, however, that cleavers are sold by the street-sellers, as they are too heavy to carry about. I am told that the trade of the tool-sellers in Newgate and Leadenhall markets is now very indifferent, owing chiefly to the butchers having been so frequently imposed upon by the street-sellers, that they are either indisposed or afraid to deal with them. When the itinerant tool-sellers are not occupied at the markets they vend their wares to tradesmen at private shops, but often without success. "It is a poor living," said one of the hawkers to me; "sometimes little better than starving. I have gone out a whole day and haven't taken a farthing." I am informed that the greater portion of these street-sellers are broken-down butchers. The tools they vend are purchased at the Brummagem warehouses. To start in this branch of the street-business 5s. or

10s. usually constitutes the amount of capital invested in stock, and the average takings of each are about 2s. or 2s. 6d. a day.

"A dozen years back twenty such men offered saws at my shop," said a butcher in a northern suburb to me; "now there's only one, and he seems half-starving, poor fellow, and looks very hungrily at the meat. Perhaps it's a way he's got to have a bit given him, as it is sometimes."

The only street-seller of tools at present frequenting Billingsgate-market is an elderly man, who is by trade a working cutler. The articles he displays upon his tray are oyster-knives, fish-knives, steels, scissors, packing-needles, and hammers. This tradesman makes his own oyster-knives and fish-knives; the scissors and hammers are second-hand; and the packing-needles are bought at the ironmongers. Sometimes brad-awls, gimlets, nails, and screws form a part of his stock. He informed me that he had frequented Billingsgate-market upwards of ten years. "Wet or dry," he said, "I am here, and I often suffer from rheumatics in the head and limbs. Sometimes I have taken only a few pence; on other occasions I have taken 3s. or 4s., but this is not very often. However, what with the little I take at Billingsgate, and at other places, I can just get a crust, and go on from day to day."

The itinerant saw-sellers offer their goods to any one in the street as well as at the shops, and are at the street markets on Saturday evenings with small saws for use in cookery. With the butchers they generally barter rather than sell, taking any old saw in exchange with so much money, for a new one. "I was brought up a butcher," said one of these saw-sellers, "and worked as a journeyman, off and on, between twenty and thirty year. But I grew werry delicate from rheumatics, and my old 'ooman was bad too, so that we once had to go into Marylebone work'us. I had no family living, perhaps they're better as it is. We discharged ourselves after a time, and they gave us 5s. I then thought I'd try and sell a few saws and things. A master-butcher that's been a friend to me, lent me another 5s., and I asked a man as sold saws to butchers to put me in the way of it, and he took me to a swag-shop. I do werry badly, sir, but I'll not deny, and I can't deny—not anyhow—when you tell me Mr. — told you about me—that there's 'elps to me. If I make a bargain, for so much; or for old saws or cleavers, or any old butcher thing, and so much; a man wot knows me says, 'Well, old boy, you don't look satisfied; here's a bit of steak for you.' Sometimes it's a cut off a scrag of mutton, or weal; that gives the old 'ooman and me a good nourishing bit of grub. I can work at times, and every Saturday a'most I'm now a porter to a butcher. I carries his meat from Newgate, when he's killed hisself, and wants no more than a man's weight from the market; and when he 'asn't killed hisself in course he hires a cart. I makes 1s. a day the year round, I think, on saws, and my old 'ooman makes more than 'arf as much at charing, and there's the 'elps, and then I gets 18d. and my

grub every Saturday. It's no use grumbling; lots isn't grubbed 'arf so well as me and my old 'ooman. My rent's 20*d.* a week."

The articles vended by the second class of the street-sellers of tools, or those whose purchasers are mostly connected with the docks and warehouses, consist of iron-handled claw-hammers, spanners, bed-keys, and corkscrews. Of these street-traders there are ten or twelve, and the greater portion of them are blacksmiths out of employ. Some make their own hammers, whereas others purchase the articles they vend at the swag-shops. "We sell more hammers and bed-keys than other things," said one, "and sometimes we sell a corkscrew to the landlord of a public-house, and then we have perhaps half-a-pint of beer. Our principal customers for spanners are wheelwrights. Those for hammers are egg-merchants, oilmen, wax and tallow-chandlers, and other tradesmen who receive or send out goods in wooden cases; as well as chance customers in the streets." The amount of capital required to start in the line is from 5*s.* to 15*s.*: "it is not much use," said one, "to go to shop with less than 10*s.*"

A third class of the street-sellers of tools are the vendors of curry-combs and brushes, mane-combs, scrapers, and clipping instruments; and these articles are usually sold at the several mews, stable-yards, and jobbing-masters' in and about the metropolis. The sellers are mostly broken-down grooms, who, not being able to obtain a situation, resort to street-selling as a last shift. "It is the last coach, when a man takes to this kind of living," said one of my informants, a groom in a "good place;" "and it's getting worse and worse. The poor fellows look half-starved. Why, what do you think I gave for these scissors? I got 'em for 6*d.* and a pint of beer, and I should have to give perhaps half-a-crown for 'em at a shop." The trade is fast declining, and to gentlemen's carriage mews the street-sellers of such tools rarely resort, as the instruments required for stable-use are now bought, by the coachmen, of the tradesmen who supply their masters. At the "mixed mews," as I heard them called, there are two men who, along with razors, knives, and other things, occasionally offer "clipping" and "trimming" scissors. Four or five years ago there were four of these street-sellers. The trimming-scissors are, in the shops, 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a pair. There is one trade still carried on in these places, although it is diminutive compared to what it was: I allude to the sale of curry-combs. Those vended by street-sellers at the mews are sold at 7*d.* or 6*d.* The best sale for these curry-combs is about Coventry-street and the Haymarket, and at the livery-stables generally. Along with curry-combs, the street-vendors sell wash-leathers, mane-combs (horn), sponges (which were like dried moss for awhile, I was told, got up by the Jews, but which are now good), dandy-brushes (whalebone-brushes, to scrape dirt from a horse's legs, before he is groomed), spoke-brushes (to clean carriage-wheels), and coach-mops. One dweller in a large West-end mews computed that 100 different street-traders resorted thither daily, and that

twenty sold the articles I have specified. In this trade, I am assured, there are no broken-down coachmen or grooms, only the regular street-sellers. A commoner curry-comb is sold at 2*d.* (prime cost 1*s.* 3*d.* a dozen), at Smithfield, on market-days, and to the carmen, and the owners of the rougher sort of horses; but this trade is not extensive.

There may be ten men, I am told, selling common "currys;" and they also sell other articles (often horse oil-cloths and nose-bags) along with them.

The last class of street-sellers is the beaten-out mechanic or workman, who, through blindness, age, or infirmities, is driven to obtain a livelihood by supplying his particular craft with their various implements. Of this class, as I have before stated, there are six men in London who were brought up as tailors, but are now, through some affliction or privation, incapacitated from following their calling. These men sell needles at four and five for 1*d.*; thimbles 1*d.* to 2*d.* each; scissors from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*; and wax 1*d.* the lump. There are also old and blind shoemakers, who sell a few articles of grindery to their shopmates, as they term them, as well as a few decayed members of other trades, hawking the implements of the handicraft to which they formerly belonged. But as I have already given a long account of one of this class, under the head of the blind needle-seller, there is no occasion for me to speak further on the subject.

From one of the street-traders I saw I had the following account of his struggles, as well as the benefit he received from teetotalism, of which he spoke very warmly. His room was on the fourth floor of a house in a court near Holborn, and was clean and comfortable-looking. There were good-sized pictures, in frames, of the Queen, the Last Supper, and a Rural Scene, besides minor pictures: some of these had been received in exchange for saws with street-picture-sellers. A shelf was covered with china ornaments, such as are sold in the streets; the table had its oil-skin cover, and altogether I have seldom seen a more decent room. The rent, unfurnished, was 2*s.* a week.

"I've been eight years in this trade, sir," the saw-seller said, "but I was brought up to a very different one. When a lad I worked in a coal-pit along with my father, but his behaviour to me was so cruel, he beat me so, that I ran away, and walked every step from the north of England to London. I can't say I ever repented running away—much as I've gone through. My money was soon gone when I got to London, and my way of speaking was laughed at. [He had now very little of a provincial accent.] That's fourteen year back. Why, indeed, sir, it puzzles me to tell you how I lived then when I did live. I jobbed about the markets, and slept, when I could pay for a lodging, at the cheap lodging-houses; as I got into the way of selling a few things in the streets, as I saw others do. I sold laces and children's handkerchiefs. Sometimes I was miserable enough when I hadn't a farthing, and if I managed to make a sixpence I got tipsy on it. For six weeks I slept every night in the Peckham Union. For another five or six weeks I slept every



THE STREET-SELLER OF WALKING-STICKS.

[From a Photograph.]

night in the dark arches by the Strand. I've sometimes had twenty or thirty companions there. I used to lie down on the bare stones, and was asleep in a minute, and slept like a top all night, but waking was very bad. I felt stiff, and sore, and cold, and miserable. How I lived at all is a wonder to me. About eleven years ago I was persuaded to go to a Temperance Meeting in Harp Alley (Farringdon-street), and there I signed the pledge; that is, I made my mark, for I can't read or write, which has been a great hinder to me. If I'd been a scholar a teetotal gent would have got me into the police three years ago, about the time I got married. I did better, of course, when I was a teetotaler—no more dark arches. I sold a few little shawls in the streets then, but it was hardly bread and butter and coffee at times. Eight year ago I thought I would try saw-selling: a shopkeeper advised me, and I began on six salt saws, which I sold to oilmen. They're for cutting salt only, and are made of zinc, as steel would rust and dirty the salt. The trade was far better at first than it is now. In good weeks I earned 16s. to 18s. In bad weeks 10s. or 12s. Now I may earn 10s., not more, a week, pretty regular: yesterday I made only 6d. Oilmen are better customers than chance street-buyers, for I'm known to them. There's only one man besides myself selling nothing but saws. I walk, I believe, 100 miles every week, and that I couldn't do, I know, if I wasn't teetotal. I never long for a taste of liquor if I'm ever so cold or tired. It's all poisonous."

The saws sold are 8 inch, which cost at the saw-shops 8s. and 8s. 6d. a dozen; 10 inch, 9s. and 9s. 6d.; and so on, the price advancing according to the increased size, to 18 inch, 13s. 6d. the dozen. Larger sizes are seldom sold in the streets. The second man's earnings, my informant believed, were the same as his own.

The wife of my informant, when she got work as an embroideress, could earn 11s. and 12s. At present she was at work braiding dresses for a dressmaker, at 2½d. each. By hard work, and if she had not her baby to attend to, she could earn no more than 7½d. a day. As it was she did not earn 6d.

#### OF THE BEGGAR STREET-SELLERS.

UNDER this head I include only such of the beggar street-sellers as are neither infirm nor suffering from any severe bodily affliction or privation. I am well aware that the aged—the blind—the lame and the halt often *pretend* to sell small articles in the street—such as boot-laces, tracts, cabbage-nets, lucifer-matches, kettle-holders, and the like; and that such matters are carried by them partly to keep clear of the law, and partly to evince a disposition to the public that they are willing to do something for their livelihood. But these being really objects of charity, they belong more properly to the second main division of this book, in which the poor, or those that can't work, and their several means of living, will be treated of.

Such, though beggars, are not "lurkers"—a lurker being strictly one who loiters about for some dishonest purpose. Many modes of thieving

as well as begging are termed "lurking"—the "dead lurk," for instance, is the expressive slang phrase for the art of entering dwelling-houses during divine service. The term "lurk," however, is mostly applied to the several modes of plundering by representations of sham distress.

It is of these alone that I purpose here treating—or rather of that portion of them which pretends to deal in manufactured articles.

In a few instances the street-sellers of small articles of utility are also the manufacturers. Many, however, *say* they are the producers of the things they offer for sale, thinking thus to evade the necessity of having a hawker's licence. The majority of these petty dealers know little of the manufacture of the goods they vend, being mere tradesmen. Some few profess to be the makers of their commodities, solely with the view of enlisting sympathy, and thus either selling the trifles they carry at an enormous profit, or else of obtaining alms.

An inmate of one of the low lodging-houses has supplied me with the following statement:—"Within my recollection," says my informant, "the great branch of trade among these worthies, was the sale of sewing cotton, either in skeins or on reels. In the former case, the article cost the 'lurkers' about 8d. per pound; one pound would produce thirty skeins, which, sold at one penny each, or two for three halfpence, produced a heavy profit. The lurkers could mostly dispose of three pounds per day; the article was, of course, damaged, rotten, and worthless.

"The mode of sale consisted in the 'lurkers' calling at the several houses in a particular district, and representing themselves as Manchester cotton spinners out of employ. Long tales, of course, were told of the distresses of the operatives, and of the oppression of their employers; these tales had for the most part been taught them at the padding-ken, by some old and experienced dodger of 'the school;' and if the spokesman could patter well, a much larger sum was frequently obtained in direct alms than was reaped by the sale."

Cotton on reels was—except to the purchaser—a still better speculation; the reels were large, handsomely mounted, and displayed in bold relief such inscriptions as the following:—

PIKE'S  
PATENT COTTON.  
120 YARDS.

The reader, however, must divide the "120 yards," here mentioned, by 12, and then he will arrive at something like the true secret as to the quantity; for the surface only was covered by the thread.

"The 'cotton Lurk' is now 'cooper'd' (worn out); a more common dodge—and, of course, only an excuse for begging—is to envelope a packet of 'warranted' needles, or a few inches of 'real Honiton lace' in an envelope, with a few lines to the 'Lady of the House,' or a printed bill, setting forth the misery of the manufacturers, and the intention of the parties leaving the 'fakement' to presume to call for an answer in a few hours. I subjoin a copy of one of these documents.

## 'THE LACE-MAKERS' APPEAL.

'It is with extreme regret we thus presume to trespass on your time and attention, we are Lace Makers by trade, and owing to the extensive improvements in Machinery, it has made hand labour completely useless.

'So that it has thrown hundreds of honest and industrious men out of employment, your petitioners are among the number. Fifteen men with their families have left their homes with the intention of emigrating to South Australia, and the only means we have of supporting ourselves till we can get away, is by the sale of some Frame Thread and Traced Lace Collars of our own manufacture, at the following low prices—Fashionable Frame Lace Collars 3d. each, warranted to wash and wear well; Frame Thread Collars 6d. each, Traced Lace Collars 1s. each, the best that can be made, and we trust we shall meet with that encouragement from the Friends of Industry which our necessities require.

'The enclosed two 6d.

'The party calling for this, will have an assortment of the Newest Patterns of Frame Thread Lace and Edgings for your inspection, and the smallest purchase will be thankfully received and gratefully remembered by G. DAVIS, Lace Makers.

'We beg to state that a number of the families being destitute of clothing, the bearer is authorised to receive any articles of such in exchange for Lace, Edgings or Collars.

'ALLEN, Printer, Long-row, Nottingham.'

'These are left by one of 'the school' at the houses of the gentry, a mark being placed on the door post of such as are 'bone' or 'gammy,' in order to inform the rest of 'the school' where to call, and what houses to avoid. As the needles cost but a few pence per thousand, and the lace less than one halfpenny per yard—a few purchasers of the former at 1s. per packet (25 needles), or of the latter at 2s. 6d. per yard, is what these 'lurkers' term a 'fair day's work for a fair day's wages.'

'Another and very extensive branch of the pseudo-manufacturing' fraternity is to be found among the sham street-sellers of cutlery.

'At some of the least respectable of the swag-shops may be bought all the paraphernalia requisite in order to set up as the real manufacturer of Sheffield and 'Brummagem' goods—including, beside the cutlery, chamois-leather aprons, paper caps (ready crushed, to give them the appearance of age and usage), and last, but not least, a compound of black lead and tallow, to 'take the granny' off them as has white 'ands, so as the flat's shan't 'tumble' to the 'unworkmanlike appearance of the palms of the 'lurker.'

'Thus 'got up' for the part," continues my informant, "and provided with a case of razors, which perhaps has cost him two groats, and (if he can raise as much) a noggin o' rum to 'give him cheek' and make him 'speak up' to his victims—

'Jack Beaver,' the 'king of the street-cutlers,' will sally forth, and meet, intercept, and follow any gentleman who seems a 'likely spec,' till worried perhaps by importunity, the 'swell' buys what he does not want, and, I need scarcely add, what he cannot use. Next, in importance, to 'Jack Beaver,' is the notorious 'Pat Connor.' Pat 'does nothing on the blob,' that is to say (he does not follow people and speak to them on the streets). His 'dodge'—and it has been for years a successful one—is to go round to the public offices, dressed as before described, with the exception of being in his shirt sleeves (he has every day a *clean* shirt), and tease the clerks till they purchase a pen-knife. He has been known to sell from fifteen to twenty knives in one day, at two shillings each, the first cost being about threepence-halfpenny. Of course he is often interrupted by porters and other officials, but he always carries in one hand a roll of wire, and a small hammer in the other, and having got the name of some gentleman up stairs, he pretends that he is going to mend Mr. So-and-so's bell. This worthy, a short time ago, made free—in the Custom House—with a timepiece, belonging to one of the clerks, for which the 'Sheffield manufacturer' got twelve months in Newgate. I have not seen him since," adds my informant, "and therefore imagine that he is now taking a provincial tour."

## OF THE "HOUSE OF LORDS," A STREET-SELLER'S DEFUNCT CLUB.

I HAVE given an account of a defunct club, of which the "paper workers" were the chief members; and I have now to do the same of a society not very dissimilar in its objects, of which the street-sellers of manufactured articles constituted the great majority. It was called the "house of lords," and was established about eight years ago, at the Roebuck-tavern, Holborn, and existed three years. Its object was to relieve its members in sickness. The subscription was 2d. a week, and the relief to a sick member was as many pennies a week as the club contained members, with, in any pressing case, an additional halfpenny, which the members paid into the fund, over and above their weekly subscription. For the greater part of its existence the club contained ninety members (a few of them honorary), and there were very few cases of "declaring on the fund" by sick members. At one period for many weeks there were no such declarations, and the "house of lords" had 30l. in hand. One of the leading members, a very intelligent man, who had "a good connection in hardware," had taken great pains to prepare a code of rules, which, having been approved by the other members, it was considered time that the "house of lords" should be enrolled. Delays, however, intervened. "To tell you the truth, sir," one of them said, "we were afraid to employ an attorney, and thought of waiting upon Mr. Tidd Pratt ourselves, but it wasn't to be."

The club was, moreover, looked upon as somewhat select. "No costers were admitted, sir," I was told by a hardware seller in the streets;

"not but what there's many very industrious and honest men among them, but they're in a different line, and are a different sort of people to us." The members met once a week, and, though they were merry and talkative enough, drunkenness was strongly discouraged. It was common for the subscribers who were regarded as the "geniuses" of the trade, to take counsel together, and "invent any new move." They were reputed to be knowing among the most knowing, in all street arts and dodges, and the way in which the club came to an end, considering the strong claims to knowledge of its members, was curious enough.

One Saturday evening a member who was considered a respectable man, and was sufficiently regular in his payments, appeared at the weekly meeting, introducing his landlord, who, as a non-member, had to pay 1d. for admission. The man told how his family had suffered from illness, and how he had been ill, and got into arrears of rent, for he did not like to distress the fund; and how his landlord was then in possession of his "sticks," which must be sold in the morning if he could not pay 15s.; and, moreover, how his landlord—a very kind-hearted, indulgent man—was forced to do this, for he himself was in difficulties. The members voted that the 15s. should be advanced; but before the next meeting night it was discovered that the statement of the poor member in arrears was an imposition. The landlord was merely a confederate; the worthy couple had been drinking together, and, to prolong their tippling, had hit upon the roguish scheme I have mentioned.

This, among other things, lowered the confidence of the members. The numbers fell off until it was thought best to "wind up the concern." The small funds in hand were fairly apportioned among the remaining members, and the club ceased to exist.

Another Street-sellers' Club has recently been formed by the men themselves, of which the following is the prospectus, and it is to be hoped that this attempt on the part of the street-folk to better their condition will meet with a better fate than its predecessor:—

Our motto is "To live honestly by daily perseverance and industry."

Street Mechanics, Labourers, Hawkers, &c.  
**PROTECTION ASSOCIATION,**  
HELD AT THE LAMB TAVERN,  
NEW TURNSTILE, HOLBORN,  
Proprietor, Mr. White.

The above-named classes are kindly invited to attend a Meeting convened for

SUNDAY EVENING NEXT,

And every succeeding Sunday Evening, at the above house, to carry out the object unanimously agreed to by the Enrolled Members and the General Committee. Furthermore, to take into consideration the most appropriate means whereby we may be enabled to assist each other in the time of adversity.

## COMMITTEE:

|                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Mr. Taylor, Chairman, | Mr. Thoresby, |
| — Travers,            | — Dowse,      |
| — Cowan,              | — Manly,      |
| — Moody,              | — Morris,     |
| — Moore,              | — Lawson,     |
| — Hand,               | — Lamb,       |
| — Martin.             |               |

Mr. J. White, Treasurer. Mr. F. A. Thoresby, Secretary.

The chair will be taken at Seven o'clock, and the Committee are requested to be in attendance one hour previous.

## OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CROCKERY AND GLASS-WARES.

WE now come to a new class of the street-sellers of manufactured articles—viz., the "crocks," as they are termed. I have before alluded to one characteristic of these traders—that they all strive to be barterers in preference to salesmen. They also present other varying qualities when compared with other classes of street-sellers. Of these "crocks," there are, from the best data I could obtain from men in the trade, and from the swag-shop people who supply them, 250 men and 150 women; of these, 120 couples (man and woman) "work" together; of the remainder, sometimes two men work in unison, and some women work singly. On my inquiring of one of these street folk if ever three worked together, I was told that such was never the case, as the "crocks" would quote a saying: "Two's good company, three's none at all." Of the men and women carrying on this traffic conjointly more than half are married; showing a difference of habits to the costermongers. The reason assigned to me by one of the class (himself once a costermonger) was that the interest of the man and woman in the business was closer than in costermongering, while the serviceableness of a woman helpmate in "swopping," or bartering, was much greater. This prompts the women, I am told, even if they are unmarried at the outset, to insist upon wedlock; and the man—sometimes, perhaps, to secure a valuable "help," at others, it may be, from better motives—consents to what in this rank of life, and under the circumstances of such street-traders, is more frequently the woman's offer than the man's. The trade, in its present form, has not been known more than twelve years.

The goods, which are all bought at the crock swag-shops, of which an account is given below, are carried in baskets on the head, the men having pads on the cloth caps which they wear—or sometimes a padding of hay or wool inside the cap—while the women's pads are worn outside their bonnets or caps, the bonnet being occasionally placed on the basket. The goods, though carried in baskets on the head to the locality of the traffic, are, whilst the traffic is going on, usually borne from house to house, or street to street, on the arm, or when in large baskets carried before them by the two hands. These baskets are strongly made; the principal mart is close to Spitalfields-market.

The men engaged in this trade are usually strong, robust, and red-faced. Most of them are above the middle stature; very few are beyond middle age, and the majority of them are under or little more than 30. The women, more than the men, have contracted a stoop or bend to one side, not so much by carrying weights on the head, as by carrying them on the arm. The weights they carry are from three to five stone. The dress of the men is the same as the costermongers, with the exception of shooting-cut jackets being more frequent among the "crocks" than the costers, and red plush waistcoats are very popular with them. When not at work, or on Sundays—for they never work on the Sabbath, though they do not go to church or chapel—these men are hardly ever seen to wear a hat. Both men and women wear strong boots and, unless when "hard-up," silk handkerchiefs. Their places of residence are, as regards the majority, in Spitalfields, Bethnal-green, and Shore-ditch. Of the others the greater portion reside in the neighbourhood of Kent-street, in the Borough. Their abode usually consists of one room, which is in most cases more comfortable, and better furnished than those of the costers. "We pick up a tidy ornament now and then," one crock said, "such as a picture, in the way of swop, and our good women likes to keep them at home for a bit of show." They live well, in general, dining out almost every day; and I am told that, as a body, they have fewer children than any other class of street-folk.

The trade is almost entirely itinerant. Crock-sellers are to be seen at street-markets on Saturday nights, but they are not the regular crocks, who, as I have said, do not care to sell. The crocks go on "rounds," the great trade being in the suburbs. Sometimes a round lasts a week, the couple resting at a fresh place every night. Others have a round for each day of the week.

The long rounds are to Greenwich, Woolwich, Northfleet, Gravesend, Stroud, Rochester, Chatham, and then to Maidstone. Some will then make Maidstone the head-quarters, and work the neighbouring villages—such as East Farleigh, Town Malling, Yalding, Aylesford, and others. The return to town may be direct by railway, or by some other route, if any stock remains unsold. On these long rounds the higher priced goods are generally carried, and stock is forwarded from London to the "crock" whilst on the round, if the demand require it. Another long round is Vauxhall, Wandsworth, Kingston-on-Thames, and Guildford, with divergings to the villages. The return from Guildford is often by Richmond, Kew, &c. A third long round is Hampstead, Kilburn, Barnet, Watford, and so on to St. Alban's. The other long rounds are less frequented; but some go to Uxbridge; others to Windsor and Eton, and as far as Reading; others to Cambridge, by Tottenham, Edmonton, Ware, &c. When no trade is to be done close to London, the "crocks" often have themselves and their wares conveyed to any town by rail. The short, or town rounds, are the Dover-road, New Kent-road, Walworth, Camberwell, and back by Newington; Kennington, Brix-

ton, Clapham, and back by Vauxhall; Bayswater, Notting-hill, and back by Paddington; Camden Town, St. John's Wood, and Hampstead; Stoke Newington, Dalston, Clapton, Shacklewell, and Stamford-hill; Mile-end, Stratford, and Bow; Limehouse, Poplar, and back by the Commercial-road. It would be easy to cite other routes, but these show the character of the trade. Some occupy two days. A few crocks "work" the poor neighbourhoods, such as Hoxton, Kingsland-road, parts of Hackney, &c., and cry, "Here we are—now, ladies, bring out your old hats, old clothes, old umbrellas, old anything; old shoes, metal, old anything; here we are!"

The trade, from the best information I could acquire, is almost equally divided into what may be called "fancy" and "useful" articles. A lodging-letter, for instance, will "swop" her old gowns and boots, and drive keen bargains for plates, dishes, or wash-hand basins and jugs. A housekeeper, who may be in easier circumstances, will exchange for vases and glass wares. Servant-maids swop clothes and money for a set of china, " 'gainst they get married." Perhaps there are no more frequent collisions between buyer and seller than in the crock swag-shops. A man who had once been an assistant in one of these places, told me that some of the "crocks" were tiresome beyond measure, and every now and then a minute or two was wasted by the "crock" and the swag-shop-man in swearing one at another. Some of these street traffickers insist upon testing the soundness of every article, by striking the middle finger nail against it. This they do to satisfy their customers also, in the course of trade, especially in poor neighbourhoods.

From the best data at my command, one quarter of the goods sold at the swag-shops are sold to the crock dealers I have described, and in about equal proportions as to amount in fancy or useful articles. There are, in addition to the crock barterers, perhaps 100 traders who work the poor streets, chiefly carrying their goods in barrows, but they sell, and though they will barter, do not clamour for it. They cry: "Free trade for ever! Here's cup and saucer for a halfpenny! Pick'em out at your own price! Tea-pot for three halfpence! Pick'em out! Oho! oho! Giving away here!" They rattle dishes and basins as they make this noise. These men are all supplied at the swag-shops, buying what is called "common lots," and selling at 30 per cent. profit. Such traders have only been known in the streets for five years, and for three or four months of the year half of these "go to costering." The barrows are about seventy in number, and there are thirty stalls. Seven-eighths of the "barrow-crocks" are men. The swag-barrowmen also sell small articles of crockery wares, and altogether one half of the trade of the crock swag-shops (which I have described) is a trade for the streets.

Of the way in which the "crock barterers" dispose of their wares, &c., I have given an account below. They are rapidly supplanting the "old clo'" trade of the Jews.

The hucksters of crockery-ware are a considerable class. One who has great experience in the business thinks there must be some hundreds employed in it throughout London. He says he meets many at the swag warehouses on the evenings that he goes there. He is often half an hour before he can be served. There are seven or eight swag warehouses frequented by the hucksters, and at the busy time my informant has often seen as many as twenty-five at each house, and he is satisfied that there must be three or four hundred hucksters of china and glass throughout the metropolis. The china and glass in which they deal are usually purchased at the east end of the town, upon the understanding that if the huckster is unable to dispose of them in the course of the day the articles will be taken back in the morning, if uninjured, and the money returned. The hucksters usually take out their goods early in the day. Their baskets are commonly deposited at the warehouse, and each warehouse has from thirty to forty baskets left there over-night, when the unsold articles are returned. The baskets are usually filled with china and glass and ornaments, to the amount of from 5s. to 15s., according to the stock-money of the huckster. A basket filled with 15s. worth of china is considered, I am told, "a very tidy stock." In the same neighbourhood as they get the crockery, are made the baskets in which it is carried. For these baskets they pay from 2s. to 6s., and they are made expressly for the hucksters; indeed, on one side of a well-known street at the east end, the baskets made in the cellars may be seen piled outside the houses up to the second-floor windows. The class of persons engaged in hawking china through the metropolis are either broken-down tradesmen or clerks out of place, or Jews, or they may be Staffordshire men, who have been regularly bred to the business. They carry different kinds of articles. The Staffordshire man may generally be known by the heavy load of china that he carries with him. He has few light or fancy articles in his basket; it is filled chiefly with plates and dishes and earthenware pans. The broken-down tradesmen carries a lighter load. He prefers tea services and vases, and rummers and cruet-stands, as they are generally of a more delicate make than the articles carried by the Staffordshire men. The Jew, however, will carry nothing of any considerable weight. He takes with him mostly light, showy, Bohemian goods—which are difficult "to be priced" by his customers, and do not require much labour to hawk about. The hucksters usually start on their rounds about nine. There are very few who take money; indeed they profess to take none at all. "But that is all flam," said my informant. "If any one was to ask me the price of an article in an artful way like, I shouldn't give him a straight-forward answer. To such parties we always say, 'Have you got any old clothes?'" The hucksters do take money when they can get it, and they adopt the principle of exchanging their goods for old clothes merely as a means of evading the licence. Still they are compelled to do a great deal in the old clothes' line. When they take money

they usually reckon to get 4d. in the shilling, but at least three-fourths of their transactions consist of exchanges for old clothes. "A good tea-service we generally give," said my informant, "for a left-off suit of clothes, hat, and boots—they must all be in a decent condition to be worth that. We give a sugar-basin for an old coat, and a rummer for a pair of old Wellington boots. For a glass milk-jug I should expect a waistcoat and trowsers, and they must be tidy ones too. But there's nothing so saleable as a pair of old boots to us. There is always a market for old boots, when there is not for old clothes. You can any day get a dinner out of old Wellingtons; but as for coats and waistcoats—there's a fashion about them, and what pleases one don't another. I can sell a pair of old boots going along the streets if I carry them in my hand. The snobs will run after us to get them—the backs are so valuable. Old beaver hats and waistcoats are worth little or nothing. Old silk hats, however, there's a tidy market for. They are bought for the shops, and are made up into new hats for the country. The shape is what is principally wanted. We won't give a farden for the polka hats with the low crowns. If we can double an old hat up and put it in our pockets, it's more valuable to us than a stiff one. We know that the shape must be good to stand that. As soon as a hatter touches a hat he knows by the touch or the stiffness of it whether it's been 'through' the fire or not; and if so, they'll give it you back in a minute. There is one man who stands in Devonshire-street, Bishopsgate-street, waiting to buy the hats of us as we go into the market, and who purchases at least thirty dozen of us a week. There will be three or four there besides him looking out for us as we return from our rounds, and they'll either outbid one another, according as the demand is, or they'll all hold together to give one price. The same will be done by other parties wanting the old umbrellas that we bring back with us. These are valuable principally for the whalebone. Cane ribbed ones are worth only from 1d. to 2d., and that's merely the value of the stick and the supporters. Iron skewers are made principally out of the old supporters of umbrellas." The china and crockery bought by the hucksters at the warehouses are always second-rate articles. They are most of them a little damaged, and the glass won't stand hot water. Every huckster, when he starts, has a bag, and most of them two—the one for the inferior, and the other for the better kind of old clothes he buys. "We purchase gentlemen's left-off wearing apparel. This is mostly sold to us by women. They are either the wives of tradesmen or mechanics who sell them to us, or else it is the servant of a lodging-house, who has had the things given to her, and with her we can deal much easier than the others. She's come to 'em light, and of course she parts with 'em light," said the man, "and she'll take a pair of sugar basins worth about 6d., you know, for a thing that'll fetch two or three shillings sometimes. But the mistresses of the houses are she-dragons. They want a whole dinner *chany* service for their husband's

rags. As for plates and dishes, they think they can be had for picking up. Many a time they sell their husband's things unbeknown to 'em, and often the gentleman of the house coming up to the door, and seeing us make a deal—for his trowsers maybe—puts a stop to the whole transaction. Often and often I've known a woman sell the best part of her husband's stock of clothes for *chany* ornaments for her mantelpiece. And I'm sure the other day a lady stripped the whole of her passage, and gave me almost a new great coat, that was hanging up in the hall, for a few trumpery tea-things. But the greatest 'screws' we has to deal with are some of the ladies in the squares. They stops you on the sly in the streets, and tells you to call at their house at sitch a hour of the day, and when you goes there they smuggles you quietly into some room by yourselves, and then sets to work Jewing away as hard as they can, pricing up their own things, and downcrying yourn. Why, the other day I was told to call at a fashionable part of Pimlico, so I gave a person 3*d.* to mind the child, and me and my good woman started off at eight in the morning with a double load. But, bless you, when we got there, the lady took us both into a private room unbeknown to the servants, and wanted me to go and buy expressly for her a green and white chamber service all complete, with soap trays and brush trays, together with four breakfast cups—and all this here grand set-out she wanted for a couple of old washed-out light waistcoats, and a pair of light trowsers. She tried hard to make me believe that the buttons alone on the waistcoats was worth 6*d.* a piece, but I knowed the value of buttons afore she was borned; at first start off I'm sure they wouldn't have cost 1*d.* each, so I couldn't make a deal of it no how, and I had to take all my things back for my trouble. I asked her even for a pint of beer, but she wouldn't listen to no such thing. We generally cry as we go, 'any old clothes to sell or exchange,' and I look down the area, and sometimes knock at the door. If I go out with a 15*s.* basket of crockery, may be after a tidy day's work I shall come home with 1*s.* in my pocket (perhaps I shall have sold a couple of tumblers, or half a dozen plates), and a bundle of old clothes, consisting of two or three old shirts, a coat or two, a suit of left-off livery, a woman's gown may be, or a pair of old stays, a couple of pair of Wellingtons, and a waistcoat or so. These I should have at my back, and the remainder of my *chany* and glass on my head, and werry probably a humberella or two under my arm, and five or six old hats in my hand. This load altogether will weigh about three quarters of a cwt., and I shall have travelled fifteen miles with that, at least; for as fast as I gets rid on the weight of the crockery, I takes up the weight of the old clothes. The clothes I hardly know the value on till I gets to the Clothes Exchange, in Houndsditch. The usual time for the hucksters arriving there is between three and four in the winter, or between five and six in the summer. In fact, we must be at the Exchange at them hours, because there all our buyers is, and

we can't go out the next day until we've sold our lot. We can't have our baskets stocked again until we've got the money for our old clothes." The Exchange is a large square plot of damp ground, about an acre in extent, enclosed by a hoarding about eight feet high, on the top of which is a narrow sloping roof, projecting sufficiently forward to shelter one person from the rain. Across this ground are placed four rows of double seats, ranged back to back. Here meet all the Jew clothesmen, hucksters, dealers in second-hand shoes, left-off wardrobe keepers, hareskin dealers, umbrella dealers and menders, and indeed buyers and sellers of left-off clothes and worn-out commodities of every description. The purchasers are of all nations, and in all costumes. Some are Greeks, others Swiss, and others Germans; some have come there to buy up old rough charity clothing and army coats for the Irish market, others have come to purchase the hareskins and old furs, or else to pick up cheap old teapots and tea-urns. The man with the long flowing beard and greasy tattered gaberdine is worth thousands, and he has come to make another sixpence out of the rags and tatters that are strewn about the ground in heaps for sale. At a little before three o'clock the stream of rag-sellers sets in in a flood towards this spot. At the gate stands "Barney Aaron," to take the half-penny admission of every one entering the ground. By his side stands his son with a leather pouch of half-pence, to give change for any silver that may be tendered. The stench of the old clothes is positively overpowering. Every one there is dressed in his *worst*. If he has any good clothes he would not put them on. Almost each one that enters has a bag at his back, and scarcely has he passed the gate before he is surrounded by some half dozen eager Jews—one feels the contents of the bundle on the huckster's back—another clamours for the first sight. A third cries, "I'm sure you have something that'll suit me." "You know me," says a fourth, "I'm a buyer, and give a good price." "Have you got any breaking?" asks this Jew, who wants an old coat or two to cut up into cloth caps—"Have you got any fustian, any old cords, or old coats?" And such is the anxiety and greediness of the buyers, that it is as much as the seller can do to keep his bundle on his back. At length he forces his way to a seat, and as he empties the contents of his sack on the ground, each different article is snapped up and eagerly overhauled by the different Jews that have followed him to his seat. Then they all ask what sum is wanted for the several things, and they, one and all, bid one quarter of the price demanded. I am assured that it requires the greatest vigilance to prevent the things being carried off unpaid in the confusion. While this scene is going on, a Jew, perched upon a high stage in the centre of the ground, shouts aloud to the multitude, "Hot wine, a half-penny a glass, here." Beside him stands another, with smoking cans of hot eels; and next to this one is a sweetmeat stall, with a crowd of Jew boys gathered round the keeper of it, gambling with marbles for Albert rock and hardbake. Up and down

between the seats push women with baskets of sheep's trotters on their arms, and screaming, "Legs of mutton, two for a penny; who'll give me a handsel—who'll give me a handsel!" After them comes a man with a large tin can under his arm, and roaring, "Hot pea, oh! hot pea, oh!" In one corner is a coffee and beer shop. Inside this are Jews playing at draughts, or settling and wrangling about the goods they have bought of one another. In fact, in no other place is such a scene of riot, rags, and filth to be witnessed. The cause of this excitement is the great demand on the part of the poor, and the cheap clothiers as well, for those articles which are considered as worthless by the rich. The old shoes are to be cobbled up, and the cracks heel-balled over, and sold out to the working-classes as strong durable articles. The Wellingtons are to be new fronted, and disposed of to clerks who are expected to appear respectable upon the smallest salaries. The old coats and trowsers are wanted for the slop-shops; they are to be "turned," and made up into new garments. The best black suits are to be "clobbered" up—and those which are more worn in parts are to be cut up and made into new cloth caps for young gentlemen, or gaiters for poor curates; whilst others are to be transformed into the "best boys' tunics." Such as are *too far gone* are bought to be torn to pieces by the "devil," and made up into new cloth—or "shoddy" as it is termed—while such as have already done this duty are sold for manure for the ground. The old shirts, if they are past mending, are bought as "rubbish" by the marine store dealers, and sold as rags to the paper-mills, to be changed either into the bank-note, the newspaper, or the best satin note-paper.

The average earnings of the hucksters who exchange crockery, china and glass for the above articles, are from 8*s.* to 10*s.* per week. Some days, I am told, they will make 3*s.*, and on others they will get only 6*d.* However, taking the good with the bad, it is thought that 10*s.* a week is about a fair average of the earnings of the whole class. The best times for this trade are at the turn of the winter, and at the summer season, because then people usually purchase new clothes, and are throwing off the old ones. The average price of an old hat is from 1*d.* to 8*d.*; for an old pair of shoes, from 1*d.* to 4*d.*; an old pair of Wellingtons fetch from 3*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* (those of French leather are of scarcely any value). An old coat is worth from 4*d.* to 1*s.*; waistcoats are valued from 1*d.* to 3*d.*; trowsers are worth from 4*d.* to 8*d.*; cotton gowns are of the same value; bonnets are of no value whatever; shirts fetch from 2*d.* to 8*d.*; stockings are 1*d.* per pair; a silk handkerchief varies in value from 3*d.* to 1*s.* The party supplying me with the above information was originally in the coal and greengrocery business, but, owing to a succession of calamities, he has been unable to carry it on. Since then he has taken to the vending of crockery in the streets. He is a man far above the average of the class to which he at present belongs.

#### OF THE "SWAG," CROCKERY, AND GLASS SHOPS.

IN addition to the 150 general and particular "swag-shops," or shops having a large collection of goods, of which I have spoken, there are twenty establishments for the sale of crockery and china, which I heard styled by persons in the trade "swag-crocks," or "crock-shops." The principle on which the trade is conducted in these places is the same as that of the swag-shops, inasmuch as the sales are wholesale, to street-sellers, shop-keepers, and shippers, but rarely to private individuals.

The crock swag-shops are to be found in the streets neighbouring Spitalfields market, and in and near to Liquorpond-street. As at the more general or miscellaneous swag-shops, the crock-swags make no display. In one of the most extensive, indeed, two large windows are filled with goods. Here are spirit-stands, with the invariable three bottles (invariable in the cheap trade), blue, green, or uncoloured; some lettered "gin," "rum," "brandy," but most of them unlabelled. Here, too, are cruet-stands, and "pot" or spar figures under glass shades; and a number of many-coloured flower-glasses, some of them profusely gilded; and small china vases; but the glass wares greatly predominate. Although there are glass and colour and gilding enough to make "an imposing display," the display is nevertheless anything but showy; the goods look dingy, and, if I may so speak of such things, faded. Some of the coloured glass seems to be losing its colour, and few of the wares have the bright look of newness.

The windows of these shops are, for the most part, literally *packed* to a certain height, so as almost to exclude the light, with pitchers, and basins, and cups, and jugs, and the sundry smaller articles of this multifarious trade, all undusted, and seemingly uncared for. In one "large concern" I saw a number of glass salt-cellars wrapped severally in paper, which had changed from white to a dusty brown, and which from age, and perhaps damp, seemed about to fall to tatters.

The "interiors" of some of these warehouses are very spacious. I saw one large and lofty shop, into which two apartments and a yard had been flung, the partitions having been taken down, and the ceilings supported by pillars, in order to "extend the premises." It was really a hall of pots. On the floor were large crates, the tops removed so that the goods might be examined, packed, one with cups, another with saucers, a third with basins, and packed as only a potter could pack them. Intermixed with them were piles of blue-and-white dishes and plates, and, beside them, washing-pans, fitted one into another like the old hats on a Jew's head. The pillars had their festoons of crockery, being hung with children's white and gold mugs "for a good boy," and with white metal-lidded and brown-bodied mustard pots, as well as other minor articles. The shelves were loaded with tea-services of many shapes and hues, while the unoccupied space was what sufficed to allow the warehousemen and the

customers to thread the mazes of this labyrinth of crockerywares. Of the glass goods there was little display, as they are generally kept in cases and other packages, to preserve their freshness of appearance.

The crockery of the swag-shops is made in Staffordshire; the glass principally in Lancashire. At none of these establishments do they issue circulars of prices, such as I have cited of the general swag-shops. The articles are so very many, I was told, that to specify all the sizes and prices "would take a volume and a half." I give a statement, however, of the prices of the goods most in demand, on the occasions when the street vendors sell them without barter, and the prices at which they are purchased wholesale: Blue-edged plates sold at 1*d.* each cost 1*s.* 8*d.* the dozen; this would appear to entail a loss of 8*d.* on every dozen sold, but in this article "30 is a dozen." Dishes are bought at the "swag-crocks" in "nests," which comprise 10 dishes, or 5 pairs, of different sizes. These the street crockman sells, if possible, in pairs, but he will sell them singly, for he can always make up the complement of his "nest" at the warehouse. The prices run, chiefly according to size, from 8*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* (sometimes 1*s.* 8*d.*) the pair. "The 8*d.* a pair," said one street crock-seller, "costs me 6*d.*, not a farthing under, and the 18*d.* a pair—it's very seldom we can 'draw' 1*s.* 8*d.*—costs 1*s.* 2*d.* That's all, sir; and the profit's so small, it makes us keen to swop. I'll swop for old clothes, or dripping, or grease, or anything. You see the profit, when you sells downright down, *must* be small, 'cause there's so many pot-shops with prices marked on the plates and other things. They can buy better than us sometimes, and they're hard to stand up against. If a woman says to me—for I very seldom deal with men—"Why, they're cheaper at D——'s, in Oxford-street,"—I answers, "And worsen. I'll tell you what it is, ma'am. The cheapest place was in two houses, painted all red, in the London-road. But one fine morning them two houses fell, and the pots was smashed as a matter of course. It was a judgment on their bad pots." But it's a fact, sir, that these houses fell, about 7 or 8 years ago, I think, and I've seen goods, with one or two of 'em broken, offered for sale when the place was re-built, having been 'rescued from the ruins; and at less than half price.' Of course that was gammon. I've cracked and broke a few plates, myself, and sold them in the New Kent-road, and in Walworth and Newington, at half price, from the ruins, and at a very tidy profit." A stone china tea-service, of 32 pieces—12 cups, 12 saucers, 4 bread-and-butter plates, a tea-pot, a sugar-basin, a slop-basin, and a cream-jug—is bought for 6*s.* 9*d.* while 9*s.* is asked for it, and sometimes obtained. A "china set" costs, as the general price, 10*s.* 6*d.*, and for it 14*s.* is asked.

The glass wares are so very rarely sold—being the most attractive articles of barter—that I could hardly get any street-seller to state his prices. "Swop, sir," I was told repeatedly, "they all goes in swop." The glass goods, however, which are the most sold in the streets, I ascertained to be

cream-jugs, those vended at 6*d.* each, costing 4*s.* the dozen; and flower-glasses, the most frequent price being 1*s.* a pair, the prime cost 7*d.*

I have estimated the sum turned over by the general swag-shops at 3000*l.* each. From what I can learn, the crock swag-shops, averaging the whole, turn over a larger sum, for their profits are smaller, ranging from 10 to 30 per cent., but rarely 30. Calculating, then, that each of these swag-shops turns over 4000*l.* yearly, we find 80,000*l.* expended, but this includes the sales to shopkeepers and to shippers, as well as to street-folk.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SPAR AND CHINA ORNAMENTS, AND OF STORE FRUIT.

"SPARS," as spar ornaments are called by the street-sellers, are sold to the retailers at only four places in London, and two in Gravesend (where the hawkers are for the most part supplied). The London spar-houses are—two in Westminster, one in Shoreditch, and one on Battle-bridge. None of them present any display of their goods which are kept in large drawers, closets, and packages. At Gravesend the spar-shops are handsome.

These wares are principally of Derbyshire spar, and made in Matlock; a few are German. The "spars" are hawked on a round, and are on fine Saturday nights offered for sale in the street and markets. The trade was unknown as a street, or a hawking trade in London, I am informed, until about twenty-five years ago, and then was not extensive, the goods, owing to the cost of carriage, &c., being high-priced. As public conveyance became more rapid, certain and cheap, the trade in spars increased, and cheaper articles were prepared for the London market. From ten to fifteen years ago the vendors of spars "did well in swop" (as street-sellers always call barter). The articles with which they tempted housewives were just the sort of article to which it was difficult for inexperienced persons to attach a value. They were massive and handsome ornaments, and the spar-sellers did not fail to expatiate on their many beauties. "God rest Jack Moody's soul," said an Irishman, now a crock-seller, to me; "Jack Moody was only his nick-name, but that don't matter; God rist his sowl and the hivers be his bid. He was the boy to sell the spar's. They was from the cavernts at the bottom of the say, he towld them, or from a new island in the frozen ocean. He did well; God rist him; but he died young." The articles "swopped" were such as I have described in my account of the tradings of the crock-sellers; and if the "swop" were in favour of the spar-seller, still the customer became possessed of something solid, enduring, and generally handsome.

At the outset of the street or hawking trade, the spar-sellers carried their goods done up in paper, in strong baskets on their heads; the man's wife sometimes carrying a smaller basket, with less burdensome articles, on her arm. Men have been known to start on a round, with a basket of spars, which would weigh from 1 cwt. to 1½ cwt. (or 12 stone). This, it must be remembered, might

have to be borne for three or four miles into the suburbs, before its weight was diminished by a sale. One of these traders told me that twelve years ago he had sold spar watch-stands, weighing above 15 lbs. These stands were generally of a square form; the inner portion being open, except a sort of recess for the watch. "The tick sounds well on spar, I've often heard," said one spar-seller.

Some of the spar ornaments are plain, white, and smooth. Of these many have flowers, or rims, or insects, painted upon them, and in brilliant colours. Those which are now in demand for the street sales, or for itinerant barterings, are—Small microscopes, candlesticks, inkstands, pin-cushions, mugs, paper-holders, match perfumery, and shaving-boxes, etc. The general price of these articles is 6*d.* to the street-seller or hawker, some of the dealers being licensed hawkers. The wholesale price varies from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.* per dozen; or an average of 3*s.* 9*d.* or 4*s.* Of the larger articles the most saleable are candlesticks, at from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* each; from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* being the most frequent price. Watch-stands and vases are now, I am told, in small demand. "People's got stocked, I think," one man said, "and there's so much cheap glass and chaney work, that they looks on spars as heavy and old-fashioned."

Some street-sellers have their spars in covered barrows, the goods being displayed when the top of the barrow is removed, so that the conveyance is serviceable whether the owner be stationary or itinerant. The spar-sellers, however, are reluctant to expose their goods to the weather, as the colours are easily affected.

In this trade I am informed that there are now twelve men, nine of whom are assisted by their wives, and that in the summer months there are eighteen. Their profits are about 15*s.* per week on an average of the whole year, including the metropolis and a wide range of the suburbs. What amount of money may be expended by the public in the street purchase of "spars" I am unable to state, so much being done in the way of barter; but assuming that there are fourteen sellers throughout the year, and that their profits are cent per cent., there would appear to be about 1000*l.* per annum thus laid out.

Of stone fruit there are now usually six street sellers, and in fine weather eight. Eight or ten years ago there were twenty. The fruit is principally made at Chesterfield in Derbyshire, and is disposed of to the London street-sellers in the swag-shops in Houndsditch. Some of the articles, both as regards form and colour, are well executed; others are far too red or too green; but that, I was told, pleased children best. The most saleable fruits are apples, pears, peaches, apricots, oranges, lemons and cucumbers. The cucumbers, which are sometimes of pot as well as of stone, are often hollow, and are sometimes made to serve for gin-bottles, holding about a quarter.

The price at the swag-shops is 4*s.* 3*d.* for a gross of fruit of all kinds in equal quantities; for a better quality the price is 7*s.* 6*d.* The street-seller endeavours to get 1*d.* each for the lower priced, and

2*d.* for the higher, but has most frequently to be content with ½*d.* and 1*d.* The stone fruitmen are itinerant during the week and stationary in the street markets on Saturday, and sometimes other evenings. They carry their stock both in baskets and barrows. One man told me that he always cried, "Pick 'em out! pick 'em out! Half-penny each! Cheapest fruit ever seen! As good to-morrow as last week! Never lose flavour! Ever-lasting fruit."

Supposing that there are six persons selling stone-fruit in the streets through the year, and that each earns—and I am assured that is the full amount—9*s.* weekly (one man said 7*s.* 6*d.* was the limit of his weekly profits in fruit), we find 140*l.* received as profit on these articles, and calculating the gains at 33 per cent., an outlay of 420*l.*

The trade in China ornaments somewhat differs from the others I have described under the present head. It is both a street and a public-house trade, and is carried on both in the regular way and by means of raffles. At some public-houses, indeed, the China ornament dealers are called "rafflers."

The "ornaments" now most generally sold or raffled are Joy and Grief (two figures, one laughing and the other crying); dancing Highlanders; mustard pots in the form of cottages, &c.; grotesque heads, one especially of an old man, which serves as a pepper-box, the grains being thrown through the eyes, nose, and mouth; Queen and Alberts (but not half so well as the others); and, until of late, Smith O'Briens. There are others, also, such as I have mentioned in my account of the general swag-shops, to the windows of many of which they form the principal furniture. Some of these "ornaments" sold "on the sly" can hardly be called obscene, but they are dirty, and cannot be further described.

The most lucrative part of the trade is in the raffling. A street-seller after doing what business he can, on a round or at a stand, during the day, will in the evening resort to public-houses, where he is known, and is allowed to offer his wares to the guests. The ornaments, in public-house sale, are hardly ever offered for less than 6*d.* each, or 6*d.* a pair. The raffling is carried on rapidly and simply. Dice are very rarely used now, and when used, provoke many murmurs from the landlords. The raffler of the China ornaments produces a portable roulette box or table—these tables becoming an established part of street traffic—eight or ten inches in diameter. What may be called "the board" of some of these "roulettes" is numbered to thirty-two. It is set rapidly spinning on a pivot, a pea is then slipped through a hole in the lid of the box, and, when the motion has ceased, the pea is found in one of the numbered partitions. "Now, gentlemen," a raffler told me he would say, "try your luck for this beautiful pair of ornaments; six of you at 1*d.* a piece. If you go home rather how came you so, show what you've bought for the old lady, and it'll be all right and peaceful." If six persons contribute 1*d.* each, the one "spinning" the highest number

gains the prize, and is congratulated by the ornament seller on having gained for 1*d.* what was only too cheap at 6*d.* "Why, sir," said a man who had recently left the trade for another calling, and who was anxious that I should not give any particular description of him, "in case he went back to the raffling,"—"Why, sir, I remember one Monday evening four or five months back, going into a parlour, not a tap-room, mind, where was respectable mechanics. They got to play with me, and got keen, and played until my stock was all gone. If one man stopped raffling, another took his place. I can't recollect how many ornaments I raffled, but I cleared rather better than 3*s.* 6*d.* When there was no ornaments left they gave me 1*d.* a piece—there was eleven of them then—and a pint of beer to let them have the roulette till 12 o'clock; and away they went at it for beer and screws, and bets of 1*d.* and 2*d.* One young man that had been lucky in winning the ornaments got cleaned out, and staked his ornaments for 2*d.*, or for a 1*d.* rather than not play. That sort of thing only happened to me once, to the same extent. If the landlord came into the room, of course they was only playing for drink, or he might have begun about his licence."

The ornaments are bought at the swag shops I have described, and are nearly all of German make. They are retailed from 1*d.* and sometimes ½*d.* to 1*s.* each, and the profit is from 25 to 75 per cent. There are, I am informed, about thirty persons in this trade, two-thirds of them being rafflers, and their receipts being from 25*s.* to 30*s.* weekly. Most of them mix "fancy glass" goods and spars, and other articles, with their "ornament" trade, so that it is not easy to ascertain what is expended upon the china ornaments independently of other wares. If we calculate it at 10*s.* weekly (a low average considering the success of some of the raffles), we find 780*l.* expended in the streets in these ornamental productions.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF TEXTILE FABRICS.

THESE street-folk present perhaps as great a diversity of character as any of which I have been called upon to treat.

Among them are the strong persevering men, who carry rolls of linen or cotton manufacture in packs on their backs, and trudge along holding a yard-wand by the middle, which—it is a not uncommon joke against them—is always worn down an inch or two, by being used as a walking-stick in their long pedestrian journeys. Such, however, is not the case, for the packman—when measuring is resorted to—generally shows the justice of his measure, or invites the purchaser to use her own yard-wand (for women are now their most frequent customers). Some of these men love to tell of the many hundreds of miles they have walked in their time, and in the three kingdoms. The most of those who make London, or any large town their head-quarters, and take regular journeys into the country, are licensed hawkers; those who confine their sales exclusively to London and its immediate vicinity, frequently conduct their business without

incurring the annual cost of a licence. The penalty for hawking without a licence is 10*l.*, or an imprisonment (in default of payment) not exceeding three months, with a discretionary power of mitigation to the magistrates. Some of these men may be styled hereditary hawkers, having first accompanied and then succeeded their parents on a round; some were in their youth assistants to hawkers; some had been unsuccessful as tallymen when shopkeepers, or travellers for tally-shops, and have resorted to hawking or street-trading, occasionally, in their transactions with different parties, blending the tally system with the simple rules of sale for ready money.

In striking contrast to these sturdy and often astute traders are the street-sellers of lace and millinery, the majority of whom are women. A walk through a street-market, especially on a Saturday evening, will show any one the frequent difference of the established street-milliner to the other female traders surrounding her stall. The milliner, as she is commonly called by the street-folk, wears a clean, and often tasty cap, beneath her closely-fitting bonnet, a cap in which artificial flowers are not wanting, should she sell those adornments. Her shawl is pinned beneath her collar; her gown, if it be old or of poor material, is clean; and she is rarely to be seen in boots or shoes made for men's wear. Near her stall are stout, coarse-looking Irish girls, with unstringed bonnets, half-ragged shawls, thrown loose round their shoulders, necks red from exposure to the weather, coarse and never brushed, but sometimes scraped, shoes, when shoes are worn, and a general dirtiness of apparel. The street-milliners have been ladies'-maids, working milliners and dress-makers, the wives of mechanics who have been driven to the streets, and who add to the means of the family by conducting a street-trade themselves, with a sprinkling from other classes.

The street-sellers of lace are of the same class as the milliners, but with perhaps less smartness, and carrying on an inferior trade both as regards profit and display.

The street-sellers of boot and stay-laces and of such things as sewing cotton, threads and tapes, when sold separately from more valuable articles, are children and old people, some of whom are infirm, and some blind. The children have, in some instances, been bred to the streets; the old people probably are worn out in street-trades requiring health and strength, and so adopt a less laborious calling, or else they have been driven to it, either from comparatively better circumstances, or by some privation or affliction, in order to avoid the workhouse.

The sale of belts, stockings, braces, straps and garters, is mostly in the hands of men, who, from all that I can learn, are regular street-sellers, who "turn their hands first to this and then to that," but this portion of street-traffic is often combined with the sale of dog-collars, chains, &c. The trade is more a public-house than a distinct traffic in the street. The landlord of a well-frequented inn in Lambeth told me that every day at least 100 of such street-sellers—not including match-girls and

women—entered his house to offer their wares; the greatest number of such sellers was in the evening.

I have so far described what may be called the fair traders, but to them the street-sellers of textile fabrics are not confined. There are besides these, two other classes known as "Duffers" and as "Lumpers," and sometimes the same man is both "Duffer" and "Lumper." The two names are often confounded, but an intelligent street-seller, versed in all the arts and mysteries of this trade, told me that he understood by a "Duffer," a man who sold goods under false pretences, making out that they were smuggled, or even stolen, so as to enhance the idea of their cheapness; whereas a "Lumper" would sell linens, cottons, or silks, which might be really the commodities represented; but which, by some management or other, were made to appear new when they were old, or solid when they were flimsy.

#### OF THE HABERDASHERY SWAG-SHOPS.

By this name the street-sellers have long distinguished the warehouses, or rather shops, where they purchase their goods. The term *Swag*, or *Swack*, or *Sweg*, is, as was before stated, a Scotch word, meaning a large collection, a "lot." The haberdashery, however, supplied by these establishments is of a very miscellaneous character; which, perhaps, can best be shown by describing a "haberdashery swag," to which a street-seller, who made his purchases there, conducted me, and which, he informed me, was one of the most frequented by his fraternity, if not the most frequented, in the metropolis.

The window was neither dingy, nor, as my companion expressed it, "gay." It was in size, as well as in "dressing," or "show"—for I heard the arrangement of the window goods called by both those names by street people—half-way between the quiet plainness of a really wholesale warehouse, and the gorgeousness of a retail drapery concern, when a "tremendous sacrifice" befools the public. Not a quarter of an inch of space was lost, and the announcements and prices were written many of them in a bungling school-boy-like hand, while others were the work of a professional "ticket writer," and show the eagerness of so many of this class of trade to obtain custom. In one corner was this announcement: "To boot-makers. Boot fronts cut to any size or quality." There was neither boot nor shoe visible, but how a boot front can be cut "to any quality," is beyond my trade knowledge. Half hidden, and read through laces, was another announcement, sufficiently odd, in a window decorated with a variety of combustible commodities: "Hawkers supplied with fuzees cheaper than any house in London." On the "ledge," or the part shelving from the bottom of the window, within the shop, were paper boxes of steel purses with the price marked so loosely as to leave it an open question whether 1*s.* 0½*d.* or 10½*d.* was the cost. There was also a good store of silk purses, marked 2½*d.*; bright-coloured ribbons, in a paper box, and done up in small rolls, 1½*d.*; cotton reels, four a penny; worsted balls,

three a penny; girls' night-caps, 1½*d.*; women's caps, from 2½*d.* to 7½*d.*; (the ½*d.* was always in small indistinct characters, but it was a very favourite adjunct); diamond patent mixed pins—London and Birmingham—1*d.* an oz. My companion directed my attention to the little packets of pins: "They're well done up, sir, as you can see, and in very good and thick and strong pink papers, with ornamental printers' borders, and plenty of paper for three ounces. The paper's weighed with the pins, and the price is 1*d.* an oz.; so the paper fetches 1*s.* 4*d.* a pound." There were also many papers of combs, and one tied outside the packet as a specimen, without a price marked upon them. "The price varies, sir," said my guide and informant, and I heard the same account from others; "it varies from 1*d.* a pair to such as me; up to 6*d.* or perhaps 1*s.* to a servant-maid what looks innocent."

From what appeared to be slender rods fitted higher up to the breadth of the window depended "black lace handkerchiefs, 4½*d.*;" and cap fronts, some being a round wreath of gauze ornamented with light rose-coloured artificial flowers, and marked "only 5½*d.*;" together with lace (or edgings) which hung in festoons, and filled every vacancy. Higher up were braces marked 5*d.*; and more lace; and to the back of all was a sort of screen—for it shuts out all view of the inside of the shop—of big-figured shawls (the figures in purple, orange, and crimson) and of silk handkerchiefs: "They're regular duffers," I was told, "and very tidy duffers too—very, for it's a respectable house."

In the centre of the window ledge was a handsome wreath of artificial flowers, marked 2½*d.* "If a young woman was to go in to buy it at 2½*d.*, I've seen it myself, sir," said the street-seller, "she's told that the ticket has got out of its place, for it belonged to the lace beneath, but as she'd made a mistake without thinking of the value, the flowers was 1*s.* 6*d.* to her, though they was cheap at 2*s.* 6*d.*"

From this account it will be seen that the swag or wholesale haberdashers are now very general traders; and that they trade "retail" as well as "wholesale." Twenty or twenty-five years ago, I am informed, the greater part of these establishments were really haberdashery swags; but so fierce became the competition in the trade, so keen the desire "to do business," that gradually, and more especially within these four or five years, they became "all kinds of swags."

A highly respectable draper told me that he never could thoroughly understand where hosiery, haberdashery, or drapery, began or ended; for hosiers now were always glovers, and often shirt-makers; haberdashers were always hosiers (at the least), and drapers were everything; so that the change in the character of the shops from which the street-sellers of textile fabrics procure their supplies, is but in accordance with the change in the general drapery trade. The literal meaning of the word haberdashery is unknown to etymologists.

There are now about fifty haberdashery swags

resorted to by street-sellers, but only a fifth part of them make the trade to street-sellers a principal, while none make it a sole feature of their business. In the enumeration of the fifty haberdashery "swags," five are large and handsome shops carried on by "cutting" drapers. Some of these—one in the borough, especially—do not "serve" the street-sellers, except at certain hours, generally from four to six.

There is another description of shops from which a class of street traders derive their supplies of stock. These are the "print-brokers," who sell "gown-pieces" to the hawkers or street-traders. Only about a dozen of such shops, and those principally in the borough and in Wormwood-street, Bishopsgate, are frequented by the London street-sellers. One man showed me a draper's shop, at which hawkers were "supplied," but without an announcement of such a thing, as it might affect the character of the concern for gentility. The gown-pieces were rolled loosely together, and to each was attached a ticket, 2s. 11d. or 3s. 11d., with intermediate prices, but those here mentioned were the most frequent. The 11d. was in pencil, so that it could be altered at any time, without the expense of a new ticket being incurred. "That one marked 2s. 11d.," said the street-seller, "would be charged to me 2s. 2d., and the 3s. 11d. in the same way 3s. 2d., or I might get it at 3s. If those gown-pieces don't take—and they are almost as thin as silver-paper,—they'll be marked down to 2s. 2d. and 3s. 2d., just by degrees, as you see them shown in the window." The regular "print-brokers" make no display in their windows or premises.

The "duffers" and "lumpers" are supplied almost entirely at one shop in the east end. The proprietor has the sham, or inferior, silk handkerchiefs manufactured for the purpose; and for the supply of his other silk-goods, he purchases any silk "miscoloured" in the dyeing, or faded from time. "A faded lavender," one of his customers told me, "he'll get dyed black, and made to look quite new and fresh. Sometimes it's good silk, but it's mostly very dicky." This tradesman is also a retailer.

Such things as braces and garters are sold to the street people at the general as well as the haberdashery swag-shops; and are more frequently sold wholesale than other goods; indeed the general swag-shop keepers sell them by no other way; but the "wholesale haberdashers" will sell a single pair, though not, of course, at wholesale price. Some houses again supply the more petty street-sellers, solely with such articles as are known in Manchester by the name of small-ware, including thread, cotton, tapes, laces, &c.

#### OF HAWKERS, PEDLARS, AND PETTY CHAPMEN.

THE machinery for the distribution of commodities has, in this and in all other "progressive" countries, necessarily undergone many changes; but whether these changes have been beneficial to the community, or not, this is not the place for me to inquire; all I have to do here is to set forth the order

of such changes, and to show the position that the hawker and pedlar formerly occupied in the state.

The "distributor" of the produce of the country is necessarily a kind of go-between, or middleman, introduced for the convenience of bringing together the producer and consumer—the seller and the buyer of commodities. The producer of a particular commodity being generally distinct from the consumer, it follows, that either the commodity must be carried to the consumer, or the consumer go to the commodity. To save time and trouble to both parties, it seems to have been originally arranged that producer and consumer should meet, periodically, at appointed places. Such periodical meetings of buyers and sellers still exist in this and many other countries, and are termed either fairs or markets, according as they are held at long or short intervals—the fair being generally an annual meeting, and the market a weekly one. In the olden time the peculiar characteristic of these commercial congregations was, that the producer and consumer came into immediate contact, without the intervention of any middleman. The fair or market seemed to be a compromise between the two, as to the inconvenience of either finding the other when wanted. The producer brought his goods, so to speak, half way to the consumer, while the consumer travelled half way to the goods. "There would be a great waste of time and trouble," says Stewart Mill, "and an inconvenience often amounting to impracticability, if consumers could only obtain the article they want by treating directly with the producers. Both producers and consumers are too much scattered, and the latter often at too great a distance from the former."

"To diminish this loss of time and labour," continues Mr. Mill, "the contrivance of fairs and markets was early had recourse to, where consumers and producers might periodically meet, without any intermediate agency; and this plan still answers tolerably well for many articles, especially agricultural produce—agriculturists having at some seasons a certain quantity of spare time on their hands. But even in this case, attendance is often very troublesome and inconvenient to buyers who have other occupations, and do not live in the immediate vicinity; while, for all articles the production of which requires continuous attention from the producers, these periodical markets must be held at such considerable intervals, and the wants of the consumers must either be provided for so long beforehand, or must remain so long unsupplied, that even before the resources of society permitted the establishment of shops, the supply of those wants fell universally into the hands of *itinerant dealers*, the pedlars who might appear once a month, being preferred to the fair, which only returned once a year. In country districts, remote from towns or large villages, the vocation of the pedlar is not yet wholly superseded. But a dealer who has a fixed abode, and fixed customers," continues Mr. Mill, "is so much more to be depended on, that customers prefer resorting to him, if he is conveniently accessible; and dealers, therefore, find their advantage in estab-

lishing themselves in every locality where there are sufficient consumers near at hand to afford them remuneration."

Thus we see that the pedlar was the original distributor of the produce of the country—the primitive middleman, as well as the prime mover in extending the markets of particular localities, or for particular commodities. He was, as it were, the first "free-trader;" increasing the facilities for the interchange of commodities, without regard to market dues or tolls, and carrying the natural advantages of particular districts to remote and less favoured places; thus enabling each locality to produce that special commodity for which it had the greatest natural convenience, and exchanging it for the peculiar produce of other parts.

Now, this extension of the markets necessarily involved some machinery for the conveyance of the goods from one district to another. Hence, the pedlar was not only the original merchant, but the primitive carrier—to whom, perhaps, we owe both our turnpike-roads and railways. For, since the peculiar characteristic of the pedlar was the carrying the produce to the consumer, rather than troubling the consumer to go after the produce, of course it soon became necessary, as the practice increased, and increased quantities of goods had to be conveyed from one part of the country to another, that increased facilities of transit should be effected. The first change was from the pack-man to the pack-horse: for the former a foot-way alone was required; while the latter necessitated the formation of some kind of a road. Some of these ancient pack-horse roads existed till within these few years. Hagbush-lane, which was described by William Hone only twenty years ago, but which has now vanished, was the ancient bridle or pack-horse road from London to the North, and extended by the Holloway back road as far as the City-road, near Old-street. "Some parts of Hagbush-lane," says Hone, "are much lower than the meadows on either side." At one time a terraced ridge, at another a deep rut, the pack-horse road must have been to the unaccustomed traveller a somewhat perilous pass. The historian of Craven, speaking of 1609, says, "At this time the communication between the north of England and the Universities was kept up by the carriers, who pursued their long but uniform route with trains of pack-horses. To their care were consigned packages, and not unfrequently the persons of young scholars. It was through their medium, also, that epistolary correspondence was managed; and as they always visited London, a letter could scarcely be exchanged between Yorkshire and Oxford in less time than a month." The General Post Office was established by Act of Parliament in the year 1660, and all letters were to be sent through this office, "except such letters as shall be sent by coaches, common-known carriers of goods by carts, waggons, and pack-horses, and shall be carried along with their carts, waggons, and pack-horses respectively."

"There is no such conveyance as a waggon in this country" (Scotland), says Roderick Random, referring to the beginning of the last century,

"and my finances were too weak to support the expense of hiring a horse. I determined therefore to set out with the carriers, who transport goods from one place to another on horseback; and this scheme I accordingly put in execution on the 1st day of November, 1739, sitting on a pack-saddle between two baskets, one of which contained my goods in a knapsack. But by the time we arrived at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, I was so fatigued with the tediousness of the carriage, and benumbed with the coldness of the weather, that I resolved to travel the rest of my journey on foot, rather than proceed in such a disagreeable manner."

The present mode of travelling, compared with that of the pack-horse means of conveyance as pursued of old, forms one of the most striking contrasts, perhaps, in all history.

Hence we see that the pedlar was originally both carrier and seller; first conveying his pack on his back, and then, as it increased in bulk, transferring it to the back of "the pack-horse." But as soon as the practice of conveying the commodities to the buyers, instead of compelling the buyers to go to the commodities, was found to be advantageous to both consumer and producer, it was deemed expedient that the two distinct processes of carriage and sale, which are included in the distribution of commodities, should be conducted by distinct persons, and hence the carrying and selling of goods became separate vocations in the State; and such is now the machinery by which the commodities of different parts of this country, as well as of others, are at present diffused over the greater portion of this kingdom. In remote districts however, and the poorer neighbourhoods of large towns, where there are either too few consumers, or too few commodities required now to support a fixed distributor with a distinct apparatus of transit, the pedlar still continues to be the sole means of diffusing the produce of one locality among the inhabitants of another; and it is in this light—as the poor man's merchant—that we must here consider him.

Among the more ancient of the trades, then, carried on in England is that of the hawker or pedlar. It is generally considered, as I said before, that hawking "is as ancient a mode of trade as that carried on in fairs and markets, towns and villages, as well as at the castles of the nobles or the cottages of their retainers." To fix the origin of fairs is impossible, for, in ancient and mediæval times, every great gathering was necessarily a fair. Men—whom it is no violence to language to call "hawkers"—resorted alike to the Olympic games and to the festivals of the early Christian saints, to sell or barter their wares. Of our English fairs Mr. Jacob says, in his "Law Dictionary"—"Various privileges have been annexed to them, and numerous facilities afforded to the disposal of property in them. To give them a greater degree of solemnity, they were originally, both in the ancient and modern world, associated with religious festivals. In most places, indeed, they are still held on the same day with the wake or feast of the saint to whom the church is dedicated; and till the practice was prohibited, it was customary

in England to hold them in churchyards. This practice, I may add, was not fully prohibited until the reign of Charles II., although it had long before fallen into disuse. Thus the connection between church and market is shown to be of venerable antiquity."

The hawker dealt, in the old times, more in textile fabrics than in anything else. Indeed, Shakspeare has dashed off a catalogue of his wares, in the song of *Autolycus* :

"Lawn as white as driven snow,  
Cyprus black as e'er was crow."

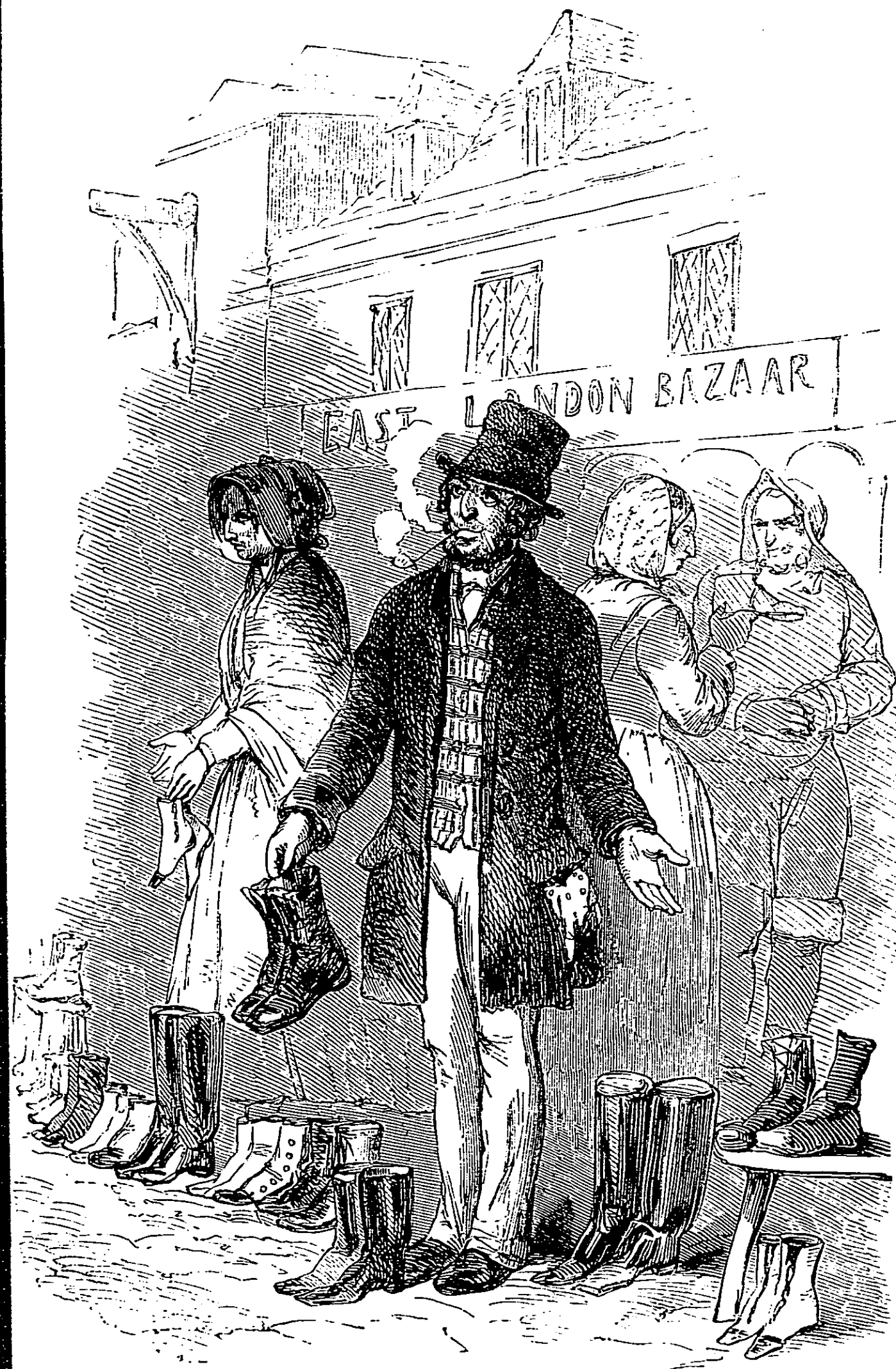
In the reigns succeeding the termination of the Wars of the Roses, and down to the Commonwealth, the hawker's pack was often stocked with costly goods; for great magnificence in dress was then the custom of the wealthy, and even the burgesses on public occasions wore velvet, fine cambric ruffs, and furs. The hawker was thus often a man of substance and frequently travelled on horseback, with his wares slung in bags on his horse's side, or fitted to the crupper or pommel of his saddle. He was often, moreover, attended by a man, both for help in his sales, and protection in travelling. In process of time an established hawker became the medium of news and of gossip, and frequently the bearer of communications from town to town. His profits were often great, but no little trust seems to have been reposed in him as to the quality and price of his goods; and, until the present century or so, slop goods were little manufactured, so that he could not so well practise deceptions. Neither, during the prosperity of the trade, does it appear that any great degree of dishonesty characterized the hawker, though to this there were of course plenty of minor exceptions as well as one glaring contradiction. The wreckers of our southern coasts, who sometimes became possessed of rich silks, velvets, laces, &c.—(not unfrequently murdering all the mariners cast on shore, and there was a convenient superstition among the wreckers, that it was unlucky to offer help to a drowning man)—disposed of much of their plunder to the hawkers; and as communication was slow, even down to Mr. Palmer's improvements in the Post Office in 1784, the goods thus rescued from the deep, or obtained by the murder of the mariners, were disposed of even before the loss of the vessel was known at her destination; for we are told that there was generally a hawker awaiting a wreck on the most dangerous shores of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Sussex.

During the last century, and for the first ten years of the present, the hawker's was a profitable calling. He usually in later times travelled with horse and covered cart, visiting fairs, markets, and private houses, more especially in the country. In some parts the calling was somewhat hereditary, son succeeding to father after having officiated as his assistant, and so becoming known to the customers. The most successful of the class, alike on both sides of the border, were Scotchmen.

In 1810 the prosperity of this trade experienced a check. In that year "every hawker, pedlar, or petty chapman going from town to town, or to

other men's houses, and travelling on foot, carrying to sell or exposing for sale any goods" was required to pay a yearly licence of 4*l.*, with an additional 4*l.* for every horse, ass, or mule, used in the business. Nothing, however, in the Act in question, 50 Geo. III. c. 41, as I have before intimated, "extended to prohibit" the hawking for sale of "any fish, fruit, or victuals" without licence. Neither is there any extension of the prohibition to the unlicensed workers or makers of any goods or wares, or their children or servants resident with them, hawking such goods, and selling them "in every city, borough, town, corporate, or market town," but not in villages or country places. "Tinkers, coopers, glaziers, plumbers, and harness-menders," are likewise permitted to carry about with them the proper materials necessary for their business, no licence being necessary.

The passing of this Act did not materially check the fraudulent practices of which the hawkers were accused, and of which a portion of them were doubtlessly guilty; indeed some of the manufacturers, whose names were pirated by the hawkers, were of opinion that the licensing for ten or twenty years facilitated fraud, as many people, both in London and the country, thought they were safe in dealing with a "licensed" hawker, since he could not procure a licence without a certificate of his good character from the clergyman of his place of residence, and from two "reputable inhabitants." Linen of good quality used to be extensively hawked, but from 1820 to 1825, or later in some parts, the hawkers got to deal in an inferior quality, "unions" (a mixture of linen and cotton), glazed and stiffened, and set off with gaudy labels bearing sometimes the name of a well-known firm, but altered in spelling or otherwise, and expressed so as to lead to the belief that such a firm were the manufacturers of the article. Jews, moreover, as we have seen, travelled in all parts with inferior watches and jewellery, and sometimes "did well" by persuading the possessors of old solid watches, or old seals or jewellery, that they were ridiculously out of fashion, and so inducing them to give money along with the old watch for a watch or other article of the newest fashion, which yet was intrinsically valueless compared with the other. These and other practices, such as selling inferior lace under pretence of its having been smuggled from France, and of the choicest quality, tended to bring the hawker's trade into disrepute, and the disrepute affected the honest men in the business. Some sank from the possession of a good horse and cart to travelling on foot, as of yore, forwarding goods from place to place by the common carriers, and some relinquished the itinerant trade altogether. The "cutting" and puffing shopkeepers appeared next, and at once undersold the "slop" hawker, and foiled him on his own ground of pushing off inferior wares for the best. The numbers of the hawkers fell off considerably, but notwithstanding I find, in the last census tables (1841), the following returns as to the numbers of "hawkers, hucksters, and pedlars," distributed throughout Great Bri-



A VIEW IN ROSEMARY LANE.

tain. The Government returns, however, admit of no comparison being formed between these numbers and those of any previous time.

| ENGLAND AND WALES.  |        | SCOTLAND.           |      |
|---------------------|--------|---------------------|------|
| Bedford             | 79     | Aberdeen            | 105  |
| Berks               | 160    | Argyll              | 44   |
| Bucks               | 129    | Avr.                | 144  |
| Cambridge           | 139    | Blair               | 33   |
| Chester             | 362    | Berwick             | 41   |
| Cornwall            | 175    | Bute                | 17   |
| Cumberland          | 217    | Caithness           | 4    |
| Derby               | 427    | Clackmannan         | 18   |
| Devon               | 230    | Dumbarton           | 29   |
| Dorset              | 97     | Dumfries            | 72   |
| Durham              | 301    | Edinburgh           | 401  |
| Essex               | 339    | Elgin, or Moray     | 37   |
| Gloucester          | 437    | Fife                | 77   |
| Hereford            | 44     | Forfar              | 108  |
| Hertford            | 137    | Haddington          | 54   |
| Huntingdon          | 45     | Inverness           | 33   |
| Kent                | 284    | Kincardine          | 27   |
| Lancaster           | 1862   | Kinross             | 9    |
| Leicester           | 292    | Kirkeudbright       | 46   |
| Lincoln             | 435    | Lanark              | 677  |
| Middlesex           | 1597   | Linlithgow          | 33   |
| Monmouth            | 163    | Nairn               | 2    |
| Norfolk             | 431    | Orkney and Shetland | 10   |
| Northampton         | 214    | Peebles             | 13   |
| Northumberland      | 426    | Perth               | 119  |
| Nottingham          | 267    | Renfrew             | 107  |
| Oxford              | 94     | Ross and Cromarty   | 11   |
| Rutland             | 23     | Roxburgh            | 96   |
| Salop               | 240    | Selkirk             | 18   |
| Somerset            | 201    | Stirling            | 95   |
| Southampton         | 226    | Sutherland          | 5    |
| Stafford            | 472    | Wigtown             | 30   |
| Suffolk             | 288    |                     |      |
| Surrey              | 609    |                     |      |
| Sussex              | 238    |                     |      |
| Warwick             | 476    |                     |      |
| Westmorland         | 44     |                     |      |
| Wilts.              | 109    |                     |      |
| Worcester           | 247    |                     |      |
| City of York        | 63     |                     |      |
| East Riding of York | 200    |                     |      |
| North Riding        | 187    |                     |      |
| West Riding         | 1039   |                     |      |
|                     | 14,038 |                     |      |
| WALES.              |        |                     |      |
| Anglesey            | 14     |                     |      |
| Brecon              | 63     |                     |      |
|                     |        |                     | 2561 |

Thus we find that, in 1841, there were of these trades in

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| England                | 14,038 |
| Wales                  | 63     |
| British Isles          | 47     |
| Scotland               | 2,561  |
| Total in Great Britain | 17,270 |

The counties in which the hawkers, hucksters, and pedlars most abound appear to be—1st, Lancaster; 2nd, Middlesex; 3rd, Yorkshire (West Riding); 4th, Lanark; and 5th, Surrey.

What rule, if any rule, was observed in classing these "hawkers, hucksters, and pedlars," or what distinction was drawn between a hawker and a huckster, I am unable to say, but it is certain that the number of "licensed hawkers" was within one-half of the 17,270; for, in 1841, the hawkers' duty realized only 32,762*l.* gross revenue, and waiving the amount paid for the employment of horses, &c., the official return, reckoning so many persons paying 4*l.* each, shows only 8190 licensed hawkers in 1841.

The hawker's business has been prosecuted far more extensively in country than in town, but he still continues to deal in London.

OF THE PACKMEN, OR HAWKERS OF SOFT WARES.

THE packman, as he is termed, derives his name from carrying his merchandise or pack upon his back. These itinerant distributors are far less numerous than they were twenty or twenty-five years since. A few years since, they were mostly Irishmen, and their principal merchandise, Irish linens—a fabric not so generally worn now as it was formerly.

The packmen are sometimes called Manchester-men. These are the men whom I have described as the sellers of shirtings, sheetings, &c. One man, who was lately an assistant in the trade, could reckon twenty men who were possessed of good stocks, good connections, and who had saved money. They traded in an honourable manner, were well known, and much respected. The majority of them were natives of the north of Ireland, and two had been linen manufacturers. It is common, indeed, for all the Irishmen in this trade to represent themselves as having been connected with the linen manufacture in Belfast.

This trade is now becoming almost entirely a country trade. There are at present, I am told, only five pursuing it in London, none of them having a very extensive connection, so that only a brief notice is necessary. Their sale is of both cottons and linens for shirts. They carry them in rolls of 36 yards, or in smaller rolls, each of a dozen yards, and purchase them at the haberdashery swag-shops, at from 9*d.* to 18*d.* a yard. I now speak of good articles. Their profits are not very large—as for the dozen yards, which cost them 9*s.*, they often have a difficulty in getting 12*s.*—while in street-sale, or in hawking from house to house, there is great delay. A well-furnished pack weighs about one cwt., and so necessitates frequent stoppages. Cotton, for sheetings, is sold in the same manner, costing the vendors from 6*d.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* a yard.

Of the tricks of the trade, and of the tally system of one of these chapmen, I had the following account from a man who had been, both as principal and assistant, a travelling packman, but was best acquainted with the trade in and about London.

"My master," he said, "was an Irishman, and told everybody he had been a manager of a linen factory in Belfast. I believe he was brought up to be a shoemaker, and was never in the north of Ireland. Anyhow, he was very shy of talking about Irish factories to Irish gentlemen. I heard one say to him, 'Don't tell me, you have the Cork brogue.' I know he'd got some knowledge of linen weaving at Dundee, and could talk about it very clever; indeed he was a clever fellow. Sometimes, to hear him talk, you'd think he was quite a religious man, and at others that he was a big blackguard. It wasn't drink that made the difference, for he was no drinker. It's a great thing on a round to get a man or woman into a cheerful talk, and put in a joke or two; and that he could do, to rights. I had 12*s.* a week, standing wages, from him, and bits of commissions on

sales that brought me from 3s. to 5s. more. He was a buyer of damaged goods, and we used to 'doctor' them. In some there was perhaps damages by two or three threads being out all the way, so the manufacturers wouldn't send them to their regular customers. My master pretended it was a secret where he got them, but, lord, I knew; it was at a swag-shop. We used to cut up these in twelves (twelve yards), sometimes less if they was very bad, and take a Congreve, and just scorch them here and there, where the flaws was worst, and plaster over other flaws with a little flour and dust, to look like a stain from street water from the fire-engine. Then they were from the stock of Mr. Anybody, the great draper, that had his premises burnt down—in Manchester or Glasgow, or London—if there'd been a good fire at a draper's—or anywhere; we wasn't particular. They was fine or strong shirtings, he'd say—and so they was, the sound parts of them—and he'd sell as cheap as common calico. I've heard him say, 'Why, marm, sure marm, with your eyes and scissors and needle, them burns—ah! fire's a dreadful judgment on a man—isn't the least morsel of matter in life. The stains is cured in a wash-tub in no time. It's only touched by the fire, and you can humour it, I know, in cutting out as a shirt ought to be cut; it should be as carefully done as a coat.' Then we had an Irish linen, an imitation, you know, a kind of 'Union,' which we call double twist. It is made, I believe, in Manchester, and is a mixture of linen and cotton. Some of it's so good that it takes a judge to tell the difference between it and real Irish. He got some beautiful stuff at one time, and once sold to a fine-dressed young woman in Brompton, a dozen yards, at 2s. 6d. a yard, and the dozen only cost him 14s. Then we did something on tally, but he was dropping that trade. The shopkeepers undersold him. 'If you get 60% out of 100%, in tally scores,' he often said, 'it's good money, and a fair living profit; but he got far more than that. What was worth 8s. was 18s. on tally, pay 1s. a week. He did most that way with the masters of coffee-shops and the landlords of little public-houses. Sometimes, if they couldn't pay, we'd have dinner, and that went to account, and he'd quarrel with me after it for what was my share. There's not much of this sort of trade now, sir. I believe my old master got his money together and emigrated."

"Do you want any genuine Irish linin, ma'am?" uttered in unmistakable brogue, seemed to authenticate the fact, that the inquirer (being an Irishman) in all likelihood possessed the legitimate article; but as to their obtaining their goods from Coleraine and other places in the Emerald Isle, famed for the manufacture of linen, it was and is as pure fiction as the Travels of Baron Munchausen.

The majority of these packmen have discontinued dealing in linens exclusively, and have added silks, ladies' dresses, shawls and various articles connected with the drapery business. The country, and small towns and villages, remote from the neighbourhood of large and showy shops,

are the likeliest markets for the sale of their goods. In London the Irish packmen have been completely driven out by the Scotch tallymen, who indeed are the only class of packmen likely to succeed in London. If the persevering Scotch tallyman can but set foot in a decent-looking residence, and be permitted to display his tempting finery to the "lady of the house," he generally manages to talk her into purchasing articles that perhaps she has no great occasion for, and which serve often to involve her in difficulties for a considerable period—causing her no little perplexity, and requiring much artifice to keep the tallyman's weekly visits a secret from her husband—to say nothing of paying an enormous price for the goods; for the many risks which the tallyman incurs, necessitates of course an exorbitant rate of profit.

"The number of packmen or hawkers of shawls, silks, &c., I think" (says one of their own body) "must have decreased full one-half within the last few years. The itinerant haberdashery trade is far from the profitable business that it used to be, and not unfrequently do I travel a whole day without taking a shilling: still, perhaps, one day's good work will make up for half a dozen bad ones. All the packmen have hawkers' licences, as they have mostly too valuable a stock to incur the risk of losing it for want of such a privilege. Some of the fraternity" (says my informant) "do not always deal 'upon the square;' they profess to have just come from India or China, and to have invested all their capital in silks of a superior description manufactured in those countries, and to have got them on shore 'unbeknown to the Custom-house authorities.' This is told in confidence to the servant-man or woman who opens the door—'be so good as tell the lady as much,' says the hawker, 'for really I'm afraid to carry the goods much longer, and I have already sold enough to pay me well enough for my spec—go, there's a good girl, tell your missus I have splendid goods, and am willing almost to give them away, and if we makes a deal of it, why I don't mind giving you a handsome present for yourself.'" This is a bait not to be resisted. Should the salesman succeed with the mistress, he carries out his promise to the maid by presenting her with a cap ribbon, or a cheap neckerchief.

The most primitive kind of packmen, or hawkers of soft-wares, who still form part of the distributing machinery of the country, traverse the highlands of Scotland. They have their regular rounds, and their regular days of visiting their customers; their arrival is looked for with interest by the country people; and the inmates of the farm-house where they locate for the night consider themselves fortunate in having to entertain the packman; for he is their newsmonger, their story-teller, their friend, and their acquaintance, and is always made welcome. His wares consist of hose—linsey walsey, for making petticoats—muslins for caps—ribbons—an assortment of needles, pins, and netting-pins—and all sorts of small wares. He always travels on foot. It is suspected that he likewise does a little in the "jigger line," for many of these

Highlanders have, or are supposed to have, their illicit distilleries; and the packmen are suspected of trafficking without excise interference. Glasgow, Dundee, Galashiels, and Harwick are the principal manufacturing towns where the packman replenishes his stock. "My own opinion," says an informant of considerable experience, "is that these men seldom grow rich; but the prevailing idea in the country part of Scotland is, that the pedlar has an unco lang stockin wi' an awfu' amount o' goden guineas in it, and that his pocket buik is plumped out wi' a thick roll of bank notes. Indeed there are many instances upon record of poor packmen having been murdered—the assassins, doubtlessly, expecting a rich booty." It scarcely ever costs the packman of Scotland anything for his bed and board. The Highlanders are a most hospitable people with acquaintances—although with strangers at first they are invariably shy and distant. In Ireland there is also the travelling pedlar, whose habits and style of doing business are nearly similar to that of the Scotchman. Some of the packmen of Scotland have risen to eminence and distinction. A quondam lord provost of Glasgow, a gentleman still living, and upon whom the honour of knighthood has been conferred, was, according to common report, in his earlier days a packman; and rumour also does the gentleman the credit to acknowledge that he is not ashamed to own it.

I am told by a London hawker of soft goods, or packman, that the number of his craft, hawking London and its vicinity, as far as he can judge, is about 120 (the census of 1841 makes the London hawkers, hucksters and pedlars amount to 2041). In the 120 are included the Irish linen hawkers. I am also informed that the fair trader's profits amount to about 20 per cent., while those of the not over-particular trader range from 80 to 200 per cent. In a fair way of business it is said the hawker's taking will amount, upon an average, to 7l. or 8l. per week; whereas the receipts of the "duffer," or unfair hawker, will sometimes reach to 50l. per week. Many, however, travel days, and do not turn a penny.

#### STATEMENT OF A PACKMAN.

Of the way of trading of a travelling-pedlar I had the following account from one of the body. He was well dressed, and a good but keen-looking man of about thirty-five, slim, and of rather short stature, with quick dark eyes and bushy whiskers, on which it was evident no small culture was bestowed. His manners were far from obtrusive or importunate—to those whom he sought to make customers—for I happened to witness a portion of his proceedings in that respect; but he had a quiet perseverance with him, which, along with perfect civility, and something like deference, might be the most efficient means of recommending himself to the maid-servants, among whom lay his chief customers. He showed a little of the pride of art in describing the management of his business, but he would not hear that he "pattered;" he talked to his customers, he declared, as any

draper, who knew his business well, might talk to his.

When I saw him, his pack, which he carried slung over one shoulder, contained a few gown-pieces of printed cotton, nearly all with pink grounds; a few shawls of different sizes; and three rolls firmly packed, each with a card-label on which was neatly written, "French Merino. Full duty paid. A.B.—L.F.—18—33—1851. French Chocolate." There were also six neat paper packages, two marked "worked collars," three, "gauze handkerchiefs," and the other "beautiful child's gros de naples." The latter consisted of 4½ yards of black silk, sufficient for a child's dress. He carried with him, moreover, 5 umbrellas, one inclosed in a bright glazed cover, while from its mother-of-pearl handle hung a card addressed—"The Lady's Maid, Victoria Lodge, 13s. 6d."

"This is a very small stock," he said, "to what I generally carry, but I'm going on a country round to-morrow, and I want to get through it before I lay in a new one. I tell people that I want to sell off my goods cheap, as they're too good for country sale; and that's true, the better half of it."

On my expressing some surprise that he should be leaving London at this particular time, he answered:—

"I go into the country because I think all the hawkers will be making for town, and there'll be plenty of customers left in the country, and fewer to sell to them at their own places. That's my opinion."

"I sell to women of all sorts. Smart-dressing servant-maids, perhaps, are my best customers, especially if they live a good way from any grand ticketing shop. I sold one of my umbrellas to one of them just before you spoke to me. She was standing at the door, and I saw her give half a glance at the umbrellas, and so I offered them. She first agreed to buy a very nice one at 3s. 3d. (which should have been 4s.), but I persuaded her to take one at 3s. 9d. (which should have been 4s. 6d.). 'Look here, ma'am,' said I, 'this umbrella is much bigger you see, and will carry double, so when you're coming from church of a wet Sunday evening, a friend can have share of it, and very grateful he'll be, as he's sure to have his best hat on. There's been many a question put under an umbrella that way that's made a young lady blush, and take good care of her umbrella when she was married, and had a house of her own. I look sharp after the young and pretty ladies, Miss, and shall as long as I'm a bachelor.' 'O,' says she, 'such ridiculous nonsense. But I'll have the bigger umbrella, because it's often so windy about here, and then one must have a good cover if it rains as well.'

"That's my way, sir. I don't mind telling that, because they do the same in the shops. I've heard them, but they can't put love and sweet-hearting so cleverly in a crowded shop as we can in a quiet house. It's that I go for, love and sweet-hearting; and I always speak to any smart servant as if I thought she was the mistress, or as

if I wasn't sure whether she was the mistress or the lady's-maid; three times out of four she's house-maid or maid of all work. I call her 'ma'am,' and 'young lady,' and sometimes 'miss.' It's no use offering to sell until a maid has tidied herself in the afternoon—not a bit. I should make a capital draper's shopman, I know, only I could never bear the confinement. I never will hear such words as 'I don't want it,' or, 'nothing more to-day,' no more than if I was behind a counter.

"The great difficulty I have is to get a chance of offering my goods. If I ring at a gate—for I always go a little way out of town—they can see who it is, and I may ring half an hour for nothing. If the door's opened it's often shut again directly, and I just hear 'bother.' I used to leave a few bills, and I do so still in some parts of the country, with a list of goods, and 'this bill to be called for' printed at the bottom. But I haven't done that in town for a long time; it's no good. People seem to think it's giving double trouble. One of the prettiest girls I ever saw where I called one evening, pointed—just as I began to say, 'I left a bill and'—to some paper round a candle in a stick, and shut the door laughing.

"In selling my gown-pieces I say they are such as will suit the complexion, and such like; and I always use my judgment in saying so. Why shouldn't I? It's the same to me what colour I sell. 'It's a genteel thing, ma'am,' I'll say to a servant-maid, 'and such as common people won't admire. It's not staring enough for them. I'm sure it would become you, ma'am, and is very cheap; cheaper than you could buy at a shop; for all these things are made by the same manufacturers, and sold to the wholesale dealers at the same price, and a shopkeeper, you know, has his young men, and taxes, and rates, and gas, and fine windows to pay for, and I haven't, so it don't want much judgment to see that I must be able to sell cheaper than shopkeepers, and I think your own taste, ma'am, will satisfy you that these here are elegant patterns.'

"That's the way I go on. No doubt there's others do the same, but I know and care little about them. I have my own way of doing business, and never trouble myself about other people's patter or nonsense.

"Now, that piece of silk I shall, most likely, sell to the landlady of a public-house, where I see there's children. I shall offer it after I've got a bit of dinner there, or when I've said I want a bit. It's no use offering it there, though, if it isn't cheap; they're too good judges. Innkeepers aren't bad customers, I think, taking it altogether, to such as me, if you can get to talk to them, as you sometimes can at their bars. They're generally wanting something, that's one step. I always tell them that they ought to buy of men, in my way, who live among them, and not of fine shop-keepers, who never came a-near their houses. I've sold them both cottons and linens, after such talk as that. I live at public-houses in the country. I sleep nowhere else.

"My trade in town is nothing to what it was ten or a dozen years back. I don't know the

reason exactly. I think so many threepenny busses is one; for they'll take any servant, when she's got an afternoon, to a thoroughfare full of ticket-shops, and bring her back, and her bundle of purchases too, for another 3d. I shall cut it altogether, I think, and stick to the country. Why, I've known the time when I should have met from half-a-dozen to a dozen people trading in my way in town, and for these three days, and dry days too, I haven't met one. My way of trading in the country is just the same as in town. I go from farm-house to farm-house, or call at gentlemen's grand seats—if a man's known to the servants there, it may be the best card he can play—and I call at every likely house in the towns or villages. I only go to a house and sell a mistress or maid the same sort of goods (a little cheaper, perhaps), and recommend them in the same way, as is done every day at many a fine city, and borough, and West-End shop. I never say they're part of a bankrupt's stock; a packfull would seem nothing for that. I never pretend that they're smuggled. Mine's a respectable trade, sir. There's been so much dodging that way, it's been a great stop to fair trading; and I like to go on the same round more than once. A person once taken-in by smuggled handkerchiefs, or anything, won't deal with a hawker again, even though there's no deception. But 'duffing,' and all that is going down fast, and I wish it was gone altogether. I do nothing in tally. I buy my goods; and I've bought all sorts, in wholesale houses, of course, and I'd rather lay out 10l. in Manchester than in London. O, as to what I make, I can't say it's enough to keep me (I've only myself), and escape the income-tax. Sometimes I make 10s. a week; sometimes 20s.; sometimes 30s.; and I have made 50s.; and one week, the best I ever did, I made as much as 74s. 6d. That's all I can say."

Perhaps it may be sufficiently accurate to compute the average weekly earnings of a smart trader like my informant, at from 21s. to 25s. in London, and from 25s. to 30s. in the country.

#### OF THE TALLY PACKMAN.

THE pedlar tallyman is a hawker who supplies his customers with goods, receiving payment by weekly instalments, and derives his name from the tally or score he keeps with his customers. Linen drapery—or at least the general routine of linen-drapery's stock, as silk-mercery, hosiery, woollen cloths, &c.—is the most prevalent trade of the tallyman. There are a few shoemakers and some household furniture dealers who do business in the tally or "score" system; but the great majority are linen-draperies, though some of them sell household furniture as well. The system is generally condemned as a bad one; as leading to improvidence in the buyer and rapacity in the seller. There are many who have incurred a tally debt, and have never been able to "get a-head of it," but have been kept poor by it all their lives. Some few, however, may have been benefited by the system, and as an outfit for a young man or woman entering service is necessary—when the parties are too poor to pay ready money—it is an

accommodation. I have never heard any of the tallyman's customers express an opinion upon the subject, other than that they wish they had done with the tallyman, or could do without him.

The system does not prevail to so great an extent as it did some years back. The pedlar or hawking tallyman travels for orders, and consequently is said not to require a hawker's licence. The great majority of the tally-packmen are Scotchmen. The children who are set to watch the arrival of the tallyman, and apprise the mother of his approach, when not convenient to pay, whisper instead of "Mother, here's the Tallyman," "Mother, here's the Scotchman." These men live in private houses, which they term their ware-house; they are many of them proprietors themselves in a small way, and conduct the whole of their business unassisted. Their mode of doing business is as follows:—they seldom knock at a door except they have a customer upon whom they call for the weekly instalment, but if a respectable-looking female happens to be standing at her door, she, in all probability, is accosted by the Scotchman, "Do you require anything in my way to-day, ma'am?" This is often spoken in broad Scotch, the speaker trying to make it sound as much like English as possible. Without waiting for a reply, he then runs over a programme of the treasures he has to dispose of, emphasising all those articles which he considers likely to suit the taste of the person he addresses. She doesn't want perhaps any—she has no money to spare then. "She may want something in his way another day, may-be," says the tallyman. "Will she grant him permission to exhibit some beautiful shawls—the last new fashion? or some new style of dress, just out, and an extraordinary bargain?" The man's importunities, and the curiosity of the lady, introduces him into the apartment,—an acquaintance is called in to pass her opinion upon the tallyman's stock. Should she still demur, he says, "O, I'm sure your husband cannot object—he will not be so unreasonable; besides, consider the easy mode of payment, you'll only have to pay 1s. 6d. a week for every pound's worth of goods you take; why it's like nothing; you possess yourself of respectable clothing and pay for them in such an easy manner that you never miss it; well, I'll call next week. I shall leave you this paper." The paper left is a blank form to be filled up by the husband, and runs thus:—"I agree on behalf of my wife to pay, by weekly instalments of 1s. 6d. upon every pound's worth of good she may purchase." This proceeding is considered necessary by the tallymen, as the judges in the Court of Requests now so frequently decide against him, where the husband is not cognisant of the transaction.

These preliminaries being settled, and the question having been asked what business the husband is—where he works—and (if it can be done without offence) what are his wages? The Scotchman takes stock of the furniture, &c.; the value of what the room contains gives him a sufficiently correct estimate of the circumstances of his customers. His next visit is to the nearest chandler's shop, and there as blandly as possible he inquires

into the credit, &c., of Mr. —. If he deal, however, with the chandler, the tallyman accounts it a bad omen, as people in easy circumstances seldom resort to such places. "It is unpleasant to me," he says to the chandler, "making these inquiries; but Mrs. — wishes to open an account with me, and I should like to oblige them if I thought my money was safe." "Do you trust them, and what sort of payers are they?" According to the reply—the tallyman determines upon his course. But he rarely stops here; he makes inquiries also at the greengrocer's, the beer shop, &c.

The persons who connect themselves with the tallyman, little know the inquisition they subject themselves to.

When the tallyman obtains a customer who pays regularly, he is as importunate for her to recommend him another customer, as he originally was to obtain her custom. Some tallymen who keep shops have "travellers" in their employ, some of whom have salaries, while others receive a percentage upon all payments, and do not suffer any loss upon bad debts. Notwithstanding the caution of the tallyman, he is frequently "victimised." Many pawn the goods directly they have obtained them, and in some instances spend the money in drink. Their many losses, as a matter of course, *somebody* must make good. It therefore becomes necessary for them to charge a higher price for their commodities than the regular trader.

However charitably inclined the tallyman may be at first, he soon becomes, I am told, inured to scenes of misery, while the sole feeling in his mind at length is, "I will have my money;" for he is often tricked, and in some cases most impudently victimised. I am told by a tallyman that he once supplied goods to the amount of 2l., and when he called for the first instalment, the woman said she didn't intend to pay, the goods didn't suit her, and she would return them. The tallyman expressed his willingness to receive them back, whereupon she presented him a pawnbroker's duplicate. She had pledged them an hour after obtaining them. This was done in a court in the presence of a dozen women, who all chuckled with delight at the joke.

The principal portion of the tallyman's customers are poor mechanics. When the appearance of the house, and the inquiries out of doors are approved of, no security is required; but the tallyman would at all times rather add a security, when attainable. Servant-girls who deal with tallymen must find the security of a housekeeper; and when such housekeeper agrees to be responsible for the payments, the same inquisitorial proceedings are adopted, in order to ascertain the circumstances of the surety. There are about fifty drapery shops in London where the tally-trade is carried on; and about 200 Scotchmen, besides fifty others (part English, part Irish), are engaged in the trade. A clerk of a tally-shop, at the West-end, informs me that there are ten collectors and canvassers for customers, out each day, from that one establishment; and that, until

lately, they were accustomed to collect moneys on Sundays. Some collect as much as 12*l.* or 14*l.* a day; and some not more than 2*l.* or 3*l.* The average sum collected may be about 5*l.* each, or 50*l.* per day by the whole. The profits are 30 per cent., the bad debts 10 per cent., thus leaving 20 per cent. net.

The Scotchman who does not choose to extend his business beyond his own cautious superintendence, is content with smaller profits, perhaps 20 per cent., and his bad debts may be estimated at 2½ per cent. One of the body informed me that he had been in the tally-trade about five years; that he commenced with a capital of only 10*l.*, and that now his collections average 30*l.* per week. He never bought, he said, on credit; and his stock on hand is worth nearly 200*l.* cost price, while his outstanding debts are nearly 200*l.* also. "This is a flourishing state of affairs," he remarked; "I do not owe a penny in the world, and I have accomplished all this in little less than five years." This man had served his apprenticeship to a draper in Glasgow, and had originally arrived in London with 20*l.* in his pocket. After some weeks' fruitless endeavour to obtain a situation, his money dwindling away the while, he was advised, by a fellow-countryman, who was a tallyman, to try the tally-trade. For a few days previous to adopting the business, he went the "rounds" with his friend, for the purpose of getting initiated, and the week after started on his own account. Notwithstanding his having no hawker's licence, he tried to effect sales for ready money, and, to a trifling extent, succeeded. The first week he obtained three tally customers. He could have got, he said, a dozen; but he selected three whom he considered good, and he was not deceived, for they continued to be customers of his to this day. The amount of goods that each of these took of him was 20*s.*; and the three instalments of 1*s.* 6*d.* each (4*s.* 6*d.* per week) the tallyman determined to subsist upon, though his lodging and washing cost him 2*s.* per week. He lived principally upon "parritch" and skim milk, indulging now and then in the luxury of a herring and a few potatoes. In twelve weeks he had added only one more credit customer to his books. He had hawked for ready money, and had succeeded so far as to increase his stock to 15*l.* in value. His first three customers had, by this time, paid their accounts, and again patronized him. In the course of a little time his fourth customer had also paid up, and had another supply of goods; he then added two more tally customers, and commenced indulging (though very seldom) in a mutton chop. He progressed slowly, and is now in flourishing circumstances. He states that he has met with only one loss during his connection with the tally-trade, and that but a trifling one. It is those who wish to drive a very extensive business, he says, who are principally victimised. The most industrious of the packmen tallymen seldom travel less than twenty miles a day, carrying a burthen upon their backs of from 100 to 120*lbs.* They used to carry merely patterns to their customers, but they find that the full-

length article is more likely to secure purchasers and customers. Those who keep shops do not carry goods with them; the would-be customer is invited to the shop.

The best day for business in the tally-trade is Monday, and most of these shops upon that day are crowded. Sometimes an unsolicited customer (mostly a female) presents herself, and wishes to be supplied with goods on tally. "Who recommended you?" inquires the tallyman. "Oh, Mrs. —, sir, a customer of yours." "Ah! indeed, very much obliged to Mrs. —," is the answer. The articles required are shown, selected, and cut. The new customer is treated most civilly by the tallyman, who further inquires her name and abode. The purchaser, of course, expects the next process will be to deliver up the parcel to her, when she is informed that they "will send it home for her." "Oh," she replies, "I won't trouble you, I can carry it myself." "Our rule, ma'am," returns the tallyman, "is always to send parcels home. We certainly cannot doubt your respectability, but we never deviate from our practice." The disappointed female departs, and if the inquiries do not prove satisfactory, she never hears further from the tallyman. The goods which she selected, and which were cut expressly for her, find their way to the shelves of the establishment. If, however, a good customer accompanies a friend whom she wishes to recommend, the parcels are delivered when purchased, if required. The tallyman (to good customers) often extends his civilities to a glass of wine; or, if the "Ladies" prefer it (which it must be confessed they mostly do), a glass of gin.

There is another class of tallymen who sell clocks, receiving payment by weekly instalments. These are content with an instalment of 1*s.* in the pound per week. They are principally Germans who can speak English. Their proceedings altogether are similar to the tally linen-draper.

I have given the rise and progress of a Scotch tallyman, and will now relate the downfall of another—an Englishman. He commenced a tally-shop in the neighbourhood of —, and was carrying on a prosperous and daily increasing trade. At one time, a bill in the shop window announced that an errand boy was wanted—an applicant soon presented himself—was engaged, and proved a steady lad. In the course of a few weeks, this youth was promoted to the office of serving in the shop, and afterwards became collecting clerk. "George," said his master one day, "we have three days in the week unemployed; suppose you try and form a connection around Finchley, Highgate, Hampstead, and that neighbourhood." George was quite willing to make the experiment, and succeeded beyond expectation. The country connection soon surpassed the town trade; and George, the errand boy, became a man of some consequence in the establishment. The principal of the firm was what is termed "gay." He was particularly fond of attending public entertainments. He sported a little as well, and delighted in horse-racing. His business,

though an excellent one, was neglected; the books got out of order; and he became involved in difficulties. An examination of his affairs took place; and a Mr. R— was engaged from a wholesale house in the city to assist in making up the accounts, &c. During this person's sojourn in the shop, he saw that George (the quondam errand boy) was the chief support of the concern. The country customers had never seen any other person, and a partnership was proposed. The proposal was accepted, and the firm R— and W— became one of the most prosperous tally-shops in the neighbourhood of Tottenham-court-road. George's master was made bankrupt, and is now a street-seller in Fitzroy-market—vending sandwiches, &c.

The cases are not a few where ruin has followed a connection with the tallymen. I will particularize one instance related to me on good authority. A lawyer's clerk married, when young, a milliner; his salary was a guinea per week, and he and his wife had agreed to "get on in the world." They occupied furnished lodgings at first, but soon accumulated furniture of their own, and every week added some little useful article towards their household stock. "At the end of a year," said the individual in question, "I had as comfortable a little home as any man would wish to possess; I was fond of it too, and would rather have been there than anywhere else. My wife frequently wished to obtain credit; 'it would be so easy,' said she, 'to pay a trifling instalment, and then we could obtain immediately whatever we might want.' I objected, and preferred supplying our wants gradually, knowing that for ready money I could purchase to much better advantage. Consequently we still kept progressing, and I was really happy. Judge my astonishment one day, when I came home, and found an execution was in the house. My wife had run in debt with the tallyman unknown to me. Summonses had been served, which by some means she had concealed from me. The goods which I had taken so much pains to procure were seized and sold. But this was not all. My wife grew so much alarmed at the misery she had caused that she fled from me, and I have never seen her but once since. This occurred seven years ago, and she has been for some time the companion of those who hold their virtue of little worth. For some time after this I cared not what became of me; I lost my situation, and sunk to be a supernumerary for 1*s.* a night at one of the theatres. Here, after being entrusted with a line to speak, I eventually rose to a 'general utility man,' at 12*s.* per week. With this and some copying, that I occasionally obtain from the law-stationers, I manage to live, but far from comfortably, for I never think of saving now, and only look out for copying when I stand in need of more money. I am always poor, and scarcely ever have a shilling to call my own."

Some of the principal establishments, "doing largely" in the tally-trade, are in or about Red Lion-square and street, the higher part of High Holborn, the vicinity of Tottenham-court-road,

the Blackfriars, Waterloo, Westminster, St. George's, Walworth, New Kent, and Dover roads.

At some of these tally-shops horses and carts are kept to carry out the goods ordered of the "travellers," especially when furniture is supplied as well as drapery; while in others the "travellers" are resident on the premises, and are occasionally shopmen, for a "large" tally-master not unfrequently carries on a retail trade in addition to his tally-business.

The tallymen not concerned with these large establishments, but carrying on trade on their own account, reside generally in the quieter streets in the neighbourhood of the thoroughfares I have mentioned, and occupy perhaps the ground-floor, letting (for the house is generally their own) the other apartments. Sometimes a piece of cotton-print is placed in their parlour-window, and sometimes there is no indication whatever of any business being carried on within, for the hawking tallymen do not depend in any measure upon situation or display, but solely on travelling and personal solicitations at people's own residences.

#### OF THE "DUFFERS" OR HAWKERS OF PRETENDED SMUGGLED GOODS.

OF "duffers" and "lumpers," as regards the sale of textile fabrics, there are generally, I am informed, about twenty in London. At such times as Epsom, Ascot-heath, or Goodwood races, however, there is, perhaps, not one. All have departed to prey, if possible, upon the countrymen. Eight of them are Jews, and the majority of the others are Irishmen. They are generally dressed as sailors, and some wear either fur caps, or cloth ones, with gilt bands round them, as if they were the mates or stewards of ships. They look out for any likely victim at public-houses, and sometimes accost persons in the streets—first looking carefully about them, and hint that they are smugglers, and have the finest and cheapest "Injy" handkerchiefs ever seen. These goods are now sold in "pieces" of three handkerchiefs. When times were better, I was told, they were in pieces of four, five, and six. One street-seller said to me, "Yes, I know the 'duffers,' all of them. They do more business than you might think. Everybody likes a smuggled thing; and I should say these men, each of the 'duffers,' tops his 1*l.* a week, clear profit." I am assured that one of the classes most numerously victimised is a body who generally account themselves pretty sharp, viz. gentlemen's grooms, and coachmen at the several mews. Sailors are the best customers, and the vicinity of the docks the best locality for this trade; for the hawker of pretended smuggled goods always does most business among the "tars." The mock handkerchiefs are damped carefully with a fine sponge, before they are offered for sale; and they are often strongly perfumed, some of the Jews supplying cheap perfumes, or common "scents." When the "duffer" thinks he may venture upon the assertion, he assures a customer that this is "the smell the handkerchiefs brought with 'em from foreign parts, as they was smuggled in a bale of spices!"

The trade however is not without its hazards; for I am informed that the "duffers" sometimes, on attempting their impositions imprudently, and sometimes on being discovered before they can leave the house, get soundly thrashed. They have, of course, no remedy.

The "pieces" of three handkerchiefs sold by the "duffers" are purchased by them in Houndsditch, at from 3s. to 7s.; but 7s. is only given when there is a design to palm off the 3s. goods along with them. Cent. per cent. is a low profit in this trade.

One intelligent street-trader, to whom I am indebted for carefully-considered information, said to me very quietly: "I've read your work, sir, at a coffee-shop; for I can't afford to take it in. I know you're going to open the eyes of the public as to the 'duffer's' tricks, now. All right, sir, they're in honest men's ways. But, sir, when are you going to say something about the rich shopkeepers as sells, and the rich manufacturers as makes, the 'duffer's' things? Every man of them knows it's for roguery."

There is a peculiar style among the "duffers;" they never fold their goods neatly—the same as drapers do, but thrust them into the pack, in a confused heap, as if they did not understand their value—or their business. There are other classes of "duffers" whose calling is rather more hazardous than the licensed-hawker "duffer." "I have often thought it strange," says a correspondent, "that these men could induce any one to credit the fact of their being sailors, for, notwithstanding the showy manner in which they chew their quid, and the jack-tar like fashion in which they suffer their whiskers to grow, there is such a fresh-waterfied appearance about them, that they look no more like a regular mariner than the supernumerary seamen in a nautical drama, at the Victoria Theatre. Yet they obtain victims readily. Their mode of proceeding in the streets is to accost their intended dupes, while walking by their side; they usually speak in a half whisper, as they keep pace with them, and look mysteriously around to see if there be any of 'them ere Custom-house sharks afloat.' They address the simple-looking passers by thus: 'Shipmate' (here they take off their fur-cap and spit their quid into it)—'shipmate, I've just come ashore arter a long voyage—and splice me but I've something in the locker that'll be of service to you; and, shiver my timbers' (they are very profuse in nautical terms), 'you shall have it at your own price, for I'm determined to have a spree, and I haven't a shot in the locker; helm's a-lee; just let's turn into this creek, and I'll show you what it is' (perhaps he persuades his dupe down a court, or to a neighbouring public-house). 'Now here is a beautiful piece of *Ingy* handkerchiefs.' (They are the coarsest description of spun not *thrown* silk, well stiffened into stoutness, and cost the "duffer" perhaps 15d. each; but as business is always done on the sly, in a hurry, and to escape observation, an examination seldom or never takes place). 'I got 'em on shore in spite of those pirates, the Custom-house officers. You shall have 'em cheap, there's half a dozen on

'em, they cost me 30s. at Madras, you shall have 'em for the same money.' (The victim, may be, is not inclined to purchase. The pretended tar, however, must have money.) 'Will you give me 25s. for them?' he says; 'd—n it, a pound? Shiver my topsails, you don't want them any cheaper than that, do you?' The 'duffer' says this to make his dupe believe that he really does want the goods, or has offered a price for them. Perhaps if the 'duffer' cannot extort more he takes 10s. for the half dozen 'Ingy' handkerchiefs, the profit being thus about 2s. 6d.; but more frequently he gets 100 and even 200 per cent. on his transactions according to the gullibility of his customers. The 'duffer' deals also in cigars; he accosts his victim in the same style as when selling handkerchiefs, and gives himself the same sailor-like airs.

"Sometimes the 'duffers' visit the obscure streets in London, where there are small chandler's shops; one of them enters, leaving his mate outside to give him the signal in case the enemy heaves in sight. He requests to be served with some trifling article—when if he approve of the physiognomy of the shopkeeper, and consider him or her likely to be victimised—he ventures an observation as to how enormously everything is taxed' (though to one less innocent it might appear unusual for a sailor to talk politics); 'even this tobacco' he says, taking out his quid, 'I can't chew, without paying a tax; but, he adds, chuckling—'us sailor chaps sometimes shirks the Custom-house lubbers, sharp as they are. (Here his companion outside puts his head in at the door, and, to make the scene as natural as possible, says, 'Come, Jack, don't stop there all night spinning your yarns; come, bear a hand, or I shall part convoy.') 'Oh, heave to a bit longer, my hearty,' replies the 'duffer,' 'I will be with you in the twinkling of a marling spike. I'll tell you what we've got, marm, and if you likes to buy it you shall have it cheap, for me and my mate are both short of rhino. We've half-a-dozen pounds of tea—you can weigh it if you like—and you shall have the lot for 12s.' Perhaps there is an immediate purchase, but if 12s. is refused, then 10s. 8s. or 6s. is asked, until a sale be effected, after which the sailors make their exit as quickly as possible. Then the chandler's-shop keeper begins to exult over the bargain he or she has made, and to examine more minutely the contents of the neatly packed, and tea-like looking packet thus bought. It proves to be lined with a profuse quantity of tea lead, and though some Chinese characters are marked on the outside, it is discovered on opening to contain only half-a-pound of tea, the remainder consisting principally of chopped hay. The 'duffers' enact the same part, and if a purchaser buy 10lbs. of the smuggled article, then 9lbs. at least consist of the same chopped hay.

"Sometimes the 'duffers' sell all their stock to one individual. No sooner do they dispose of the handkerchiefs to a dupe, than they introduce the smuggled tobacco to the notice of the unsuspecting customer; then they palm off their cigars, next their tea, and lastly, as the 'duffer' is determined to raise as much money as he can 'to

have his spree;' 'why d—e,' he exclaims to his victim—'I'll sell you my watch. It cost me 6l. at Portsmouth—give me 3l. for it and it's yours, shipmate. Well, then, 2l.—1l.' The watch, I need not state, is made solely for sale.

"It is really astonishing," adds my informant, "how these men ever succeed, for their look denotes cunning and imposition, and their proceedings have been so often exposed in the newspapers that numbers are alive to their tricks, and warn others when they perceive the "duffers" endeavouring to victimise them; but, as the thimble-men say, 'There's a fool born every minute.'"

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF "SMALL-WARE," OR TAPE, COTTON, ETC.

THE street-sellers of tape and cotton are usually elderly females; and during my former inquiry I was directed to one who had been getting her living in the street by such means for nine years. I was given to understand that the poor woman was in deep distress, and that she had long been supporting a sick husband by her little trade, but I was wholly unprepared for a scene of such startling misery, sublimed by untiring affection and pious resignation, as I there discovered.

I wish the reader to understand that I do not cite this case as a type of the sufferings of this particular class, but rather as an illustration of the afflictions which frequently befall those who are solely dependent on their labour, or their little trade, for their subsistence, and who, from the smallness of their earnings, are unable to lay by even the least trifle as a fund against any physical calamity.

The poor creatures lived in one of the close alleys at the east end of London. On inquiring at the house to which I had been directed, I was told I should find them in "the two-pair back." I mounted the stairs, and on opening the door of the apartment I was terrified with the misery before me. There, on a wretched bed, lay an aged man in almost the last extremity of life. At first I thought the poor old creature was really dead, but a tremble of the eyelids as I closed the door, as noiselessly as I could, told me that he breathed. His face was as yellow as clay, and it had more the cold damp look of a corpse than that of a living man. His cheeks were hollowed in with evident want, his temples sunk, and his nostrils pinched close. On the edge of the bed sat his heroic wife, giving him drink with a spoon from a tea-cup. In one corner of the room stood the basket of tapes, cottons, combs, braces, nutmeg-graters, and shaving-glasses, with which she strove to keep her old dying husband from the work-house. I asked her how long her good man had been ill, and she told me he had been confined to his bed five weeks last Wednesday, and that it was ten weeks since he had eaten the size of a nut in solid food. Nothing but a little beef-tea had passed his lips for months. "We have lived like children together," said the old woman, as her eyes flooded with tears, "and never had no dispute. He hated drink, and there was no cause for us to quarrel. One of my legs, you see, is shorter

than the other," said she, rising from the bed-side, and showing me that her right foot was several inches from the ground as she stood. "My hip is out. I used to go out washing, and walking in my pattens I fell down. My hip is out of the socket three-quarters of an inch, and the sinews is drawn up. I am obliged to walk with a stick." Here the man groaned and coughed so that I feared the exertion must end his life. "Ah, the heart of a stone would pity that poor fellow," said the good wife.

"After I put my hip out, I couldn't get my living as I'd been used to do. I couldn't stand a day if I had five hundred pounds for it. I must sit down. So I got a little stall, and sat at the end of the alley here with a few laces and tapes and things. I've done so for this nine year past, and seen many a landlord come in and go out of the house that I sat at. My husband used to sell small articles in the streets—black lead and furniture paste, and blacking. We got a sort of a living by this, the two of us together. It's very seldom though we had a bit of meat. We had 1s. 9d. rent to pay—Come, my poor fellow, will you have another little drop to wet your mouth?" said the woman, breaking off. "Come, my dearest, let me give you this," she added, as the man let his jaw fall, and she poured some warm sugar and water flavoured with cinnamon—all she had to give him—into his mouth. "He's been an ailing man this many a year. He used to go of errands and buy my little things for me, on account of my being lame. We assisted one another, you see. He wasn't able to work for his living, and I wasn't able to go about, so he used to go about and buy for me what I sold. I am sure he never earned above 1s. 6d. in the week. He used to attend me, and many a time I've sat for ten and fourteen hours in the cold and wet and didn't take a sixpence. Some days I'd make a shilling, and some days less; but whatever I got I used to have to put a good part into the basket to keep my little stock." [A knock here came to the door; it was for a halfpenny-worth of darning cotton.] "You know a shilling goes further with a poor couple that's sober than two shillings does with a drunkard. We lived poor, you see, never had nothing but tea, or we couldn't have done anyhow. If I'd take 18d. in the day I'd think I was grandly off, and then if there was 6d. profit got out of that it would be almost as much as it would. You see these cotton braces here" (said the old woman, going to her tray). "Well, I gives 2s. 9d. a dozen for them here, and I sells 'em for 4½d., and oftentimes 4d. a pair. Now, this piece of tape would cost me seven farthings in the shop, and I sells it at six yards a penny. It has the name of being eighteen yards. The profit out of it is five farthings. It's beyond the power of man to wonder how there's a bit of bread got out of such a small way. And the times is so bad, too! I think I could say I get 8d. a day profit if I have any sort of custom, but I don't exceed that at the best of times. I've often sat at the end of the alley and taken only 6d., and that's not much more than 2d. clear—it an't 3d. I'm

sure. I think I could safely state that for the last nine year me and my husband has earned together 5s. a week, and out of that the two of us had to live and pay rent—1s. 9d. a week. Clothes I could buy none, for the best garment is on me; but I thank the Lord still. I've paid my rent all but three weeks, and that isn't due till to-morrow. We have often reckoned it up here at the fire. Some weeks we have got 5s. 3d., and some weeks less, so that I judge we have had about 3s. to 3s. 6d. a week to live upon the two of us, for this nine year past. Half-a-hundred of coals would fit me the week in the depths of winter. My husband had the kettle always boiling for me against I came in. He used to sit here reading his book—he never was fit for work at the best—while I used to be out minding the basket. He was so sober and quiet too. His neighbours will tell that of him. Within the last ten weeks he's been very ill indeed, but still I could be out with the basket. Since then he's never earned me a penny—poor old soul, he wasn't able! All that time I still attended to my basket. He wasn't so ill then but what he could do a little here in the room for himself; but he wanted little, God knows, for he couldn't eat. After he fell ill, I had to go all my errands myself. I had no one to help me, for I'd nothing to pay them, and I'd have to walk from here down to Sun-street with my stick, till my bad leg pained me so that I could hardly stand. You see the hip being put out has drawn all the sinews up into my groin, and it leaves me oncapable of walking or standing constantly; but I thank God that I've got the use of it anyhow. Our lot's hard enough, goodness knows, but we are content. We never complain, but bless the Lord for the little he pleases to give us. When I was away on my errands, in course I couldn't be minding my basket; so I lost a good bit of money that way. Well, five weeks on Wednesday he has been totally confined to his bed, excepting when I lifted him up to make it some nights; but he can't bear that now. Still the first fortnight he was bad, I did manage to leave him, and earn a few pence; but, latterly, for this last three weeks, I haven't been able to go out at all, to do anything."

"She's been stopping by me, minding me here night and day all that time," mumbled the old man, who now for the first time opened his gray glassy eyes and turned towards me, to bear, as it were, a last tribute to his wife's incessant affection. "She has been most kind to me. Her tenderness and care has been such that man never knew from woman before, ever since I lay upon this sick bed. We've been married five-and-twenty years. We have always lived happily—very happily, indeed—together. Until sickness and weakness overcome me I always strove to help myself a bit, as well as I could; but since then she has done all in her power for me—worked for me—ay, she has worked for me, surely—and watched over me. My creed through life has been repentance towards God, faith in Jesus Christ, and love to all my brethren. I've made up my mind that I must soon change this

tabernacle, and my last wish is that the good people of this world will increase her little stock for her. She cannot get her living out of the little stock she has, and since I lay here it's so lessened, that neither she nor no one else can live upon it. If the kind hearts would give her but a little stock more, it would keep her old age from want, as she has kept mine. Indeed, indeed, she does deserve it. But the Lord, I know, will reward her for all she has done to me." Here the old man's eyelids dropped exhausted.

"I've had a shilling and a loaf twice from the parish," continued the woman. "The overseer came to see if my old man was fit to be removed to the workhouse. The doctor gave me a certificate that he was not, and then the relieving officer gave me a shilling and a loaf of bread, and out of that shilling I bought the poor old fellow a sup of port wine. I bought a quart of wine, which was 4d., and I gave 5d. for a bit of tea and sugar, and I gave 2d. for coals; a half-penny rushlight I bought, and a short candle, that made a penny—and that's the way I laid out the shilling. If God takes him, I know he'll sleep in heaven. I know the life he's spent, and am not afraid; but no one else shall take him from me—nothing shall part us but death in this world. Poor old soul, he can't be long with me. He's a perfect skeleton. His bones are starting through his skin."

I asked what could be done for her, and the old man thrust forth his skinny arm, and laying hold of the bed-post, he raised himself slightly in his bed, as he murmured "If she could be got into a little parlour, and away from sitting in the streets, it would be the saving of her." And, so saying, he fell back overcome with the exertion, and breathed heavily.

The woman sat down beside me, and went on. "What shocked him most was that I was obligated in his old age to go and ask for relief at the parish. You see, he was always a spirited man, and it hurted him sorely that he should come to this at last, and for the first time in his lifetime. The only parish money that ever we had was this, and it *does* hurt him every day to think that he must be buried by the parish after all. He was always proud, you see."

I told the kind-hearted old dame that some benevolent people had placed certain funds at my disposal for the relief of such distress as hers; and I assured her that neither she nor her husband should want for anything that might ease their sufferings.

The day after the above was written, the poor old man died. He was buried out of the funds sent to the "Morning Chronicle," and his wife received some few pounds to increase her stock; but in a few months the poor old woman went mad, and is now, I believe, the inmate of one of the pauper lunatic asylums.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LACE.

THIS trade is carried on both by itinerants and at stands, or "pitches." The itinerants, of whom I will first treat, are about forty in number (thirty

women and ten men). They usually carry their lace in boxes, or cases. It is not uncommon for the women to represent themselves as lacemakers from Marlow, or some other place in Buckinghamshire, or from Honiton, in Devonshire, while the men assert they are from Nottingham. I am informed that there are among these itinerant lacemakers two women and one man who really have been lacemakers. They all buy their wares at the haberdashery swag-shops.

The lace, which is the principal staple of this trade, is "edgings," or the several kinds of cheap lace used for the bordering of caps and other female requirements. Among street-people the lace is called "driz," and the sellers of it "driz-fencers." It gained this slang name, I was informed, many years ago, when it was sold, and often to wealthy ladies, as rare and valuable lace, smuggled from Mechlin, Brussels, Valenciennes, or any foreign place famous, or once famous, for its manufacture. The pretended smuggled lace trade is now unknown in London, and is very little practised in the country. There is, however, still some smuggling connected with lace-selling. Two, and sometimes three, female lacemakers are also "jigger-workers." They carry about their persons pint bladders of "stuff," or "jigger stuff" (spirit made at an illicit still). "I used to supply them with it until lately," one street-trader told me, "from a friend that kept a 'jigger,' and a tidy sale some of them had. Indeed, I've made the stuff myself. I knew one woman, six or seven years back, that did uncommon well at first, but she got too fond of the stuff, and drank herself into the work'us. They never carried gin, for brandy was most asked for. They sold the brandy at 2s. 6d. the pint; rum at 1s. 6d.; and whiskey at 2s.; sometimes higher, and always trying for 6d. a pint profit, at least. O yes, sir; I know they got the prices I've mentioned, though they seem high; for you must remember that the jigger spirit is above proof, and a pint will make two pints of gin-palace stuff. They sold it, I've heard them say, to ladies that liked a drop on the sly; and to some as pretended they bought that way for economy; yes, and to shopkeepers and publicans too. One old lady used to give 3s. for three yards of driz, and it was well enough understood, without no words, that a pint of brandy was part of them three yards. But the trade that way is nothing to what it was, and gets less and less every year."

From a middle-aged woman selling laces I had the following account:—

"I've been in the trade about six years, sir. Ten years back or more I was in place, and saved a little money, as a servant of all work. I married a house-painter, but trade got bad, and we both had illnesses; and my husband, though he's as good a man as need be, can't stick to anything very long at a time." (A very common failing, by the bye, with the street-folk.) "It seems not in his nature. When we was reduced very low he got on a cab—for he can turn his hand to almost anything—and after that we came to street-selling. He's now on jewellery, and I think it suits him as

well or better than anything he's tried; I do my part, and we get on middling. If we're ever pushed it's no use fretting. We had one child, and he died when he wanted just a month of three years old, and after I'd lost him I said I would never fret for trifles no more. My heart was broke for a long time—it was indeed. He was the loveliest boy ever seen, and everybody said so. I went into lace, because my husband got to know all about it, and I had no tie at home then. I was very shy and ashamed at first to go into houses, but that wears off, and I met with some nice people that bought of me and was very civil, so that encourages one. I sell nothing but lace. I never cleared more than 2s. 6d. in a day, and that only once. I suppose I clear from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d. a week now; perhaps, take it altogether, rather more than 4s. I have a connection, and go to the houses in and about the Regent's Park, and all the small streets near it, and sometimes Maida Hill way. I once tried a little millinery made-up things, but it didn't suit somehow, and I didn't stick to it. You see, sir, I sell my lace to very few but servant maids and small shopkeepers' wives and daughters; but then they're a better sort of people than those as has to buy everything ready made like servants has. They can use their own needles to make themselves nice and smart, and they buy of such as me to do it cheap, and they're not often such beaters down as them that buys the ready-made. I can do nothing, or next to nothing, in very wet weather. If I'm in the habit of going into a nice kitchen, perhaps the housemaid flies at me for 'bringing in all that dirt.' My husband says all women is crossset in bad weather, and perhaps servants is.

"I buy my lace near Shoreditch. It's a long walk, but I think I'm best used there. I buy generally a dozen yards, from 3½d. to 1s., and sometimes up to 2s. I sell the commoner at 1d. a yard, and three yards 2d.; and the better at 2d. and 3d. a yard. It's a poor trade, but it's doing something. My husband seldom earns less than 12s. a week, for he's a good salesman, and so we pay 2s. rent regular every Monday for an unfurnished room, and has the rest to live on. I have sold in the Brill on a Saturday night, but not often, nor lately I don't like it; I haven't tongue enough."

In addition to the itinerants there are about seventy stationary lace sellers, and not less than eighty on the Saturday evenings. The best pitches are, I am told, near the Borough-market; in Clare-market; the New Cut (on Saturday nights); Walworth-road; Tooley-street; and Dockhead, Bermondsey. From the best information at my command, it appears that at least half of these traders sell only lace, or rarely anything else. The others sell also net for making caps and "cauls," which are the plain portion at the back, to be trimmed or edged according to the purchaser's taste. Some sell also, with their lace, cap ribbons—plain or worked colliers—and muslin, net, or worked undersleeves. Braid and gimp were formerly sold by them, but are now in no demand. The prices run from 2d. to 6d. for lace articles, and about the same for net, &c. per yard; the lowest priced are most sold

In this stationary trade are as many men and youths as women and girls. One woman, who had known street-selling for upwards of twenty years, said she could not do half so well now as she could twenty years ago, for the cheaper things got the cheaper people would have them. "Why, twenty year ago," she exclaimed, "I bought a lot of 'leno' cheap—it was just about going out of fashion for caps then, I think—and one Saturday night in the Cut, I cleared 15s. on it. I don't clear that in a fortnight now. I have sold to women of the town, as far as I've known them to be of that sort, but very seldom. It's not often you'll catch them using a needle for themselves. They do use their needles, I know. You can see some of them sewing at their doors and windows in Granby-street, Waterloo-road, or could lately—for I haven't passed that way for some time—but I believe it's all for money down, for the slop-shops. It suits the slop-shops to get work cheap anyway; and it suits the women to have some sort of occupation, which they needn't depend upon for their living."

The stationary lace sellers, for the most part, display their goods on stalls, but some spread them on a board, or on matting on the ground. Some of the men gather an audience by shouting out, "Three yards a penny, edging!" As at this rate the lace-seller would only clear  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  in a dozen yards, the cry is merely uttered to attract attention. A few who patter at the trade—but far fewer than was once the case—give short measure. One man, who occasionally sold lace, told me, that when he was compelled to sell for "next to no profit, and a hungry Sunday coming," he gave good shop measure, thirty full inches to a yard. His yard wand was the correct length, "but I can do it, sir," he said with some exultation, "by palming," and he gave a jerk to his fingers, to show how he caught in the lace, and "clipped it short."

Calculating that 100 persons in this trade each take 10s. 6d. weekly, the profit being about cent. per cent., we find 2600l. expended in the streets in lace and similar commodities.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF JAPANNED TABLE-COVERS.

THIS trade, like several others, as soon as the new commodities became in established demand, and sufficiently cheap, was adopted by street-sellers. It has been a regular street-trade between four and five years. Previously, when the covers were dearer, the street-sellers were afraid to speculate much in them; but one man told me that he once sold a table-cover for 8s., and at another time for 10s.

The goods are supplied to the street-folk principally by three manufacturers—in Long-lane, Smithfield, Whitechapel-road, and Petticoat-lane. The vendors of the glazed table-covers are generally considered among the smartest of the street-folk, as they do not sell to the poor, or in poor neighbourhoods, but "at the better sort of houses, and to the wealthier sort of people." Table-covers are now frequently disposed of by raffle. "I very

seldom sell in the streets," said one man, "though I one evening cleared 4s. by standing near the Vinegar-works, in the City-road, and selling to gents on their way home from the city. The public-house trade is the best, and indeed in winter evenings, and after dark generally, there's no other. I get rid of more by raffling than by sale. On Saturday evening I had raffles for two covers, which cost me 1s. 4d. each. I had some trouble to get 1s. 9d. for one; but I got up a raffle for the other, and it brought me 2s.; six members at 4d. each. It's just the sort of thing to get off in a raffle on Saturday night, or any time when mechanics have money. A man thinks—leastways I've thought so myself, when I've been in a public-house raffle—now I've spent more money than I ought to, and there's the old woman to face; but if I win the raffle, and take the thing home, why my money has gone to buy a nice thing, and not for drink." I may remark that in nearly all raffles got up in this manner, the article raffled for is generally something coveted by a working man, but not so indispensably necessary to him, that he feels justified in expending his money upon it. This fact seems well enough known to the street-sellers who frequent public-houses with their wares. I inquired of the informant in question if he had ever tried to get up a raffle of his table-covers in a coffee-shop as well as a public-house. "Never, with table-covers," he said, "but I have with other things, and find it's no go. In a coffee-shop people are quiet, and reading, unless it's one of them low places for young thieves, and such like; and they're no money very likely, and I wouldn't like to trust them in a raffle if they had. In public-houses there's talk and fun, and people's more inclined for a raffle, or anything spicy that offers."

There are now fifteen regular street-sellers, or street-hawkers of these table-covers, in London, four of whom are the men's wives, and they not unfrequently go a round together. Sometimes, on fine days, there are twenty. I heard of one woman who had been very successful in bartering table-covers for old clothes. "I've done a little that way myself," said a man in the trade, "but nothing to her, and people sees into things so now, that there's hardly a chance for a crust. The covers is so soft and shiny, and there's such fine parrots and birds of paradise on them, that before the price was known there was a chance of a good bargain. I once got for a cover that cost me 2s. 9d. a great coat that a Jew, after a hard bargaining, gave me 6s. 3d. for."

The prices of the table-covers (wholesale) run from 8s. a dozen to 30s.; but the street-sellers rarely go to a higher price than 18s. They can buy a dozen, or half a dozen—or even a smaller quantity—of different sizes. Some of these street-traders sell, with the table-covers, a few wash-leathers, of the better kind. Calculating that fifteen street-sellers each take 25s. weekly the year round—one-half being the profit, including their advantages in bartering and raffling—we find 975l. expended yearly upon japanned table-covers, bought in the streets.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF BRACES, BELTS, HOSE, TROWSER-STRAPS, AND WAISTCOATS.

THE street-sellers of braces are a numerous and a mixed class. They are nearly all men, and the majority are Irishmen; but this relates only to the itinerant or public-house brace-sellers. These wares are sold also by street-traders, who make other articles the staple of their trade—such as the dog-collar-sellers.

The braces sold thirty years ago were of a very different manufacture from those vended in the streets at present. India-rubber web was then unknown as a component part of the street braces. The braces, which in some parts of the country are called "gallowses," were, at the time specified, made of a woollen web, both washable and durable. "One pair of such braces, good ones," said an old tailor with whom I had some talk on the subject, "would last a poor man his lifetime. Now they're in a rope or in rags in no time." These woollen braces were sold at from 1s. to 2s. the pair in the streets; the straps being of good firm leather. Not long after this period a much cheaper brace-web was introduced—a mixture of cotton with the woollen—and the cheap manufacture gradually supplanted the better article, as respects the street trade. The cheaper braces were made with sheepskin straps, which soon yielded to friction, and were little serviceable. The introduction of the India-rubber web was another change in the trade, and the manufacture has become lower and lower-priced until the present time.

The braces sold in the streets, or hawked in the public-houses, are, however, not all of the very inferior manufacture. Some are called "silk," others "buck-leather," and others "knitted cotton." The "silk" are of a silken surface, with an admixture of cotton and India-rubber; the "buck-leather" (a kind now very little known in street sale) are of strong sheepskin, dressed buck-leather fashion; and the "knitted" cotton are woven, some kinds of them being very good and strong.

The street brace-sellers, when trying to do business in the streets, carry their goods generally with a few belts, and sometimes with hose in their hands and across their arms. They stretch them from end to end, as they invite the custom of passers by, to evince the elasticity and firmness of the web. Sometimes the braces are slung from a pole carried on the shoulder. The sellers call at the public-house bars and tap-rooms; some are admitted into the parlours; and at a well-frequented gin-palace, I was informed by a manager of one, a brace-seller will call from twelve to twenty times a day, especially on a Monday; while on a Saturday evening they will remain two, three, or four hours, accosting fresh customers. At the gin-palaces, the young and strong Irishmen offering these wares—and there are many such—are frequently scoffed at for selling "braces and things a baby can carry."

The following account, which I received from a street brace-seller, shows the class who purchase such articles:—

"I was put to a carriage-lamp maker," the

man said, "at Birmingham, but soon ran away. Nobody saw after me, for I had only an uncle, and he left me to to the parish. It was all my own fault. I was always after some idle end, though I can read very well. It seems as if I couldn't help it, being wild, I mean. I ran away to Worcester, without knowing where I was going, or caring either. I was half starved in Worcester, for I lived as I could. I found my way to London afterwards. I've been in the streets ever since, at one thing or the other; how many years I can't say. Time goes so quick sometimes, and sometimes so slow, and I'm never long in one place. I've sold braces off and on ever since Amato won the Derby, if you know when that was. I remember it because I went to Epsom races that year to sell race cards. When I came to London after the races I laid out 12s. in braces. I hardly remember how many pairs I bought for it, but they wasn't such common things as I'm carrying now. I could sell a few then at from 9d. to 1s. 3d. a pair, to the 'cads' and people at such places as the 'Elephant,' and the 'Flower Pot' in Bishopsgate-street, which was a great 'bus' place then. I used to sell, too, to the helpers in inn-yards, and a few in the mews. The helpers in the mews mostly buys knitted cotton. I've got 1s. and sometimes 1s. 6d. for an extra article from them, but now I don't carry them; there's no demand there. You see, many of them work in their shirts, and the head coachmen and grooms, which is often great Turks, would blow up if the men had dirty braces hanging to their buttons, so they uses what'll wash. Nearly all my business now is done at public-houses. I go from one tavern to another on my round all day long, and sell in the street when I can. I think I sell as many at 5d. and at 10d. as at all other prices together, and most at 5d.; but when I have what I call a full stock I carry 'em from 4d. to 20d. The poorer sort of people, such as wears braces—for there's a many as does without 'em—likes the 1d. out of 6d., and the others the 2d. out of the 1s.; it tempts them. It's a tiresome life, and not so good as costermongering, for I once did tidy well in apples. But in the brace trade you arn't troubled with hiring barrows, and it's easy carried on in public-houses in wet weather, and there's no stock to spoil. I sell all to working-people, I think. Sometimes an odd pair or two at 1s. 6d., or so, to a tradesman, that may happen to be in a bar, and likes the look and the price; or to a gentleman's servant. I make from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a day; full 1s. 6d. if I stick close to it. I may make 2s. or 2s. 6d. a week, too, in selling belts and stockings; but I only sometimes carry stockings. Perhaps I clear 9s. a week the year round. There's lots in the trade don't clear 1s. a day, for they only carry low-priced things. I go for 4d. profit on every shilling's worth I sell. I've only myself to keep. I pay 3d. a night at a lodging-house, and nothing on Sundays. I had a young woman with me when I was a coster, but we didn't agree, and parted. She was too fond of lifting her hand to her mouth ('tippling') to please me. I mean to live very near this week, and get a few shillings if I can to

try something at Greenwich next Monday." This was said on the Tuesday in Passion-week.

The braces are bought by the street-sellers at the swag-shops I have described. The prices range from 1s. 6d. (for common children's) to 12s. a dozen; 3s., 3s. 6d., 6s. 6d., and 7s. being the most frequent prices. Higher-priced articles are also sold at the swags and by the street-sellers, but not one in twenty of these compared with the lower priced.

In London and its suburbs, and on "rounds," of which the metropolis forms the central point, and at stands, there are, I am assured, not fewer than 500 persons vending braces. Of these a twentieth portion may be women, and a tenth old and sometimes infirm men. There are few children in the trade. The stall-keepers, selling braces with other articles, are about 100, and of the remainder of this class, those who are not Irishmen are often impoverished mechanics, such as tailors—brace-vending being easily resorted to, and carried on quietly in public-houses, and it does not entail the necessity of bawling aloud, to which a working-man, driven to a street-life, usually feels repugnance. Calculating that 500 brace-sellers clear 5s. a week each on those articles alone, and estimating the profit at 33 per cent., it shows a street expenditure of 3900*l.* One brace-seller considered that 500 such sellers was too low a number; but the most intelligent I met with agreed on that estimate.

The Belts sold in the street are nearly all of stout cotton web, "with India-rubber threads," and usually of a drab colour, woollen belts being rarely ever seen now. They are procured in the same way, and sold by the same parties, as are braces. The amount expended on belts is, from the best information I can command, about an eighth of that expended on braces. The belts are sold at 1s. each, and cost 8s. the dozen, or 9*d.* each, if only one be purchased.

The street-sale of hose used to be far more considerable than it is now, and was, in a great measure, in the hands of a class who had personal claims to notice, independent of the goodness of their wares. These were old women, wearing, generally, large white aprons, and chintz-patterned gowns, and always scrupulously clean. They carried from door to door, in the quieter streets, and in the then suburbs, stockings of their "own knitting." Such they often were; and those which were not were still knitted stockings, although they might be the work of old women in the country, who knitted by the fireside, needing no other light on winter evenings and at the doors of their cottages in the sunshine in summer. Of these street-sellers some were blind. Between thirty and forty years ago, I am told, there were from twelve to twenty blind knitters, but my informant could not speak with certainty, as he might probably observe the same women in different parts. The blind stocking-sellers would knit at a door as they waited. The informant I have quoted thought that the last of these knitters and street-sellers disappeared upwards of twenty years ago, as he then missed her from his door, at

which she used to make her regular periodical appearance. The stockings of this trade were most frequently of white lamb's-wool, and were sold at from 3s. 6*d.* to 5s. 6*d.* They were long in the leg, and were suited "for gentle-people's winter wear." The women-sellers made in those days, I am assured, a comfortable livelihood.

The sale of stockings is now principally in the hands of the men who vend braces, &c. The kind sold is most frequently unbleached cotton. The price to a street-buyer is generally from 6*d.* to 9*d.*; but the trade is of small extent. "It's one of the trades," a street-seller said to me, "that we can't compete with shop-keepers in. You shall go to a haberdashery swag-shop, and though they have 'wholesale haberdashers,' and 'hawkers supplied' on the door-post, you'll see a pair of stockings in the window marked with a very big and very black 6, and a very little and not half black  $\frac{3}{4}$ ; and if I was to go in, they'd very likely ask me 6s. 6*d.* a dozen for an inferior thing. They retail themselves, and won't be undersold if they can help it, and so they don't care to accommodate us in things that's always going."

A few pairs of women's stockings are hawked by women, and sold to servant-maids; but the trade in these goods, I am informed, including all classes of sellers—of whom there may be fifty—does not exceed (notwithstanding the universality of the wear), the receipt of 6s. weekly per individual, with a profit of from 1s. 4*d.* to 2s., and an aggregate expenditure of about 800*l.* in the year. The trade is an addition to some other street trade.

The brace-sellers used to carry with their wares another article, of which India-rubber web formed the principal part. These were trowser-straps, "with leather buttonings and ingy-spring bodies." It was only, however, the better class of brace-sellers who carried them; those who, as my informant expressed it, "had a full stock;" and their sale was insignificant. At one time, the number of brace-sellers offering these straps was, I am informed, from 70 to 100. "It was a poor trade, sir," said one of the class. "At first I sold at 4*d.*, as they was 6*d.* in middling shops, and 1*d.* in the toppers, if not 1s. 6*d.*; but they soon came down to 3*d.*, and then to 2*d.* My profit was short of 3*d.* in 1s. My best customers for braces didn't want such things; plain working-men don't. And grooms, and stable-keepers generally, wears boots or knee-gaiters, and footmen sports knee-buckles and stockings. All I did sell to was, as far as I can judge, young mechanics as liked to turn out like gents on a Sunday or an evening, and real gents that wanted things cheap. I very seldom cleared more than 1s. a week on them. The trade's over now. If you see a few at a stand, it's the remains of an old stock, or some that a swag-shop has pushed out for next to nothing to be rid of them."

The sale of waistcoats is confined to Smithfield, as regards the class I now treat of—the sellers of articles made by others. Twelve or fourteen years back, there was a considerable sale in what was a branch of duffing. Waistcoats were sold to countrymen, generally graziers' servants, under



THE STREET DOG-SELLER.

the pretence that they were of fine silk plush, which was then rather an object of rustic Sunday finery. A drover told me that a good many years ago he saw a countryman, with whom he was conversing at the time, pay 10s. 6d. for a "silk plush waistcoat," the vendor having asked 15s., and having walked away—no doubt remarking the eagerness of his victim—when the countryman refused to give more than 10s. "He had a customer set for it," he said, "at half-a-guinea." On the first day the waistcoat was worn—the drover was afterwards told by the purchaser—it was utterly spoiled by a shower of rain; and when its possessor asked the village tailor the value of the garment, he was told that it had no value at all; the tailor could not even tell what it was made of, but he never saw anything so badly made in his life; never. Some little may be allowed for the natural glee of a village tailor on finding one of his customers, who no doubt was proud of his London bargain, completely taken in; but these waistcoats, I am assured by a tailor who had seen them, were the veriest rubbish. The trade, however, has been unknown, unless with a few rare exceptions at a very busy time—such as the market for the show and sale of the Christmas stock—since the time specified.

The waistcoats now sold in Smithfield market, or in the public-houses connected with it, are, I am told, and also by a tailor, very paltry things; but the price asked removes the trade from the imputation of duffing. These garments are sold at from 1s. to 4s. 6d. each; but very rarely 4s. 6d. The shilling waistcoats are only fit for boys—or "youths," as the slop-tailors prefer styling them—but 1s. 6d. is a common price enough; and seven-eighths of the trade, I am informed, is for prices under, or not exceeding, 2s. The trade is, moreover, very small. There are sometimes no waistcoat-sellers at all; but generally two, and not unfrequently three. The profits of these men are 1s. on a bad, and 2s. 6d. on a good day. As, at intervals, these street-sellers dispose of a sleeve-waistcoat (waistcoat with sleeves) at from 4s. 6d. to 6s., we may estimate the average earnings in the trade at 5s. per market day, or 10s. in the week. This shows an outlay of 78*l.* in the year, as the profits of these street traders may be taken at 33 per cent.; or, as it is almost invariably worded by such classes, "4*d.* in the 1*s.*" The material is of a kind of cotton made to look as stout as possible, the back, &c., being the commonest stuff. They are supplied by a slop-house at the East End, and are made by women, or rather girls.

The sale of waistcoats in the street, markets, &c., is of second-hand goods, or otherwise in the hands of a distinct class. There are other belts, and other portions of wearing apparel, which, though not of textile fabrics, as they are often sold by the same persons as I have just treated of, may be described here. These are children's "patent leather" belts, trowser-straps, and garters.

The sellers of children's and men's belts and trowser-straps are less numerous than they were, for both these things, I am told, but only on street authority, are going out of fashion. From one

elderly man who had "dropped belts, and straps, and all that, for oranges," I heard bitter complaints of the conduct of the swag shop-keepers who supplied these wares. The substance of his garrulous and not very lucid complaint was that when boys' patent leather belts came into fashion, eleven, twelve, or thirteen years back, he could not remember which, the usual price in the shops was 1*s.*, and they were soon to be had in the streets for 6*d.* each. The belt-sellers "did well" for a while. But the "swags" who, according to my informant, at first supplied belts of patent horse-leather, came to substitute patent sheep-leather for them, which were softer, and looked as well. The consequence was, that whenever the sheep-leather belts were wet, or when there was any "pull" upon them, they stretched, and "the polish went to cracks." After having been wet a few times, too, they were easily torn, and so the street trade became distrusted. It was the same with trowser-straps.

The belt trade is now almost extinct in the streets, and the strap trade, which was chiefly in the hands of old and infirm, and young people, is now confined to the sellers of dog-collars, &c. The trowser-straps are not glazed or patent-leather, now, but "plain calf;" sold at 2*d.* a pair generally, and bought at from 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 4*d.* the dozen pairs. Many readers will remember how often they used to hear the cry, "Three pair for sixpence! Three pair for sixpence!" A cry now, I believe, never heard.

Among the belt and strap-sellers were some blind persons. One man counted to me three blind men whom he knew selling them, and one sells them still, attached to the rails by St. Botolph's church, Bishopsgate.

The same persons who sold straps, &c., not including the present sellers, the dog-collar men, &c., had lately no small traffic in the vending of garters. The garter-sellers were, however, far more numerous than ever were the strap-sellers. At one time, I am told, there were 200 garter sellers; all old or infirm, or poor women, or children, and chiefly Irish children. As these children were often stockingless and shoeless, their cry of "Penny a pair! India-rubber garters, penny a pair!" was sometimes pitiful enough, as they were offering a cheap article, unused by themselves. The sudden influx of garters, so to speak, was owing, I am told, to a manufacturer having discovered a cheap way of "working the India-rubber threads," and having "thrown a lot into the market through the swag shops." The price was at first 8*s.* a gross (8*d.* a dozen), but as the demand increased, it was raised to 9*s.* and 9*s.* 6*d.* The trade continued about six weeks, but has now almost entirely ceased. The stock of garters still offered for sale is what stall-keepers have on hand, or what swag shop-keepers tempt street-sellers to buy by reducing the price. The leather garter-trade, 1*d.* a pair being the usual price for sheep-skin garters, is now almost unknown. It was somewhat extensive.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF BOOT AND STAY-LACES, &c.

LIKE many street-calls which can be started on

the smallest means, and without any previous knowledge of the article sold being necessary to the street-vendor, the boot and stay-lace trade has very many followers. I here speak of those who sell boot-laces, and subsist, or endeavour to subsist, by the sale, without mixing it up with begging. The majority, indeed the great majority, of these street traders are women advanced in years, and, perhaps, I may say the whole of them are very poor. An old woman said to me, "I just drag, on, sir, half-starving on a few boot-laces, rather than go into the workhouse, and I know numbers doing the same."

The laces are bought at the haberdashery swag-shops I have spoken of, and amongst these old women I found the term "swag-shop" as common as among men who buy largely at such establishments. The usual price for boot-laces to be sold in the streets is 1*d.* a dozen. Each lace is tagged at both ends, sufficing for a pair of boots. The regular retail price is three a penny, but the lace-sellers are not unfrequently compelled to give four, or lose a customer. A better quality is sold at 1½*d.* and 2*d.* a dozen, but these are seldom meddled with by the street lace-sellers. It is often a matter of strong endeavour for a poor woman to make herself mistress of 11*d.*, the whole of which she can devote to the purchase of boot-laces, as for 11*d.* she can procure a gross, so saving 1*d.* in twelve dozen.

The stay-laces, which are bought at the same places, and usually sold by the same street-traders, are 2*d.* and 2½*d.* the dozen. I am told that there are as many of the higher as of the lower priced stay-laces bought for street sale, "because," one of the street-sellers told me "there's a great many servant girls, and others too, that's very particular about their stay-laces." The stay-laces are retailed at ½*d.* each.

These articles are vended at street-stalls, along with other things for female use; but the most numerous portion of the lace-sellers are itinerant, walking up and down a street market, or going on a round in the suburbs, calling at every house where they are known, or where, as one woman expressed it, "we make bold to venture." Those frequenting the street-markets, or other streets or thoroughfares, usually carry the boot-laces in their hands, and the stay-laces round their necks, and offer them to the females passing. Their principal customers are the working-classes, the wives and daughters of small shop-keepers, and servant-maids. "Ladies, of course," said one lace-seller, "won't buy of us." Another old woman whom I questioned on the subject, and who had sold laces for about fourteen years, gave me a similar account; but she added:—"I've sold to high-up people though. Only two or three weeks back, a fine-dressed servant maid stopped me and said, 'Here, I must have a dozen boot-laces for mistress, and she says, she'll only give 3*d.* for them, as it's a dozen at once. A mean cretur she is. It's grand doings before faces, and pinchings behind backs, at our house.'"

Among the lace-sellers having rounds in the suburbs are some who "have known better

days." One old woman had been companion and housekeeper to a lady, who died in her arms, and whose legacy to her companion-servant enabled her to furnish a house handsomely. This she let out in apartments at "high-figures," and anything like a regular payment by her lodgers would have supplied her with a comfortable maintenance. But fine gentlemen, and fine ladies too, went away in her debt; she became involved, her furniture was seized, and step by step she was reduced to boot-lace selling. Her appearance is still that of "the old school;" she wears a very large bonnet of faded black silk, a shawl of good material, but old and faded, and always a black gown. The poor woman told me that she never ventured to call even at the houses where she was best received if she saw any tax-gatherer go to or from the house: "I know very well what it is," she continued, "it's no use my calling; they're sure to be cross, and the servants will be cross too, because their masters or mistresses are cross with them. If the tax-gatherer's not paid, they're cross at being asked; if he is paid, they're cross at having had to part with their money. I've paid taxes myself."

The dress of the boot lace-sellers generally is that of poor elderly women, for the most part perhaps a black clip, or old straw bonnet (often broken) and a dark-coloured cotton gown. Their abodes are in the localities in all parts of the metropolis, which I have frequently specified as the abodes of the poor. They live most frequently in their own rooms, but the younger, and perhaps I may add, coarser, of the number, resort to lodging-houses. It is not very uncommon, I was told by one of the class, for two poor women, boot-lace sellers or in some similar line, "to join" in a room, so saving half the usual rent of 1*s.* 6*d.* for an unfurnished room. This arrangement, however, is often of short duration. There is always arising some question, I was told, about the use or wear of this utensil or the other, or about washing, or about wood and coals, if one street-seller returned an hour or two before her companion. This is not to be wondered at, when we bear in mind that to these people every farthing is of consequence. From all that I can learn, the boot-lace sellers (I speak of the women) are poor and honest, and that, as a body, they are little mixed up with dishonest characters and dishonest ways. The exceptions are, I understand, among some hale persons, such as I have alluded to as sojourning in the lodging-houses. Some of these traders receive a little parochial relief.

One intelligent woman could count up 100 persons depending chiefly upon the sale of boot and stay-laces, in what she called her own neighbourhood. This comprised Leather-lane, Holborn, Tottenham Court-road, the Hampstead-road, and all the adjacent streets. From the best data at my command, I believe there are not fewer than 500 individuals selling these wares in London. Several lace-sellers agreed in stating that they sold a dozen boot-laces a-day, and a dozen stay-laces, and 2 dozen extra on Saturday nights; but the drawbacks of bad weather, &c., reduce the average sale to not more than 6 dozen a week, or 384,400

boot-laces in a year, at an outlay to the public of £120*l.* yearly; from a half to three-fourths of the receipts being the profit of the street-sellers.

The same quantity of stay-laces sold at 6*d.* a dozen shows an outlay of 4680*l.*, with about an equally proportional profit to the sellers.

Most of these traders sell tapes and other articles as well as laces. The tapes cost 3*d.* and 3½*d.* the dozen, and are sold at ½*d.* a knot. A dozen in 2 days is an average sale, but I have treated more expressly of those who depend principally upon boot-lace selling for their livelihood. Their average profits are about 3*s.* a week, on laces alone. The trade, I am told, was much more remunerative a few years back, and the decline was attributed "to so many getting into the trade, and the button boots becoming as fashionable as the *Adelaides.*"

#### OF A BLIND FEMALE SELLER OF "SMALL-WARES."

I now give an account of the street-trade, the feelings, and the life of a poor blind woman, who may be seen nearly every fine day, selling what is technically termed "small-ware," in Leather-lane, Holborn. The street "small-wares" are now understood to be cotton-tapes, pins, and sewing cotton; sometimes with the addition of boot and stay-laces, and shirt-buttons.

I saw the blind small-ware seller enter her own apartment, which was on the first floor of a small house in a court contiguous to her "pitch." The entrance into the court was low and narrow; a tall man would be compelled to stoop as he entered the passage leading into the court. Here were unmistakeable signs of the poverty of the inhabitants. Soap-suds stood in the choked gutter, old clothes were hung out to dry across the court, one side being a dead wall, and the windows were patched with paper, sometimes itself patched with other paper. In front of one window, however, was a rude gate-work, behind which stood a root of lavender, and a campanula, thriving not at all, but yet, with all their dinginess, presenting a relief to the eye.

The room of the blind woman is reached by a very narrow staircase, on which two slim persons could not pass each other, and up old and worn stairs. Her apartment may be about ten feet square. The window had both small and large panes, with abundance of putty plastering. The furniture consisted of a small round deal table (on which lay the poor woman's stock of black and white tapes, of shirt-buttons, &c.), and of four broken or patched chairs. There were a few motley-looking "pot" ornaments on the mantel-shelf, in the middle of which stood a doctor's bottle. The bust of a female was also conspicuous, as was a tobacco-pipe. Above the mantel-piece hung some pictureless frames, while a pair of spectacles were suspended above a little looking-glass. Over a cupboard was a picture of the Ethiopian serenaders, and on the uncoloured walls were engravings of animals apparently from some work on natural history. There were two thin beds, on one of which was stowed a few costermonger's old baskets and old clothes (women's and boys'), as if

stowed away there to make room to stir about. All the furniture was dilapidated. An iron rod for a poker, a pair of old tongs, and a sheet-iron shovel, were by the grate, in which glimmered a mere handful of fire. All showed poverty. The rent was 1*s.* a week (it had been 1*s.* 9*d.*), and the blind woman and a lodger (paying 6*d.* of the rent) slept in one bed, while a boy occupied the other. A wiry-haired dog, neither handsome nor fat, received a stranger (for the blind woman, and her guide and lodger, left their street trade at my request for their own room) with a few querulous yelps, which subsided into a sort of whining welcome to me, when the animal saw his mistress was at ease. The pleasure with which this poor woman received and returned the caresses of her dog was expressed in her face. I may add that owing to a change of street names in that neighbourhood, I had some difficulty in finding the small-ware seller, and heard her poor neighbours speak well of her as I inquired her abode; usually a good sign among the poor.

The blind tape-seller is a tall and somewhat strongly-formed woman, with a good-humoured and not a melancholy expression of face, though her manner was exceedingly quiet and subdued and her voice low. Her age is about 50. She wore, what I understand is called a "half widow's cap;" this was very clean, as indeed was her attire generally, though worn and old.

I have already given an account of a female small-ware seller (which account formerly appeared in one of my letters in the *Morning Chronicle*) strongly illustrating the vicissitudes of a street life. It was the statement, however, of one who is no longer in the streets, and the account given by the blind tape and pin seller is further interesting as furnishing other habitudes or idiosyncrasies of the blind (or of an individual blind woman), in addition to those before detailed; more especially in its narrative of the feelings of a perhaps not very sensitive woman who became "dark" (as she always called it) in mature age.

"It's five years, sir," she said, "since I have been quite dark, but for two years before that I had lost the sight of one eye. Oh, yes, I had doctors but they couldn't save my eyesight. I lost it after illnesses and rheumatics, and from want and being miserable. I felt very miserable when I first found myself quite dark, as if everything was lost to me. I felt as if I'd no more place in the world; but one gets reconciled to most things, thank God, in time; but I'm often low and sad now. Living poorly and having a sickly boy to care about may be one reason, as well as my blindness and being so bad off.

"I was brought up to service, and was sent before that to St. Andrew's school. I lost my parents and friends (relatives) when I were young. I was in my first place eighteen months, and was eight or nine years in service altogether, mostly as maid of all work. I saved a little money and married. My husband was a costermonger, and we didn't do well. Oh, dear no, sir, because he was addicted to drinking. We often suffered great pinching. I can't say as he was unkind to me.

He died nine years or more since. After that I supported myself, and two sons we had, by going out to wash and 'chair.' I did that when my husband was living. I had tidy work, as I 'chaired' and washed for one family in Clerkenwell for ten years, and might again if I wasn't dark. My eldest son's now a soldier and is with his regiment at Dover. He's only eighteen, but he could get nothing to do as hard as he tried; I couldn't help him; he knew no trade; and so he 'listed. Poor fellow! perhaps I shall never see him again. Oh, see him! That I couldn't if he was sitting as near me as you are, sir; but perhaps I may never hear his voice again. Perhaps he'll have to go abroad and be killed. It's a sad thought that for a blind widow; I think of it both up and in bed. Blind people think a great deal, I feel they do. My youngest son—he's now fourteen—is asthmatical; but he's such a good lad, so easily satisfied. He likes to read if he can get hold of a penny book, and has time to read it. He's at a paper-stainer's and works on fancy satin paper, which is very obnoxious" (the word she used twice for pernicious or obnoxious) "to such a delicate boy. He has 5s. a week, but, oh dear me, it takes all that for his bit of clothes, and soap for washing, and for shoes, and then he must carry his dinner with him every day, which I makes ready, and as he has to work hard, poor thing, he requires a little meat. I often frets about his being so weakly; often, as I stands with my tapes and pins, and thinks, and thinks. But, thank God, I can still wash for him and myself, and does so regularly. No, I can't clean my room myself, but a poor woman who lives by selling boot-laces in the streets has lodged with me for many years, and she helps me."

"Lives!" interrupted the poor boot-lace woman, who was present, "starves, you mean; for all yesterday I only took a farthing. But anything's better than the house. I'll live on 4d. a day, and pay rent and all, and starve half my time, rather nor the great house" (the Union).

"Yes, indeed," resumed the blind woman, "for when I first went dark, I was forced to send to my parish, and had 6d. twice a week, and a half-quartern loaf, and that was only allowed for three weeks, and then there was the house for me. Oh dear, after that I didn't know what I could do to get a bit of bread. At first I was so frightened and nervous, I was afraid of every noise. That was when I was quite dark; and I am often frightened at nothing still, and tremble as I stand in the lane. I was at first greatly distressed, and in pain, and was very down-hearted. I was so put about that I felt as if I was a burden to myself, and to everybody else. If you lose your sight as I did, sir, when you're not young, it's a long time before you learns to be blind. [So she very expressly worded it.] A friend advised me to sell tapes and cottons, and boot-laces, in the street, as better than doing nothing; and so I did. But at first I was sure every minute I should be run on. The poor woman that lodges with me bought some things for me where she buys her own—at Albion-house, in the Borough. O, I

does very badly in my trade, very badly. I now clear only 2d., 3d., or 4d. a day; no, I think not more than 1s. 6d. a week; that is all. Why, one day this week I only sold a ha'porth of pins. But what I make more than pays my rent, and it's a sort of employment; something to do, and make one feel one's not quite idle. I hopes to make more now that nights are getting long, for I can then go into the lane. (Leather-lane) of an evening, and make 1d. or 2d. extra. I daren't go out when it's long dark evenings, for the boys teases me, and sometimes comes and snatches my tapes and things out of my hands, and runs away, and leaves me there robbed of my little stock. I'm sure I don't know whether it's young thieves as does it, or for what they calls a lark. I only knows I loses my tapes. Do I complain to the police, do you say, sir? I don't know when a policeman's passing, in such a crowded place. Oh yes, I could get people to complain for me, but perhaps it would be no good; and then I'm afraid of the police; they're so arbitrary. [Her word.] It's not very long since one of them—and I was told afterwards he was a sergeant, too—ordered me to move on. 'I can't move on, sir,' said I, 'I wish I could, but I must stand still, for I'm blind.' 'I know that,' says he, 'but you're begging.' 'No, I'm not,' says I, 'I'm only a trying to sell a few little things, to keep me out of the work 'us.' 'Then what's that thing you have tied over your breast?' says he. 'If you give me any more of your nonsense, I'll lock you up;' and then he went away. I'm terrified to think of being taken to the station."

The matter which called forth the officer's wrath, was a large card, tied from the poor woman's shoulders, on which was printed, in large letters, "PLEASE TO BUY OF THE POOR BLIND." "Ay," said the blind woman's companion, with a bitterness not uncommon on the part of street-sellers on such occasions, "and any shopkeeper can put what notice he likes in his window, that he can, if it's ever such a lie, and nothing's said if he collects a crowd; oh dear, no. But we musn't say our lives is our own."

"Yes, sir," said the blind woman, as I questioned her further, "there I stands, and often feels as if I was half asleep, or half dreaming; and I sometimes hardly knows when I dreams, and what I thinks; and I think what it was like when I had my eyesight and was among them, and what it would be like if I had my eyesight again; all those people making all that noise, and I trying to earn a penny, seems so queer. And I often thinks if people suffered ever so much, they had something to be thankful for, if they had their eyesight. If I'd been dark from a child, I think I shouldn't have felt it so much. It wouldn't have been like all that lost, and I should be handier, though I'm not bad that way as it is, but I'm afraid to go out by myself. Where I lives, there's so many brokers about, I should run against their furniture. I'm sometimes not spoken to for an hour and more. Many a day I've only took 1d. Then I thinks and mopes about what will become of me, and thinks

about my children. I don't know who buys of me, but I'm sure I'm very thankful to all as does. They takes the things out of my hands, and puts the money into them. I think they're working-people as buys of me, but I can't be sure. Some speaks to me very kind and pleasant. I don't think they're ladies that speaks kind. My husband used to say that if ladies went to places like the Lane, it was on the sly, to get something cheap, and they didn't want to be seen there, or they might be counted low. I'm sure he was right. And it ain't such as them as buys of a poor blind woman out of kindness. No, sir, it's very seldom indeed that I get more than the regular price. A halfpenny a knot for my tapes; and a halfpenny and a farthing for pins; and a halfpenny and a penny a dozen for shirt-buttons; and three a penny when I sells boot-laces; and a halfpenny a piece when I has stay-laces. I sells good things, I know, for the friend as gets them wouldn't deceive me, and I never has no complaints of them.

"I don't know any other blind woman in the trade besides myself. No, I don't associate with blind people. I wasn't brought up, like, to such a thing, but am in it by accident. I can't say how many blind women there may be in my line in the streets. I haven't the least notion. I took little notice of them, God forgive me, when I had my eyesight, and I haven't been thrown among them since. Whether there's many of them or not, they're all to be pitied."

"On a Sunday I never stirs out, except to chapel, with my lodger or my son. No, sir, not a Roman Catholic chapel, but a Protestant. When it's not very fine weather we goes to the nearest, but you hears nothing but what's good in any of them. Oh dear, no."

"I lives on tea and bread and butter all the week—yes, I can make it ready myself—except on Sundays, when my son has his dinner here, and we has a bit of cheap meat; not often fish; it's troublesome. If bread and things wasn't cheap I couldn't live at all, and it's hardly living as it is. What can any one do on all that I can earn? There's so many in the streets, I'm told, in my line, and distress drives more and more every week—everybody says so, and wages is so bad, and there's such under-selling, that I don't know whatever things will come to. I've no 'spectation of anything better in the time that has to come, nothing but misery, God help me. But I'm sure I should soon fret to death in a work 'us."

The poor woman lodging with the blind street-seller is herself in the same trade, but doing most in boot and stay-laces. She has a sharp and pinched outline of countenance, as if from poverty of diet, and is indeed wretchedly poor, earning only about 6d. a day, if so much. She is about the same age as her landlady, or somewhat younger, and has apparently been good-looking, and has still an intelligent expression. She lodged with the blind woman during her husband's lifetime, when he rented two rooms, letting her one, and she had lived with the present widow in this way

about fourteen years. She speaks cheerfully and seems an excellent companion for a blind person. On my remarking that they could neither of them be very cross-tempered to have lived so long together, the lodger said, laughingly, "O, we have a little tiff now and then, sir, as women will, you know; but it's not often, and we soon are all right again. Poor people like us has something else to think of than tiffs and gossiping."

#### THE BLIND STREET-SELLER OF BOOT-LACES.

THE character, thoughts, feelings, regrets, and even the dreams, of a very interesting class of street-folk—the blind—are given in the narratives I now proceed to lay before the reader, from blind street-folk; but a few words of general introduction are necessary.

It may be that among the uneducated—among those whose feelings and whose bodies have been subjected to what may be called the wear and tear of poverty and privation—there is a tendency, even when misfortunes the most pitiable and undeserved have been encountered, to fall from misery into mendicancy. Even the educated, or, as the street people more generally describe them, those "who have seen better days," sometimes, after the ordeal of the streets and the low lodging-houses, become trading mendicants. Among such people there may be, in one capacity or other, the ability and sometimes the opportunity to labour, and yet—whether from irrepressible vagabondism, from utter repugnance to any settled mode of subsistence (caused either by the natural disposition of the individual, or by the utter exhaustion of mind and body driving him to beg)—yet, I say, men of this class become beggars and even "lurkers."

As this is the case with men who have the exercise of their limbs, and of the several senses of the body, there must be some mitigating plea, if not a full justification, in the conduct of those who beg directly or indirectly, because they cannot and perhaps never could labour for their daily bread—I allude to those afflicted with blindness, whether "from their youth up" or from the calamity being inflicted upon them in maturer years.

By the present law, for a blind man to beg is to be amenable to punishment, and to be subjected to perhaps the bitterest punishment which can be put upon him—imprisonment; to a deprivation of what may be his chief solace—the enjoyment of the fresh air; and to a rupture of the feeling, which cannot but be comforting to such a man, that under his infirmity he still has the sympathies of his fellow-creatures.

It appears to me, then, that the blind have a right to ask charity of those whom God has spared so terrible an affliction, and who in the terms best understood by the destitute themselves, are "well to do;" those whom—in the canting language of a former generation of blind and other beggars—"Providence has blessed with affluence." This right to solicit aid from those to whom such aid does not even approach to the sacrifice of any idle indulgence—to say nothing of any necessary want—is based on their helplessness, but lapses if it becomes a mere business, and with all the

trickiness by which a street business is sometimes characterised.

On this question of moral right, as of political expediency, I quote an authority which must command attention, that of Mr. Stuart Mill:—

Apart from any metaphysical considerations respecting the foundation of morals or of the social union, he says, "It will be admitted to be right, that human beings should help one another; and the more so, in proportion to the urgency of the need; and none needs help so urgently as one who is starving. The claim to help, therefore, created by destitution, is one of the strongest which can exist; and there is *prima facie* the amplest reason for making the relief of so extreme an exigency as certain, to those who require it, as, by any arrangements of society, it can be made.

"On the other hand, in all cases of helping, there are two sets of consequences to be considered; the consequences of the assistance itself, and the consequences of relying on the assistance. The former are generally beneficial, but the latter for the most part injurious; so much so, in many cases, as greatly to outweigh the value of the benefit. And this is never more likely to happen than in the very cases where the need of help is the most intense. There are few things for which it is more mischievous, that people should rely on the habitual aid of others, than for the means of subsistence, and unhappily there is no lesson which they more easily learn." I may here mention, in corroboration of this statement, that I was told by an experienced parochial officer, that there was truth in the saying, "Once a pauper, and always a pauper;" which seems to show that the lesson of relying on the habitual aid of others may not only be learned with ease, but is forgotten with difficulty. "The problem to be solved," continues Mr. Mill, "is, therefore, one of peculiar nicety, as well as importance; how to give the greatest amount of needful help, with the smallest encouragement to undue reliance on it.

"Energy and self-dependence are, however," Mr. Mill proceeds to argue, and, in this respect, it seems to me, to argue to demonstration, "liable to be impaired by the absence of help, as well as by its excess. It is even more fatal to exertion to have no hope of succeeding by it, than to be assured of succeeding without it. When the condition of any one is so disastrous that his energies are paralyzed by discouragement, assistance is a tonic, not a sedative: it braces, instead of relaxing the active faculties: always provided that the assistance is not such as to dispense with self-help, by substituting itself for the person's own labour, skill, and prudence, but is limited to affording him a better hope of attaining success by those legitimate means. This, accordingly, is a test to which all plans of philanthropy and benevolence should be brought, whether intended for the benefit of individuals or of classes, and whether conducted on the voluntary or on the government principle.

"In so far as the subject admits of any general doctrine or maxim, it would appear to be this—that if assistance is given in such a manner that the condition of the person helped is rendered

as desirable as that of another (in a similar grade of society) who succeeds in maintaining himself without help, the assistance, if systematic and capable of being previously calculated upon, is MISCHIEVOUS: but if, while available to everybody, it leaves to all a strong motive to do without it if they can, it is then for the most part BENEFICIAL."

That the workhouse should bring less comfort and even greater irksomeness and restraint to any able-bodied inmate, than is felt by the poorest agricultural labourer in the worst-paid parts of the country, or the most wretched slop tailor, or shoemaker, or cabinet maker in London, who supports himself by his own labour, is, I think, a sound principle. However wretched the ploughman may be in his hut, or the tailor in his garret, he is what I have heard underpaid mechanics call, still "his own man." He is supported by his labour; he has escaped the indignity of a reliance on others.

I need not now enter into the question whether or not the workhouse system has done more harm than good. Some harm it is assuredly doing, for its over-discipline drives people to beg rather than apply for parish relief; and so the public are twice mulct, by having to pay compulsorily, in the form of poor's-rate, and by being induced to give voluntarily, because they feel that the applicant for their assistance deserves to be helped.

But although the dogma I have cited, respecting the condition of those in a workhouse, may be sound in principle as regards the able-bodied, how does it apply to those who are not able-bodied? To those who cannot work? And above all how does it apply to those to whom nature has denied even the capacity to labour? To the blind, for instance? Yet the blind man, who dreads the injustice of such a creed applied to his misfortune, is subject to the punishment of the mendacious beggar, should he ask a passer-by to pity his afflictions. The law may not often be enforced, but sometimes it is enforced—perhaps more frequently in country than in town—and surely it is so enforced against abstract right and political morality. The blind beggar, "worried by the police," as I have heard it described, becomes the mendacious beggar, no longer asking, in honesty, for a mite to which a calamity that no prudence could have saved him gave him a fair claim, but resorting to trick in order to increase his precarious gains.

That the blind resort to deceitful representations is unquestionable. One blind man, I am informed, said to Mr. Child the oculist, when he offered to couch him, "Why, that would ruin me!" And there are many, I am assured, who live by the streets who might have their eyesight restored, but who will not.

The public, however, must be warned to distinguish between those determined beggars and the really deserving and helpless blind. To allow their sympathies to be blunted against all, because some are bad, is a creed most consolatory to worldly successful selfishness, and alien to every principle of pure morals, as well as to that of more than morals—the spirit of Christianity.

The feelings of the blind, apart from their mere sufferings as poor men, are well described in some of the narratives I give, and the account of a blind man's dreams is full of interest. Man is blessed with the power of seeing dreams, it should be remembered, *visionally*; but the blind man, to whose statement I invite attention, dreams, it will be seen, like the rest of his fraternity, through the sense of hearing, or of feeling, best known as "touching;" that is to say, by audible or tactile representations.

Some of the poor blind, he told me, are polishers' wheel-turners, but there is not employment for one in one hundred at this. My informant only knew two so engaged. People, he says, are glad to do it, and will work at as low wages as the blind. Some of the blind, too, blow blacksmiths' forges at foundries; others are engaged as cutlers' wheel-turners. "There was one talking to me the other day, and he said he'd get me a job that way." Others again turn mangles, but at this there is little employment to be had. Another blind acquaintance of my informant's chops chaff for horses. Many of the blind are basket-makers, learning the business at the blind school, but one-half, I am told, can't make a living at this, after leaving the school; they can't do the work so neatly, and waste more rods than the other workers. Other blind people are chair-bottomers, and others make rope mats with a frame, but all of these can scarcely make a living. Many blind people play church organs. Some blind men are shoemakers, but their work is so inferior, it is almost impossible to live by it.

The blind people are forced to the streets because, they say, they can do nothing else to get a living; at no trade, even if they know one, can they get a living, for they are not qualified to work against those who can see; and what's more, labourers' wages are so low that people can get a man with his eyesight at the same price as they could live upon. "There's many a blind basket-weaver playing music in the streets 'cause he can't get work. At the trade I know one blind basket-maker can make 15s. a-week at his trade, but then he has a good connection and works for himself; the work all comes home. He couldn't make half that working for a shop. At turning wheels there's nothing to be done; there's so many seeing men out of employment that's glad to do the work at the same price as the blind, so that unless the blind will go into the workhouse, they must fly to the streets. The police, I am told, treat the blind very differently: some of the force are very good to them, and some has no feeling at all—they shove them about worse than dogs; but the police is just like other men, good and bad amongst them. They're very kind to me," said my blind informant, "and they have a difficult duty to perform, and some persons, like Colonel Cavendish, makes them harsher to us than they would be." I inquired whether my blind informant had received one of the Census papers to fill up, and he told me that he had heard nothing about them, and that he had certainly made no return to the government about his blindness; but what

it was to the government whether he was blind or not, he couldn't tell. His wife was blind as well as himself, and there was another blind man living in his room, and none of his blind friends, that he had heard of, had ever received any of the papers.

"Some blind people in the streets carry laces. There are some five men and one woman at the West-end do this, and three of these have dogs to lead them; one stands always on Langham-place. One carries cabbage-nets, he is an old man of seventy year, with white hair, and is likewise led by a dog. Another carries matches (he has a large family), and he is often led by one of his boys. There is a blind woman who always sits by the Polytechnic, and has indeed done so since it was built. She gets her living by sewing, making caps and things for ladies. Another blind woman obtains a livelihood by knitting garters and covers for bread trays and backs of chairs. She generally walks about in the neighbourhood of Baker-street, and Portman-square. Many recite a lamentation as they go along, but in many parts of London the police will not allow them to do so.

"It's a very jealous place, is London. The police is so busy; but many recites the lamentation for all that. It's a feeling thing—Oh, they're very touching words."

The greater part in the streets are musicians; five to one are, or ten to one. My informant thinks, last Thursday week, there were seven blind musicians all playing through the streets together in one band. There are four living in York-court; two in Grafton-court; two in Clement's-lane; one in Orchard-place; two in Gray's-buildings; two in Half-Moon-street, in the City, and two in a court hard by; one up by Ball's-pond; two in Rose-court, Whitechapel; three in Golden-lane; two at Chelsea; three in Westminster; one up at Paddington; one (woman) in Marylebone; one in Westminster; one in Gray's-inn-lane; one in Whitechapel: in all thirty-one; but my informant was satisfied there must be at least as many more, or sixty blind musicians in all.

In the course of a former inquiry into the character and condition of street performers, I received the following account from a blind musician:—

"The street blind tried, some years back, to maintain a burying and sick club of our own; but we were always too poor. We live in rooms. I don't know one blind musician who lives in a lodging-house. I myself know a dozen blind men now performing in the streets of London. The blind musicians are chiefly married men. I don't know one who lives with a woman unmarried. The loss of sight changes a man, he doesn't think of women, and women don't think of him. We are of a religious turn, too, generally.

"When we agreed to form the blind club there was not more than a dozen members. These consisted of two basket-makers; one mat-maker; four violin players; myself; and my two mates;

and this was the number when it dropped for want of funds; that's now sixteen years ago. We were to pay 1s. a month, and sick members were to have 5s. a week when they had paid two years. Our other rules were the same as other clubs. There's a good many blind who play at sailors dances, Wapping and Deptford way. We seldom hire children to lead us in the streets; we have plenty of our own generally. I have five. Our wives are generally women that have their eyesight; but some blind men marry blind women."

My informant was satisfied that there were at least 100 blind men and women getting their living in the streets, and about 500 throughout the country. There are many who stay continually in Brighton, Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Plymouth, and indeed all large towns. "There are a great many blind people, I am told," he said, "in Cornwall. It's such a humane place for them; the people has great feeling for the blind; they're very religious there, and a many lose their sight in the mines, and that's what makes them have a feeling for others so." This man heard a calculation made some time back, that there were 5000 blind people, including those in schools and asylums, within five miles round St. Paul's. The most of the blind have lost their sight by the small-pox—nine out of every ten of the musicians have done so; since the vaccination has been discovered, I am told the cases of blindness from small-pox have been considerably increased. "Oh, that was a very clever thing—very," said the blind boot-lace seller to me. Those who have not lost their sight by the small-pox, have gone blind from accidents, such as substances thrown or thrust in the eyes, or inflammation induced from cold and other ailments. My informant was not acquainted with one blind person in the streets who had been born blind. One of his acquaintance who had been blind from birth caught the small-pox, and obtained his sight after recovery at eight years old. "The great majority have lost their sight at an early age—when mere children, indeed; they have consequently been trained to no employment; those few who have" (my informant knew two) "been educated in the blind schools as basket-makers, are unable to obtain employment at this like a seeing person. Why, the time that a blind man's feeling for the hole to have a rod through, a seeing man will have it through three or four times. The blind people in the streets mostly know one another; they say they have all a feeling of brotherly love for another, owing to their being similarly afflicted. If I was going along the street, and had a guide with me that could see, they would say, 'Here's a blind man or blind woman coming;' I would say, 'Put me up to them so as I'll speak to them;' then I should say, as I laid my hand upon them, 'Holloa, who's this?' they'd say, 'I'm blind.' I should answer, 'So am I.' 'What's your name?' would be the next question. 'Oh, I have heard tell of you,' most like, I should say. 'Do you know so and so?' I would say, 'Yes, he's coming to see me,' or perhaps, 'I'm

going to see him on Sunday;' then we say, 'Do you belong to any of the Institutions?' that's the most particular question of all; and if he's not a traveller, and we never heard tell of one another, the first thing we should ask would be, 'How did you lose your sight?' You see, the way in which the blind people in the streets gets to know one another so well, is by meeting at the houses of gentlemen when we goes for our pensions."

The boot, shoe, and stay laces, are carried by the blind, I am told "seldom for sale;" for it's very few they sell of them. "They have," they say, "to prevent the police or mendicity from interfering with them, though the police do not often show a disposition to obstruct them." "The officers of the Mendicity Society," they tell me, "are their worst enemies." These, however, have desisted from molesting them, because the magistrates object to commit a blind man to prison. The blind never ask anybody for anything, they tell me their cry is simply "Bootlace! Bootlace!" When they do sell, they charge 1½d. per pair for the leather boot-laces, 1d. per pair the silk boot-laces, and ½d. per pair for the cotton boot-laces, and d. each for the stay-laces. They generally carry black laces only, because the white ones are so difficult to keep clean. For the stay-laces they pay 2d. a dozen, and for the boot-laces 5d. a dozen, for the leather or for the silk ones; and 1½d. for the cotton; each of the boot-laces is double, so that a dozen makes a dozen pair. They buy them very frequently at a swag-shop in Compton-street. My informant carried only the black-cotton laces, and doesn't sell six-penny worth in a week. He did not know of a blind boot lace-seller that sold more than he did.

"Formerly the blind people in the street used to make a great deal of money; up to the beginning of the peace, and during all the war, the blind got money in handfuls. Where there was one blind man travelling then, there's ten now. If they didn't take 2l. and 2l. 10s. a day in a large town, it was reckoned a bad day's work for the musicianers. Almost all the blind people then played music. In war time there was only one traveller (tramp); there are 100 now. There was scarcely a common lodging-house then in one town out of the three; and now there's not a village hardly in the country but what there's one, and perhaps two or three. Why the lodging-houses coin money now. Look at a traveller's house where there's twenty beds (two in each bed), at 3d. each, and that's 10s. you know. There was very few blind beggars then, and what there was done well. Certainly, done well; they could get hatfuls of money almost, but then money was of no valley scarcely; you could get nothing for it most; but now if you get a little, you can buy a plenty with it. What is worth 6d. now fetched 2s. then. I wasn't in the streets then, I wish I had been, I should have made a fortin, I think I should. The blind beggars then could get 2l. a day if they went to look for it." "I myself," said one, "when I first began, have gone and sat myself down by the side of the road and got my 1l., all in half-pence. When I went to Brain-

tree, I stood beside a public-house, the 'Orange Tree,' just by where the foot-people went on to the fair ground, and I took 15s. a day for two days only, standing there a pattering my lamentation from 1 o'clock till the dusk in the evening. This is what I said:—

'You feeling Christians look with pity,  
Unto my grief relate—  
Pity my misfortune,  
For my sufferings are great.

'I'm bound in dismal darkness—  
A prisoner I am led;  
Poor and blind, just in prime,  
Brought to beg my bread.

'When in my pleasant youthful days  
In learning took delight,

(and when I was in the country I used to say)

And by the small-pox  
I lost my precious sight.

(some says by an inflammation)

'I've lost all earthly comforts,  
But since it is God's will,  
The more I cannot see the day,  
He'll be my comfort still.

'In vain I have sought doctors,  
Their learned skill did try,  
But they could not relieve me,  
Nor spare one single eye.

'So now in dismal darkness  
For ever more must be,  
To spend my days in silent tears,  
Till death doth set me free.

'But had I all the treasures  
That decks an Indian shore,  
Was all in my possession,  
I'd part with that wealthy store,

'If I once more could gain my sight,  
And when could gladly view  
That glorious light to get my bread,  
And work once more like you.

'Return you, tender Christians dear,  
And pity my distress;  
Relieve a helpless prisoner,  
That's blind and comfortless.

'I hope that Christ, our great Redeemer,  
Your kindness will repay,  
And reward you with a blessing  
On the judgment day.'

"Some say 'pity the poor blind,' but the lamentation is better. It's a very feeling thing. Many people stands still and hears it right through, and gives a halfpenny. I'd give one myself any day to hear it well said. I'm sure the first time I heard it the very flesh crept on my bones. I learnt it to one blind man myself last summer.

"Now just to show you the difference of things two year afterwards: I went to the very same place where I had took 1l. by the road side, as I told, and all I got was 4s., so you can see how things was falling. The day I took the 1l., there was only one blind man in the town beside me; but when I got the 4s., there was three men blind there. But things now is much worse—bless you, a hundred times worse. If I went now to Braintree fair, I don't think as I should take 3s. You see there's so many blind men now about that I should'nt wonder if there'd be eight or ten at that very fair; they don't know where to run to now to get a halfpenny; there's so many blind people that persons makes game of them. If they see two near one another, they cries out, there's opposition! See what things is come to.

Twelve year ago I should have thought the town was completely done, and people quite tired of me. If I didn't get my shilling going down only one side of a street, and now I may go up and down and not get a penny. If I get 3d. I am very well satisfied. But mind, I may perhaps sometimes meet a gentlemen who may give me a shilling, or one who may give me 2s. 6d.; a person the other day tapped me on the shoulder, near Brook-street, and said, 'Here's half-a-crown for you.' Why, even five year ago one gentleman gave me 1l. twice over within three months, and Prince Napoleon gave me a sovereign last 23rd June was two year. I know the date, because that's the day the blind people goes to the Cloth Hall to get their quarter's money, 25s., and I thought I was as good as they." My informant told me he does better than any of them. "Not one docs better than me," he said, "because I sticks to it night and day. It's 12 o'clock every night before I leave the streets. You know I leaves home by ten of a morning. I will have it to get a living. Many says they don't know how I stand it to keep so long on my legs. I only has two meals a day—my breakfast, a bit of summat about five or six at a public-house—my dog though has plenty. I feeds him well, poor fellow. Many times I sleep as I go, and knock my stick just the same as if I was awake. I get a comfortable living—always a little in debt. I've got a very good kerackter, thank God—indeed all the blind men has—they can always get credit; and my dog gets me many a shilling that I wouldn't get at all. But then it's dreadful slavery. I've never no amusement—always out excepting on Sunday. Then I've got 5l. from Cloth Hall, besides a small pension of 1s., and 2s. 6d., and 5s. a year from different gentlemen, who allows us poor blind a small pension yearly. There are many gentleman do this at the West-end. Some will allow 10s. a year, and some only 1s. a year, to a stated number; and they all pay on a particular day that they may appoint. The Earl of Mansfield allows twenty-four destitute blind people 10s. 6d. a year; and his mother gives two blind 1l., and four 10s. The Baroness Rothschild gives to between seventy and eighty 5s. a piece once a year." ("Bless her," said my informant, most heartily, "she is a good woman.") "The Earl Stanhope gives to between forty and fifty the same sum every year, and he's a fine kind-hearted gentleman. The Earl of Cork's brother gives eight or nine of us a shilling a piece once a year. Lady Otway Cave, she is very good to us; she gives seventy or eighty of us 1s. each every fust of May; but the butler, like a many more, I am told, takes advantage of the blind, and puts them off with 6d., and takes a receipt from them for 1s. The Earl of Normanton gives 2s. 6d. to ten of us. Mrs. Managan, of May-fair, gives three 2s. 6d. a piece. The Hon. Miss Brande 1s. a piece to eight. Lady Clements, Grosvenor-square, 2s. a piece to fifteen. The Marchioness of Aylesbury, 5s. a piece to about thirty. The Earl of Harrowby gives twelve 5s. a piece. Lord Dudley Stuart gives to seven or eight 5s. a piece.

Mr. Gurney, 1s. a piece to forty. Mr. Ellis, Arlington-street, 2s. 6d. a piece to fourteen. The Marquis of Bute used to give 5s. a piece to sixty or seventy; but the Marchioness, since his death, has discontinued his allowance. The Dean of Westminster gives 1s. a piece to thirty on Boxing-day. Mr. Spottiswoode, 1s. a piece to about fourteen. Archbishop of Oxford, 5s. a piece to twelve. Rev. Sir Samuel Jarvis, 2s. 6d. a piece to five. Lady Dundas, 1s. a piece to about fourteen or fifteen. The Earl of Besborough, 1s. each to ten. Lord Stafford, 1s. each to about twenty; he used to give 2s. 6d., but, owing to his servant, I am told the sum has been reduced to 1s. Lady Isabella Thynne, 1s. to ten. The Countess of Carlisle, 2s. 6d. each to sixteen. Earl Fitzwilliam used to give 5s. to some, and 2s. 6d. to others, to about twenty. The Countess of Essex, 2s. 6d. each to three. Lord Hatherton, 2s. 6d. each to twelve. John Ashley Warr, Esq., 5s. each to twenty-four. Lord Tynemouth, 2s. 6d. each to forty. Miss Vaughan, 2s. 6d. each to forty (this is bequeathed for ever). Lord Saltoun, 5s. each to three. Mr. Hope, 1s. each to fifty. Mr. Warren (Bryanstone-square), 1s. each to twenty-five. Miss Howard (York-place), 1s. each to every blind person that calls on Boxing-day. Sir John Curtis, 1s. each to eighty (this is also a bequest). Lady Beresford, 1s. each to forty. Lord Robert Grosvenor gives 1l. each to some few. The Countess of Andover, 2s. 6d. a piece to ten. Lord Stanley used to give 3s. to about twelve; but two years ago the allowance was discontinued. The Marquis of Bristol gives 10s. to eighteen. The Bishop of London, 5s. to every one that can obtain a minister's signature. Mr. Mackenze (Devonshire-place), 2s. 6d. to ten. Mr. Deacon, 2s. 6d. to ten. Miss Sheriff (Manchester-square), 1s. to twenty. Miss Morrison (Cadogan-place), 1s. each to ten. Mrs. Kittington (Wilton-crescent), 1s. to twenty. Mrs. Ferguson, 2s. 6d. each to seven. The Earl of Haddington, 10s. each to twelve." I am assured that these are only half of the donors to the blind, and that, with the exception of Lady Liddledam, there is not one person living eastward of Tottenham Court-road, who allows the smallest pension to the blind. My informant told me that he knew of no attorneys, barristers, surgeons, physicians, soldiers or sailors, who distributed any money to the blind, nor one tradesman. I think I get 10s. a week regular," he said. "While the quality's in town I'm safe. For other times I can't count above 5s. a week at the outside—if it's the least damp in the world, the quality will not come out. The musicians, you see, have got the chance of a damp day, for then all the best people's at home; but such as me does well only when they're out. If it wasn't for the pensions that the quality gives to the blind during the winter, they couldn't do at all. The blind people who have guides pay them no wages, they find them their victuals and clothes; but the guides are mostly children, and the blind are very good to them; many that I know spoils the."

The blind people are mostly all of a religious turn of mind. They all make a point of attending

divine service; and the majority of them are Catholics. My informant knew only five among his blind neighbours who were Protestants—and two of these were Presbyterians, one a Methodist, and two Churchmen; and on the other hand he numbered up fourteen Catholics, all going to the same chapel, and living within a short distance of himself. They are peculiarly distinguished by a love of music. "It's a sure bit of bread to the most; besides, it makes them independent, you see, and that's a great thing to people like us." There is not one teetotaller, I am told, among the street blind, but they are not distinguished by a love of drink. The blind musicians often, when playing at public-houses, are treated to drink, and, indeed, when performing in the streets, are taken by drunken men to play at taverns, and there supplied with liquor; but they do not any of them make a habit of drinking. There is, however, one now in prison who is repeatedly intoxicated; and this, the blind say, is a great injury to them; for people who see one of them drunk in the streets, believe that they are all alike; and there is one peculiarity among them all—being continually mistaken for one another. However different they may be in features, still, from the circumstance of their being blind, and being mostly accompanied by a dog, or a guide, few persons can distinguish one from another. They are mostly very jealous, they tell me, because they say every one takes advantage of their affliction, even their own children, and their own wives. "Some of the wives dress themselves very gaily, because they know their husbands can't see their fine clothes, particularly those that have got no children—then there's none to tell. But, pray mind I only speaking of some of them—don't blame the whole. People never took no money out of my dog's basket—two gals of the town once did try to steal a shilling out of it, that some gentleman had dropped in, but the dog barked, and they gave a scream, and run away. Many of the blind men have married blind women—they say that they don't like seeing women. If seeing men find it a hard job to take care of seeing women, how are blind men to do it?" My informant knows six blind men who have married blind wives—the blind wives, I am told, stick closer to home—and do not want to go to plays, or dances, or shows, and have no love of dress—and they are generally more sober than those who can see. "A blind person," says one, "has no reason to be as wicked as those that can see—there's not half the temptation, you know. The women do all their household duties as well as if they had their eyesight. They make puddings and pies, and boil them, or send them to the oven, as well, as quick, and as handy as a woman that can see. They sweep the floor without leaving a speck; and tidy the room, and black-lead the grate, and whiten the hearth, and dress the chimney-piece off quite handsome, I can tell you. They take great pride in their chimney-piece—they like other people to see it—and they take great pride in having their house quite clean and neat. Where I live it's the remark of all, that they who can't see have their

houses the cleanest. I don't know of any blind person that has a looking-glass over the mantel-piece, though. I'm sure that many would, if they had the money, just to please their friends. And, what's more strange, the blind wives will wash their husbands' shirts quite clean." "The blind are very fond of their children, you see, sir," said one; "we owe so much to them, they're such helps to us, even from their very infancy. You'll see a little thing that can hardly walk, leading her blind father about, and then, may be, our affliction makes them loves us the more. The blind people are more comfortable at home—they are more together, and more dependent on one another, and don't like going out into company as others do. With women a love of company is mostly of a love of seeing others, and being seen themselves, so the blind wives is happy and contented at home. No man that could see, unless he was a profligate, would think of marrying a blind woman; and the blind women knows this, and that's why they love their blind husbands the more—they pity one another, and so can't help liking each other." Now, it's strange, that with so many blind couples living together, no one ever heard of any accident from fire with blind people—the fact is, their blindness makes them so careful, that there's no chance of it; besides, when there's two blind people together, they never hardly light a candle at all, except when a stranger comes in, and then they always ask him, before he leaves, to put the light out.

The blind people generally are persons of great feeling; they are very kind and charitable to persons who are in any way afflicted, or even to poor persons. Many of those who live on charity themselves are, I am assured, very generous to those that want. One told me that "a beggar had come to his house, and he had made him cry with his story; my heart" he said, "was that full I was ashamed." They're not particularly proud, though they like to be well-dressed, and they say that no one can get a wife so soon as a blind man. One assured me that he'd go into any lodging-house in the country and get two or three if he wanted—only they'd fight, he said. "You see in the lodging-houses there are many woman whose husbands (but they're not married, you know) have told them to go on and said they would follow them, which of course they don't; or there's many in such places as wants a companion. When a blind man goes into one of these houses, a woman is sure to say to him, 'Can I fetch you anything, master?' Half an ounce of tea may be, and when they've got it, of course, they're invited to have a cup, and that does the business. She becomes the blind man's guide after that. The next morning, after telling one another where to meet—'I'm going such a road,' they whisper to each other,—away they starts. I've known many a blind man run away with a seeing man's wife. The women, I think, does it for a living, and that's all.

"I can't see the least light in the world—not the brightest sun that ever shone. I have pressed my eye-balls—they are quite de-

cayed, you see; but I have pushed them in, and they have merely hurt me, and the water has run from them faster than ever. I have never seen any colours when I did so." (This question was asked to discover whether the illusion called "peacock's feathers" could still be produced by pressure on the nerve). "I have been struck on the eye since I have been blind, and then I have seen a flash of fire like lightning. I know it's been like that, because I've seen the lightning sometimes, when it's been very vivid, even since I was stone blind. It was terrible pain when I was struck on the eye. A man one day was carrying some chairs along the street, and struck me right in the eye-ball with the end of the leg of one of the chairs; and I fell to the ground with the pain. I thought my heart was coming out of my mouth; then I saw the brightest flash that ever I saw, either before or since I was blind." (I irritated the ball of the eye with the object of discovering whether the nerve was decayed, but found it impossible to produce any luminous impression—though I suspect this arose principally from the difficulty of getting him to direct his eye in the proper direction). "I know the difference of colours, because I remember them; but I can't distinguish them by my touch, nor do I think that any blind man in the world ever could. I have heard of blind people playing at cards, but it's impossible they can do so any other way than by having them marked. I know many that plays cards that way." He was given two similar substances, but of different colours, to feel, but could not distinguish between them—both were the same to him, he said, "with the exception that one felt stiffer than the other. I know hundreds of people myself—and they know hundreds more—and none of us has ever heard of one that could tell colours by the feel. There's blind people in the school can tell the colours of their rods; but they do so by putting their tongue to them, and so they can distinguish them that's been dipped in copperas from them that hasn't. I know blind people can take a clock to pieces, and put it together again, as well as any person that can see. Blind people gets angry when they hear people talk of persons seeing with their fingers. A man has told me that a blind person in St. James's work-house could read the newspaper with his fingers, but that, the blind know, is quite impossible."

Many blind men can, I am told, distinguish between the several kinds of wood by touch alone. Mahogany, oak, ash, elm, deal, they say, have all a different feel. They declare it is quite ridiculous, the common report, that blind people can discern colours by the touch. One of my informants, who assured me that he was considered to be one of the cleverest of blind people, told me that he had made several experiments on this subject, and never could distinguish the least difference between black or red, or white, or yellow, or blue, or, indeed, any of the mixed colours. "My wife," said one, "went blind so young, that she doesn't never remember having seen the light; and I am often sorry for her that she has no idea of what a beautiful thing light or colours is. We often talk about

it together, and then she goes a little bit melancholy, because I can't make her understand what the daylight is like, or the great delight that there is in seeing it. I've often asked whether she knows that the daylight and the candlelight is of different colours, and she has told me she thinks they are the same; but then she has no notion of colours at all. Now, it's such people as these I pity." I told the blind man of Sanderson's wonderful effect of imagination in conceiving that the art of seeing was similar to that of a series of threads being drawn from the distant object to the eye; and he was delighted with the explanation, saying, "he could hardly tell how a born blind man could come at such an idea." On talking with this man, he told me he remembered having seen a looking-glass once—his mother was standing putting her cap on before it, and he thought he never saw anything so pretty as the reflection of the half-mourning gown she had on, and the white feathery pattern upon it (he was five years old then). He also remembered having seen his shadow, and following it across the street; these were the only two objects he can call to mind. He told me that he knew many blind men who could not comprehend how things could be seen, round or square, *all at once*; they are obliged, they say, to pass their fingers all over them; and how it is that the shape of a thing can be known in an instant, they cannot possibly imagine. I found out that this blind man fancied the looking-glass reflected only one object at once—only the object that was immediately in front of it; and when I told him that, looking in the glass, I could see everything in the room, and even himself, with my back turned towards him, he smiled with agreeable astonishment. He said, "You see how little I have thought about the matter." There was a blind woman of his acquaintance, he informed me, who could thread the smallest needle with the finest hair in a minute, and never miss once. "She'll do it in a second. Many blind women thread their needles with their tongues; the woman who stitches by the Polytechnic always does so." My informant was very fond of music. One of the blind makes his own teeth, he told me; his front ones have all been replaced by one long bit of bone which he has fastened to the stumps of his two eye teeth: he makes them out of any old bit of bone he can pick up. He files them and drills a hole through them to fasten them into his head, and eats his food with them. He is obliged to have teeth because he plays the clarinet in the street. "Music," he said, "is our only enjoyment, we all like to listen to it and learn it." It affects them greatly, they tell me, and if a lively tune is played, they can hardly help dancing. "Many a tune I've danced to so, that I could hardly walk the next day," said one. Almost all of the blind men are clever at reckoning. It seems to come natural to them after the loss of their sight. By counting they say they spend many a dull hour—it appears to be all mental arithmetic with them, for they never aid their calculations by their fingers or any signs whatever. My informant knew a blind man who could reckon on what day it was new moon for a hundred years back, or when

it will be new moon a century to come—he had never had a book read to him on the subject in his life—he was one of the blind wandering musicians. My informant told me he often sits for hours and calculates how many quarters of ounces there are in a ship-load of tea, and such like things. Many of the blind are very partial to the smell of flowers. My informant knew one blind man about the streets who always would have some kind of smelling flowers in his room.

"The blind are very ingenious; oh, very!" said one to me, "they can do anything that they can feel. One blind man who kept a lodging-house at Manchester and had a wife fond of drink, made a little chest of drawers (about two feet high), in which he used to put his money, and so cleverly did he arrange it that neither his wife nor any one else could get at the money without breaking the drawers all to pieces. Once while her blind husband was on his travels, she opened every drawer by means of false keys, and though she took each one out, she could find no means to get at the money, which she could hear jingling inside when she shook it. At last she got so excited over it that she sent for a carpenter, and even he was obliged to confess that he could not get to it without taking the drawers to pieces. The same blind man had a great fancy for white mice, and made a little house for them out of pieces of wood cut into the shape of bricks: there were doors, windows, and all," said my informant. The blind are remarkable for the quickness of their hearing—one man assured me he could hear the lamp-posts in the streets, and, indeed, any *substance* (any solid thing he said) that he passed in the street, provided it be as high as his ear; if it were below that he could not hear it so well.

"Do you know, I can hear any substance in the street as I pass it by, even the lamp-post or a dead wall—anything that's the height of my head, let it be ever so small, just as well, and tell what it is as well as you as can see. One night I was coming home—you'll be surprised to hear this—along Burlington-gardens, between twelve and one o'clock, and a gentleman was following me. I knew he was not a poor man by his walk, but I didn't consider he was watching me. I just heard when I got between Sackville-street and Burlington-street. Oh, I know every inch of the street, and I can go as quick as you can, and walk four mile an hour; know where I am all the while. I can tell the difference of the streets by the sound of my ear—a wide street and a narrow street—I can't tell a long street till I get to the bottom of it. I can tell when I come to an opening or a turning just by the click on the ear, without either my touching with hand or stick. Well, as I was saying, this gentleman was noticing me, and just as I come to turn up Cork-street, which, you know, is my road to go into Bond-street, on my way home; just as I come into Cork-street, and was going to turn round the corner, the sergeant of police was coming from Bond-street, at the opposite corner of Cork-street, I heard him, and he just stopped to notice me, but didn't know the gentleman was noticing me too. I whipped

round the corner as quick as any man that had his sight, and said, 'Good night, policeman.' I can tell a policeman's foot anywhere, when he comes straight along in his regular way while on his beat, and they all know it too. I can't tell it where there's a noise, but in the stillness of the night nothing would beat me. I can't hear the lamp-posts when there's a noise. When I said, 'Good night, policeman,' the gentleman whipped across to him, and says, 'Is that man really blind?' and by this time I was half way up Cork-street, when the gentleman hallooed to me to stop; and he comes up, and says, 'Are you really blind?' The sergeant of police was with him, and he says, 'Yes, he is really blind, sir;' and then he says, 'How is it that you go so cleverly along the street if you're blind?' Well, I didn't want to stop bothering with him, so I merely says, 'I do far cleverer things than that. I can hear the lamp-post as well as you that can see it.' He says, 'Yes, because you know the distance from one to another.' The sergeant stood there all the time, and he says, 'No, that can't be, for they're not a regular distance one from another.' Then the gentleman says, 'Now, could you tell if I was standing in the street when you passed me by?' I said, 'Yes; but you mustn't stand behind the lamp-post to deceive me with the sound of the substance.' Then he went away to try me, and a fine try we had. He will laugh when he sees that they're all put down. When he went away I recollected that if he didn't stand as near to the pavement as the lamp-post is, and remain still, he'd deceive me. Oh, certainly, I couldn't hear him if he was far off, and I shouldn't hear him in the same way as I can hear the lamp-posts if he didn't stand still. The policeman hallooed after him, and told him that he mustn't deceive me; but he wouldn't make no answer, for fear I should catch the sound of his voice and know where he was. I had agreed to touch every substance as I went along and round the street to look for him; we always call it looking though we are blind. Well, when he had stood still the sergeant told me to go; he's the sergeant of St. James' station-house, and has been often speaking to me since about it; and on I went at the rate of about three mile an hour, and touched every lamp-post without feeling for them, but just struck them with my stick as I went by, without stopping, and cried out, 'There's a substance.' At last I come to him. There's a mews, you know, just by the hotel in Cork-street, and the gentleman stood between the mews and Clifford-street, in Cork-street; and when I come up to him, I stopped quite suddenly, and cried out, 'There's a substance.' As I was offering to touch him with my stick, he drew back very softly, just to deceive me. Then he would have another try, but I picked him out again, but that wouldn't satisfy him, and he would try me a third time; and then, when I come up to him, he kept drawing back, right into the middle of the road. I could hear the stones scrunch under his feet; so I says, 'Oh, that's not fair;' and he says, 'Well, I'm bet.' Then he made me a present, and said that he would like to spend an hour some night

with me again. I don't think he was a doctor, 'cause he never took no notice of my eyes, but he was a real gentleman—the sergeant said so.

"When I dream, it's just the same as I am now, I dream of hearing and touching. The last dream that I had was about a blind man—that's in prison just now. I went into his wife's house, I knew it was her house by the sound of my foot in it. I can tell whether a place is clean or dirty by the sound. Then I heard her say, 'Well, how do you get on?' and I said 'Very well;' and she said 'Sit down,' and after sitting there a little while, I heard a voice at the door, and I said to her, 'Bless me, wouldn't you think that was John;' she said, 'Yes, I would,' but she took no farther notice, and I heard his voice repeatedly. I thought he was speaking to a child, and I got up and went to the door, and says, 'Halloa! is this you;' I was quite surprised and took him by the arm (laying his hand on his own) and he was in his shirt sleeves. I knew that by the feel. Then I was kind of afraid of him, though I am not afraid of anything. I was rather surprised that he should come out three weeks before his time. Then I dreamt that he tried to frighten and pushed me down on the floor, that way (making the motion sideways), to make me believe he was a ghost. I felt it as plain as I should if you were to do the same to me now. I says to him 'Don't be so foolish, sit down,' and I pushed him away and got up. When I got up, his wife says to him, 'Sit down, John, and don't be so foolish; sit down, and behave yourself;' and then we set down the two of us, just on the edge of the bed (here he moved his hand along the edge of the table). I thought it was turned down. He's a very resolute man and a wicked one, this blind man is, so I would like to have been out from him, but I was afraid to go, for he'd got a hold of me; after that I waked and I heard no more. But it's my real opinion that he's dead now, it is indeed, through having such dreams of him I think so; and the same night his wife dreamt that I was killed and all knocked into about a hundred pieces; and those two dreams convince me something's come to him. Oh, I do firmly believe in dreams, that I do; they're sent for people to foresee things, I'm certain of it, if people will only take notice of 'em. I have been many times in prison myself, while I've been travelling the country. You know in many towns they comes and takes you up without given you never no warning if they catches you begging. I was took up once in Liverpool, once in Hull, once in Exeter, and once in Biddeford, in Devonshire. Most of the times I had a month, and one of them only seven days. I think that's very unjust—never to say you mustn't do it; but to drag you off without never no warning. Every time before I was put in quod I had always dreamt that my father was starving to death for want of victuals, and at last I got to know whenever I dreamt that, I was sure of going to prison. I never dreamt about my mother; she died, you see, when I was very young, and I never remember hearing

her speak but once or twice. My father never did the thing that was right to me, and I didn't care much about him. When I was at home I was very fond of pigeons, and my mind went so much upon them, that I used to dream of it the night before, always when they had eggs, and when my rabbits had young ones too. I know when I wake in the morning that I am awake by my thoughts. Sometimes I dream I've got a lot of money in my hand, and when I wake and put my hand to feel it, it's gone, there's none there, and so I know it's been only a dream. I'm much surprised at my disappointment though."

Many of the blind are very fond of keeping birds and animals; some of them keep pigeons in one of their rooms, others have cocks and hens, and others white mice and rabbits, and almost all have dogs, though all are not led about by them. Some blind men take delight in having nothing but bull-dogs, not to lead them, but solely for fancy. Nobody likes a dog so much as a blind man, I am told—"they can't—the blind man is so much beholden to his dog, he does him such favours and sarvices." "With my dog I can go to any part of London as independent as any one who has got his sight. Yesterday afternoon when I left your house, sir, I was ashamed of going through the street. People was a saying, 'Look'ee there, that's the man as says he's blind.' I was going so quick, it was so late you know, they couldn't make it out, but without my dog I must have crawled along, and always be in great fear. The name of my present dog is 'KEEPER,' he is a mongrel breed; I have had him nine years, and he is with me night and day, goes to church with me and all. If I go out without him, he misses me, and then he scampers all through the streets where I am in the habit of going, crying and howling after me, just as if he was fairly out of his mind. It's astonishing. Often, before my first blind wife died (for I've been married twice to blind women, and once to a seeing woman), I used to say I'd sooner lose my wife than my dog; but when I did lose her I was sorry that ever I did say so. I didn't know what it was. I'm sorry for it yet, and ever will be sorry for it; she was a very good woman, and had fine principles. I shall never get another that I liked so much as the first. My dog knows every word I say to him. Tell him to turn right or left, or cross over, and whip! round he goes in a moment. Where I go for my tobacco, at the shop in Piccadilly, close to the Arcade—it's down six or seven steps, straight down—and when I tells Keeper to go to the baccy shop, off he is, and drags me down the steps, with the people after me, thinking he's going to break my neck down the place, and the people stands on top the steps making all kinds of remarks, while I'm below. If he was to lose me to-night or to-morrow, he'd come back here and rise the whole neighbourhood. He knows any public-house, no matter whether he was there before or not; just whisper to him, go to the public-house, and away he scampers and drags me right into the first he comes to. Directly I whis-

per to him, go to the public-house, he begins playing away with the basket he has in his mouth, throwing it up and laying it down—throwing it and laying it down for pleasure; he gets his rest there, and that's why he's so pleased. It's the only place I can go to in my rounds to sit down. Oh, he's a dear clever fellow. Now, only to show you how faithful he is, one night last week I was coming along Burlington-gardens, and I stopped to light my pipe as I was coming home, and I let him loose to play a bit and get a drink; and after I had lit my pipe I walked on, for I knew the street very well without any guide. I didn't take notice of the dog, for I thought he was following me. I was just turning into Clifford-street when I heard the cries of him in Burlington-gardens. I know his cry, let him be ever so far away; the screech that he set up was really quite dreadful; it would grieve anybody to hear him. So I puts my fingers in my mouth and gives a loud whistle; and at last he heard me, and then up he comes tearing along and panting away as if his heart was in his mouth; and when he gets up to me he jumped up to me right upon my back, and screams like—as if really he wanted to speak—you can't call it panting, because it's louder than that, and he does pant when he a'n't tired at all; all I can say is, it's for all the world like his speaking, and I understands it as such. If I say a cross word to him after he's lost—such as, ah, you rascal, you—he'll just stand of one side, and give a cry just like a Christian. I've known him break the windows up two story high when I've left him behind, and down he would have been after me only he durstn't jump out. I've had Keeper nine year. The dog I had before him was Blucher; he was a mongrel too; he had a tail like a wolf, an ear like a fox, and a face black like a monkey. I had him thirteen year. He was as clever as Keeper, but not so much loved as he is. At last he went blind; he was about two year losing his sight. When I found his eyes was getting bad I got Keeper. The way I first noticed him going blind was when I would come to cross a street on my way home; at nightfall the shade of the house on the opposite side, as we was crossing, would frighten him and drive him in the middle of the road; and he wouldn't draw to the pavement till he found he was wrong; and then after that he began to run again the lamp-posts in the dark; when he did this he'd cry out just like a Christian. I was sorry for him, and he knowed that, for I used to fret. I was sorry for him on account of my own affliction. At last I was obligated to take to Keeper. I got him of another blind man, but he had no larning in him when he come to me. I was a long time teaching him, for I didn't do it all at once. I could have taught him in a week, but I used to let the old dog have a run, while I put Keeper into the collar for a bit" (here the blind man was some time before he could proceed for his tears), "and so he larnt all he knows, little by little. Now Keeper and Blucher used to agree pretty well; but I've got another dog now, named Dash, and Keeper's as jealous of him as a woman is of a man. If I say, 'Come Keeper



STREET-SELLER OF BIRDS'-NESTS.

come and have the collar on,' I may call twenty times before he'll come; but if I say, 'Dash, come and have the collar on,' Keeper's there the first word, jumping up agin me, and doing anything but speak. At last my old Blucher went stone blind, as bad as his master; it was, poor thing; and then he used to fret so when I went out without him that I couldn't bear it, and so got at length to take him always with me, and then he used to follow the knock of my stick. He done so for about six months, and then I was one night going along Piccadilly and I stops speaking to a policeman, and Blucher misses me; he couldn't hear where I was for the noise of the carriages. He didn't catch the sound of my stick, and couldn't hear my voice for the carriages, so he went seeking me into the middle of the road, and there a buss run over him, poor thing. I heard him scream out and I whistled to him, and he came howling dreadful on to the pavement again. I didn't think he was so much hurt then, for I puts the collar on him to take him safe back, and he led me home blind as he was. The next morning he couldn't rise up at all, his hind parts was useless to him. I took him in my arms and found he couldn't move. Well, he never eat nor drink nothing for a week, and got to be in such dreadful pain that I was forced to have him killed. I got a man to drown him in a bag. I couldn't have done it myself for all the world. It would have been as bad to me as killing a Christian. I used to grieve terribly after I'd lost him. I couldn't get him off my mind. I had had him so many years, and he had been with me night and day, my constant companion, and the most faithful friend I ever had, except Keeper: there's nothing in the world can beat Keeper for faithfulness—nothing."

#### OF THE LIFE OF A BLIND BOOT-LACE SELLER.

THE blind boot lace-seller who gave me the following history of his life was the original of the portrait given in No. 17. He was a tall, strongly-built man. In face he was ghastly, his cheek bones were sharp and high, his nose flat to his face, and his eyes were so deeply sunk in that he had more the appearance of a death's head than of a living man. His shirt was scrupulously clean. He wore a bright red cotton neckerchief and a plaid waistcoat of many colours. His dog accompanied him and never left his master's side one moment.

"It's very sorrowful—very sorrowful indeed to hear that," said the boot-lace seller to me, on my reading him the account of the blind needle-seller; "it touches me much to hear that. But you see I don't grieve for the loss of my sight as he do, poor man. I don't remember ever seeing any object. If there was a thing with many colours in it, I could dissarn the highest colour. I couldn't tell one from another, but only the highest.

"I was born in Northumberland," he said, "about five-and-fifty years ago. My father was a grocer and had 1,000*l.* worth of freehold property besides his business, which was very large for a

small town; his was the principal shop, and in the general line. He had a cart of his own, in which he attended market. I was very comfortably brought up, never wanted for nothing, and had my mother lived I should have had an independent fortune. At five years old, while mother was still alive, I caught the small pox. I had four sisters and one brother, and we all six had it at once; that was before the vaccination was properly established. I've heard said that father did not want to have us inoculated, because of the people coming backwards and forwards to the shop. I only wish vaccination had been in vogue then as it is now, and I shouldn't have lost my eyes. God bless the man who brought it up, I say; people doesn't know what they've got to thank him for. Well, all my sisters and brothers had not a mark upon them. It laid hold of only me. They couldn't lay a finger upon me, they was obligated to lift me up in one of my father's shirts, by holding the corners of it like a sheet. As soon as ever the pock began to decay it took away my eyes altogether. I didn't lose both my eyeballs till about twenty years after that, though my sight was gone for all but the shadow of daylight and any high colours. At sixteen years of age my left eye bursted; I suffered terribly then—oh terribly! yes, that I did. The black-and-white like all mixed together, the pock came right through the star of the eye the doctor said; and when I was five-and-twenty my other eye-ball bursted, and then my eyes was quite out of my head. Till that time I could see a little bit; I could tell the daylight, and I could see the moon, but not the shape of it. I never could see a star, and do you know I grieved about the loss of that little bit of sight as much as if I was losing the whole of it. As my eye-ball sloughed day by day, I could see the light going away by little, every day till the week's end. When I looked at the daylight just before it all went, I could see the light look as red as fire—as red as blood; and when it all left me, oh, I was dreadful sorrowful, I thought I was lost altogether. But, I shouldn't have been so had off, as I said, if mother had lived, but she died when I was about six year old. I didn't care much about her, indeed I took a dreadful dislike to her. I heard her say one day to a person in the shop, that she would sooner see me dead and buried than be as I was, but now I know that it was her fondness for me. Mother caught a cold, and died after six day's illness. When she was gone, father got to neglect his business. He had no one then to attend to it, and he took and shut up the shop. He lost heart, you see. He took and turned all the tenants out of his property, and furnished all the rooms of a large house suitable for the quality that used to come to the town to bathe. He mortgaged the place for 250*l.* to buy the furniture, and that was the ruin of him. Eighteen years afterwards the lawyers got the better of him, and all the family was turned out of the door without a penny. My father they'd put in jail before. He died a few years afterwards in the workhouse. When the family was turned

out, there was only my eldest brother away at sea, and my eldest sister in service; so me and my three sisters was sent in the wide world without the means of getting a crust or a place to put our heads in. All my sisters after that got into service, and I went to drive some coal carts at North Shields. The coal carts was father's, and they was all he had left out of his property; so I used to go to Wall's End and fill the carts, then take them down to North Shields and sell them at the people's doors. We never used to sell less than the load. I did all this, blind as I was, without a person to guide, and continued at it night and day for about fifteen year. It was well known to the whole country side. I was the talk for miles round. They couldn't believe I was blind; though they see my eyes was gone, still they couldn't hardly believe. Then, after the fifteen year, me and my father had a complete fall out. He took an advantage of my sister. He had borrowed 20*l.* of her, and when he could he wouldn't pay her. He behaved as bad as father could, and then I broke with him." (He then went over the whole story, and was affected, even to speechlessness, at the remembrance of his family troubles. Into these there is no necessity to enter here; suffice it, the blind man appears to have behaved very nobly.) "I came away and went to my brother, who was well off at Hull; when I got there, I found he had gone to Russia and died there that very spring. While I was on my way to Hull, I used to go to sleep at the lodging-houses for travellers. I had never been in one before, and there I got to think, from what I heard, that a roving life was a fine pleasant one. The very first lodging-house I went into was one in Durham, and there persons as was coming the same road persuaded me to go and beg with them, but I couldn't cheek it; it was too near hand at home. We came on to Darlington, that was 18 miles further, that day. They still kept company with me, and wanted me to beg, but I wouldn't; I couldn't face it. I thought people would know me. The next day we started on our way to Northallerton, and then my few shillings was all gone; so that night we went to seek relief, and got a pennyworth of milk, and a penny loaf each and our bed. The parish gave us a ticket to a lodging-house. The next morning we started from Northallerton, and then I was very hungry; all I had the day before was the pennyworth of bread I got from the parish. Then as we got about a mile out of the town, there was a row of houses, and the Scotchman who was with me says, 'If ye'll gang up wi' me, I'll speak for ye.' Well, we went up and got 3*d.*, and plenty of bread and butter; almost every house we got something at; then I was highly delighted; thinks I, this is a business—and so I did. We shared with the other man who had come on the road with us, and after that we started once more, and then I was all eager to go on with the same business. You see I'd never had no pleasure, and it seemed to me like a new world—to be able to get victuals without doing anything—instead of slaving as I'd been with a couple

of carts and horses at the coal-pits all the time. I didn't think the country was half so big, and you couldn't credit the pleasure I felt in going about it. I felt as if I didn't care for nothing; it was so beautiful to be away there quite free, without any care in the world, for I could see plainly I could always get the best of victuals, and the price of my lodgings. There's no part in all England like Yorkshire for living. We used to go to all the farm-houses, we wouldn't miss one if it was half a mile off the road; if the Scotchman who was with me could only see a road he'd take me up it, and we got nice bits of pie and meat, and bread and cake, indeed as much as would serve four people, when we got to the lodging-house at night and a few shillings beside. I soon got not to care about the loss of my brother. At last we got to make so much money that I thought it was made to chuck about the streets. We got it so easy, you see. It was only 4*s.* or 5*s.*, but then I was only a flatty or I could have made 14*s.* or 15*s.* at least. This was in Borough-bridge, and there at a place called, I think, Bridely-hill, there was a lodging-house without never a bed in it at all; but only straw littered on the ground, and here I found upwards of sixty or seventy, all tramps, and living in different ways, pattering, and thieving, and singing, and all sorts; and that night I got to think it was the finest scene I had ever known. I grew pleaser, and pleaser, with the life, and wondered how any one could follow any other. There was no drunkenness, but it was so new and strange, and I'd never known nothing of life before, that I was bewildered, like, with over-joy at it. Then I soon got to think I'd have the summer's pleasure out and wouldn't go near Hull till the back end of the year, for it was the month of May, that what I'm talking about took place; and so things went on I never thought of home, or sisters, or anything indeed. I was so over-joyed that I could think of nothing else. Whenever I got to a new county it seemed like getting into a new nation, and when I heard we were close upon a new place I used to long and long to get into it. At last I left the Scotchman and took up with an old sailor, a man-of-warsman, who was coming up to London to get his pension, and he was a regular 'cadger' like the other who had put me 'fly to the dodge,' though none of us wer'n't 'fly' to nothing then. I can't tell you, I wanted to, how I longed to be in town, and, as I came through the streets with him, I didn't know whether I carried the streets or they carried me. You see I had heard people talk about London in North Shields, and I thought there was no poor people there at all—none but ladies and gentlemen and sailors. In London the sailor drew his pension, and he and me got robbed, and then the sailor left me, and then I started off without a penny into the country; and at Stratford-le-Bow I began, for the first time, to say, 'Pity the poor blind.' Up to this time I had never axed no one—never spoke, indeed—the cadgers who had been with me had done this for me, and glad to have the chance of sharing with me. A blind man can get a guide at any place, because they know

he's sure to get something. I took only 5*d.* at Stratford-le-Bow, and then started on my way to Romford; and there, in the lodging-house, I met a blind man, who took me in partnership with him, and larnt me my business complete—that he just did, and since then I've been following it, and that's about two or three and twenty year ago. Since I've been in London, and that's fourteen year, I've lived very regular, always had a place, and attended my church. If it hadn't been for the lodging-houses I should never, may be, have been as I am; though, I must confess, I always had a desire to find out travelling, but couldn't get hold of any one to put me in the way of it. I longed for a roving life and to shake a loose leg, still I couldn't have done much else after my quarrel with my father. My sister had offered to lend me money enough to buy a horse and cart for myself, but I didn't like that, and thought I'd get it of my brother at Hull; and that and the padding kens is solely the cause of my being as I am; and since I first travelled there's more now than ever—double and treble as many."

#### OF THE LOW LODGING-HOUSES.

THE revelations of the Blind Boot-Lace Seller concerning the low lodging-houses make me anxious to arouse the public to a full sense of the atrocities committed and countenanced in those infamous places. It will have been noticed that the blind man frankly tells us that he was "taught his business" as a mendicant in one of these houses of call for vagabonds of all kinds—beggars, prostitutes, cheats, and thieves. Up to the time of his starting to see his brother at Hull, he appears to have had no notion of living but by his labour, and, more especially, no wish to make a trade of his affliction. Till then he seems to have been susceptible of some of the nobler impulses of humanity, and to have left his home solely because he refused to be party to a fraud on his own sister. Unfortunately, however, on his way to carry out his generous purposes, he put up for the night at the "travellers'" house in the town where he arrived, at the end of his first day's journey; from the very minute that he set foot in the place he was a lost man. Here were assembled scores of the most degraded and vicious members of society, lying in ambush, as it were, like tigers in the jungle, ready to spring upon and make a prey of any one who came within the precincts of their lair. To such as these—sworn to live on the labours of others, and knowing almost to a sixpence the value of each human affliction as a means of operating upon both the heart-strings and the purse-strings of the more benevolent of the industrious or the affluent—to such as these, I say, a blind man, unskilled in the art and system of mendicancy, was literally a God-send. A shipwreck or a colliery explosion, as they too well knew, some of the more sceptical of the public might call in question, but a real blind man, with his eye-balls gone, was beyond all doubt; and to inspire faith, as they were perfectly aware, was one of the most important and difficult processes of the beggar's craft. Besides, of

all misfortunes, blindness is one which, to those who have their sight, appears not only the greatest of human privations, but a privation which wholly precludes the possibility of self-help, and so gives the sufferer the strongest claim on our charity. In such a place, therefore, as a low lodging-house, the common resort of all who are resolved not to work for their living, it was almost impossible for a blind man to pass even an hour without every virtuous principle of his nature being undermined, and overtures of the most tempting character being made to him. To be allowed to go partners in so valuable a misfortune was a privilege that many there would strive for; accordingly, as we have seen, the day after the blind man entered the low lodging-house, he who, up to that time, had been, even in his affliction, earning his living, was taken out by one of the "travellers," and taught how much better a living—how much more of the good things of this world—he could get by mendicancy than by industry; and from the very hour when the blind man learnt this, the most dangerous lesson that any human being can possibly be taught, he became, heart and soul, an ingrained beggar. His description of the delight he felt when he found that he had no longer any need to work—that he could rove about the country as he pleased—without a care, without a purpose—with a perfect sense of freedom, and a full enjoyment of the open air in the day, and the wild licence of the lodging-house society at night, satisfied that he could get as much food and drink, and even money as he needed, solely for the asking for it; his description of this is a frank confession of a few of the charms of vagabondism—charms to which the more sedate are not only strangers, but of which they can form no adequate conception. The pleasure of "shaking a loose leg," as the vagrants themselves call it, is, perhaps, known only in its intensity by those wayward spirits who object to the restraint of work or the irksomeness of any settled pursuit. The perfect *thoughtlessness* that the blind man describes as the first effect produced upon him by his vagabondism is the more remarkable, because it seems to have effaced from his mind all regard, even for the sister for whose sake he had quitted his home—though to those who have made a study of the vagrant character it is one of those curious inconsistencies which form the principal feature in the idiosyncrasy of the class, and which, indeed, are a necessary consequence of the very purposelessness, or want of some permanent principle or feeling, which constitutes, as it were, the mainspring of vagabondism. Indeed, the blind man was a strange compound of cunning and good feeling; at one moment he was weeping over the afflictions of others—he was deeply moved when I read to him the sufferings of the Crippled Nutmeg-Grater Seller; and yet, the next minute he was grinning behind his hand, so that his laughter might be concealed from me, in a manner that appeared almost fiendish. Still, I am convinced that at heart he was far from a bad man; there was, amid the degradation that necessarily comes of habitual

mendicancy, a fine expression of sympathy, that the better class of poor always exhibit towards the poor; nor could I help wondering when I heard *him*—the professed mendicant—tell me how he had been moved to tears by the recital of the sufferings of another mendicant—sufferings that might have been as profitable a stock in trade to the one as his blindness was to the other; though it is by no means unusual for objects of charity to have *their* objects of charity, and to be imposed upon by fictitious or exaggerated tales of distress, almost as often as they impose upon others by the very same means.

I now invite the reader's attention to the narratives given below as to the character of the low lodging-houses. The individuals furnishing me with those statements, it should be observed, were not "picked" people, but taken promiscuously from a number belonging to the same class. I shall reserve what else I may have to remark on the subject till the conclusion of those statements.

Prisons, tread-mills, penal settlements, gallows, I said, eighteen months ago, in the 'Morning Chronicle,' are all vain and impotent as punishments—and Ragged Schools and City missions are of no avail as preventives of crime—so long as the wretched dens of infamy, brutality, and vice, termed "padding-kens" continue their daily and nightly work of demoralization. If we would check the further spread of our criminals—and within the last four years they have increased from 24,000 to 30,000—we must apply ourselves to the better regulation and conduct of these places. At present they are not only the preparatory schools, but the finishing academies for every kind of profligacy and crime.

"The system of lodging-houses for travellers, otherwise tramps," says the Constabulary Commissioners' Report, "requires to be altogether revised; at present they are in the practice of lodging all the worst characters unquestioned, and are subject to no other control than an occasional visit of inspection from the parish officers, accompanied by the constables, whose power of interference—if they have a legal right of entry—does not extend to some of the most objectionable points connected with those houses, as they can merely take into custody such persons as they find in commission of some offence. The state in which those houses are found on the occasion of such visit, proves how much they require interference. The houses are small, and yet as many as thirty travellers, or even thirty-five, have been found in one house; fifteen have been found sleeping in one room, three or four in a bed—men, women, and children, promiscuously; beds have been found occupied in a cellar. It is not necessary to urge the many opportunities of preparing for crime which such a state of things presents, or the actual evils arising from such a mode of harbouring crowds of low and vicious persons."

According to the report of the Constabulary Commissioners, there were in 1839—

|                                   | Mendicants'<br>Lodging-<br>houses. | Total No.<br>of<br>Lodgers. Inmates. |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| In London .....                   | 221                                | average 11 or 2,431                  |
| In Liverpool .....                | 176                                | 6                                    |
| Bristol .....                     | 69                                 | 1,056                                |
| Bath .....                        | 14                                 | 493                                  |
| Kingston-on-Hull .....            | 11                                 | 7                                    |
| Newcastle-on-Tyne .....           | 78                                 | 9                                    |
| Chester (see Report, p. 35) ..... | 159                                | 126                                  |
|                                   |                                    | 33                                   |
|                                   |                                    | 294                                  |
|                                   |                                    | 459                                  |
|                                   | 619                                | 4,813                                |

Moreover, the same Report tells us, at p. 32,

that there is a low lodging-house for tramps in every village. By the Post-office Directory there are 3823 postal towns in England and Wales; and assuming that in each of these towns there are two "travellers'" houses, and that each of these, upon an average, harbours every night ten tramps (in a list given at p. 311, there were in 83 towns no less than 678 low lodging-houses, receiving 10,860 lodgers every night; this gives, on an average, 8 such houses to each town, and 16 lodgers to each such house), we have thus 76,460 for the total number of the inmates of such houses.

To show the actual state of these lodging-houses from the testimony of one who had been long resident in them, I give the following statement. It was made to me by a man of superior education and intelligence (as the tone of his narrative fully shows), whom circumstances, which do not affect the object of my present letter, and therefore need not be detailed, had reduced from affluence to beggary, so that he was compelled to be a constant resident in those places. All the other statements that I obtained on the subject—and they were numerous—were corroborative of his account to the very letter:—

"I have been familiar, unfortunately for me, with low lodging-houses, both in town and country, for more than ten years. I consider that, as to the conduct of those places, it is worse in London than in the country—while in the country the character of the keeper is worse than in London, although but a small difference can be noted. The worst I am acquainted with, though I haven't been in it lately, is in the neighbourhood of Drury-lane—this is the worst both for filth and for the character of the lodgers. In the room where I slept, which was like a barn in size, the tiles were off the roof, and as there was no ceiling, I could see the blue sky from where I lay. That may be altered now. Here I slept in what was called the single men's room, and it was confined to men. In another part of the house was a room for married couples, as it was called, but of such apartments I can tell you more concerning other houses. For the bed with the view of the blue sky I paid 3d. If it rained there was no shelter. I have slept in a room in Brick-lane, Whitechapel, in which were fourteen beds. In the next bed to me, on the one side, was a man, his wife, and three children, and a man and his wife on the other. They were Irish people, and I believe the women were the men's wives—as the Irish women generally are. Of all the women that resort to these places the Irish are far the best for chastity. All the beds were occupied, single men being mixed with the married couples. The question is never asked, when a man and woman go to a lodging-house, if they are man and wife. All must pay before they go to bed, or be turned into the street. These beds were made—as all the low lodging-house beds are—of the worst cotton floes stuffed in coarse, strong canvas. There is a pair of sheets, a blanket, and a rug. I have known the bedding to be unchanged for three months; but that is not general. The beds are an

average size. Dirt is the rule with them, and cleanliness the exception. They are all infested with vermin. I never met with an exception. No one is required to wash before going to bed in any of these places (except at a very few, where a very dirty fellow would not be admitted), unless he has been walking on a wet day without shoes or stockings, and then he must bathe his feet. The people who slept in the room I am describing were chiefly young men, almost all accompanied by young females. I have seen girls of fifteen sleep with 'their chaps'—in some places with youths of from sixteen to twenty. There is no objection to any boy and girl occupying a bed, even though the keeper knows they were previously strangers to each other. The accommodation for purposes of decency is very bad in some places. A pail in the middle of a room, to which both sexes may resort, is a frequent arrangement. No delicacy or decency is ever observed. The women are, I think, worse than the men. If any one, possessing a sense of shame, says a word of rebuke, he is at once assailed, by the women in particular, with the coarsest words in the language. The Irish women are as bad as the others with respect to language, but I have known them keep themselves covered in bed when the other women were outraging modesty or decency. The Irish will sleep anywhere to save a halfpenny a night, if they have ever so much money." [Here he stated certain gross acts common to lodging-houses, which cannot be detailed in print.] "It is not uncommon for a boy or man to take a girl out of the streets to these apartments. Some are the same as common brothels, women being taken in at all hours of the day or night. In most, however, they must stay all night as a married couple. In dressing or undressing there is no regard to decency, while disgusting blackguardism is often carried on in the conversation of the inmates. I have known decent people, those that are driven to such places from destitution, perhaps for the first time, shocked and disgusted at what they saw. I have seen a decent married pair so shocked and disgusted that they have insisted on leaving the place, and have left it. A great number of the lodging-houses are large old buildings, which were constructed for other purposes; these houses are not so ill-ventilated, but even there, where so many sleep in one room, the air is hot and foul. In smaller rooms, say twelve feet by nine, I have seen four beds placed for single men, with no ventilation whatsoever, so that no one could remain inside in warmish weather, without every door and window open; another room in the same house, a little larger, had four double beds, with as many men and women, and perhaps with children. The Board of Health last autumn compelled the keepers of these places to whitewash the walls and ceilings, and use limewash in other places; before that, the walls and ceilings looked as if they had been blackwashed, but still you could see the bugs creeping along those black walls, which were not black enough to hide that. In some houses in the summer you can hardly place your finger on a part of the wall

free from bugs. I have scraped them off by hand-fulls.

"Nothing can be worse to the health than these places, without ventilation, cleanliness, or decency, and with forty people's breaths perhaps mingling together in one foul choking steam of stench. [The man's own words.] They are the ready resort of thieves and all bad characters, and the keepers will hide them if they can from the police, or facilitate any criminal's escape. I never knew the keepers give any offender up, even when rewards were offered. If they did, they might shut up shop. These houses are but receptacles, with a few exceptions, for beggars, thieves, and prostitutes, and those *in training* for thieves and prostitutes—the exceptions are those who *must* lodge at the lowest possible cost. I consider them in every respect of the worst possible character, and think that immediate means should be adopted to improve them. Fights, and fierce fights too, are frequent in them, and I have often been afraid murder would be done. They are money-making places, very. One person will own several—as many as a dozen. In each house he has one or more 'deputies,' chiefly men. Some of these keepers are called respectable men; some live out in the country, leaving all to deputies. They are quite a separate class from the keepers of regular brothels. In one house that I know they can accommodate eighty single men; and when single men only are admitted, what is decent, or rather what is considered decent in such places, is less unrequited. Each man in such houses pays 4d. a night, a bed to each man or boy; that is 26s. 8d. nightly, or 486l. 13s. 4d. a year, provided the beds be full every night—and they are full six nights out of seven. Besides that, some of the beds supply double turns; for many get up at two to go to Covent-garden or some other market, and their beds are then let a second time to other men; so that more than eighty are frequently accommodated, and I suppose 500l. is the nearest sum to be taken for an accurate return. The rent is very trifling; the chief expense to be deducted from the profits of the house in question is the payment of three and sometimes four deputies, receiving from 7s. to 12s. a week each—say an average of from 30s. to 40s. a week—as three or four are employed. Fire (coke being only used) and gas are the other expenses. The washing is a mere trifle. Then there are the parochial and the water-rates. The rent is always low, as the houses are useable for nothing but such lodgings. The profits of the one house I have described cannot be less than 300l. a year, and the others are in proportion. Now, the owner of this house has, I believe, 10 more such houses, which, letting only threepenny beds (some are lower than that), may realise a profit of about 200l. a year each. These altogether yield a clear profit of 2300l. for the eleven of them; but on how much vice and disease that 2300l. has been raised is a question beyond a schoolmaster. The missionaries visit these lodging-houses, but, judging from what I have heard said by the inmates in all of them, when the missionaries have left, scarcely any

good effect has resulted from the visits. *I never saw a clergyman of any denomination in any one of these places, either in town or country.* In London the master or deputy of the low lodging-house does not generally meddle with the disposal of stolen property, as in the country. This is talked about, alike in the town and country houses, very openly and freely before persons known only to be beggars, and never stealing: it is sufficient that they are known as tramps. In London the keepers must all know that stolen property is nightly brought into the house, and they wink at its disposal, but they won't mix themselves up with disposing of it. If it be provisions that have been stolen, they are readily disposed of to the other inmates, and the owner or deputy of the house may know nothing about it, and certainly would not care to interfere if he did. I never heard robberies planned there, but there are generally strangers present, and this may deter. I believe more robberies are planned in low coffee-shops than in lodging-houses. The influence of the lodging-house society on boys who have run away from their parents, and have got thither, either separately or in company with lads who have joined them in the streets, is this:—Boys there, after paying their lodgings, may exercise the same freedom from every restraint as they see the persons of maturer years enjoy. This is often pleasant to a boy, especially if he has been severely treated by his parents or master; he apes, and often outdoes, all the men's ways, both in swearing and lewd talk, and so he gets a relish for that sort of life. After he has resorted to such places—the sharper boys for three, and the duller for six months—they are adepts at any thieving or vice. Drunkenness, and even moderate drinking, is very rare among them. I seldom or never see the boys drink—indeed, thieves of all ages are generally sober men. Once get to like a lodging-house life, and a boy can hardly be got out of it. I said the other day to a youth, 'I wish I could get out of these haunts and never see a lodging-house again;' and he replied, 'If I had ever so much money I would never live anywhere else.' I have seen the boys in a lodging-house sit together telling stories, but paid no attention to them."

#### STATEMENT OF A YOUNG PICKPOCKET.

To show the class of characters usually frequenting these lodging-houses, I will now give the statement of a boy—a young pickpocket—without shoes or stockings. He wore a ragged, dirty, and very thin great coat, of some dark jean or linen, under which was another thin coat, so arranged that what appeared rents—and, indeed, were rents, but designedly made—in the outer garment, were slits through which the hand readily reached the pockets of the inner garment, and could there deposit any booty. He was a slim, agile lad, with a sharp but not vulgar expression, and small features. His hands were of singular delicacy and beauty. His fingers were very long, and no lady's could have been more taper. A burglar told me that with such a hand he ought to have made his

fortune. He was worth 20*l.* a week, he said, as a "wire," that is, a picker of ladies' pockets. When engaged "for a turn," as he told me he once was by an old pickpocket, the man looked minutely at his fingers, and approved of them highly. His hands, the boy said, were hardly serviceable to him when very cold. His feet were formed in the same symmetrical and beautiful mould as his hands. "I am 15," he said. "My father was a potter, and I can't recollect my mother" (many of the thieves are orphans or motherless). "My father has been dead about five years. I was then working at the pottery in High-street, Lambeth, earning about 4*s.* a week; in good weeks, 4*s.* 6*d.* I was in work eight months after my father died; but one day I broke three bottles by accident, and the foreman said 'I shan't want you any more;' and I took that as meant for a discharge; but I found afterwards that he didn't so mean it. I had 2*s.* and a suit of clothes then, and tried for work at all the potteries; but I couldn't get any. It was about the time Smithfield fair was on. I went, but it was a very poor concern. I fell asleep in a pen in the afternoon, and had my shoes stolen off my feet. When I woke up, I began crying. A fellow named Gyp then came along (I knew his name afterwards), and he said, 'What are you crying for?' and I told him, and he said, 'Pull off your stockings, and come with me, and I'll show you where to sleep.' So I did, and he took me to St. Olave's workhouse, having first sold my stockings. I had never stolen anything until then. There I slept in the casual ward, and Gyp slept there too. In the morning we started together for Smithfield, where he said he had a job to sweep the pens, but he couldn't sweep them without pulling off his coat, and it would look so queer if he hadn't a shirt—and he hadn't one. He promised to teach me how to make a living in the country if I would lend him mine, and I was persuaded—for I was an innocent lad then—and went up a gateway and stripped off my shirt and gave it to him, and soon after he went into a public-house to get half a pint of beer; he went in at one door and out at another, and I didn't see him for six months afterwards. That afternoon I went into Billingsgate market and met some boys, and one said, 'Mate, how long have you been knocking about; where did you doss?' I didn't know what they meant, and when they'd told me they meant where did I sleep? I told them how I'd been served. And they said, 'Oh! you must expect that, until you learn something,' and they laughed. They all know'd Gyp; he was like the head of a Billingsgate gang once. I became a pal with these boys at Billingsgate, and we went about stealing fish and meat. Some boys have made 2*s.* in a morning, when fish is dear—those that had pluck and luck; they sold it at half-price. Billingsgate market is a good place to sell it; plenty of costermongers are there who will buy it, rather than of the salesmen. I soon grew as bad as the rest at this work. At first I sold it to other boys, who would get 3*d.* for what they bought at 1*d.* Now they can't do me. If I can get a thing

cheap where I lodge, and have the money, and can sell it dear, that's the chance. I carried on this fish rig for about two years, and went begging a little, too. I used to try a little thieving sometimes in Petticoat-lane. They say the 'fliest' is easy to take in sometimes—that's the artfullest; but I could do no good there. At these two years' end, I was often as happy as could be; that is, when I had made money. Then I met B—, whom I had often heard of as an uncommon clever pickpocket; he could do it about as well as I can now, so as people won't feel it. Three of his mates were transported for stealing silver plate. He and I became pals, and started for the country with 1*d.* We went through Foot's Cray, and passed a farm where a man's buried at the top of a house; there's something about money while a man's above ground; I don't understand it, but it's something like that. A baker, about thirty miles from London, offended us about some bread; and B— said 'I'll serve him out.' We watched him out, and B— tried at his pocket, saying, 'I'll show you how to do a handkerchief;' but the baker looked round, and B— stopped; and just after that I flared it (whisked the handkerchief out); and that's the first I did. It brought 1*s.* 3*d.* We travelled across country, and got to Maidstone, and did two handkerchiefs. One I wore round my neck, and the other the lodging-housekeeper pawned for us for 1*s.* 6*d.* In Maidstone, next morning, I was nailed, and had three months of it. I didn't mind it so much then, but Maidstone's far worse now, I've heard. I have been in prison three times in Brixton, three times in the Old Horse (Bridewell), three times in the Compter, once in the Steel, and once in Maidstone—thirteen times in all, including twice I was remanded, and got off; but I don't reckon that prison. Every time I came out harder than I went in. I've had four floggings; it was bad enough—a flogging was—while it lasted; but when I got out I soon forgot it. At a week's end I never thought again about it. If I had been better treated I should have been a better lad. I could leave off thieving now as if I had never thieved, if I could live without." [I am inclined to doubt this part of the statement.] "I have carried on this sort of life until now. I didn't often make a very good thing of it. I saw Manning and his wife hung. Mrs. Manning was dressed beautiful when she came up. She screeched when Jack Ketch pulled the bolt away. She was harder than Manning, they all said; without her there would have been no murder. It was a great deal talked about, and Manning was pitied. It was a punishment to her to come on the scaffold and see Manning with the rope about his neck, if people takes it in the right light. I did 4*s.* 6*d.* at the hanging—two handkerchiefs, and a purse with 2*s.* in it—the best purse I ever had; but I've only done three or four purses. The reason is, because I've never been well dressed. If I went near a lady, she would say, 'Tush, tush, you ragged fellow!' and would shrink away. But I would rather rob the rich than the poor; they miss it less. But 1*s.* honest goes further than 5*s.* stolen. Some call that only a saying, but it's true. All

the money I got soon went—most of it a-gambling. Picking pockets, when any one comes to think on it, is the daringest thing that a boy can do. It didn't in the least frighten me to see Manning and Mrs. Manning hanged. I never thought I should come to the gallows, and I never shall—I'm not high-tempered enough for that. The only thing that frightens me when I'm in prison is sleeping in a cell by myself—you do in the Old Horse and the Steel—because I think things may appear. You can't imagine how one dreams when in trouble. I've often started up in a fright from a dream. I don't know what might appear. I've heard people talk about ghosts and that. Once, in the County, a tin had been left under a tap that went drip—drip—drip. And all in the ward were shocking frightened; and weren't we glad when we found out what it was! Boys tell stories about haunted castles, and cats that are devils; and that frightens one. At the fire in Monument-yard I did 5*s.* 7*d.*—3*s.* in silver and 2*s.* 3*d.* in handkerchiefs, and 4*d.* for three pairs of gloves. I sell my handkerchiefs in the Lane (Petticoat-lane). I carry on this trade still. Most times I've got in prison is when I've been desperate from hunger, and have said to B—, 'Now I'll have money, nailed or not nailed.' I can pick a woman's pocket as easy as a man's, though you wouldn't think it. If one's in prison for begging, one's laughed at. The others say, 'Begging! Oh, you cadger!' So a boy is partly forced to steal for his character. I've lived a good deal in lodging-houses, and know the ways of them. They are very bad places for a boy to be in. Where I am now, when the place is full, there's upwards of 100 can be accommodated. I won't be there long. I'll do something to get out of it. There's people there will rob their own brother. There's people there talk backward—for one they say *eno*, for two *out*, for three *erht*, for four *ruof*, for five *evif*, for six *exis*. I don't know any higher. I can neither read nor write. In this lodging-house there are no women. They talk there chiefly about what they've done, or are going to do, or have set their minds upon, just as you and any other gentlemen might do. I have been in lodging-houses in Mint-street and Kent-street, where men and women and children all slept in one room. I think the men and women who slept together were generally married, or lived together; but it's not right for a big boy to sleep in the same room. Young men have had beds to themselves, and so have young women there; but there's a deputy comes into the room, every now and then, to see there's nothing wrong. There's little said in these places, the people are generally so tired. Where I am there's horrid language—swearing, and everything that's bad. They are to be pitied, because there's not work for honest people, let alone thieves. In the lodging-houses the air is very bad, enough to stifle one in bed—so many breaths together. Without such places my trade couldn't be carried on; I couldn't live. Some though would find another way out. Three or four would take a room among them. Anybody's money's good—you can always get a room. I would be glad to leave this life, and

work at a pottery. As to sea, a bad captain would make me run away—sure. He can do what he likes with you when you're out at sea. I don't get more than 2s. a week, one week with the other, by thieving; some days you do nothing until hunger makes your spirits rise. I can't thieve on a full belly. I live on 2s. a week from thieving, because I understand fiddling—that means, buying a thing for a mere trifle, and selling it for double, or for more, if you're not taken in yourself. I've been put up to a few tricks in lodging-houses; and now I can put others up to it. Everybody must look after themselves, and I can't say I was very sorry when I stole that 2s. from a poor woman, but I'd rather have had 1s. 6d. from a rich one. I never drink—eating's my part. I spend chief part of my money in pudding. I don't like living in lodging-houses, but I must like it as I'm placed now—that sort of living, and those lodging-houses, or starving. They bring tracts to the lodging-houses—pipes are lighted with them; tracts won't fill your belly. Tracts is no good, except to a person that has a home; at the lodging-houses they're laughed at. They seldom are mentioned. I've heard some of them read by missionaries, but can't catch anything from them. If it had been anything bad, I should have caught it readily. If an innocent boy gets into a lodging-house, he'll not be innocent long—he can't. I know three boys who have run away, and are in the lodging-houses still, but I hope their father has caught them. Last night a little boy came to the lodging-house where I was. We all thought he had run away, by the way he spoke. He stayed all night, but was found out in two or three falsehoods. I wanted to get him back home, or he'll be as bad as I am in time, though he's nothing to me; but I couldn't find him this morning; but I'll get him home yet, perhaps. The Jews in Petticoat-lane are terrible rogues. They'll buy anything of you—they'll buy what you've stolen from their next-door neighbours—that they would, if they knew it. But they'll give you very little for it, and they threaten to give you up if you won't take a quarter of the value of it. 'Oh! I shee you do it,' they say, 'and I like to shee him robbed, but you musht take vot I give.' I wouldn't mind what harm came to those Petticoat-laners. Many of them are worth thousands, though you wouldn't think it." After this I asked him what he, as a sharp lad, thought was the cause of so many boys becoming vagrant pickpockets? He answered, "Why, sir, if boys runs away, and has to shelter in low lodging-houses—and many runs away from cruel treatment at home—they meet there with boys such as me, or as bad, and the devil soon lays his hand on them. If there wasn't so many lodging-houses there wouldn't be so many bad boys—there couldn't. Lately a boy came down to Billingsgate, and said he wouldn't stay at home to be knocked about any longer. He said it to some boys like me; and he was asked if he could get anything from his mother, and he said 'yes, he could.' So he went back, and brought a brooch and some other things with him to a

place fixed on, and then he and some of the boys set off for the country; and that's the way boys is trapped. I think the fathers of such boys either ill-treat them, or neglect them; and so they run away. My father used to beat me shocking; so I hated home. I stood hard licking well, and was called 'the plucked one.' This boy first stole flowers, garrants, and gooseberries out of the clergyman's garden, more by way of bravado, and to ensure the approbation of his comrades, than for anything else. He answered readily to my inquiry, as to what he thought would become of him?—"Transportation. If a boy has great luck he may carry on for eight years. Three or four years is the common run, but transportation is what he's sure to come to in the end." This lad picked my pocket at my request, and so dexterously did he do his "work," that though I was alive to what he was trying to do, it was impossible for me to detect the least movement of my coat. To see him pick the pockets, as he did, of some of the gentlemen who were present on the occasion, was a curious sight. He crept behind much like a cat with his claws out, and while in the act held his breath with suspense; but immediately the handkerchief was safe in his hand, the change in the expression of his countenance was most marked. He then seemed almost to be convulsed with delight at the success of his perilous adventure, and, turning his back, held up the handkerchief to discover the value of his prize, with intense glee evident in every feature.

#### STATEMENT OF A PROSTITUTE.

THE narrative which follows—that of a prostitute, sleeping in the low-lodging houses, where boys and girls are all huddled promiscuously together, discloses a system of depravity, atrocity, and enormity, which certainly cannot be paralleled in any nation, however barbarous, nor in any age, however "dark." The facts detailed, it will be seen, are gross enough to make us all blush for the land in which such scenes can be daily perpetrated. The circumstances, which it is impossible to publish, are of the most loathsome and revolting nature.

A good-looking girl of sixteen gave me the following awful statement:—

"I am an orphan. When I was ten I was sent to service as maid of all-work, in a small tradesman's family. It was a hard place, and my mistress used me very cruelly, beating me often. When I had been in place three weeks, my mother died; my father having died twelve years before. I stood my mistress's ill-treatment for about six months. She beat me with sticks as well as with her hands. I was black and blue, and at last I ran away. I got to Mrs. —, a low lodging-house. I didn't know before that there was such a place. I heard of it from some girls at the Glasshouse (baths and washhouses), where I went for shelter. I went with them to have a halfpenny worth of coffee, and they took me to the lodging-house. I then had three shillings, and stayed about a month, and did nothing wrong, living on

the three shillings and what I pawned my clothes for, as I got some pretty good things away with me. In the lodging-house I saw nothing but what was bad, and heard nothing but what was bad. I was laughed at, and was told to swear. They said, 'Look at her for a d— modest fool'—sometimes worse than that, until by degrees I got to be as bad as they were. During this time I used to see boys and girls from ten and twelve years old sleeping together, but understood nothing wrong. I had never heard of such places before I ran away. I can neither read nor write. My mother was a good woman, and I wish I'd had her to run away to. I saw things between almost children that I can't describe to you—very often I saw them, and that shocked me. At the month's end, when I was beat out, I met with a young man of fifteen—I myself was going on to twelve years old—and he persuaded me to take up with him. I stayed with him three months in the same lodging-house, living with him as his wife, though we were mere children, and being true to him. At the three months' end he was taken up for picking pockets, and got six months. I was sorry, for he was kind to me; though I was made ill through him; so I broke some windows in St. Paul's-churchyard to get into prison to get cured. I had a month in the Compter, and came out well. I was scolded very much in the Compter, on account of the state I was in, being so young. I had 2s. 6d. given to me when I came out, and was forced to go into the streets for a living. I continued walking the streets for three years, sometimes making a good deal of money, sometimes none, feasting one day and starving the next. The bigger girls could persuade me to do anything they liked with my money. I was never happy all the time, but I could get no character and could not get out of the life. I lodged all this time at a lodging-house in Kent-street. They were all thieves and bad girls. I have known between three and four dozen boys and girls sleep in one room. The beds were horrid filthy and full of vermin. There was very wicked carryings on. The boys, if any difference, was the worst. We lay packed on a full night, a dozen boys and girls squeezed into one bed. That was very often the case—some at the foot and some at the top—boys and girls all mixed. I can't go into all the particulars, but whatever could take place in words or acts between boys and girls did take place, and in the midst of the others. I am sorry to say I took part in these bad ways myself, but I wasn't so bad as some of the others. There was only a candle burning all night, but in summer it was light great part of the night. Some boys and girls slept without any clothes, and would dance about the room that way. I have seen them, and, wicked as I was, felt ashamed. I have seen two dozen capering about the room that way; some mere children, the boys generally the youngest. \* \* \* \* \* There were no men or women present. There were often fights. The deputy never interfered. This is carried on just the same as ever to this day, and is the same every night. I have heard young girls shout out to one another how often they had

been obliged to go to the hospital, or the infirmary, or the workhouse. There was a great deal of boasting about what the boys and girls had stolen during the day. I have known boys and girls change their 'partners,' just for a night. At three years' end I stole a piece of beef from a butcher. I did it to get into prison. I was sick of the life I was leading, and didn't know how to get out of it. I had a month for stealing. When I got out I passed two days and a night in the streets doing nothing wrong, and then went and threatened to break Messrs. — windows again. I did that to get into prison again; for when I lay quiet of a night in prison I thought things over, and considered what a shocking life I was leading, and how my health might be ruined completely, and I thought I would stick to prison rather than go back to such a life. I got six months for threatening. When I got out I broke a lamp next morning for the same purpose, and had a fortnight. That was the last time I was in prison. I have since been leading the same life as I told you of for the three years, and lodging at the same houses, and seeing the same goings on. I hate such a life now more than ever. I am willing to do any work that I can in washing and cleaning. I can do a little at my needle. I could do hard work, for I have good health. I used to wash and clean in prison, and always behaved myself there. At the house where I am it is 3d. a night; but at Mrs. —'s it is 1d. and 2d. a night, and just the same goings on. Many a girl—nearly all of them—goes out into the streets from this penny and twopenny house, to get money for their favourite boys by prostitution. If the girl cannot get money she must steal something, or will be beaten by her 'chap' when she comes home. I have seen them beaten, often kicked and beaten until they were blind from bloodshot, and their teeth knocked out with kicks from boots as the girl lays on the ground. The boys, in their turn, are out thieving all day, and the lodging-housekeeper will buy any stolen provisions of them, and sell them to the lodgers. I never saw the police in the house. If a boy comes to the house on a night without money or sawney, or something to sell to the lodgers, a handkerchief or something of that kind, he is not admitted, but told very plainly, 'Go thieve it, then.' Girls are treated just the same. Any body may call in the daytime at this house and have a halfpennyworth of coffee and sit any length of time until evening. I have seen three dozen sitting there that way, all thieves and bad girls. There are no chairs, and only one form in front of the fire, on which a dozen can sit. The others sit on the floor all about the room, as near the fire as they can. Bad language goes on during the day, as I have told you it did during the night, and indecencies too, but nothing like so bad as at night. They talk about where there is good places to go and thieve. The missioners call sometimes, but they're laughed at often when they're talking, and always before the door's closed on them. If a decent girl goes there to get a ha'porth of coffee, seeing the board over the door, she is always shocked. Many a poor girl

has been ruined in this house since I was, and boys have boasted about it. I never knew boy or girl do good, once get used there. Get used there, indeed, and you are life-ruined. I was an only child, and haven't a friend in the world. I have heard several girls say how they would like to get out of the life, and out of the place. From those I know, I think that cruel parents and mistresses cause many to be driven there. One lodging-house keeper, Mrs. —, goes out dressed respectable, and pawns any stolen property, or sells it at public-houses."

As a corroboration of the girl's statement, a wretched-looking boy, only thirteen years of age, gave me the following additional information. He had a few rags hanging about him, and no shirt—indeed, he was hardly covered enough for purposes of decency, his skin being exposed through the rents in his jacket and trowsers. He had a stepfather, who treated him very cruelly. The stepfather and the child's mother went "across the country," begging and stealing. Before the mother died, an elder brother ran away on account of being beaten:—

"Sometimes (I give his own words) he (the stepfather) wouldn't give us a bit to eat, telling us to go and thieve for it. My brother had been a month gone (he's now a soldier in Gibraltar) when I ran away to join him. I knew where to find him, as we met sometimes. We lived by thieving, and I do still—by pulling flesh (stealing meat). I got to lodge at Mrs. —, and have been there this eight months. I can read and write a little." [This boy then confirmed what the young girl had told me of the grossest acts night by night among the boys and girls, the language, &c., and continued]—"I always sleep on the floor for 1d. and pay a ½d. besides for coke. At this lodging-house cats and kittens are melted down, sometimes twenty a day. A quart pot is a cat, and pints and half pints are kittens. A kitten (pint) brings 3d. from the rag shops, and a cat 6d. There's convenience to melt them down at the lodging-house. We can't sell clothes in the house, except any lodger wants them; and clothes nearly all goes to the Jews in Petticoat-lane. Mrs. — buys the sawney of us; so much for the lump, 2d. a pound about; she sells it again for twice what she gives, and more. Perhaps 30lb. of meat every day is sold to her. I have been in prison six times, and have had three dozen; each time I came out harder. If I left Mrs. —'s house I don't know how I could get my living. Lots of boys would get away if they could. I never drink, I don't like it. Very few of us boys drink. I don't like thieving, and often go about singing; but I can't live by singing, and I don't know how I could live honestly. If I had money enough to buy a stock of oranges I think I could be honest."

The above facts require no comment from me.

#### STATEMENT OF A BEGGAR.

A beggar decently attired, and with a simple and what some would call even a respectable look, gave me the following account:—

"I am now twenty-eight, and have known all connected with the begging trade since I was fourteen. My grandfather (mother's father) was rich, owning three parts of the accommodation houses in St. Giles's; he allowed me 2s. a week pocket-money. My grandfather kept the great house, the old Rose and Crown, in Church-lane, opposite Carver-street, best known as the 'Beggar's Opera.' When a child of seven, I have seen the place crowded—crammed with nothing but beggars, first-rates—none else used the house. The money I saw in the hands of the beggars made a great impression upon me. My father took away my mother's money. I wish my mother had run away instead. He was kind, but she was always nagging. My father was a foreman in a foundry. I got a situation in the same foundry after my father cut. Once I was sent to a bank with a cheque for 38l. to get cashed, in silver, for wages. In coming away, I met a companion of mine, and he persuaded me to bolt with the money, and go to Ashley's. The money was too much for my head to carry. I fooled all that money away. I wasn't in bed for more than a fortnight. I bought linnets in cages for the fancy of my persuader. In fact, I didn't know what use to put the money to. I was among plenty of girls. When the money was out I was destitute. I couldn't go back to my employers, and I couldn't face my mother's temper—that was worse; but for that nagging of hers I shouldn't have been as I am. She has thrashed me with a hand broom until I was silly; there's the bumps on my head still; and yet that woman would have given me her heart's blood to do me a good. As soon as I found myself quite destitute, I went wandering about the City, picking up the skins of gooseberries and orange peel to eat, to live on—things my stomach would turn at now. At last my mother came to hear that I tried to destroy myself. She paid the 38l., and my former employers got me a situation in Paddington. I was there a month, and then I met him as advised me to steal the money before—he's called the ex-king of the costermongers now. Well he was crying hareskins, and advised me again to bolt, and I went with him. My mind was bent upon costermongering and a roving life. I couldn't settle to anything. I wanted to be away when I was at work, and when I was away I wanted to be back again. It was difficult for me to stick to anything for five minutes together; it is so now. What I begin I can't finish at the time—unless it's a pot of beer. Well, in four days my adviser left me; he had no more use for me. I was a flat. He had me for a "go-along," to cry his things for him. Then, for the first time in my life, I went into a low lodging-house. There was forty men and women sleeping in one room. I had to sleep with a black man, and I slept on the floor to get away from the fellow. There were plenty of girls there; some playing cards and dominoes. It was very dirty—old Mother —, in Lawrence-lane—the Queen of Hell she was called. There was one tub among the lot of us. I felt altogether disgusted. Those who lived there were beggars, thieves, smashers, coiners,

purchasers of begged and stolen goods, and prostitutes. The youngest prostitute was twelve, and so up to fifty. The beastliest language went on. It's done to outrival one another. There I met with a man called Tom Shallow (*shallow* is cant for half-naked), and he took me out ballad-singing, and when we couldn't get on at that (the songs got dead) he left me. I made him 10s. or 12s. a day in them days, but he only gave me my lodgings and grub (but not half enough), and two pipes of tobacco a day to keep the hunger down, that I mightn't be expensive. I then listed. I was starving, and couldn't raise a lodging. I took the shilling, but was rejected by the doctor. I listed again at Chatham afterwards, but was rejected again. I stayed jobbing among the soldiers for some weeks, and then they gave me an old regimental suit, and with that I came to London. One gave me a jacket, and another a pair of military trowsers, and another a pair of old ammunition boots, and so on. About that time a batch of invalids came from Spain, where they had been under General Evans. On my way up from Chatham, I met at Gravesend with seven chaps out on 'the Spanish lurk' as they called it—that is, passing themselves off as wounded men of the Spanish Legion. Two had been out in Spain, and managed the business if questions were asked; the others were regular English beggars, who had never been out of the country. I joined them as a serjeant, as I had a serjeant's jacket given me at Chatham. On our way to London—"the school" (as the lot is called) came all together—we picked up among us 4l. and 5l. a day—no matter where we went. 'The school' all slept in lodging houses, and I at last began to feel comfortable in them. We spent our evenings in eating out-and-out suppers. Sometimes we had such things as sucking pigs, hams, mince pies—indeed we lived on the best. No nobleman could live better in them days. So much wine, too! I drank in such excess, my nose was as big as that there letter stamp; so that I got a sickening of it. We gave good victuals away that was given to us—it was a nuisance to carry them. It cost us from 6d. to 1s. a day to have our shoes cleaned by poor tramps, and for clean dickies. The clean dodge is always the best for begging upon. At Woolwich we were all on the fuddle at the Dust Hole, and our two spokesmen were drunk; and I went to beg of Major —, whose brother was then in Spain—he himself had been out previously. Meeting the major at his own house, I said, 'I was a serjeant in the 3rd Westminster Grenadiers, you know, and served under your brother.' 'Oh! yes, that's my brother's regiment,' says he. 'Where was you, then, on the 16th of October?' 'Why, sir, I was at the taking of the city of Irun,' says I—(in fact, I was at that time with the costermonger in St. Giles's, calling cabbages, 'white heart cabbages, oh!') Then said the major, 'What day was Ernani taken on?' 'Why,' said I (I was a little tipsy, and bothered at the question), 'that was the 16th of October, too.' 'Very well, my man,' says he, tapping his boots with a riding whip he held, 'I'll see what I can do for

you;' and the words were no sooner out of his mouth than he stepped up to me and gave me a regular pasting. He horsewhipped me up and down stairs, and all along the passages; my flesh was like sassage. I managed at last, however, to open the door myself, and get away. After that 'the school' came to London. In a day we used to make from 8l. to 10l. among us, by walking up Regent-street, Bond-street, Piccadilly, Pall-mall, Oxford-street, the parks—those places were the best beats. All the squares were good too. It was only like a walk out for air, and your 25s. a man for it. At night we used to go to plays, dressed like gentlemen. At first the beaks protected us, but we got found out, and the beaks grew rusty. The thing got so overdone, every beggar went out as a Spanish lurksman. Well, the beaks got up to the dodge, and all the Spanish lurksmen in their turns got to work the universal staircase, under the care of Lieutenant Tracy (Tot-hill-fields treadmill). The men that had really been out and got disabled were sent to that staircase at last, and I thought I would try a fresh lurk. So I went under the care and tuition of a sailor. He had been a sailor. I became a *turnpike sailor*, as it's called, and went out as one of the Shallow Brigade, wearing a Guernsey shirt and drawers, or tattered trowsers: There was a school of four. We only got a tidy living—16s. or 1l. a day among us. We used to call every one that came along—coalheavers and all—sea-fighting captains. 'Now, my noble sea-fighting captain,' we used to say, 'fire an odd shot from your larboard locker to us, Nelson's bull-dogs;' but mind we never tried that dodge on at Greenwich, for fear of the old geese, the Collegemen. The Shallow got so grannied (known) in London, that the supplies got queer, and I quitted the land navy. Shipwrecks got so common in the streets, you see, that people didn't care for them, and I dropped getting cast away. I then took to *screeving* (writing on the stones). I got my head shaved, and a cloth tied round my jaws, and wrote on the flags—

#### 'Illness and Want,'

'though I was never better in my life, and always had a good bellyfull before I started of a morning. I did very well at first: 3s. or 4s. a day—sometimes more—till I got grannied. There is one man who draws Christ's heads with a crown of thorns, and mackerel, on the pavement, in coloured chalks (there are four or five others at the same business); this one, however, often makes 1l. a day now in three hours; indeed, I have known him come home with 21s., besides what he drank on the way. A gentleman who met him in Regent-street once gave him 5l. and a suit of clothes to do Christ's heads with a crown of thorns and mackerel on the walls. His son does Napoleon's heads best, but makes nothing like so much as the father. The father draws cats' heads and salmon as well—but the others are far the best spec. He will often give thirteen-pence, and indeed fourteen-pence, for a silver shilling, to get rid of the coppers. This man's pitch is Lloyd-square, not far from Sadler's Wells. I have seen him commence

his pitch there at half-past eleven, to catch the people come from the theatre. He is very clever. In wet weather, and when I couldn't chalk, as I couldn't afford to lose time, I used to dress tidy and very clean for the 'respectable broken-down tradesman or reduced gentleman' caper. I wore a suit of black, generally, and a clean dickey, and sometimes old black kid gloves, and I used to stand with a paper before my face, as if ashamed—

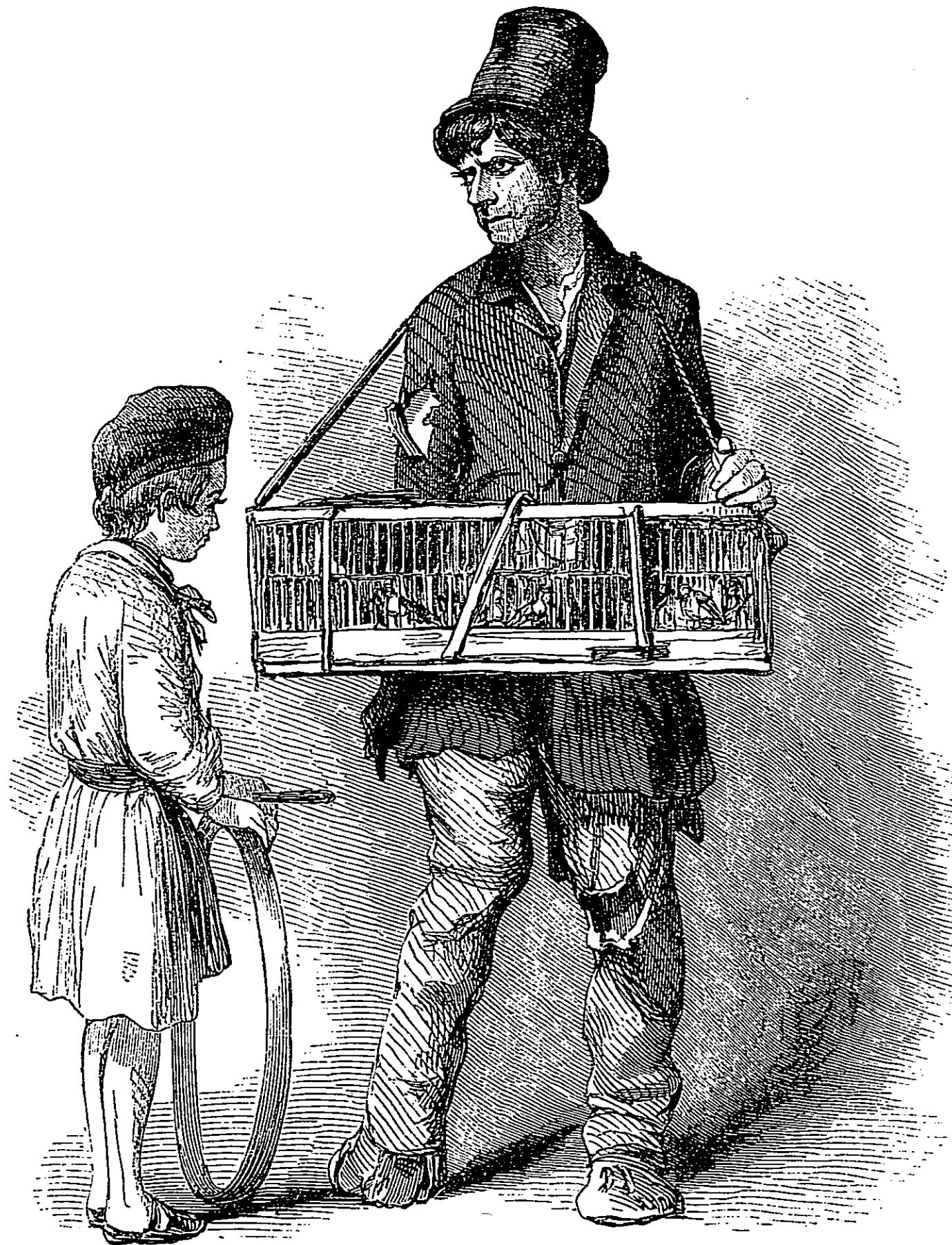
'To a Humane Public.  
'I have seen better days.

This is called standing pad with a fakement. It is a wet-weather dodge, and isn't so good as screeving, but I did middling, and can't bear being idle. After this I mixed with the street patters (men who make speeches in the streets) on the *destitute mechanics' lurk*. We went in a school of six at first, all in clean aprons, and spoke every man in his turn. It won't do unless you're clean. Each man wanted a particular article of dress. One had no shirt—another no shoes—another no hat—and so on. No two wanted the same. We said:—

"Kind and benevolent Christians!—It is with feelings of deep regret, and sorrow and shame, that us unfortunate tradesmen are compelled to appear before you this day, to ask charity from the hands of strangers. We are brought to it from want—I may say, actual starvation.' (We always had a good breakfast before we started, and some of us, sir, was full up to the brim of liquor.) 'But what will not hunger and the cries of children compel men to do.' (We were all single men.) 'When we left our solitary and humble homes this morning, our children were crying for food, but if a farthing would have saved their lives, we hadn't it to give them. I assure you, kind friends, me, my wife, and three children, would have been houseless wanderers all last night, but I sold the shirt from off my back as you may see (opening my jacket) to pay for a lodging. We are, kind friends, *English mechanics*. It is hard that you won't give your own countrymen a penny, when you give so much to *foreign hurdy-gurdies* and organ-grinders. Owing to the introduction of steam and machinery and foreign manufactures we have been brought to this degraded state. Fellow countrymen, there are at this moment 4000 men like ourselves, able and willing to work, but can't get it, and forced to wander the streets. I hope and trust some humane Christian within the sound of my voice will stretch out a hand with a small trifle for us, be it ever so small, or a bit of dry bread or cold potato, or anything turned from your table, it would be of the greatest benefit to us and our poor children.' (Then we would whisper to one another, 'I hope they won't bring out any scran—only coppers.') 'We have none of us tasted food this blessed day. We have been told to go to our parishes, but that we cannot brook; to be torn from our wives and families is heart-rending to think of—may God save us all from the Bastille!' (We always pattered hard at the overseers).

The next of the school that spoke would change the story somehow, and try to make it more heart-rending still. We did well at first, making about 5s. a day each, working four hours, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. We got a good deal of clothing too. The man who went without a shirt never went to a door to ask for one; he had to show himself in the middle of the road. The man that *did* go to the door would say, 'Do bestow a shirt on my poor shopmate, who hasn't had one for some days.' It's been said of me, when I had my shirt tied round my waist all the time out of sight. The man who goes without his shirt has his pick of those given; the rest are sold and shared. Whatever trade we

represented we always had one or two really in the trade in the school. These were always to be met at the lodging-houses. They were out of work, and had to go to low lodging-houses to sleep. There they met with beggars who kiddied them on to the lurk. The lodging-houses is good schools for that sort of thing, and when a mechanic once gets out on the lurk he never cares to go to work again. I never knew one return. I have been out oft and oft with weavers with a loom, and have woven a piece of ribbon in a gentleman's parlour—that was when we was Coventry ribbon weavers. I have been a stocking weaver from Leicester, and a lacemaker too from Nottingham. Distressed mechanics on their way to London get initiated into beggar's tricks in the low lodging-houses and the unions. This is the way, you see, sir. A school may be at work from the lodging-house where the mechanic goes to, and some of the school finds out what he is, and says, 'Come and work with us in a school; you'll do better than you can at your business, and you can answer any questions; we'll lurk on your trade.' I have been out with a woman and children. It's been said in the papers that children can be hired for that lurk at 4d. or 6d. a day—that's all fudge, all stuff, every bit of it—there's no children to be hired. There's many a labouring man out of work, who has a wife and three or more children, who is glad to let them go out with any patterer he knows. The woman is entitled to all the clothes and grub given, and her share of the tin—that's the way it's done; and she's treated to a drink after her day's work, into the bargain. I've been out on the *respectable family man lurk*. I was out with a woman and three kids the other day; her husband was on the pad in the country, as London was too hot to hold him. The kids draws, the younger the better, for if you vex them, and they're oldish, they'll blow you. Liverpool Joe's boy did so at Bury St. Edmund's to a patterer that he was out with, and who spoke cross to him. The lad shouted out so as the people about might hear, 'Don't you jaw me, you're not my father; my father's at home playing cards.' They had to crack the pitch (discontinue) through that. The respectable family dodge did pretty well. I've been on the *clean family lurk* too, with a woman and children. We dressed to give the notion that, however humble, at least we were clean in all our poverty. On this lurk we stand by the side of the pavement in silence, the wife in a perticler clean cap, and a milk-white apron. The kids have long clean pinafores, white as the driven snow; they're only used in clean lurk, and taken off directly they come home. The husband and father is in a white flannel jacket, an apron worn and clean, and polished shoes. To succeed in this caper there must be no rags, but plenty of darns. A pack of pawn-tickets is carried in the waistcoat pocket. (One man that I know stuck them in his hat like a carman's.) That's to show that they've parted with their little all before they came to that. They are real pawn-tickets. I have known a man *day 2s. 6d.*



THE CRIPPLED STREET BIRD-SELLER.

[From a Photograph.]

for the loan of a marriage certificate to go out on the clean lurk. If a question is asked, I say—'We've parted with everything, and can get no employment; to be sure, we have had a loaf from the parish, but what's that among my family?' That takes the start out of the people, because they say, why not go to the parish? Some persons say, 'Oh, poor folks, they're brought to this, and how clean they are—a darn is better than a patch any time.' The clean lurk is a bare living now—it was good—lots of togs came in, and often the whole family were taken into a house and supplied with flannel enough to make under clothing for them all; all this was pledged soon afterwards, and the tickets shown to prove what was parted with, through want. Those are some of the leading lurks. There's others. 'Fits,' are now bad, and 'paralytics' are no better. *The lucifer lurk* seems getting up though. I don't mean the selling, but the dropping them in the street as if by accident. It's a great thing with the children; but no go with the old 'uns. I'll tell you of another lurk: a woman I knows sends out her child with  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. of tea and half a quarter of sugar, and the child sits on a door step crying, and saying, if questioned, that she was sent out for tea and sugar, and a boy snatched the change from her, and threw the tea and sugar in the gutter. The mother is there, like a stranger, and says to the child:—'And was that your poor mother's last shilling, and daren't you go home, poor thing?' Then there is a gathering—sometimes 18d. in a morning; but it's almost getting stale, that is. I've done *the shivering dodge* too—gone out in the cold weather half naked. One man has practised it so much that he can't get off shivering now. Shaking Jemmy went on with his shivering so long that he couldn't help it at last. He shivered like a jelly—like a calf's foot with the ague—on the hottest day in summer. It's a good dodge in tidy inclement seasons. It's not so good a lurk, by two bob a day, as it once was. This is a single-handed job; for if one man shivers less than another he shows that it isn't so cold as the good shiverer makes it out—then it's no go. Of the *maimed beggars*, some are really deserving objects, as without begging they must starve to death; that's a fact, sir. What's a labouring man to do if he's lost any of his limbs? But some of these even are impostors. I know several blind men who have pensions; and I know two who have not only pensions, but keep lodging-houses, and are worth money, and still go out a begging—though not near where they live. There's the man with the very big leg, who sits on the pavement, and tells a long yarn about the tram carriage having gone over him in the mine. He does very well—remarkable well. He goes tating and billy-hunting in the country (gathering rags and buying old metal), and comes only to London when he has that sort of thing to dispose of. There's Paddy in the truck too; he makes a good thing, and sends money home to Ireland; he has a decrepit old mother, and it's to his credit. He never drinks. There's Jerry, the collier, he has lost both arms, and does a tidy living, and

deserves it; it's a bad misfortune. There's Jack Tiptoe, he can't put one heel to the ground—no gammon; but Mr. Horsford and he can't agree, so Jack takes to the provinces now. He did very well indeed here. There used to be a society among us called *the Cadger's Club*; if one got into a prison there was a gathering for him when he came out, and 6s. a week for a sick member, and when he got out again two collections for him, the two amounting perhaps to 1l. We paid 3d. a week each—no women were members—for thirteen weeks, and then shared what was in hand, and began for the next thirteen, receiving new members and transacting the usual business of a club. This has been discontinued these five years; the landlord cut away with the funds. We get up raffles, and help one another in the best way we can now. At one time we had forty-five members, besides the secretary, the conductor, and under-conductor. The rules were read over on meeting nights—every Wednesday evening. They were very strict; no swearing, obscene or profane language was permitted. For the first offence a fine of 1d. was inflicted, for the second 2d., and for the third the offender was ejected the room. There was very good order, and few fines had to be inflicted. Several respectable tradesmen used to pay a trifle to be admitted, out of curiosity, to see the proceedings, and used to be surprised at their regularity. Among the other rules were these: a fine of 1d. for any member refusing to sing when called on; visitors the same. All the fines went to the fund. If a member didn't pay for five meeting nights he was scratched. Very few were scratched. The secretary was a windmill cove (sold children's windmills in the streets), and was excused contributing to the funds. He had 1d. from each member every sharing night, once a quarter, for his labour; he was a very good scholar, and had been brought up well. The landlord generally gave a bob on a sharing night. The conductor managed the room, and the under-conductor kept the door, not admitting those who had no right to be there, and putting out those who behaved improperly. It was held in the Coachmakers' Arms, Rose-street, Longrave-street; tip-top swells used to come among us, and no mistake; real noblemen, sir. One was the nephew of the Duke of —, and was well-known to all of us by the nick-name, Facer.

I used to smoke a very short and very black pipe, and the honourable gent has often snatched it from my mouth, and has given me a dozen cigars for it. My face has been washed in the gin by a noble lord after he'd made me drunk, and I felt as if it was vitriol about my eyes. The beggars are now dispersed and broken up. They live together now only in twos and threes, and, in plain truth, have no money to spend; they can't get it. Upon an average, in former days a cadger could make his two or three guineas per week without working overtime; but now he can hardly get a meal, not even at the present winter though it's been a slap up inclement season, to be sure. The Mendicity Society has ruined us—them men took me and gave me a month, and I

can say from my conscience, that I was no more guilty of begging at that time than an unborn baby. The beggars generally live in the low lodging-houses, and there of a night they tell their tales of the day, and inform each other of the good and bad places throughout London, and what 'lurks' do the best. They will also say what beats they intend to take the next day, so that those who are on the same lurk may not go over the same ground as their pals. It is no use telling a lie, but the low lodging-houses throughout London and the country are nests for beggars and thieves. I know some houses that are wholly supported by beggars. In almost every one of the padding kens, or low lodging-houses in the country, there is a list of walks written on a piece of paper, and pasted up over the kitchen mantel-piece. Now at St. Alban's, for instance, at the ———, and at other places, there is a paper stuck up in each of the kitchens. This paper is headed 'WALKS OUT OF THIS TOWN,' and underneath it is set down the names of the villages in the neighbourhood at which a beggar may call when out on his walk, and they are so arranged as to allow the cadger to make a round of about six miles, each day, and return the same night. In many of those papers there are sometimes twenty walks set down. No villages that are in any way 'gammy' are ever mentioned in these papers, and the cadger, if he feels inclined to stop for a few days in the town, will be told by the lodging-house keeper, or the other cadgers that he may meet there, what gentleman's seats or private houses are of any account on the walk that he means to take. The names of the good houses are not set down in the paper, for fear of the police. Most of the lodging-house keepers buy the 'scran' (broken victuals) of the cadgers; the good food they either eat themselves or sell to the other travellers, and the bad they sell to parties to feed their dogs or pigs upon. The cadgers' talk is quite different now to what it was in the days of Billy. You see the flats got awake to it, so in course we had to alter the patter. The new style of cadgers' cant is nothing like the thieves' cant, and is done all on the rhyming principle. This way 's the caper. Suppose I want to ask a pal to come and have a *glass of rum* and smoke a *pipe of tobacco*, and have a game at cards with some *blokes at home* with me, I should say, if there were any flats present, 'Splodger, will you have a Jack-surpass of finger-and-thumb, and blow your yard of *tripe* of nosey me *knacker*, and have a touch of the *broads* with me and the other heaps of *coke* at my *drum*. [In this it will be observed that every one of the 'cant words rhymes with the words ordinarily used to express the same idea.] I can assure you what little we cadgers do get we earn uncommon hard. Why, from standing shaking—that is, being out nearly naked in the hardest frosts—I lost the use of my left side for nearly three years, and wasn't able to stir outside the door. I got my living by card-playing in the low lodging-houses all that time. I worked the oracle—they were not up to it. I put the first and seconds on and the bridge also. I'd play at cards with any

one. You see, sir, I was afeard to come to you at first because I had been 'a starving' on the pavement only a few days ago, not a hundred yards from your very door, and I thought you might know me."

#### MEETING OF THIEVES.

As a further proof, however, of the demoralizing influences of the low lodging-houses, I will now conclude my investigations into the subject with a report of the meeting of vagrants, which I convened for the express purpose of consulting them generally upon several points which had come under my notice in the course of my inquiries. The Chronicle reporter's account of this meeting was as follows:—

A meeting of an unprecedented character was held at the British Union School-room, Shakespeare-walk, Shadwell, on Monday evening last. The use of the school-room was kindly granted by Mr. Fletcher, the proprietor, to whose liberality we stand indebted for many similar favours. It was convened by our Metropolitan Correspondent, for the purpose of assembling together some of the lowest class of male juvenile thieves and vagabonds who infest the metropolis and the country at large; and although privately called, at only two days' notice, by the distribution of tickets of admission among the class in question at the various haunts and dens of infamy to which they resort, no fewer than 150 of them attended on the occasion. The only condition to entitle the parties to admission was that they should be vagrants, and under twenty years of age. They had all assembled some time before the hour for commencing the proceedings arrived, and never was witnessed a more distressing spectacle of squalor, rags, and wretchedness. Some were young men, and some mere children; one, who styled himself a "cadger," was six years of age, and several who confessed themselves "prigs" were only ten. The countenances of the boys were of various characters. Many were not only good-looking, but had a frank, ingenuous expression that seemed in no way connected with innate roguery. Many, on the other hand, had the deep-sunk and half-averted eye which are so characteristic of natural dishonesty and cunning. Some had the regular features of lads born of parents in easy circumstances. The hair of most of the lads was cut very close to the head, showing their recent liberation from prison; indeed, one might tell by the comparative length of the crop, the time that each boy had been out of gaol. All but a few of the elder boys were remarkable, amidst the rags, filth, and wretchedness of their external appearance, for the mirth and carelessness impressed upon their countenances. At first their behaviour was very noisy and disorderly: coarse and ribald jokes were freely cracked, exciting general bursts of laughter; while howls, cat-calls, and all manner of unearthly and indescribable yells threatened for some time to render the object of the meeting utterly abortive. At one moment a lad would imitate the bray of a jack-ass, and immediately the whole hundred and fifty would fall to braying

Then some ragged urchin would crow like a cock, whereupon the place would echo again with a hundred and fifty cock-crows. Then, as a black boy entered the room, one of the young vagabonds would shout out "swe-ee-op." This would be received with peals of laughter, and followed by a general repetition of the same cry. Next, a hundred and fifty cat-calls of the shrillest possible description would almost split the ears. These would be succeeded by cries of "Strike up, you catgut scrapers," "Go on with your barrow," "Flare up, my never-sweats," and a variety of other street sayings. Indeed, the uproar which went on before the meeting began will be best understood if we compare it to the scene presented by a public menagerie at feeding time. The greatest difficulty, as might be expected, was experienced in collecting the subjoined statistics of their character and condition. By a well-contrived and persevering mode of inquiry, however, the following facts were elicited:—

With respect to their *ages*, the youngest boy present was 6 years old. He styled himself a "cadger," and said that his mother, who is a widow, and suffering from ill-health, sends him into the streets to beg. There were seven of 10 years of age, three of 12, three of 13, ten of 14, ten of 15, eleven of 16, twenty of 17, twenty-six of 18, and forty-five of 19.

Nineteen had *fathers and mothers* still living; thirty-nine had only one parent, and eighty were orphans in the fullest sense of the word, having neither father nor mother alive.

Of *professed beggars* there were fifty, and sixty-six who acknowledged themselves to be *habitual thieves*. The announcement that the greater number present were thieves pleased them exceedingly, and was received with three rounds of applause.

Twelve of the youths assembled had been *in prison* once (two of these were but 10 years of age); 5 had been in prison twice; 3, thrice; 4 four times; 7, five times; 8, six times; 5, seven times; 4, eight times; 2, nine times (1 of them 13 years of age); 5, ten times; 5, twelve times; 2, thirteen times; 3, fourteen times; 2, sixteen times; 3, seventeen times; 2, eighteen times; 5, twenty times; 6, twenty-four times; 1, twenty-five times; 1, twenty-six times; and 1, twenty-nine times. The announcements in reply to the questions as to the number of times that any of them had been in prison were received with great applause, which became more and more boisterous as the number of imprisonments increased. When it was announced that one, though only 19 years of age, had been in prison as many as twenty-nine times, the clapping of hands, the cat-calls, and shouts of "brayvo!" lasted for several minutes, and the whole of the boys rose to look at the distinguished individual. Some chalked on their hats the figures which designated the sum of the several times that they had been in gaol.

As to the *causes of their vagabondism*, it was found that 22 had run away from their homes, owing to the ill-treatment of their parents; 18 confessed to having been ruined through their parents allowing them to run wild in the streets,

and to be led astray by bad companions; and 15 acknowledged that they had been first taught thieving in a lodging-house.

Concerning the vagrant habits of the youths, the following facts were elicited: 78 regularly roam through the country every year, 65 sleep regularly in the casual wards of the unions, and 52 occasionally slept in tramper's lodging-houses throughout the country.

Respecting their *education*, according to the popular meaning of the term, 63 of the 150 were able to read and write, and they were principally thieves. Fifty of this number said they had read "Jack Sheppard," and the lives of Dick Turpin, Claude du Val, and all the other popular thieves' novels, as well as the "Newgate Calendar" and "Lives of the Robbers and Pirates." Those who could not read themselves, said they'd had "Jack Sheppard" read to them at the lodging-houses. Numbers avowed that they had been induced to resort to an abandoned course of life from reading the lives of notorious thieves, and novels about highway robbers. When asked what they thought of "Jack Sheppard," several bawled out "He's a regular brick"—a sentiment which was almost universally concurred in by the deafening shouts and plaudits which followed. When asked whether they would like to be Jack Sheppards, they answered, "Yes, if the times was the same now as they were then." Thirteen confessed that they had taken to thieving in order to go to the low theatres; and one lad said he had lost a good situation on the Birmingham Railway through his love of the play.

Twenty stated they had *been flogged in prison*—many of them two, three, and four different times. A policeman in plain clothes was present; but their acute eyes were not long before they detected his real character notwithstanding his disguise. Several demanded that he should be turned out. The officer was accordingly given to understand that the meeting was a private one, and requested to withdraw. Having apologised for intruding, he proceeded to leave the room—and, no sooner did the boys see the policeman move towards the door, than they gave vent to several rounds of very hearty applause, accompanied with hisses, groans, and cries of "throw him over."

The process of interrogating them in the mass having been concluded, the next step was to call several of them separately to the platform, to narrate, in their peculiar style and phraseology, the history of their own career, together with the causes which had led them to take up a life of dishonesty. The novelty of their position as speech-makers seemed peculiarly exciting to the speakers themselves, and provoked much merriment and interest amongst the lads. Their antics and buffoonery in commencing their addresses were certainly of the most ludicrous character. The first speaker, a lad 17 years of age, ascended the platform, dressed in a torn "wide-a-awake" hat, and a dirty smock-frock. He began:—Gentlemen [immense applause and laughter], I am a Brunmagem lad [laughter]. My father has been

dead three years, and my mother seven. When my father died I had to go and live along with my aunt. I fell out of employment, and went round about the town, and fell into the company of a lot of chaps, and went picking ladies' pockets. Then I was in prison once or twice, and I came to London, and have been in several prisons here. I have been in London three years; but I have been out of it several times in that time. I can't get anything honest to do; and I wish I could get something at sea, or in any foreign land. I don't care what or where it is [cheers and yells].

Another lad about 16, clad in a ragged coat, with a dirty face and matted hair, next came forward and said—My father was a soldier, and when I grew up to about ten years I joined the regiment as a drummer in the Grenadier Guards. I went on and got myself into trouble, till at last I got turned away, and my father left the regiment. I then went out with some more chaps and went thieving, and have been thieving about two years now. [Several voices—"Very good;" "that's beautiful;" "I hope you do it well."]

The third boy, who stated that he had been twenty-four times in prison, said he belonged to Hendon, in Middlesex, and that his father left his mother seventeen years ago, and he did not know whether he was dead or alive. He went to Christchurch school for some time, but afterwards picked up with bad companions, and went a thieving. He went to school again, but again left it to go a thieving and cadging with bad companions. He had been doing that for the last five years; and if he could get out of it he would be very glad to leave it [cheers].

The fourth lad (who was received with loud cheering, evidently indicating that he was a well-known character) said, he came from the city of York, and was a farrier. His father died a few years ago, and then he took to work; but "the play" led him on to be a thief, and from that time to the present he had done nothing but beg or thieve. If he could go to Australia he would be very glad; as if he stopped in England he feared he should do nothing but thieve to the end [laughter, with cries of "well done," "very well spoken"].

The next speaker was about 18 years of age, and appeared a very sharp intelligent lad. After making a very grave but irresistibly comical pre-factory bow, by placing his hand at the back of his head, and so (as it were) forcing it to give a nod, he proceeded: My father is an engineer's labourer, and the first cause of my thieving was that he kept me without grub, and walloped me [laughter]. Well, I was at work at the same time that he was, and I kept pilfering, and at last they bowled me out [loud cheers]. I got a showing up, and at last they turned me away; and, not liking to go home to my father, I ran away. I went to Margate, where I had some friends, with a shilling in my pocket. I never stopped till I got to Ramsgate, and I had no lodging except under the trees, and had only the bits of bread I could pick up. When I got there my grandfather took me in and kept me for a twelvemonth.

My mother's brother's wife had a spite against me, and tried to get me turned away. I did not know what thieving was then; and I used to pray that her heart might be turned, because I did not know what would become of me if my grandfather turned me away. But she got other people to complain of me, and say I was a nuisance to the town; but I knew there was no fault in me; but, however, my grandfather said he could put up with me no longer, and turned me away. So after that I came back to London, and goes to the union. The first night I went there I got tore up [cheers and laughter]. Everything was torn off my back, and the bread was taken away from me, and because I said a word I got well walloped [renewed laughter]. They "small-ganged" me; and afterwards I went seven days to prison because others tore my clothes. When I went in there—this was the first time—a man said to me, "What are you here for?" I said, "For tearing up." The man said to another, "What are you here for?" and the other made answer, "For a handkerchief." The man then said, "Ah, that's something like;" and he said to me, "Why are you not a thief—you will only get to prison for that." I said, "I will." Well, after that I went pilfering small things, worth a penny or twopence at first; but I soon saw better things were as easy to be got as them, so I took them [laughter]. I picked up with one that knewed more than me. He fairly kept me for some time, and I learnt as well as him. I picked him up in a London workhouse. After that I thought I would try my friends again, and I went to my uncle at Dover, but he could do nothing for me, so I got a place at a butcher's, where I fancied myself fairly blessed, for I had 2s. a week and my board and washing. I kept a twelvemonth there honest, without thieving. At last my master and I fell out and I left again, so I was forced to come up to London, and there I found my old companions in the Smithfield pens—they were not living anywhere. I used to go to the workhouse and used to tear up and refuse to work, and used to get sent to "quod," and I used to curse the day when it was my turn to go out. The governor of the prison used to say he hoped he wouldn't see my face there again; but I used to answer, "I shall be here again to night, because it's the only place I've got." That's all I've got to say.

The next lad, who said he had been fourteen times in prison, was a taller, cleaner, and more intelligent-looking youth than any that had preceded him. After making a low affected bow, over the railing, to the company below, and uttering a preliminary a-hem or two with the most ludicrous mock gravity, he began by saying:—"I am a native of London. My father is a poor labouring man, with 15s. a week—little enough, I think, to keep a home for four, and find candle-light [laughter]. I was at work looking after a boiler at a paper-stainer's in Old-street-road at 6s. a week, when one night they bowled me out. I got the sack, and a bag to take it home in [laughter]. I got my wages, and ran away from

home, but in four days, being hungry, and having no money, I went back again. I got a towelling, but it did not do me much good. My father did not like to turn me out of doors, so he tied me to the leg of the bedstead [laughter]. He tied my hands and feet so that I could hardly move, but I managed somehow to turn my gob (mouth) round and gnawed it away. I run down stairs and got out at the back door and over a neighbour's wall, and never went home for nine months. I never bolted with anything. I never took anything that was too hot for me. The captain of a man-of-war about this time took me into his service, where I remained five weeks till I took a fever, and was obliged to go to the hospital. When I recovered, the captain was gone to Africa; and not liking to go home, I stepped away, and have been from home ever since. I was in Brummagem, and was seven days in the new 'stir' (prison), and nearly broke my neck. When I came out, I fell into bad company, and went cadging, and have been cadging ever since; but if I could leave off, and go to the Isle of Dogs, the Isle of Man, or the Isle of Woman [laughter], or any other foreign place, I would embrace the opportunity as soon as I could. And if so be that any gentleman would take me in hand, and send me out, I would be very thankful to him, indeed. And so good night" [cheers].

A dirty little boy, fourteen years of age, dressed in a big jacket, next stood forward. He said his father was a man-of-war's man, and when he came home from sea once his father, his mother, and all of them got drunk. The lad then stole 4d. from his father's pocket. After this, when he was sent for sixpenny rum he used to fetch fourpenny, and for fourpenny gin threepenny; and for fourpenny beer he used to fetch threepenny, and keep the difference to himself. His mother used to sell fruit, and when she left him at the stall he used to eat what he could not sell, and used to sell some to get marbles and buttons. Once he stole a loaf from a baker's shop. The man let him off, but his father beat him for it. The beating did him no good. After that he used to go "smuggling" [running away with] other people's things. Then one day his father caught him, and tied his leg to the bedstead, and left him there till he was pretty near dead. He ran away afterwards, and has been thieving ever since.

A lad about twenty was here about to volunteer a statement concerning the lodging-houses, by which he declared he had been brought to his ruin, but he was instantly assailed with cries of "come down!" "hold your tongue!" and these became so general, and were in so menacing a tone, that he said he was afraid to make any disclosures, because he believed if he did so he would have perhaps two or three dozen of the other chaps on to him [great confusion].

MR. MAYHEW: Will it hurt any of you here if he says anything against the lodging-houses [yes, yes]? How will it do so?

A Voice: They will not allow stolen property to come into them if it is told.

MR. MAYHEW: But would you not all gladly

quit your present course of life [yes, yes, yes]? Then why not have the lodging-house system, the principal cause of all your misery, exposed?

A Voice: If they shut up the lodging houses, where are we to go? If a poor boy gets to the workhouse he catches a fever, and is starved into the bargain.

MR. MAYHEW:—Are not you all tired of the lives you now lead? [Vociferous cries of "yes, yes, we wish to better ourselves!" from all parts of the room.] However much you dread the exposure of the lodging-houses, you know, my lads, as well as I do, that it is in them you meet your companions, and ruin, if not begun there, is at least completed in such places. If a boy runs away from home he is encouraged there and kept secreted from his parents. And do not the parties who keep these places grow rich on your degradation and your peril? [Loud cries of "yes, yes!"] Then why don't you all come forward now, and, by exposing them to the public, who know nothing of the iniquities and vice practised in such places, put an end to these dens at once? There is not one of you here—not one, at least, of the elder boys, who has found out the mistake of his present life, who would not, I verily believe, become honest, and earn his living by his industry, if he could. You might have thought a roving life a pleasant thing enough at first, but you now know that a vagabond's life is full of suffering, care, peril, and privation; you are not so happy as you thought you would be, and are tired and disgusted with your present course. This is what I hear from you all. Am I not stating the fact? [Renewed cries of "yes, yes, yes!" and a voice: "The fact of it is, sir, we don't see our folly till it is too late."] Now I and many hundreds and thousands really wish you well, and would gladly do anything we could to get you to earn an honest living. All, or nearly all, your misery, I know, proceeds from the low lodging-houses ["yes, yes, it does, master! it does"]; and I am determined, with your help, to effect their utter destruction. [A voice, "I am glad of it, sir—you are quite right; and I pray God to assist you."]

The elder boys were then asked what they thought would be the best mode of effecting their deliverance from their present degraded position. Some thought emigration the best means, for if they started afresh in a new colony, they said they would leave behind them their bad characters, which closed every avenue to employment against them at home. Others thought there would be difficulties in obtaining work in the colonies in sufficient time to prevent their being driven to support themselves by their old practices. Many again thought the temptations which surrounded them in England rendered their reformation impossible; whilst many more considered that the same temptations would assail them abroad which existed at home.

MR. MAYHEW then addressed them on another point. He said he had seen many notorious thieves in the course of his investigations. Since then he had received them at all hours into his house—men of the most desperate and women of

the most abandoned characters—but he had never lost a 6*l.* worth of his property by them. One thief he had entrusted with a sovereign to get changed, and the lad returned and gave him back the full amount in silver. He had since gone out to America. Now he would ask all those present whether, if he were to give them a sovereign, they would do the same? [Several voices here called out that they would, and others that they would not. Others, again, said that they would to him, but to no one else.]

Here one of the most desperate characters present, a boy who had been twenty-six times in prison, was singled out from the rest, and a sovereign given to him to get changed, in order to make the experiment whether he would have the honesty to return the change or abscond with it in his possession. He was informed, on receiving it, that if he chose to decamp with it, no proceedings should be taken against him. He left the room amid the cheers of his companions, and when he had been absent a few moments all eyes were turned towards the door each time it opened, anxiously expecting his arrival, to prove his trustworthiness. Never was such interest displayed by any body of individuals. They mounted the forms in their eagerness to obtain the first glimpse of his return. It was clear that their honour was at stake; and several said they would kill the lad in the morning if he made off with the money. Many minutes elapsed in almost painful suspense, and some of his companions began to fear that so large a sum of money had proved too great a temptation for the boy. At last, however, a tremendous burst of cheering announced the lad's return. The delight of his companions broke forth again and again, in long and loud peals of applause, and the youth advanced amidst triumphant shouts to the platform, and gave up the money in full.

The assemblage was then interrogated as to the effect of flogging as a punishment; and the general feeling appeared to be that it hardened the criminal instead of checking his depravity, and excited the deadliest enmity in his bosom at the time towards the person inflicting it. When asked whether they had seen any public executions, they almost all cried out that they had seen Manning and his wife hung; others said that they had seen Rush and Sarah Thomas executed. They stated that they liked to go a "death-hunting," after seeing one or two executed. It hardened them to it, and at last they all got to thieve under the gallows. They felt rather shocked at the sight of an execution at first; but, after a few repetitions, it soon wore off.

Before the meeting broke up several other lads expressed a strong desire to make statements.

A young man, 18 years of age, and of a miserable and ragged appearance, said he first left home from bad usage; and could not say whether it was the same with his sister or not, but she left her home about nine months ago, when he met her while he was getting his living as a costermonger. With the stock-money that he had, rather than she should be driven to prostitution and the

streets, he bought as many things as he could to furnish a room. This exhausted his stock-money, and then his furniture had to go a little at a time to support him and his sister in food. After this he was obliged to take a furnished room, which put him to greater expense. To keep her off the streets, he was compelled to thieve. His father, if he ever had the feeling of a Christian, would never have treated him as he had done. Could a father (he asked) have any feeling, who chained his son up by the leg in a shed, as *his* father had done to him, and fed him on bread and water for one entire month: and then, after chaining him up all day, still chain him in bed at night. This it was that drove him into the streets at first. It was after his mother died, and he had a step-mother, that his father treated him thus. His mother-in-law ill-treated him as well as his father. If he had been a transport he could not have been treated worse. He told his father that he was driving him on the road to transportation, but he took no notice of it; and he was obliged to leave his roof. He had been in Newgate since.

A little boy, dressed in the garb of a sailor, came up to Mr. Mayhew crying bitterly, and implored him to allow him to say a word. He stated—I am here starving all my time. Last night I was out in the cold and nearly froze to death. When I got up I was quite stiff and could hardly walk. I slept in Whitechapel under a form where they sell meat. I was an apprentice on board of a fishing smack, and ran away because I was ill-treated. After I ran away I broke into my master's house because I was hungry. He gave me twelve months, and now he is in the union himself; he failed in business and got broken up. I have been out of prison three months, starving; and I would rather do anything than thieve. If I see a little thing I take it, because I can't get anything to eat without it. [Here the child, still weeping piteously, uncovered his breast, and showed his bones starting through his skin. He said he was anxious to get out of the country.]

The following statement respecting the lodging-houses was made, after the others had left, by another lad. He left home when about thirteen, and never thieved before that. His father was dead, and his mother was unable to keep him. He got a situation and held it for three years and nine months, until he picked up with a man from a lodging-house, and through keeping late hours he was obliged to leave his place and sleep in a lodging-house himself. The lodging-house is in Short's-gardens. This he considered to have been the commencement of his downfall. About forty thieves lived in the house, and they brought in stolen property of every description, and the deputies received it and took it to other people to sell it again, and get the price and pay the thieves. They got double as much as the thieves did, or else they would have nothing to do with it. Several housebreakers lived at the house, and he heard them there plan the robbery of Bull and Wilson, the woollen-draper in St. Martin's-lane. One of the men secreted himself in the house in the daytime, and the other two were admitted by

him at night. If he had stated this at the meeting the persons present would have killed him. He was sure that more might be done by giving proper encouragement to virtue, and by reforming the criminal, than by rigorous prosecution. He said (with tears in his eyes) that he should be very willing and happy to work for an honest living if he could only get it to do. He showed a letter of recommendation for good conduct to his former master, and a Bible; both of which had been given him by the chaplain of the goal which he had just left, after undergoing an imprisonment of twelve months. It was useless (he said) for a young man like him to apply to the parish for relief; he might just as well stand in the street and talk to a lamp-post. Then what was a man to do after he left prison? He must go a thieving to live. He was persuaded that if there was an institution to give employment to the homeless, the friendless, and the penniless, after being liberated from prison, it would be the means of rescuing thousands.

The proceedings then terminated. The assemblage, which had become more rational and manageable towards the close, dispersed, quite peaceably it should be added, and the boys were evidently sincerely grateful for the efforts being made to bring their misfortunes before the notice of those in whose power it may be to alleviate them.

Before they were dismissed, as much money was dispensed to each as would defray his night's lodging.

#### OF THE COUNTRY LODGING-HOUSES.

Concerning the lodging-houses, more especially in the country, I give the statement of a middle-aged man, familiar with them for twenty years. He was recommended to me as possessed of much humour and a great master of humorous slang:—

"I can tell you all about it, sir; but one lodging-house is so like another that I can't draw much distinction. In small country towns, especially agricultural towns, they are decent places enough, regular in their hours, and tidy enough. At these places they have what they call 'their own travellers,' persons that they know, and who are always accommodated in preference. As to the characters that frequent these places, let us begin with the *Crocusses*. They carry about a lot of worms in bottles, what they never took out of anybody, though they'll tell you different, or long pieces of tape in bottles, made to look like worms, and on that they'll *patter* in a market place as if on a real cure, and they've got the cheek to tell the people that that very worm was taken from Lady —, near the town, and referring them to her to prove it. The one I knew best would commence with a piece of sponge in a bottle, which he stiled the stomach wolf. That was his leading slum, and pretty well he sponged them too. When he'd pattered on about the wolf, he had another bottle with what he called a worm 200 inches long, he bounced it was, which the day before yesterday he had from Mrs. —'s girl (some well-known person), and referred them to her. While he's going on, a

brother Crocus will step up, a stranger to the people, and say, 'Ah, Doctor —, you're right. I had the pleasure of dining with Mr. — when the worm was extracted, and never saw a child so altered in my life.' That's what the Crocus's call giving a jolly; and after that don't the first Crocus's old woman serve out the six-penny-worths? The stuff is to cure every mortal thing a man can ail—ay, or a woman either. They'd actually have the cheek to put a blister on a cork leg. Well, when they're done pattering on the worm racket, then come the wonderful pills. Them are the things. These pills, from eight to a dozen in a box, are charged 4*d.* to 6*d.* according to the flat's appearance—as the Crocus calls his customers. The pills meet with a ready sale, and they're like chip in porridge, neither good nor harm. It's chiefly the bounciful patter, the cheek they have, that gets them Crocusses on. It's amazing. They'll stare a fellow in the face, and make him believe he's ill whether he is or no. The man I speak of is a first-rate cove; he trains it and coaches it from market to market like any gentleman. He wears a stunning fawny (ring) on his finger, an out-and-out watch and guard, and not a duffer neither—no gammon; and a slap-up suit of black togs. I've seen the swell bosmen (farmers) buy the pills to give the people standing about, just to hear the Crocus patter. Why they've got the cheek to pitch their stall with their worms opposite a regular medical man's shop, and say, 'Go over the way and see what he'll do—he'll drive up in a horse and gig to your door, and make you pay for it too; but I don't—I've walked here to do you good, and I will do you good before I leave you. One trial is all I ask'—and quite enough too (said my informant). I'll warrant they won't come a second time; if they do, it's with a stick in their hands. If he does much business in the worm-powder way (some have it in cakes for children), the Crocus never gives them a chance to catch him. But if it's only pills, he'll show next market day, or a month after, and won't he crack about it then? He says, 'One trial is all I ask,' and one of them got it and was transported. I knew one of these Crocusses who was once so hard up from lushing and boozing about that he went into a field and collected sheep dung and floured it over, and made his pills of it, and made the people swallow it at Lutterworth market, in Leicestershire; because there they'll swallow anything. If the Crocus I have mentioned see this in the paper—as he will, for he's a reading-man—won't he come out bounceful? He'll say, 'Why am I thus attacked—why don't the proprietor and the editor of this paper come forward—if he's among you? Who made this report? let him come forward, and I'll refute him face to face.' And no doubt (my informant remarked), he'd give him a tidy dose, too, the Crocus would. For myself, I'd far rather meet him face to face than his medicine, either his blue or his pink water. There's another sort who carry on the crocussing business, but on a small scale; they're on the penny and twopenny racket, and are called hedge-crocusses—men who sell corn salve, or 'four pills

a penny,' to cure anything, and go from house to house in the country. But as the hedge crocus is shickery togged, he makes poorly out. Respectable people won't listen to him, and it's generally the lower order that he gulls. These hedge fellows are slow and dull; they go mouching along as if they were croaking themselves. I've seen the head crocus I've mentioned at four markets in one week, and a town on a Saturday night, clear from 5*l.* to 7*l.*—all clear profit, for his fakement costs him little or nothing. For such a man's pound, the hedge fellow may make 1*s.* The next I'll tell you about is durrynacking, or duryking. The gipsies (and they're called Romanies) are the leading mob at this racket, but they're well known, and I needn't say anything about those ladies. But there're plenty of travelling women who go about with a basket and a bit of driss (lace) in it, gammy lace, for a stall-off (a blind), in case they meet the master, who would order them off. Up at a bosken (farm-house) they'll get among the servant girls, being pretty well acquainted with the neighbourhood by inquiries on the road, as to the number of daughters and female servants. The first inquiry is for the missus or a daughter, and if they can't be got at they're on to the slaveys. Suppose they do get hold of one of the daughters, they commence by offering the driss, which, as it is queer stuff, wouldn't be picked up by an agricultural young lady, as the durrynacker very well knows. Then she begins, 'Ah! my sweet young lady, my blessed looking angel'—if she's as ugly as sin, and forty; they say that, and that's the time you get them to rights, when they're old and ugly, just by sweetening them, and then they don't mind tipping the loaver (money)—'I know you dont want this stuff (she'll continue), there's something on your mind. I see you're in love; but the dear handsome gentleman—he'll not slight you, but loves you as hard as a hammer.' This is thrown out as a feeler, and the young lady is sure to be confused; then the durrynacker has hold of her mauly (hand) in a minute. It's all up with the girl, once the woman gets a grip. She's asked in directly, and of course the sisters (if she has any) and the slavey are let into the secret, and all have their fortunes told. The fortune-teller may make a week's job of it, according as the loaver comes out. She'll come away with her basket full of eggs, bacon, butter, tea and sugar, and all sorts of things. I have seen them bring the scran in! Every one is sure to have handsome husbands, thumping luck, and pretty children. The durrynacker, too, is not particular, if there's a couple of silver spoons—she doesn't like odd ones; and mind you, she always carries a basket—big enough too. I know a man on this lurk, but he works the article with a small glass globe filled full of water, and in that he shows girls their future husbands, and kids them on to believe they do see them—ay, and the church they're to be married in—and they fancy they do see it as they twist the globe this way and that, while he twists the tin out of them, and no flies. He actually had the cheek, though he knew

I was fly to every fake, to try to make me believe that I could see the place where Smith O'Brien had the fight in Ireland! 'Don't you see them cabbages, and a tall man in a green velvet cap among them, holloring out, "I'm the King of Munster?"' I don't know any other male durrynacker worth noticing; the women have all the call. Young women won't ask their fortunes of men. The way the globe man does is to go among the old women and fiddle (humbug) them, and, upon my word, three-parts of them are worse than the young ones. Now I'll tell you about the tat (rag) gatherers; buying rags they call it, but I call it bouncing people. Two men I lodged with once, one morning hadn't a farthing, regularly smashed up, not a feather to fly with, they'd knocked down all their tin lushing. Well, they didn't know what to be up to, till one hit upon a scheme. 'I've got it, Joe,' says he. He borrows two blue plates from the lodging-house keeper, a washing jug and basin. Off they goes, one with the crockery, and the other with a bag. They goes into the by-courts in Windsor, because this bouncing caper wouldn't do in the main drag. Up goes the fellow with a bag, and hollas out, 'Now, women, bring out your copper, brass, white rags, old flannel, bed-sacking, old ropes, empty bottles, umbrellas—any mortal thing—the best price is given;' and the word's hardly out, when up comes his pal, hollaring, 'Sam, holloa! stop that horse,' as if he'd a horse and cart passing the court, and then the women bring out their umbrellas and things, and the're all to be exchanged for crockery such as he shows, and all goes into the bag, and the bagman goes off with the things, leaving the other to do the bounce, and he keeps singing out for the horse and cart with the load of crockery, gammoning there is one, that the ladies may have their choice, and he then hurries down to quicken his cart-driver's movements, and hooks it, leaving the flats completely stunned. Oh! it does give them a ferry-cadouzer. Two other men go about on this lurk, one with an old cracked plate under his waistcoat, and the other with a bag. And one sings out, 'Now, women, fourpence a pound for your white rags. None of your truck system, your needles and thread for it. I don't do it that way; ready money, women, is the order of the day with me.' Well, one old mollesher (woman), though she must have known her rags would only bring 2*d.* a lb. at a fair dealer's, if there be one, brought out 8 lbs. of white rags. He weighs them with his steelyards, and in they went to the bag. The man with the bag steps it immediately, and the other whips out his flute quite carelessly, and says—'Which will you have marm, Jem Crow, or the Bunch of Roses?' The old woman says directly, 'What do you mean, 8 times 4 is 32, and 32 pence is 2*s.* 8*d.*; never mind, I won't be hard, give me half-a-crown.' Well, when she finds there's no money, out she hollars, and he plays his distracted flute to drown her voice, and backs himself manfully out of the court. I have known these men get on so that I have seen them with a good horse and cart. There's another class

of rag bloaks, who have bills printed with the Queen's Arms at the top, if you please, 'By royal authority'—that's their own authority, and they assume plenty of it. Well, this bill specifies the best prices for rags, left-off clothes, &c. One fellow goes and drops these bills at the kens (houses), the other comes after him, and as the man who drops marks every house where a bill has been taken, the second man knows where to call. Any house where he gets a call commences the caper. Well, anything to be disposed of is brought out, often in the back yard. The party of the house produces the bill, which promises a stunning tip for the old lumber. The man keeps sorting the things out, and running them down as not so good as he expected; but at the same time he kids them on by promising three times more than the things are worth. This is a grand racket—the way he fakes them, and then he says, 'Marm (or sir, as it may be), I shall give you 15*s.* for the lot,' which stuns the party, for they never expected to get anything like that—and their expectations is not disappointed, for they don't. Then he turns round directly, and commences sorting more particularly than before, putting the best and the easiest to carry altogether. He starts up then, and whips a couple of bob, or half a bull (2*s.* 6*d.*) into the woman's hand, saying, 'I always like to bind a bargain, marm—one of the fairest dealing men travelling. Do save all your old lumber for me.' Of a sudden he begins searching his pockets, and exclaims, 'Dear me, I haven't enough change in my pocket, but I'll soon settle that—my mate has it outside. I'll just take a load out to the cart, and come back for the others with the money;' and so he hooks it, and I've no occasion to tell you he never comes back; and that's what he calls having them on the knock."

The other inmates at the lodging-houses which my informant described are of the class concerning whom full information is or will be given in other portions of this or the following letters. His description of the lodging-houses, too, was a corroboration of the statement I give to-day. All the classes described meet and mix at the lodging-houses.

I shall reserve what I have to say concerning the influence of the low lodging-houses of London and the country till the conclusion of the present volume.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CHEMICAL ARTICLES OF MANUFACTURE.

THE street purveyors of blacking, of the different preparations of black lead, of plating-balls, of corn-salves, of grease-removing compositions, of china and glass cements, of rat poisons, of fly-papers, of beetle-wafers, of gutta-percha heads, of lucifer-matches, and of cigar-lights, may be classed generally under two heads. They are either very old or very young persons, or else they are men who recommend their wares by patter.

Among the first-mentioned class are the vendors of cakes of blacking, papers of black-lead, and lucifer matches. Of blacking and black-lead the street-sellers are more frequently old women; of

lucifer matches they are usually women and children, and of all ages. It is not uncommon, in the quieter roads of the suburbs especially, to see a young woman extend her bare red arm from beneath a scanty ragged shawl, and with an imploring look, a low curtsey, and a piteous tone, proffer a box of matches for sale; while a child in her arms, perhaps of two or three years old, extends in its little hand another box. There are also in the street sale of lucifer matches very many girls and boys, parentless or uncared for, and many old or infirm women and men.

The street-sellers of chemically-manufactured articles, who feel it necessary to recommend their wares by a little street oratory, or patter, (the paper-worker, whose humorous remarks I have before quoted, once described it to me as "advertising by word of mouth,") are the vendors of the articles which are to cure, to repair, to renovate, or to kill. Any other itinerant vendors of chemical articles are of the ordinary class of street traders.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF BLACKING, BLACK LEAD, ETC.

I SPECIFY these two commodities jointly, because they are frequently sold by the same individual. In Whitechapel and Spitalfields are eight establishments, where the street-sellers of blacking are principally supplied with their stock. It is sold in cakes, which are wrapped in a kind of oil paper, generally printed on the back, so as to catch the eye, with the address of some well-known blacking manufacturer. Thus some which a street-seller of blacking showed me were printed, in large type, as a sort of border, "Lewis's India Rubber Blacking," while in the middle was a very black and very predominant 30, and beneath it, in small and hardly distinguishable type, "Princess-st., Portman-market." Any shopkeeper, who "supplies the trade," if he be a regular customer of the manufacturer, can have his name and address printed on the cover of the blacking-cakes. The 30 is meant to catch the eye with the well-known flourish of "30, Strand."

The quality of these cakes of blacking, the street-sellers whom I questioned told me was highly approved by their customers, and, as blacking is purchased by the classes who aim at a smartness and cleanliness above that of the purchasers of many street commodities, there is no reason to doubt the assertion. The sale of this blacking, indeed, is chiefly on a round, and it would be hopeless as to future custom to call a second time at any house where bad blacking had been sold on a previous visit. The article is vended wholesale, in "gross boxes," and "half-gross boxes." The half-gross boxes are 1*s.* 9*d.*, and capital, even in this trifling trade, has its customary advantages, for the "gross boxes" are but 3*s.* It should be remembered, however, that to the buyer of two "half-gross" a couple of the plain wooden boxes, in which the blacking is sold, and often hawked, must be supplied; but to the buyer of a "gross box" only one of these cases is furnished. I may mention, to the credit

of the vendors, that of the wholesale blacking makers, two have themselves been street-sellers, and one still, but only at intervals, goes "on a blacking-round" among his old customers. There are other blacking-makers, but those I have specified, as to number, are more particularly the providers for the street trade. The poor people who sell blacking at a distance from the manufacturer's premises—as in the case of the "30, Princess-st., Portman-market"—are supplied by oilmen, chandlers, and other shopkeepers, who buy largely of the manufacturers, and can consequently supply the purchasers by the dozen, for street sale or hawking, as cheaply as they would be supplied by the manufacturer himself. A dozen is generally charged 3½d., and as the cakes are sold at ½d. each (occasionally 1d., both by the street people and more frequently the small shopkeepers) the profit is moderate enough. The cakes, however, which are regularly retailed at 1d., are larger, and cost nearly twice the amount of the others whole-sale.

This trade presents the peculiarity of being almost entirely a street "door-to-door" trade, as I heard it described. Blacking is not presented for purposes of begging, as are lucifer-matches, tracts, memorandum-books, boot-laces, &c.; for the half-trading, half-begging, is carried on in the quieter parts of town, and more extensively in the suburbs, ladies being principally accosted, and to them blacking is not offered.

There are now, I learn from good authority, never fewer than 200 persons selling cake blacking, "from door to door." More than half of them are elderly women, and more than three-fourths women of all ages and girls. The other sellers are old men and boys. None of the blacking-sellers make the article they vend. To sell eight dozen cakes a week is a full average, and of these the "pennies" and the "half-pennies" are about equally divided. This gives a weekly outlay of 6s. to each individual seller, with an average profit of about 2s. 6d., and shows a yearly street-expenditure by the public of 3120l. The profit, however, is not in equal apportionment among the traders in blacking, for the "old hands" on a regular round will do double the business of the others.

In liquid blacking the trade is now small. It is occasionally sold in the street markets on Saturday nights, but the principal traffic is in the public-houses. This kind of blacking is retailed at 2d. a bottle, and, I was informed by a man who had sold it, was "rather queer stuff." It is labelled "equal to" (in very small letters) DAY AND MARTIN in very large letters. One of the manufacturers a few years ago told my informant that he had been threatened "with being sued for piracy, but it was no use suing a mouse." There are sometimes none, and sometimes twenty persons hawking this blacking, and they are principally, I am informed, the servants of showmen, "out of employ," or "down on their luck." Some of these men "raffle" their blacking in public-houses. They are provided with tickets, numbered from one to six, which are thrown, the

blank sides upwards on a table, and the drawer of number six wins a two-penny bottle of blacking for ½d.; for this the raffler receives 3d. Few of these traders sell more than one dozen bottles in a day, the principal trade being in the evening, and "one-and-a-half dozen is a very good day." The goods are carried in a sack, slung from the shoulder, and are a very heavy carriage, as two-and-a-half dozen, which are often carried, weigh about 100 lbs. If ten men, the year through, take each 6s. weekly (about half the amount being profit), which, I am assured, is the average extent of the trade, we find 156l. yearly expended in this liquid blacking. "Ten years ago," said one blacking seller to me, "it was three times as much as it is now." At the mews blacking is sold by men who are for the most part servants out of place, or who have become known to the denizens of the mews, from having been "helpers" in some capacity, if they have not worn a livery. Here the article vended is what it is announced to be,—"Hoby's" or "Everett's" blacking. The sellers are known to the coachmen and grooms, many of whom have to "find their own blacking," or there would be no business done in the mews, the dwellers there being great sticklers for "a good article." The profit to the vendors is 3s. in 12s. Shilling bottles are vended as numerous as "sixpennies." An old coachman, who had lived in mews in all parts of town, calculated that, take the year through, there was every day twenty men selling blacking in the mews, with an average profit of 10d. a day, or 5s. a week, so taking 15s. each. This gives a mews expenditure, yearly, of 780l.

*Black-Lead*, for the polishing of grates, is sold in small paper packets, the half ounce being a ½d., and the ounce a 1d. The profit is cent per cent. Nearly all the women who sell blacking, as I have described, sell black-lead also. In addition to these elderly traders, however, there are from twenty to thirty boys and girls who vend black-lead in the street markets, but chiefly on Saturday nights, and on other days offer it through the area rails—their wretched plight, without any actual begging, occasionally procuring them custom.

The black-lead sold in the streets has often a label in imitation of that of established shopkeepers, as "Superfine Pencil Black-Lead, prepared expressly for, and sold by T. H. Jennings, Oil-Colour and Italian Warehouse, 25, Wormwood-street, City." The name and address must of course be different, but the arrangement of the lines, and often the type, is followed closely, as are the adornments of the packet, which in the instance cited are heraldic. In other parts of town, the labels of tradesmen are imitated in a similar way, but not very closely; and in nearly half the quantity sold a *bona fide* label is given, without imitation or sham. "There would be more sold in that way," I was told by a sharp lad, "quite the real ticket, if the dons as whole-sales the black-lead, would make it up to sell in ha'porths and penn'orths, with a proper 'lowance to us as sells." This boy and a young sister went on a round; the boy with black-lead, the girl with

boot-laces, in one direction, the mother going in another, and each making for their room at six in the evening, or as soon as "sold out."

There are, I am informed, 100 to 150 persons selling and hawking black-lead in the streets, and it may be estimated that they take 4s. each weekly (the adults selling other small articles with the black-lead); thus we find, averaging the number of sellers at 125, that 1250l. is yearly expended in this article, half of which sum forms the profit of the street-folk.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF FRENCH POLISH.

THE greater part of the French polish vended in the streets is bought at oil and varnish-shops in Bethnal-green and Whitechapel, the wholesale price being 1s. a pint. The street-vendors add turpentine to the polish, put it into small bottles, and retail it at 1d. a bottle. They thus contrive to clear 5d. on each shilling they take.

There are now five and sometimes six men selling French polish in the streets and public-houses. "But the trade's getting stale," I was told; "there was twice as many in it three or four years back, and there'll be fewer still next year." When French polish first became famous there were, I was informed, several cabinet-makers who hawked it—some having prepared it themselves—and they would occasionally clear 5s. in a day. Of these street-traders there are now none, the present vendors having been in no way connected with the manufacture of furniture. These men generally carry with them pieces of "fancy wood," such as rose, or sandal wood, which they polish up in the streets to show the excellence of the varnish. The chief purchasers are working people and small tradespeople, or their wives, who require trifling quantities of such a composition when they re-polish any small article of furniture.

The French polish-sellers, I am assured by a man familiar with the business, take 2s. a day each, or rather in an evening, for the sales are then the most frequent: the 2s. leaves a profit of 10d. The street expenditure is, therefore (reckoning five regular sellers), 156l. yearly. None of the French polish-sellers confine themselves entirely to the sale of it.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF GREASE-REMOVING COMPOSITIONS.

THE persons engaged in this trade carry it on with a regular patter. One man's street announcement is in the following words: "Here you have a composition to remove stains from silks, muslins, bombazeens, cords, or tabarets of any kind or colour. It will never injure nor fade the finest silk or satin, but restore it to its original colour. For grease on silks, &c., only rub the composition on dry, let it remain five minutes, then take a clothes' brush and brush it off, and it will be found to have removed the stains. For grease in woollen cloths spread the composition on the place with a piece of woollen cloth and cold water; when dry rub it off, and it will remove the grease or stain. For pitch or tar use hot water instead of cold, as that prevents the nap coming off the cloth. Here

it is. Squares of grease-removing composition, never known to fail, only 1d. each."

This street-traffic, I was informed, was far more extensively carried on when silks and woollen cloths, and textile manufactures generally, were more costly and more durable than at present, and when to dye, and scour, and "turn" a garment, was accounted good housewifery. The sellers then told wonders of their making old silk gowns, or old coats, as good as new, by removing every discolouration, no matter from what cause. Now a silk dress is rarely, if ever, subjected to the experiment of being renovated by the virtues of grease-removing compositions sold in the streets. The trade, at present, is almost confined to the removing of the grease from coat-collars, or of stains from contact with paint, &c., with which boys (principally) have damaged their garments.

The grease-remover generally carries his wares on a tray slung in front of him, and often illustrates the efficacy of his composition, by showing its application to the very greasy collar of a boy's old jacket, which is removed with admirable facility. The man patters as he carries on this work. "You would have thought now that jacket was done for, and only fit for the rag-bag, or to go to make up a lot for a Jew; but with my composition—only 1d. a cake—it has acquired a new nap and a new gloss, and you've escaped a tailor's bill for awhile for 1d. You can use your own eyes. You've seen me do it, and here's the very same stuff as I have proved to you is so useful and was never known to fail. No mother, or wife, or mistress, or maid, that wishes to be careful and not waste money, should be without it in the house. It removes stains from silks, &c., &c."

Notwithstanding these many recommendations, the street trade in grease-removing cakes is a very poor one. It cannot be carried on in bad weather, for an audience cannot then be collected, and to clear 1s. 6d. in a day is accounted fair work. No grease-remover confines his trade to that commodity. One of the best known sells also plate balls, and occasionally works conundrums and comic exhibitions. The two brothers, who were formerly Grecians at the Blue Coat School, are also in this line. There are now seven men who sell grease-removing compositions, which they prepare themselves. The usual ingredients are pipe clay, two pennyworth of which is heat up and "worked with two colours," generally red lead and stone blue. This gives the composition a streaky look, and takes away the appearance of pipe clay.

The purchasers of this article are, I am told, women and servants, but the trade is one which is declining. One of the best localities for sale is Ratchiff Highway and the purchasers there are sailors. One man told me that he once made a pound's worth for a sailor, who took it to sea with him. The street-seller did not know for what purpose, but he conjectured that it was as a matter of speculation to a foreign country.

Calculating that the seven grease-removers carry on the sale of the article 3 days each week, and clear 1s. 6d. per day, we find 75 guineas yearly

expended in the streets for the removal of grease. Nearly the whole is profit.

*Plating Balls* are generally sold by the grease-removers, but sometimes they are proffered for sale alone. There are four men whose principal dependance is on the sale of plating balls. One announces his wares as "making plate as good as silver, and all inferior metals equal to the best plated. No tarnish can stand against my plate balls," he goes on, "and if, in this respectable company, there should chance to be any lady or genl'man that has no plate, then let him make an old brass candlestick shine like gold, or his tin candlestick, extinguisher and all, shine like silver. Here are the balls that can do it, and only 4 a penny. You have only to rub the ball on your wash-leather, or dry woollen cloth, and rub it on what has to be restored. Four a penny!"

These balls, which are prepared by the street-sellers, are usually made of a halfpennyworth of whitening, a farthing's worth of red-lead, and an ounce of quicksilver, costing 7d. A gross of balls costs 7½d., as regards the materials. The receipts of the plating ball sellers are the same as those of the grease-removers, but with a somewhat smaller profit.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CORN-SALVE.

THE street purveyors of corn-salve, or corn-plaster, for I heard both words used, are not more than a dozen in number; but, perhaps, none depend *entirely* upon the sale of corn-salve for a living. As is the wont of the pattering class to which they belong, these men make rounds into the country and into the suburbs, but there are sometimes, on one day, a dozen "working the main drags" (chief thoroughfares) of London: there are no women in the trade. The salve is most frequently carried on a small tray, slung in front of the street professional; but sometimes it is sold at a small stall or stand. Oxford-street, Holborn, Tottenham-court-road, and Whitechapel, are favourite localities for these traders; as are Blackfriars-road and Newington-causeway on the Surrey side of the Thames. On the Saturday evening the corn-salve sellers resort to the street markets.

The patter of these traders is always to the same purport (however differently expressed)—the long-tested efficacy and the unquestionable cheapness of their remedies. The vendors are glib and unhesitating; but some, owing, I imagine, to a repetition of the same words, as they move from one part of a thoroughfare to another, or occupy a pitch, have acquired a monotonous tone, little calculated to impress a street audience—to effect which a man must be, or appear to be, in earnest. The patter of one of these dealers, who sells corn-salve on fine evenings, and works the public-houses, "with anything likely," on wet evenings, is, from his own account, in the following words:—

"Here you have a speedy remedy for every sort of corn! Your hard corn, soft corn, blood corn, black corn, old corn, new corn, wart, or bunion, can be safely cured in three days! Nothing further to do but spread this salve on a piece of

glove-leather, or wash-leather, and apply it to the place. Art and nature does the rest. Either corns, warts, or bunions, cured for one penny."

This, however, is but as the announcement of the article on sale, and is followed by a recapitulation of the many virtues of that peculiar recipe; but, as regards the major part of these street-traders, the recapitulation is little more than a change of words, if that. There are, however, one and sometimes two patterers, of acknowledged powers, who every now and then sell corn-salve—for the restlessness of this class of people drives them to incessant changes in their pursuits—and their oratory is of a higher order. One of the men in question speaks to the following purport:—

"Here you are! here you are! all that has to complain of corns. As fast as the shoemaker lames you, I'll cure you. If it wasn't for me he dursn't sing at his work; bless you, but he knows I'll make his pinching easy to you. Hard corn, soft corn, any corn—sold again! Thank you, sir, you'll not have to take a 'bus home when you've used my corn-salve, and you can wear your boots out then; you can't when you've corns. Now, in this little box you see a large corn which was drawn by this very salve from the honourable foot of the late lamented Sir Robert Peel. It's been in my possession three years and four months, and though I'm a poor man—hard corn, soft corn, or any corn—though I'm a poor man, the more's the pity, I wouldn't sell that corn for the newest sovereign coined. I call it the free-trade corn, genl'men and leddis. No cutting and paring, and sharpening penknives, and venturing on razors to level your corns; this salve draws them out—only one penny—and without pain. But wonders can't be done in a moment. To draw out such a corn as I've shown you, the foot, the whole foot, must be soaked five minutes in warm soap and water. That makes the salve penetrate, and draw the corn, which then falls out, in three days, like a seed from a flower. Hard corn, soft corn, &c., &c."

The corn from "the honourable foot" of Sir Robert Peel, or from the foot of any one likely to interest the audience, has been scraped and trimmed from a cow's heel, and may safely be submitted to the inspection and handling of the incredulous. "There it is," the corn-seller will reiterate—"it speaks for itself."

One practice—less common than it was, however,—of the corn-salve street-seller, is to get a friend to post a letter—expressive of delighted astonishment at the excellence and rapidity of the corn-cure—at some post-office not very contiguous. If the salve-seller be anxious to remove the corns of the citizens, he displays this letter, with the genuine post-mark of Piccadilly, St. James's-street, Pall-mall, or any such quarter, to show how the fashionable world avails itself of his wares, cheap as they are, and fastidious as are the fashionable! If the street-professional be offering his corn-cures in a fashionable locality, he produces a letter from Cheapside, or Cornhill—"there it is, it speaks for itself"—to show how the shrewd city-people, who were never taken in



THE BONE-GRUBBER.

[From a Photograph.]

by street-sellers in their lives, and couldn't be, appreciated that particular corn-salve! Occasionally, as the salve-seller is pattering, a man comes impetuously forward, and says loudly, "Here, doctor, let me have a shilling's-worth. I bought a penn'orth, and it cured one corn by bringing it right out—here the d—d thing is, it troubled me seven year—and I've got other corns, and I'm determined I'll root out the whole family of them. Come, now, look sharp, and put up a shilling's-worth." The shilling's-worth is gravely handed to the applicant as if it were not only a *bona fide*, but an ordinary occurrence in the way of business.

One corn-salve seller—who was not in town at the time of my inquiry into this curious matter—had, I was assured, "and others might have" full faith in the efficacy of the salve he vended. One of his fellow-traders said to me, "Ay, sir, and he has good reason for trusting to it for a cure; he cured me of my corns, that I'm sure of; so there can be no nonsense about it. He has a secret." On my asking this informant if he had tried his own corn-salve, he laughed, and said "No! I'm like the regular doctors that way, never tries my own things." The same man, who had no great faith in what he sold being of any use in the cure of "corn, wart, or bunion," assured me—and I have no doubt with truth—that he had sold his remedy to persons utter strangers to him, who had told him afterwards that it had cured their corns. "False relics," says a Spanish proverb, "have wrought true miracles," and to what cause these corn-cures were attributable, it is not my business to inquire.

I had no difficulty in acquiring a knowledge of the ingredients of a street corn-salve. "Anybody," said one man, "that understands how to set about it, can get the recipe for 2d." Resin, 1 lb., (costing 2d.); tallow,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.); emerald green (1d.); all boiled together. The emerald green, I was told, was to "give it a colour." The colour is varied, but I have cited the most usual mode of preparation. Attempts have been made to give an aromatic odour to the salve, but all the perfumes within the knowledge, or rather the means, of the street-sellers, were overpowered by the resin and the tallow, "and it has," remarked one dealer, "a physicky sort of smell as it is, which answers." The quantity I have cited would supply a sufficiency of the composition for the taking of "a sovereign in penn'orths." In a week or so the stuff becomes discoloured, often from dust, and has to be re-boiled. Some of the traders illustrate the mode of applying the salve by carrying a lighted candle, and a few pieces of leather, and showing how to soften the composition and spread it on the leather. "After all, sir," said the man, who had faith in the virtues of his fellow street-trader's salve, "the regular thing, such as I sell, may do good; I cannot say; but it is very likely that the resin will draw the corn, just as people apply cobbler's wax, which has resin in it. The chemists will sell you something of the same sort as I do."

The principal purchasers are working men, who

buy in the streets, and occasionally in the public-houses. The trade, however, becomes less and less remunerative. To take 15s. in a week is a good week, and to take 10s. is more usual; the higher receipt is no doubt attributable to a superior patter being used, as men will give 1d. to be amused by this street work, without caring about the nostrum. Calculating that eight of these traders take 10s. weekly—so allowing for the frequent resort of the patters to anything more attractive—we find 208l. expended in the streets on this salve. The profits of the seller are about the same as his receipts, for 240 pennyworths can be made out of materials costing only 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. The further outlay necessary to this street profession is a tray worth 1s. or 1s. 6d., but a large old backgammon board, which may be bought at the second-hand shops for 1s. and sometimes for 6d., is more frequently used by the street purveyors of corn-salve.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF GLASS AND CHINA CEMENT, AND OF RAZOR PASTE.

THE sale of glass and china cement is an old trade in the streets, but one which becomes less and less followed. Before the finer articles of crockeryware became cheap as they are now, it was of importance to mend, if possible, a broken dish of better quality, and of more importance to mend a china punch-bowl. Dishes, however, are now much cheaper, and china punch-bowls are no longer an indispensable part of even tavern festivity.

The sellers of this cement proclaim it as one which will "cure any china, stone, or earthenware, and make the broken parts adhere so firmly, that if you let it fall again, it will break, not at the part where it has been cemented, but at some other. Only a halfpenny, or a penny a stick." These traders sometimes illustrate the adhesive strength of the composition by producing a plate or dish which has been cemented in different places, and letting it fall, to break in some hitherto sound part. This they usually succeed in doing. For the cementing of glass the street article is now perhaps never sold, and was but scantily sold, I am informed, at any time, as the junction was always unsightly.

There are now four men who sell this cement in the streets, one usually to be found in Wilderness-row, Goswell-street, being, perhaps, the one who carries on the trade most regularly. They all make their own cement; one of the receipts being—1 lb. shellac (5d.),  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. brimstone ( $\frac{1}{2}$ d.), blended together until it forms a thick sort of glue. This quantity makes half-a-crown's-worth of the cement for the purposes of retail. The sellers do not confine themselves to one locality, but are usually to be found in one or other of the street-markets on a Saturday night. If each seller take 5s. weekly (of which 4s. may be profit), we find 52l. expended yearly by street customers in this cement.

I include razor paste under this head, as sometimes, and at one time more frequently than now,

the same individual sold both articles, though not at the same time.

There are twelve street-sellers of razor-paste, but they seem to prefer "working" the distant suburbs, or going on country rounds, as there are often only three in London. It is still vended, I am told, to clerks, who use it to sharpen their pen-knives, but the paste, owing to the prevalence of the use of steel pens, is now almost a superfluity, compared to what it was. It is bought also, and frequently enough in public-houses, by working men, as a means of "setting" their razors. The vendors make the paste themselves, except two, who purchase of a street-seller. The ingredients are generally fuller's earth (1*d.*), hog's lard (1*d.*), and emery powder (2*d.*). The paste is sold in boxes carried on a tray, which will close and form a sort of case, like a backgammon board. The quantity I have given will make a dozen boxes (each sold at 1*d.*), so that the profit is 7*d.* in the 1*s.*, for to the 4*d.* paid for ingredients must be added 1*d.*, for the cost of a dozen boxes. The paste is announced as "warranted to put an edge to a razor or pen-knife superior to anything ever before offered to the public." The street-sellers offer to prove this by sharpening any gentleman's pen-knife on the paste spread on a piece of soldier's old belt, which sharpening, when required, they accomplish readily enough. One of these paste-sellers, I was told, had been apprenticed to a barber; another had been a cutler, the remainder are of the ordinary class of street-sellers.

Calculating that 6 men "work" the metropolis daily, taking 2*s.* each per day (with 1*s.* 2*d.* profit), we find 187*l.* the amount of the street outlay.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLER OF CRACKERS AND DETONATING BALLS.

THIS trade, I am informed by persons familiar with it, would be much more frequently carried on by street-folk, and in much greater numbers, were it not the one which of all street callings finds the least toleration from the police. "You must keep your eyes on both corners of the street," said one man, "when you sell crackers; and what good is it the police stopping us? The boys have only to go to a shop, and then it's all right."

The trade is only known in the streets at holiday seasons, and is principally carried on for a few days before and after the 5th of November, and again at Christmas-tide. "Last November was good for crackers," said one man; "it was either Guy Faux day, or the day before, I'm not sure which now, that I took 15*s.*, and nearly all of boys, for waterloo crackers and ball crackers (the common trade names), 'waterloo' being the 'pulling crackers.' At least three parts was ball crackers. I sold them from a barrow, wheeling it about as if it was hearthstone, and just saying quietly when I could, 'Six a penny crackers.' The boys soon tell one another. All sorts bought of me; doctors' boys, school boys, pages, boys as was dressed beautiful, and boys as hadn't neither shoes nor stockings. It's sport for them all." The same man told me he did well at what

he called "last Poram fair," clearing 13*s.* 6*d.* in three days, or rather evenings or nights. "Poram fair, sir," he said, "is a sort of feast among the Jews, always three weeks I've heard, afore their Passover, and I then work Whitechapel and all that way."

I inquired of a man who had carried on this street trade for a good many years, it might be ten or twelve, if he had noticed the uses to which his boy-customers put his not very innocent wares, and he entered readily into the subject.

"Why, sir," he said, "they're not all boy-customers, as you call them, but they're far the most. I've sold to men, and often to drunken men. What larks there is with the ball-crackers! One man lost his eye at Stepney Fair, but that's 6 or 7 years ago, from a lark with crackers. The rights of it I never exactly understood, but I know he lost his eye, from the dry gravel in the ball-cracker bouncing into it. But it's the boys as is fondest of crackers. I sold 'em all last Christmas, and made my 5*s.* and better on Boxing-day. I was sold out before 6 o'clock, as I had a regular run at last—just altogether. After that, I saw one lad go quietly behind a poor lame old woman and pull a Waterloo close behind her ear; he was a biggish boy and tidily dressed; and the old body screamed, 'I'm shot.' She turned about, and the boy says, says he, 'Does your grandmother know you're out? It's a improper thing, so it is, for you to be walking out by yourself.' You should have seen her passion! But as she was screaming out, 'You saucy wagabone! You boys is all wagabones. People can't pass for you. I'll give you in charge, I will,' the lad was off like a shot.

"But one of the primest larks I ever saw that way was last winter, in a street by Shoreditch. An old snob that had a bulk was making it all right for the night, and a lad goes up. I don't know what he said to the old boy, but I saw him poke something, a last I think it was, against the candle, put it out, and then run off. In a minute, three or four lads that was ready, let fly at the bulk with their ball-crackers, and there was a clatter as if the old snob had tumbled down, and knocked his lasts down; but he soon had his head out—he was Irish, I think—and he first set up a roar like a Smithfield bull, and he shouts, 'I'm kilt intirely wid the murthering pistols! Po—lice! Po—lice!' He seemed taken quite by surprise—for they was capital crackers—I think he couldn't have been used to bulks, or he would have been used to pelting; but how he did bellow, surely.

"I think it was that same night too, I saw a large old man, buttoned up, but seeming as if he was fine-dressed for a party, in a terrible way in the Commercial-road. I lived near there then. There was three boys afore me—and very well they did it—one of 'em throws a ball-cracker bang at the old gent's feet, just behind him, and makes him jump stunning, and the boy walks on with his hands in his pocket, as if he know'd nothing about it. Just after that another boy does the same, and then the t'other boy; and the old gent—Lord,

how he swore! It was shocking in such a respectable man, as I told him, when he said, 'I'd cracked him! 'Me cracker you,' says I; 'it 'ud look better if you'd have offered to treat a poor fellow to a pint of beer with ginger in it, and the chill off, than talk such nonsense.' As we was having this jaw, one of the boys comes back and lets fly again; and the old gent saw how it was, and he says, 'Now, if you'll run after that lad, and give him a d—d good hiding, you shall have the beer.' 'Money down, sir,' says I, 'if you mean honour bright;' but he grumbled something, and walked away. I saw him soon after, talking to a Bobby, so I made a short cut home."

At the fairs near London there is a considerable sale of these combustibles; and they are often displayed on large stalls in the fair. They furnish the means of practical jokes to the people on their return. "After last Whitsun Greenwich Fair," said a street-seller to me, I saw a gent in a white choker, like a parson, look in at a pastry-cook's shop, as is jist by the Elephant (and Castle), a-waiting for a 'bus, I s'pose. There was an old oman with a red face standing near him; and I saw a lad, very quick, pin something to one's coat and the t'other's gown. They turned jist arter, and bang goes a Waterloo, and they looks savage one at another; and hup comes that indetical boy, and he says to the red faced 'oman, a pointing to the white choker, 'Marm, I seed him a twiddling with your gown. He done it for a lark arter the fair, and ought to stand something.' So the parson, if he were a parson, walked away."

There are eight makers, I am told, who supply the street-sellers and the small shops with these crackers. The wholesale price is 4*d.* to 6*d.* a gross, the "cracker-balls" being the dearest. The retail price in the streets is from six to twelve a penny, according to the appearance and eagerness of the purchaser. Some street traders carry these commodities on trays, and very few are stationary, except at fairs. I am assured, that for a few days last November, from 50 to 60 men and women were selling crackers in the streets, of course "on the sly." In so irregular and surreptitious a trade, it is not possible even to approximate to statistics. The most intelligent man that I met with, acquainted, as he called it, "with all the ins and outs of the trade," calculated that in November and Christmas, 100*l.* at least was expended in the streets in these combustibles, and another 100*l.* in the other parts of the year. About Tower-hill, Ratcliff-highway (or "the Highway," as street-sellers often call it), and in Wapping and Shadwell, the sale of crackers is the best. The sellers are the ordinary street-sellers, and no patter is required.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LUCIFER-MATCHES.

UNDER this head I shall speak only of those who sell the matches, apart from those who, in proffering lucifer boxes, mix up trade with mendicancy. The latter class I have spoken of, and shall treat of them more fully under the head of "the London Poor."

Until "lucifers" became cheap and in general use, the matches sold by the street-folks, and there were numbers in the trade, were usually prepared by themselves. The manufactures were simple enough. Wooden splints, twice or thrice the length of the lucifer matches now in use, were prepared, and dipped into brimstone, melted in an iron ladle. The matches were never, as now, self-igniting, or rather ignitable by rapid friction; but it was necessary to "strike a light" by the concussion of a flint and steel, the sparks from which were communicated to tinder kept in a "box."

The brimstone match-sellers were of all ages, but principally, I am told, old people. Many of them during, and for some years after the war, wore tattered regimentals, or some remains of military paraphernalia, and had been, or assumed to have been, soldiers, but not entitled to a pension; the same with seamen. I inquired of some of the present race of match-sellers what became of the "old brimstones," as I heard them called, but from them I could gain little information. An old groundsel-gatherer told me that some went into his trade. Others, I learned, "took to pins," and others to song or tract selling. Indeed the brimstone match-sellers not unfrequently carried a few songs to vend with their matches. It must be borne in mind that, 15 years ago, those street trades, into which any one who is master of a few pence can now embark, were less numerous. Others of the match-sellers, with rounds, or being known men, displaced their "brimstones" for "lucifers," and traded on as usual. I heard of one old man, now dead, who made a living on brimstone-matches by selling a good quantity in Hackney, Stoke Newington, and Islington, and who long refused to sell lucifer-matches; "they was new-fangled rubbish," he said, "and would soon have their day." He found his customers, however, fall off, and in apprehension of losing them all, he was compelled to move with the times.

"I believe, sir," said one man, still a street-seller, but not having sold matches of any kind for years,—"I believe I was the first who hawked 'Congreves,' or 'instantaneous lights;' they weren't called 'lucifers' for a good while after. I bought them at Mr. Jones's light-house in the Strand, and if I remember right, for it must be more than 20 years ago, between 1820 and 1830, Mr. Jones had a patent somehow about them. I bought them at 7*s.* a dozen boxes, and sold them at 1*s.* a box. I'm not sure how many matches was in a box, but I think it was 100. You'll get as much for a farthing now, as you would for a shilling then. The matches were lighted by being drawn quickly through sand-paper. I sold them for a twelvemonth, and had the trade all to myself. As far as I know, I had; for I never met with or heard of anybody else in it all that time. I did decent at it. I suppose I cleared my 15*s.* a week. The price kept the same while I was in the business. I sold them at city offices. I supplied the Phoenix in Lombard-street, I remember, and the better sort of shops.

People liked them when they wanted to light a candle in a hurry, in places where there was no fire to seal a letter, or such like. There was no envelopes in them days. The penny-postage brought them in. I was sometimes told not to carry such things there again, as they didn't want the house set on fire by keeping such dangerous things in it. Now, I suppose, lucifers are in every house, and that there's not a tinder-box used in all London." Such appears to have been the beginning of the extensive street-trade in these chemical preparations now carried on. At the twelvemonth's end, my informant went into another line of business.

The "German Congreves" were soon after introduced, and were at first sold wholesale at the "English and German" swag-shops in Houndsditch, at 2s. the dozen boxes, and were retailed at 3d., 4d., and sometimes as high as 6d. the box. These matches, I am told, "kept their hold" about five years, when they ceased to be a portion of the street trade. The German Congreves were ignited by being drawn along a slip of sand-paper, at the bottom of the box, as is done at present; with some, however, a double piece of sand-paper was sold for purposes of igniting.

After this time cheaper and cheaper matches were introduced, and were sold in the streets immediately on their introduction. At first, the cheaper matches had an unpleasant smell, and could hardly be kept in a bed-room, but that was obviated, and the trade progressed to its present extent.

The lucifer-match boxes, the most frequent in the street-trade, are bought by the poor persons selling them in the streets, at the manufacturers, or at oil-shops, for a number of oilmen buy largely of the manufacturers, and can "supply the trade" at the same rate as the manufacturer. The price is 2½d. the dozen boxes, each box containing 150 matches. Some of the boxes (German made) are round, and many used to be of tin, but these are rarely seen now. The prices are proportionate. The common price of a lucifer box in the streets is ½d., but many buyers, I am told, insist upon and obtain three a penny, which they do generally of some one who supplies them regularly. The trade is chiefly itinerant.

One feeble old man gave me the following account of his customers. He had been in the employ of market-gardeners, carmen, and others, whose business necessitated the use of carts and horses. In his old age he was unable to do any hard work; he was assisted, however, by his family, especially by one son living in the country; he had a room in the house of a daughter, who was a widow, but his children were only working people, with families, he said, and so he sold a few lucifers "as a help," and to have the comfort of a bit of tobacco, and buy an old thing in the way of clothing without troubling any one. Out of his earnings, too, he paid 6d. a week for the schooling of one of his daughter's children.

"I sell these lucifers, sir," he said, in answer to my inquiries, "I never beg with them: I'd

scorn it. My children help me, as I've told you; I did my best for them when I was able, and so I have a just sort of claim on them. Well, indeed, then, sir, as you ask me, if I had only myself to depend upon, why I couldn't live. I must beg or go into the house, and I don't know which I should take to worst at 72. I've been selling lucifers about five years, for I was worn out with hard work and rheumatics when I was 65 or 66. I go regular rounds, about 2 miles in a day, or 2½, or if it's fine 3 miles or more from where I live, and the same distance back, for I can sometimes walk middling if I can do nothing else. I carry my boxes tied up in a handkerchief, and hold 2 or 3 in my hand. I'm ashamed to hold them out on any rail where I aint known; and never do if there isn't a good-humoured looking person to be seen below, or through the kitchen window. But my eyesight aint good, and I make mistakes, and get snapped up very short at times. Yesterday, now, I was lucky in my small way. There's a gentleman, that if I can see him, I can always sell boxes to at 1d. a piece. That's his price, he says, and he takes no change if I offer it. I saw him yesterday at his own door, and says he, 'Well, old greybeard, I haven't seen you for a long time. Here's 1s., leave a dozen boxes.' I told him I had only 11 left; but he said, 'O, it's all the same,' and he told a boy that was crossing the hall to take them into the kitchen, and we soon could hear the housekeeper grumbling quite loud—perhaps she didn't know her master could hear—about being bothered with rubbish that people took in master with; and the gentleman shouts out, 'Some of you stop that old ——— mouth, will you? She wants a profit out of them in her bills.' All was quiet then, and he says to me quite friendly, 'If she wasn't the best cook in London I'd have quitted her long since, by G—.' The old man chuckled no little as he related this; he then went on, 'He's a swearing man, but a good man, I'm sure, and I don't know why he's so kind to me. Perhaps he is to others. I'm ashamed to hold my boxes to the ary rails, 'cause so many does that to beg. I sell lucifers both to mistresses and maids. Some will have 3 for a 1d., and though it's a poor profit, I do it, for they say, 'O, if you come this way constant, we'll buy of you whenever we want. If you won't give 3 a penny, there's plenty will.' I sell, too, in some small streets, Lisson-grove way, to women that see me from their windows, and come down to the door. They're needle-workers I think. They say sometimes, 'I'm glad I've seen you, for it saves me the trouble of running out.'

"Well, sir, I'm sure I hardly know how many boxes I sell. On a middling good day I sell 2 dozen, on a good day 3 dozen, on a bad day not a dozen, sometimes not half-a-dozen, and sometimes, but not often, not more than a couple. Then in bad weather I don't go out, and time hangs very heavy if it isn't a Monday; for every Monday I buy a threepenny paper of a newsman for 2d., and read it as well as I can with my old eyes and glasses, and get my

laughter to read a bit to me in the evening, and next day I send the paper to my son in the country, and so save him buying one. As well as I can tell I sell about 9 dozen boxes a week, one week with another, and clear from 2s. to 2s. 6d. It's employment for me as well as a help."

It is not easy to estimate the precise number of persons who really sell lucifer matches as a means of subsistence, or as a principal means. There are many, especially girls and women, the majority being Irishwomen, who do not directly solicit charity, and do not even say, "Buy a box of lucifers from a poor creature, to get her a ha'porth of bread;" or, "please a bit of broken victuals, if it's only cold potatoes, for a box of the best lucifers." Yet these match-sellers look so imploringly down an area, or through a window, some "shouldering" a young child the while, and remain there so pertinaciously that a box is bought, or a halfpenny given, often merely to get rid of the applicant.

An intelligent man, a street-seller, and familiar with street-trading generally, whom I questioned on the subject, said: "It's really hard to tell, sir, but I should calculate this way. It's the real sellers you ask about; them as tries to live on their selling lucifers, or as their main support. I have worked London and the outside places—yes, I mean the suburbs—in ten rounds, or districts, but six is better, for you can then go the same round the same day next week, and so get known. The real sellers, in my opinion, is old men and women out of employ, or past work, and to beg they are ashamed. I've read the Bible you see, sir, though I've had too much to do with gay persons even to go to church. I should say that in each of those ten rounds, or at any rate, splicing one with another, was twenty persons really selling lucifers. Yes, and depending a good deal upon them, for they're an easy carriage for an infirm body, and as ready a sale as most things. I don't reckon them as begs, or whines, or sticks to a house for an hour, but them as sells; in my opinion, they're 200, and no more. All the others dodges, in one way or other, on pity and charity. There's one lurk that's getting common now. A man well dressed, and very clean, and wearing gloves, knocks at a door, and asks to speak to the master or mistress. If he succeeds, he looks about him as if he was ashamed, and then he pulls out of his coat-pocket a lucifer box or two, and asks, as a favour, to be allowed to sell one, as reduced circumstances drive him to do so. He doesn't beg, but I don't reckon him a seller, for he has always some story or other to tell, that's all a fakement." Most dwellers in a suburb will have met with one of these well-dressed match-sellers.

Adopting my informant's calculation, and supposing that each of these traders take, on lucifers alone, but 4s. weekly, selling nine dozen (with a profit to the seller of from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 6d.), we find 2080l. expended in this way. The matches are sold also at stalls, with other articles, in the street markets, and elsewhere; but this traffic, I am told, becomes smaller, and only amounts to one-

tenth of the amount I have specified as taken by itinerants. These street-sellers reside in all parts of town which I have before specified as the quarters of the poor.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CIGAR LIGHTS, OR FUZEES.

THIS is one of the employments to which boys, whom neglect, ill-treatment, destitution, or a vagrant disposition, have driven or lured to a street life, seem to resort to almost as readily as to the offers, "Old your 'os, sir? "Shall I carry your passel, marm?"

The trifling capital required to enter into the business is one cause of its numbering many followers. The "fuzees," as I most frequently heard them called, are sold at the "Congreve shops," and are chiefly German made. At one time, indeed, they were announced as "German tinder." The wholesale charge is 4½d. per 1000 "lights." The 1000 lights are apportioned into fifty rows, each of twenty self-igniting matches; and these "rows" are sold in the streets, one or two for ½d., and two, three, or four 1d. It is common enough for a juvenile fuzee-seller to buy only 500; so that 2½d. supplies his stock in trade.

The boys (for the majority of the street-traders who sell *only* fuzees, are boys) frequent the approaches to the steam-boat piers, the omnibus stands, and whatever places are resorted to by persons who love to smoke in the open air. Some of these young traders have neither shoes nor stockings, more especially the Irish lads, who are at least half the number, and their apology for a cap fully displays the large red ears, and flat features, which seem to distinguish a class of the Irish children in the streets of London. Some Irish boys hold out their red-tipped fuzees with an appealing look, meant to be plaintive, and say, in a whining tone, "Spend a halfpenny on a poor boy, your honour." Others offer them, without any appealing look or tone, either in silence, or saying—"Buy a fuzee to light your pipe or cigar, sir; a row of lights for a ½d."

I met with one Irish boy, of thirteen or fourteen years of age, who was offering fuzees to the persons going to Chalk Farm fair on Easter Tuesday, but the rain kept away many visitors, and the lad could hardly find a customer. He was literally drenched, for his skin, shining with the rain, could be seen about his arms and knees through the slits of his thin corduroy jacket and trowsers, and he wore no shirt.

"It's oranges I sell in ginral, your honour," he said, "and it's on oranges I hopes to be next week, plaze God. But mother—it's orange-selling she is too—wanted to make a grand show for Aister wake, and tuk the money to do it, and put me on the fuzees. It's the thruth I'm telling your honour. She thought I might be after making a male's mate (meal's meat) "out of them, intirely; but the sorra a male I'll make to day if it cost me a fardin, for I haven't tuk one. I niver remimber any fader; mother and me lives together somehow, glory be to God; but it's often knowin' what it is to be hungry we are. I've

sould fuzees before, when ingans, and nuts, and oranges was dear and not for the poor to buy, but I niver did so bad as to-day. A gentleman once said to me: 'Here, Pat, yer sowl, you look hungry. Here's a thirteener for yez; go and get drunk wid it.' Och, no, your honour, he wasn't an Irish gentleman; it was afther mocking me he was, God save him." On my asking the boy if he felt hurt at this mockery, he answered, silyly, with all his air of simplicity, "Sure, thin, wasn't there the shillin'? For it was a shillin' he gave me, glory be to God. No, I niver heard it called a thirteener before, but mother has. Och, thin, sir, indeed, and it's could and wet I am. I have a new shirt, as was giv to mother for me by a lady, but I wouldn't put it on sich a day as this, your honour, sir. I'll go to mass in it ivery Sunday. I've made 6*d.* a day and sometimes more a sellin' fuzees, wid luck, God be praised, but the bad wither's put me out intirely this time."

The fuzee-sellers frequently offer their wares at the bars of public-houses in the daytime, and sometimes dispose of them to those landlords who sell cigars. From the best information I can command there are now upwards of 200 persons selling fuzees in the streets of the metropolis. But the trade is often collateral. The cigar-seller offers fuzees, play-bill sellers (boys) do so sometimes at the doors of the theatres to persons coming out, the pipe-sellers also carry them; they are sometimes sold along with lucifer matches, and at miscellaneous stalls. It will, I believe, be accurate to state that in the streets there are generally 100 persons subsisting, or endeavouring to subsist, on the sale of fuzees alone. It may be estimated also that each of these traders averages a receipt of 10*d.* a day (with a profit exceeding 6*d.*), so that 1300*l.* is yearly laid out in the streets in this way.

Of the fuzee-selling lads, those who are parentless, or runaway, sleep in the lodging-houses, in the better conducted of which the master or deputy takes charge of the stock of fuzees or lucifer-matches during the night to avert the risk of fire; in others these combustibles are stowed anywhere at the discretion, or indiscretion, of the lodgers.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF GUTTA-PERCHA HEADS.

THERE are many articles which, having become cheap in the shops, find their way to the street-traders, and after a brief, or comparatively brief, and prosperous trade has been carried on in them, gradually disappear. These are usually things which are grotesque or amusing, but of no utility, and they are supplanted by some more attractive novelty—a main attraction being that it is a novelty.

Among such matters of street-trade are the elastic toys called "gutta-percha heads;" these, however, have no gutta-percha in their composition, but consist solely of a composition made of glue and treacle—the same as is used for printer's rollers. The heads are small coloured models of the human face, usually with projecting nose and

chin, and wide or distorted mouth, which admit of being squeezed into a different form of features, their elasticity causing them to return to the original caste. The trade carried on in the streets in these toys was at one time extensive, but it seems now to be gradually disappearing. On a fine day a little after noon, last week, there was not one "head" exposed for sale in any of the four great street markets of Leather-lane, the Brill, Tottenham-court-road including the Hampstead-road, and High-street, Camden-town.

The trade became established in the streets upwards of two years ago. At first, I am told by a street-seller, himself one of the first, there were six "head-sellers," who "worked" the parks and their vicinity. My informant one day sold a gross of heads in and about Hyde-park, and a more fortunate fellow-trader on the same day sold 1½ gross. The heads were recommended, whenever opportunity offered, by a little patter. "Here," one man used to say, "here's the Duke of Wellington's head for 1*d.* It's modelled from the statty on horseback, but is a improvement. His nose speaks for itself. Sir Robert Peel's only 1*d.* Anybody you please is 1*d.*; a free choice and no favour. The Queen and all the Royal Family 1*d.* apiece." As the street-seller offered to dispose of the model of any eminent man's head and face, he held up some one of the most grotesque of the number. Another man one Saturday evening sold five or six dozen to costermongers and others in the street markets "pattering" them off as the likenesses of any policeman who might be obnoxious to the street-traders! This was when the trade was new. The number of sellers was a dozen in the second week; it was soon twenty-five, all confining themselves to the sale of the heads; besides these the heads were offered to the street-buying public by many of the stationary street-folk, whose stock partook of a miscellaneous character. The men carrying on this traffic were of the class of general street-sellers.

"The trade was spoiled, sir," said an informant, "by so many going into it, but I've heard that it's not bad in parts of the country now. The sale was always best in the parks, I believe, and Sundays was the best days. I don't pretend to be learned about religion, but I know that many a time after I'd earned next to nothing in a wet week, it came a fine Sunday morning, and I took as much as got me and my wife and children a good dinner of meat and potatoes, and sometimes, when we could depend on it, smoking hot from the baker's oven; and I then felt I had something to thank God for. You see, sir, when a man's been out all the week, and often with nothing to call half a dinner, and his wife's earnings only a few pence by sewing at home, with three young children to take care of, you're nourished and comforted, and your strength keeps up, by a meat dinner on a Sunday, quietly in your own room. But them as eats their dinner without having to earn it, can't understand about that, and as the Sunday park trade was stopped, the police drive us about like dogs, not gentlemen's dogs, but stray or mad dogs. And it

seems there's some sort of a new police. I can't understand a bit of it, and I don't want to, for the old police is trouble enough."

The gutta-percha heads are mostly bought at the "English and German" swag-shops. A few are made by the men who sell them in the streets. The "swag" price is 1*s.* the gross; at one time the swag man demurred to sell less than half a gross, but now when the demand is diminished, a dozen is readily supplied for 8*d.* The street price retail, is and always was 1*d.* a head. The principal purchasers in the street are boys and young men, with a few tradesmen or working people, "such as can afford a penny or two," who buy the "gutta percha" heads for their children. There used to be a tolerable trade in public houses, where persons enjoying themselves bought them "for a lark," but this trade has now dwindled to a mere nothing. One of the "larks," an informant knew to be practised, was to attach the head to a piece of paper or card, write upon it some one's name, make it up into a parcel, and send it to the flattered individual. The same man had sold heads to young women, not servant-maids he thought, but in some not very ill paid employment, and he believed, from their manner when buying, for some similar purpose of "larking." When the heads were a novelty, he sold a good many to women of the town.

There are now no street-folks who depend upon the sale of these gutta-percha heads, but they sell them occasionally. The usual mode is to display them on a tray, and now, generally with other things. One man showed me his box, which, when the lid was raised, he carried as a tray slung round his neck, and it contained gutta-percha heads, exhibition medals, and rings and other penny articles of jewellery.

There are at present, I am informed, 30 persons selling gutta-percha heads in the streets, some of them confining their business solely to those articles. In this number, however, I do not include those who are both makers and sellers. Their average receipts, I am assured, do not exceed 5*s.* a week each, for, though some may take 15*s.* a week, others, and generally the stationary head-sellers, do not take 1*s.* The profit to the street retailer is one third of his receipts. From this calculation it appears, that if the present rate of sale continue, 390*l.* is spent yearly in these street toys. At one time it was far more than twice the amount.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF FLY-PAPERS AND BEETLE-WAFERS.

FLY-PAPERS came, generally, into street-traffic, I am informed, in the summer of 1848.

The fly-papers are sold wholesale at many of the oil-shops, but the principal shop for the supply of the street-traders is in Whitechapel. The wholesale price is 2½*d.* a dozen, and the (street) retail charge ½*d.* a paper, or three 1*d.* A young man, to whom I was referred, and whom I found selling, or rather bartering, crockery, gave me the following account of his experience of the fly-paper trade. He was a rosy-cheeked, strong-built young fellow, and said he thought he was "getting

on" in his present trade. He spoke merrily of his troubles, as I have found common among his class, when they are over.

"My father had a milk-walk," he said, "and when he died I was without money and had nothing to do, but I soon got a place with a single gentleman. He had a small house, and kept only me and a old housekeeper. I was to make myself generally useful, but when I first went, the most I had to do was to look after a horse that master had. Master never was on horseback in his life, but he took Skipjack—that was the horse's name, he was rising six—for a debt, and kept him two months, till he could sell him to his mind. Master took a largeish garden—for he was fond of growing flowers and vegetables, and made presents of them—just before poor Skipjack went, and I was set to work in it, besides do my house-work. It was a easy place, and I was very comfable. But master, who was a good master and a friend to a poor man, as I know, got into difficulties; he was something in the City; I never understood what; and one night, when I'd been above a year and a-half with him, he told me I must go, for he couldn't afford to keep me any longer. Next day he was arrested, quite sudden I believe, and sent to prison for debt. I had a good character, but nobody cared for one from a man in prison, and in a month my money was out, and my last 3*s.* 6*d.* went for an advertisement, what was no good to me. I then took to holding horses or anything that way, and used to sleep in the parks or by the road-sides where it was quiet. I did that for a month and more. I've sometimes never tasted food all day, and used to quench myself (so he worded it) with cold water from the pumps. It took off the hunger for a time. I got to know other boys that was living as I was, and when I could afford it I slept at lodging-houses, the boys took me to or told me about. One evening a gentleman gave me 1*s.* for catching his horse that he'd left standing, but it had got frightened, and run off. Next morning I went into the fly-paper trade,—it's nearly two years ago, I think—because a boy I slept with did tidy in it. We bought the papers at the first shop as was open, and then got leave of the deputy of the lodging-house to catch all the flies we could, and we stuck them thick on the paper, and fastened the paper to our hats. I used to think, when I was in service, how a smart livery hat, with a cockade to it, would look, but instead of that I turned out, the first time in my life that ever I sold anything, with my hat stuck round with flies. I felt so ashamed I could have cried. I was miserable, I felt so awkerd. But I spent my last 2*d.* in some gin and milk to give me courage, and that brightened me up a bit, and I set to work. I went Mile-end way, and got out of the main streets, and I suppose I'd gone into streets and places where there hadn't often been fly-papers before, and I soon had a lot of boys following me, and I felt, almost, as if I'd picked a pocket, or done something to be 'shamed of. I could hardly cry 'Catch 'em alive, only a halfpenny!' But I found I could sell my papers to public-houses and

shopkeepers, such as grocers and confectioners, and that gave me pluck. The boys caught flies, and then came up to me, and threw them against my hat, and if they stuck the lads set up a shout. I stuck to the trade, however, and took 2s. 6d. to 3s. every day that week, more than half of it profit, and on Saturday I took 5s. 6d. The trade is all to housekeepers. I called at open shops and looked up at the windows, or held up my hat at private houses, and was sometimes beckoned to go in and sell my papers. Women bought most, I think. 'Nasty things,' they used to say, 'there's no keeping-nothing clean for them.' I stuck to the trade for near two months, and then I was worth 13s. 6d., and had got a pair of good shoes, and a good second-hand shirt, with one to change it; and next I did a little in tins and hardware, at the places where I used to go my fly rounds, and in the winter I got into the crock-trade, with another young fellow for a mate, and I'm in it yet, and getting a tidy connection, I think."

Some of the fly-paper sellers make their stock-in-trade, but three-fourths of the number buy them ready-made. The street-sellers make them of old newspapers or other waste-paper, no matter how dirty. To the paper they apply turpentine and common coach varnish, some using resin instead of varnish, and occasionally they dash a few grains of sugar over the composition when spread upon the paper.

Last summer, I was informed, there were fifty or sixty persons selling fly-papers and beetle wafers in the streets; some of them boys, and all of them of the general class of street-sellers, who "take" to any trade for which 1s. suffices as capital. Their average earnings may be estimated at 2s. 6d. a day, about one-half being profit. This gives a street outlay, say for a "season" of ten weeks, of 375l., calculating fifty sellers.

A few of these street traders carried a side of a newspaper, black with flies, attached to a stick, waving it like a flag. The cries were "Catch 'em alive! Catch 'em alive for ½d!" "New method of destroying thousands!"

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES.

In addition to the more staple wares which form the street trade in manufactured articles of a miscellaneous character, are many, as I said before, which have been popular for a while and are now entirely disused. In the course of my inquiry it was remarkable how oblivious I found many of the street-sellers as to what they had sold at various periods. "O dear, yes sir, I've sold all sorts of things in the streets besides what I'm on now; first one and then another as promised a few pence," was the substance of a remark I frequently heard; but *what* was meant by the one and the other thing thus sold they had a difficulty to call to mind, but on a hint being thrown out they could usually give the necessary details. From the information I acquired I select the following curious matter.

Six or seven years ago *Galvanic Rings* were

sold extensively by the street-folk. These were clumsy lead-coloured things, which were described by the puffing shop-keepers, and in due course by the street-sellers, as a perfect amulet; a thing which by its mere contact with the finger would not only cure but prevent "fits, rheumatics, and cramps." On my asking a man who had sold them if these were all the ailments of which he and the others proclaimed the galvanic rings an infallible cure, he answered: "Like the quack medicines you read about, sir, in 'vertisements, we said they was good for anything anybody complained of or was afraid was coming on them, but we went mostly for rheumatics. A sight of tin some of the shopkeepers must have made, for what we sold at 1d. they got 6d. a piece for. Then for gold galvanics—and I've been told they was gilt—they had 10s. 6d. each. The streets is nothing to the shops on a dodge. I've been told by people as I'd sold galvanics to, that they'd had benefit from them. I suppose that was just superstitious. I think Hyams did the most of any house in galvanics."

The men selling these rings—for the business was carried on almost entirely by men—were the regular street-traders, who sell "first one thing and then another." They were carried in boxes, as I have shown medals are now, and they generally formed a portion of the street-jeweller's stock, whether he were itinerant or stationary. The purchasers were labourers in the open air, such as those employed about buildings, whose exposure to the alternations of heat and cold render them desirous of a cure for, or preventive against rheumatism. The costermongers were also purchasers, and in the course of my inquiries among that numerous body, I occasionally saw a galvanic ring still worn by a few, and those chiefly, I think, fish-sellers.

Nor was the street or shop trade in these galvanic rings confined to amulets for the finger. I heard of one elderly woman, then a prosperous street-seller in the New Cut, who slept with a galvanic ring on every toe, she suffered so much from cramp and rheumatism! There were also galvanic shields, which were to be tied round the waist, and warranted "to cure all over." They were retailed at 6d. each. Galvanic earrings were likewise a portion of this manufacture. They were not "drops" from the ear, but filled behind and around it as regards the back of the skull, and were to avert rheumatic attacks, and even aching from the head. The street price was 1s. the pair. Galvanic bracelets, handsomely gilt, were 2s. 6d. the pair. But the sale of all these higher-priced charms was a mere nonentity compared to that of the penny rings.

Another trade—if it may be classed under this head—carried on by great numbers and with great success for a while, was that of *cards with the Lord's Prayer in the compass of a sixpence*. This was an engraving—now and then offered in the streets still—strictly fulfilling the announcement as to the compass in which the Prayer was contained, with the addition of a drawing of the Bible, as part of the engraving, "within the six-

pence." This trade was at first, I am told, chiefly in the hands of the patterers: "Grand novelty!" they said; "splendid engraving! The Lord's Prayer, with a beautiful picture of the Bible, all legible to the naked eye, in the compass of a sixpence. Five hundred letters, all clear, on a sixpence." One man said to me: "I knew very well there wasn't 500, but it was a neat number to cry. A schoolmaster said to me once—'Why, there isn't above half that number of letters.' He was wrong though; for I believe there's 280." This card was published six or seven years ago, and the success attending the sale of the Lord's Prayer, led to the publication of the Belief in the same form. "When the trade was new," said one man, "I could sell a gross in a day without any very great trouble; but in a little time there was hundreds in the trade, and one might patter hard to sell four dozen."

The wholesale price was 8s. the gross, and as thirteen cards went to the dozen, the day's profit when a gross was sold was 5s. When the sale did not extend to beyond four dozen the profit was 1s. 8d. A few cards "in letters of gold" were vended in the streets at 6d. each. They had large margins and presented a handsome appearance. The wholesale price was 3s. 6d. the dozen.

When this trade was at its height, there were, I am told, from 500 to 700 men, women and children engaged in it; selling the cards both with and without other articles. The cards had also a very extensive sale in the country.

*Pen-holders with glass or china handles* are another commodity which appeared suddenly, about six months ago, in street commerce, and at once became the staple of a considerable traffic. These pens are eight or nine inches long, the "body," so to speak, being of solid round glass, of almost all colours, green, blue, and black predominating, with a seal (lacquered white or yellow) at the top, and a holder of the usual kind, with a steel pen at the bottom. Some are made of white pot and called "China pens," and of these some are ornamented with small paintings of flowers and leaves. These wares are German, and were first charged 9s. 6d. the gross, without pens, which were an additional 3d. at the swag-shops. The price is now 5s. the gross, the pens being the same. The street-sellers who were fortunate enough to "get a good start" with these articles did exceedingly well. The pen-holders, when new, are handsome-looking, and at 1d. each were cheap; some few were at first retailed at 2d. One man, I am told, sold two-and-a-half gross in one day in the neighbourhood of the Bank, purchasers not seldom taking a dozen or more. As the demand continued, some men connected with the supply of goods for street sale, purchased all the stock in the swag-shops, expending about 170l., and at once raised the price to 10s. 6d. the gross. This amount the poorer street-sellers demurred to give, as they could rarely obtain a higher price than 1d. each, and 2d. for the ornamented holders, but the street-stationers (who bought, however, very sparingly) and the small shopkeepers gave the advance "as they found the glass-holders asked for." On the

whole, I am told, this forestalling was not very profitable to the speculators, as when fresh supplies were received at the "swags," the price fell.

At first this street business was carried on by men, but it was soon resorted to by numbers of poor women and children. One gentleman informed me that in consequence of reading "London Labour and the London Poor," he usually had a little talk with the street-sellers of whom he purchased any trifle; he bought these pen-holders of ten or twelve different women and girls; all of them could answer correctly his inquiry as to the uses of the pens; but only one girl, of fifteen or sixteen, and she hesitatingly, ventured to assert that she could write her own name with the pen she offered for sale. The street-trade still continues, but instead of being in the hands of 400 individuals—as it was, at the very least, I am assured, at one period—there are now only about fifty carrying it on itinerantly, while with the "pitched" sales-people, the glass-holders are merely a portion of the stock, and with the itinerants ten dozen a week (a receipt of 10s., and a profit of 4s. 9d.) is now an average sale. The former glass-holder sellers of the poorer sort are now vending oranges.

*Shirt Buttons* form another of the articles—(generally either "useful things" or with such recommendation to street-buyers as the galvanic amulets possessed)—which every now and then are disposed of in great quantities in the streets. If an attempt be made by a manufacturer to establish a cheaper shirt button, for instance, of horn, or pot, or glass, and if it prove unsuccessful, or if an improvement be effected and the old stock becomes a sort of dead stock, the superseded goods have to be disposed of, and I am informed by a person familiar with those establishments, that the swag-shopkeepers can always find customers, "for anything likely," with the indispensable proviso that it be cheap. In this way shirt buttons have lately been sold in the streets, not only by the vendors of small wares in their regular trade, but by men, lads, and girls, some of the males shirtless themselves, who sell them solely, with a continuous and monotonous cry of "Halfpenny a dozen; halfpenny a dozen." The wholesale price of the last "street lot," was 3d. the gross, or ¼d. the dozen. To clear 6d. a day in shirt buttons is "good work;" it is more frequently 4d.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF WALKING-STICKS.

The walking-sticks sold in the streets of London are principally purchased at wholesale houses in Mint-street and Union-street, Borough, and their neighbourhoods. "There's no street-trade," said an intelligent man, "and I've tried most that's been, or promised to be, a living in the streets, that is so tiresome as the walking-stick trade. There is nothing in which people are so particular. The stick's sure to be either too short or too long, or too thick or too thin, or too limp or too stiff. You would think it was a simple thing for a man to choose a stick out of a lot, but if you were with

me a selling on a fine Sunday at Battersea Fields, you'd see it wasn't. O, it's a tiresome job."

The trade is a summer and a Sunday trade. The best localities are the several parks, and the approaches to them, Greenwich-park included; Hampstead Heath, Kennington Common, and, indeed, wherever persons congregate for pedestrian purposes, Battersea Fields being, perhaps, the place where the greatest Sunday trade is carried on. Some of the greater thoroughfares too, such as Oxford-street and the City-road, are a good deal frequented by the stick-sellers.

This trade—like others where the article sold is not of general consumption or primary usefulness—affords, what I once heard a street-seller call, "a good range." There is no generally recognised price or value, so that a smart trader in sticks can apportion his offers, or his charges, to what he may think to be the extent of endurance in a customer. What might be 2*d.* to a man who "looked knowing," might be 6*d.* to a man who "looked green." The common sticks, which are the "cripples," I was told, of all the sorts of sticks (the spoiled or inferior sticks) mixed with "common pines," are 15*d.* the dozen. From this price there is a gradual scale up to 8*s.* the dozen for "good polished;" beyond that price the street-seller rarely ventures, and seldom buys even at that (for street-trade) high rate, as fourpenny and sixpenny sticks go off the best; these saleable sticks are generally polished hazel or pine. "I've sold to all sorts of people, sir," said a stick-seller. "I once had some very pretty sticks, very cheap, only 2*d.* a piece, and I sold a good many to boys. They bought them, I suppose, to look like men, and daren't carry them home; for I once saw a boy I'd sold a stick to, break it and throw it away just before he knocked at the door of a respectable house one Sunday evening. I've sold shilling sticks to gentlemen, sometimes, that had lost or broken or forgot their own. Canes there's nothing done in now in the streets; nor in 'vines,' which is the little switchy things that used to be a sort of a plaything. There's only one stick-man in the streets, as far as I know—and if there was, I should be sure to know, I think—that has what you may call a capital in sticks. Only the other day I saw him sell a registered stick near Charing-cross. It was a beauty. A Bath cane, with a splendid ivory head, and a compass let into the ivory. The head screwed off, and beneath was a map of London and a Guide to the Great Exhibition. O, but he has a beautiful stock, and aint he aristocratic! 'Ash twigs,' with the light-coloured bark on them, not polished, but just trimmed, was a very good sale, but they're not now. Why, as to what I take, it's such an uncertain trade that it's hard to say. Some days I haven't taken 6*d.*, and the most money I ever took was one Derby day at Epsom—I wish there was more Derby days, for poor people's sakes—and then I took 30*s.* The most money as ever I took in London was 14*s.*—one Sunday, in Battersea Fields, when I had a prime cheap stock of bamboos. When I keep entirely to the stick trade, and during the sum-

mer, I may take 35*s.* in a week, with a profit of 15*s.*

The street stick-sellers are, I am assured, sometimes about 200 in number, on a fine Sunday in the summer. Of these, some are dock-labourers, who thus add to their daily earnings by a seventh day's labour; others, and a smarter class, are the "supers" (supernumeraries) of theatres, who also eke out their pittance by Sunday toil; porters, irregularly employed, and consequently "hard pushed to live," also sell walking-sticks on the Sundays; as do others who "cannot afford"—as a well-educated man, a patterer on paper, once said to me—"to lose a day if they were d—d for it." The usual mode of this street-trade is to carry the bundle of sticks strapped together, under the arm, and deposit the ends on the ground when a sale is to be effected. A few, however, and principally Jews, have "stands," with the walking-sticks inclosed in a sort of frame. On the Mondays there are not above a third of the number of stick-sellers there are on the Sundays; and on the other days of the week not above a seventh, or an eighth. Calculating that for 12 weeks of the year there are every day 35 stick-sellers, each taking, on an average, 30*s.* a week (with a profit, individually, of about 12*s.*), we find 630*l.* expended in walking-sticks in the streets.

On clear winter days a stick-seller occasionally plies his trade, but on frosty days they are occupied in letting out skates in the parks, or wherever ponds are frozen.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF WHIPS, ETC.

THESE traders are a distinct class from the stick-sellers, and have a distinct class of customers. The sale is considerable; for to many the possession of a whip is a matter of importance. If one be lost or stolen, for instance, from a butcher's cart at Newgate-market, the need of a whip to proceed with the cart and horse to its destination, prompts the purchase in the quickest manner, and this is usually effected of the street-seller who offers his wares to the carters at every established resort.

The commonest of the whips sold to cart-drivers is sometimes represented as whalebone covered with gut; but the whalebone is a stick, and the flexible part is a piece of leather, while the gut is a sort of canvas, made to resemble the worked gut of the better sort of whips, and is pasted to the stock; the thong—which in the common sort is called "four-strands," or plaits—being attached to the flexible part. Some of these whips are old stocks recovered, and many are sad rubbish; but for any deceit the street-seller can hardly be considered responsible, as he always purchases at the shop of a wholesale whipmaker, who is in some cases a retailer at the same price and under the same representations as the street-seller. The retail price is 1*s.* each; the wholesale, 8*s.* and 9*s.* a dozen. Some of the street whip-sellers represent themselves as the makers, but the whips are almost all made in Birmingham and Walsall.

Of these traders very few are the ordinary street-sellers. Most of them have been in some

way or other connected with the care of horses, and some were described to me as "beaten-out countrymen," who had come up to town in the hope of obtaining employment, and had failed. One man, of the last-mentioned class, told me that he had come to London from a village in Cambridgeshire, bringing with him testimonials of good character, and some letters from parties whose recommendation he expected would be serviceable to him; but he had in vain endeavoured for some months to obtain work with a carrier, omnibus proprietor, or job-master, either as driver or in charge of horses. His prospects thus failing him, he was now selling whips to earn his livelihood. A friend advised him to do this, as better than starving, and as being a trade that he understood:—

"I often thought I'd be forced to go back home, sir," he said, "and I'd have been ashamed to do't, for I would come to try my luck in London, and would leave a place I had. All my friends—and they're not badly off—tried to 'snaude me to stop at home another year or two, but come I would, as if I must and couldn't help it. I brought good clothes with me, and they're a'most all gone; and I'd be ashamed to go back so shabby, like the prodigal's son; you know, sir. I'll have another try yet, for I get on to a cab next Monday, with a very respectable cab-master. As I've only myself, I know I can do. I was on one, but not with the same master, after I'd been six weeks here; but in two days I was forced to give it up, for I didn't know my way enough, and I didn't know the distances, and couldn't make the money I paid for my cab. If I asked another cabman, he was as likely to tell me wrong as right. Then the fares used to be shouting out, 'I say, cabby, where the h— are you going? I told you Mark-lane, and here we are at the Minories. Drive back, sir.' I know my way now well enough, sir. I've walked the streets too long not to know it. I notice them on purpose now, and know the distances. I've written home for a few things for my new trade, and I'm sure to get them. They don't know I'm selling whips. There would be such a laugh against me among all t'young fellows if they did. Me as was so sure to do well in London!"

"It's a poor trade. A carman'll bid me 6*d.* for such a whip as this, which is 4*s.* 3*d.* the half dozen wholesale. 'I have to find my own whips,' my last customer said, 'though I drives for a stunning grocer, and he d—d to him.' They're great swearers some of them. I make 7*s.* or 8*s.* in a week, for I can walk all day without tiring. I one week cleared 14*s.* Next week I made 3*s.* I have slept in cheap lodging-houses—but only in three: one was very decent, though out of the way; one was middling; and the t'other was a pig-sty. I've seen very poor places in the country, but nothing to it. I now pay 2*s.* a week for a sort of closet, with a bed in it, at the top of a house, but it's clean and sweet; and my landlord's a greengrocer and coal-merchant and firewood-seller;—he's a good man—and I can always earn a little against the rent with him, by

cleaning his harness, and grooming his pony—he calls it a pony, but it's over 15 hands—and greasing his cart-wheels, and mucking out his stable, and such like. I shall live there when I'm on my cab."

Other carmen's whips are 1*s.* 6*d.*, and as high as 2*s.* 6*d.*, but the great sale is of those at 1*s.* The principal localities for the trade are at the meat-markets, the "green markets," Smithfield, the streets leading to Billingsgate when crowded in the morning, the neighbourhood of the docks and wharfs, and the thoroughfares generally.

The trade in the other kind of whips is again in the hands of another class, in that of cabmen who have lost their licence, who have been maimed, and the numerous "hands" who job about stables—especially cab-horse stables—when without other employment. The price of the inferior sort of "gig-whips" is 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*, the wholesale price being from 9*s.* 6*d.* to 14*s.* 6*d.* the dozen. Some are lower than 9*s.* 6*d.*, but the cabmen, I am told, "will hardly look at them; they know what they're a-buying of, and is wide awake, and that's one reason why the profit's so small." Occasionally, one whip-seller told me, he had sold gig-whips at 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* to gentlemen who had broken their "valuable lance-wood," or "beautiful thorn," and who made a temporary purchase until they could buy at their accustomed shops. "A military gent, with mustachers, once called to me in Piccadilly," the same man stated, "and he said, 'Here, give me the best you can for half-a-crown, I've snapped my own. I never use the whip when I drive, for my horse is skittish and won't stand it, but I can't drive without one.'"

In the height of the season, two, and sometimes three men, sell handsome gig-whips at the fashionable drives or the approaches. "I have taken as much as 30*s.* in a day, for three whips," said one man, "each 10*s.*; but they were silver-mounted thorn, and very cheap indeed; that's 8 or 9 years back; people looks oftener at 10*s.* now. I've sold horse-dealers' whips too, with loaded ends. Oh, all prices. I've bought them, wholesale, at 8*s.* a dozen, and 7*s.* 6*d.* a piece. Hunting whips are never sold in the streets now. I have sold them, but it's a good while ago, as riding whips for park gentlemen. The stocks were of fine strong lancewood—such a close grain! with buck horn handles, and a close-worked thong, fastened to the stock by an 'eye' (loop), which it's slipped through. You could hear its crack half a mile off. 'Threshing machines,' I called them."

All the whip-sellers in a large way visit the races, fairs, and large markets within 50 miles of London. Some go as far as Goodwood at the race-time, which is between 60 and 70 miles distant. On a well-thronged race-ground these men will take 3*l.* or 4*l.* in a day, and from a half to three-fourths as much at a country fair. They sell riding-whips in the country, but seldom in town.

An experienced man knew 40 whip-sellers, as nearly as he could call them to mind, by sight, and 20 by name. He was certain that on no day

were there fewer than 30 in the streets, and sometimes—though rarely—there were 100. The most prosperous of the body, including their profits at races, &c., make 1*l.* a week the year through; the poorer sort from 5*s.* to 10*s.*, and the latter are three times as numerous as the others. Averaging that only 30 whip-sellers take 25*s.* each weekly (with profits of from 5*s.* to 10*s.*) in London alone, we find 2340*l.* expended in the streets in whips.

Some of the whip-sellers vend whipcord, also, to those cabmen and carters who "cord" their own whips. The whipcord is bought wholesale at 2*s.* the pound (sometimes lower), and sold at  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* the knot, there being generally six dozen knots in a pound.

Another class "mend" cabmen's whips, re-thonging, or "new-springing" them, but these are street-artisans.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF PIPES, AND OF SNUFF AND TOBACCO BOXES.

THE pipes now sold in the streets and public-houses are the "china bowls" and the "comic heads." The "china-bowl" pipe has a bowl of white stone china, which unscrews, from a flexible tube or "stem," as it is sometimes called, about a foot long, with an imitation-amber mouth-piece. They are retailed at 6*d.* each, and cost 4*s.* a dozen at the swag-shops. The "comic heads" are of the clay ordinarily used in the making of pipes, and cost 16*d.* the dozen, or 15*s.* the gross. They are usually retailed at 2*d.* Some of the "comic heads" may be considered as hardly well described by the name, as among them are death's-heads and faces of grinning devils. "The best sale of the comic heads," said one man, "was when the Duke put the soldiers' pipes out at the barracks; wouldn't allow them to smoke there. It was a Wellington's head with his thumb to his nose, taking a sight, you know, sir. They went off capital. Lots of people that liked their pipe bought 'em, in the public-houses especial, 'cause, as I heerd one man—he was a boot-closer—say, 'it made the old boy a-ridiculing of hisself.' At that time—well, really, then, I can't say how long it's since—I sold little bone 'tobacco-stoppers'—they're seldom asked for now, stoppers is quite out of fashion—and one of them was a figure of 'old Nosey,' the Duke you know—it was intended as a joke, you see, sir; a tobacco-stopper."

There are now nine men selling pipes, which they frequently raffle at the public-houses; it is not unusual for four persons to raffle at  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* each, for a "comic head." The most costly pipes are not now offered in the streets, but a few are sold on race-courses. I am informed that none of the pipe-sellers depend entirely upon their traffic in those wares, but occasionally sell (and raffle) such things as china ornaments or table-covers, or tobacco or snuff-boxes. If, therefore, we calculate that four persons sell pipes daily the year through, taking each 25*s.* (and clearing 10*s.*), we find 260*l.* yearly expended upon the hawkers' pipes.

The snuff and tobacco-boxes disposed of by street-traders, for they are usually sold by the

same individual, are bought at the swag-shops. In a matter of traffic, such as snuff-boxes, in which the "fancy" (or taste) of the purchaser is freely exercised, there are of course many varieties. The exterior of some presents a series of transverse lines, coloured, and looking neat enough. Others have a staring portrait of the Queen, or of "a young lady," or a brigand, or a man inhaling the pungent dust with evident delight; occasionally the adornment is a ruin, a farm-house, or a hunting scene. The retail price is from 4*d.* to 1*s.*, and the wholesale 3*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* the dozen. The Scotch boxes, called "Holyroods" in the trade, are also sold in the streets and public-houses. These are generally the "self-colour" of the wood; the better sort are lined with horn, and are, or should be, remarkable for the closeness and nice adjustment of the hinges or joints. They are sold—some I was told being German-made—at the swag-shops at 3*s.* the dozen, or 4*d.* each, to 6*s.* the dozen, or 8*d.* each. "Why, I calculated," said one box-seller, "that one week when I was short of tin, and had to buy single boxes, or twos, at a time, to keep up a fair show of stock, the swags got 2*s.* more out of me than if I could have gone and bought by the dozen. I once ventured to buy a very fine Holyrood; it'll take a man three hours to find out the way to open it, if he doesn't know the trick, the joints is so contrived. But I have it yet. I never could get an offer for what it cost me, 5*s.*"

The tobacco-boxes are of brass and iron (though often called "steel"). There are three sizes: the "quarter-ounce," costing 3*s.* the dozen; the "half-ounce," 4*s.* 3*d.*; and "the ounce," 5*s.* 6*d.* the dozen, or 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* each. These are the prices of the brass. The iron, which are "sized" in the same way, are from 2*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* the dozen, wholesale. They are retailed at from 3*d.* to 6*d.* each, the brass being retailed at from 4*d.* to 1*s.* All these boxes are opened and shut by pressure on a spring; they are partly flat (but rounded), so as to fit in any pocket. The cigar-cases are of the same quality as the snuff-boxes (not the Holyroods), and cost, at the German swag-shops, 3*s.* 6*d.* the dozen, or 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* each. They are usually retailed, or raffled for on Saturday and Monday nights, at 6*d.* each, but the trade is a small one.

One branch of this trade, concerning which I heard many street-sellers very freely express their opinions, is the sale of "indecent snuff-boxes." Most of these traders insisted, with a not unnatural bitterness, that it would be as easy to stop the traffic as it was to stop Sunday selling in the park, but then "gentlemen was accommodated by it," they added. These boxes and cigar-cases are, for the most part, I am told, French, the lowest price being 2*s.* 6*d.* a box. One man, whose information was confirmed to me by others, gave me the following account of what had come within his own knowledge:—

"There's eight and sometimes nine persons carrying on the indecent trade in snuff-boxes and cigar-cases. They make a good bit of money, but they're drunken characters, and often hard up. They've neither shame nor decency; they'll



THE JEW OLD-CLOTHES-MAN.

"Clo', Clo', Clo'."

[From a Photograph.]

tempt lads or anybody. They go to public-houses which they know is used by fast gents that has money to spare. And they watch old and very young gents in the streets, or any gents indeed, and when they see them loitering and looking after the girls, they take an opportunity to offer a 'spicy snuff-box, very cheap.' It's a trade only among rich people, for I believe the indecent sellers can't afford to sell at all under 2s. 6d., and they ask high prices when they get hold of a green 'un; perhaps one up on a spree from Oxford or Cambridge. Well, I can't say where they get their goods, nor at what price. That's their secret. They carry them in a box, with proper snuff-boxes to be seen when its opened, and the others in a secret drawer beneath; or in their pockets. You may have seen a stylish shop in Oxford-street, and in the big window is large pipe heads of a fine quality, and on them is painted, quite beautiful, naked figures of women, and there's snuff-boxes and cigar-cases of much the same sort, but they're nothing to what these men sell. I must know, for it's not very long since I was forced, through distress, to colour a lot of the figures. I could colour 50 a day. I hadn't a week's work at it. I don't know what they make; perhaps twice as much in a day, as in the regular trade can be made in a week. I was told by one of them that one race day he took 15*l*. It's not every day they do a good business, for sometimes they may hawk without ever showing their boxes; but gentlemen will have them if they pay ever so much for them. There's a risk in the trade, certainly. Sometimes the police gets hold of them, but very very seldom, and it's 3 months. Or if the Vice Society takes it up, it may be 12 months. The two as does best in the trade are women; they carry great lots. They've never been apprehended, and they've been in the trade for years. No, I should say they was not women of the town. They're both living with men, but the men's not in the same trade, and I think is in no trade; just fancy men. So I've understood."

I may observe that the generality of the hawkers of indecent prints and cards are women.

There are about 35 persons selling snuff and tobacco-boxes—the greatest sale being of tobacco-boxes—and cigar-cases, generally with the other things I have mentioned. Of these 35, however, not one-half sell snuff-boxes constantly, but resort to any traffic of temporary interest in the public or street-public estimation. Some sell only in the evenings. Reckoning that 15 persons on snuff and tobacco and cigar boxes alone take 18*s*. weekly (clearing 7*s*. or 8*s*.), we find 692*l*. thus expended.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF CIGARS.

CIGARS, I am informed, have constituted a portion of the street-trade for upwards of 20 years, having been introduced not long after the removal of the prohibition on their importation from Cuba. It was not, however, until five or six years later that they were at all extensively sold

in the streets; but the street-trade in cigars is no longer extensive, and in some respects has ceased to exist altogether.

I am told by experienced persons that the cigars first vended in the streets and public-houses were really smuggled. I say "really" smuggled, as many now vended under that pretence never came from the smuggler's hands. "Well, now, sir," said one man, "the last time I sold Pickwicks and Cubers a penny apiece with lights for nothing, was at Greenwich Fair, on the sly rather, and them as I could make believe was buying a smuggled thing, bought far freer. Everybody likes a smuggled thing." [This remark is only in consonance with what I have heard from others of the same class.] "In my time I've sold what was smuggled, or made to appear as sich, but far more in the country than town, to all sorts—to gentlemen, and ladies, and shopkeepers, and parsons, and doctors, and lawyers. Why no, sir, I can't say as how I ever sold anything in that way to an exciseman. But smuggling'll always be liked; it's sich a satisfaction to any man to think he's done the tax-gatherer."

The price of a cigar, in the earlier stages of the street-traffic, was 2*d*. and 3*d*. One of the boxes in which these wares are ordinarily packed was divided by a partition, the one side containing the higher, and the other the lower priced article. The division was often a mere trick of trade—in justification of which any street-seller would be sure to cite the precedent of shopkeepers' practices—for the cigars might be the same price (wholesale) but the bigger and better-looking were selected as "threepennies," the "werry choicest and realest Hawanners, as mild as milk, and as strong as gunpowder," for such, I am told, was the cry of a then well-known street-trader. The great sale was of the "twopennies." As the fuzees, now so common, were unknown, and lucifer matches were higher-priced, and much inferior to what they are at present, the cigar seller in most instances carried tow with him, a portion of which he kept ignited in a sort of tinder-box, and at this the smokers lighted their cigars; or the vender twisted together a little tow and handed it, ignited, to a customer, that if he were walking on he might renew his "light," if the cigar "wouldn't draw."

A cheaper cigar soon found its way into street commerce, "only a penny apiece, prime cigars;" and on its first introduction, a straw was fitted into it, as a mouth-piece. "Cigar tubes" were also sold in the streets; they were generally of bone, and charged from 2*d*. to 1*s*. each. The cigar was fitted into the tube, and they were strongly recommended on the score of economy, as "by means of this tube, any gen'l'man can smoke his cigar to half a quarter of an inch, instead of being forced to throw it away with an inch and a half left." These tubes have not for a long time been vended in the streets. I am told by a person, who himself was then engaged in the sale, that the greatest number of penny cigars ever sold in the streets in one day was on that of her Majesty's coronation (June 28, 1838). Of this he was quite

positive from what he had experienced, seen, and heard.

"In my opinion," said another street-seller, "the greatest injury the street-trade in such things had was when the publicans took to selling cigars. They didn't at first, at least not generally; I've sold cigars myself, at the bars of respectable houses, to gentlemen that was having their glass of ale with a friend, and one has said to another, 'Come, we'll have a smoke,' and has bought a couple. O, no; I never was admitted to offer them in a parlour or tap-room; that would have interfered with the order for 'screws' (penny papers of tobacco), which is a rattling good profit, I can tell you. Indeed, I was looked shy at, from behind the bar; but if customers chose to buy, a landlord could hardly interfere. Now, it's no go at all in such places."

One common practice among the smarter street-sellers, when "on cigars," was, until of late years, and still is, occasionally at races and fairs, to possess themselves of a few really choice "weeds," as like as they could procure them to their stock-in-trade, and to smoke one of them, as they urged their traffic.

The aroma was full and delicate, and this was appealed to if necessary, or, as one man worded it, the smell was "left to speak for itself." The street-folk who prefer the sale of what is more or less a luxury, become, by the mere necessities of their calling, physiognomists and quick observers, and I have no reason to doubt the assertion of one cigar-vendor, when he declared that in the earlier stages of this traffic he could always, and most unerringly in the country, pick out the man on whose judgment others seemed to rely, and by selling him one of his choice reserve, procure a really impartial opinion as to its excellence, and so influence other purchasers. When the town trade "grew stale"—the usual term for its falling-off—the cigar-sellers had a remunerative field in many parts of the country.

In London, before railways became the sole means of locomotion to a distance, the cigar-sellers frequented the coaching-yards; and the "outsides" frequently "bought a cigar to warm their noses of a cold night," and sometimes filled their cases, if the cigar-seller chanced to have the good word of the coachman or guard.

The cigar street-trade was started by two Jews, brothers, named Benasses, who were "licensed to deal in tobacco," and vended good articles. When they relinquished the open-air business, they supplied the other street-sellers, whose numbers increased very rapidly. The itinerant cigar-vending was always principally in the hands of the Jews, but the general street-traders resorted to the traffic on all occasions of public resort,—"such times," observed one, "as fairs and races, and crownations, and Queen's weddings; I wish they came a bit oftener for the sake of trade." The manufacture of the cigars sold at the lowest rates, is now almost entirely in the hands of the Jews, and I am informed by a distinguished member of that ancient faith, that when I treat of the Hebrew children employed in *making* cigars, there

will be much to be detailed of which the public have little cognisance and little suspicion.

The cigars in question are bought (wholesale) in Petticoat-lane, Rosemary-lane, Ailie-street, Tenter-ground, in Goodman's-fields, and similar localities. The kinds in chief demand are Pickwicks, 7s. and 8s. per lb.; Cubas, 8s. 6d.; common Havannahs and Bengal Cheroots, the same price; but the Bengal Cheroots are not uncommonly smuggled.

"The best places for cigar-selling," one man stated, "I've always found to be out of town; about Greenwich and Shooter's Hill, and to the gents going to Kensington Gardens, and such like places. About the Eagle Tavern was good, too, as well as the streets leading to the Surrey Zoological—one could whisper, 'cheap cigar, sir, half what they'll charge you inside.' I've known young women treat their young men to cigars as they were going to Cremorne, or other public places; but there's next to no trade that way now, and hasn't been these five or six years. I don't know what stopped it exactly. I've heard it was shopkeepers that had licences, complaining of street people as hadn't, and so the police stopped the trade as much as they could."

At all the neighbouring races and fairs, and at any great gathering of people in town, cigars are sold, more with the affectation than the reality of its being done, "quite on the sly." The retail price is 1d. each, and three for 2d. Some of the cheap cigars are made to run 200, and even as high as 230 to the pound. A fuzee is often given into the bargain.

I am told that, on all favourable opportunities, there are still 100 persons who vend cigars in the streets of London, while a greater number of "London hands" carry on the trade at Epsom and Ascot races. At other periods the business is all but a nonentity. To clear 1l. a week is considered "good work." At one period, on every fine Sunday, there were not, I am assured, fewer than 500 persons selling cigars in the open air in London and its suburbs.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SPONGE.

THIS is one of the street-trades which has been long in the hands of the Jews, and, unlike the traffic in pencils, sealing-wax, and other articles of which I have treated, it remains so principally still.

In perhaps no article which is a regular branch of the street-trade, is there a greater diversity in the price and quality than in sponge. The street-sellers buy it at 1s. (occasionally 6d.), and as high as 21s. the pound. At one time, I believe about 20 years back, when fine sponge in large pieces was scarce and dear, some street-sellers gave 28s. the pound, or, in buying a smaller quantity, 2s. an ounce.

"I have sold sponge of all sorts," said an experienced street-seller, "both 'fine toilet,' fit for any lady or gentleman, and coarse stuff not fit to groom a ass with. That very common sponge is mostly 1s. the lb. wholesale, but it's no manner of use it's so sandy and gritty. It weighs heavy,

or there might be a better profit on it. It has to be trimmed up and damped for showing it, and then it always feels hark (harsh) to the hand. It rubs to bits in no time. There was a old gent what I served with sponges, and he was very perticler, and the best customer I ever had, for his housekeeper bought her leathers of me. Like a deal of old coves that has nothing to do and doesn't often stir out, but hidles away time in reading or pottering about a garden, he was fond of a talk, and he'd give me a glass of something short, as if to make me listen to him, for I used to get fidgety, and he'd talk away stunning. He's dead now. He's told me, and more nor once, that sponges was more of a animal than a vegetable," continued the incredulous street-seller, "I do believe people reads theirselves silly. Such—nonsense! Does it look like a animal? Where's its head and its nose? He'd better have said it was a fish. And it's not a wegetable neither. But I'll tell you what it is, sir, and from them as has seen it where its got with their own eyes. I have some relations as is scafarin'-men, and I went a woyage once myself when a lad—one of my relations has seen it gathered by divers, I forget where, from the rocks at the bottom and shores of the sea, and he says it's just sea-moss—stuff as grows there, as moss does to old walls in England. That's what it is, sir. As it's grown in the water, it holds water you see. I've made 15s. on sponge alone, in a good week, when I had a good stock; but oftener I've made only 10s., and sometimes not 5s. My best trade is at private houses a little ways out of town. I've heard gents say, 'A good sponging's as good as a bath,' and when I could get good things cheap they'd be sure to sell. No, I never did much at the mews."

Another man told me that he once bought a large quantity of sponge at 6d. the lb., trimmed it up as well as he could, and got a man to help him, and the two "worked it off" in barrows; there was six barrows full, and as one was emptied it was replenished. It was sold at 1d. and 2d. a lump; about twenty lumps, or pieces, going to a pound, so that there was 14d. profit on what cost 6d., even on the penny lumps. He had forgotten the exact amount he cleared, and he and his mate sold it all in one summer's evening, but it was somewhere about 10s. This happened some years ago, when the common sponge, which I heard called also "honeycomb" sponge, was not so "blown upon," as my informant expressed it, as it is now. On my asking this man as to the proportion of Jews in this trade, he answered: "Well, many a day I'm satisfied there's 100 people selling sponge, and I should say that for every ten or twelve Jews is one Christian, and half of them, or more, has been in some sort of service, I mean the Christians has, most likely stable-helpers, and they supplies the mews and the job and livery stables, such of them as requires men to find their own sponges, but that's only a few; sponges is mostly bought for such places at the saddlers' and other shops. In my opinion, sir, Jews is better Christians than

Christians themselves, for *they* help one another, and we don't. I've been helped by a Jew myself, without any connection with them. They're terrible keen hands at a bargain, though."

The sponge in the street-trade is purchased, wholesale, chiefly in Houndsditch. The wholesale trade in sponge, I may add, is also in the hands of the Jews. The great mart is Smyrna, the best qualities being gathered in the islands of the Greek Archipelago. The sponge is carried by the street-traders in baskets, the bearer holding a specimen piece or two in his hand. Smaller pieces are sometimes carried in nets, and nets were more frequently in use for this purpose than at present. It is nearly all sold by itinerants, in the business parts as well as the suburbs, the purchasers being "shopkeepers, innkeepers, gentlemen, and gentlemen's servants." Sometimes low-priced sponge is offered in a street-market on a Saturday or Monday night, but very rarely, as it is a thing little used by the poor. A little is sold to the cabmen at their stands. The sponge-sellers, I may add, when going a regular round, offer their wares to any passer-by. A little is done by the Jews in bartering sponge for old clothes. There are five or six women in the trade.

I have reason to believe that the estimate of my informant, as to the number of sponge-sellers, is correct. But some sell sponge only occasionally, some make it only a portion of their business, and others vend it only when they "have it a bargain." Calculating, then, that only fifty persons (so allowing for the irregularities in the trade) vend sponge daily, and that each takes 15s. weekly,—some taking 25s., and others but 5s.—with about half profit on the whole (the common sponge is often from 200 to 300 per cent. profit), we find the outlay to be 1850l.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF WASH-LEATHERS.

THE wash-leathers, sometimes called "shammys" (chamois), now sold extensively in the streets, are for the most part the half of a sheep-skin, or of a larger lamb-skin. The skin is "split" by machinery, and to a perfect nicety, into two portions. That known as the "grain" (the part to which the fleece of the animal is attached) is very thin, and is dressed into a "skiver," a kind of leather used in the commoner requirements of book-binding, and for such purposes as the lining of hats. The other portion, the "flesh," is dressed as wash-leather. These skins are bought at the leather-sellers and the leather-dressers, at from 2s. to 20s. the dozen. The higher priced, or those from 12s. are often entire, and not "split" skins. The great majority of the street-sellers of wash-leathers are women, and principally Irishwomen. They offer their wash-leathers in all parts of town, calling at shops and inns; and at private houses offering them through the area rails, or knocking at the door when it is accessible. Many of these street-sellers are the wives of Irish labourers, employed by bricklayers and others, who are either childless, or able to leave their younger children under

the care of an older brother or sister, or when the poverty of the parents, or their culpable neglect, is extreme, allow them to run at large in the court or street, untended. The wives by this street-trade add to the husbands' earnings. In the respects of honesty and chastity, these women bear good characters.

The wash-leathers are sold for the cleaning of windows, and of plate and metal goods. Sixpence is a common price for a leather, the higher priced being sold at the mews and at gentlemen's houses. The "chamois" sold at the mews, however, are not often sold by the Irishwomen, but by the class I have described as selling scissors, &c., there. The leathers are also cut into pennyworths, and these pennyworths are sometimes sold on Saturday evenings in the street-markets.

There are, I am assured, 100 individuals selling little or nothing else but wash-leathers (for these traders are found in all the suburbs) in London, and that they take 10s. weekly, with a profit of from 4s. to 5s. There are, also, 100 other persons selling them occasionally, along with other goods, and as they vend the higher-priced articles, they probably receive nearly an equal amount. Hence it would appear that upwards of 5000l. is annually expended in the streets in this purchase.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SPECTACLES AND EYE-GLASSES.

TWENTY-FIVE years ago the street-trade in spectacles was almost entirely in the hands of the Jews, who hawked them in their boxes of jewellery, and sold them in the streets and public-houses, carrying them in their hands, as is done still. The trade was then far more remunerative than it is at the present time to the street-folk carrying it on. "People had more money then," one old spectacle-seller, now vending sponges, said, "and there wasn't so many forced to take to the streets, Irish particularly, and opticians' charges were higher than they are now, and those who wanted glasses thought they were a take-in if they wasn't charged a fair price. O, times was very different then."

The spectacles in the street-trade are bought at swag-shops in Houndsditch. The "common metal frames," with or without slides, are 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. the dozen wholesale, and are retailed from 4d. to 1s. The "horn frames" are 6s. to 7s. 6d. the dozen, and are retailed from 9d. to 18d., and even 2s. The "thin steel" are from 10s. 6d. to 21s. the dozen, and are retailed from 1s. 6d. to 3s. There are higher and lower prices, but those I have cited are what are usually paid by the street-traders. The inequality of the retail prices is accounted for by there being some difference in the spectacles in a dozen, some being of a better-looking material in horn or metal; others better finished. Then there is the chance of which street-sellers are not slow to avail themselves—"no more nor is shopkeepers," one man said—I mean, the chance of obtaining an enhanced

price for an article, with whose precise value the buyer is unacquainted.

"The patter," said the street-trader I have before quoted, "is nothing now, to what I've known it. You call it patter, but I don't. I think it's more in the way of persuasion, and is mostly said in public-houses, and not in the streets. Why, I've persuaded people, when I was in the trade and doing well at it—for that always gives you spirits—I've persuaded them in spite of their eyes that they wanted glasses. I knew a man who used to brag that he could talk people blind, and then they bought! It wasn't old people I so much sold to as young and middle-aged. I think perhaps I sold as many because people thought they looked better, or more knowing in them, than to help their eyesight. I've known my customers try my glasses, one pair after another, in the chimney glass of a public-house parlour. 'They're real Scotch pebbles,' I used to say sometimes—and I always had a fair article,—and was intended for a solid silver frame but the frame was made too small for them, and so I got them and put them into this frame myself, for I'm an optician, out of work, by trade. They're worth 15s., but you may have them, framed and all, for 7s. 6d.' I got 5s. for one pair once that way but they were a superior thing; I had them a particular bargain." One man told me that not long ago he asked 10d. for a pair of spectacles, and a journeyman slop-tailor said to him, "Why I only gave 1s. for this pair I'm wearing a few years back, and they ought to be less than 10d. now, for the duty's off glass."

The eye-glasses sold in the streets are "framed" in horn. They are bought at the same places as the spectacles, and cost, wholesale, for "single eyes" 4s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. the dozen. The retail price is from 6d. to 1s. The "double eyes," which are jointed in the middle so that the frame can be fitted to the bridge of the nose, are 10s. 6d. to 15s. the dozen, and are retailed by the street-folk from 1s. 3d. to 2s. each.

The spectacles are sold principally to working men, and are rarely hawked in the suburbs. The chief sale is in public-houses, but they are offered in all the busier thoroughfares and wherever a crowd is assembled. "The eye-glasses," said a man who vended them, "is sold to what I call counter-hoppers and black-legs. You'll see most of the young swells that's mixed up with gaming concerns at races—for there's gaming still, though the booths is put down in many places—sport their eye-glasses; and so did them as used to be concerned in getting up Derby and St. Leger 'sweeps' at public-houses; least-ways I've sold to them, where sweeps was held, and they was busy about them, and offered me a chance, sometimes, for a handsome eye-glass. But they're going out of fashion, is eye-glasses, I think. The other day I stood and offered them for nearly five hours at the foot of London-bridge, which used to be a tidy pitch for them, and I couldn't sell one. All that day I didn't take a halfpenny."

There are sometimes 100 men, the half of whom are Jews and Irishmen in equal propor-

tions, now selling spectacles and eye-glasses. Some of these traders are feeble from age, accident, continued sickness, or constitution, and represent that they must carry on a "light trade," being incapable of hard work, even if they could get it. Two women sell spectacles along with Dutch drops. As in other "light trades," the spectacle sellers do not, as a body, confine themselves to those wares, but resort, as one told me, "to anything that's up at the time and promises better," for a love of change is common among those who pursue a street life. It may be estimated, I am assured, that there are thirty-five men (so allowing for the breaks in regular spectacle selling) who vend them daily, taking 15s. a week (with a profit of 10s.), the yearly expenditure being thus 1365l.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF DOLLS.

THE making of dolls, like that of many a thing required for a mere recreation, a toy, a pastime, is often carried on amidst squalor, wretchedness, or privation, or—to use the word I have frequently heard among the poor—"pinching." Of this matter, however, I shall have to treat when I proceed to consider the manufacture of and trade in dolls generally, not merely as respects street-sale.

Dolls are now so cheap, and so generally sold by open-air traders whose wares are of a miscellaneous character, as among the "swag-barrow" or "penny-a-piece" men of whom I have treated separately, that the sale of what are among the most ancient of all toys, as a "business of itself," is far smaller, numerically, than it was.

The dolls are most usually carried in baskets by street-sellers (who are not makers) and generally by women who are very poor. Here and there in the streets most frequented by the patrons of the open-air trade may be seen a handsome stall of dolls of all sizes and fashions, but these are generally the property of makers; although those makers may buy a portion of their stock. There are also smaller stalls which may present the stock of the mere seller.

The dolls for street traffic may be bought at the swag-shops or of the makers. For the little armless 1d. dolls the maker charges the street-seller 8s., and to the swag-shop keeper who may buy largely, 7s. 6d. the dozen. Some little stalls are composed entirely of penny dolls; on others the prices run from 1d. to 6d. The chief trade, however, among the class I now describe, is carried on by the display of dolls in baskets. If the vendor can only attract the notice of children—and more especially in a private suburban residence, where children are not used to the sight of dolls on stalls or barrows, or in shops—and can shower a few blessings and compliments, "God be wid your bhutiful faces thin—and yours too, my lady, ma'am (with a curtsy to mistress or maid). Buy one of these dolls of a poor woman: shure they're bhutiful dolls and shuted for them angels o' the worruld;" under such circumstances, I say, a sale is almost certain. I may add that the words I have given I myself heard a poor Irishwoman, whom I had seen before selling large pincushions

in the same neighbourhood (that of the Regent's Park), address to a lady who was walking round her garden accompanied by two children.

A vendor of dolls expresses an opinion that as long as ever there are children from two years old to ten, there will always be purchasers of dolls; "but for all that," said he, "somehow or another 'tis nothing of a trade to what it used to be. I've seen the time when I could turn out in the morning and earn a pound afore night; but it's different now there's so many bazaars, and so many toy shops that the doll hawkers hasn't half the chance he used to have. Sartinly we gets a chance now and then—fine days is the best—and if we can get into the squares or where the children walks with their nurses, we can do tidy; but the police are so very particular there's not much of a livelihood to be got. Spoiled children are our best customers. Whenever we sees a likely customer approaching—we, that is, those who know their business—always throw ourselves in the way, and spread out our dolls to the best advantage. If we hears young miss say *she will* have one, and cries for it, we are almost sure of a customer, and if we see her kick and fight a bit with the nuss-maid we are sure of a good price. If a child *cries well* we never baits our price. Most of the doll-sellers are the manufacturers of the dolls—that is, I mean, they puts 'em together. The heads are made in Hamburgh; the principal places for buying them in London are at Alfred Davis's, in Houndsditch; White's, in Houndsditch; and Joseph's, in Leadenhall-street. They are sold as thus:—The heads that we sell for 3d. each, when made up, cost us 7s. 6d. per gross, or 7½d. per dozen; these are called 1—O's. No. 2—O's., are 8s. 6d. per gross, and No. 3—O's. 10s. per gross. One yard and half of calico will make a dozen bodies, small size. These we get sewn for three halfpence, and we stuffs and finishes them ourselves.

"When our 3d. dolls are made up, they cost about 1s. per dozen—so there is 2d. profit on every doll, which I thinks is little enough; but we often sells 'em at 2d.; we lays 'em out to the best advantage in a deep basket, all standing up, as it were, or leaning against the sides of the basket. The legs and bodies is carefully wrapped in tissue paper, not exactly to preserve the lower part of the doll, for that isn't so very valuable, but in reality to conceal the legs and body, which is rather the reverse of symmetrical; for, to tell the truth, every doll looks as if it were labouring under an attack of the gout. There are, however, some very neat articles exported from Germany, especially the jointed dolls, but they are too dear for the street-hawker, and would not show to such advantage. There is also the plaster dolls, with the match legs. I wonder how they keep their stand, for they are very old-fashioned; but they sell, for you never see a chandler's shop window without seeing one of these sticking in it, and a falling down as if it was drunk. Then there's the wax dolls. Some of 'em are made of wax, and others of 'pappy mashy,' and afterwards dipped in wax. The cheapest and best mart for these is in Barbi-

can; it would astonish many if they knew exactly what was laid out in the course of a year in dolls. It would be impossible, I think, to ascertain exactly; but I think I could guess something near the mark. There are, at least, at this time of year, when the fairs are coming on, fifty doll-hawkers, who sell nothing else. Say each of these sells one dozen dolls per day, and that their average price is 4*d.* each. That is just 10*l.* a day, and 60*l.* per week. In the winter time so many are not sold; but I have no doubt that 50*l.*'s worth of dolls are sold each week throughout the year by London hawkers alone, or just upon 3000*l.* per annum. The shops sell as many as the hawkers, and the stalls attending fairs half the amount; and you may safely say that the sum taken for dolls in and around London in one year amounts to 7500*l.* A doll-merchant can begin business with a trifle," continued my informant; "a shilling will obtain a dozen 3*d.* dolls. If you have no basket, carry them in your arms, although they don't show off to such advantage there as they do when nicely basketed; however, if you've luck, you may soon raise a basket; for 3*s.* 6*d.* you can get a very nice one; and although the doll trade is not what it used to be, there are," said my informant, "worse games than that yet, I know. One man, who is now in a very respectable way of business—a regular gentleman—was a very few years ago only a doll-hawker. Another man, who had two hands and only one arm—poor fellow! he was born with one arm, and had two hands, one appended to his arm in the usual way, and the other attached to his shoulder—a freak of nature, I think, they called it. However, my one-armed friend keeps now a very respectable little swag-shop at North Shields, in Northumberland."

I inquired of my informant whether he objected to relate a little of his history? He replied, "not the least," and recounted as follows:—

"They call me *Dick the Dollman*. I was, I believe, the first as ever cried dolls three a shilling in the streets. Afore I began they al'ays stood still with 'em; but I cried 'em out same as they do mackrel; that is twenty years ago. I wasn't originally a doll-seller. My father was a pensioner in Greenwich College. My mother used to hawk, and had a licence. I was put to school in St. Patrick's-school, Lanark's-passage, where I remained six years, but I didn't learn much. At thirteen years of age I was apprenticed to a brush and broom maker's, corner of C—— Street, Spitalfields. My master was not the honestest chap in the world, for he bought hair illegal, was found out, and got transported for seven years. A man who worked for my master took me to finish my apprenticeship; this man and his wife was very old people. I used to work four days in the week, two for them and two for myself; the other two days I went out hawking brooms and brushes, and very often would earn 7*s.* or 8*s.* on a Saturday, but times was better then than they are now. Arter that, for sake of gain, I left the old people, I was offered 20*s.* to make and hawk; and in course I took it. I remained with this master five months; he was afflicted with rheumatic fever—

went into the hospital—and I was left to shift for myself. When my master went to the hospital I had 7*s.* 6*d.* in my pocket; I knew I *must* do something, and, to tell you the truth, I didn't like the brush-making; I would rather have hawked something without the trouble of making it. I think *now* I was a little afflicted with laziness. I was passing London-bridge and saw a man selling Marshall's pocket-books; I knowed him afore; I thought I should like to try the pocket-book selling, and communicated my wishes to the man; he told me they cost eight shillings a dozen, if I liked we would purchase a dozen a'twixt us; we did so; I received half a dozen, but I afterwards learned that my friend obtained seven for his share, as they were sold thirteen to the dozen. I went to Chancery-lane with my lot and was very lucky; I sold the six books to one gentleman for six shillings: in course I soon obtained another supply; that day I sold four dozen, and earned 20*s.* I was such a good seller that Marshall let me have 3*l.* or 4*l.*'s worth on credit—and *I never paid him*. I know that was wrong now; but I was such a foolish chap, and used to spend my money as fast as I got it. I would have given Marshall a shilling the other day if I had had one, for I see him selling penny books in the street. I thought it was hard lines, and had been such a gentleman too. Somerset-house corner was a capital stand for selling pocket-books. The way I took to the dolls was this; I met a girl with a doll basket one day as I was standing at Somerset-house corner; she and I got a talking. 'Will you go to the 'Delphy to night?' says I; she consented. They was a playing Tom and Jerry at this time, all the street-sellers went to see it, and other people; and nice and crabbed some on 'em was. Well, we goes to the 'Delphy—and I sees her often arter that, and at last gets married. She used to buy her dolls ready made; I soon finds out where to get the heads—and the profits when we made them ourselves was much greater. We began to serve hawkers and shops; went to Bristol—saved 47*l.*—comes to London and spends it all; walks back to Bristol, and by the time we got there we had cleared more than 20*l.* We were about a month on the journey, and visited Cheltenham and other towns. We used to spend our money very foolishly; we were too fond of what was called getting on the spree. You see we might have done well if we had liked, but we hadn't the sense. My wife got very clever at the dolls and so did I. Then I tried my hand at the wax dolls, and got to make them very well. I paid a guinea to learn.

"I was selling wax-dolls one day in London, and a gentleman asked me if I could mend a wax figure whose face was broken. I replied yes, for I had made a few wax heads, large size, for some showmen. I had made some murderers who was hung; lately I made Rush and Mr. and Mrs. Manning; but the showmen can't afford to get new heads now-a-days, so they generally makes one head do for all; sometimes they changes the dress. Well, as I was telling you, I went with this gentleman, and proposed that he should have

a new head cast, for the face of the figure was so much broken. It was Androcles pulling the thorn out of the lion's foot, and was to be exhibited. I got 20*s.* for making the new head. The gentleman asked me if I knew the story about Androcles. Now I had never heard on him afore, but I didn't like to confess my ignorance, so I says 'yes;' then he offers me 30*s.* a week to describe it in the Flora Gardens, where it was to be exhibited. I at once accepted the engagement; but I was in a bit of a fix, for I didn't know what to say. I inquired of a good many people, but none on 'em could tell me; at last I was advised to go to Mr. Charles Sloman—you know who I mean—him as makes a song and sings it directly; I was told he writes things for people. I went, and he wrote me out a patter. I asked him how much he charged; he said, 'Nothing my man.' Sartinly he wasn't long a-doing it, but it was very kind of him. I got what Mr. Sloman wrote out for me printed, and this I stuck inside my hat; the people couldn't see it, though I dare say they wondered what I was looking in my hat about. However, in a week or so, I got it by heart, and could speak it well enough. After exhibiting Androcles I got an engagement with another waxwork show—named Biancis—and afterwards at other shows. I was considered a very good doorsman in time, but there's very little to be got by that now; so we keeps to the dolly business, and finds we can get a better living at that than anything else. Me and the old woman can earn 1*l.* a week, bad and all as things are; but we're obliged to hawk."

#### OF THE "SWAG-BARROWMEN," AND "LOT-SELLERS."

THE "swag" (miscellaneous) barrow is one of the objects in the streets which attracts, perhaps more readily than any other, the regards of the passer-by. There are so many articles and of such various uses; they are often so closely packed, so new and clean looking, and every here and there so tastefully arranged, that this street-trader's barrow really repays an examination. Here are spread on the flat part of the barrow, pepper-cruets or boxes, tea-caddies, nutmeg-graters, vinegar-cruets, pen-cases, glass or china-handled pens, pot ornaments, beads, ear-rings, finger-rings (plain or with "stones"), cases of scent-bottles, dolls, needle-cases, pincushions, Exhibition medals and "frames" (framed pictures), watches, shawl-pins, extinguishers, trumpets and other toys, kaleidoscopes, seals, combs, lockets, thimbles, bone tooth-picks, small playing-cards, teetotums, shuttle-cocks, key-rings, shirt-studs or buttons, hooks and eyes, coat-studs, money-boxes, spoons, boxes of toys, earthenware-mugs, and glass articles, such as salt-cellars and smelling-bottles. On one barrow were 225 articles.

At the back and sides of the swag-barrow are generally articles which are best displayed in an erect position. These are children's wooden swords, whips, climbing monkeys, and tumblers, jointed snakes twisting to the wind from the top

of a stick, kites, and such things as tin egg-holders.

Perhaps on very few barrows or stalls are to be seen *all* the articles I have enumerated, but they are all "in the trade," and, if not found in this man's stock, may be found in his neighbour's. Things which attain only a temporary sale, such as galvanic rings, the Lord's Prayer in the compass of a sixpence, gutta-percha heads, &c., are also to be found, during the popular demand, in the miscellaneous trader's stock.

Each of the articles enumerated is retailed at 1*d.* "Only a penny!" is the cry, "pick 'em out anywhere; wherever your taste lies; only a penny, a penny, a penny!" But on a few other barrows are goods, mixed with the "penny" wares, of a higher price; such as knives and forks, mustard pots, sham beer glasses (the glasses which appear to hold beer frothing to the brim), higher-priced articles of jewellery, skipping-ropes, drums, china ornaments, &c. At these barrows the prices run from 1*d.* to 1*s.*

The practice of selling by commission, the same as I have shown to prevail among the costers, exists among the miscellaneous dealers of whom I am treating, who are known among street-folk as "swag-barrowmen," or, in the popular ellipsis, "penny swags;" the word "swag" meaning, as I before showed, a collection—a lot.

The "swag-men" are often confounded with the "lot-sellers"; so that I proceed to show the difference.

The *Lot-Sellers* proper, are those who vend a variety of small articles, or "a lot," all for 1*d.* A "lot" frequently consists of a sheet of songs, a Chinese puzzle, a 5*l.* note (Bank of Elegance), an Exhibition snuff-box (containing 6 spoons), a half jack (half sovereign), a gold ring, a silver ring, and a chased keeper with rose, thistle, and shamrock on it. The lots are diversified with packs of a few cards, little pewter ornaments, boxes of small wooden toys, shirt-buttons, baby thimbles, beads, tiny scent bottles, and such like.

The "penny apiece" or "swag" trade, as contradistinguished from the "penny lots" vended by the lot-sellers, was originated by a man who, some 19 years ago, sold a variety of trifles from a tea-tray in Petticoat-lane. My informant had heard him say—for the original "penny apiece" died four years ago—that he did it to get rid of the odds and ends of his stock. The system, however, at once attracted popularity, and the fortunate street-seller prospered and "died worth money." At that period penny goods (excepting such things as sweet-stuffs, pastry, &c.) were far less numerous in the streets, and yet I have never met with an old street-trader (a statement fully borne out by old and intelligent mechanics) who did not pronounce spare pennies to be far more abundant in those days among the poorer and even middle classes. There were, moreover, far fewer street chapmen, so that this novel mode of business had every chance to thrive.

The origin of "lot-selling," or selling "penny lots" instead of penny articles, was more curious. It was commenced by an ingenious Swiss (?)

(about a year after the "penny apiece" trade), known in the street circles as "Swede." He was a refugee, a Roman Catholic, and a hot politician. He spoke and understood English well, but had no sympathy with the liberal parties in this country. "He was a republican," he would say, "and the Chartists were only milk and water." When he established his lot-selling he used to place to his mouth an instrument, which was described to me as "like a doubled card," and play upon it very finely. This would attract a crowd, and he would then address them in good English, but with a slight foreign accent: "My frents; come to me, and I will show you my musical instruments, which will play Italian, Swiss, French, Scotch, Irish, or any tunes. And here you see beautiful cheap lots of useful tings, and elegant tings. A penny a lot, a penny a lot!" The arrangement of the "lots" was similar to what it is at present, but the components of the pennyworth were far less numerous. This man carried on a good trade in London for two or three years, and then applied his industry to a country more than a town career. He died about five or six years ago, at his abode in Fashion-street, Spitalfields, "worth money." At the time of his decease he was the proprietor of two lodging-houses; one in Spitalfields, the other in Birmingham, both I am told, well conducted; the charge was 4*d.* a night. He did not reside in either, but employed "deputies." I may observe that he sold his "musical instruments," also, at 1*d.* each, but the sale was insignificant. "Only himself seemed master of 'em," said one man; "with other people they were no better nor a Jew's-harp."

Of the "penny apiece" street-vendors, there are about 300 in London; 250 having barrows, and 50 stalls or pitches on the ground. Some even sell at "a halfpenny apiece," but chiefly to get rid of inferior wares, or when "cracked up," and unable to "spring" a better stock. The barrows are 7 feet by 3; are well built in general, and cost 50*s.* each. These barrows, when fully stocked, are very heavy (about 4 cwt.), so that it requires a strong man to propel one any distance, and though occasionally the man's wife officiates as the saleswoman, there is always a man connected with the business. In my description of a stock of penny goods, I have mentioned that there were 225 articles; these were counted on a barrow in a street near the Brill—but probably on another occasion (when there appeared a better chance of selling) there might be 500 articles, such things as rings and the like admitting of being stowed by the hundred in very small compass. The great display, however, is only on the occasion of holidays, or "when a man starts and wants to stun you with a show." At Maidstone Fair the other day, a London street-seller, rather well to do, sold his entire stock of penny articles to a shopkeeper of the town, and when counted there were exactly fifteen gross, or 2160 "pieces" as they are sometimes called. These, vended at 1*d.* each, would realize just 9*l.*, and would cost, wholesale, about 6*l.*, or for ready money, at the swag-shops, where they may be bought, from 10*s.*

to 20*s.* less, according to the bargaining powers of the buyer. The man's reason for selling was that the Fair was "no good;" that is to say, the farmers had no money, and their labourers received only 7*s.* a week, so there was no demand; the swag-seller, therefore, rather than incur the trouble and expense of having to carry his wares back to London, sold at a loss to a shopkeeper in Maidstone, who wanted a stock.

The swag-barrowmen selling on commission have 3*s.* in every 20*s.* worth of goods that they sell. The commission may average from 9*s.* to 12*s.* a week in tolerable weather, but as in bad, and especially in foggy weather, the trade cannot be prosecuted at all, 7*s.* 6*d.* may be the highest average, or 10*s.* the year through.

The character of the penny swag-men belongs more to that of the costermongers than to any other class of street-folk. Many of them drink as freely as their means will permit. I was told of a match between a teetotaller and a beer-drinker, about nine years ago. It was for 5*s.* a side, and the "Championship." Each man started with an equal stock, alike in all respects, but my informant had forgotten the precise number of articles. They pattered, twenty-five yards apart one from another, three hours in James-street, Covent-garden; three hours in the Blackfriars-road; and three hours in Deptford. The teetotaller was "sold out" in seven-and-a-half hours; while his opponent—and the contest seems to have been carried on very good-humouredly—at the nine hours' end, had four dozen articles left, and was rather exhausted, or, as it was described to me, "told out." The result, albeit, was not looked upon, I was assured, as anything very decisive of the relative merits of beer or water, as the source of strength or inspiration of "patter." The teetotaller was the smarter, though he did not appear the stronger, man; he abandoned the championship, and went into another trade four years ago. The patter of the swag-men has nothing of the humour of the paper-workers; it is merely declaratory that the extensive stock offered on such liberal terms to the public would furnish a wholesale shop; that such another opportunity for cheap pennyworths could never by any possibility occur again, and that it was a duty on all who heard the patterer to buy at once.

The men having their own barrows or stalls (but the stall-trade is small) buy their goods as they find their stock needs replenishment at the swag-shops. "It was a good trade at first, sir," said one man, "and for its not being a good trade now, we may partly blame one another. There was a cutting-down trade among us. Black earrings were bought at 14*d.* the dozen, and sold at a loss at 1*d.* each. So were children's trap-bats, and monkeys-up sticks, but they are now 9*d.* a dozen. Sometimes, sir, as I know, the master of a swag-barrow gets served out. You see, a man may once on a time have a good day, and take as much as 2*l.* Well, next day he'll use part of that money, and go as a penny swag on his own account; or else he'll buy things he is sold out of, and work them on his own account or

his master's barrow. All right, sir; his master makes him a convenience for his own pocket, and so his master may be made a convenience for the man's. When he takes the barrow back at the week's end, if he's been doing a little on his own dodge, there's the stock, and there's the money. It's all right between a rich man and a poor man that way; turn and turn about's fair play."

The lot-sellers are, when the whole body are in London, about 200 in number; but they are three times as itinerant into the country as are the traders in the heavier and little portable swag-barrows. The lot-sellers nearly all vend their goods from trays slung from their shoulders. The best localities for the lot-sellers are Ratchiffe-high-way, Commercial-road, Whitechapel, Minorities, Tower-hill, Tooley-street, Newington-causeway, Walworth, Blackfriars and Westminster-roads, Long-acre, Holborn, and Oxford-street. To this list may be added the Brill, Tottenham-court-road, and the other street-markets, on Saturday evenings, when some of these places are almost impassable. The best places for the swag-barrow trade are also those I have specified. Their customers, alike for the useful and fancy articles, are the working-classes, and the chief sale is on Saturdays and Mondays. One swag-man told me that he thought he could sell better if he had a less crowded barrow, but his master was so keen of money that he would make him try everything. It made selling more tiresome, too, he said, for a poor couple who had a penny or two to lay out would fix on half the things they saw, and change them for others, before they parted with their money.

Of the penny-a-piece sellers trading on their own account, the receipts may be smaller than those of the men who work the huge swag-barrows on commission, but their profits are greater. Calculating that 100 of these traders are, the year round, in London (some are absent all the summer at country fairs, and on any favourable opportunity, while a number of swag-barrowmen leave that employment for costermongering on their own account), and that each takes 2*l.* weekly, we find no less than 10,400*l.* thus expended in the streets of London in a year.

The lot-sellers also resort largely to the country, and frequently try other callings, such as the sale of fruit, medals, &c. Some also sell lots only on Saturday and Monday nights. Taking these deductions into consideration, it may be estimated that only fifty men (there is but one female lot-seller on her own account) carry on the trade, presuming it to be spread over the six days of the week. Each of them may take 13*s.* weekly (with a profit of 7*s.* 6*d.*), so showing the street outlay to be 1190*l.* The "lots" are bought at the German and English swag-shops; the principal supply, however, is procured from Black Tom in Clerkenwell.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF ROULETTE BOXES.  
Is my account of the street-trade in "China ornaments" I had occasion to mention a use to which a roulette box, or portable roulette table,

was put. I need only repeat in this place that the box (usually of mahogany) contains a board, with numbered partitions, which is set spinning, by means of a central knob, on a pivot; the lid is then placed on the box, a pea is slipped through a hole in the lid, and on the number of the partition in which the pea is found deposited, when the motion has ceased, depends the result. The table, or board, is thus adapted for the determination of that mode of raising money, popular among costermongers and other street-folk, who in their very charities crave some excitement; I mean a "raffle;" or it may be used for play, by one or more persons, the highest number "spun" determining the winner. These street-sold tables may still be put to another use: In the smaller sort, "going no higher than fourteen," one division is blank. Thus any one may play against another, or several others spinning in turns, the "blank" being a chance in the "banker's" favour. Some of the tables, however, are numbered as high as 36, or as a seller of them described it, "single and double zero, bang; a French game."

This curious street-trade has been carried on for seven years, but with frequent interruptions, by one man, who, until within these few weeks, was the sole trader in the article. There are now but two selling roulette-boxes at all regularly. The long-established salesman wears mustachios, and has a good deal the look of a foreigner. During his seven years' experience he has sold, he calculates, 12,000 roulette-boxes, at a profit of from 175*l.* to 200*l.* The prices (retail) are from 1*s.* to 2*l.*, at which high amount my informant once disposed of "a roulette" in the street. He has sold, however, more at 1*s.* than at all other rates together. The "shilling roulette" is about three inches in diameter; the others proportionately larger. These wares are German made, bought at a swag-shop, and retailed at a profit of from 15 to 33 per cent. They are carried in a basket, one being held for public examination in the vendor's hand.

"My best customers," said the experienced man in the business, "are stock-brokers, travellers, and parsons; people that have spare time on their hands. O, I mean by 'travellers,' gentlemen going on a railway who pass the time away at roulette. Now and then a regular 'leg,' when he's travelling to Chester, York, or Doncaster, to the races, may draw other passengers into play, and make a trifle, or not a trifle, by it; or he will play with other legs; but it's generally for amusement, I've reason to believe. Friends travelling together play for a trifle to pass away time, or who shall pay for breakfasts for two, or such like. I supplied one gaming-house with a large roulette-table made of a substance that if you throw it into water—and there's always a pail of 'tepid' ready—would dissolve very quickly. When it's not used it's hung against the wall and is so made that it looks to be an oil-painting framed. It cost them 10*l.* I suppose I have the 'knock' of almost every gaming-house in London. There's plenty of them still. The police can drive such as me about in the streets or out of the streets to

starve, but lords, and gentlemen, and some parsons, I know, go to the gaming-houses, and when one's broke into by the officers—it's really funny—John Smith, and Thomas Jones, and William Brown are pulled up, but as no gaming implements are found, there's nothing against them. Some of these houses are never noticed for a long time. The 'Great Nick' hasn't been, nor the 'Little Nick.' I don't know why they're called 'Nicks,' those two; but so they are. Perhaps after Old Nick. At the Great Nick I dare say there's often 1000*l.* depending. But the Little Nick is what we call only 'brown papermen,' low gamblers—playing for pence, and 1*s.* being a great go. I wonder the police allow *that*."

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF POISON FOR RATS.

THE number of Vermin-Destroyers and Rat-Catchers who ply their avocation in London has of late years become greatly diminished. One cause which I heard assigned for this was that many ruinous old buildings and old streets had been removed, and whole colonies of rats had been thereby extirpated. Another was that the race of rat-catchers had become distrusted, and had either sought some other mode of subsistence, or had resorted to other fields for the exercise of their professional labours.

The rat-catcher's dress is usually a velveteen jacket, strong corduroy trowsers, and laced boots. Round his shoulder he wears an oil-skin belt, on which are painted the figures of huge rats, with fierce-looking eyes and formidable whiskers. His hat is usually glazed and sometimes painted after the manner of his belt. Occasionally—and in the country far more than in town—he carries in his hand an iron cage in which are ferrets, while two or three crop-eared rough terriers dog his footsteps. Sometimes a tamed rat runs about his shoulders and arms, or nestles in his bosom or in the large pockets of his coat. When a rat-catcher is thus accompanied, there is generally a strong aromatic odour about him, far from agreeable; this is owing to his clothes being rubbed with oil of thyme and oil of aniseed, mixed together. This composition is said to be so attractive to the sense of the rats (when used by a man who understands its due apportionment and proper application) that the vermin have left their holes and crawled to the master of the powerful spell. I heard of one man (not a rat-catcher professionally) who had in this way tamed a rat so effectually that the animal would eat out of his mouth, crawl upon his shoulder to be fed, and then "smuggle into his bosom" (the words of my informant) "and sleep there for hours." The rat-catchers have many wonderful stories of the sagacity of the rat, and though in reciting their own feats, these men may not be the most trustworthy of narrators, any work on natural history will avouch that rats *are* sagacious, may be trained to be very docile, and are naturally animals of great resources in all straits and difficulties.

One great source of the rat-catcher's employment and emolument thirty years ago, or even to a later period, is now comparatively a nonentity. At that

time the rat-catcher or killer sometimes received a yearly or quarterly stipend to keep a London granary clear of rats. I was told by a man who has for twenty-eight years been employed about London granaries, that he had never known a rat-catcher employed in one except about twenty or twenty-two years ago, and that was in a granary by the river-side. The professional man, he told me, certainly poisoned many rats, "which stunk so," continued my informant—but then all evil odours in old buildings are attributed to dead rats—"that it was enough to infect the corn. He poisoned two fine cats as well. But I believe he was a young hand and a bungler." The rats, after these measures had been taken, seem to have deserted the place for three weeks or a month, when they returned in as great numbers as ever; nor were their ravages and annoyances checked until the drains were altered and rebuilt. It is in the better disposition of the drains of a corn-magazine, I am assured, that the great check upon the inroads of these "varmint" is attained—by strong mason work and by such a series and arrangement of grates, as defy even the perseverance of a rat. Otherwise the hordes which prey upon the garbage in the common sewers, are certain to find their way into the granary along the drains and channels communicating with those sewers, and will increase rapidly despite the measures of the rat-catcher.

The same man told me that he had been five or six times applied to by rat-catchers, and with liberal offers of beer, to allow them to try and capture the black rats in the granary. One of these traders declared that he wanted them "for a gent as vas curious in them there hinteresting warmint;" But from the representations of the other applicants, my informant was convinced that they were wanted for rat-hunts, the Dog Billy being backed for 100*l.* to kill so many rats in so many minutes. "You see, sir," the corn merchant's man continued, "ours is an old concern, and there's black rats in it, great big fellows; some of 'em must be old, for they're as white about the muzzle as is the Duke of Wellington, and they have the character of being very strong and very fierce. One of the catchers asked me if I knew what a stunning big black rat would weigh, as if I weighed rats! I always told them that I cared nothing about rat-hunts and that I knew our people wouldn't like to be bothered; and they was gentlemen that didn't admire sporting characters."

The black rat, I may observe, or the English rat, is now comparatively scarce, while the brown, or Hanoverian, rat is abundant. This brown rat seems to have become largely domiciled in England about the period of the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty; whence its name. "A Hanover rat" was a term of reproach applied by the Jacobites to the successful party.

The rat-catchers are also rat-killers. They destroy the animals sometimes by giving them what is called in the trade "an alluring poison." Every professional destroyer, or capturer, of rats will pretend that as to poison he has his own particular method—his secret—his discovery. But

there is no doubt that arsenic is the basis of all their poisons. Its being inodorous, and easily reducible to a soft fine powder, renders it the best adapted for mixing with anything of which rats are fond—toasted cheese, or bacon, or fried liver, or tallow, or oatmeal. Much as the poisoner may be able to tempt the animal's appetite, he must, and does, proceed cautiously. If the bait be placed in an unwonted spot, it is often untouched. If it be placed where rats have been accustomed to find their food, it is often devoured. But even then it is frequently accounted best to leave the bait unpoisoned for the first night; so that a hungry animal may attack it greedily the second. With oatmeal it is usual to mix for the first and even second nights a portion of pounded white sugar. If this be eaten it accustoms the jealous pest to the degree of sweetness communicated by arsenic. The "oatmeal poison" is, I am told, the most effectual; but even when mixed only with sugar it is often refused; as "rats is often better up to a dodge nor Kirstians" (Christians).

Another mode of killing rats is for the professional destroyer to slip a ferret into the rats' haunts wherever it is practicable. The ferret soon dislodges them, and as they emerge for safety they are seized by terriers, who, after watching the holes often a long time, and very patiently, and almost breathlessly, throttle them silently, excepting the short squeak, or half-squeak, of the rat, who, by a "good dog," is seized unerringly by the part of the back where the terrier's gripe and shake is speedy death; if the rat still move, or shows signs of life, the well-trained rat-killer's dog cracks the vermin's skull between his teeth.

If the rats have to be taken alive, they are either trapped, so as not to injure them for a rat-hunt (or the procedure in the pit would be accounted "foul"), or if driven out of their holes by ferrets, they can only run into some cask, or other contrivance, where they can be secured for the "sportsman's" purposes. Although any visible injury to the body of the rat will prevent its reception into a pit, the creatures' teeth are often drawn, and with all the cruelty of a rough awkwardness, by means of pinchers, so that they may be unable to bite the puppies being trained for the pit on the rats. If the vermin be not truly seized by the dog, the victim will twist round and inflict a tremendous bite on his worrier, generally on the lip. This often causes the terrier to drop his prey with a yell, and if a puppy he may not forget the lesson from the sharp nip of the rat. To prevent this it is that the rat-catchers play the dentist on their unfortunate captives.

I heard many accounts of the "dodges" practised by, or imputed to, the rat-catchers: that it was not a very unusual thing to deposit here and there a dead rat, when those vermin were to be poisoned on any premises; it is then concluded that the good poison has done its good work, and the dead animal supplies an ocular demonstration of professional skill. These men, also, I am informed, let loose live rats in buildings adapted for

the purpose, and afterwards apply for employment to destroy them.

I am informed that the principal scene of the rat-catcher's labours in London is at the mews, and in private stables, coach-houses, and out-buildings. It is probable that the gentlemen's servants connected with such places like the excitement of rat-hunting, and so encourage the profession which supplies them with that gratification. In these places such labours are often necessary as well as popular; for I was informed by a coachman, then living with his family in a West End mews, and long acquainted with the mews in different parts of town, that the drainage was often very defective, and sanitary regulations—except, perhaps, as regarded the horses—little cared for. Hence rats abounded, and were with difficulty dislodged from their secure retreats in the ill-constructed drains and kennels.

The great sale of the rat-catchers is to the shops supplying "private parties" with rats for the amusement of seeing them killed by dogs. With some "fast" men, one of these shopkeepers told me, it was a favourite pastime in their own rooms on the Sunday mornings. It is, however, somewhat costly if carried on extensively, as the retail charge from the shops is 6*d.* per rat. The price from the catcher to the dealer is from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 7*s.* the dozen. Rats, it appears, are sometimes scarce, and then the shopkeeper must buy, "to keep up his connection," at enhanced cost. One large bird-seller, who sold also plain and fancy rats, white mice, and live hedgehogs, told me that he had, last winter, been compelled to give 7*s.* a dozen for his vermin and sell them at 6*d.* each.

The grand consumption of rats, however, is in Bunhill-row, at a public-house kept by a pugilist. A rat-seller told me that from 200 to 500 rats were killed there weekly, the weekly average being, however, only the former number; while at Easter and other holidays, it is not uncommon to see bills posted announcing the destruction of 500 rats on the same day and in a given time, admittance 6*d.* Dogs are matched at these and similar places, as to which kills the greatest number of these animals in the shortest time. I am told that there are forty such places in London, but in some only the holiday times are celebrated in this small imitation of the beast combats of the ancients. There is, too, a frequent abandonment of the trade in consequence of its "not paying," and perhaps it may be fair to estimate that the average consumption of this vermin-game does not exceed, in each of these places, 20 a week, or 1040 in a year; giving an aggregate—over and above those consumed in private sport—of 52,000 rats in a year, or 1000 a week in public amusement alone.

To show the nature of the sport of rat-catching, I print the following bill, of which I procured two copies. The words and type are precisely the same in each, but one bill is printed on good and the other on very indifferent paper, as if for distribution among distinct classes. The concluding announcement, as to the precise moment at which

killing will commence, reads supremely business-like:—

### RATTING FOR THE MILLION!

A SPORTING GENTLEMAN, Who is a Staunch Supporter of the destruction of these VERMIN

WILL GIVE A  
GOLD REPEATER  
WATCH,

TO BE KILLED FOR BY  
DOGS Under 13½ lbs. Wt.  
15 RATS EACH!

TO COME OFF AT JEMMY MASSEY'S,  
KING'S HEAD,  
COMPTON ST., SOHO,  
On Tuesday, May 20, 1851.

To be Killed in a Large Wire Pit. A chalk Circle to be drawn in the centre for the Second.—Any Man touching Dog or Rats, or acting in any way unfair his dog will be disqualified.

TO GO TO SCALE AT Half past 7 KILLING TO COMMENCE At Half past 8 PRECISELY.

A dealer in live animals told me that there were several men who brought a few dozens of rats, or even a single dozen, from the country; men who were not professionally rat-catchers, but worked in gardens, or on farms, and at their leisure caught rats. Even some of the London professional rat-catchers work sometimes as country labourers, and their business is far greater, in merely rat-catching or killing, in the country than in town. From the best information I could command, there are not fewer than 2000 rats killed, for sport, in London weekly, or 104,000 a year, including private and public sport, for private sport in this pursuit goes on uninterruptedly; the public delectation therein is but periodical.

This calculation is of course exclusive of the number of rats killed by the profession, "on the premises," when these men are employed to "clear the premises of vermin."

There are, I am told, 100 rat-catchers resorting, at intervals, to London, but only a fourth of that number can be estimated as carrying on their labours regularly in town, and their average earnings, I am assured, do not exceed 15s. a week; being 975*l.* a year for London merely.

These men have about them much of the affected mystery of men who are engaged on the turf. They have their "secrets," make or pretend to "make their books" on rat fights and other sporting events; are not averse to drinking, and lead in general irregular lives. They are usually on intimate terms with the street dog-sellers (who are much of the same class). Many of the rat-catchers have been brought up in stables, and there is little education among them. When in London, they are chiefly to be found in White-chapel, Westminster, and Kent-street, Borough;

the more established having their own rooms; the others living in the low lodging-houses. None of them remain in London the entire year.

These men also sell rat-poison (baked flour or oatmeal sometimes) in cakes, arsenic being the ingredient. The charge is from 2*d.* to 1*s.*, "according to the circumstances of the customer." In like manner the charge for "clearing a house of vermin" varies from 2*s.* to 1*l.*: a very frequent charge is 2*s.* 6*d.*

### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF RHUBARB AND SPICE.

FROM the street-seller whose portrait has already been given I received the following history. He appeared to be a very truthful and kindly-disposed old man:—

"I am one native of Mogadore in Morocco. I am an Arab. I left my countree when I was sixteen or eighteen year of age. I forget, sir. I don't know which, about eighteen, I tink it was. My fader was like market man, make de people pay de toll—he rent de whole market, you see, from de governemen, and make de people pay so much for deir stands. I can't tell you what dey call dem dere. I couldn't recollect what my fader pay for de market; but I know some of de people pay him a penny, some a ha'penny, for de stands. Dere everyting sheap, not what dey are here in England. Dey may stop all day for de toll or go when de market is over. My fader was not very rish—not very poor—he keep a family. We have bread, meat, shicken, apples, grapes, all de good tings to eat, not like here—tis de sheapest countree in de world. My fader have two wives, not at once you know, he bury de first and marry anoder. I was by second wife. He have seven shildren by her, four sons and tree daughters. By de first I tink dere was five, two sons and tree daughters. Bless you, by de time I was born dere was great many of 'em married and away in de world. I don't know where dey are now. Only one broder I got live for what I know, wheder de oders are dead or where dey are I can't tell. De one broder I speak of is in Algiers now; he is dealer dere. What led me to come away, you say? Like good many I was young and foolish; like all de rest of young people, I like to see foreign countries, but you see in my countree de governemen don't like de people to come away, not widout you pay so mush, so Gibraltar was de only port I could go to, it was only one twenty miles across de water—close to us. You see you go to Gibraltar like smuggling—you smuggle yourself—you talk wid de Captain and he do it for you.

"My fader been dead years and years before I come away, I suppose I was about ten year old when he die. I had been at school till time I was grown up, and after dat I was shoemaker. I make de slippers. Oh yes! my moder was alive den—she was dead when I was here in England. I get about one penny a pair for de slippers in my countree; penny dere as good as shilling here amost. I could make tree, four, five pair in one day. I could live on my gains den better dan what I could do here wid twelve times as mush—



THE MUD-LARK.

[From a Photograph.]

dat time I could. I don't know what it is now. Yes, my moder give me leave to go where I like. She never see me since" (sighing). "Oh yes, I love her very mush. I am old man now, but I never forgot her yet;" here the old man burst into tears and buried his face in his handkerchief for several minutes. "No, no! she don't know when I come away dat she never see me again, nor me neider. I tell I go Gibraltar, and den I tell her I go to Lisbon to see my broder, who was spirit merchant dere. I didn't say noting not at all about coming back to her, but I tought I should come back soon. If I had tought I never see no more, not all de gold in de world take me from her. She was good moder to me. I was de youngest but one. My broders kept my moder, you see. Where I came from it is not like here, if only one in de family well off, de oders never want for noting. In my country, you see, de law is you must maintain your fader and moder before you maintain your own family. You must keep dem in de house." Here he repeated the law in Hebrew. "De people were Mahomedans in Mogadore, but we were Jews, just like here, you see. De first ting de Jews teesh de shildren is deir duty to deir faders and deir moders. And dey love one anoder more than de gold; but dey love de gold more dan most people, for you see gold is more to dem. In my countree de governemen treat de Jews very badly, so de money all de Jews have to help dem. Often de government in my country take all deir money from de Jews, and kill dem after, so de Jews all keep deir money in secret places, put de gold in jars and dig dem in de ground, and de men worths hundreds go about wid no better clothes dan mine.

"Well, you see I leave my poor moder, we kissed one anoder, and cry for half an hour, and come away to Gibraltar. When I get dere, my broder come away from Lisbon to Gibraltar; dat time it was war time, and de French was coming to Lisbon, so everybody run. When I come away from Mogadore, I have about one hundred dollars—some my moder give me, and some I had save. When I got to Gibraltar, I begin to have a little stand in de street wid silk handkershieffs, cotton handkershieffs, shop goods you know. I do very well wid dat, so after I get licence to hawk de town, and after dat I keep shop. Altogeder, I stop in Gibraltar about six year. I had den about five or six hundred dollars. I live very well all de time I dere. I was wid my broder all de time. After I am six year in Gibraltar, I begin to tink I do better in England. I tink, like good many people, if I go to anoder part dat is risher—'t is de rishest countree in de world—I do better still. So I start off, and get I here I tink in 1811, when de tree shilling pieces first come out. I have about one hundred and tirty pound at dat time. I stop in London a good bit, and eat my money; it was most done before I start to look for my living. I try to look what I could do, but I was quite stranger you see. I am about fourteen or fifteen month before I begin to do anything. I go to de play house; I see never such tings as I see here before

I come. When I come here, I tink I am in heaven altogether—God a'mighty forgive me—such sops (shops) and such beautiful tings. I live in Mary Axe Parish when I first come; same parish where I live now. Well, you see some of my countreemen den getting good living by selling de rhubarb and spices in de street. I get to know dem all; and dat time you see was de good time, money was plenty, like de dirt here. Dat time dere was about six or seven Arabians in de street selling rhubarb and spices, five of 'em was from Mogadore, and two from not far off; and dere is about five more going troo de country. Dey all sell de same tings, merely rhubarb and spice, dat time; before den was good for tem tings—after dat dey get de silks and tings beside. I can't tell what first make dem sell de rhubarb and de spice; but I tink it is because people like to buy de Turkey rhubarb of de men in de turbans. When I was little shild, I hear talk in Mogadore of de people of my country sell de rhubarb in de streets of London, and make plenty money by it.

"Dere was one very old Arabian in de streets wen I first come; dey call him Sole; he been forty year at de same business. He wear de long beard and Turkish dress. He used to stand by Bow Shursh, Sheapside. Everybody in de street know him. He was de old establish one. He been dead now, let me see—how long he been dead—oh, dis six or seven and twenty year. He die in Gibraltar very poor and very old—most ninety year of age. All de rhubarb-sellers was Jews. Dere was anoder called Ben Aforiat, and two broders; and anoder, his name was Azuli. One of Aforiat's broders use to stand in St. Paul's Shurshyard. He was very well know; all de oders hawk about de town like I do myself. Now dey all gone dead, and dere only four of us now in England; dey all in London, and none in de country. Two of us live in Mary Axe, anoder live in, what dey call dat—Spitalfield, and de oder in Petticoat-lane. De one wat live in Spitalfield is old man, I dare say going for 70. De one in Petticoat-lane not mush above 30. I am little better dan 73, and de oder wat live in Mary Axe about 40. I been de longest of all in de streets, about tirty-eight or tirty-nine year. All dat was here when I first come, die in London, except dat old man Sole wat I was telling you of, dat die in Gibraltar. About tirteen or fourteen die since I come to England; some die in de Hospital of de Jews at Mile End; some die at home—not one of dem die worth no money. Six of dem was very old people, between 60 and 70; dere was some tirty, some forty. Some of dem die by inshes. Dere was one fine fellow, he was six foot two, and strong man, he take to his bed and fall away so; at last you see troo his hand; he was noting but de carcase; oders die of what you call de yellow jaundice; some have de fever, but deir time was come; de death we must be.

"When I first come to dis countree me make plenty of money by selling de rhubarb in de street. Five-and-twenty year ago I make a pound a day

some time. Take one week wid another, I dare say I clear, after I pay all de cost of my living, tirty shillings; and now, God help me, I don't make not twelve shilling a week, and all my food to pay out of dat. One week wid anoder, when I go out I clear about twelve shilling. Everyting is so sheep now, and dere is so many sops (shops), people has no money to buy tings with. I could do better when everyting was dear. I could live better, get more money, and have more for it. I have better food, better lodging, and better clothes. I don't know wat is de cause, as you say. I only know dat I am worse, and everybody is worse; dat is all I know. Bread is sheeper, but when it was one and ninepence de loaf I could get plenty to buy it wid, but now it is five pence, I can't no five pence to have it. If de cow is de penny in de market what is de use of dat, if you can't get no penny to buy him? After I been selling my rhubarb for two years, when I fust come here, I save about a hundred and fifty pound, and den you see I agree wid tree oder of my countrymen to take a sop (shop) in Exeter. De oder tree was rhubarb-sellers, like myself, and have save good bit of money as well. One have seven hundred pound; but he have brought tree or four hundred pound wid him to dis countree. Anoder of de tree have about two hundred, and de oder about one hundred; dey have all save deir money out of de rhubarb. We keep our sop, you see, about five year, and den we fall in pieces altogeder. We take and trust, and lose all our money. T'oders never keep a sop before, and not one of us was English scholar; we was forced to keep a man, and dat way we lose all our money, so we was force to part, and every one go look for hisself. Den we all go selling rhubarb again about de country, and in London; and I never able to hold up my head since. When I come back to de rhubarb times is getting bad, and I not able to save no more money. All I am worth in de world is all I got in my box, and dat altogeder is not more dan ten shilling. Last week I havn't a pound of meat in de house, and I am obliged to pawn my waistcoat and handkerchief to get me some stock. It easy to put dem in, but very hard to get dem out.

"I had two wives. After two or tree year when I come I marry my first. I had two shildren by my first, but both of dem die very young; one was about five year old and de oder about tree. When I travel de countree, my first wife she go wid me everywhere. I been to all parts—to Scotland, to Wales, but not Ireland. I see enough of dem Irish in dis countree, I do no want no more of dem dere. Not one of my countree I tink ever been to Ireland, and only one beside myself been to Scotland; but dat no use, de Scotch don't know wat de spice is. All de time I am in Scotland I can't get no bread, only barley and pea meal, and dat as sour as de winegar—and I can't get no flour to make none too—so I begin to say, by God I come to wrong countree here. When I go across de countree of England I never live in no lodging-houses—always in de public—because you see I do business dére: de

missus perhaps dere buy my spices of me. I lodge once in Taunton, at a house where a woman keep a lodging-house for de Jewish people wat go about wid de gold tings—de jewellery. At oder towns I stop at de public, for dere is de company, and I sell my tings.

"I buy my rhubarb and my spice of de large warehouse for de drngs; sometime I buy it of my countreemen. We all of us know de good spice from de bad. You look! I will show you how to tell de good nutmeg from de bad. Here is some in de shell: you see, I put de strong pin in one and de oil run out; dat is because dey has not been put in de spirit to take away de oil for to make de extract. Now, in de bad nutmeg all de oil been took out by de spirit, and den dere is no flavour, like dose you buy in de sheep sops (cheap shops). I sell de Rhubarb, East Indy and Turkey, de Cloves, Cinnamons, Mace, Cayenne Pepper, White Pepper—a little of all sorts when I get de money to buy it wid. I take my solemn oat I never sheat in scales nor weight; because de law is, 'take weight and give weight,' dat is judge and justice. Dere is no luck in de sort weight—no luck at all. Never in my life I put no tings wid my goods. I tell you de troot, I grind my white pepper wid my own hands, but I buy me ginger ground, and dat is mixed I know. I tink it is pea flour dey put wid it, dere is no smell in dat, but it is de same colour—two ounces of ginger will give de smell to one pound of pea flour. De public-houses will have de sheap ginger and dat I buy. I tell you de troot. How am I tell what will become of me. Dat is de Almighty's work" (here he pointed to Heaven). "De Jews is very good to deir old people. If it was not for my old woman I be like a gentleman now in de hospital at Mile End; but you see, I marry de Christian woman, and dat is against our people—and I would never leave her—no not for all de good in de world to come to myself. If I am poor, I not de only one. In de holiday times I send a petition, and perhaps dere is five shillings for me from de hospital. In de Jews' Hospital dere is only ten—what you call de Portuguese Jews. We have hospital to our ownelves. Dere de old people—dey are all above sixty—are all like noblemen, wid good clothes, plenty to eat, go where you like, and pipe of tobacco when you want. But I wont go in no hospital away from my old woman. I will get a bit of crust for her as long as I can stand—but I can hardly do that now. Every one got his feeling, and I will feel for her as long as I live. When dere is de weather I have de rheumatis—oh! very bad—sometime I can scarcely stand or walk. I am seventy-tree, and it is a sad time for me now. I am merry sometime tho'. Everyting wid de pocket. When de pocket is merry, den I am merry too. Sometime I go home wid one shilling, and den I tink all gets worse and worse, and what will become of me I say—but dat is de Almighty's work, and I trust in him. Can I trust any better one? Sometime I say I wish I was back in my countree—and I tink of my poor moder wat is dead now, and den I am very sad. Oh yes, bless your heart, very sad indeed!"

The old man appears to sell excellent articles, and to be a very truthful, fair-dealing man.

#### OF THE HAWKING OF TEA.

"PERSONS hawking tea without a licence" (see Chitty's Edition of "Burn's Justice," vol. ii. p. 1113) "are liable to a penalty, under 50 Geo. III., cap. 41.; and, even though they had a licence, they would be liable to a penalty for selling tea in an unentered place." The penalty under this act is 10*l.*, but the prohibition in question has long been commonly, if not very directly, evaded.

The hawking of tea in London cannot be considered as immediately a street-trade, but it is in some respects blended with street callings and street traffic, so that a brief account is necessary.

I will first give a short history of what is, or was, more intimately a portion of the street-trade.

Until about eight or ten years ago, tea was extensively hawked—from house to house almost—"on tally." The tally system is, that wherein "weekly payments" are taken in liquidation of the cost of the article purchased, and the trade is one embodying much of evil and much of trickery. At the present time the tallymen are very numerous in London, and in the tally trade there are now not less than 1000 hawkers of, or travellers in, tea; but they carry on their business principally in the suburbs. When I come to treat of the class whom I have called "distributors," I shall devote an especial inquiry to the tally trade, including, of course, the tea trade. Mr. McCulloch mentions that a Scotchman's "tally-walk"—and the majority of the tallymen are Scotchmen—is worth 15 per cent. more than an Englishman's.

The branch of the tea trade closely connected with the street business is that in tea-leaves. The exhausted leaves of the tea-pot are purchased of servants or of poor women, and they are made into "new" tea. One gentleman—to whose information, and to the care he took to test the accuracy of his every statement, I am bound to express my acknowledgments—told me that it would be fair to reckon that in London 1500 lbs. of tea-leaves were weekly converted into new tea, or 78,000 lbs. in the year! One house is known to be very extensively and profitably concerned in this trade, or rather *manufacture*, and on my asking the gentleman who gave me the information if the house in question (he told me the name) was accounted respectable by their fellow-citizens, the answer was at once, "Highly respectable."

The *old* tea-leaves, to be converted into *new*, are placed by the manufacturers on hot plates, and are re-dried and *re-dyed*. To give the "green" hue, a preparation of copper is used. For the "black" no dye is necessary in the generality of cases. This tea-manufacture is sold to "cheap" or "slop" shopkeepers, both in town and country, and especially for hawking in the country, and is almost always sold ready mixed.

The admixture of sloe-leaves, &c., which used

to be gathered for the adulteration of tea, is now unknown, and has been unknown since tea became cheaper, but the old tea-leaf trade is, I am assured, carried on so quietly and cleverly, that the most vigilant excise-officers are completely in the dark; a smaller "tea-maker" was, however, fined for tea-leaf conversion last year.

Into this curious question, concerning the purposes for which the old tea-leaves are now purchased by parties in the street, I shall enter searchingly when I treat of the *street-buyers*. The information I have already received is of great curiosity and importance, nor shall I suppress the names of those dishonest traders who purchase the old dried tea-leaves, as a means of cheating their customers.

Into the statistics of this strange trade I will not now enter, but I am informed that great quantities of tea-leaves are sent from the country to London. Perhaps of the 1500 lbs. weekly manufactured, three quarters may be collected in the metropolis.

I may here add, that the great bulk of the tea now hawked throughout the metropolis is supplied from the handsome cars, or vans, of well-known grocers and tea-dealers. Of these—it was computed for me—there are, on no day, fewer than 100 in the streets of London, and of its contiguous and its more remote suburbs, such as Woolwich, and even Barnet. One tradesman has six such cars. The tea is put up in bags of 7, 14, and 21 lbs., duly apportioned in quarter, half, and whole pounds; a quarter of a pound being the smallest quantity vended in this manner. The van and its contents are then entrusted to a driver, who has his regular round, and very often his regular customers. The customers purchase the tea from their faith in the respectability of the firm—generally well known through extensive advertising. The teas are supplied by the house which is pronounced to supply them; for the tradesman is the capitalist in the matter, his carman is the labourer, and the house is responsible for the quality of the article. When a new connection has to be formed, or an "old connection" to be extended, circulars (*bonâ fide*) are sent round, and the carman afterwards calls: and, "in some genteel streets," I was told, "calls, oft enough, at every house, and, in many districts, at every decent-looking house in every street." So far, then, even this part of the traffic may be considered one of the streets. The remuneration of the street-traveller in, or hawker of, tea, is usually 1*d.* per lb. on the lower-priced kinds, 2*d.* on the higher (but more often 1*d.*) and, very rarely indeed, 3*d.* on the highest. The trade is one peculiar to great cities—and most peculiar, I am assured, to London—for the tradesman does not know so much as the name of his customer; nor, perhaps, does the carman, but merely as "Number such-an-one." The supply is for ready money, or, if credit be given, it is at the risk of the carman, who has a weekly wage in addition to his perquisites. Every evening, when the vehicle is driven back to the premises of its owner, "stock is taken," and the money taken by the carman—

minus what may be called the "poundage"—is paid over to the proper party.

A man who had driven, or, as he called it, "managed," one of these vans, told me that he made this way, 2s. to 2s. 6d. a day; "but," he added, "if you make a good thing of it that way, you have all the less salary." These carmen are men of good character and good address, and were described to me, by a gentleman familiar with the trade, as "of the very best class of porters."

As this vehicular-itinerant business has now become an integral part of the general tea-trade, I need not further dwell upon it, but reserve it until I come to treat of the shopmen of grocers and tea-dealers, and thence of the tea-trade in general. I may add, however, that the tea thus hawked is, as regards, perhaps, three-fourths of the quantity sold, known as "mixed," and sold at 4s. per lb.—costing, at a tea-broker's, from 2s. 11d. to 3s. 3d. It is announced, as to its staple or entire compound, to be "congou," but is in reality a tea known as "pouchong." Some old ladies are still anxious, I was told, for a cup of good strong bohea; and though bohea has been unknown to the tea-trade since the expiration of the East India Company's Charter in 1834, the accommodating street-traveller will undertake to supply the genuine leaf to which the old lady had been so long accustomed. The green teas thus sold (and they are not above a fiftieth part of the other) are common twankays and common young hysons, neither of them—I can state on excellent authority—accounted in the trade to be "true teas," but, as in the case of some other green teas, "Canton made." The "green" is sold from the vans generally at 4s. 6d.; sometimes, but rarely, as high as 5s. 6d. What is sold at 4s. 6d. may cost, on the average, 3s. 5d. I may add, also, that when a good article is supplied, such profits in the tea-trade are not accounted at all excessive.

But the more usual mode of tea hawking is by itinerant dealers who have a less direct connection with the shop whereto they purchase their goods. To this mode of obtaining a livelihood, the hawkers are invited by all the persuasive powers of advertising eloquence: "To persons in want of a genteel and lucrative employment"—"To Gentlemen of good address and business habits," &c., &c. The genteel and lucrative employment is to hawk tea under the auspices of this "company" or the other. The nature of this business, and of the street tea-trade generally, is shown in the following statement:—"About twelve years ago I came to London in expectation of a situation as tide-waiter; I did not succeed, however, and not being able to obtain any other employment, and trusting to the promises of gentlemen M.P.s for too long a time, my means were exhausted, and I was at length induced to embark in the tea business. To this I was persuaded by a few friends who advanced me some money, considering that it would suit me well, while my friends would endeavour to get me a connection, that is, procure me customers. I accordingly went to a well-known Tea Company in the City, a firm bear-

ing a great name. Their advertisements put forth extraordinary statements, of so many persons realizing independencies from selling their teas, and in very short spaces of time. I was quite pleased at the prospect presented to me in such glowing terms, and, depending not a little on my own industry and perseverance, I embraced the opportunity and introduced myself forthwith to the Company. They advised me in the first place to take out a licence for selling teas, to secure me against any risk of fines or forfeitures. The cost of a licence, after payment of 2s. 11d. preliminary expenses, is 11s. per annum, to be paid quarterly, as it becomes due, and it is paid by the Company for their agents. The licence is granted for the place of abode of the 'traveller,' and strictly prohibits him from hawking or exposing his wares for sale at places other than at such place of abode, but he may of course supply his customers where he will, and serve them at their places of abode respectively. Everything thus prepared, I commenced operations, but soon found that this tea dealing was not so advantageous as I had anticipated. I found that the commission allowed by the Company on cheap teas was very low. For those generally used by the working people, '4s. tea,' for instance, or that at 4s. per pound, I had to pay to the Company 3s. 6d. per pound, thus allowing the travelling dealer or agent for commission only 6d. in the pound, or 1½d. per quarter. Now 80 or 100 customers is considered a fair connection for a dealer, and allowing each customer to take a quarter of a pound at an average, 80 good customers at that rate would bring him in 10s., or 100 customers 12s. 6d. clear profit weekly. But many customers do not require so much as a quarter of a pound weekly, while others require more, so that I find it rather awkward to subdivide it in portions to suit each customer, as the smallest quantity made at the warehouse is a quarter of a pound, and every quarter is done up in a labelled wrapper, with the price marked on it. So that to break or disturb the package in any way might cause some customers to suspect that it had been meddled with unfairly.

"Another disadvantage was in dealing with the 'Tea Company.' No sugars are supplied by them, which makes it more inconvenient for the travelling dealer, as his customers find it difficult to get sugars, most retail grocers having an objection to sell sugars to any but those who are purchasers of teas as well. However, I was not confined to deal with this Company, and so I tried other places, and found a City house, whose terms were preferable. Here I could get tea for 3s. 3d., as good as that for which the Company charged 3s. 6d., besides getting it done up to order in plain paper, and in quantities to suit every variety of customer. There were also sugars, which must be had to accommodate the customers, at whatever trouble or inconvenience to the traveller; for it is very lumbering to carry about, and leaves scarcely any profit at all.

"The trade is anything but agreeable, and the customers are often exacting. They seem to fancy,

however cheaply and well they may be supplied, that the tea-seller is under obligations to them; that their custom will be the making of him, and, therefore, they expect some compliment in return. The consequence is, that very often, unless he be willing to be accounted a 'shabby man,' the tea-dealer is obliged, of a Saturday night, to treat his customers, to ensure a continuance of their custom. Other customers take care to be absent at the time he calls. Those who are anxious to run up bills, perhaps, keep out of the way purposely for two or more successive nights of the dealer's calling, who, notwithstanding, cannot very well avoid serving such customers. This is another evil, and if the tea-man's capital be not sufficient to enable him to carry on the business in this manner, giving credit (for it is unavoidable), he is very soon insolvent, and compelled to give up the business. I had to give it up at last, after having carried it on for four years, leaving 8l. or 9l. due to me, in small sums, varying from 1s. to 10s., one shilling of which I never expect to be paid. I could not have continued it so long, for my means would not allow me to give credit; but getting partial employment at the last-mentioned house, where I dealt, enabled me to do so. When, however, I got permanently employed, I grew tired of tea-dealing, and gave it up.

"In my opinion the business would best suit persons casually employed, such as dockmen and others, who might have leisure to go about; those

also who get other commissions and hawk about other commodities, such as soft wares, might do very well by it; otherwise, in most cases, 'tis only resorted to as a make-shift where no other employment can be obtained.

"I do not know how many persons are in the trade. I have, however, heard it asserted, that there were between 4000 and 5000 persons in London engaged in the business, who are, with but few exceptions, Scotchmen; they, of all others, manage to do the best in this line.

"A man, to undertake the tea business, requires a double capital, because in the first place, he has to purchase the tea, then he must give credit, and be able to support himself till such time as he can get in his money. Some of the tea-dealers manage to eke out their profits by mixing tea-leaves, which have been used, with the genuine commodity. They spread the old tea-leaves on tins which they have for the purpose, and, by exposing them either to the action of the air or the heat of the fire, the leaves crisp up as they had been before they were used, and are not distinguishable from the rest. I never vended such an article, and that may be one reason why I could not succeed in the business."

I believe the career thus detailed is a common one among the hawkers of tea, or rather the "travellers" in the tea trade. Many sell it on tally.

## OF THE WOMEN STREET-SELLERS.

As the volume is now fast drawing to a close, and a specific account has been furnished of almost every description of street-seller (with the exception of those who are the makers of the articles they vend), I purpose giving a more full and general history and classification than I have yet done of the feminine portion of the traders in the streets.

The women engaged in street-sale are of all ages and of nearly all classes. They are, however, chiefly of two countries, England and Ireland. There are (comparatively) a few Jewesses, and a very few Scotchwomen and Welchwomen who are street-traders; and they are so, as it were, accidentally, from their connection, by marriage or otherwise, with male street-sellers. Of foreigners there are German broom-women, and a few Italians with musical instruments.

The first broad and distinctive view of the female street-sellers, is regarding them *nationally*, that is to say, either English or Irish women—two classes separated by definite characteristics from each other.

The Irishwomen—to avoid burthening the reader with an excess of subdivisions—I shall speak of generally; that is to say, as one homogeneous class, referring those who require a more specific account to the description before given of the street-sellers.

The Englishwomen selling in the streets appear to admit of being arranged into four distinct groups, viz. :—

1. The Wives of Street-Sellers.
2. Mechanics' or Labourers' Wives, who go out Street-Selling (while their husbands are at work) as a means of helping out the family income.
3. Widows of former Street-Sellers.
4. Single Women.

I do not know of any street-trade carried on *exclusively* by women. The sales in which they are principally concerned are in fish (including shrimps and oysters), fruit and vegetables (widows selling on their own account), fire-screens and ornaments, laces, millinery, artificial flowers (but not in any great majority over the male traders), cut flowers, boot and stay-laces and small wares, wash-leathers, towels, burnt linen, combs, bonnets, pin-cushions, tea and coffee, rice-milk, curds and whey, sheeps'-trotters, and dressed and undressed dolls.

What may be called the "heavier" trades, those necessitating the carrying of heavy weights, or the pushing of heavily-laden barrows, are in the hands of men; and so are, even more exclusively, what may be classed as the more skilled trades of the streets, viz. the sale of stationery, of books, of the most popular catables and