

Putting the above sums together we have the following aggregate result:—
 Expended yearly in green fruit . . . £333,420
 Expended yearly in dry fruit . . . 1,000
 Expended yearly in vegetables . . . 292,000

Gross sum taken annually by the London costermongers for fruit and vegetables } £626,420

Then adding the above to the gross amount received by the street-sellers of fish, which we have before seen comes to as much as £1,460,850, we have for the annual income of the London costermongers no less a sum than £2,087,270.

OF THE STATIONARY STREET-SELLERS OF FISH, FRUIT, AND VEGETABLES.

OF THE NUMBER OF STREET STALLS.

Thus far we have dealt only with the itinerant dealers in fish, fruit, or vegetables; but there are still a large class of street-sellers, who obtain a living by the sale of the same articles at some fixed locality in the public thoroughfares; and as these differ from the others in certain points, they demand a short special notice here. First, as to the number of stalls in the streets of London, I caused personal observations to be made; and in a walk of 46 miles, 632 stalls were counted, which is at the rate of very nearly 14 to the mile. This, too, was in bad weather,—was not on a Saturday night,—and at a season when the fruit-sellers all declare that "things is dull." The routes taken in this inquiry were:—No. 1, from Vauxhall to Hatton-garden; No. 2, from Baker-street to Bermondsey; No. 3, from Blackwall to Brompton; No. 4, from the Hackney-road to the Edgware-road. I give the results.

	F.	FR.	V.	M.	T.
No. 1 . . .	9	28	5	7	49
" 2 . . .	37	50	4	14	105
" 3 . . .	90	153	30	40	313
" 4 . . .	75	52	23	15	165
	211	283	62	76	632

F. denotes fish-stalls; Fr. fruit-stalls; V. vegetable-stalls; M. miscellaneous; and T. presents the total:

The miscellaneous stalls include peas-soup, pickled whelks, sweetmeats, toys, tin-ware, elder-wine, and jewellery stands. Of these, the toy-stalls were found to be the most numerous; sweetmeats the next; tin-ware the next; while the elder-wine stalls were least numerous.

Some of the results indicate, curiously enough, the character of the locality. Thus, in Fleet-street there were 3, in the Haymarket 5, in Regent-street 6, and in Piccadilly 14 fruit-stalls, and no fish-stalls—these streets not being resorted to by the poor, to whom fruit is a luxury, but fish a necessity. In the Strand were 17 fruit and 2 fish-stalls; and in Drury-lane were 8 stalls of fish to 6 of fruit. On the other hand, there were in Ratcliffe-high-way, 38 fish and 23 fruit-stalls; in Rosemary-lane, 13 fish and 8 fruit-stalls; in Shoreditch,

28 fish and 13 fruit-stalls; and in Bethnal-green Road (the poorest district of all), 14 of the fish, and but 3 of the fruit stalls. In some places, the numbers were equal, or nearly so; as in the Minories, for instance, the City-road, the New-road, Goodge-street, Tottenham-court Road, and the Camberwell-road; while in Smithfield were 5, and in Cow-cross 2 fish-stalls, and no fruit-stalls at all. In this enumeration the street-markets of Leather-lane, the New Cut, the Brill, &c., are not included.

The result of this survey of the principal London thoroughfares is that in the mid-route (viz., from Brompton, along Piccadilly, the Strand, Fleet-street, and so *via* the Commercial-road to Blackwall), there are twice as many stalls as in the great northern thoroughfare (that is to say, from the Edgware-road, along the New-road, to the Hackney-road); the latter route, however, has more than one-third as many stalls as route No. 2, and that again more than double the number of route No. 1. Hence it appears that the more frequented the thoroughfare, the greater the quantity of street-stalls.

The number of miles of streets contained within the inner police district of the metropolis, are estimated by the authorities at 2,000 (including the city), and assuming that there are on an average only four stalls to the mile throughout London, we have thus a grand total of 8,000 fish, fruit, vegetable, and other stalls dispersed throughout the capital.

Concerning the character of the stalls at the street-markets, the following observations have been made:—At the New-cut there were, before the removals, between the hours of eight and ten on a Saturday evening, ranged along the kerb-stone on the north side of the road, beginning at Broad-wall to Marsh-gate (a distance of nearly half-a-mile), a dense line of "pitches"—at 77 of which were vegetables for sale, at 40 fruit, 25 fish, 22 boots and shoes, 14 eatables, consisting of cakes and pies, hot eels, baked potatoes, and boiled whelks; 10 dealt in nightcaps, lace, ladies' collars, artificial flowers, silk and straw bonnets; 10 in tinware—such as saucepans, tea-kettles, and Dutch-ovens; 9 in crockery and glass, 7 in brooms and brushes, 5 in poultry and rabbits, 6 in paper, books, songs, and almanacs; and about 60 in sundries.

OF THE CHARACTER OF THE STREET-STALLS.

The stalls occupied by costermongers for the sale of fish, fruit, vegetables, &c., are chiefly constructed of a double cross-trestle or moveable frame, or else of two trestles, each with three legs, upon which is laid a long deal board, or tray. Some of the stalls consist merely of a few boards resting upon two baskets, or upon two herring-barrels. The fish-stalls are mostly covered with paper—generally old newspapers or periodicals—but some of the street-fishmongers, instead of using paper to display their fish upon, have introduced a thin marble slab, which gives the stall a cleaner, and, what they consider a high attribute, a "respectable" appearance.

Most of the fruit-stalls are, in the winter time, fitted up with an apparatus for roasting apples and chestnuts; this generally consists of an old saucepan with a fire inside; and the woman who vends them, huddled up in her old faded shawl or cloak, often presents a picturesque appearance, in the early evening, or in a fog, with the gleam of the fire lighting up her half-somnolent figure. Within the last two or three years, however, there has been so large a business carried on in roasted chestnuts, that it has become a distinct street-trade, and the vendors have provided themselves with an iron apparatus, large enough to roast nearly half a bushel at a time. At the present time, however, the larger apparatus is less common in the streets, and more frequent in the shops, than in the previous winter.

There are, moreover, peculiar kinds of stalls—such as the hot eels and hot peas-soup stalls, having tin oval pots, with a small chafing-dish containing a charcoal fire underneath each, to keep the eels or soup hot. The early breakfast stall has two capacious tin cans filled with tea or coffee, kept hot by the means before described, and some are lighted up by two or three large oil-lamps; the majority of these stalls, in the winter time, are sheltered from the wind by a screen made out of an old clothes horse covered with tarpaulin. The cough-drop stand, with its distilling apparatus, the tin worm curling nearly the whole length of the tray, has but lately been introduced. The nut-stall is fitted up with a target at the back of it. The ginger-beer stand may be seen in almost every street, with its French-polished mahogany frame and bright polished taps, and its foot-bath-shaped reservoir of water, to cleanse the glasses. The hot elder wine stand, with its bright brass urns, is equally popular.

The sellers of plum-pudding, "cake, a penny a slice," sweetmeats, cough-drops, pin-cushions, jewellery, chimney ornaments, tea and table-spoons, make use of a table covered over, some with old newspapers, or a piece of oil-cloth, upon which are exposed their articles for sale.

Such is the usual character of the street-stalls. There are, however, "stands" or "cans" peculiar to certain branches of the street-trade. The most important of these, such as the baked-

potatoe can, and the meat-pie stand, I have before described, p. 27.

The other means adopted by the street-sellers for the exhibition of their various goods at certain "pitches" or fixed localities are as follows. Straw bonnets, boys' caps, women's caps, and prints, are generally arranged for sale in large umbrellas, placed "upside down." Haberdashery, with rolls of ribbons, edgings, and lace, some street-sellers display on a stall; whilst others have a board at the edge of the pavement, and expose their wares upon it as tastefully as they can. Old shoes, patched up and well blacked, ready for the purchaser's feet, and tin ware, are often ranged upon the ground, or, where the stock is small, a stall or table is used.

Many stationary street-sellers use merely baskets, or trays, either supported in their hand, or on their arm, or else they are strapped round their loins, or suspended round their necks. These are mostly fruit-women, watercress, blacking, congreves, sheep's-trotters, and ham-sandwich sellers.

Many stationary street-sellers stand on or near the bridges; others near the steam-packet wharfs or the railway terminuses; a great number of them take their pitch at the entrance to a court, or at the corners of streets; and stall-keepers with oysters stand opposite the doors of public-houses.

It is customary for a street-seller who wants to "pitch" in a new locality to solicit the leave of the housekeeper, opposite whose premises he desires to place his stall. Such leave obtained, no other course is necessary.

OF FRUIT-STALL KEEPERS.

I HAD the following statement from a woman who has "kept a stall" in Marylebone, at the corner of a street, which she calls "my corner," for 38 years. I was referred to her as a curious type of the class of stall-keepers, and on my visit, found her daughter at the "pitch." This daughter had all the eloquence which is attractive in a street-seller, and so, I found, had her mother when she joined us. They are profuse in blessings; and on a bystander observing, when he heard the name of these street-sellers, that a jockey of that name had won the Derby lately, the daughter exclaimed, "To be sure he did; he's my own uncle's relation, and what a lot of money came into the family! Bless God for all things, and bless every body! Walnuts, sir, walnuts, a penny a dozen! Wouldn't give you a bad one for the world, which is a great thing for a poor 'oman for to offer to do." The daughter was dressed in a drab great-coat, which covered her whole person. When I saw the mother, she carried a similar great-coat, as she was on her way to the stall; and she used it as ladies do their muff, burying her hands in it. The mother's dark-coloured old clothes seemed, to borrow a description from Sir Walter Scott, flung on with a pitchfork. These two women were at first very suspicious, and could not be made to understand my object in questioning,

them; but after a little while, the mother became not only communicative, but garrulous, conversing—with no small impatience at any interruption—of the doings of the people in her neighbourhood. I was accompanied by an intelligent costermonger, who assured me of his certitude that the old woman's statement was perfectly correct, and I found moreover from other inquiries that it was so.

"Well, sir," she began, "what is it that you want of me? Do I owe you anything? There's half-pay officers about here for no good; what is it you want? Hold your tongue, you young fool," (to her daughter, who was beginning to speak;) "what do you know about it?" [On my satisfying her that I had no desire to injure her, she continued, to say after spitting, a common practice with her class, on a piece of money, "for luck,"] "Certainly, sir, that's very proper and good. Aye, I've seen the world—the town world and the country. I don't know where I was born; never mind about that—it's nothing to nobody. I don't know nothing about my father and mother; but I know that afore I was eleven I went through the country with my missis. She was a smuggler. I didn't know then what smuggling was—bless you, sir, I didn't; I knew no more nor I know who made that lamp-post. I didn't know the taste of the stuff we smuggled for two years—didn't know it from small beer; I've known it well enough since, God knows. My missis made a deal of money that time at Deptford Dockyard. The men wasn't paid and let out till twelve of a night—I hardly mind what night it was, days was so alike then—and they was our customers till one, two, or three in the morning—Sunday morning, for anything I know. I don't know what my missis gained; something jolly, there's not a fear of it. She was kind enough to me. I don't know how long I was with missis. After that I was a hopping, and made my 15s. regular at it, and a haymaking; but I've had a pitch at my corner for thirty-eight year—aye! turned thirty-eight. It's no use asking me what I made at first—I can't tell; but I'm sure I made more than twice as much as my daughter and me makes now, the two of us. I wish people that thinks we're idle now were with me for a day. I'd teach them. I don't—that's the two of us don't—make 15s. a week now, nor the half of it, when all's paid. D—d if I do. The d—d boys take care of that." [Here I had a statement of the boys' tradings, similar to what I have given.] "There's 'Canterbury' has lots of boys, and they bother me. I can tell, and always could, how it is with working men. When mechanics is in good work, their children has halfpennies to spend with me. If they're hard up, there's no halfpennies. The pennies go to a loaf or to buy a candle. I might have saved money once, but had a misfortunate family. My husband? O, never mind about him. D—n him. I've been a widow many years. My son—it's nothing how many children I have—is married; he had the care of an ingine. But

he lost it from ill health. It was in a feather-house, and the flue got down his throat, and coughed him; and so he went into the country, 108 miles off, to his wife's mother. But his wife's mother got her living by wooding, and other ways, and couldn't help him or his wife; so he left, and he's with me now. He has a job sometimes with a greengrocer, at 6d. a day and a bit of grub; a little bit—very. I must shelter him. I couldn't turn him out. If a Turk I knew was in distress, and I had only half a loaf, I'd give him half of that, if he was ever such a Turk—I would, sir! 'Out of 6d. a day, my son—poor fellow, he's only twenty-seven!—wants a bit of 'baccy and a pint of beer. It 'ud be unnatural to oppose that, wouldn't it, sir? He frets about his wife, that's staying with her mother, 108 miles off; and about his little girl; but I tell him to wait, and he may have more little girls. God knows, they come when they're not wanted a bit. I joke and say all my old sweethearts is dying away. Old Jemmy went off sudden. He lent me money sometimes, but I always paid him. He had a public once, and had some money when he died. I saw him the day afore he died. He was in bed, but wasn't his own man quite; though he spoke sensible enough to me. He said, said he, 'Won't you have half a quarter of rum, as we've often had it?' 'Certainly, Jemmy,' says I, 'I came for that very thing.' Poor fellow! his friends are quarrelling now about what he left. It's 56l. they say, and they'll go to law very likely, and lose every thing. There'll be no such quarrelling when I die, unless it is for the pawn-tickets. I got a meal now, and got a meal afore; but it was a better meal then, sir. Then look at my expenses. I was a customer once. I used to buy, and plenty such did, blue cloth aprons, opposite Drury-lane theatre: the very shop's there still, but I don't know what it is now; I can't call to mind. I gave 2s. 6d. a yard, from twenty to thirty years ago, for an apron, and it took two yards, and I paid 4d. for making it, and so an apron cost 5s. 4d.—that wasn't much thought of in those times. I used to be different off then. I never go to church; I used to go when I was a little child at Sevenoaks. I suppose I was born somewhere thereabouts. I've forgot what the inside of a church is like. There's no costermongers ever go to church, except the rogues of them, that wants to appear good. I buy my fruit at Covent-garden. Apples is now 4s. 6d. a bushel there. I may make twice that in selling them; but a bushel may last me two, three, or four days."

As I have already, under the street-sale of fish, given an account of the oyster stall-keeper, as well as the stationary dealers in sprats, and the principal varieties of wet fish, there is no necessity for me to continue this part of my subject.

We have now, in a measure, finished with the metropolitan costermongers. We have seen that the street-sellers of fish, fruit, and vegetables

constitute a large proportion of the London population; the men, women, and children numbering at the least 30,000, and taking as much as 2,000,000l. per annum. We have seen, moreover, that these are the principal purveyors of food to the poor, and that consequently they are as important a body of people as they are numerous. Of all classes they *should* be the most honest, since the poor, least of all, can afford to be cheated; and yet it has been shown that the consciences of the London costermongers, generally speaking, are as little developed as their intellects; indeed, the moral and religious state of these men is a foul disgrace to us, laughing to scorn our zeal for the "propagation of the gospel in *foreign* parts," and making our many societies for the civilization of savages on the other side of the globe appear like a "delusion, a mockery, and a snare," when we have so many people sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism round about our very homes. It is well to have Bishops of New Zealand when we have Christianized all *our own* heathen; but with 30,000 individuals, in merely *one* of our cities, utterly credulous, mindless, and principleless, surely it would look more like earnestness on our parts if we created Bishops of the New-Cut, and sent "right reverend fathers" to watch over the "cure of souls" in the Broadway and the Brill. If our sense of duty will not rouse us to do this, at least our regard for our own interests should teach us, that it is not safe to allow this vast dunghill of ignorance and vice to seethe and fester, breeding a social pestilence in the very heart of our land. That the costermongers belong essentially to the dangerous classes none can doubt; and those who know a coster's hatred of a "crusher," will not hesitate to believe that they are, as they themselves confess, one and all ready, upon the least disturbance, to seize and disable their policeman.

It would be a marvel indeed if it were otherwise. Denied the right of getting a living by the street authorities, after having, perhaps, been supplied with the means of so doing by the parish authorities—the stock which the one had provided seized and confiscated by the other—law seems to them a mere farce, or at best, but the exercise of an arbitrary and despotic power, against which they consider themselves justified, whenever an opportunity presents itself, of using the same physical force as it brings to bear against them. That they are ignorant and vicious as they are, surely is not their fault. If we were all born with learning and virtue, then might we, with some show of justice, blame the costermongers for their want of both; but seeing that even the most moral and intelligent of us owe the greater part, if not the whole, of our wisdom and goodness to the tuition of others, we must not in the arrogance of our self-conceit condemn these men because they are not like ourselves, when it is evident that we should have been as they are, had not some one done for us what we refuse to do for them. We leave them destitute of all perception of beauty, and there-

fore without any means of pleasure but through their appetites, and then we are surprized to find their evenings are passed either in brutalizing themselves with beer, or in gloating over the mimic sensuality of the "penny gaff." Without the least intellectual culture is it likely, moreover, that they should have that perception of antecedents and consequents which enables us to see in the shadows of the past the types of the future—or that power of projecting the mind into the space, as it were, of time, which we in Saxon-English call fore-sight, and in Anglo-Latin pro-vidence—a power so godlike that the latter term is often used by us to express the Godhead itself? Is it possible, then, that men who are as much creatures of the present as the beasts of the field—instinctless animals—should have the least faculty of prevision? or rather is it not natural that, following the most precarious of all occupations—one in which the subsistence depends upon the weather of this the most variable climate of any—they should fail to make the affluence of the fine days mitigate the starvation of the rainy ones? or that their appetites, made doubly eager by the privations suffered in their adversity, should be indulged in all kinds of excess in their prosperity—their lives being thus, as it were, a series of alternations between starvation and surfeit?

The fate of children brought up amid the influence of such scenes—with parents starving one week and drunk all the next—turned loose into the streets as soon as they are old enough to run alone—sent out to sell in public-houses almost before they know how to put two half-pence together—their tastes trained to libidinalism long before puberty at the penny concert, and their passions inflamed with the unrestrained intercourse of the twopenny hops—the fate of the young, I say, abandoned to the blight of such associations as these, cannot well be otherwise than it is. If the child be father to the man, assuredly it does not require a great effort of imagination to conceive the manhood that such a childhood must necessarily engender.

Some months back Mr. Mayhew, with a view to mitigate what appeared to him to be the chief evils of a street-seller's life, founded "The Friendly Association of London Costermongers," the objects of which were as follows:

1. To establish a Benefit and Provident Fund for insuring to each Member a small weekly allowance in Sickness or Old Age, as well as a certain sum to his family at his death, so that the Costermongers, when incapacitated from labour, may not be forced to seek parochial relief, nor, at their decease, be left to be buried by the parish.

2. To institute a Penny Savings' Bank and Winter Fund, where the smallest deposits will be received and bear interest, so that the Costermongers may be encouraged to lay by even the most trivial sums, not only as a provision for future comfort, but as the means of assisting their poorer brethren with future loans.

3. To form a Small Loan Fund for supplying the more needy Costermongers with Stock-Money, &c., at a fair and legitimate interest, instead of the exorbitant rates that are now charged.

4. To promote the use of full weights and measures by every Member of the Association, as well as a rigid inspection of the scales, &c., of all other Costermongers, so that the honestly disposed Street-sellers may be protected, and the public secured against imposition.

5. To protect the Costermongers from interference when lawfully pursuing their calling, by placing it in their power to employ counsel to defend them, if unjustly prosecuted.

6. To provide harmless, if not rational, amusements at the same cheap rate as the pernicious entertainments now resorted to by the Street-sellers.

7. To adopt means for the gratuitous education of the children of the Costermongers, in the day time, and the men and women themselves in the evening.

This institution remains at present comparatively in abeyance, from the want of funds to complete the preliminary arrangements. Those, however, who may feel inclined to contribute towards its establishment, will please to pay their subscriptions into Messrs. Twinings' Bank, Strand, to the account of Thomas Hughes, Esq. (of 63, Upper Berkeley-street, Portman-square), who has kindly consented to act as Treasurer to the Association.

OF A PUBLIC MEETING OF STREET-SELLERS.

The Association above described arose out of a meeting of costermongers and other street-folk, which was held, at my instance, on the evening of the 12th of June last, in the National Hall, Holborn. The meeting was announced as one of "street-sellers, street-performers, and street-labourers," but the costermongers were the great majority present. The admission was by ticket, and the tickets, which were of course gratuitous, were distributed by men familiar with all the classes invited to attend. These men found the tickets received by some of the street-people with great distrust; others could not be made to understand why any one should trouble himself on their behalf; others again, cheerfully promised their attendance. Some accused the ticket distributors with having been bribed by the Government or the police, though for what purpose was not stated. Some abused them heartily, and some offered to treat them. At least 1,000 persons were present at the meeting, of whom 731 presented their tickets; the others were admitted, because they were known to the door-keepers, and had either lost their tickets or had not the opportunity to obtain them. The persons to whom cards of admission were given were invited to write their names and callings on the backs, and the cards so received gave the following result. Costermongers, 256; fish-sellers, 28; hucksters, 23; lot-sellers, 18; street-labourers, 16; paper-sellers and workers, 13;

toy-sellers, 11; ginger-beer-sellers, 9; hardware-sellers, 9; general-dealers, 7; street-musicians, 5; street-performers, 5; cakes and pastry-sellers, fried-fish-vendors, and tinkers, each, 4; turf-vendors, street-exhibitors, strolling-players, cat's-meat-men, water-cress-sellers, stay-lace, and cotton-sellers, each, 3; board-carriers, fruit-sellers, street-tradesmen, hawkers, street-green-grocers, shell-fish-vendors, poulterers, mud-larks, wire-workers, ballad-singers, crock-men, and booksellers, each, 2; the cards also gave one each of the following avocations:—fly-cage-makers, fly-paper-sellers, grinders, tripe-sellers, pattern-printers, blind-paper-cutters, lace-collar-sellers, bird-sellers, bird-trainers, pen-sellers, lucifer-merchants, watch-sellers, decorators, and play-bill-sellers. 260 cards were given in without being indorsed with any name or calling.

My object in calling this meeting was to ascertain from the men themselves what were the grievances to which they considered themselves subjected; what were the peculiarities and what the privations of a street-life. Cat-calls, and every description of discordant sound, prevailed, before the commencement of the proceedings, but there was also perfect good-humour. Although it had been announced that all the speakers were to address the meeting from the platform, yet throughout the evening some men or other would occasionally essay to speak from the body of the hall. Some of those present expressed misgivings that the meeting was got up by the Government, or by Sir R. Peel, and that policemen, in disguise, were in attendance. The majority showed an ignorance of the usual forms observed at public meetings, though some manifested a thorough understanding of them. Nor was there much delicacy observed—but, perhaps, about as much as in some assemblages of a different character—in clamouring down any prosy speaker. Many present were without coats (for it was a warm evening), some were without waistcoats, many were in tatters, hats and caps were in infinite varieties of shape and shade, while a few were well and even genteelly dressed. The well dressed street-sellers were nearly all young men, and one of these wore moustachios. After I had explained, amidst frequent questions and interruptions, the purpose for which I had summoned the meeting, and had assured the assembly that, to the best of my knowledge, no policemen were present, I invited free discussion.

It was arranged that some one person should address the meeting as the representative of each particular occupation. An elderly man of small stature and lively intelligent features, stood up to speak on behalf of the "paper-workers," "flying-stationers," and "standing-patterers." He said, that "for twenty-four years he had been a penny-showman, a street-seller, and a patterer." He dwelt upon the difference of a street-life when he was young and at the present time, the difference being between meals and no meals; and complained that though

he had been well educated, had friends in a respectable way of life, and had never been accused of any dishonesty, such was the moral brand," of having been connected with a "street life, that it was never got rid of. He more than once alluded to this "moral brand." The question was, he concluded, in what way were they to obtain an honest livelihood, so as to keep their wives and children decently, without being buffeted about like wild beasts in the open streets? This address was characterised by propriety in the delivery, and by the absence of any grammatical inaccuracy, or vulgarity of tone or expression.

A costermonger, a quiet-looking man, tidily clad, said he was the son of a country auctioneer, now dead; and not having been brought up to any trade, he came to London to try his luck. His means were done before he could obtain employment; and he was in a state of starvation. At last he was obliged to apply to the parish. The guardians took him into the workhouse, and offered to pass him home: but as he could do no good there, he refused to go. Whereupon, giving him a pound of bread, he was turned into the streets, and had nowhere to lay his head. In wandering down the New-cut a costermonger questioned him, and then took him into his house and fed him. This man kept him for a year and a half; he showed him how to get a living in the street trade; and when he left, gave him 20s. to start with. With this sum he got a good living directly; and he could do so now, were it not for the police, whose conduct, he stated, was sometimes very tyrannical. He had been dragged to the station-house, for standing to serve customers, though he obstructed nobody; the policeman, however, called it an obstruction, and he (the speaker) was fined 2s. 6d.; whereupon, because he had not the half-crown, his barrow and all it contained were taken from him, and he had heard nothing of them since. This almost broke him down. There was no redress for these things, and he thought they ought to be looked into.

This man spoke with considerable energy; and when he had concluded, many costermongers shouted, at the top of their voices, that they could substantiate every word of what he had said.

A young man, of superior appearance, said he was the son of a gentleman who had held a commission as Lieutenant in the 20th Foot, and as Captain in the 34th Infantry, and afterwards became Sub-director of the Bute Docks; in which situation he died, leaving no property. He (the speaker) was a classical scholar; but having no trade, he was compelled, after his father's death, to come to London in search of employment, thinking that his pen and his school acquirements would secure it. But in this expectation he was disappointed,—though for a short period he was earning two guineas a week in copying documents for the House of Commons. That time was past; and he was a street-patterer now through sheer necessity. He could say

from experience that the earnings of that class were no more than from 8s. to 10s. a week. He then declaimed at some length against the interference of the police with the patterers, considering it harsh and unnecessary.

After some noisy and not very relevant discussion concerning the true amount of a street-patterer's earnings, a clergyman of the Established Church, now selling stenographic cards in the street, addressed the meeting. He observed, that in every promiscuous assembly there would always be somebody who might be called unfortunate. Of this number he was one; for when, upon the 5th September, 1831, he preached a funeral sermon before a fashionable congregation, upon Mr. Huskisson's death by a railway accident, he little thought he should ever be bound over in his own recognizances in 10l. for obstructing the metropolitan thoroughfares. He was a native of Hackney, but in early life he went to Scotland, and upon the 24th June, 1832, he obtained the presentation to a small extra-parochial chapel in that country, upon the presentation of the Rev. Dr. Bell. His people embraced Irvingism, and he was obliged to leave; and in January, 1837, he came to the metropolis. His history since that period he need not state. His occupation was well known, and he could confirm what had been stated with regard to the police. The Police Act provided, that all persons selling goods in the streets were to keep five feet off the pavement, the street not being a market. He had always kept with his wares and his cards beyond the prohibited distance of five feet; and for six years and a half he had sold his cards without molesting or being molested. After some severe observations upon the police, he narrated several events in his personal history to account for his present condition, which he attributed to misfortune and the injustice of society. In the course of these explanations he gave an illustration of his classical acquirements, in having detected a grammatical error in a Latin inscription upon the plate of a foundation-stone for a new church in Westminster. He wrote to the incumbent, pointing out the error, and the incumbent asked the beadle who he was. "Oh," said the beadle, "he is a fellow who gets his living in the streets." This was enough. He got no answer to his letter, though he knew the incumbent and his four curates, and had attended his church for seven years. After dwelling on the sufferings of those whose living was gained in the streets, he said, that if persons wished really to know anything of the character or habits of life of the very poor, of whom he was one, the knowledge could only be had from a personal survey of their condition in their own homes. He ended, by expressing his hope that by better treatment, and an earnest attention—moral, social, and religious—to their condition, the poor of the streets might be gathered to the church, and to God.

A "wandering musician" in a Highland garb, worn and dirty, complained at some

length of the way in which he was treated by the police.

A hale-looking man, a costermonger, of middle age—who said he had a wife and four children dependent upon him—then spoke. It was a positive fact, he said, notwithstanding their poverty, their hardships, and even their degradation in the eyes of some, that the first markets in London were mainly supported by costermongers. What would the Duke of Bedford's market in Covent-garden be with-

out them? This question elicited loud applause.

Several other persons followed with statements of a similar character, which were listened to with interest; but from their general sameness it is not necessary to repeat them here. After occupying nearly four hours, the proceedings were brought to a close by a vote of thanks, and the "street-sellers, performers, and labourers," separated in a most orderly manner.

OF THE STREET-IRISH.

THE Irish street-sellers are both a numerous and peculiar class of people. It therefore behoves me, for the due completeness of this work, to say a few words upon their numbers, earnings, condition, and mode of life.

The number of Irish street-sellers in the metropolis has increased greatly of late years. One gentleman, who had every means of being well-informed, considered that it was not too much to conclude, that, within these five years, the numbers of the poor Irish people who gain a scanty maintenance, or what is rather a substitute for a maintenance, by trading, or begging, or by carrying on the two avocations simultaneously in the streets of London, had been doubled in number.

I found among the English costermongers a general dislike of the Irish. In fact, next to a policeman, a genuine London costermonger hates an Irishman, considering him an intruder. Whether there be any traditional or hereditary ill-feeling between them, originating from a clannish feeling, I cannot ascertain. The costermongers whom I questioned had no knowledge of the feelings or prejudices of their predecessors, but I am inclined to believe that the prejudice is modern, and has originated in the great influx of Irishmen and women, intermixing, more especially during the last five years, with the costermonger's business. An Irish costermonger, however, is no novelty in the streets of London. "From the mention of the costardmonger," says Mr. Charles Knight, "in the old dramatists, he appears to have been frequently an Irishman."

Of the Irish street-sellers, at present, it is computed that there are, including men, women, and children, upwards of 10,000. Assuming the street-sellers attending the London fish and green markets to be, with their families, 30,000 in number, and 7 in every 20 of these to be Irish, we shall have rather more than the total above given. Of this large body three-fourths sell only fruit, and more especially nuts and oranges; indeed, the orange-season is called the "Irishman's harvest." The others deal in fish, fruit, and vegetables, but these are principally men. Some of the most wretched of the street-

Irish deal in such trifles as lucifer-matches, water-cresses, &c.

I am informed that the great mass of these people have been connected, in some capacity or other, with the culture of the land in Ireland. The mechanics who have sought the metropolis from the sister kingdom have become mixed with their respective handicrafts in England, some of the Irish—though only a few—taking rank with the English skilled labourers. The greater part of the Irish artizans who have arrived within the last five years are to be found among the most degraded of the tailors and shoemakers who work at the East-end for the slop-masters.

A large class of the Irish who were agricultural labourers in their country are to be found among the men working for bricklayers, as well as among the dock-labourers and excavators, &c. Wood chopping is an occupation greatly resorted to by the Irish in London. Many of the Irish, however, who are not regularly employed in their respective callings, resort to the streets when they cannot obtain work otherwise.

The Irish women and girls who sell fruit, &c., in the streets, depend almost entirely on that mode of traffic for their subsistence. They are a class not sufficiently taught to avail themselves of the ordinary resources of women in the humbler walk of life. Unskilled at their needles, working for slop employers, even at the commonest shirt-making, is impossible to them. Their ignorance of household work, moreover (for such description of work is unknown in their wretched cabins in many parts of Ireland), incapacitates them in a great measure for such employments as "charing," washing, and ironing, as well as from regular domestic employment. Thus there seems to remain to them but one thing to do—as, indeed, was said to me by one of themselves—viz., "to sell for a ha'pinny the three apples which cost a farruthing."

Very few of these women (nor, indeed, of the men, though rather more of them than the women) can read, and they are mostly ill wretchedly poor; but the women present two characteristics which distinguish them from the London costerwomen generally—they are chaste, and, unlike the "coster girls," very seldom form any con-

nection without the sanction of the marriage ceremony. They are, moreover, attentive to religious observances.

The majority of the Irish street-sellers of both sexes beg, and often very eloquently, as they carry on their trade; and I was further assured, that, but for this begging, some of them might starve outright.

The greater proportion of the Irish street-sellers are from Leinster and Munster, and a considerable number come from Connaught.

OF THE CAUSES WHICH HAVE MADE THE IRISH TURN COSTERMONGERS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the prejudices of the English costers, I am of opinion that the Irishmen and women who have become costermongers, belong to a better class than the Irish labourers. The Irishman may readily adapt himself, in a strange place, to labour, though not to trade; but these costers are—or the majority at least are—poor persevering traders enough.

The most intelligent and prosperous of the street-Irish are those who have "risen"—for so I heard it expressed—"into regular costers." The untaught Irishmen's capabilities, as I have before remarked, with all his powers of speech and quickness of apprehension, are far less fitted for "buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest" than for mere physical employment. Hence those who take to street-trading for a living seldom prosper in it, and three-fourths of the street-Irish confine their dealings to such articles as are easy of sale, like apples, nuts, or oranges, for they are rarely masters of purchasing to advantage, and seem to know little about tale or measure, beyond the most familiar quantities. Compared with an acute costermonger, the mere apple-seller is but as the labourer to the artisan.

One of the principal causes why the Irish costermongers have increased so extensively of late years, is to be found in the fact that the labouring classes, (and of them chiefly the class employed in the culture of land,) have been driven over from "the sister Isle" more thickly for the last four or five years than formerly. Several circumstances have conspired to effect this.—First, they were driven over by the famine, when they could not procure, or began to fear that soon they could not procure, food to eat. Secondly, they were forced to take refuge in this country by the evictions, when their landlords had left them no roof to shelter them in their own. (The shifts, the devices, the plans, to which numbers of these poor creatures had recourse, to raise the means of quitting Ireland for England—or for anywhere—will present a very remarkable chapter at some future period.) Thirdly, though the better class of small farmers who have emigrated from Ireland, in hopes of "bettering themselves," have mostly sought the shores of North America, still some who have reached this country have at last settled into street-sellers. And, fourthly, many who have come over here only for the

harvest have been either induced or compelled to stay.

Another main cause is, that the Irish, as labourers, can seldom obtain work all the year through, and thus the ranks of the Irish street-sellers are recruited every winter by the slackness of certain periodic trades in which they are largely employed—such as hodmen, dock-work, excavating, and the like. They are, therefore, driven by want of employment to the winter sale of oranges and nuts. These circumstances have a doubly malefic effect, as the increase of costers accrues in the winter months, and there are consequently the most sellers when there are the fewest buyers.

Moreover, the cessation of work in the construction of railways, compared with the abundance of employment which attracted so many to this country during the railway mania, has been another fertile cause of there being so many Irish in the London streets.

The prevalence of Irish women and children among street-sellers is easily accounted for—they are, as I said before, unable to do anything else to eke out the means of their husbands or parents. A needle is as useless in their fingers as a pen.

Bitterly as many of these people suffer in this country, grievous and often eloquent as are their statements, I met with none who did not manifest repugnance at the suggestion of a return to Ireland. If asked why they objected to return, the response was usually in the form of a question: "Shure thin, sir, and what good could I do there?" Neither can I say that I heard any of these people express any love for their country, though they often spoke with great affection of their friends.

From an Irish costermonger, a middle-aged man, with a physiognomy best known as "Irish," and dressed in corduroy trousers, with a loose great-coat, far too big for him, buttoned about him, I had the following statement:

"I had a bit o' land, yer honor, in County Limerick. Well, it wasn't just a farrum, nor what ye would call a garden here, but my father lived and died on it—glory be to God!—and brought up me and my sister on it. It was about an acre, and the taties was well known to be good. But the sore times came, and the taties was afflicted, and the wife and me—I have no childer—hadn't a bite nor a sup, but wather to live on, and an igg or two. I felt the famine a-comin'. I saw people a-feedin' on the wild green things, and as I had not such a bad take, I got Mr. — (he was the head master's agent) to give me 28s. for possission in quietness, and I sould some poulthry I had—their iggs was a blessin' to keep the life in us—I sould them in Limerick for 3s. 3d.—the poor things—four of them. The furnithur' I sould to the nabors, for somehow about 6s. Its the thruth I'm ay-tellin' of you, sir, and there's 2s. owin' of it still, and will be a perpetual loss. The wife and me walked to Dublin, though we had better have gone by the 'long say,' but I didn't under-