

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 costermongers 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-

stand it thin, and we got to Liverpool. Then sorrow's the taste of worruk could I git, beyant onct 3s. for two days harrud porthering, that broke my back half in two. I was tould I'd do better in London, and so, glory be to God! I have—perhaps I have. I knew Mr. —, he porthers at Covent-garden, and I made him out, and hilped him in any long distance of a job. As I'd been used to farrumin' I thought it good raison I should be a costermonger, as they call it here. I can read and write too. And some good Christian—the heavens light him to glory when he's gone!—I don't know who he was—advanced me 10s.—or he gave it me, so to spake, through Father —, (a Roman Catholic priest.) We earrun what keeps the life in us. I don't go to markit, but buy of a fair dealin' man—so I count him—though he's harrud sometimes. I can't till how many Irishmen is in the thrade. There's many has been brought down to it by the famin' and the changes. I don't go much among the English street-dalers. They talk like haythens. I never miss mass on a Sunday, and they don't know what the blissed mass manes. I'm almost glad I have no childer, to see how they're raired here. Indeed, sir, they're not raired at all—they run wild. They haven't the fear of God or the saints. They'd hang a praste—glory be to God! they would."

HOW THE STREET-IRISH DISPLANTED THE STREET-JEWS IN THE ORANGE TRADE.

The Jews, in the streets, while acting as costermongers, never "worked a barrow," nor dealt in the more ponderous and least profitable articles of the trade, such as turnips and cabbages. They however, had, at one period, the chief possession of a portion of the trade which the "regular hands" do not consider proper costermongering, and which is now chiefly confined to the Irish—viz.: orange selling.

The trade was, not many years ago, confined almost entirely to the Jew boys, who kept aloof from the vagrant lads of the streets, or mixed with them only in the cheap theatres and concert-rooms. A person who had had great experience at what was, till recently, one of the greatest "coaching inns," told me that, speaking within his own recollection and from his own observation, he thought the sale of oranges was not so much in the hands of the Jew lads until about forty years back. The orange monopoly, so to speak, was established by the street-Jews, about 1810, or three or four years previous to that date, when recruiting and local soldiering were at their height, and when a great number of the vagabond or "roving" population, who in one capacity or other now throng the streets, were induced to enlist. The young Jews never entered the ranks of the army. The streets were thus in a measure cleared for them, and the itinerant orange-trade fell almost entirely into their hands. Some of the young Jews gained, I am assured, at least 100*l.* a year in this traffic.

The numbers of country people who hastened to London on the occasion of the Allied Sovereigns' visit in 1814—many wealthy persons then seeing the capital for the first time—afforded an excellent market to these dealers.

Moreover, the perseverance of the Jew orange boys was not to be overcome; they would follow a man who even looked encouragingly at their wares for a mile or two. The great resort of these Jew dealers—who eschewed night-work generally, and left the theatre-doors to old men and women of all ages—was at the coaching inns; for year by year, after the peace of 1815, the improvement of the roads and the consequent increase of travellers to London, progressed.

About 1825, as nearly as my informant could recollect, these keen young traders began to add the sale of other goods to their oranges, pressing them upon the notice of those who were leaving or visiting London by the different coaches. So much was this the case, that it was a common remark at that time, that no one could reach or leave the metropolis, even for the shortest journey, without being expected to be in urgent want of oranges and lemons, black-lead pencils, sticks of sealing-wax, many-bladed pen-knives, pocket-combs, razors, strops, braces, and sponges. To pursue the sale of the last-mentioned articles—they being found, I presume, to be more profitable—some of the street-Jews began to abandon the sale of oranges and lemons; and it was upon this, that the trade was "taken up" by the wives and children of the Irish bricklayers' labourers, and of other Irish work-people then resident in London. The numbers of Irish in the metropolis at that time began to increase rapidly; for twenty years ago, they resorted numerously to England to gather in the harvest, and those who had been employed in contiguous counties during the autumn, made for London in the winter. "I can't say they were well off, sir," said one man to me, "but they liked bread and herrings, or bread and tea—better than potatoes without bread at home." From 1836 to 1840, I was informed, the Irish gradually superseded the Jews in the fruit traffic about the coaching-houses. One reason for this was, that they were far more eloquent, begging pathetically, and with many benedictions on their listeners. The Jews never begged, I was told; "they were merely traders." Another reason was, that the Irish, men or lads, who had entered into the fruit trade in the coach-yards, would not only sell and beg, but were ready to "lend a hand" to any over-burthened coach-porter. This the Jews never did, and in that way the people of the yard came to encourage the Irish to the prejudice of the Jews. At present, I understand that, with the exception of one or two in the city, no Jews vend oranges in the streets, and that the trade is almost entirely in the hands of the Irish.

Another reason why the Irish could supersede and even undersell the Jews and regular costermongers was this, as I am informed on ex-

cellent authority:—Father Mathew, a dozen years back, made temperance societies popular in Ireland. Many of the itinerant Irish, especially the younger classes, were "temperance men." Thus the Irish could live as sparely as the Jew, but they did not, like him, squander any money for the evening's amusement, at the concert or the theatre.

I inquired what might be the number of the Jews plying, so to speak, at the coaching inns, and was assured that it was less numerous than was generally imagined. One man computed it at 300 individuals, all under 21; another at only 200; perhaps the mean, or 250, might be about the mark. The number was naturally considered greater, I was told, because the same set of street traders were seen over and over again. The Jews knew when the coaches were to arrive and when they started, and they would hurry, after availing themselves of a departure, from one inn—the Belle Sauvage, Ludgate-hill, for instance—to take advantage of an arrival at another—say the Saracen's Head, Snow-hill. Thus they appeared everywhere, but were the same individuals.

I inquired to what calling the youthful Jews, thus driven from their partially monopolized street commerce, had devoted themselves, and was told that even when the orange and hawking trade was at the best, the Jews rarely carried it on after they were twenty-two or twenty-three, but that they then resorted to some more wholesale calling, such as the purchase of nuts or foreign grapes, at public sales. At present, I am informed, they are more thickly than ever engaged in these trades, as well as in two new avocations, that have been established within these few years,—the sale of the Bahama pine-apples and of the Spanish and Portuguese onions.

About the Royal Exchange, Jew boys still hawk pencils, etc., but the number engaged in this pursuit throughout London is not, as far as I can ascertain, above one-eighth—if an eighth—of what it was even twelve years ago.

OF THE RELIGION OF THE STREET-IRISH.

HAVING now given a brief sketch as to how the Irish people have come to form so large a proportion of the London street-sellers, I shall proceed, as I did with the English costermongers, to furnish the reader with a short account of their religious, moral, intellectual, and physical condition, so that he may be able to contrast the habits and circumstances of the one class with those of the other. First, of the religion of the Irish street-folk.

Almost all the street-Irish are Roman Catholics. Of course I can but speak generally; but during my inquiry I met with only two who said they were Protestants, and when I came to converse with them, I found out that they were partly ignorant of, and partly indifferent to, any religion whatever. An Irish Protestant gentleman said to me: "You may depend upon it, if ever you meet any of my poor countrymen who

will not talk to you about religion, they either know or care nothing about it; for the religious spirit runs high in Ireland, and Protestants and Catholics are easily led to converse about their faith."

I found that some of the Irish Roman Catholics—but they had been for many years resident in England, and that among the poorest or vagrant class of the English—had become indifferent to their creed, and did not attend their chapels, unless at the great fasts or festivals, and this they did only occasionally. One old stall-keeper, who had been in London nearly thirty years, said to me: "Ah! God knows, sir, I ought to attend mass every Sunday, but I haven't for a many years, barrin' Christmas-day and such times. But I'll thry and go more regular, plase God." This man seemed to resent, as a sort of indignity, my question if he ever attended any other place of worship. "Av course not!" was the reply.

One Irishman, also a fruit-seller, with a well-stocked barrow, and without the complaint of poverty common among his class, entered keenly into the subject of his religious faith when I introduced it. He was born in Ireland, but had been in England since he was five or six. He was a good-looking, fresh-coloured man, of thirty or upwards, and could read and write well. He spoke without bitterness, though zealously enough. "Perhaps, sir, you are a gintleman connected with the Protistant clargy," he asked, "or a missionary?" On my stating that I had no claim to either character, he resumed: "Will, sir, it don't matter. All the worruld may know my riligion, and I wish all the worruld was of my riligion, and better min in it than I am; I do, indeed. I'm a Roman Catholic, sir;" [here he made the sign of the cross]; "God be praised for it! O yis, I know all about Cardinal Wiseman. It's the will of God, I feel sure, that he's to be 'stablished here, and it's no use ribillin' against that. I've nothing to say against Protistints. I've heard it said, 'It's best to pray for them.' The street-people that call themselves Protistants are no riligion at all at all. I serruve Protistant gintlemen and ladies too, and sometimes they talk to me kindly about religion. They're good custhomers, and I have no doubt good people. I can't say what their lot may be in another worruld for not being of the true faith. No, sir, I'll give no opinions—none."

This man gave me a clear account of his belief that the Blessed Virgin (he crossed himself repeatedly as he spoke) was the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, and was a mediator with our Lord, who was God of heaven and earth—of the duty of praying to the holy saints—of attending mass—"but the priest," he said, "won't exact too much of a poor man, eithner about that or about fasting")—of going to confession at Easter and Christmas times, at the least—of receiving the body of Christ, "the rale prinsence," in the holy sacrament—of keeping all God's commandments—of purgatory being a purgation of sins—and of heaven and hell.

I found the majority of those I spoke with, at least as earnest in their faith, if they were not as well instructed in it as my informant, who may be cited as an example of the better class of street-sellers.

Another Irishman,—who may be taken as a type of the less informed, and who had been between two and three years in England, having been disappointed in emigrating to America with his wife and two children,—gave me the following account, but not without considering and hesitating. He was a very melancholy looking man, tall and spare, and decently clad. He and his family were living upon 8*d.* a day, which he earned by sweeping a crossing. He had been prevented by ill health from earning 2*l.*, which he could have made, he told me, in harvest time, as a store against winter. He had been a street-seller, and so had his wife; and she would be so again as soon as he could raise 2*s.* to buy her a stock of apples. He said, touching his hat at each holy name,—

“Sure, yis, sir, I’m a Roman Cartholic, and go to mass every Sunday. Jesus Christ? O yis,” (hesitating, but proceeding readily after a word of prompting), “he is the Lord our Saviour, and the Son of the Holy Virgin. The blessed saints? Yis, sir, yis. The praste prays for them. I—I mane prays to them. O, yis. I pray to them mysilf ivery night for a blissin’, and to rise me out of my misery. No, sir, I can’t say I know what the mass is about. I don’t know what I’m prayin’ for thin, only that it’s right. A poor man, that can neither read nor write—I wish I could and I might do betther—can’t understand it; it’s all in Latin. Iv’e heard about Cardinal Wiseman. It’ll do us no good sir; it’ll only set people more against us. But it ain’t poor min’s fault.”

As I was anxious to witness the religious zeal that characterizes these people, I obtained permission to follow one of the priests as he made his rounds among his flock. Everywhere the people ran out to meet him. He had just returned to them I found, and the news spread round, and women crowded to their door-steps, and came creeping up from the cellars through the trap-doors, merely to curtsy to him. One old crone, as he passed, cried, “You’re a good father, Heaven comfort you,” and the boys playing about stood still to watch him. A lad, in a man’s tail coat and a shirt-collar that nearly covered in his head—like the paper round a bouquet—was fortunate enough to be noticed, and his eyes sparkled, as he touched his hair at each word he spoke in answer. At a conversation that took place between the priest and a woman who kept a dry fish-stall, the dame excused herself for not having been up to take tea “with his rivirince’s mother lately, for thrade had been so bisy, and night was the fullest time.” Even as the priest walked along the street, boys running at full speed would pull up to touch their hair, and the stall-women would rise from their baskets; while all noise—even a quarrel—ceased until he had passed by. Still

there was no look of fear in the people. He called them all by their names, and asked after their families, and once or twice the “father” was taken aside and held by the button while some point that required his advice was whispered in his ear.

The religious fervour of the people whom I saw was intense. At one house that I entered, the woman set me marvelling at the strength of her zeal, by showing me how she contrived to have in her sitting-room a sanctuary to pray before every night and morning, and even in the day, “when she felt weary and lonesome.” The room was rudely enough furnished, and the only decent table was covered with a new piece of varnished cloth; still before a rude print of our Saviour there were placed two old plated candlesticks, pink, with the copper shining through; and here it was that she told her beads. In her bed-room, too, was a coloured engraving of the “Blessed Lady,” which she never passed without curtsying to.

Of course I detail these matters as mere facts, without desiring to offer any opinion here, either as to the benefit or otherwise of the creed in question. As I had shown how the English costermonger neither had nor knew any religion whatever, it became my duty to give the reader a view of the religion of the Irish street-sellers. In order to be able to do so as truthfully as possible, I placed myself in communication with those parties who were in a position to give me the best information on the subject. The result is given above, in all the simplicity and impartiality of history.

OF THE EDUCATION, LITERATURE, AMUSEMENTS, AND POLITICS OF THE STREET-IRISH.

THESE several heads have often required from me lengthened notices, but as regards the class I am now describing they may be dismissed briefly enough. The majority of the street-Irish whom I saw were unable to read, but I found those who had no knowledge of reading—(and the same remark applies to the English street-sellers as well)—regret their inability, and say, “I wish I could read, sir; I’d be better off now.” On the other hand, those who had a knowledge of reading and writing, said frequently enough, “Why, yes, sir, I can read and write, but it’s been no good to me,” as if they had been disappointed in their expectations as to the benefits attendant upon scholarship. I am inclined to think, however, that a greater anxiety exists among the poor generally, to have some schooling provided for their children, than was the case a few years back. One Irishman attributed this to the increased number of Roman Catholic schools, “for the more schools there are,” he said, “the more people think about schooling their children.”

The literature, or reading, of the street-Irish is, I believe, confined to Roman Catholic books, such as the “Lives of the Saints,” published in a cheap form; one, and only one, I found with



THE WALLFLOWER GIRL.

[From a Photograph.]

the "Nation" newspaper. The very poor have no leisure to read. During three days spent in visiting the slop-workers at the East end of the town, not so much as the fragment of a leaf of a book was seen.

The amusements of the street-Irish are not those of the English costermongers—though there are exceptions, of course, to the remark. The Irish fathers and mothers do not allow their daughters, even when they possess the means, to resort to the "penny gaffs" or the "twopenny hops," unaccompanied by them. Some of the men frequent the beer-shops, and are inveterate drinkers and smokers too. I did not hear of any amusements popular among, or much resorted to, by the Irishmen, except dancing parties at one another's houses, where they jig and reel furiously. They frequent raffles also, but the article is often never thrown for, and the evening is spent in dancing.

I may here observe—in reference to the statement that Irish parents will not expose their daughters to the risk of what they consider corrupt influences—that when a young Irishwoman *does* break through the pale of chastity, she often becomes, as I was assured, one of the most violent and depraved of, perhaps, the most depraved class.

Of politics, I think, the street-Irish understand nothing, and my own observations in this respect were confirmed by a remark made to me by an Irish gentleman: "Their politics are either a dead letter, or the politics of their priests."

THE HOMES OF THE STREET-IRISH.

In almost all of the poorer districts of London are to be found "nests of Irish"—as they are called—or courts inhabited solely by the Irish costermongers. These people form separate colonies, rarely visiting or mingling with the English costers. It is curious, on walking through one of these settlements, to notice the manner in which the Irish deal among themselves—street-seller buying of street-seller. Even in some of the smallest courts there may be seen stalls of vegetables, dried herrings, or salt cod, thriving, on the associative principle, by mutual support.

The parts of London that are the most thickly populated with Irish lie about Brook-street, Rat-cliff-cross, down both sides of the Commercial-road, and in Rosemary-lane, though nearly all the "coster-districts" cited at p. 47, have their Irish settlements—Cromer-street, Saffron-hill and King-street, Drury-lane, for instance, being thickly peopled with the Irish; but the places I have mentioned above are peculiarly distinguished, by being almost entirely peopled by visitors from the sister isle.

The same system of immigration is pursued in London as in America. As soon as the first settler is thriving in his newly chosen country, a certain portion of his or her earnings are carefully hoarded up, until they are sufficient to pay for the removal of another member of

the family to England; then one of the friends left "at home" is sent for; and thus by degrees the entire family is got over, and once more united.

Perhaps there is no quarter of London where the habits and habitations of the Irish can be better seen and studied than in Rosemary-lane, and the little courts and alleys that spring from it on each side. Some of these courts have other courts branching off from them, so that the locality is a perfect labyrinth of "blind alleys;" and when once in the heart of the maze it is difficult to find the path that leads to the main-road. As you walk down "the lane," and peep through the narrow openings between the houses, the place seems like a huge peep-show, with dark holes of gateways to look through, while the court within appears bright with the daylight; and down it are seen rough-headed urchins running with their feet bare through the puddles, and bonnetless girls, huddled in shawls, lolling against the door-posts. Sometimes you see a long narrow alley, with the houses so close together that opposite neighbours are talking from their windows; while the ropes, stretched zig-zag from wall to wall, afford just room enough to dry a blanket or a couple of shirts, that swell out dropsically in the wind.

I visited one of the paved yards round which the Irish live, and found that it had been turned into a complete drying-ground, with shirts, gowns, and petticoats of every description and colour. The buildings at the end were completely hidden by "the things," and the air felt damp and chilly, and smelt of soap-suds. The gutter was filled with dirty gray water emptied from the wash-tubs, and on the top were the thick bubbles floating about under the breath of the boys "playing at boats" with them.

It is the custom with the inhabitants of these courts and alleys to assemble at the entrance with their baskets, and chat and smoke away the morning. Every court entrance has its little group of girls and women, lolling listlessly against the sides, with their heads uncovered, and their luxuriant hair fuzzy as oakum. It is peculiar with the Irish women that—after having been accustomed to their hoods—they seldom wear bonnets, unless on a long journey. Nearly all of them, too, have a thick plaid shawl, which they keep on all the day through, with their hands covered under it. At the mouth of the only thoroughfare deserving of the name of street—for a cart could just go through it—were congregated about thirty men and women, who rented rooms in the houses on each side of the road. Six women, with baskets of dried herrings, were crouching in a line on the kerbstone with the fish before them; their legs were drawn up so closely to their bodies that the shawl covered the entire figure, and they looked very like the podgy "tombolers" sold by the Italian boys. As all their wares were alike, it was puzzling work to imagine how, without the strongest opposition, they could each obtain a living. The

men were dressed in long-tail coats, with one or two brass buttons. One old dame, with a face wrinkled like a dried plum, had her cloak placed over her head like a hood, and the grisly hair hung down in matted hanks about her face, her black eyes shining between the locks like those of a Skye terrier; beside her was another old woman smoking a pipe so short that her nose reached over the bowl.

After looking at the low foreheads and long bulging upper lips of some of the group, it was pleasant to gaze upon the pretty faces of the one or two girls that lolled against the wall. Their black hair, smoothed with grease, and shining almost as if "japanned," and their large gray eyes with the thick dark fringe of lash, seemed out of place among the hard features of their companions. It was only by looking at the short petticoats and large feet you could assure yourself that they belonged to the same class.

In all the houses that I entered were traces of household care and neatness that I had little expected to have seen. The cupboard fastened in the corner of the room, and stocked with mugs and cups, the mantelpiece with its images, and the walls covered with showy-coloured prints of saints and martyrs, gave an air of comfort that strangely disagreed with the reports of the cabins in "ould Ireland." As the doors to the houses were nearly all of them kept open, I could, even whilst walking along, gain some notion of the furniture of the homes. In one house that I visited there was a family of five persons, living on the ground floor and occupying two rooms. The boards were strewn with red sand, and the front apartment had three beds in it, with the printed curtains drawn closely round. In a dark room, at the back, lived the family itself. It was fitted up as a parlour, and crowded to excess with chairs and tables, and the very staircase having pictures fastened against the wooden partition. The fire, although it was midday, and a warm autumn morning, served as much for light as for heat, and round it crouched the mother, children, and visitors, bending over the flame as if in the severest winter time. In a room above this were a man and woman lately arrived in England. The woman sat huddled up in a corner smoking, with the husband standing over her in, what appeared at first, a menacing attitude; I was informed, however, that they were only planning for the future. This room was perfectly empty of furniture, and the once white-washed walls were black, excepting the little square patches which showed where the pictures of the former tenants had hung. In another room, I found a home so small and full of furniture, that it was almost a curiosity for domestic management. The bed, with its chintz curtains looped up, filled one end of the apartment, but the mattress of it served as a long bench for the visitors to sit on. The table was so large that it divided the room in two, and if there was one picture there must have been thirty—all of "holy men," with yellow

glories round their heads. The window-ledge was dressed out with crockery, and in a tumbler were placed the beads. The old dame herself was as curious as her room. Her shawl was fastened over her large frilled cap. She had a little "button" of a nose, with the nostrils entering her face like bullet holes. She wore over her gown an old pilot coat, well-stained with fish slime, and her petticoats being short, she had very much the appearance of a Dutch fisherman or stage smuggler.

Her story was affecting—made more so, perhaps, by the emotional manner in which she related it. Nine years ago "the father" of the district—"the Blessed Lady guard him!"—had found her late at night, rolling in the gutter, and the boys pelting her with orange-peel and mud. She was drunk—"the Lorrud pass by her"—and when she came to, she found herself in the chapel, lying before the sanctuary, "under the shadow of the holy cross." Watching over her was the "good father," trying to bring back her consciousness. He spoke to her of her wickedness, and before she left she took the pledge of temperance. From that time she prospered, and the 1s. 6d. the "father" gave her "had God's blissin' in it," for she became the best dressed woman in the court, and in less than three years had 15l. in the savings' bank, "the father—Heaven chirish him"—keeping her book for her, as he did for other poor people. She also joined "the Association of the Blessed Lady," (and bought herself the dress of the order "a beautiful grane vilvit, which she had now, and which same cost her 30s."), and then she was secure against want in old age and sickness. But after nine years prudence and comfort, a brother of hers returned home from the army, with a pension of 1s. a day. He was wild, and persuaded her to break her pledge, and in a short time he got all her savings from her and spent every penny. She could not shake him off, "for he was the only kin she had on airth," and "she must love her own flesh and bones." Then began her misery. "It plased God to visit her ould limbs with aches and throubles, and her hips swole with the cowl," so that she was at last forced into a hospital, and all that was left of her store was "aten up by sufferin's." This, she assured me, all came about by the "good father's" leaving that parish for another one, but now he had returned to them again, and, with his help and God's blessing, she would yet prosper once more.

Whilst I was in the room, the father entered, and "old Norah," half-divided between joy at seeing him and shame at "being again a beggar," laughed and wept at the same time. She stood wiping her eyes with the shawl, and groaning out blessings on "his rivirince's hid," begging of him not "to scould her for she was a wake woman." The renegade brother was had in to receive a lecture from "his rivirince." A more sottish idiotic face it would be difficult to imagine. He stood with his hands hanging

down like the paws of a dog begging, and his two small eyes stared in the face of the priest, as he censured him, without the least expression even of consciousness. Old Norah stood by, groaning like a bagpipe, and writhing while the father spoke to her "own brother," as though every reproach were meant for her.

The one thing that struck me during my visit to this neighbourhood, was the apparent listlessness and lazy appearance of the people. The boys at play were the only beings who seemed to have any life in their actions. The women in their plaid shawls strolled along the pavements, stopping each friend for a chat, or joining some circle, and leaning against the wall as though utterly deficient in energy. The men smoked, with their hands in their pockets, listening to the old crones talking, and only now and then grunting out a reply when a question was directly put to them. And yet it is curious that these people, who here seemed as inactive as negroes, will perform the severest bodily labour, undertaking tasks that the English are almost unfitted for.

To complete this account, I subjoin a brief description of the lodging-houses resorted to by the Irish immigrants on their arrival in this country.

IRISH LODGING-HOUSES FOR IMMIGRANTS.

OFTEN an Irish immigrant, whose object is to settle in London, arrives by the Cork steamer without knowing a single friend to whom he can apply for house-room or assistance of any kind. Sometimes a whole family is landed late at night, worn out by sickness and the terrible fatigues of a three days' deck passage, almost paralysed by exhaustion, and scarcely able to speak English enough to inquire for shelter till morning.

If the immigrants, however, are bound for America, their lot is very different. Then they are consigned to some agent in London, who is always on the wharf at the time the steamer arrives, and takes the strangers to the homes he has prepared for them until the New York packet starts. During the two or three days' necessary stay in London, they are provided for at the agent's expense, and no trouble is experienced by the travellers. A large provision-merchant in the city told me that he often, during the season, had as many as 500 Irish consigned to him by one vessel, so that to lead them to their lodgings was like walking at the head of a regiment of recruits.

The necessities of the immigrants in London have caused several of their countrymen to open lodging-houses in the courts about Rosemary-lane; these men attend the coming in of the Cork steamer, and seek for customers among the poorest of the poor, after the manner of touters to a sea-side hotel.

The immigrants'-houses are of two kinds—clean and dirty. The better class of Irish lodging-houses almost startle one by the comfort and cleanliness of the rooms; for after the

descriptions you hear of the state in which the deck passengers are landed from the Irish boats, their clothes stained with the manure of the pigs, and drenched with the spray, you somehow expect to find all the accommodations disgusting and unwholesome. But one in particular, that I visited, had the floor clean, and sprinkled with red sand, while the windows were sound, bright, and transparent. The hobs of the large fire-place were piled up with bright tin pots, and the chimney piece was white and red with the china images ranged upon it. In one corner of the principal apartment there stood two or three boxes still corded up, and with bundles strung to the sides, and against the wall was hung a bunch of blue cloaks, such as the Irishwomen wear. The proprietor of the house, who was dressed in a gray tail-coat and knee-breeches, that had somewhat the effect of a footman's livery, told me that he had received seven lodgers the day before, but six were men, and they were all out seeking for work. In front of the fire sat a woman, bending over it so close that the bright cotton gown she had on smelt of scorching. Her feet were bare, and she held the soles of them near to the bars, curling her toes about with the heat. She was a short, thick-set woman, with a pair of wonderfully muscular arms crossed over her bosom, and her loose rusty hair streaming over her neck. It was in vain that I spoke to her about her journey, for she wouldn't answer me, but kept her round, open eyes fixed on my face with a wild, nervous look, following me about with them everywhere.

Across the room hung a line, with the newly-washed and well-patched clothes of the immigrants hanging to it, and on a side-table were the six yellow basins that had been used for the men's breakfasts. During my visit, the neighbours, having observed a strange gentleman enter, came pouring in, each proffering some fresh bit of news about their newly-arrived countrymen. I was nearly stunned by half-a-dozen voices speaking together, and telling me how the poor people had been four days "at say," so that they were glad to get near the pigs for "warrumth," and instructing me as to the best manner of laying out the sum of money that it was supposed I was about to shower down upon the immigrants.

In one of the worst class of lodging-houses I found ten human beings living together in a small room. The apartment was entirely devoid of all furniture, excepting an old mattress rolled up against the wall, and a dirty piece of cloth hung across one corner, to screen the women whilst dressing. An old man, the father of five out of the ten, was seated on a tea-chest, mending shoes, and the other men were looking on with their hands in their pockets. Two girls and a woman were huddled together on the floor in front of the fire, talking in Irish. All these people seemed to be utterly devoid of energy, and the men moved about so lazily

that I couldn't help asking some of them if they had tried to obtain work. Every one turned to a good-looking young fellow lolling against the wall, as if they expected him to answer for them. "Ah, sure, and that they have," was the reply; "it's the docks they have tried, worrus luck." The others appeared struck with the truthfulness of the answer, for they all shook their heads, and said, "Sure an' that's thruth, anyhow." Here my Irish guide ventured an observation, by remarking solemnly, "It's no use tilling a lie;" to which the whole room assented, by exclaiming altogether, "Thru for you, Norah." The chosen spokesman then told me, "They paid half-a-crown a week for the room, and that was as much as they could earrun, and it was starruve they should if the neighbours didn't hilp them a bit." I asked them if they were better off over here than when in Ireland, but could get no direct answer, for my question only gave rise to a political discussion. "There 's plenty of food over here," said the spokesman, addressing his companions as much as myself, "plenty of 'taties—plenty of mate—plenty of porruk." "But where the use," observed my guide, "if there's no money to buy 'em wid?" to which the audience muttered, "Thru for you again, Norah;" and so it went on, each one pleading poverty in the most eloquent style.

After I had left, the young fellow who had acted as spokesman followed me into the street, and taking me into a corner, told me that he was a "sailor by thrade, but had lost his 'rigis-thration-ticket,' or he'd have got a berruth long since, and that it was all for 3s. 6d. he wasn't at say."

Concerning the number of Irish immigrants, I have obtained the following information:

The great influx of the Irish into London was in the year of the famine, 1847-8. This cannot be better shown than by citing the returns of the number of persons admitted into the Asylum for the Houseless Poor, in Playhouse-yard, Cripple-gate. These returns I obtained for fourteen years, and the average number of admissions of the applicants from all parts during that time was 8,794 yearly. Of these, the Irish averaged 2,455 yearly, or considerably more than a fourth of the whole number received. The total number of applicants thus sheltered in the fourteen years was 130,625, of which the Irish numbered 34,378. The smallest number of Irish (men, women, and children) admitted, was in 1834-5, about 300; in 1846-7, it was as many as 7,576, while in 1847-8, it was 10,756, and in 1848-9, 5,068.

But it was into Liverpool that the tide of immigration flowed the strongest, in the calamitous year of the famine. "Between the 13th Jan, and the 13th Dec., both inclusive," writes Mr. Rushton, the Liverpool magistrate, to Sir G. Grey, on the 21st April last, "296,231 persons landed in this port (Liverpool) from Ireland. Of this vast number, about 130,000 emigrated to

the United States; some 50,000 were passengers on business; and the remainder (161,231), mere paupers, half-naked and starving, landed, for the most part, during the winter, and became, immediately on landing, applicants for parochial relief. You already know the immediate results of this accumulation of misery in the crowded town of Liverpool; of the cost of relief at once rendered necessary to prevent the thousands of hungry and naked Irish perishing in our streets; and also of the cost of the pestilence which generally follows in the train of famine and misery such as we then had to encounter. . . . Hundreds of patients perished, notwithstanding all efforts made to save them; and ten Roman Catholic and one Protestant clergyman, many parochial officers, and many medical men, who devoted themselves to the task of alleviating the sufferings of the wretched, died in the discharge of these high duties."

Great numbers of these people were, at the same time, also conveyed from Ireland to Wales, especially to Newport. They were brought over by coal-vessels as a return cargo—a living ballast—2s. 6d. being the highest fare, and were huddled together like pigs. The manager of the Newport tramp-house has stated concerning these people, "They don't live long, diseased as they are. They are very remarkable; they will eat salt by basons-full, and drink a great quantity of water after. I have frequently known those who could not have been hungry eat cabbage-leaves and other refuse from the ash-heap."

It is necessary that I should thus briefly allude to this matter, as there is no doubt that some of these people, making their way to London, soon became street-sellers there, and many of them took to the business subsequently, when there was no employment in harvesting, hop-picking, &c. Of the poor wretches landed at Liverpool, many (Mr. Rushton states) became beggars, and many thieves. Many, there is no doubt, tramped their way to London, sleeping at the "casual wards" of the Unions on their way; but I believe that of those who had become habituated to the practice of beggary or theft, few or none would follow the occupation of street-selling, as even the half-passive industry of such a calling would be irksome to the apathetic and dishonest.

Of the immigration, direct by the vessels trading from Ireland to London, there are no returns such as have been collected by Mr. Rushton for Liverpool, but the influx is comparatively small, on account of the greater length and cost of the voyage. During the last year I am informed that 15,000 or 16,000 passengers were brought from Ireland to London direct, and, in addition to these, 500 more were brought over from Cork in connection with the arrangements for emigration to the United States, and consigned to the emigration agent here. Of the 15,500 (taking the mean between the two numbers above given) 1,000 emigrated to the United States. It appears,

on the authority of Mr. Rushton, that even in the great year of the immigration, more than one-sixth of the passengers from Ireland to Dublin came on business. It may, then, be reasonable to calculate that during last year one-fourth at least of the passengers to London had the same object in view, leaving about 10,000 persons who have either emigrated to British North America, Australia, &c., or have resorted to some mode of subsistence in the metropolis or the adjacent parts. Besides these there are the numbers who make their way up to London, tramping it from the several provincial ports—namely, Liverpool, Bristol, Newport, and Glasgow. Of these I have no means of forming any estimate, or of the proportion who adopt street-selling on their arrival here—all that can be said is, that the influx of Irish into the street-trade every year must be very considerable. I believe, however, that only those who "have friends in the line" resort to street-selling on their arrival in London, though all may make it a resource when other endeavours fail. The great immigration into London is from Cork, the average cost of a deck passage being 5s. The immigrants direct to London from Cork are rarely of the poorest class.

OF THE DIET, DRINK, AND EXPENSE OF LIVING OF THE STREET-IRISH.

The diet of the Irish men, women, and children, who obtain a livelihood (or what is so designated) by street-sale in London, has, I am told, on good authority, experienced a change. In the lodging-houses that they resorted to, their breakfast, two or three years ago, was a dish of potatoes—two, three, or four lbs., or more, in weight—for a family. Now half an ounce of coffee (half chicory) costs ½d., and that, with the half or quarter of a loaf, according to the number in family, is almost always their breakfast at the present time. When their constant diet was potatoes, there were frequent squabbles at the lodging-houses—to which many of the poor Irish on their first arrival resort—as to whether the potato-pot or the tea-kettle should have the preference on the fire. A man of superior intelligence, who had been driven to sleep and eat occasionally in lodging-houses, told me of some dialogues he had heard on these occasions:—"It's about three years ago," he said, "since I heard a bitter old Englishwoman say, 'To — with your 'taty-pot; they're only meat for pigs.' 'Sure, thin,' said a young Irishman—he was a nice 'cute fellow—'sure, thin, ma'am, I should be afther offering you a taste.' I heard that myself, sir. You may have noticed, that when an Irishman doesn't get out of temper, he never loses his politeness, or rather his blarney."

The dinner, or second meal of the day—assuming that there has been a breakfast—ordinarily consists of cheap fish and potatoes. Of the diet of the poor street-Irish I had an account from a little Irishman, then keeping an oyster-stall, though he generally sold fruit. In all such details I have found the

Irish far more communicative than the English. Many a poor untaught Englishman will shrink from speaking of his spare diet, and his trouble to procure that; a reserve, too, much more noticeable among the men than the women. My Irish informant told me he usually had his breakfast at a lodging-house—he preferred a lodging-house, he said, on account of the warmth and the society. Here he boiled half an ounce of coffee, costing a ½d. He purchased of his landlady the fourth of a quartern loaf (1¼d. or 1½d.), for she generally cut a quartern loaf into four for her single men lodgers, such as himself, clearing sometimes a farthing or two thereby. For dinner, my informant boiled at the lodging-house two or three lbs. of potatoes, costing usually 1d. or 1½d., and fried three, or four herrings, or as many as cost a penny. He sometimes mashed his potatoes, and spread over them the herrings, the fatty portion of which flavoured the potatoes, which were further flavoured by the roes of the herrings being crushed into them. He drank water to this meal, and the cost of the whole was 2d. or 2½d. A neighbouring stall-keeper attended to this man's stock in his absence at dinner, and my informant did the same for him in his turn. For "tea" he expended 1d. on coffee, or 1½d. on tea, being a "cup" of tea, or "half-pint of coffee," at a coffee-shop. Sometimes he had a halfpenny-worth of butter, and with his tea he ate the bread he had saved from his breakfast, and which he had carried in his pocket. He had no butter to his breakfast, he said, for he could not buy less than a penny-worth about where he lodged, and this was too dear for one meal. On a Sunday morning however he generally had butter, sometimes joining with a fellow-lodger for a pennyworth; for his Sunday dinner he had a piece of meat, which cost him 2d. on the Saturday night. Supper he dispensed with, but if he felt much tired he had a half-pint of beer, which was three farthings "in his own jug," before he went to bed, about nine or ten, as he did little or nothing late at night, except on Saturday. He thus spent 4½d. a day for food, and reckoning 2½d. extra for somewhat better fare on a Sunday, his board was 2s. 10d. a week. His earnings he computed at 5s., and thus he had 2s. 2d. weekly for other expenses. Of these there was 1s. for lodging; 2d. or 3d. for washing (but this not every week); ½d. for a Sunday morning's shave; 1d. "for his religion" (as he worded it); and 6d. for "odds and ends," such as thread to mend his clothes, a piece of leather to patch his shoes, worsted to darn his stockings, &c. He was subject to rheumatism, or "he might have saved a trifle of money." Judging by his methodical habits, it was probable he had done so. He had nothing of the eloquence of his countrymen, and seemed indeed of rather a morose turn.

A family boarding together live even cheaper than this man, for more potatoes and less fish fall to the share of the children. A meal too is

not unfrequently saved in this manner:—If a man, his wife, and two children, all go out in the streets selling, they breakfast before starting, and perhaps agree to re-assemble at four o'clock. Then the wife prepares the dinner of fish and potatoes, and so tea is dispensed with. In that case the husband's and wife's board would be 4d. or 4½d. a day each, the children's 3d. or 3½d. each, and giving 1½d. extra to each for Sunday, the weekly cost is 10s. 3d. Supposing the husband and wife cleared 5s. a week each, and the children each 3s., their earnings would be 16s. The balance is the surplus left to pay rent, washing, firing, and clothing.

From what I can ascertain, the Irish street-seller can always live at about half the cost of the English costermonger; the Englishman must have butter for his bread, and meat at no long intervals, for he "hates fish more than once a week." It is by this spareness of living, as well as by frequently importunate and mendacious begging, that the street-Irish manage to save money.

The diet I have spoken of is *generally*, but not universally, that of the poor street-Irish; those who live differently, do not, as a rule, incur greater expense.

It is difficult to ascertain in what proportion the Irish street-sellers consume strong drink, when compared with the consumption of the English costers; as a poor Irishman, if questioned on that or any subject, will far more frequently shape his reply to what he thinks will please his querist and induce a trifle for himself, than answer according to the truth. The landlord of a large public-house, after inquiring of his assistants, that his opinions might be checked by theirs, told me that in one respect there was a marked difference between the beer-drinking of the two people. He considered that in the poor streets near his house there were residing quite as many Irish street-sellers and labourers as English, but the instances in which the Irish conveyed beer to their own rooms, as a portion of their meals, was not as 1 in 20 compared with the English: "I have read your work, sir," he said, "and I know that you are quite right in saying that the costermongers go for a good Sunday dinner. I don't know what my customers are except by their appearance, but I do know that many are costermongers, and by the best of all proofs, for I have bought fish, fruit, and vegetables of them. Well, now, we'll take a fine Sunday in spring or summer, when times are pretty good with them; and, perhaps, in the ten minutes after my doors are opened at one on the Sunday, there are 100 customers for their dinner-beer. Nearly three-quarters of these are working men and their wives, working either in the streets, or at their indoor trades, such as tailoring. But among the number, I'm satisfied, there are not more than two Irishmen. There may be three or four Irishwomen, but one of my barmen tells me he knows that two of them—very well-behaved and good-looking women—are married to Englishmen. In my

opinion the proportion, as to Sunday dinner-beer, between English and Irish, may be two or three in 70."

An Irish gentleman and his wife, who are both well acquainted with the habits and condition of the people in their own country, informed me, that among the classes who, though earning only scant incomes, could not well be called "impoverished," the use of beer, or even of small ale—known, now or recently—as "Thunder's thruppeny," was very unfrequent. Even in many "independent" families, only water is drunk at dinner, with punch to follow. This shows the accuracy of the information I derived from Mr. — (the innkeeper), for persons unused to the drinking of malt liquor in their own country are not likely to resort to it afterwards, when their means are limited. I was further informed, that reckoning the teetotallers among the English street-sellers at 300, there are 600 among the Irish,—teetotallers too, who, having taken the pledge, under the sanction of their priests, and looking upon it as a religious obligation, keep it rigidly.

The Irish street-sellers who frequent the gin-palaces or public-houses, drink a pot of beer, in a company of three or four, but far more frequently, a quartern of gin (very seldom whisky) oftener than do the English. Indeed, from all I could ascertain, the Irish street-sellers, whether from inferior earnings, their early training, or the restraints of their priests, drink less beer, by one-fourth, than their English brethren, but a larger proportion of gin. "And you must bear this in mind, sir," I was told by an innkeeper, "I had rather have twenty poor Englishmen drunk in my tap-room than a couple of poor Irishmen. They'll quarrel with anybody—the Irish will—and sometimes clear the room by swearing they'll 'use their knives, by Jesus; and if there's a scuffle they'll kick like devils, and scratch, and bite, like women or cats, instead of using their fists. I wish all the drunkards were teetotallers, if it were only to be rid of them."

Whiskey, I was told, would be drunk by the Irish, in preference to gin, were it not that gin was about half the price. One old Irish fruit-seller—who admitted that he was fond of a glass of gin—told me that he had not tasted whiskey for fourteen years, "because of the price." The Irish, moreover, as I have shown, live on stronger and coarser food than the English, buying all the rough (bad) fish, for, to use the words of one of my informants, they look to quantity more than quality; this may account for their preferring a stronger and fiercer stimulant by way of drink.

OF THE RESOURCES OF THE STREET-IRISH AS REGARDS "STOCK-MONEY," SICKNESS, BURIALS, &c.

It is not easy to ascertain from the poor Irish themselves how they raise their stock-money, for their command of money is a subject on

which they are not communicative, or, if communicative, not truthful. "My opinion is," said an Irish gentleman to me, "that some of these poor fellows would declare to God that they hadn't the value of a halfpenny, even if you heard the silver chink in their pockets." It is certain that they never, or very rarely, borrow of the usurers like their English brethren.

The more usual custom is, that if a poor Irish street-seller be in want of 5s., it is lent to him by the more prosperous people of his court—bricklayers' labourers, or other working-men—who club 1s. a piece. This is always repaid. An Irish bricklayer, when in full work, will trust a needy countryman with some article to pledge, on the understanding that it is to be redeemed and returned when the borrower is able. Sometimes, if a poor Irishwoman need 1s. to buy oranges, four others—only less poor than herself, because not utterly penniless—will readily advance 3d. each. Money is also advanced to the deserving Irish through the agency of the Roman Catholic priests, who are the medium through whom charitable persons of their own faith exercise good offices. Money, too, there is no doubt, is often advanced out of the priest's own pocket.

On all the kinds of loans with which the poor Irish are aided by their countrymen no interest is ever charged. "I don't like the Irish," said an English costermonger to me; "but they do stick to one another far more than we do."

The Irish costers hire barrows and shallows like the English, but, if they "get on" at all, they will possess themselves of their own vehicles much sooner than an English costermonger. A quick-witted Irishman will begin to ponder on his paying 1s. 6d. a week for the hire of a barrow worth 20s., and he will save and hoard until a pound is at his command to purchase one for himself; while an obtuse English coster (who will yet buy cheaper than an Irishman) will probably pride himself on his cleverness in having got the charge for his barrow reduced, in the third year of its hire, to 1s. a week the twelvemonth round!

In cases of sickness the mode of relief adopted is similar to that of the English. A raffle is got up for the benefit of the Irish sufferer, and, if it be a bad case, the subscribers pay their money without caring what trifle they throw for, or whether they throw at all. If sickness continue and such means as raffles cannot be persevered in, there is one resource from which a poor Irishman never shrinks—the parish. He will apply for and accept parochial relief without the least sense of shame, a sense which rarely deserts an Englishman who has been reared apart from paupers. The English costers appear to have a horror of the Union. If the Irishman be taken into the workhouse, his friends do not lose sight of him. In case of his death, they apply for, and generally receive his body, from the parochial authorities, undertaking the

expense of the funeral, when the body is duly "waked." "I think there's a family contract among the Irish," said a costermonger to me; "that's where it is."

The Irish street-folk are, generally speaking, a far more provident body of people than the English street-sellers. To save, the Irish will often sacrifice what many Englishmen consider a necessary, and undergo many a hardship.

From all I could ascertain, the saving of an Irish street-seller does not arise from any wish to establish himself more prosperously in his business, but for the attainment of some cherished project, such as emigration. Some of the objects, however, for which these struggling men hoard money, are of the most praiseworthy character. They will treasure up halfpenny after halfpenny, and continue to do so for years, in order to send money to enable their wives and children, and even their brothers and sisters, when in the depth of distress in Ireland, to take shipping for England. They will save to be able to remit money for the relief of their aged parents in Ireland. They will save to defray the expense of their marriage, an expense the English costermonger so frequently dispenses with—but they will *not* save to preserve either themselves or their children from the degradation of a workhouse; indeed they often, with the means of independence secreted on their persons, apply for parish relief, and that principally to save the expenditure of their own money. Even when detected in such an attempt at extortion an Irishman betrays no passion, and hardly manifests any emotion—he has speculated and failed. Not one of them but has a positive genius for begging—both the taste and the faculty for alms-seeking developed to an extraordinary extent.

Of the amount "saved" by the patience of the poor Irishmen, I can form no conjecture.

OF THE HISTORY OF SOME IRISH STREET-SELLERS.

In order that the following statements might be as truthful as possible, I obtained permission to use the name of a Roman Catholic clergyman, to whom I am indebted for much valuable information touching this part of my subject.

A young woman, of whose age it was not easy to form a conjecture, her features were so embrowned by exposure to the weather, and perhaps when I saw her a little swollen from cold, gave me the following account as to her living. Her tone and manner betrayed indifference to the future, caused perhaps by ignorance,—for uneducated persons I find are apt to look on the future as if it must needs be but a repetition of the present, while the past in many instances is little more than a blank to them. This young woman said, her brogue being little perceptible though she spoke thickly:

"I live oy keepin' this fruit stall. It's a poor livin' when I see how others live. Yes, in thruth, sir, but it's thankful I am for to be able

to live at all, at all; troth is it, in these sore times. My father and mother are both did. God be gracious to their souls! They was evicted. The family of us was. The thatch of the bit o' home was tuk off above our hids, and we were lift to the wide worruld—yis, indeed, sir, and in the open air too. The rint wasn't paid and it couldn't be paid, and so we had to face the wither. It was a sorrowful time. But God was good, and so was the neighbours. And when we saw the praste, he was a frind to us. And we came to this cuntry, though I'd always heard it called a black cuntry. Sure, an' there's much in it to indhure. There's goin's on it, sir, that the praste, God rewarrud him! wouldn't like to see. There's bad ways. I won't talk about thim, and I'm sure you are too much of a gintlemin to ask me; for if you know Father—, that shows you are the best of gintlemin, sure. It was the eviction that brought us here. I don't know about where we was just; not in what county; nor parish. I was so young whin we lift the land. I belave I'm now 19, perhaps only 18" (she certainly looked much older, but I have often noticed that of her class). "I can't be more, I think, for sure an' its only 5 or 6 years since we left Watherford and come to Bristol. I'm sure it was Watherford, and a beautiful place it is, and I know it was Bristol we come to. We walked all the long way to London. My parints died of the cholera, and I live with mysilf, but my aunt lodges me and secs to me. She sills in the sthrects too. I don't make 7d. a day. I may make 6d. There's a good many young payple I know is now sillin' in the streets because they was evicted in their own cuntry. I suppose they had no where ilse to come to. I'm nivir out of a night. I sleep with my aunt, and we keep to oursilves sure. I very sildom taste mate, but perhaps I do oftener than before we was evicted—glory be to God."

One Irish street-seller I saw informed me that she was a "widdy wid three childer." Her husband died about four years since. She had then five children, and was near her confinement with another. Since the death of her husband she had lost three of her children; a boy about twelve years died of stoppage on his lungs, brought on, she said, through being in the streets, and shouting so loud "to get sale of the fruit." She has been in Clare-street, Clare-market, seven years with a fruit stall. In the summer she sells green fruit, which she purchases at Covent-garden. When the nuts, oranges, &c., come in season, she furnishes her stall with that kind of fruit, and continues to sell them until the spring salad comes in. During the spring and summer her weekly average income is about 5s., but the remaining portion of the year her income is not more than 3s. 6d. weekly, so that taking the year through, her average weekly income is about 4s. 3d.; out of this she pays 1s. 6d. a week rent, leaving only 2s. 9d. a week to find necessary comforts for herself and family. For fuel the

children go to the market and gather up the waste walnuts, bring them home and dry them, and these, with a pennyworth of coal and coke, serve to warm their chilled feet and hands. They have no bedstead, but in one corner of a room is a flock bed upon the floor, with an old sheet, blanket, and quilt to cover them at this inclement season. There is neither chair nor table; a stool serves for the chair, and two pieces of board upon some baskets do duty for a table, and an old penny tea-canister for a candlestick. She had parted with every article of furniture to get food for her family. She received nothing from the parish, but depended upon the sale of her fruit for her living.

The Irishmen who are in this trade are also very poor; and I learned that both Irishmen and Irishwomen left the occupation now and then, and took to begging, as a more profitable calling, often going begging this month and fruit-selling the next. This is one of the causes which prompt the London costermongers' dislike of the Irish. "They'll beg themselves into a meal, and work us out of one," said an English coster to me. Some of them are, however, less "poverty-struck" (a word in common use among the costermongers); but these for the most part are men who have been in the trade for some years, and have got regular "pitches."

The woman who gave me the following statement seemed about twenty-two or twenty-three. She was large-boned, and of heavy figure and deportment. Her complexion and features were both coarse, but her voice had a softness, even in its broadest brogue, which is not very frequent among poor Irishwomen. The first sentence she uttered seems to me tersely to embody a deplorable history of the poverty of a day. It was between six and seven in the evening when I saw the poor creature:—

"Sure, thin, sir, it's thrippince I've taken to-day, and tuppince is to pay for my night's lodgin'. I shall do no more good to-night, and shall only stay in the cowl, if I stay in it, for nothing. I'm an orphan, sir," (she three or four times alluded to this circumstance,) "and there's nobody to care for me but God, glory be to his name! I came to London to join my brother, that had come over and did will, and he sint for me, but whin I got here I couldn't find him in it anyhow. I don't know how long that's ago. It may be five years; it may be tin; but" (she added, with the true eloquence of beggary,) "sure, thin, sir, I had no harrut to keep count, if I knew how. My father and mother wasn't able to keep me, nor to keep thimsilves in Ireland, and so I was sint over here. They was cuntry payple. I don't know about their landlorrud. They died not long aftther I came here. I don't know what they died of, but sure it was of the will of God, and they hadn't much to make them love this worruld; no more have I. Would I like to go back to my own cuntry? Will, thin, what would be the use? I sleep at a lodging-house, and it's a dacint place"

It's mostly my own cuntrywomen that's in it; that is, in the women's part. I pay 1s. a week, that's 2d. a night, for I'm not charged for Sundays. I live on brid, and 'taties and salt, and a herrin' sometimes. I niver taste beer, and not often tay, but I sit here all day, and I feel the hunger this day and that day. It goes off though, if I have nothin' to ate. I don't know why, but I won't deny the goodness of God to bring such a thing about. I have lived for a day on a pinny, sir: a ha'pinny for brid, and a ha'pinny for a herrin', or two herrin's for a ha'pinny, and 'taties for the place of brid. I've changed apples for a herrin' with a poor man, God rewarrud him. Sometimes I make on to 6d. a day, and sometimes I have made 1s. 6d., but I think that I don't make 5d. a day—arrah, no, thin, sir! one day with the other, and I don't worruk on Sunday, not often. If I've no mate to ate, I'd rather rist. I never miss mass on a Sunday. A lady gives me a rag sometimes, but the bitter time's comin'. If I was sick I don't know what I'd do, but I would sind for the praste, and he'd counsel me. I could read a little oncte, but I can't now."

OF THE IRISH "REFUSE"-SELLERS.

THERE still remains to be described one branch of the Irish street-trade which is peculiar to the class—viz., the sale of "refuse," or such fruit and vegetables as are damaged, and suited only to the very poorest purchasers.

In assorting his goods, a fruit-salesman in the markets generally throws to one side the shrivelled, dwarfish, or damaged fruit—called by the street-traders the "specks." If the supply to the markets be large, as in the pride of the season, he will put his several kinds of specks in separate baskets. At other times all kinds are tossed together, and sometimes with an admixture of nuts and walnuts. The Irish women purchase these at a quarter, or within a quarter, of the regular price, paying from 6d. to 1s. a bushel for apples; 9d. to 1s. 6d. for pears; 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. for plums. They are then sorted into halfpenny-worths for sale on the stalls. Among the refuse is always a portion of what is called "tidy" fruit, and this occupies the prominent place in the "halfpenny lots"—for they are usually sold at a halfpenny. Sometimes, too, a salesman will throw in among the refuse a little good fruit, if he happen to have it over, either gratuitously or at the refuse price; and this, of course, is always made the most conspicuous on the stalls. Of other fruits, perhaps, only a small portion is damaged, from over-ripeness, or by the aggression of wasps and insects, the remainder being very fine, so that the retail "lots" are generally cheap. The sellers aim at "half profits," or cent. per cent.

The "refuse" trade in fruit—and the refuse-trade is mainly confined to fruit—is principally in the hands of the Irish. The persons carrying it on are nearly all middle-aged and elderly women. I once or twice saw a delicate and pretty-looking girl sitting with the old "re-

fuse" women; but I found that she was not a "regular hand," and only now and then "minded the stall" in her mother's absence. She worked with her needle, I was told.

Of the women who confine themselves to this trade there are never less than twenty, and frequently thirty. Sometimes, when the refuse is very cheap and very abundant, as many as 100 fruit-sellers, women and girls, will sell it in halfpenny-worths, along with better articles. These women also sell refuse dry-fruit, purchased in Duke's-place, but only when they cannot obtain green-fruit, or cannot obtain it sufficiently. All is sold at stalls; as these dealers seem to think that if it were hawked, the police might look too inquisitively at a barrow stocked with refuse. The "refuse-sellers" buy at all the markets. The poorer street-sellers, whose more staple trade is in oranges or nuts, are occasional dealers in it.

Perhaps the regular refuse-buyers are not among the very poorest class, as their sale is tolerably quick and certain, but with the usual drawbacks of wet weather. They make, I was told, from 4d. to 1s. a day the year round, or perhaps 7d. or 8d. a day, Sunday included. They are all Roman Catholics, and resort to the street-sale after mass. They are mostly widows, or women who have reached middle-age, unmarried: Some are the wives of street-sellers. Two of their best pitches are on Saffron-hill and in Petticoat-lane. It is somewhat curious to witness these women sitting in a line of five or six, and notwithstanding their natural garrulity, hardly exchanging a word one with another. Some of them derive an evident solace from deliberate puffs at a short black pipe.

A stout, healthy-looking woman of this class said:—"Sure thin, sir, I've sat and sould my bit of fruit in this place, or near it, for twinty year and more, as is very well known indeed, is it. I could make twice the money twinty year ago that I can now, for the boys had the ha'pinnies more thin than they has now, more's the pity. The childer is my cushmaners, very few beyant—such as has only a ha'pinny now and thin, God hilp them. They'll come a mile from any parrut, to spind it with such as me, for they know it's chape we sill! Yis, indeed, or they'll come with a fardin either, for it's a ha'pinny lot we'll split for them any time. The boys buys most, but they're dridful tazes. It's the patience of the divil must be had to dale wid the likes of thim. They was dridful about the Pope, but they've tired of it now. O, no, it wasn't the boys of my cuntry that demaned themselves that way. Well, I make 4d. some days, and 6d. some, and 1s. 6d. some, and I have made 3s. 6d., and I have made nothing. Perhaps I make 5s. or 6s. a week regular, but I'm established and well-known you see."

The quantity of refuse at the metropolitan "green" markets varies with the different descriptions of fruit. Of apples it averages onc-

twentieth, and of plums and greengages one-fifteenth, of the entire supply. With pears, cherries, gooseberries, and currants, however, the damaged amounts to one-twelfth, while of strawberries and mulberries it reaches as high as one-tenth of the aggregate quantity sent to market.

The Irish street-sellers, I am informed, buy full two-thirds of all the refuse, the other third being purchased by the lower class of English costermongers—"the illegitimates,"—as they are called. We must not consider the sale of the damaged fruit so great an evil as it would, at the first blush, appear, for it constitutes perhaps the sole luxury of poor children, as well as of the poor themselves, who, were it not for the halfpenny and farthing lots of the refuse-sellers, would doubtlessly never know the taste of such things.

Before leaving this part of the subject, it may be as well to say a few words concerning the curious revelations made by the returns from Billingsgate, Covent-garden, and the other London markets, as to the diet of the poor. In the first place, then, it appears that in the matter of fish, herrings constitute the chief article of consumption—no less than 210,000,000 lbs. weight of this fish in a "fresh" state, and 60,000,000 lbs. in a "dried" state, being annually eaten by the humbler classes of the metropolis and the suburbs. Of sprats there are 3,000,000 lbs. weight consumed—and these, with the addition of plaice, are the staple comestibles at the dinners and suppers of the ichthyophagous part of the labouring population of London. One of the reasons for this is doubtless the extraordinary cheapness of these kinds of fish. The sprats are sold at a penny per pound; the herrings at the same rate; and the plaice at a fraction less, perhaps; whereas a pound of butcher's meat, even "pieces," or the "block ornaments," as they are sometimes called, cannot be got for less than twopence-halfpenny or threepence. But the relative cheapness of these two kinds of food can only be tested by the proportionate quantity of nutrition in each. According to Liebig, butcher's meat contains 26 per cent. of solid matter, and 74 per cent. of water; whereas, according to Brande, fish consists of 20 parts of solid matter, and 80 parts water in every 100. Hence it would appear that butcher's meat is five per cent more nutritive than fish—or, in other words, that if the two were equally cheap, the prices, according to the quantity of nutrition in each, should be for fish one penny per pound, and butcher's meat not five farthings; so that even at twopence-halfpenny the pound, meat is more than twice as dear an article of diet as fish.

But it is not only on account of their cheapness that herrings and sprats are consumed in such vast quantities by the labouring people of London. Salmon, eels, herrings, pilchards, and

sprats, Dr. Pereira tells us, abound in oil; and oleaginous food, according to Liebig, is an "element of respiration," consisting of nearly 80 per cent. charcoal, which burns away in the lungs, and so contributes to the warmth of the system. Fat, indeed, may be said to act as fuel to the vital fire; and we now know, from observations made upon the average daily consumption of food by 28 soldiers of the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, in barracks, for a month—which is the same as 840 men for one day—that an adult taking moderate exercise consumes, in the act of respiration, very nearly a pound of charcoal every day, which of course must be supplied in his food. "But persons who take much exercise, or labour hard," says Dr. Pereira, "require more frequent and copious meals than the indolent or sedentary. In the active man the number of respirations is greater than in the inactive, and therefore a more frequent supply of food is required to furnish the increased quantity of carbon and hydrogen to be consumed in the lungs." "A bird deprived of food," says Liebig, "dies on the third day; while a serpent, with its sluggish respiration, can live without food three months, or longer."

Captain Parry, in his account of one of the Polar expeditions (1827), states, that both himself and Mr. Beverley, the surgeon, were of opinion, that, in order to maintain the strength of the men during their harassing journey across the ice, living constantly in the open air, and exposed to the wet and cold for twelve hours a day, an addition was requisite of at least one-third to the quantity of provisions daily issued. So, in the gaol dietaries, the allowance to prisoners sentenced to hard labour for three months is one-third more than the scale for those sentenced to hard labour for three days—the former having 254 ounces, and the latter only 168 ounces of solid food served out to them every week.

But the hard-working poor not only require more food than the non-working rich, but it is mainly because the rich are better fed that they are more lethargic than the poor; for the greater the supply of nutriment to the body, the more inactive does the system become. From experiments made a few years ago at the Zoological Gardens, it was found, that, by feeding the animals twice, instead of once, in the twenty-four hours, their habits, as regards exercise, were altered—a fact which readily explains how the fat and overfed are always the least energetic; fat being at once the cause and consequence of inaction. It is well to hear an obese citizen tell a hollow-cheeked man, who begs a penny of him, "to go and work—a lazy scoundrel;" but physiology assures us that the fat tradesman is naturally the laziest of the two. In a word, he is fat because he is lazy, and lazy because he is fat.

The industrious poor, however, not only require more food than the indolent rich, but, getting less, they become more susceptible of cold, and, therefore, more eager for all that tends to

promote warmth. I have often had occasion to remark the sacrifices that the ill-fed will make to have "a bit of fire." "He who is well fed," observes Sir John Ross, "resists cold better than the man who is stinted, while starvation from cold follows but too soon a starvation in food. This doubtlessly explains in a great measure the resisting powers of the natives of frozen climates, their consumption of food being enormous, and often incredible." Captain Cochrane, in his "Journey through Russia and Siberian Tartary," tells us that he has repeatedly seen a Yakut or Tongouse devour forty pounds of meat in a day; and one of the Yakuti he speaks of as having consumed, in twenty-four hours, "the hind-quarter of a large ox, twenty pounds of fat, and a proportionate quantity of melted butter for his drink." (Vol. i. p. 255.) Much less heat is evolved, physiologists tell us, where there is a deficiency of food. "During the whole of our march," says Sir John Franklin, "we experienced that no quantity of clothing could keep us warm while we fasted; but, on those occasions on which we were enabled to go to bed with full stomachs, we passed the night in a warm and comfortable manner." Hence, it is evident, that in summer a smaller quantity of food suffices to keep up the temperature of the body. I know of no experiments to show the different proportions of aliment required at different seasons of the year. In winter, however, when a greater supply is certainly needed, the labouring man, unfortunately, has less means of obtaining it—nearly all trades slacken as the cold weather comes on, and some, as brick-making, market-gardening, building, &c., then almost entirely cease—so that, were it not for the cheapness of fish, and, moreover, the oleaginous quality of those kinds which are most plentiful in the winter time, the metropolitan poor would be very likely to suffer that "starvation from cold which," in the words of Sir John Ross, "follows but too soon a starvation in food." Hence we can readily understand the remark of the enthusiastic street-seller—"Sprats is a blessing to the poor."

The returns as to the other articles of food sold in the streets are equally curious. The 1,500,000^{l.} spent yearly in fish, and the comparatively small amount expended on vegetables, viz., 290,000^{l.}, is a circumstance which seems to show that the labouring population of London have a greater relish for animal than vegetable diet. "It is quite certain," says Dr. Carpenter, "that the most perfect physical development and the greatest intellectual vigour are to be found among those races in which a mixed diet of animal and vegetable food is the prevalent habit." And yet, in apparent contradiction to the proposition asserted with so much confidence by Dr. Carpenter, we have the following curious fact cited by Mr. Jacob Bentley:—

"It is, indeed, a fact worthy of remark, and one that seems never to have been noticed, that throughout the whole animal creation, in every country and clime of the earth the most useful animals cost nature the least waste to sustain them with food. For in-

stance, all animals that work, live on vegetable or fruit food; and no animal that eats flesh, works. The all-powerful elephant, and the patient, untiring camel in the torrid zone; the horse, the ox, or the donkey in the temperate, and the rein-deer in the frigid zone; obtain all their muscular power for enduring labour, from Nature's simplest productions,—the vegetable kingdom.

"But all the flesh-eating animals, keep the rest of the animated creation in constant dread of them. They seldom eat vegetable food till some other animal has eaten it first, and made it into flesh. Their only use seems to be, to destroy life; their own flesh is unfit for other animals to eat, having been itself made out of flesh, and is most foul and offensive. Great strength, fleetness of foot, usefulness, cleanliness and docility, are then always characteristic of vegetable-eating animals, while all the world dreads flesh-eaters."

Of vegetables we have seen that the greatest quantity consumed by the poor consists of potatoes, of which 60,500,000 lbs. are annually sold in the streets; but ten pounds of potatoes are only equal in nutritive power to one pound of butcher's meat, which contains one-fifth more solid food than fish,—so that a pound of fish may be said to equal eight pounds of potatoes, and thus the 60,000,000 lbs. of vegetable is dietetically equivalent to nearly 7,000,000 lbs. of fish diet. The cost of the potatoes, at five pounds for 2^{d.}, is, as we have seen, 100,000^{l.}; whereas the cost of the same amount of nutritive matter in the form of fish, at 1^{d.} per pound, would have been only 30,000^{l.}, or upwards of two-thirds less. The vegetable of which there is the next greatest street sale is onions, upon which 90,000^{l.} are annually expended. This has been before accounted for, by saying, that a piece of bread and an onion are to the English labourer what bread and grapes are to the Frenchman—oftentimes a meal. The relish for onions by the poorer classes is not difficult to explain. Onions are strongly stimulating substances, and they owe their peculiar odour and flavour, as well as their pungent and stimulating qualities, to an acrid volatile oil which contains sulphur. This oil becomes absorbed, quickens the circulation, and occasions thirst. The same result takes place with the oil of fish. It not only proves a stimulant to the general system, but we are told that the thirst and uneasy feeling at the stomach, frequently experienced after the use of the richer species of fish, have led to the employment of spirit to this kind of food. Hence, says Dr. Pereira, the vulgar proverb, "Brandy is Latin for Fish." Moreover, the two classes of food are similar in their comparative indigestibility, for the uneducated palates of the poor not only require a more pungent kind of diet, but their stronger stomachs need something that will resist the action of the gastric juice for a considerable time. Hence their love of shell-fish.

The small quantity of fruit, too, sold to the poor is a further proof of what is here stated. The amount of the street sale of this luxury is no criterion as to the quantity purchased by the London labourers; for according to all accounts the fruit-buyers in the streets consist mostly of clerks, shopmen, small tradesmen, and the chil-

men of mechanics or the lower grade of middle class people. Those who may be said strictly to belong to the poor,—viz. those whose incomes are barely sufficient for their support—seldom purchase fruit. In the first place they have no money to spend on such a mere toothsome extravagance; and, secondly, they require a stronger and more stimulating, and “staying” kind of food. The delights of the palate, we should remember, are studied only when the cravings of the stomach are satisfied, so that those who have strong stomachs have necessarily dull palates, and, therefore, prefer something that “bites in the mouth,”—to use the words of one of my informants—like gin, onions, sprats, or pickled whelks. What the poor term “relishes” are very different things from what the rich style the “delicacies of the season.”

I have no means of ascertaining the average number of ounces of solid food consumed by the poorer class of the metropolis. The *whole* of the fish, fruit, and vegetables, sold to the London costermongers, is not disposed of in the London streets—many of the street-sellers going, as we have seen, on country excursions with their goods. According to the result of the Government Commissioners of Inquiry, the labourers in the country are unable to procure for themselves and families an average allowance of more than 122 ounces of solid food—principally bread—every week; hence it has been justly said we may infer that the man consumes, as his share, 140 ounces (134 bread and 6 meat). The gaol dietaries allow 254 ounces, or nearly twice as much to all prisoners, who undergo continuous hard labour. In the construction of these dietaries Sir James Graham—the then Secretary of State—says, in his “Letter to the Chairman of Quarter Sessions” (January 27th, 1843), “I have consulted not only the Prison Inspectors, but medical men of the greatest eminence possessing the advantage of long experience.” They are proposed, he adds, “as the *minimum* amount which can be safely afforded to prisoners without the risk of inflicting a punishment not contemplated by law and which it is unjust and cruel to inflict; namely, loss of health and strength through the inadequacy of the food supplied.” Hence it appears not that the thief gets too much, but the honest

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF GAME, POULTRY (LIVE AND DEAD), RABBITS, BUTTER, CHEESE, AND EGGS.

The class who sell game and poultry in the public thoroughfares of the metropolis are styled hawkers, both in Leadenhall and Newgate-market. The number of these dealers in London is computed at between 200 and 300. Of course, legally to sell game, a license, which costs 2*l.* 2*s.* yearly, is required; but the street-seller laughs at the notion of being subjected to a direct tax; which, indeed, it might be impossible to levy on so “slippery” a class.

working man too little—or, in other words, that the labourer of this country is able to procure, by his industry, only half the quantity of food that is considered by “medical men of the greatest eminence” to be “the *minimum* amount” that can be safely afforded for the support of the criminals—a fact which it would be out of place to comment upon here.

One word concerning the incomes of the London costermongers, and I have done. It has been before shown that the gross sum of money taken yearly, in the streets, by the sale of fish, fruit, and vegetables, amounts, in round numbers, to two million pounds—a million and a half being expended in fish, and a quarter of a million upon fruit and vegetables respectively. In estimating the yearly receipts of the costermongers, from their average gains, the gross “takings” of the entire body were concluded to be between a million and a quarter and a million and a half sterling—that is to say, each one of the 10,000 street-sellers of fish, fruit, and vegetables, was supposed to clear ten shillings a week all the year through, and to take fifty shillings. But, according to the returns furnished me by the salesmen, at the several metropolitan markets, the weekly “takings” of the ten thousand men and their families—for often both wife and children sell—cannot be less than four pounds per week all the year round, out of which it would seem that the clear weekly gains are about fifteen shillings. (Some costers we have seen take pounds in a day, others—as the nut and orange-women and children—only a few shillings a week; some, again, make cent per cent. profit, whilst others are obliged to sell at a loss.) This, from all I can gather, is well as from a comparison of the coster’s style of living with other classes whose weekly income is nearly the same, appears to be very close upon the truth.

We may then, I think, safely assert, that the gross yearly receipts of the London costermongers are two millions of money; that their clear annual gain, or income, is 425,000*l.*; and that the capital invested in their business, in the form of donkey-carts, barrows, baskets, weights, and stock-money, is 25,000*l.*;—half of this being borrowed, for which they pay upwards of 20,000*l.* interest per annum.

The sale of game, even with a license, was not legalised until 1831; and, prior to that year, the mere killing of game by an “unqualified” person was an offence entailing heavy penalties. The “qualification” consisted of the possession of a freehold estate of 100*l.* a year, or a leasehold for ninety-nine years of 150*l.* a year! By an Act, passed in the 25th year of George III., it was provided that a certificate (costing 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*) must be taken out by all qualified persons

killing game. Since 1831 (1 & 2 William IV., c. 32.) a certificate, without any qualification, is all that is required from the game-killer.

Both sexes carry on the trade in game-hawking, but there are more than thrice as many men as women engaged in the business, the weight occasionally carried being beyond a woman’s strength. The most customary dress of the game or poultry-hawker is a clean smock-frock covering the whole of his other attire, except the ends of his trousers and his thick boots or shoes. Indeed he often, but less frequently than was the case five years ago, assumes the dress of a country labourer, although he may have been for years a resident in London. About forty years ago, I am informed, it was the custom for countrymen, residing at no great distance, to purchase a stock of chickens or ducks; and, taking their places in a wagon, to bring their birds to London, and hawk them from door to door. Some of these men’s smock-frocks were a convenient garb, for they covered the ample pockets of the coat beneath, in which were often a store of partridges, or an occasional pheasant or hare. This game, illegally killed—for it was all poached—was illegally sold by the hawker, and illegally bought by the hotel-keepers and the richer tradesmen. One informant (an old man) was of opinion that the game was rarely offered for sale by these countrymen at the West-end mansions of the aristocracy. “In fact,” he said, “I knew one country fellow—though he was sharp enough in his trade of game and poultry-selling—who seemed to think that every fine house, without a shop, and where there were livery servants, must needs be inhabited by a magistrate! But, as the great props of poaching were the rich—for, of course, the poor couldn’t buy game—there was, no doubt, a West-end as well as a City trade in it. I have bought game of a country poultry-hawker,” continued my informant, “when I lived in the City at the beginning of this century, and generally gave 3*s.* 6*d.* a brace for partridges. I have bid it, and the man has left, refusing to take it; and has told me afterwards, and, I dare say, he spoke the truth, that he had sold his partridges at 5*s.* or 6*s.* or more. I believe 5*s.* a brace was no uncommon price in the City. I have given as much as 10*s.* for a pheasant for a Christmas supper. The hawker, before offering the birds for sale, used to peer about him, though we were alone in my counting-house, and then pull his partridges out of his pockets, and say, ‘Sir, do you want any very young chickens?’—for so he called them. Hares he called ‘lions;’ and they cost often, enough, 5*s.* each of the hawker. The trade had all the charms and recommendations of a mystery and a risk about it, just like smuggling.”

The sale of game in London, however, was not confined to the street-hawkers, who generally derived their stock-in-trade immediately from the poacher. Before the legalisation of the sale, the trade was carried on, under the rose, by the salesmen in Leadenhall-market, and that to an extent of not less than a fifteenth of the sale now

accomplished there. The purveyors for the London game-market—I learned from leading salesmen in Leadenhall—were not then, as now, noble lords and honourable gentlemen, but peasant or farmer poachers, who carried on the business systematically. The guards and coachmen of the stage-coaches were the media of communication, and had charge of the supply to the London market. The purchasers of the game thus supplied to a market, which is mostly the property of the municipality of the City of London, were not only hotel-keepers, who required it for public dinners presided over by princes, peers, and legislators, but the purveyors for the civic banquets—such as the Lord Mayor’s ninth of November dinner, at which the Ministers of State always attended.

This street-hawking of poached game, as far as I could ascertain from the best-informed quarters, hardly survived the first year of the legalised sale.

The female hawkers of game are almost all the wives of the men so engaged, or are women living with them as their wives. The trade is better, as regards profit, than the costermonger’s ordinary pursuits, but only when the season is favourable; it is, however, more uncertain.

There is very rarely a distinction between the hawkers of game and of poultry. A man will carry both, or have game one day and poultry the next, as suits his means, or as the market avails. The street-sellers of cheese are generally costers, while the vendors of butter and eggs are almost extinct.

Game, I may mention, consists of grouse (including black-cocks, and all the varieties of heath or moor-game), partridges, pheasants, bustards, and hares. Snipe, woodcocks, plovers, teal, widgeons, wild ducks, and rabbits are not game, but can only be taken or killed by certificated persons, who are owners or occupiers of the property on which they are found, or who have the necessary permission from such persons as are duly authorised to accord it. Poultry consists of chickens, geese, ducks, and turkeys, while some persons class pigeons as poultry.

Birds are dietetically divided into three classes: (1) the white-fleshed, as the common fowl and the turkey; (2) the dark-fleshed game, as the grouse and the black-cock; and (3) the aquatic (including swimmers and waders), as the goose and the duck; the flesh of the latter is penetrated with fat, and difficult of digestion.

OF THE QUANTITY OF GAME, RABBITS, AND POULTRY, SOLD IN THE STREETS.

It appears from inquiries that I instituted, and from authentic returns which I procured on the subject, that the following is the quantity of game and poultry sold yearly, as an average, in the markets of the metropolis. I give it exclusive of such birds as wild-ducks, woodcocks, &c., the supply of which depends upon the severity of the winter. I include all wild birds or animals, whether considered game or not, and I use round numbers, but as closely as possible.