

Holly . . . . .	59,040 bunches
Mistletoe . . . . .	56,160 "
Ivy and Laurel . . . . .	26,640 "
Lilac . . . . .	5,400 "
Palm . . . . .	1,008 "
May . . . . .	2,520 "

Total number of bunches sold in the streets from market-sale . . . . .	150,000
Add to quantity from other sources . . . . .	75,000

225,768

The quantity of branches "from other sources" is that gathered by the costers in the way I have described; but it is impossible to obtain a return of it with proper precision: to state it as half of that purchased in the markets is a low average.

I now give the amount paid by street-buyers who indulge in the healthful and innocent tastes of which I have been treating—the fondness for the beautiful and the natural.

CUT FLOWERS.		
Bunches of	per bunch	
65,280 Violets . . . . .	at ½d.	£136
115,200 Wallflowers . . . . .	" ¼d.	240
86,400 Mignonette . . . . .	" 1d.	360
1,632 Lilies of the Valley . . . . .	" ½d.	3
20,448 Stocks . . . . .	" ½d.	42
316,800 Pinks and Carnations . . . . .	" ½d. each	660
864,000 Moss Roses . . . . .	" ½d.	1,800
864,000 China ditto . . . . .	" ½d.	1,800
296,640 Lavender . . . . .	" 1d.	1,236

Total annually . . . . . £6,277

FLOWER ROOTS.		
	per root	
24,000 Primroses . . . . .	at ½d.	£50
34,560 Polyanthuses . . . . .	" 1d.	144
28,800 Cowslips . . . . .	" ½d.	50
33,600 Daisies . . . . .	" 1d.	140
46,080 Wallflowers . . . . .	" 1d.	192
28,800 Candy-tufts . . . . .	" 1d.	120
28,800 Daffodils . . . . .	" ½d.	60
38,400 Violets . . . . .	" ½d.	80
30,380 Mignonette . . . . .	" ½d.	63
23,040 Stocks . . . . .	" 1d.	96
19,200 Pinks and Carnations . . . . .	" 2d.	160
3,456 Lilies of the Valley . . . . .	" 1d.	14
12,960 Pansies . . . . .	" 1d.	54
660 Lilies . . . . .	" 2d.	5
850 Tulips . . . . .	" 2d.	7
7,704 Balsams . . . . .	" 2d.	64
3,180 Calceolarias . . . . .	" 2d.	26
253,440 Musk Plants . . . . .	" 1d.	1,056
11,520 London Pride . . . . .	" 1d.	48
25,595 Lupins . . . . .	" 1d.	106
9,156 China-asters . . . . .	" 1d.	38
63,360 Marigolds . . . . .	" ½d.	132
852 Dahlias . . . . .	" 6d.	21
13,356 Heliotropes . . . . .	" 2d.	111
1,920 Poppies . . . . .	" 2d.	16
6,912 Michaelmas Daisies . . . . .	" ½d.	14

Total annually . . . . . £2,867

BRANCHES.

Bunches of	per bunch	
59,040 Holly . . . . .	at 3d.	£783
56,160 Mistletoe . . . . .	" 3d.	702
26,640 Ivy and Laurel . . . . .	" 3d.	333
5,400 Lilac . . . . .	" 3d.	67
1,008 Palm . . . . .	" 3d.	12
2,520 May . . . . .	" 3d.	31

Total annually from Markets . . . . . £1,183  
Add one-half as shown . . . . . 591

£2,774

TREES AND SHRUBS.

	each root	
9,576 Firs (roots) . . . . .	at 3d.	£119
1,152 Laurels . . . . .	" 3d.	14
23,040 Myrtles . . . . .	" 4d.	384
2,160 Rhododendrons . . . . .	" 9d.	81
2,304 Lilacs . . . . .	" 4d.	38
2,880 Box . . . . .	" 2d.	24
21,888 Heaths . . . . .	" 4d.	364
2,880 Broom . . . . .	" 1d.	12
6,912 Furze . . . . .	" 1d.	28
6,480 Laurustinus . . . . .	" 8d.	216
25,920 Southernwood . . . . .	" 1d.	108

Total annually spent . . . . . £1,388

FLOWERS IN POTS.

	per pot	
38,880 Moss Roses . . . . .	at 4d.	£648
38,880 China ditto . . . . .	" 2d.	324
38,800 Fuschias . . . . .	" 3d.	485
12,850 Geraniums and Pelargoniums (of all kinds) . . . . .	" 3d.	210

Total annually . . . . . £1,667

The returns give the following aggregate amount of street expenditure:—

Trees and shrubs . . . . .	£1,388
Cut Flowers . . . . .	6,277
Flowers in pots . . . . .	1,667
Flower roots . . . . .	2,867
Branches . . . . .	2,774
Seeds . . . . .	200

£15,173

From the returns we find that of "cut flowers" the roses retain their old English favouritism, no fewer than 1,628,000 being annually sold in the streets; but locality affects the sale, as some dealers dispose of more violets than roses, because violets are accounted less fragile. The cheapness and hardihood of the musk-plant and marigold, to say nothing of their peculiar odour, has made them the most popular of the "roots," while the myrtle is the favourite among the "trees and shrubs." The heaths, moreover, command an extensive sale—a sale, I am told, which was unknown, until eight or ten years ago, another instance of the "fashion in flowers," of which an informant has spoken.

STREET-SELLERS OF GREEN STUFF.

UNDER this head I class the street-purveyors of water-cresses, and of the chickweed, groundsel, plantain, and turf required for cage-birds. These purveyors seem to be on the outskirts, as it were, of the costermonger class, and, indeed, the regular costers look down upon them as an inferior caste. The green-stuff trade is carried on by very poor persons, and, generally, by children or old people, some of the old people being lame, or suffering from some infirmity, which, however, does not prevent their walking about with their commodities. To the children and infirm class, however, the turf-cutters supply an exception. The costermongers, as I have intimated, do not resort, and do not let their children resort, to this traffic. If reduced to the last shift, they will sell nuts or oranges in preference. The "old hands" have been "reduced," as a general rule, from other avocations. Their homes are in the localities I have specified as inhabited by the poor.

I was informed by a seller of birds, that he thought fewer birds were kept by poor working-people, and even by working-people who had regular, though, perhaps, diminished earnings, than was the case six or eight years ago. At one time, it was not uncommon for a young man to present his betrothed with a pair of singing-birds in a neat cage; now such a present, as far as my informant's knowledge extended—and he was a sharp intelligent man—was but rarely made. One reason this man had often heard advanced for poor persons not renewing their birds, when lost or dead, is pitiful in its plainness—"they eat too much." I do not know, that, in such a gift as I have mentioned, there was any intention on the part of the lover to typify the beauty of cheerfulness, even in a very close confinement to home. "I can't tell, sir," was said to me, "how it may have been originally, but I never heard such a thing said much about, though there's been joking about the matter, as when would the birds have young ones, and such like. No, sir; I think it was just a fashion." Contrary to the custom in more prosperous establishments, I am satisfied, that, among the labouring classes, birds are more frequently the pets of the men than of the women. My bird-dealing informant cited merely his own experience, but there is no doubt that cage-birds are more extensively kept than ever in London; consequently there is a greater demand for the "green stuff" the birds require.

OF WATERCRESS-SELLING, IN FARRINGTON-MARKET.

THE first coster-cry heard of a morning in the London streets is that of "Fresh water-cresses." Those that sell them have to be on their rounds in time for the mechanics' breakfast, or the day's gains are lost. As the stock-money for this calling need only consist of a few

halfpence, it is followed by the very poorest of the poor; such as young children, who have been deserted by their parents, and whose strength is not equal to any very great labour, or by old men and women, crippled by disease or accident, who in their dread of a workhouse life, linger on with the few pence they earn by street-selling.

As winter draws near, the Farringdon cress-market begins long before daylight. On your way to the City to see this strange sight, the streets are deserted; in the squares the blinds are drawn down before the windows, and the shutters closed, so that the very houses seem asleep. All is so silent that you can hear the rattle of the milkmaids' cans in the neighbouring streets, or the noisy song of three or four drunken voices breaks suddenly upon you, as if the singers had turned a corner, and then dies away in the distance. On the cab-stands, but one or two crazy cabs are left, the horses dozing with their heads down to their knees, and the drawn-up windows covered with the breath of the driver sleeping inside. At the corners of the streets, the bright fires of the coffee-stalls sparkle in the darkness, and as you walk along, the policeman, leaning against some gas-lamp, turns his lantern full upon you, as if in suspicion that one who walks abroad so early could mean no good to householders. At one house there stands a man, with dirty boots and loose hair, as if he had just left some saloon, giving sharp single knocks, and then going into the road and looking up at the bed-rooms, to see if a light appeared in them. As you near the City, you meet, if it be a Monday or Friday morning, droves of sheep and bullocks, tramping quietly along to Smithfield, and carrying a fog of steam with them, while behind, with his hands in his pockets, and his dog panting at his heels, walks the sheep-drover.

At the principal entrance to Farringdon-market there is an open space, running the entire length of the railings in front, and extending from the iron gates at the entrance to the sheds down the centre of the large paved court before the shops. In this open space the cresses are sold, by the salesmen or saleswomen to whom they are consigned, in the hampers they are brought in from the country.

The shops in the market are shut, the gas-lights over the iron gates burn brightly, and every now and then you hear the half-smothered crowing of a cock, shut up in some shed or bird-fancier's shop. Presently a man comes hurrying along, with a can of hot coffee in each hand, and his stall on his head, and when he has arranged his stand by the gates, and placed his white mugs between the railings on the stone wall, he blows at his charcoal fire, making the bright sparks fly about at every puff he gives. By degrees the customers are creeping up, dressed



in every style of rags; they shuffle up and down before the gates, stamping to warm their feet, and rubbing their hands together till they grate like sandpaper. Some of the boys have brought large hand-baskets, and carry them with the handles round their necks, covering the head entirely with the wicker-work as with a hood; others have their shallows fastened to their backs with a strap, and one little girl, with the bottom of her gown tattered into a fringe like a blacksmith's apron, stands shivering in a large pair of worn-out Vestris boots, holding in her blue hands a bent and rusty tea-tray. A few poor creatures have made friends with the coffee-man, and are allowed to warm their fingers at the fire under the cans, and as the heat strikes into them, they grow sleepy and yawn.

The market—by the time we reach it—has just begun; one dealer has taken his seat, and sits motionless with cold—for it wants but a month to Christmas—with his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his gray driving coat. Before him is an opened hamper, with a candle fixed in the centre of the bright green cresses, and as it shines through the wicker sides of the basket, it casts curious patterns on the ground—as a night shade does. Two or three customers, with their "shallows" slung over their backs, and their hands poked into the bosoms of their gowns, are bending over the hamper, the light from which tinges their swarthy features, and they rattle their halfpence and speak coaxingly to the dealer, to hurry him in their bargains.

Just as the church clocks are striking five, a stout saleswoman enters the gates, and instantly a country-looking fellow, in a wagoner's cap and smock-frock, arranges the baskets he has brought up to London. The other ladies are soon at their posts, well wrapped up in warm cloaks, over their thick shawls, and sit with their hands under their aprons, talking to the loungers, whom they call by their names. Now the business commences; the customers come in by twos and threes, and walk about, looking at the cresses, and listening to the prices asked. Every hamper is surrounded by a black crowd, bending over till their heads nearly meet, their foreheads and cheeks lighted up by the candle in the centre. The saleswomen's voices are heard above the noise of the mob, sharply answering all objections that may be made to the quality of their goods. "They're rather spotty, mum," says an Irishman, as he examines one of the leaves. "No more spots than a newborn babe, Dennis," answers the lady tartly, and then turns to a new comer. At one basket, a street-seller in an old green cloak, has spread out a rusty shawl to receive her bunches, and by her stands her daughter, in a thin cotton dress, patched like a quilt. "Ah! Mrs. Dolland," cried the saleswoman in a gracious tone, "can you keep yourself warm? it bites the fingers like biling water, it do." At another basket, an old man, with long gray hair streaming over a kind of policeman's cape, is bitterly complaining of the way he has been treated by

another saleswoman. "He bought a lot of her, the other morning, and by daylight they were quite white; for he only made threepence on his best day." "Well, Joe," returns the lady, "you should come to them as knows you, and allers treats you well."

These saleswomen often call to each other from one end of the market to the other. If any quarrel take place at one of the hampers, as frequently it does, the next neighbour is sure to say something. "Pinch him well, Sally," cried one saleswoman to another; "pinch him well; I do when I've a chance." "It's no use," was the answer; "I might as well try to pinch a elephant."

One old wrinkled woman, carrying a basket with an oilcloth bottom, was asked by a buxom rosy dealer, "Now, Nancy, what's for you?" But the old dame was surly with the cold, and sneering at the beauty of the saleswoman, answered, "Why don't you go and get a sweet-heart; sich as you aint fit for sich as we." This caused angry words, and Nancy was solemnly requested "to draw it mild, like a good soul."

As the morning twilight came on, the paved court was crowded with purchasers. The sheds and shops at the end of the market grew every moment more distinct, and a railway-van, laden with carrots, came rumbling into the yard. The pigeons, too, began to fly on to the sheds, or walk about the paving-stones, and the gas-man came round with his ladder to turn out the lamps. Then every one was pushing about; the children crying, as their naked feet were trodden upon, and the women hurrying off, with their baskets or shawls filled with cresses, and the bunch of rushes in their hands. In one corner of the market, busily tying up their bunches, were three or four girls seated on the stones, with their legs curled up under them, and the ground near them was green with the leaves they had thrown away. A saleswoman, seeing me looking at the group, said to me, "Ah! you should come here of a summer's morning, and then you'd see 'em, sitting tying up, young and old, upwards of a hundred poor things as thick as crows in a ploughed field."

As it grew late, and the crowd had thinned; none but the very poorest of the cress-sellers were left. Many of these had come without money, others had their halfpence tied up carefully in their shawl-ends, as though they dreaded the loss. A sickly-looking boy, of about five, whose head just reached above the hampers, now crept forward, treading with his blue naked feet over the cold stones as a cat does over wet ground. At his elbows and knees, his skin showed in gashes through the rents in his clothes, and he looked so frozen, that the buxom saleswoman called to him, asking if his mother had gone home. The boy knew her well, for without answering her question, he went up to her, and, as he stood shivering on one foot, said, "Give us a few old cresses, Jinney," and in a few minutes was running off with a green bundle under his arm. All of the saleswomen

seemed to be of kindly natures, for at another stall an old dame, whose rags seemed to be beyond credit, was paying for some cresses she had long since been trusted with, and excusing herself for the time that had passed since the transaction. As I felt curious on the point of the honesty of the poor, I asked the saleswoman when she was alone, whether they lost much by giving credit. "It couldn't be much," she answered, "if they all of them decamped." But they were generally honest, and paid back, often reminding her of credit given that she herself had forgotten. Whenever she lost anything, it was by the very very poor ones; "though it aint their fault, poor things," she added in a kindly tone, "for when they keeps away from here, it's either the workhouse or the churchyard as stops them."

As you walk home—although the apprentice is knocking at the master's door—the little water-cress girls are crying their goods in every street. Some of them are gathered round the pumps, washing the leaves and piling up the bunches in their baskets, that are tattered and worn as their own clothing; in some of the shallows the holes at the bottom have been laced up or darned together with rope and string, or twigs and split laths have been fastened across; whilst others are lined with oilcloth, or old pieces of sheet-tin. Even by the time the cress-market is over, it is yet so early that the maids are beating the mats in the road, and mechanics, with their tool-baskets swung over their shoulders, are still hurrying to their work. To visit Farringdon-market early on a Monday morning, is the only proper way to judge of the fortitude and courage and perseverance of the poor. As Douglas Jerrold has beautifully said, "there is goodness, like wild honey, hived in strange nooks and corners of the earth." These poor cress-sellers belong to a class so poor that their extreme want alone would almost be an excuse for theft, and they can be trusted paying the few pence they owe even though they hunger for it. It must require no little energy of conscience on the part of the lads to make them resist the temptations around them, and refuse the luring advice of the young thieves they meet at the low lodging-house. And yet they prefer the early rising—the walk to market with naked feet along the cold stones—the pinched meal—and the day's hard labour to earn the few halfpence—to the thief's comparatively easy life. The heroism of the unknown poor is a thing to set even the dullest marvelling, and in no place in all London is the virtue of the humblest—both young and old—so conspicuous as among the watercress-buyers at Farringdon-market.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF WATER-CRESS.

The dealers in water-cresses are generally very old or very young people, and it is a trade greatly in the hands of women. The cause of this is, that the children are sent out by their parents

"to get a loaf of bread somehow" (to use the words of an old man in the trade), and the very old take to it because they are unable to do hard labour, and they strive to keep away from the workhouse—"I'd do anything before I'd go there—sweep the crossings, or anything: but I should have had to have gone to the house before, if it hadn't been for my wife. I'm sixty-two," said one who had been sixteen years at the trade). The old people are both men and women. The men have been sometimes one thing, and sometimes another. "I've been a porter myself," said one, "jobbing about in the markets, or wherever I could get a job to do. Then there's one old man goes about selling water-cresses who's been a seafaring man; he's very old, he is—older than what I am, sir. Many a one has been a good mechanic in his younger days, only he's got too old for labour. The old women have, many of them, been laundresses, only they can't now do the work, you see, and so they're glad to pick up a crust anyhow. Nelly, I know, has lost her husband, and she hasn't nothing else but her few creases to keep her. She's as good, honest, hard-working a creature as ever were, for what she can do—poor old soul! The young people are, most of them, girls. There are some boys, but girls are generally put to it by the poor people. There's Mary Macdonald, she's about fourteen. Her father is a bricklayer's labourer. He's an Englishman, and he sends little Mary out to get a halfpenny or two. He gets sometimes a couple of days' work in the week. He don't get more now, I'm sure, and he's got three children to keep out of that; so all on 'em that can work are obligated to do something. The other two children are so small they can't do nothing yet. Then there's Louisa; she's about twelve, and she goes about with creases like I do. I don't think she's got ne'er a father. I know she's a mother alive, and she sells creases like her daughter. The mother's about fifty odd, I dare say. The sellers generally go about with an arm-basket, like a greengrocer's at their side, or a 'shallow' in front of them; and plenty of them carry a small tin tray before them, slung round their neck. Ah! it would make your heart ache if you was to go to Farringdon-market early, this cold weather, and see the poor little things there without shoes and stockings, and their feet quite blue with the cold—oh, that they are, and many on 'em don't know how to set one foot before the t'other, poor things! You would say they wanted something give to 'em."

The small tin tray is generally carried by the young children. The cresses are mostly bought in Farringdon-market: "The usual time to go to the market is between five and six in the morning, and from that to seven," said one informant; "myself, I am generally down in the market by five. I was there this morning at five, and bitter cold it was, I give you my word. We poor old people feel it dreadful. Years ago I didn't mind cold, but I feel it now cruel bad, to be sure. Sometimes, when I'm turning up my



things, I don't hardly know whether I've got 'em in my hands or not; can't even pick off a dead leaf. But that's nothing to the poor little things without shoes. Why, bless you, I've seen 'em stand and cry two and three together, with the cold. Ah! my heart has ached for 'em over and over again. I've said to 'em, I wonder why your mother sends you out, that I have; and they said they was obligated to try and get a penny for breakfast. We buy the water-cresses by the 'hand.' One hand will make about five halfpenny bundles. There's more call for 'em in the spring of the year than what there is in the winter. Why, they're reckoned good for sweetening the blood in the spring; but, for my own eating, I'd sooner have the crease in the winter than I would have it in the spring of the year. There's an old woman sits in Farringdon-market, of the name of Burrows, that's sot there twenty-four years, and she's been selling out creases to us all that time.

"The sellers goes to market with a few pence. I myself goes down there and lays out sometimes my 4d.; that's what I laid out this morning. Sometimes I lay out only 2d. and 3d., according as how I has the halfpence in my pocket. Many a one goes down to the market with only three halfpence, and glad to have that to get a halfpenny, or anything, so as to earn a mouthful of bread—a bellyful that they can't get no how. Ah, many a time I walked through the streets, and picked a piece of bread that the servants chucked out of the door—may be to the birds. I've gone and picked it up when I've been right hungry. Thinks I, I can eat that as well as the birds. None of the sellers ever goes down to the market with less than a penny. They won't make less than a pennorth, that's one 'hand,' and if the little thing sells that, she won't earn more than three halfpence out of it. After they have bought the creases they generally take them to the pump to wet them. I generally pump upon mine in Hatton-garden. It's done to make them look nice and fresh all the morning, so that the wind shouldn't make them flag. You see they've been packed all night in the hamper, and they get dry. Some ties them up in ha'porths as they walks along. Many of them sit down on the steps of St. Andrew's Church and make them up into bunches. You'll see plenty of them there of a morning between five and six. Plenty, poor little dear souls, sitting there," said the old man to me. There the hand is parcelled out into five halfpenny bunches. In the summer the dealers often go to market and lay out as much as 1s. "On Saturday morning, this time of year, I buys as many as nine hands—there's more call for 'em on Saturday and Sunday morning than on any other days; and we always has to buy on Saturdays what we want for Sundays—there an't no market on that day, sir. At the market sufficient creases are bought by the sellers for the morning and afternoon as well. In the morning some begin crying their creases through

the streets at half-past six, and others about seven. They go to different parts, but there is scarcely a place but what some goes to—there are so many of us now—there's twenty to one to what there used to be. Why, they're so thick down at the market in the summer time, that you might bowl balls along their heads, and all a fighting for the creases. There's a regular scramble, I can assure you, to get at 'em, so as to make a halfpenny out of them. I should think in the spring mornings there's 400 or 500 on 'em down at Farringdon-market all at one time—between four and five in the morning—not more than that, and as fast as they keep going out, others keep coming in. I think there is more than a thousand, young and old, about the streets in the trade. The working classes are the principal of the customers. The bricklayers, and carpenters, and smiths, and plumbers, leaving work and going home to breakfast at eight o'clock, purchase the chief part of them. A great many are sold down the courts and mews, and bye streets, and very few are got rid of in the squares and the neighbourhood of the more respectable houses. Many are sold in the principal thoroughfares—a large number in the City. There is a man who stands close to the Post-office, at the top of Newgate-street, winter and summer, who sells a great quantity of bunches every morning. This man frequently takes between 4s. and 5s. of a winter's morning, and about 10s. a day in the summer." "Sixteen years ago," said the old man who gave me the principal part of this information, "I could come out and take my 18s. of a Saturday morning, and 5s. on a Sunday morning as well; but now I think myself very lucky if I can take my 1s. 3d., and it's only on two mornings in the week that I can get that." The hucksters of watercresses are generally an honest, industrious, striving class of persons. The young girls are said to be well-behaved, and to be the daughters of poor struggling people. The old men and women are persons striving to save themselves from the workhouse. The old and young people generally travel nine and ten miles in the course of the day. They start off to market at four and five, and are out on their morning rounds from seven till nine, and on their afternoon rounds from half-past two to five in the evening. They travel at the rate of two miles an hour. "If it wasn't for my wife, I must go to the workhouse outright," said the old watercress man. "Ah, I do'n't know what I should do without her, I can assure you. She earns about 1s. 3d. a day. She takes in a little washing, and keeps a mangle. When I'm at home I turn the mangle for her. The mangle is my own. When my wife's mother was alive she lent us the money to buy it, and as we earned the money we paid her back so much a week. It is *that* what has kept us together, or else we shouldn't have been as we are. The mangle we give 50s. for, and it brings us in now 1s. 3d. a day with the washing. My wife is

younger than I am. She is about thirty-five years old. We have got two children. One is thirteen and the other fifteen. They've both got learning, and are both in situations. I always sent 'em to school. Though I can't neither read nor write myself, I wished to make them some little scholars. I paid a penny a week for 'em at the school. Lady M—— has always given me my Christmas dinner for the last five years, and God bless her for it—that I *do* say indeed."

#### WATERCRESS GIRL.

The little watercress girl who gave me the following statement, although only eight years of age, had entirely lost all childish ways, and was, indeed, in thoughts and manner, a woman. There was something cruelly pathetic in hearing this infant, so young that her features had scarcely formed themselves, talking of the bitterest struggles of life, with the calm earnestness of one who had endured them all. I did not know how to talk with her. At first I treated her as a child, speaking on childish subjects; so that I might, by being familiar with her, remove all shyness, and get her to narrate her life freely. I asked her about her toys and her games with her companions; but the look of amazement that answered me soon put an end to any attempt at fun on my part. I then talked to her about the parks, and whether she ever went to them. "The parks!" she replied in wonder, "where are they?" I explained to her, telling her that they were large open places with green grass and tall trees, where beautiful carriages drove about, and people walked for pleasure, and children played. Her eyes brightened up a little as I spoke; and she asked, half doubtingly, "Would they let such as me go there—just to look?" All her knowledge seemed to begin and end with watercresses, and what they fetched. She knew no more of London than that part she had seen on her rounds, and believed that no quarter of the town was handsomer or pleasanter than it was at Farringdon-market or at Clerkenwell, where she lived. Her little face, pale and thin with privation, was wrinkled where the dimples ought to have been, and she would sigh frequently. When some hot dinner was offered to her, she would not touch it, because, if she eat too much, "it made her sick," she said; "and she wasn't used to meat, only on a Sunday."

The poor child, although the weather was severe, was dressed in a thin cotton gown, with a threadbare shawl wrapped round her shoulders. She wore no covering to her head, and the long rusty hair stood out in all directions. When she walked she shuffled along, for fear that the large carpet slippers that served her for shoes should slip off her feet.

"I go about the streets with water-cresses, crying, 'Four bunches a penny, water-cresses.' I am just eight years old—that's all, and I've a big sister, and a brother and a sister younger than I am. On and off, I've been very near a

twelvemonth in the streets. Before that, I had to take care of a baby for my aunt. No, it wasn't heavy—it was only two months old; but I minded it for ever such a time—till it could walk. It was a very nice little baby, not a very pretty one; but, if I touched it under the chin, it would laugh. Before I had the baby, I used to help mother, who was in the fur trade; and, if there was any slits in the fur, I'd sew them up. My mother learned me to needle-work and to knit when I was about five. I used to go to school, too; but I wasn't there long. I've forgot all about it now, it's such a time ago; and mother took me away because the master whacked me, though the missus use'n't to never touch me. I didn't like him at all. What do you think? he hit me three times, ever so hard, across the face with his cane, and made me go dancing down stairs; and when mother saw the marks on my cheek, she went to blow him up, but she couldn't see him—he was afraid. That's why I left school.

"The creases is so bad now, that I haven't been out with 'em for three days. They're so cold, people won't buy 'em; for when I goes up to them, they say, 'They'll freeze our bellies.' Besides, in the market, they won't sell a ha'penny handful now—they're ris to a penny and tuppence. In summer there's lots, and 'most as cheap as dirt; but I have to be down at Farringdon-market between four and five, or else I can't get any creases, because everyone almost—especially the Irish—is selling them, and they're picked up so quick. Some of the saleswomen—we never calls 'em ladies—is very kind to us children, and some of them altogether spiteful. The good one will give you a bunch for nothing, when they're cheap; but the others, cruel ones, if you try to bate them a farden less than they ask you, will say, 'Go along with you, you're no good.' I used to go down to market along with another girl, as must be about fourteen, 'cos she does her back hair up. When we've bought a lot, we sits down on a door-step, and ties up the bunches. We never goes home to breakfast till we've sold out; but, if it's very late, then I buys a penn'orth of pudden, which is very nice with gravy. I don't know hardly one of the people, as goes to Farringdon, to talk to; they never speaks to me, so I don't speak to them. We children never play down there, 'cos we're thinking of our living. No; people never pities me in the street—excepting one gentleman, and he says, says he, 'What do you do out so soon in the morning?' but he gave me nothink—he only walked away.

"It's very cold before winter comes on regular—specially getting up of a morning. I gets up in the dark by the light of the lamp in the court. When the snow is on the ground, there's no creases. I bears the cold—you must; so I puts my hands under my shawl, though it hurts 'em to take hold of the creases, especially when we takes 'em to the pump to wash 'em. No; I never see any children crying—it's no use.

"Sometimes I make a great deal of money.



One day I took 1s. 6d., and the creases cost 6d.; but it isn't often I get such luck as that. I oftener makes 3d. or 4d. than 1s.; and then I'm at work, crying, 'Creases, four bunches a penny, creases!' from six in the morning to about ten. What do you mean by mechanics?—I don't know what they are. The shops buys most of me. Some of 'em says, 'Oh! I ain't a-goin' to give a penny for these;' and they want 'em at the same price as I buys 'em at.

"I always give mother my money, she's so very good to me. She don't often beat me; but, when she do, she don't play with me. She's very poor, and goes out cleaning rooms sometimes, now she don't work at the fur. I ain't got no father, he's a father-in-law. No; mother ain't married again—he's a father-in-law. He grinds scissors, and he's very good to me. No; I don't mean by that that he says kind things to me, for he never hardly speaks. When I gets home, after selling creases, I stops at home. I puts the room to rights: mother don't make me do it, I does it myself. I cleans the chairs, though there's only two to clean. I takes a tub and scrubbing-brush and flannel, and scrubs the floor—that's what I do three or four times a week.

"I don't have no dinner. Mother gives me two slices of bread-and-butter and a cup of tea for breakfast, and then I go till tea, and has the same. We has meat of a Sunday, and, of course, I should like to have it every day. Mother has just the same to eat as we has, but she takes more tea—three cups, sometimes. No; I never has no sweet-stuff; I never buy none—I don't like it. Sometimes we has a game of 'honey-pots' with the girls in the court, but not often. Me and Carry H— carries the little 'uns. We plays, too, at 'kiss-in-the-ring.' I knows a good many games, but I don't play at 'em, 'cos going out with creases tires me. On a Friday night, too, I goes to a Jew's house till eleven o'clock on Saturday night. All I has to do is to snuff the candles and poke the fire. You see they keep their Sabbath then, and they won't touch anything; so they gives me my vittals and 1½d., and I does it for 'em. I have a reg'lar good lot to eat. Supper of Friday night, and tea after that, and fried fish of a Saturday morning, and meat for dinner, and tea, and supper, and I like it very well.

"Oh, yes; I've got some toys at home. I've a fire-place, and a box of toys, and a knife and fork, and two little chairs. The Jews gave 'em to me where I go to on a Friday, and that's why I said they was very kind to me. I never had no doll; but I misses little sister—she's only two years old. We don't sleep in the same room; for father and mother sleeps with little sister in the one pair, and me and brother and other sister sleeps in the top room. I always goes to bed at seven, 'cos I has to be up so early.

"I am a capital hand at bargaining—but only at buying watercreases. They can't take me in. If the woman tries to give me a small handful of creases, I says, 'I ain't a goin' to

have that for a ha'porth,' and I go to the next basket, and so on, all round. I know the quantities very well. For a penny I ought to have a full market hand, or as much as I could carry in my arms at one time, without spilling. For 3d. I has a lap full, enough to earn about a shilling; and for 6d. I gets as many as crams my basket. I can't read or write, but I knows how many pennies goes to a shilling, why, twelve, of course, but I don't know how many ha'pence there is, though there's two to a penny. When I've bought 3d. of creases, I ties 'em up into as many little bundles as I can. They must look biggish, or the people won't buy them, some puffs them out as much as they'll go. All my money I earns I puts in a club and draws it out to buy clothes with. It's better than spending it in sweet-stuff, for them as has a living to earn. Besides it's like a child to care for sugar-sticks, and not like one who's got a living and vittals to earn. I aint a child, and I shan't be a woman till I'm twenty, but I'm past eight, I am. I don't know nothing about what I earns during the year, I only know how many pennies goes to a shilling, and two ha'pence goes to a penny, and four farthings goes to a penny. I knows, too, how many farthings goes to tuppence—eight. That's as much as I wants to know for the markets."

The market returns I have obtained show the following result of the quantity vended in the streets, and of the receipts by the cress-sellers:—

A TABLE SHOWING THE QUANTITY OF WATER-CRESSES SOLD WHOLESALE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR IN LONDON, WITH THE PROPORTION RETAILED IN THE STREETS.

Market.	Quantity sold wholesale.	Proportion retailed in the Streets.
Covent Garden	1,578,000 bunches	one-eighth.
Farringdon	12,960,000 "	one-half.
Borough	180,000 "	one-half.
Spitalfields	180,000 "	one-half.
Portman	60,000 "	one-third.
Total	14,958,000 "	

From this sale the street cress-sellers receive:—

	Bunches.	Receipts
Farringdon	6,480,000 ½d. per bunch	£13,500
Covent Garden	16,450 "	34
Borough	90,000 "	187
Spitalfields	90,000 "	187
Portman	20,000 "	41
		£13,949

The discrepancy in the quantity sold in the respective markets is to be accounted for by the fact, that Farringdon is the water-cress market to which are conveyed the qualities, large-

leaved and big-stalked, that suit the street-folk. Of this description of cress they purchase one-half of all that is sold in Farringdon; of the finer, and smaller, and brown-leaved cress sold there, they purchase hardly any. At Covent Garden only the finer sorts of cress are in demand, and, consequently, the itinerants buy only an eighth in that market, and they are not encouraged there. They purchase half the quantity in the Borough, and the same in Spitalfields, and a third at Portman. I have before mentioned that 500 might be taken as the number supported by the sale of "creases;" that is, 500 families, or at least 1,000 individuals. The total amount received is nearly 14,000l., and this apportioned among 1,000 street-sellers, gives a weekly receipt of 5s. 5d., with a profit of 3s. 3d. per individual.

The discrepancy is further accounted for because the other market salesmen buy cresses at Farringdon; but I have given under the head of Farringdon all that is sold to those other markets to be disposed to the street-sellers, and the returns from the other markets are of the cresses carried direct there, apart from any purchases at Farringdon.

#### OF GROUNDSEL AND CHICKWEED SELLERS.

ON a former occasion (in the *Morning Chronicle*) I mentioned that I received a letter informing me that a woman, residing in one of the courts about Saffron-hill, was making braces, and receiving only 1s. for four dozen of them. I was assured she was a most deserving character, strictly sober, and not receiving parochial relief. "Her husband," my informant added, "was paralysed, and endeavoured to assist his family by gathering green food for birds. They are in deep distress, but their character is irreproachable." I found the couple located up a court, the entrance to which was about as narrow as the opening to a sentry-box, and on each side lolled groups of labourers and costermongers, with short black pipes in their mouths. As I dived into the court, a crowd followed me to see whither I was going. The brace-maker lived on the first floor of a crazy, foetid house. I ascended the stairs, and the banisters, from which the rails had all been purloined, gave way in my hands. I found the woman, man, and their family busy at their tea-dinner. In a large broken chair, beside the fire-place, was the old paralysed man, dressed in a ragged greasy fustian coat, his beard unshorn, and his hair in the wildest disorder. On the edge of the bed sat a cleanly looking woman, his wife, with a black apron on. Standing by the table was a blue-eyed laughing and shoeless boy, with an old camlet cape pinned over his shoulders. Next him was a girl in a long grey pinafore, with her hair cut close to her head, with the exception of a few locks in front, which hung down over her forehead like a dirty fringe. On a chair near the window stood a basket half full of chickweed and groundsel, and two large cabbages. There was a stuffed linnnet on the

mantel-piece and an empty cage hanging outside the window. In front of the window-sill was the small imitation of a gate and palings, so popular among the workpeople. On the table were a loaf, a few mugs of milkless tea, and a small piece of butter in a saucer. I had scarcely entered when the mother began to remove the camlet cape from the boy's shoulders, and to slip a coarse clean pinafore over his head instead. At present I have only to deal with the trade of the husband, who made the following statement:

"I sell chickweed and grunsell, and turfs for larks. That's all I sell, unless it's a few nettles that's ordered. I believe they're for tea, sir. I gets the chickweed at Chalk Farm. I pay nothing for it. I gets it out of the public fields. Every morning about seven I goes for it. The grunsell a gentleman gives me leave to get out of his garden: that's down Battle-bridge way, in the Chalk-road, leading to Holloway. I gets there every morning about nine. I goes there straight. After I have got my chickweed, I generally gathers enough of each to make up a dozen halfpenny bunches. The turfs I buys. A young man calls here with them. I pay 2d. a dozen for 'em to him. He gets them himself. Sometimes he cuts 'em at Kilburn Wells; and Notting-hill he goes to sometimes, I believe. He hires a spring barrow, weekly, to take them about. He pays 4d. a day, I believe, for the barrow. He sells the turfs to the bird-shops, and to such as me. He sells a few to some private places. I gets the nettles at Highgate. I don't do much in the nettle line—there ain't much call for it. After I've gathered my things I puts them in my basket, and slings 'em at my back, and starts round London. Low Marrabun I goes to always of a Saturday and Wednesday. I goes to St. Pancras on a Tuesday. I visit Clerkenwell, and Russell-square, and round about there, on a Monday. I goes down about Covent-garden and the Strand on a Thursday. I does High Marrabun on a Friday, because I aint able to do so much on that day, for I gathers my stuff on the Friday for Saturday. I find Low Marrabun the best of my beats. I cry 'chickweed and grunsell' as I goes along. I don't say 'for young singing birds.' It is usual, I know, but I never did. I've been at the business about eighteen year. I'm out in usual till about five in the evening. I never stop to eat. I'm walking all the time. I has my breakfast afore I starts, and my tea when I comes home." Here the woman shivered. I turned round and found the fire was quite out. I asked them whether they usually sat without one. The answer was, "We most generally raise a pennyworth, some how, just to boil the kettle with." I inquired whether she was cold, and she assured me she wasn't. "It was the blood," she said, "that ran through her like ice sometimes." "I am a walking ten hours every day—wet or dry," the man continued. "I don't stand nice mucu about that. I can't go much above one mile



and a half an hour, owing to my right side being paralysed. My leg and foot and all is quite dead. I goes with a stick." [The wife brought the stick out from a corner of the room to show me. It was an old peculiarly carved one, with a bird rudely cut out of wood for the handle, and a snake twisting itself up the stick.] "I walk fifteen miles every day of my life, that I do—quite that—excepting Sunday, in course. I generally sell the chickweed and grunsell and turfs, all to the houses, not to the shops. The young man as cut the turf gathers grunsell as well for the shops. They're tradespeople and gentlefolks' houses together that I sells to—such as keeps canaries, or goldfinches, or linnets. I charge ½d. a bunch for chickweed and grunsell together. It's the regular charge. The nettles is ordered in certain quantities; I don't get them unless they're ordered: I sells these in three-penn'orths at a time. Why, Saturday is my best day, and that's the reason why I can't spare time to gather on that day. On Saturday I dare say I gets rid on two dozen bunches of chickweed and grunsell. On the other days, sometimes, I goes out and don't sell above five or six bunches; at other times I get rid on a dozen; that I call a tidy day's work for any other day but a Saturday, and some days I don't sell as much as a couple of bunches in the whole day. Wednesday is my next best day after Saturday. On a Wednesday, sometimes, I sell a dozen and a half. In the summer I does much better than in winter. They gives it more to the birds then, and changes it oftener. I've seed a matter of eight or nine people that sell chickweed and grunsell like myself in the fields where I goes to gather it. They mostly all goes to where I do to get mine. They are a great many that sells grunsell about the streets in London, like I do. I dare say there is a hundred, and far more nor that, taking one place with another. I takes my nettles to ladies' houses. They considers the nettles good for the blood, and drinks 'em at tea, mostly in the spring and autumn. In the spring I generally sells three threepenn'orths of 'em a week, and in the autumn about two threepenn'orths. The ladies I sell the nettles to are mostly sickly, but sometimes they aint, and has only a breaking out in the skin, or in their face. The nettles are mostly taken in Low Marrabun. I gathers more than all for Great Titchfield-street. The turfs I sell mostly in London-street, in Marrabun and John-street, and Carburton-street, and Portland-street, and Berners, and all about there. I sells about three dozen of turfs a week. I sells them at three and four a penny. I charges them at three a penny to gentlefolks and four a penny to tradespeople. I pays 2d. a dozen for 'em and so makes from 1d. to 2d. a dozen out of 'em. I does trifling with these in the winter—about two dozen a week, but always three dozen in the summer. Of the chickweed and grunsell I sells from six to seven dozen bunches a week in the summer, and about four or five dozen bunches in the winter. I sells

mostly to regular customers, and a very few to chance ones that meet me in the street. The chance customers come mostly in the summer times. Altogether I should say with my regular and chance customers I make from 4s. to 5s. a week in the summer, and from 3s. to 4s. in the winter. That's as near as I can tell. Last Monday I was out all day, and took 1½d.; Tuesday I took about 5½d.; Wednesday I got 9½d.; Thursday I can't hardly recollect, not to tell the truth about it. But oh, dear me, yes I wasn't allowed to go out on that day. We was given to understand nothing was allowed to be sold on that day. They told us it were the Thanksgiving-day. I was obliged to fast on that day. We did have a little in the morning, a trifle, but not near enough. Friday I came home with nigh upon 6d., and Saturday I got 1s., and 3d. after when I went out at night. I goes into Leather-lane every Saturday night, and stands with my basket there, so that altogether, last week I made 3s. 1½d. But that was a slack week with me, owing to my having lost Thursday. If it hadn't been for that I should have made near upon 4s. We felt the loss very severely. Prices have come down dreadful with us. The same bunches as I sell now for ½d. I used to get 1d. for nine or ten years ago. I dare say I could earn then, take one day with another, such a thing as 7s. a week, summer and winter through. There's so many at it now to what there was afore, that it's difficult to get a living, and the ladies are very hard with a body. They tries to beat me down, and particular in the matter of turfs. They tell me they can buy half-a-dozen for 1d., so I'm obligated to let 'em have three or four. There's a many women at the business. I hardly know which is the most, men or women. There's pretty nigh as much of one as the other, I think. I am a bed-sacking weaver by trade. When I worked at it I used to get 15s. a week regularly. But I was struck with paralysis nearly nineteen years ago, and lost the use of all one side, so I was obleeged to turn to summut else. Another grunseller told me on the business, and what he got, and I thought I couldn't do no better. That's a favourite linnet. We had that one stuffed there. A young man that I knew stuffed it for me. I was very sorry when the poor thing died. I've got another little linnet up there." "I'm particular fond of little birds," said the wife. "I never was worse off than I am now. I pays 2s. a week rent, and we has, take one time with another, about 3s. for the four of us to subsist upon for the whole seven days; yes, that, take one time with another, is generally what I do have. We very seldom has any meat. This day week we got a pound of pieces. I gave 4d. for 'em. Everything that will pledge I've got in pawn. I've been obliged to let them go. I can't exactly say how much I've got in pledge, but you can see the tickets." [The wife brought out a tin box full of duplicates. They were for the usual articles—coats, shawls, shirts, sheets,



THE STREET-SELLER OF GREASE-REMOVING COMPOSITION, ETC.

[From a Photograph.]

handkerchiefs, indeed almost every article of wearing-apparel and bedding. The sums lent were mostly 6d. and 9d., while some ran as high as 2s. The dates of many were last year, and these had been backed for three months.] "I've been paying interest for many of the things there for seven years. I pay for the backing 2½d., that is 1d. for the backing, and 1½d. for the three months' interest. I pay 6d. a year interest on every one of the tickets. If its only 3d., I have to pay ½d. a month interest just the same, but nothing for the ticket when we put it in." The number of duplicates was 26, and the gross sum amounted to 1l. 4s. 8d. One of the duplicates was for 4d.; nine were for 6d., two for 9d., nine were for 1s., two for 1s. 6d., one for 1s. 3d., one for 1s. 7d. and two for 2s. "The greatest comfort I should like to have would be something more on our beds. We lay dreadful cold of a night, on account of being thin clad. I have no petticoats at all. We have no blankets—of late years I haven't had any. The warm clothing would be the greatest blessing I could ask. I'm not at all discontented at my lot. That wouldn't mend it. We strive and do the best we can, and may as well be contented over it. I think its God's will we should be as we are. Providence is kind to me, even badly off as we are. I know its all for the best."

There are no "pitches," or stands, for the sale of groundsel in the streets; but, from the best information I could acquire, there are now 1,000 itinerants selling groundsel, each person selling, as an average, 18 bunches a day. We thus have 5,616,000 bunches a year, which, at ½d. each, realise 11,700l.—about 4s. 2d. per week per head of sellers of groundsel. The "oldest hand" in the trade is the man whose statement and likeness I give. The sale continues through the year, but "the groundsel" season extends from April to September; in those months 24 bunches, per individual seller, is the extent of the traffic, in the other months half that quantity, giving the average of 18 bunches. The capital required for groundsel-selling is 4d. for a brown wicker-basket; leather strap to sling it from the shoulder, 6d.; in all, 10d. No knife is necessary; they pluck the groundsel.

Chickweed is only sold in the summer, and is most generally mixed with groundsel and plantain. The chickweed and plantain, together, are but half the sale of groundsel, and that only for five months, adding, to the total amount, 2,335l. But this adds little to the profits of the regular itinerants; for, when there is the best demand, there are the greatest number of sellers, who in winter seek some other business. The total amount of "green stuff" expended upon birds, as supplied by the street-sellers, I give at the close of my account of the trade of those purveyors.

Many of the groundsel and chickweed-sellers—for the callings are carried on together—who are aged men, were formerly brimstone-match sellers, who "didn't like to take to the lucifers."

On the publication of this account in the *Morning Chronicle*, several sums were forwarded to the office of that journal for the benefit of this family. These were the means of removing them to a more comfortable home, of redeeming their clothing, and in a measure realizing the wishes of the poor woman.

#### OF TURF CUTTING AND SELLING.

A man long familiar with this trade, and who knew almost every member of it individually, counted for me 36 turf-cutters, to his own knowledge, and was confident that there were 40 turf-cutters and 60 sellers in London; the addition of the sellers, however, is but that of 10 women, who assist their husbands or fathers in the street sales,—but no women cut turf,—and of 10 men who sell, but buy of the cutters.

The turf is simply a sod, but it is considered indispensable that it should contain the leaves of the "small Dutch clover," (the shamrock of the Irish), the most common of all the trefoils. The turf is used almost entirely for the food and roosting-place of the caged sky-larks. Indeed one turf-cutter said to me: "It's only people that don't understand it that gives turf to other birds, but of course if we're asked about it, we say it's good for every bird, pigeons and chickens and all; and very likely it is if they choose to have it." The principal places for the cutting of turf are at present Shepherd's Bush, Notting Hill, the Caledonian Road, Hampstead, Highgate, Hornsey, Peckham, and Battersea. Chalk Farm was an excellent place, but it is now exhausted, "fairly flayed" of the shamrocks. Parts of Camden Town were also fertile in turf, but they have been built over. Hackney was a district to which the turf-cutters resorted, but they are now forbidden to cut sods there. Hampstead Heath used to be another harvest-field for these turf-purveyors, but they are now prohibited from "so much as sticking a knife into the Heath;" but turf-cutting is carried on surreptitiously on all the outskirts of the Heath, for there used to be a sort of feeling, I was told, among some real Londoners that Hampstead Heath yielded the best turf of any place. All the "commons" and "greens," Paddington, Camberwell, Kennington, Clapham, Putney, &c. are also forbidden ground to the turf-cutter. "O, as to the parks and Primrose Hill itself—round about its another thing—nobody," it was answered to my inquiry, "ever thought of cutting their turf there. The people about, if they was only visitors, wouldn't stand it, and right too. I wouldn't, if I wasn't in the turf-cutting myself."

The places where the turf is principally cut are the fields, or plots, in the suburbs, in which may be seen a half-illegible board, inviting the attention of the class of speculating builders to an "eligible site" for villas. Some of these places are open, and have long been open, to the road; others are protected by a few crazy rails, and the turf-cutters consider that outside the rails, or between them and the road, they



have a right to cut turf, unless forbidden by the police. The fact is, that they cut it on sufferance; but the policeman never interferes, unless required to do so by the proprietor of the land or his agent. One gentleman, who has the control over a considerable quantity of land "eligible" for building, is very inimical to the pursuits of the turf-cutters, who, of course, return his hostility. One man told me that he was required, late on a Saturday night, some weeks ago, to supply six dozen of turfs to a very respectable shopkeeper, by ten or eleven on the Sunday morning. The shopkeeper had an aristocratic connection, and durst not disappoint his customers in their demands for fresh turf on the Sunday, so that the cutter must supply it. In doing so, he encountered Mr. — (the gentleman in question), who was exceedingly angry with him: "You d—d poaching thief!" said the gentleman, "if this is the way you pass your Sunday, I'll give you in charge." One turf-cutter, I was informed, had, within these eight years, paid 3*l.* 15*s.* fines for trespassing, besides losing his barrow, &c., on every conviction: "But he's a most outdacious fellow," I was told by one of his mates, "and won't mind spoiling anybody's ground to save himself a bit of trouble. There's too many that way, which gives us a bad name." Some of the managers of the land to be built upon give the turf-cutters free leave to labour in their vocation; others sell the sods for garden-plots, or use them to set out the gardens to any small houses they may be connected with, and with them the turf-cutters have no chance of turning a sod or a penny.

I accompanied a turf-cutter, to observe the manner of his work. We went to the neighbourhood of Highgate, which we reached a little before nine in the morning. There was nothing very remarkable to be observed, but the scene was not without its interest. Although it was nearly the middle of January, the grass was very green and the weather very mild. There happened to be no one on the ground but my companion and myself, and in some parts of our progress nothing was visible but green fields with their fringe of dark-coloured leafless trees; while in other parts, which were somewhat more elevated, glimpses of the crowded roof of an omnibus, or of a line of fleecy white smoke, showing the existence of a railway, testified to the neighbourhood of a city; but no sound was heard except, now and then, a distant railway whistle. The turf-cutter, after looking carefully about him—the result of habit, for I was told afterwards, by the policeman, that there was no trespass—set rapidly to work. His apparatus was a sharp-pointed table-knife of the ordinary size, which he inserted in the ground, and made it rapidly describe a half-circle; he then as rapidly ran his implement in the opposite half-circle, flung up the sod, and, after slapping it with his knife, cut off the lower part so as to leave it flat—working precisely as does a butcher cutting out a joint or a chop, and reducing the fat. Small holes are thus left in the ground—

of such shape and size as if deep saucers were to be fitted into them—and in the event of a thunder-shower in drouthy weather, they become filled with water, and have caused a puzzlement, I am told, to persons taking their quiet walk when the storm had ceased, to comprehend why the rain should be found to gather in little circular pools in some parts, and not in others.

The man I accompanied cut and shaped six of these turfs in about a minute, but he worked without intermission, and rather to show me with what rapidity and precision he could cut, than troubling himself to select what was saleable. After that we diverged in the direction of Hampstead; and in a spot not far from a temporary church, found three turf-cutters at work,—but they worked asunder, and without communication one with another. The turfs, as soon as they are cut and shaped, are thrown into a circular basket, and when the basket is full it is emptied on to the barrow (a costermonger's barrow), which is generally left untended at the nearest point: "We can trust one another, as far as I know," said one turf-man to me, "and nobody else would find it worth while to steal turfs." The largest number of men that my most intelligent informant had ever seen at work in one locality was fourteen, and that was in a field just about to be built over, and "where they had leave." Among the turf-purveyors there is no understanding as to where they are to "cut." Wet weather does not interfere with turf procuring; it merely adds to the weight, and consequently to the toil of drawing the barrow. Snow is rather an advantage to the street-seller, as purchasers are apt to fancy that if the storm continues, turfs will not be obtainable, and so they buy more freely. The turf-man clears the snow from the ground in any known locality—the cold pinching his ungloved hands—and cuts out the turf, "as green," I was told, "as an April sod." The weather most dreaded is that when hoar frost lies long and heavy on the ground, for the turf cut with the rime upon it soon turns black, and is unsaleable. Foggy dark weather is also prejudicial, "for then," one man said, "the days clips it uncommon short, and people won't buy by candlelight, no more will the shops. Birds has gone to sleep then, and them that's fondest on them says, 'We can get fresher turf to-morrow.'" The gatherers cannot work by moonlight; "for the clover leaves then shuts up," I was told by one who said he was a bit of a botanist, "like the lid of a box, and you can't tell them."

One of my informants told me that he cut 25 dozen turfs every Friday (the great working turf-day) of the year on an average (he sometimes cut on that day upwards of 30 dozen); 17 dozen on a Tuesday; and 6 dozen on the other days of the week, more or less, as the demand justified—but 6 dozen was an average. He had also cut a few turfs on a Sunday morning, but only at long intervals, sometimes only thrice a year. Thus one man will cut 2,496 dozen, or 29,952 turfs in a year, not reckoning

the product of any Sunday. From the best information I could acquire, there seems no doubt but that one-half of the turf-cutters (20) exert a similar degree of industry to that detailed; and the other 20 procure a moiety of the quantity cut and disposed of by their stronger and more fortunate brethren. This gives an aggregate, for an average year, of 598,560 turfs, or including Sunday turf-cutting, of 600,000. Each turf is about 6 inches diameter at the least; so that the whole extent of turf cut for London birds yearly, if placed side by side, would extend fifty-six miles, or from London to Canterbury.

In wet weather, 6 dozen turfs weigh, on an average, 1 cwt.; in dry weather, 8 dozen weigh no more; if, therefore, we take 7 dozen as the usual hundred-weight, a turf-cutter of the best class carries, in basket-loads, to his barrow, and when his stock is completed, drags into town from the localities I have specified, upwards of 3½ cwt. every Friday, nearly 2½ every Tuesday, and about 7 cwt. in the course of a week; the smaller traders drag half the quantity,—and the total weight of turf disposed of for the cage-birds of London, every year, is 546 tons.

Of the supply of turf, obtained as I have described, at least three-fourths is sold to the bird-shops, who retail it to their customers. The price paid by these shopkeepers to the labourers for their turf trade is 2*d.* and 2½*d.* a dozen, but rarely 2¼*d.* They retail it at from 3*d.* to 6*d.* a dozen, according to connection and locality. The remainder is sold by the cutters on their rounds from house to house, at two and three a penny.

None of the turf-cutters confine themselves to it. They sell in addition groundsel, chickweed, plaintain, very generally; and a few supply nettles, dandelion, ground-ivy, snails, worms, frogs, and toads. The sellers of groundsel and chickweed are far more numerous, as I have shown, than the turf-cutters—indeed many of them are incapable of cutting turf or of dragging the weight of the turfs.

#### OF THE EXPERIENCE AND CUSTOMERS OF A TURF-CUTTER.

A short but strongly-built man, of about thirty, with a very English face, and dressed in a smock-frock, wearing also very strong unblacked boots, gave me the following account:—"My father," he said, "was in the Earl of —'s service, and I was brought up to stable-work. I was employed in a large coaching inn, in Lancashire, when I was last employed in that way, but about ten years ago a railway line was opened, and the coaching was no go any longer; it hadn't a chance to pay, so the horses and all was sold, and I was discharged with a lot of others. I walked from Manchester to London—for I think most men when they don't know what in the world to do, come to London—and I lived a few months on what little money I had, and what I could pick up in an odd job about horses. I had some expectations when

I came up that I might get something to do through my lord, or some of his people—they all knew me: but my lord was abroad, and his establishment wasn't in town, and I had to depend entirely on myself. I was beat out three or four times, and didn't know what to do, but somehow or other I got over it. At last—it's between eight and nine years ago—I was fairly beat out. I was taking a walk—I can't say just now in what way I went, for it was all one which way—but I remember I saw a man cutting turf, and I remembered then that a man that lived near me lived pretty middling by turf-cutting. So I watched how it was done, and then I inquired how I could get into it, and as I'd paid my way I could give reference to show I might be trusted; so I got a barrow on hire, and a basket, and bought a knife for 3*d.* at a marine-shop, and set to work. At first I only supplied shops, but in a little time I fell into a private round, and that pays better. I've been at it almost every day, I may say, ever since. My best customers are working people that's fond of birds; they're far the best. It's the ready penny with them, and no grumbling. I've lost money by trusting noblemen; of course I blame their servants. You'd be surprised, sir, to hear how often at rich folks' houses, when they've taken their turf or what they want, they'll take credit and say, 'O, I've got no change,' or 'I can't be bothered with ha'pence,' or 'you must call again.' There's one great house in Cavendish-square always takes a month's credit, and pays one month within another (pays the first month as the second is falling due), and not always that very regular. They can't know how poor men has to fight for a bit of bread. Some people are very particular about their turfs, and look very sharp for the small clover leaves. We never have turfs left on hand; in summer we water them to keep them fresh; in wet weather they don't require it; they'll keep without. I think I make on turf 9*s.* a week all the year round; the summer's half as good again as the winter. Supposing I make 3*s.* a week on groundsel, and chickweed, and snails, and other things, that's 12*s.*—but look you here, sir. I pay 3*s.* 6*d.* a week for my rent—it's a furnished room—and 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for my barrow; that's 5*s.* off the 12*s.*; and I've a wife and one little boy. My wife may get a day at least every week at charring; she has 1*s.* for it and her board. She helps me when she's not out, and if she is out, I sometimes have to hire a lad, so it's no great advantage the shilling a day. I've paid 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for my barrow—it's a very good and big one—for four years. Before that I paid 2*s.* a week. O yes, sir, I know very well, that at 1*s.* 6*d.* a week I've paid nearly 14*l.* for a barrow worth only 2*l.* 2*s.*; but I can't help it; I really can't. I've tried my hardest to get money to have one of my own, and to get a few sticks (furniture) of my own too. It's no use trying any more. If I have ever got a few shillings a-head, there's a pair of shoes wanted, or there's



something else, or my wife has a fit of sickness, or my little boy has, or something's sure to happen that way, and it all goes. Last winter was a very hard time for people in my way, from hoar frost and fogs. I ran near 3*l.* into debt; greater part of it for house-rent and my barrow; the rest was small sums borrowed of shopkeepers that I served. I paid all up in the summer, but I'm now 14*s.* in debt for my barrow; it always keeps me back; the man that owns it calls every Sunday morning, but he don't press me, if I haven't money. I would get out of the life if I could, but will anybody take a groom out of the streets? and I'm not master of anything but grooming. I can read and write. I was brought up a Roman Catholic, and was christened one. I never go to mass now. One gets out of the way of such things, having to fight for a living as I have. It seems like mocking going to chapel, when you're grumbling in your soul."

#### OF PLANTAIN-SELLERS.

PLANTAIN is sold extensively, and is given to canaries, but water-cress is given to those birds more than any other green thing. It is the ripe seed, in a spike, of the "great" and the "ribbed" plantain. The green leaves of the last-mentioned plant used to be in demand as a styptic. Shenstone speaks of "plantain ribbed, that heals

the reaper's wound." I believe that it was never sold in the streets of London. The most of the plantain is gathered in the brick-fields, wherever they are found, as the greater plantain, which gives three-fourths of the supply, loves an arid situation. It is sold in hands to the shops, about 60 "heads" going to a "hand," at a price, according to size, &c., from 1*d.* to 4*d.* On a private round, five or six are given for a halfpenny. It is, however, generally gathered and sold with chickweed, and along with chickweed I have shown the quantity used.

The money-value of the several kinds and quantities of "green-stuff" annually purchased in the streets of London is as follows:—

6,696,450 bunches of water-cresses,	} £13,949
at ½ <i>d.</i> per bunch . . . . .	
5,616,000 " groundsel, at ½ <i>d.</i>	11,700
1,120,800 " chickweed and	} 2,335
plantain . . . . .	
660,000 turfs, at 2½ <i>d.</i> per doz. .	520
	28,504

Of the above amount, it may be said that upwards of 14,000*l.* are spent yearly on what may be called the bird-food of London.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF EATABLES AND DRINKABLES.

THESE dealers were, more numerous, even when the metropolitan population was but half its present extent. I heard several causes assigned for this,—such as the higher rate of earnings of the labouring people at that time, as well as the smaller number of shopkeepers who deal in such cheap luxuries as penny pies, and the fewer places of cheap amusement, such as the "penny gaffs." These places, I was told, "run away with the young people's pennies," which were, at one period, expended in the streets.

The class engaged in the manufacture, or in the sale, of these articles, are a more intelligent people than the generality of street-sellers. They have nearly all been mechanics who, from inability to procure employment at their several crafts—from dislike to an irksome and, perhaps, sedentary confinement—or from an overpowering desire "to be their own masters," have sought a livelihood in the streets. The purchase and sale of fish, fruit, or vegetables require no great training or dexterity; but to make the dainties, in which street-people are critical, and to sell them at the lowest possible price, certainly requires some previous discipline to produce the skill to combine and the taste to please.

I may here observe, that I found it common enough among these street-sellers to describe

themselves and their fraternity not by their names or callings, but by the article in which they deal. This is sometimes ludicrous enough: "Is the man you're asking about a pickled whelk, sir?" was said to me. In answer to another inquiry, I was told, "Oh, yes, I know him—he's a sweet-stuff." Such ellipses, or abbreviations, are common in all mechanical or commercial callings.

Men and women, and most especially boys, purchase their meals day after day in the streets. The coffee-stall supplies a warm breakfast; shell-fish of many kinds tempt to a luncheon; hot-eels or pea-soup, flanked by a potato "all hot," serve for a dinner; and cakes and tarts, or nuts and oranges, with many varieties of pastry, confectionary, and fruit, woo to indulgence in a dessert; while for supper there is a sandwich, a meat pudding, or a "trotter."

The street provisions consist of cooked or prepared victuals, which may be divided into solids, pastry, confectionary, and drinkables.

The "solids" however, of these three divisions, are such as only regular street-buyers consider to be sufficing for a substantial meal, for it will be seen that the comestibles accounted "good for dinner," are all of a dainty, rather than a solid character. Men whose lives, as I have before stated, are alternations of starvation

and surfeit, love some easily-swallowed and comfortable food, better than the most approved substantiality of a dinner-table. I was told by a man, who was once foodless for thirty-eight hours, that in looking into the window of a cook-shop—he longed far more for a basin of soup than for a cut from the boiled round, or the roasted ribs, of beef. He felt a gnawing rather than a ravenous desire, and some tasty semi-liquid was the incessant object of his desires.

The solids then, according to street estimation, consist of hot-eels, pickled whelks, oysters, sheep's-trotters, pea-soup, fried fish, ham-sandwiches, hot green peas, kidney puddings, boiled meat puddings, beef, mutton, kidney, and eel pies, and baked potatoes. In each of these provisions the street poor find a mid-day or mid-night meal.

The pastry and confectionary which tempt the street eaters are tarts of rhubarb, currant, gooseberry, cherry, apple, damson, cranberry, and (so called) mince pies; plum dough and plum-cake; lard, currant, almond and many other varieties of cakes, as well as of tarts; gingerbread-nuts and heart-cakes; Chelsea buns; muffins and crumpets; "sweet stuff" includes the several kinds of rocks, sticks, lozenges, candies, and hard-bakes; the medicinal confectionary of cough-drops and horehound; and, lastly, the more novel and aristocratic luxury of street-ices; and strawberry cream, at 1*d.* a glass, (in Greenwich Park).

The drinkables are tea, coffee, and cocoa; ginger-beer, lemonade, Persian sherbet, and some highly-coloured beverages which have no specific name, but are introduced to the public as "cooling" drinks; hot elder cordial or wine; peppermint water; curds and whey; water (as at Hampstead); rice milk; and milk in the parks.

At different periods there have been attempts to introduce more substantial viands into the street provision trade, but all within these twenty years have been exceptional and unsuccessful. One man a few years back established a portable cook-shop in Leather-lane, cutting out portions of the joints to be carried away or eaten on the spot, at the buyer's option. But the speculation was a failure. Black puddings used to be sold, until a few years back, smoking from cans, not unlike potato cans, in such places as the New Cut; but the trade in these rather suspicious articles gradually disappeared.

Mr. Albert Smith, who is an acute observer in all such matters, says, in a lively article on the Street Boys of London:

"The kerb is his club, offering all the advantages of one of those institutions without any subscription or ballot. Had he a few pence, he might dine equally well as at Blackwall, and with the same variety of delicacies without going twenty yards from the pillars of St. Clement's churchyard. He might begin with a water *souchée* of eels, varying his first course with pickled whelks, cold fried flounders, or periwinkles. Whitebait, to be sure, he would

find a difficulty in procuring, but as the more cunning gourmands do not believe these delicacies to be fish at all, but merely little bits of light pie-crust fried in grease;—and as moreover, the brown bread and butter is after all the grand attraction,—the boy might soon find a substitute. Then would come the potatoes, apparently giving out so much steam that the can which contains them seems in momentary danger of blowing up; large, hot, mealy fellows, that prove how unfounded were the alarms of the bad-crop-ites; and he might next have a course of boiled feet of some animal or other, which he would be certain to find in front of the gin-shop. Cyder-cups perhaps he would not get; but there would be 'ginger-beer from the fountain, at 1*d.* per glass;' and instead of mulled claret, he could indulge in hot elder cordial; whilst for dessert he could calculate upon all the delicacies of the season, from the salads at the corner of Wych-street to the baked apples at Temple Bar. None of these things would cost more than a penny a piece; some of them would be under that sum; and since as at Veréy's, and some other foreign restaurateurs, there is no objection to your dividing the "portions," the boy might, if he felt inclined to give a dinner to a friend, get off under 6*d.* There would be the digestive advantage too of moving leisurely about from one course to another; and, above all, there would be no fee to waiters." After alluding to the former glories of some of the street-stands, more especially of the kidney pudding establishments which displayed rude transparencies, one representing the courier of St. Petersburg riding six horses at once for a kidney pudding, Mr. Smith continues,—“But of all these eating-stands the chief favourite with the boy is the potato-can. They collect around it as they would do on 'Change, and there talk over local matters, or discuss the affairs of the adjacent cab-stand, in which they are at times joined by the waterman whom they respect, more so perhaps than the policeman; certainly more than they do the street-keeper, for him they especially delight to annoy, and they watch any of their fellows eating a potato, with a curiosity and an attention most remarkable, as if no two persons fed in the same manner, and they expected something strange or diverting to happen at every mouthful.”

A gentleman, who has taken an artist's interest in all connected with the streets, and has been familiar with their daily and nightly aspect from the commencement of the present century, considers that the great change is not so much in what has ceased to be sold, but in the introduction of fresh articles into street-traffic—such as pine-apples and Brazil-nuts, rhubarb and cucumbers, ham-sandwiches, ginger-beer, &c. The coffee-stall, he represents, has but superseded the saloop-stall (of which I have previously spoken); while the class of street-customers who supported the saloop-dealer now support the purveyor of coffee. The appearance of the