

can, and offer them for sale. You saw men who really appear clad in harness. Portions were fastened round their bodies, collars slung on their arms, pads or small cart-saddles, with their shaft-gear, were planted on their shoulders. Some carried merely a collar, or a harness bridle, or even a bit or a pair of spurs. It was the same with the springs, &c., of the barrows and small carts. They were carried under men's arms, or poised on their shoulders. The wheels and other things which are too heavy for such modes of transport had to be placed in some sort of vehicle, and in the vehicles might be seen trestles, &c.

The complaints on the part of the second-hand sellers were neither few nor mild: "If it had been a fat ox that had to be accommodated," said one, "before he was roasted for an alderman, they'd have found some way to do it. But it don't matter for poor men; though why we shouldn't be suited with a market as well as richer people is not the ticket, that's the fact."

These arrangements are already beginning to be infringed, and will be more and more infringed, for such is always the case. The reason why they were adopted was that the ground was so littered, that there was not room for the donkey traffic and

other requirements of the market. The donkeys, when "shown," under the old arrangement, often trod on boards of old metal, &c., spread on the ground, and tripped, sometimes to their injury, in consequence. Prior to the change, about twenty persons used to come from Petticoat-lane, &c., and spread their old metal or other stores on the ground.

Of these there are now none. These Petticoat-laners, I was told by a Smithfield frequenter, were men "who knew the price of old rags,"—a new phrase expressive of their knowingness and keenness in trade.

The statistics of this trade will be found under that head; the prices are often much higher and much lower. I speak of the regular trades. I have not included the sale of the superior butchers carts, &c., as that is a traffic not in the hands of the regular second-hand street-sellers. I have not thought it requisite to speak of the hawking of whips, sticks, wash-leathers, brushes, curry-combs, &c., &c., of which I have already treated distinctively.

The accounts of the Capital and Income of the Street-Sellers of Second-Hand Articles I am obliged to defer till a future occasion.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE ANIMALS.

THE live animals sold in the streets include beasts, birds, fish, and reptiles, all sold in the streets of London.

The class of men carrying on this business—for they are nearly all men—is mixed; but the majority are of a half-sporting and half-vagrant kind. One informant told me that the bird-catchers, for instance, when young, as more than three-fourths of them are, were those who "liked to be after a loose end," first catching their birds, as a sort of sporting business, and then sometimes selling them in the streets, but far more frequently disposing of them in the bird-shops. "Some of these boys," a bird-seller in a large way of business said to me, "used to become rat-catchers or dog-sellers, but there's not such great openings in the rat and dog line now. As far as I know, they're the same lads, or just the same sort of lads, anyhow, as you may see 'helping,' holding horses, or things like that, at concerns like them small races at Peckham or Chalk Farm, or helping any way at the foot-races at Camberwell." There is in this bird-catching a strong manifestation of the vagrant spirit. To rise long before daybreak; to walk some miles before daybreak; from the earliest dawn to wait in some field, or common, or wood, watching the capture of the birds; then a long trudge to town to dispose of the fluttering captives; all this is done cheerfully, because there are about it the irresistible charms, to this class, of excitement, variety, and free and open-air life. Nor do these charms appear one whit weakened when, as happens often enough, all this early morn business is carried on fasting.

The old men in the bird-catching business are not to be ranked as to their enjoyment of it with the juveniles, for these old men are sometimes infirm, and can but, as one of them said to me some time ago, "hobble about it." But they have the same spirit, or the sparks of it. And in this part of the trade is one of the curious characteristics of a street-life, or rather of an open-air pursuit for the requirements of a street-trade. A man, worn out for other purposes, incapable of anything but a passive, or sort of lazy labour—such as lying in a field and watching the action of his trap-cages—will yet in a summer's morning, decrepid as he may be, possess himself of a dozen or even a score of the very freest and most aspiring of all our English small birds, a creature of the air beyond other birds of his "order"—to use an ornithological term—of sky-larks.

The dog-sellers are of a sporting, trading, idling class. Their sport is now the rat-hunt, or the ferret-match, or the dog-fight; as it was with the predecessors of their stamp, the cock-fight; the bull, bear, and badger bait; the shrove-tide cock-shy, or the duck hunt. Their trading spirit is akin to that of the higher-class sporting fraternity, the trading members of the turf. They love to sell and to bargain, always with a quiet exultation at the time—a matter of loud tavern boast afterwards, perhaps, as respects the street-folk—how they "do" a customer, or "do" one another. "It's not cheating," was the remark and apology of a very famous jockey of the old times, touching such measures; "it's not cheating, it's outwitting." Perhaps this expresses the code of honesty

of such traders; not to cheat, but to outwit or over-reach. Mixed with such traders, however, are found a few quiet, plodding, fair-dealing men, whom it is difficult to classify, otherwise than that they are "in the line, just because they like it." The idling of these street-sellers is a part of their business. To walk by the hour up and down a street, and with no manual labour except to clean their dogs' kennels, and to carry them in their arms, is but an idleness, although, as some of these men will tell you, "they work hard at it."

Under the respective heads of dog and bird-sellers, I shall give more detailed characteristics of the class, as well as of the varying qualities and inducements of the buyers.

The street-sellers of foreign birds, such as parrots, parroquets, and cockatoos; of gold and silver fish; of goats, tortoises, rabbits, leverets, hedgehogs; and the collectors of snails, worms, frogs, and toads, are also a mixed body. Foreigners, Jews, seamen, countrymen, costermongers, and boys form a part, and of them I shall give a description under the several heads. The prominently-characterized street-sellers are the traders in dogs and birds.

OF THE FORMER STREET-SELLERS, "FINDERS," STEALERS, AND RESTORERS OF DOGS.

BEFORE I describe the present condition of the street-trade in dogs, which is principally in spaniels, or in the description well known as lap-dogs, I will give an account of the former condition of the trade, if trade it can properly be called, for the "finders" and "stealers" of dogs were the more especial subjects of a parliamentary inquiry, from which I derive the official information on the matter. The Report of the Committee was ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, July 26, 1844.

In their Report the Committee observe, concerning the value of pet dogs:—"From the evidence of various witnesses it appears, that in one case a spaniel was sold for 105*l.*, and in another, under a sheriff's execution, for 95*l.* at the hammer; and 50*l.* or 60*l.* are not unfrequently given for fancy dogs of first-rate breed and beauty." The hundred guineas' dog above alluded to was a "black and tan King Charles's spaniel;"—indeed, Mr. Dowling, the editor of *Bell's Life in London*, said, in his evidence before the Committee, "I have known as much as 150*l.* given for a dog." He said afterwards: "There are certain marks about the eyes and otherwise, which are considered 'properties;' and it depends entirely upon the property which a dog possesses as to its value."

I need not dwell on the general fondness of the English for dogs, otherwise than as regards what were the grand objects of the dog-finders' search—ladies' small spaniels and lap-dogs, or, as they are sometimes called, "carriage-dogs," by their being the companions of ladies inside their carriages. These animals first became fashionable by the fondness of Charles II. for them. That monarch allowed them undisturbed possession of the gilded chairs in his palace of Whitehall, and

seldom took his accustomed walk in the park without a tribe of them at his heels. So "fashionable" were spaniels at that time and afterwards, that in 1712 Pope made the chief of all his sylphs and sylphides the guard of a lady's lapdog. The fashion has long continued, and still continues; and it was on this fashionable fondness for a toy, and on the regard of many others for the noble and affectionate qualities of the dog, that a traffic was established in London, which became so extensive and so lucrative, that the legislature interfered, in 1844, for the purpose of checking it.

I cannot better show the extent and lucrativeness of this trade, than by citing a list which one of the witnesses before Parliament, Mr. W. Bishop, a gunmaker, delivered in to the Committee, of "cases in which money had recently been extorted from the owners of dogs by dog-stealers and their confederates." There is no explanation of the space of time included under the vague term "recently;" but the return shows that 151 ladies and gentlemen had been the victims of the dog-stealers or dog-finders, for in this business the words were, and still are to a degree, synonyms, and of these 62 had been so victimized in 1843 and in the six months of 1844, from January to July. The total amount shown by Mr. Bishop to have been paid for the restoration of stolen dogs was 977*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*, or an average of 6*l.* 10*s.* per individual practised upon. This large sum, it is stated on the authority of the Committee, was only that which came within Mr. Bishop's knowledge, and formed, perhaps, "but a tenth part in amount" of the whole extortion. Mr. Bishop was himself in the habit of doing business "in obtaining the restitution of dogs," and had once known 18*l.*—the dog-stealers asked 25*l.*—given for the restitution of a spaniel. The full amount realized by this dog-stealing was, according to the above proportion, 9772*l.* 5*s.* In 1843, 227*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* was so realized, and 97*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* in the six months of 1844, within Mr. Bishop's personal knowledge; and if this be likewise a tenth of the whole of the commerce in this line, a year's business, it appears, averaged 2166*l.* to the stealers or finders of dogs. I select a few names from the list of those robbed of dogs, either from the amount paid, or because the names are well known. The first payment cited is from a public board, who owned a dog in their corporate capacity:

	£	s.	d.
Board of Green Cloth	8	0	0
Hon. W. Ashley (v. t.)*	15	0	0
Sir F. Burdett	6	6	0
Colonel Udney (v. t.)	12	0	0
Duke of Cambridge	30	0	0
Count Kielmansegge	9	0	0
Mr. Orby Hunter (v. t.)	15	0	0
Mrs. Holmes (v. t.)	50	0	0
Sir Richard Phillips (v. t.)	20	0	0
The French Ambassador	1	11	6
Sir R. Peel	2	0	0
Edw. Morris, Esq.	17	0	0

* "v. t." signifies "various times," of theft and of restoration.

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. Ram (v. t.)	15	0	0
Duchess of Sutherland	5	0	0
Wyndham Bruce, Esq. (v. t.)	25	0	0
Capt. Alexander (v. t.)	22	0	0
Sir De Lacy Evans	3	0	0
Judge Littledale	2	0	0
Leonino Ippolito, Esq. (v. t.)	10	0	0
Mr. Commissioner Rae	5	0	0
Lord Cholmondeley (v. t.)	12	0	0
Earl Stanhope	8	0	0
Countess of Charlemont (v. t. in 1843)	12	0	0
Lord Alfred Paget	10	0	0
Count Leodoffe (v. t.)	7	0	0
Mr. Thorne (whipmaker)	12	12	0
Mr. White (v. t.)	15	0	0
Col. Barnard (v. t.)	14	14	0
Mr. T. Holmes	15	0	0
Earl of Winchelsea	6	0	0
Lord Wharncliffe (v. t.)	12	0	0
Hon. Mrs. Dyce Sombre	2	2	0
M. Ude (v. t.)	10	10	0
Count Batthyany	14	0	0
Bishop of Ely	4	10	0
Count D'Orsay	10	0	0

Thus these 36 ladies and gentlemen paid 438*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* to rescue their dogs from professional dog-stealers, or an average, per individual, of upwards of 12*l.*

These dog appropriators, as they found that they could levy contributions not only on royalty, foreign ambassadors, peers, courtiers, and ladies of rank, but on public bodies, and on the dignitaries of the state, the law, the army, and the church, became bolder and more expert in their avocations—a boldness which was encouraged by the existing law. Prior to the parliamentary inquiry, dog-stealing was not an indictable offence. To show this, Mr. Commissioner Mayne quoted Blackstone to the Committee: "As to those animals which do not serve for food, and which therefore the law holds to have no intrinsic value, as dogs of all sorts, and other creatures kept for whim and pleasure—though a man may have a base property therein, and maintain a civil action for the loss of them, yet they are not of such estimation as that the crime of stealing them amounts to larceny." The only mode of punishment for dog-stealing was by summary conviction, the penalty being fine or imprisonment; but Mr. Commissioner Mayne did not know of any instance of a dog-stealer being sent to prison in default of payment. Although the law recognised no property in a dog, the animal was taxed; and it was complained at the time that an unhappy lady might have to pay tax for a half after he had been stolen from her. One old offender, who stole the Duke of Beaufort's dog, was transported, not for stealing the dog, but his collar.

The difficulty of proving the positive theft of a dog was extreme. In most cases, where the man was not seen actually to seize a dog which could be identified, he escaped when carried before a magistrate. "The dog-stealers," said Inspector

Shackell, "generally go two together; they have a piece of liver; they say it is merely bullock's liver, which will entice or tame the wildest or savagest dog which there can be in any yard; they give it him, and take him from his chain. At other times," continues Mr. Shackell, "they will go in the street with a little dog, rubbed over with some sort of stuff, and will entice valuable dogs away. . . . If there is a dog lost or stolen, it is generally known within five or six hours where that dog is, and they know almost exactly what they can get for it, so that it is a regular system of plunder." Mr. G. White, "dealer in live stock, dogs, and other animals," and at one time a "dealer in lions, and tigers, and all sorts of things," said of the dog-stealers: "In turning the corners of streets there are two or three of them together; one will snatch up a dog and put into his apron, and the others will stop the lady and say, 'What is the matter?' and direct the party who has lost the dog in a contrary direction to that taken."

In this business were engaged from 50 to 60 men, half of them actual stealers of the animals. The others were the receivers, and the go-betweens or "restorers." The thief kept the dog perhaps for a day or two at some public-house, and he then took it to a dog-dealer with whom he was connected in the way of business. These dealers carried on a trade in "honest dogs," as one of the witnesses styled them (meaning dogs honestly acquired), but some of them dealt principally with the dog-stealers. Their depots could not be entered by the police, being private premises, without a search-warrant—and direct evidence was necessary to obtain a search-warrant—and of course a stranger in quest of a stolen dog would not be admitted. Some of the dog-dealers would not purchase or receive dogs known to have been stolen, but others bought and speculated in them. If an advertisement appeared offering a reward for the dog, a negotiation was entered into. If no reward was offered, the owner of the dog, who was always either known or made out, was waited upon by a restorer, who undertook "to restore the dog if terms could be come to." A dog belonging to Colonel Fox was once kept six weeks before the thieves would consent to the Colonel's terms. One of the most successful restorers was a shoemaker, and mixed little with the actual stealers; the dog-dealers, however, acted as restorers frequently enough. If the person robbed paid a good round sum for the restoration of a dog, and paid it speedily, the animal was almost certain to be stolen a second time, and a higher sum was then demanded. Sometimes the thieves threatened that if they were any longer trifled with they would inflict torture on the dog, or cut its throat. One lady, Miss Brown of Bolton-street, was so worried by these threats, and by having twice to redeem her dog, "that she has left England," said Mr. Bishop, "and I really do believe for the sake of keeping the dog." It does not appear, as far as the evidence shows, that these threats of torture or death were ever carried into execution;

some of the witnesses had merely heard of such things.

The shoemaker alluded to was named Taylor, and Inspector Shackell thus describes this person's way of transacting business in the dog "restoring" line: "There is a man named Taylor, who is one of the greatest restorers in London of stolen dogs, through Mr. Bishop." [Mr. Bishop was a gun-maker in Bond-street.] "It is a disgrace to London that any person should encourage a man like that to go to extort money from ladies and gentlemen, especially a respectable man. A gentleman applied to me to get a valuable dog that was stolen, with a chain on his neck, and the name on the collar; and I heard Mr. Bishop himself say that it cost 6*l.*; that it could not be got for less. Capt. Vansittart (the owner of the dog) came out; I asked him particularly, 'Will you give me a description of the dog on a piece of paper,' and that is his writing (producing a paper). I went and made inquiry; and the captain himself, who lives in Belgrave-square, said he had no objection to give 4*l.* for the recovery of the dog, but would not give the 6*l.* I went and took a good deal of trouble about it. I found out that Taylor went first to ascertain what the owner of the dog would give for it, and then went and offered 1*l.* for the dog, then 2*l.*, and at last purchased it for 3*l.*; and went and told Capt. Vansittart that he had given 4*l.* for the dog; and the dog went back through the hands of Mr. Bishop."

The "restorers" had, it appears, the lion's share in the profits of this business. One witness had known of as much as ten guineas being given for the recovery of a favourite spaniel, or, as the witness styled it, for "working a dog back," and only two of these guineas being received by "the party." The wronged individual, thus delicately intimated as the "party," was the thief. The same witness, Mr. Hobdell, knew 14*l.* given for the restoration of a little red Scotch terrier, which he, as a dog-dealer, valued at four shillings!

One of the coolest instances of the organization and boldness of the dog-stealers was in the case of Mr. Fitzroy Kelly's "favourite Scotch terrier." The "parties," possessing it through theft, asked 12*l.* for it, and urged that it was a reasonable offer, considering the trouble they were obliged to take. "The dog-stealers were obliged to watch every night," they contended, through Mr. Bishop, "and very diligently; Mr. Kelly kept them out very late from their homes, before they could get the dog; he used to go out to dinner or down to the Temple, and take the dog with him; they had a deal of trouble before they could get it." So Mr. Kelly was expected not only to pay more than the value of his dog, but an extra amount on account of the care he had taken of his terrier, and for the trouble his vigilance had given to the thieves! The matter was settled at 6*l.* Mr. Kelly's case was but one instance.

Among the most successful of the practitioners in this street-finding business were Messrs. "Ginger" and "Carrots," but a parliamentary witness was inclined to believe that Ginger and Carrots were nicknames for the same individual,

one Barrett; although he had been in custody several times, he was considered "a very superior dog-stealer."

If the stolen dog were of little value, it was safest for the stealers to turn him loose; if he were of value, and unowned and unsought for, there was a ready market abroad. The stewards, stokers, or seamen of the Ostend, Antwerp, Rotterdam, Hamburg, and all the French steamers, readily bought stolen fancy dogs; sometimes twenty to thirty were taken at a voyage. A steward, indeed, has given 12*l.* for a stolen spaniel as a private speculation. Dealers, too, came occasionally from Paris, and bought numbers of these animals, and at what the dog foragers considered fair prices. One of the witnesses (Mr. Baker, a game dealer in Leadenhall-market) said:—"I have seen perhaps twenty or thirty dogs tied up in a little room, and I should suppose every one of them was stolen; a reward not sufficiently high being offered for their restoration, the parties get more money by taking them on board the different steam-ships and selling them to persons on board, or to people coming to this country to buy dogs and take them abroad."

The following statement, derived from Mr. Mayne's evidence, shows the extent of the dog-stealing business, but only as far as came under the cognizance of the police. It shows the number of dogs "lost" or "stolen," and of persons "charged" with the offence, and "convicted" or "discharged." Nearly all the dogs returned as lost, I may observe, were stolen, but there was no evidence to show the positive theft:—

	Dogs Stolen.	Dogs Lost.	Persons Charged.	Convicted.	Discharged.
1841	43	521	51	19	32
1842	54	561	45	17	28
1843	60	606	38	18	20

In what proportion the police-known thefts stood to the whole number, there was no evidence given; nor, I suppose, could it be given.

The dog-stealers were not considered to be connected with housebreakers, though they might frequent the same public-houses. Mr. Mayne pronounced these dog-stealers a genus, a peculiar class, "what they call dog-fanciers and dog-stealers; a sort of half-sporting, betting characters."

The law on the subject of dog-stealing (8 and 9 Vict., c. 47) now is, that "If any person shall steal any dog, every such offender shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and, being convicted thereof before any two or more justices of the peace, shall, for the first offence, at the discretion of the said justices, either be committed to the common gaol or house of correction, there to be imprisoned only, or be imprisoned and kept to hard labour, for any term not exceeding six calendar months, or shall forfeit and pay over and above the value of the said dog such sum of money, not exceeding 20*l.*, as to the said justices shall seem meet. And if any person so convicted shall

afterwards be guilty of the same offence, every such offender shall be guilty of an indictable misdemeanor, and, being convicted thereof, shall be liable to suffer such punishment, by fine or imprisonment, with or without hard labour, or by both, as the court in its discretion shall award, provided such imprisonment do not exceed eighteen months."

OF A DOG-"FINDER."—A "LURKER'S" CAREER.

CONCERNING a dog-finder, I received the following account from one who had received the education of a gentleman, but whom circumstances had driven to an association with the vagrant class, and who has written the dog-finder's biography from personal knowledge—a biography which shows the *variety* that often characterizes the career of the "lurker," or street-adventurer.

"If your readers," writes my informant, "have passed the Rubicon of 'forty years in the wilderness,' memory must bring back the time when the feet of their childish pilgrimage have trodden a beautiful grass-plot—now converted into Belgrave-square; when Pimlico was a 'village out of town,' and the 'five fields' of Chelsea were fields indeed. To write the biography of a living character is always delicate, as to embrace all its particulars is difficult; but of the truthfulness of my account there is no question."

"Probably about the year of the great frost (1814), a French Protestant refugee, named La Roche, sought asylum in this country, not from persecution, but from difficulties of a commercial character. He built for himself, in Chelsea, a cottage of wood, nondescript in shape, but pleasant in locality, and with ample accommodations for himself and his son. Wife he had none. This little bazaar of mud and sticks was surrounded with a bench of rude construction, on which the Sunday visitors to Ranelagh used to sit and sip their curds and whey, while from the entrance—far removed in those days from competition—

'There stood uprear'd, as ensign of the place,
Of blue and red and white, a chequer'd mace,
On which the paper lantern hung to tell
How cheap its owner shaved you, and how well.'

Things went on smoothly for a dozen years, when the old Frenchman departed this life.

"His boy carried on the business for a few months, when frequent complaints of 'Sunday gambling' on the premises, and loud whispers of suspicion relative to the concealment of stolen goods, induced 'Chelsea George'—the name the youth had acquired—to sell the good-will of the house, fixtures, and all, and at the eastern extremity of London to embark in business as a 'mush or mushroom-faker.' Independently of his appropriation of umbrellas, proper to the mushroom-faker's calling, Chelsea George was by no means scrupulous concerning other little matters within his reach, and if the proprietors of the 'swell cribs' within his 'beat' had no 'umbrellas to mend,' or 'old uns to sell,' he would ease the pegs in the passage of the incumbance of a greatcoat, and telegraph the same out of sight (by a colleague),

while the servant went in to make the desired inquiries. At last he was 'bowl'd out' in the very act of 'nailing a yack' (stealing a watch). He 'expiated,' as it is called, this offence by three months' exercise on the 'cockchafer' (tread-mill). Unaccustomed as yet to the novelty of the exercise, he fell through the wheel and broke one of his legs. He was, of course, permitted to finish his time in the infirmary of the prison, and on his liberation was presented with five pounds out of 'the Sheriffs' Fund.'

"Although, as I have before stated, he had never been out of England since his childhood, he had some little hereditary knowledge of the French language, and by the kind and voluntary recommendation of one of the police-magistrates of the metropolis, he was engaged by an Irish gentleman proceeding to the Continent as a sort of supernumerary servant, to 'make himself generally useful.' As the gentleman was unmarried, and mostly stayed at hotels, George was to have permanent wages and 'find himself,' a condition he invariably fulfilled, if anything was left in his way. Frequent intemperance, neglect of duty, and unaccountable departures of property from the portmanteau of his master, led to his dismissal, and Chelsea George was left, without friends or character, to those resources which have supported him for some thirty years.

"During his 'umbrella' enterprise he had lived in lodging-houses of the lowest kind, and of course mingled with the most depraved society, especially with the vast army of trading sturdy mendicants, male and female, young and old, who assume every guise of poverty, misfortune, and disease, which craft and ingenuity can devise or well-tutored hypocrisy can imitate. Thus initiated, Chelsea George could 'go upon any lurk,' could be in the last stage of consumption—actually in his dying hour—but now and then convalescent for years and years together. He could take fits and counterfeit blindness, be a respectable broken-down tradesman, or a soldier maimed in the service, and dismissed without a pension.

"Thus qualified, no vicissitudes could be either very new or very perplexing, and he commenced operations without delay, and pursued them long without desertion. The 'first move' in his mendicant career was *taking them on the fly*; which means meeting the gentry on their walks, and beseeching or at times menacing them till something is given; something in general was given to get rid of the annoyance, and, till the 'game got stale,' an hour's work, morning and evening, produced a harvest of success, and ministered to an occasion of debauchery.

"His less popular, but more upright father, had once been a dog-fancier, and George, after many years vicissitude, at length took a 'fancy' to the same profession, but not on any principles recognised by commercial laws. With what success he has practised, the ladies and gentlemen about the West-end have known, to their loss and disappointment, for more than fifteen years past.

"Although the police have been and still are on the alert, George has, in every instance, hitherto

escaped punishment, while numerous detections connected with escape have enabled the offender to hold these officials at defiance. The 'modus operandi' upon which George proceeds is to varnish his hands with a sort of gelatine, composed of the coarsest pieces of liver, fried, pulverised, and mixed up with tincture of myrrh. [This is the composition of which Inspector Shackell spoke before the Select Committee, but he did not seem to know of what the lure was concocted. My correspondent continues]: "Chelsea George caresses every animal who seems 'a likely spec,' and when his fingers have been rubbed over the dogs' noses they become easy and perhaps willing captives. A bag carried for the purpose, receives the victim, and away goes George, bag and all, to his printer's in Seven Dials. Two bills and no less—two and no more, for such is George's style of work—are issued to describe the animal that has thus been found, and which will be 'restored to its owner on payment of expenses.' One of these George puts in his pocket, the other he pastes up at a public-house whose landlord is 'fly' to its meaning, and poor 'bow-wow' is sold to a 'dealer in dogs,' not very far from Sharp's alley. In course of time the dog is discovered; the possessor refers to the 'establishment' where he bought it; the 'dealer makes himself square,' by giving the address of 'the chap he bought 'un of,' and Chelsea George shows a copy of the advertisement, calls in the publican as a witness, and leaves the place 'without the slightest imputation on his character.' Of this man's earnings I cannot speak with precision: it is probable that in a 'good year' his clear income is 200*l.*; in a bad year but 100*l.*, but, as he is very adroit, I am inclined to believe that the 'good' years somewhat predominate, and that the average income may therefore exceed 150*l.* yearly."

OF THE PRESENT STREET-SELLERS OF DOGS.

It will have been noticed that in the accounts I have given of the former street-transactions in dogs, there is no mention of the *sellors*. The information I have adduced is a condensation of the evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, and the inquiry related only to the stealing, finding, and restoring of dogs, the selling being but an incidental part of the evidence. Then, however, as now, the street-sellers were not implicated in the thefts or restitution of dogs, "just except," one man told me, "as there was a black sheep or two in every flock." The black sheep, however, of this street-calling more frequently meddled with restoring, than with "finding."

Another street dog-seller, an intelligent man,—who, however did not know so much as my first informant of the state of the trade in the olden time,—expressed a positive opinion, that no dog-stealer was now a street-hawker ("hawker" was the word I found these men use). His reasons for this opinion, in addition to his own judgment from personal knowledge, are cogent enough: "It isn't possible, sir," he said, "and this is the reason why. We are not a large body of men. We

stick pretty closely, when we are out, to the same places. We are as well-known to the police, as any men whom they most know, by sight at any rate, from meeting them every day. Now, if a lady or gentleman has lost a dog, or it's been stolen or strayed—and the most petted will sometimes stray unaccountably and follow some stranger or other—why where does she, and he, and all the family, and all the servants, first look for the lost animal? Why, where, but at the dogs we are hawking? No, sir, it can't be done now, and it isn't done in my knowledge, and it oughtn't to be done. I'd rather make 5*s.* on an honest dog than 5*l.* on one that wasn't, if there was no risk about it either." Other information convinces me that this statement is correct.

Of these street-sellers or hawkers there are now about twenty-five. There may be, however, but twenty, if so many, on any given day in the streets, as there are always some detained at home by other avocations connected with their line of life. The places they chiefly frequent are the Quadrant and Regent-street generally, but the Quadrant far the most. Indeed before the removal of the colonnade, one-half at least of all the dog-sellers of London would resort there on a very wet day, as they had the advantage of shelter, and generally of finding a crowd assembled, either lounging to pass the time, or waiting "for a fair fit," and so with leisure to look at dogs. The other places are the West-end squares, the banks of the Serpentine, Charing-cross, the Royal Exchange, and the Bank of England, and the Parks generally. They visit, too, any public place to which there may be a temporary attraction of the classes likely to be purchasers—a mere crowd of people, I was told, was no good to the dog-hawkers, it must be a crowd of people that had money—such as the assemblage of ladies and gentlemen who crowd the windows of Whitehall and Parliament-street, when the Queen opens or prorogues the houses. These spectators fill the street and the Horse-guards' portion of the park as soon as the street mass has dispersed, and they often afford the means of a good day's work to the dog people.

Two dogs, carefully cleaned and combed, or brushed, are carried in a man's arms for street-vending. A fine chain is generally attached to a neat collar, so that the dog can be relieved from the cramped feel he will experience if kept off his feet too long. In carrying these little animals for sale—for it is the smaller dogs which are carried—the men certainly display them to the best advantage. Their longer silken ears, their prominent dark eyes and black noses, and the delicacy of their fore-paws, are made as prominent as possible, and present what the masses very well call "quite a pictur." I have alluded to the display of the *Spaniels*, as they constitute considerably more than half of the street trade in dogs, the "King Charleses" and the "Blenheims" being disposed of in nearly equal quantities. They are sold for lap-dogs, pets, carriage companions or companions in a walk, and are often intelligent and affectionate. Their colours are black, black and tan, white and liver-colour, chestnut, black and white, and entirely

white, with many shades of these hues, and inter-blendings of them, one with another, and with gray.

The small *Terriers* are, however, coming more into fashion, or, as the hawkers call it, into "vogue." They are usually black, with tanned muzzles and feet, and with a keen look, their hair being short and smooth. Some, however, are preferred with long and somewhat wiry hair, and the colour is often strongly mixed with gray. A small Isle of Skye terrier—but few, I was informed know a "real Skye"—is sometimes carried in the streets, as well as the little rough dogs known as Scotch terriers. When a street-seller has a litter of terrier pups, he invariably selects the handsomest for the streets, for it happens—my informant did not know why, but he and others were positive that so it was—that the handsomest is the worst; "the worst," it must be understood as regards the possession of choice sporting qualities, more especially of pluck. The terrier's education, as regards his prowess in a rat-pit, is accordingly neglected; and if a gentleman ask, "Will he kill rats?" the answer is in the negative; but this is no disparagement to the sale, because the dog is sold, perhaps, for a lady's pet, and is not wanted to kill rats, or to "fight any dog of his weight."

The *Pugs*, for which, 40 to 50 years ago, and, in a diminished degree, 30 years back, there was, in the phrase of the day, "quite a rage," provided only the pug was hideous, are now never offered in the streets, or so rarely, that a well-known dealer assured me he had only sold one in the streets for two years. A Leadenhall tradesman, fond of dogs, but in no way connected with the trade, told me that it came to be looked upon, that a pug was a fit companion for only snappish old maids, and "so the women wouldn't have them any longer, least of all the old maids."

French Poodles are also of rare street-sale. One man had a white poodle two or three years ago, so fat and so round, that a lady, who priced it, was told by a gentleman with her, that if the head and the short legs were removed, and the inside scooped out, the animal would make a capital muff; yet even that poodle was difficult of sale at 50*s.*

Occasionally also an *Italian Greyhound*, seeming cold and shivery on the warmest days, is borne in a hawker's arms, or if following on foot, trembling and looking sad, as if mentally murmuring at the climate.

In such places as the banks of the Serpentine, or in the Regent's-park, the hawker does not carry his dogs in his arms, so much as let them trot along with him in a body, and they are sure to attract attention; or he sits down, and they play or sleep about him. One dealer told me that children often took such a fancy for a pretty spaniel, that it was difficult for either mother, governess, or nurse, to drag them away until the man was requested to call in the evening, bringing with him the dog, which was very often bought, or the hawker recompensed for his loss of time. But sometimes the dog-dealers, I heard from

several, meet with great shabbiness among rich people, who recklessly give them no small trouble, and sometimes put them to expense without the slightest return, or even an acknowledgment or a word of apology. "There's one advantage in my trade," said a dealer in live animals, "we always has to do with principals. There's never a lady would let her most favouritest maid choose her dog for her. So no parkisits."

The species which I have enumerated are all that are now sold in the streets, with the exception of an odd "plum-pudding," or coach-dog (the white dog with dark spots which runs after carriages), or an odd bull-dog, or bull-terrier, or indeed with the exception of "odd dogs" of every kind. The hawkers are, however, connected with the trade in sporting dogs, and often through the medium of their street traffic, as I shall show under the next head of my subject.

There is one peculiarity in the hawking of fancy dogs, which distinguishes it from all other branches of street-commerce. The purchasers are all of the wealthier class. This has had its influence on the manners of the dog-sellers. They will be found, in the majority of cases, quiet and deferential men, but without servility, and with little of the quality of speech; and I speak only of speech which among English people is known as "gammon," and among Irish people as "blarney." This manner is common to many; to the established trainer of race-horses for instance, who is in constant communication with persons in a very superior position in life to his own, and to whom he is exceedingly deferential. But the trainer feels that in all points connected with his not very easy business, as well, perhaps, as in general turf knowingness, his royal highness (as was the case once), or his grace, or my lord, or Sir John, was inferior to himself; and so with all his deference there mingles a strain of quiet contempt, or rather, perhaps, of conscious superiority, which is one ingredient in the formation of the manners I have hastily sketched.

The customers of the street-hawkers of dogs are ladies and gentlemen, who buy what may have attracted their admiration. The kept mistresses of the wealthier classes are often excellent customers. "Many of 'em, I know," was said to me, "dotes on a nice spaniel. Yes, and I've known gentlemen buy dogs for their misses; I couldn't be mistaken when I might be sent on with them, which was part of the bargain. If it was a two-guinea dog or so, I was told never to give a hint of the price to the servant, or to anybody. I know why. It's easy for a gentleman that wants to please a lady, and not to lay out any great matter of tin, to say that what had really cost him two guineas, cost him twenty." If one of the working classes, or a small tradesman, buy a dog in the streets, it is generally because he is "of a fancy turn," and breeds a few dogs, and traffics in them in hopes of profit.

The homes of the dog-hawkers, as far as I had means of ascertaining—and all I saw were of the same character—are comfortable and very cleanly. The small spaniels, terriers, &c.,—I do not now

allude to sporting dogs—are generally kept in kennels, or in small wooden houses erected for the purpose in a back garden or yard. These abodes are generally in some open court, or little square or "grove," where there is a free access of air. An old man who was sitting at his door in the summer evening, when I called upon a dog-seller, and had to wait a short time, told me that so quiet were his next-door neighbour's (the street-hawker's) dogs, that for some weeks, he did not know his newly-come neighbour was a dog-man; although he was an old nervous man himself, and couldn't bear any unpleasant noise or smell. The scrupulous observance of cleanliness is necessary in the rearing or keeping of small fancy dogs, for without such observance the dog would have a disagreeable odour about it, enough to repel any lady-buyer. It is a not uncommon declaration among dog-sellers that the animals are "as sweet as nuts." Let it be remembered that I have been describing the class of regular dog-sellers, making, by an open and established trade, a tolerable livelihood.

The spaniels, terriers, &c., the stock of these hawkers, are either bred by them—and they all breed a few or a good many dogs—or they are purchased of dog-dealers (not street-sellers), or of people who having a good fancy breed of "King Charleses," or "Blenheims," rear dogs, and sell them by the litter to the hawkers. The hawkers also buy dogs brought to them, "in the way of business," but they are wary how they buy any animal suspected to be stolen, or they may get into "trouble." One man, a carver and gilder, I was informed, some ten years back, made a good deal of money by his "black-patched" spaniels. These dogs had a remarkable black patch over their eyes, and so fond was the dog-fancier, or breeder of them, that when he disposed of them to street-sellers or others, he usually gave a portrait of the animals, of his own rude painting, into the bargain. These paintings he also sold, slightly framed, and I have seen them—but not so much lately—offered in the streets, and hung up in poor persons' rooms. This man lived in York-square, behind the Colosseum, then a not very reputable quarter. It is now Munster-square, and of a reformed character, but the seller of dogs and the donor of their portraits has for some time been lost sight of.

The prices at which fancy-dogs are sold in the streets are about the same for all kinds. They run from 10s. to 5l. 5s., but are very rarely so low as 10s., as "it's only a very scrubby thing for that." Two and three guineas are frequent street prices for a spaniel or small terrier. Of the dogs sold, as I have before stated, more than one-half are spaniels. Of the remainder, more than one-half are terriers; and the surplusage, after this reckoning, is composed in about equal numbers of the other dogs I have mentioned. The exportation of dogs is not above a twentieth of what it was before the appointment of the Select Committee, but a French or Belgian dealer sometimes comes to London to buy dogs.

It is not easy to fix upon any per-centage as to

the profit of the street dog-sellers. There is the keep and the rearing of the animal to consider; and there is the same uncertainty in the traffic as in all traffics which depend, not upon a demand for use, but on the caprices of fashion, or—to use the more appropriate word, when writing on such a subject—of "fancy." A hawker may sell three dogs in one day, without any extraordinary effort, or, in the same manner of trading, and frequenting the very same places, may sell only one in three days. In the winter, the dogs are sometimes offered in public houses, but seldom as regards the higher-priced animals.

From the best data I can command, it appears that each hawker sells "three dogs and a half, if you take it that way, splitting a dog like, every week the year through; that is, sir, four or five one week in the summer, when trade's brisk and days are long, and only two or three the next week, when trade may be flat, and in winter, when there isn't the same chance." Calculating, then, that seven dogs are sold by each hawker in a fortnight, at an average price of 50s. each, which is not a high average, and supposing that but twenty men are trading in this line the year through, we find that no less a sum than 9100l. is yearly expended in this street-trade. The weekly profit of the hawker is from 25s. to 40s. More than seven-eighths of these dogs are bred in this country, Italian greyhounds included.

A hawker of dogs gave me a statement of his life, but it presented so little of incident or of change, that I need not report it. He had assisted and then succeeded his father in the business; was a pains-taking, temperate, and industrious man, seldom taking even a glass of ale, so that the tenour of his way had been even, and he was prosperous enough.

I will next give an account of the connection of the hawkers of dogs with the "sporting" or "fancy" part of the business; and of the present state of dog "finding," to show the change since the parliamentary investigation.

I may observe that in this traffic the word "fancy" has two significations. A dog recommended by its beauty, or any peculiarity, so that it be suitable for a pet-dog, is a "fancy" animal: so is he if he be a fighter, or a killer of rats, however ugly or common-looking; but the term "sporting dog" seems to become more and more used in this case: nor is the first-mentioned use of the word "fancy," at all strained or very original, for it is lexicographically defined as "an opinion bred rather by the imagination than the reason, inclination, liking, caprice, humour, whim, frolick, idle scheme, vagary."

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SPORTING DOGS.

THE use, if use it may be styled, of sporting, or fighting dogs, is now a mere nothing to what it once was. There are many sports—an appellation of many a brute cruelty—which have become extinct, some of them long extinct. Herds of bears, for instance, were once maintained in this country, merely to be baited by dogs. It was even a part of royal merry-making. It was a sport altogether

congenial to the spirit of Henry VIII.; and when his daughter, then Queen Mary, visited her sister Elizabeth at Hatfield House, now the residence of the Marquess of Salisbury, there was a bear-baiting for their delectation—*after mass*. Queen Elizabeth, on her accession to the throne, seems to have been very partial to the baiting of bears and of bulls; for she not unfrequently welcomed a foreign ambassador with such exhibitions. The historians of the day intimate—they dared do no more—that Elizabeth affected these rough sports the most in the decline of life, when she wished to seem still sprightly, active, and healthful, in the eyes of her courtiers and her subjects. Laneham, whose veracity has not been impeached—though Sir Walter Scott has pronounced him to be as thorough a coxcomb as ever blotted paper—thus describes a bear-bait in presence of the Queen, and after quoting his description I gladly leave the subject. I make the citation in order to show and contrast the former with the present use of sporting dogs.

"It was a sport very pleasant to see the bear, with his pink eyes leering after his enemies, approach; the nimbleness and wait of the dog to take his advantage; and the force and experience of the bear again to avoid his assaults: if he were bitten in one place, how he would pinch in another to get free; that if he were taken once, then by what shift with biting, with clawing, with roaring, with tossing and tumbling, he would work and wind himself from them; and, when he was loose, to shake his ears twice or thrice, with the blood and the slaver hanging about his physiognomy."

The suffering which constituted the great delight of the sport was even worse than this, in bull-baiting, for the bull gored or tossed the dogs to death more frequently than the bear worried or crushed them.

The principal place for the carrying on of these barbarities was at Paris Garden, not far from St. Saviour's Church, Southwark. The clamour, and wrangling, and reviling, with and without blows, at these places, gave a proverbial expression to the language. "The place was like a bear-garden," for "gardens" they were called. These pastimes beguiled the *Sunday* afternoons more than any other time, and were among the chief delights of the people, "until," writes Dr. Henry, collating the opinions of the historians of the day, "until the refined amusements of the drama, possessing themselves by degrees of the public taste, if they did not mend the morals of the age, at least forced brutal barbarity to quit the stage."

Of this sport in Queen Anne's days, Strutt's industry has collected advertisements telling of bear and bull-baiting at Hockley-in-the-Hole, and "Tuttle"-fields, Westminster, and of dog-fights at the same places. Marylebone was another locality famous for these pastimes, and for its breed of mastiffs, which dogs were most used for baiting the bears, whilst bull-dogs were the antagonists of the bull. Gay, who was a sufficiently close observer, and a close observer of street-life too, as is well shown in

his "Trivia," specifies these localities in one of his fables:—

"Both Hockley-hole and Mary-bone
The combats of my dog have known."

Hockley-hole was not far from Smithfield-market. In the same localities the practice of these sports lingered, becoming less and less every year, until about the middle of the last century. In the country, bull-baiting was practised twenty times more commonly than bear-baiting; for bulls were plentiful, and bears were not. There are, perhaps, none of our older country towns without the relic of its bull-ring—a strong iron ring inserted into a large stone in the pavement, to which the baited bull was tied; or a knowledge of the site where the bull-ring was. The deeds of the baiting-dogs were long talked of by the vulgar. These sports, and the dog-fights, maintained the great demand for sporting dogs in former times.

The only sporting dogs now in request—apart, of course, from hunting and shooting (remnants of the old barbarous delight in torture or slaughter)—for I am treating only of the street-trade, to which fox-hounds, harriers, pointers, setters, cockers, &c., &c., are unknown—are terriers and bull-terriers. Bull-dogs cannot now be classed as sporting, but only as fancy dogs, for they are not good fighters, I was informed, one with another, their mouths being too small.

The way in which the sale of sporting dogs is connected with street-traffic is in this wise: Occasionally a sporting-dog is offered for sale in the streets, and then, of course, the trade is direct. At other times, gentlemen buying or pricing the smaller dogs, ask the cost of a bull-dog, or a bull-terrier or rat-terrier, and the street-seller at once offers to supply them, and either conducts them to a dog-dealer's, with whom he may be commercially connected, and where they can purchase those dogs, or he waits upon them at their residences with some "likely animals." A dog-dealer told me that he hardly knew what made many gentlemen so fond of bull-dogs, and they were "the fonder on 'em the more blackguard and varmint-looking the creatures was," although now they were useless for sport, and the great praise of a bull-dog, "never flew but at head in his life," was no longer to be given to him, as there were no bulls at whose heads he could now fly.

Another dog-dealer informed me—with what truth as to the judgment concerning horses I do not know, but no doubt with accuracy as to the purchase of the dogs—that Ibrahim Pacha, when in London, thought little of the horses which he saw, but was delighted with the bull-dogs, "and he weren't so werry unlike one in the face hisself," was said at the time by some of the fancy. Ibrahim, it seems, bought two of the finest and largest bull-dogs in London, of Bill George, and largest bull-dogs in London, of Bill George, giving no less than 70l. for the twain. The bull-dogs now sold by the street-folk, or through their agency in the way I have described, are from 5l. to 25l. each. The bull-terriers, of the best blood, are about the same price, or perhaps 10 to 15 per cent. lower, and rarely attaining the top price.

The bull-terriers, as I have stated, are now the chief fighting-dogs, but the patrons of those combats—of those small imitations of the savage tastes of the Roman Colosseum, may deplore the decay of the amusement. From the beginning, until well on to the termination of the last century, it was not uncommon to see announcements of "twenty dogs to fight for a collar," though such advertisements were far more common at the commencement than towards the close of the century. Until within these twelve years, indeed, dog-matches were not unfrequent in London, and the favourite time for the regalement was on Sunday mornings. There were dog-pits in Westminster, and elsewhere, to which the admission was not very easy, for only known persons were allowed to enter. The expense was considerable, the risk of punishment was not a trifle, and it is evident that this Sunday game was *not supported by the poor or working classes*. Now, dog-fights are rare. "There's not any public dog-fights," I was told, "and very seldom any in a pit at a public-house, but there's a good deal of it, I know, at the private houses of the nobles." I may observe that "the nobles" is a common designation for the rich among these sporting people.

There are, however, occasionally dog-fights in a sporting-house, and the order of the combat is thus described to me: "We'll say now that it's a scratch fight; two dogs have each their corner of a pit, and they're set to fight. They'll fight on till they go down together, and then if one leave hold, he's sponged. Then they fight again. If a dog has the worst of it he mustn't be picked up, but if he gets into his corner, then he can stay for as long as may be agreed upon, minute or half-minute time, or more than a minute. If a dog won't go to the scratch out of his corner, he loses the fight. If they fight on, why to settle it, one must be killed—though that very seldom happens, for if a dog's very much punished, he creeps to his corner and don't come out to time, and so the fight's settled. Sometimes it's agreed beforehand, that the master of a dog may give in for him; sometimes that isn't to be allowed; but there's next to nothing of this now, unless it's in private among the nobles."

It has been said that a sportsman—perhaps in the relations of life a benevolent man—when he has failed to kill a grouse or pheasant outright, and proceeds to grasp the fluttering and agonised bird and smash its skull against the barrel of his gun, reconciles himself to the sufferings he inflicts by the *pride of art*, the consciousness of skill—he has brought down his bird at a long shot; that, too, when he cares nothing for the possession of the bird. The same feeling hardens him against the most piteous, woman-like cry of the hare, so shot that it cannot run. Be this as it may, it cannot be urged that in matching a favourite dog there can be any such feeling to destroy the sympathy. The men who thus amuse themselves are then utterly insensible to any pang at the infliction of pain upon animals, witnessing the infliction of it merely for a passing excitement: and in this insensibility the whole race who cater to such

recreations of the wealthy, as well as the wealthy themselves, participate. There is another feeling too at work, and one proper to the sporting character—every man of this class considers the glories of his horse or his dog his own, a feeling very dear to selfishness.

The main sport now, however, in which dogs are the agents is rat-hunting. It is called hunting, but as the rats are all confined in a pit it is more like mere killing. Of this sport I have given some account under the head of rat-catching. The dogs used are all terriers, and are often the property of the street-sellers. The most accomplished of this terrier race was the famous dog Billy, the eclipse of the rat pit. He is now enshrined—*for a stuffed carcase is all that remains of Billy*—in a case in the possession of Charley Heslop of the Seven Bells behind St. Giles's Church, with whom Billy lived and died. His great feat was that he killed 100 rats in five minutes. I understand, however, that it is still a moot point in the sporting world, whether Billy did or did not exceed the five minutes by a very few seconds. A merely average terrier will easily kill fifty rats in a pit in eight minutes, but many far exceed such a number. One dealer told me that he would back a terrier bitch which did not weigh 12 lbs. to kill 100 rats in six minutes. The price of these dogs ranges with that of the bull-terriers.

The passion for rat-hunting is evidently on the increase, and seems to have attained the popularity once vouchsafed to cock-fighting. There are now about seventy regular pits in London, besides a few that are run up for temporary purposes. The landlord of a house in the Borough, familiar with these sports, told me that they would soon have to breed rats for a sufficient supply!

But it is not for the encounter with dogs alone the issue being that so many rats shall be killed in a given time, that these vermin are becoming a trade commodity. Another use for them is announced in the following card:—

A FERRET MATCH.

A Rare Evening's Sport for the Fancy will take place at the

"_____,"

STREET, NEW ROAD,

On Tuesday Evening next, May 27.

Mr. _____

has backed his Ferret against Mr. W. B. _____'s Ferret to kill 6 Rats each, for 10s. a-side.

He is still open to match his Ferret for £1 to £5 to kill against any other Ferret in London.

Two other Matches with Terriers will come off the same Evening.

Matches take place every Evening. Rats always on hand for the accommodation of Gentlemen to try their dogs.

Under the Management of _____

As a rat-killer, a ferret is not to be compared to a dog; but his use is to kill rats in holes,

inaccessible to dogs, or to drive the vermin out of their holes into some open space, where they can be destroyed. Ferrets are worth from 1*l.* to 4*l.* They are not animals of street-sale.

The management of these sports is principally in the hands of the street dog-sellers, as indeed is the dog-trade generally. They are the breeders, dealers, and sellers. They are compelled, as it were, to exhibit their dogs in the streets, that they may attract the attention of the rich, who would not seek them in their homes in the suburbs. The evening business in rat-hunting, &c., for such it is principally, perhaps doubles the incomes I have specified as earned merely by street-sale. The amount "turned over" in the trade in sporting-dogs yearly in London, was computed for me by one of the traders at from 12,000*l.* to 15,000*l.* He could not, however, lay down any very precise statistics, as some bull-dogs, bull-terriers, &c., were bred by butchers, tanners, publicans, horse-dealers, and others, and disposed of privately.

In my account of the former condition of the dog-trade, I had to dwell principally on the stealing and restoring of dogs. This is now the least part of the subject. The alteration in the law, consequent upon the parliamentary inquiry, soon wrought a great change, especially the enactment of the 6th Sect. in the Act 8 and 9 Vict. c. 47. "Any person who shall corruptly take any money or reward, directly or indirectly, under pretence or upon account of aiding any person to recover any dog which shall have been stolen, or which shall be in the possession of any person not being the owner thereof, shall be guilty of a misdemeanour, and punishable accordingly."

There may now, I am informed, be half a dozen fellows who make a precarious living by dog-stealing. These men generally keep out of the way of the street dog-sellers, who would not scruple, they assure me, to denounce their practices, as the more security a purchaser feels in the property and possession of a dog, the better it is for the regular business. One of these dog-stealers, dressed like a lime-burner—they generally appear as mechanics—was lately seen to attempt the enticing away of a dog. Any idle good-for-nothing fellow, slinking about the streets, would also, I was informed, seize any stray dog within his reach, and sell it for any trifle he could obtain. One dealer told me that there might still be a little doing in the "restoring" way, and with that way of life were still mixed up names which figured in the parliamentary inquiry, but it was a mere nothing to what it was formerly.

From a man acquainted with the dog business I had the following account. My informant was not at present connected with the dog and rat business, but he seemed to have what is called a "hankering after it." He had been a pot-boy in his youth, and had assisted at the bar of public-houses, and so had acquired a taste for sporting, as some "fancy coves" were among the frequenters of the tap-room and skittle-ground. He had speculated a little in dogs, which a friend reared, and he sold to the public-house customers. "At

last I went slap into the dog-trade," he said, "but I did no good at all. There's a way to do it, I dare say, or perhaps you must wait to get known, but then you may starve as you wait. I tried Smithfield first—it's a good bit since, but I can't say how long—and I had a couple of tidy little terriers that we'd bred; I thought I'd begin cheap to turn over money quick, so I asked 12s. a-piece for them. O, in course they weren't a werry pure sort. But I couldn't sell at all. If a grazier, or a butcher, or anybody looked at them, and asked their figure, they'd say, 'Twelve shillings! a dog what ain't worth more nor 12s. ain't worth a d---n!' I asked one gent a sovereign, but there was a lad near that sung out, 'Why, you only axed 12s. a bit since; ain't you a-coming it?' After that, I was glad to get away. I had five dogs when I started, and about 1*l.* 8s. 6*d.* in money, and some middling clothes; but my money soon went, for I could do no business, and there was the rent, and then the dogs must be properly fed, or they'd soon show it. At last, when things grew uncommon taper, I almost grudged the poor things their meat and their sop, for they were filling their bellies, and I was an 'ung'ring. I got so seedy, too, that it was no use trying the streets, for any one would think I'd stole the dogs. So I sold them one by one. I think I got about 5s. apiece for them, for people took their advantage on me. After that I fasted oft enough. I helped about the pits, and looked out for jobs of any kind, cleaning knives and spittoons at a public-house, and such-like, for a bite and sup. And I sometimes got leave to sit up all night in a stable or any out-house with a live rat trap that I could always borrow, and catch rats to sell to the dealers. If I could get three lively rats in a night, it was good work, for it was as good as 1s. to me. I sometimes won a pint, or a tanner, when I could cover it, by betting on a rat-hunt with helpers like myself—but it was only a few places we were let into, just where I was known—'cause I'm a good judge of a dog, you see, and if I had it to try over again, I think I could knock a tidy living out of dog-selling. Yes, I'd like to try well enough, but it's no use trying if you haven't a fairish bit of money. I'd only myself to keep all this time, but that was one too many. I got leave to sleep in hay-lofts, or stables, or anywhere, and I have slept in the park. I don't know how many months I was living this way. I got not to mind it much at last. Then I got to carry out the day and night beers for a potman what had hurt his foot and couldn't walk quick and long enough for supplying his beer, as there was five rounds every day. He lent me an apron and a jacket to be decent. After that I got a potman's situation. No, I'm not much in the dog and rat line now, and don't see much of it, for I've very little opportunity. But I've a very nice Scotch terrier to sell if you should be wanting such a thing, or hear of any of your friends wanting one. It's dirt cheap at 30s., just about a year old. Yes, I generally has a dog, and swops and sells. Most masters allows that in a quiet respectable way."

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE BIRDS.

THE bird-sellers in the streets are also the bird-catchers in the fields, plains, heaths, and woods, which still surround the metropolis; and in compliance with established precedent it may be proper that I should give an account of the catching, before I proceed to any further statement of the procedures subsequent thereunto. The bird-catchers are precisely what I have described them in my introductory remarks. An intelligent man, versed in every part of the bird business, and well acquainted with the character of all engaged in it, said they might be represented as of "the fancy," in a small way, and always glad to run after, and full of admiration of, fighting men. The bird-catcher's life is one essentially vagrant; a few gipsies pursue it, and they mix little in street-trades, except as regards tinkering; and the mass, not gipsies, who become bird-catchers, rarely leave it for any other avocation. They "catch" unto old age. During last winter two men died in the parish of Clerkenwell, both turned seventy, and both bird-catchers—a profession they had followed from the age of six.

The mode of catching I will briefly describe. It is principally effected by means of nets. A bird-net is about twelve yards square; it is spread flat upon the ground, to which it is secured by four "stars." These are iron pins, which are inserted in the field, and hold the net, but so that the two "wings," or "flaps," which are indeed the sides of the nets, are not confined by the stars. In the middle of the net is a cage with a fine wire roof, widely worked, containing the "call-bird." This bird is trained to sing loudly and cheerily, great care being bestowed upon its tuition, and its song attracts the wild birds. Sometimes a few stuffed birds are spread about the cage as if a flock were already assembling there. The bird-catcher lies flat and motionless on the ground, 20 or 30 yards distant from the edge of the net. As soon as he considers that a sufficiency of birds have congregated around his decoy, he rapidly draws towards him a line, called the "pull-line," of which he has kept hold. This is so looped and run within the edges of the net, that on being smartly pulled, the two wings of the net collapse and fly together, the stars still keeping their hold, and the net encircles the cage of the call-bird, and incloses in its folds all the wild birds allured round it. In fact it then resembles a great cage of net-work. The captives are secured in cages—the call-bird continuing to sing as if in mockery of their struggles—or in hampers proper for the purpose, which are carried on the man's back to London.

The use of the call-bird as a means of decoy is very ancient. Sometimes—and more especially in the dark, as in the taking of nightingales—the bird-catcher imitates the notes of the birds to be captured. A small instrument has also been used for the purpose, and to this Chaucer, although figuratively, alludes: "So, the birde is begyled with the merry voice of the foulers' whistel, when it is closed in your nette."

Sometimes, in the pride of the season, a bird-catcher engages a costermonger's poney or donkey cart, and perhaps his boy, the better to convey the birds to town. The net and its apparatus cost 1*l.* The call-bird, if he have a good wild note—goldfinches and linnets being principally so used—is worth 10*s.* at the least.

The bird-catcher's life has many, and to the constitution of some minds, irresistible charms. There is the excitement of "sport"—not the headlong excitement of the chase, where the blood is stirred by motion and exercise—but still sport surpassing that of the angler, who plies his finest art to capture one fish at a time, while the bird-catcher despises an individual capture, but seeks to ensnare a flock at one twitch of a line. There is, moreover, the attraction of idleness, at least for intervals, and sometimes long intervals—perhaps the great charm of fishing—and basking in the lazy sunshine, to watch the progress of the snares. Birds, however, and more especially linnets, are caught in the winter, when it is not quite such holiday work. A bird-dealer (not a street-seller) told me that the greatest number of birds he had ever heard of as having been caught at one pull was nearly 200. My informant happened to be present on the occasion. "Pulls" of 50, 100, and 150 are not very unfrequent when the young broods are all on the wing.

Of the bird-catchers, including all who reside in Woolwich, Greenwich, Hounslow, Isleworth, Barnet, Uxbridge, and places of similar distance, all working for the London market, there are about 200. The localities where these men "catch," are the neighbourhoods of the places I have mentioned as their residences, and at Holloway, Hampstead, Highgate, Finchley, Battersea, Blackheath, Putney, Mortlake, Chiswick, Richmond, Hampton, Kingston, Eltham, Carshalton, Streatham, the Tootings, Woodford, Epping, Snarebrook, Walthamstow, Tottenham, Edmon-ton—wherever, in fine, are open fields, plains, or commons around the metropolis.

I will first enumerate the several birds sold in the streets, as well as the supply to the shops by the bird-catchers. I have had recourse to the best sources of information. Of the number of birds which I shall specify as "supplied," or "caught," it must be remembered that a not-very-small proportion die before they can be trained to song, or inured to a cage life. I shall also give the street prices. All the birds are caught by the nets with call-birds, excepting such as I shall notice. I take the singing birds first.

The *Linnet* is the cheapest and among the most numerous of what may be called the London-caught birds, for it is caught in the nearer suburbs, such as Holloway. The linnet, however,—the brown linnet being the species—is not easily reared, and for some time ill brooks confinement. About one-half of those birds die after having been caged a few days. The other evening a bird-catcher supplied 26 fine linnets to a shopkeeper in Pentonville, and next morning ten were dead. But in some of those bird shops, and bird chambers connected with the shops, the heat at the time

the new broods are caught and caged, is excessive; and the atmosphere, from the crowded and compulsory fellowship of pigeons, and all descriptions of small birds, with white rats, hedgehogs, guinea-pigs, and other creatures, is often very foul; so that the wonder is, not that so many die, but that so many survive.

Some bird-connoisseurs prefer the note of the linnet to that of the canary, but this is far from a general preference. The young birds are sold in the streets at 3*d.* and 4*d.* each; the older birds, which are accustomed to sing in their cages, from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* The "catch" of linnets—none being imported—may be estimated, for London alone, at 70,000 yearly. The mortality I have mentioned is confined chiefly to that year's brood. One-tenth of the catch is sold in the streets. Of the quality of the street-sold birds I shall speak hereafter.

The *Bullfinch*, which is bold, familiar, docile, and easily attached, is a favourite cage-bird among the Londoners; I speak of course as regards the body of the people. It is as readily sold in the streets as any other singing bird. Piping bullfinches are also a part of street-trade, but only to a small extent, and with bird-sellers who can carry them from their street pitches, or call on their rounds, at places where they are known, to exhibit the powers of the bird. The piping is taught to these finches when very young, and they must be brought up by their tutor, and be familiar with him. When little more than two months old, they begin to whistle, and then their training as pipers must commence. This tuition, among professional bullfinch-trainers, is systematic. They have schools of birds, and teach in bird-classes of from four to seven members in each, six being a frequent number. These classes, when their education commences, are kept unfed for a longer time than they have been accustomed to, and they are placed in a darkened room. The bird is wakeful and attentive from the want of his food, and the tune he is to learn is played several times on an instrument made for the purpose, and known as a bird-organ, its notes resembling those of the bullfinch. For an hour or two the young pupils mope silently, but they gradually begin to imitate the notes of the music played to them. When one commences—and he is looked upon as the most likely to make a good piper—the others soon follow his example. The light is then admitted and a portion of food, but not a full meal, is given to the birds. Thus, by degrees, by the playing on the bird-organ (a flute is sometimes used), by the admission of light, which is always agreeable to the finch, and by the reward of more and more, and sometimes more relishable food, the pupil "practises" the notes he hears continuously. The birds are then given into the care of boys, who attend to them without intermission in a similar way, their original teacher still overlooking, praising, or rating his scholars, till they acquire a tune which they pipe as long as they live. It is said, however, that only five per cent. of the number taught pipe in perfect harmony. The bullfinch is often pettish in his piping, and will in

many instances not pipe at all, unless in the presence of some one who feeds it, or to whom it has become attached.

The system of training I have described is that practised by the Germans, who have for many years supplied this country with the best piping bullfinches. Some of the dealers will undertake to procure English-taught bullfinches which will pipe as well as the foreigners, but I am told that this is a prejudice, if not a trick, of trade. The mode of teaching in this country, by barbers, weavers, and bird-fanciers generally, who seek for a profit from their pains-taking, is somewhat similar to that which I have detailed, but with far less elaborateness. The price of a piping bullfinch is about three guineas. These pipers are also reared and taught in Leicestershire and Norfolk, and sent to London, as are the singing bullfinches which do not "pipe."

The bullfinches netted near London are caught more numerous about Hounslow than elsewhere. In hard winters they are abundant in the outskirts of the metropolis. The yearly supply, including those sent from Norfolk, &c., is about 30,000. The bullfinch is "hearty compared to the linnet," I was told, but of the amount which are the objects of trade, not more than two-thirds live many weeks. The price of a good young bullfinch is 2*s.* 6*d.* and 3*s.* They are often sold in the streets for 1*s.* The hawking or street trade comprises about a tenth of the whole.

The sale of piping bullfinches is, of course, small, as only the rich can afford to buy them. A dealer estimated it at about 400 yearly.

The *Goldfinch* is also in demand by street customers, and is a favourite from its liveliness, beauty, and sometimes sagacity. It is, moreover, the longest lived of our caged small birds, and will frequently live to the age of fifteen or sixteen years. A goldfinch has been known to exist twenty-three years in a cage. Small birds, generally, rarely live more than nine years. This finch is also in demand because it most readily of any bird pairs with the canary, the produce being known as a "mule," which, from its prettiness and powers of song, is often highly valued.

Goldfinches are sold in the streets at from 6*d.* to 1*s.* each, and when there is an extra catch, and they are nearly all caught about London, and the shops are fully stocked, at 3*d.* and 4*d.* each. The yearly catch is about the same as that of the linnet, or 70,000, the mortality being perhaps 30 per cent. If any one casts his eye over the stock of hopping, chirping little creatures in the window of a bird-shop, or in the close array of small cages hung outside, or at the stock of a street-seller, he will be struck by the preponderating number of goldfinches. No doubt the dealer, like any other shopkeeper, dresses his window to the best advantage, putting forward his smartest and prettiest birds. The demand for the goldfinch, especially among women, is steady and regular. The street-sale is a tenth of the whole.

The *Chaffinch* is in less request than either of its congeners, the bullfinch or the goldfinch, but the catch is about half that of the bullfinch, and

with the same rate of mortality. The prices are also the same.

Greenfinches (called *green birds*, or sometimes *green linnets*, in the streets) are in still smaller request than are chaffinches, and that to about one-half. Even this smaller stock is little saleable, as the bird is regarded as "only a middling singer." They are sold in the open air, at 2*d.* and 3*d.* each, but a good "green bird" is worth 2*s.* 6*d.*

Larks are of good sale and regular supply, being perhaps more readily caught than other birds, as in winter they congregate in large quantities. It may be thought, to witness the restless throwing up of the head of the caged sky-lark, as if he were longing for a soar in the air, that he was very impatient of restraint. This does not appear to be so much the fact, as the lark adapts himself to the poor confines of his prison—poor indeed for a bird who soars higher and longer than any of his class—more rapidly than other wild birds, like the linnet, &c. The mortality of larks, however, approaches one-third.

The yearly "take" of larks is 60,000. This includes sky-larks, wood-larks, tit-larks, and mud-larks. The sky-lark is in far better demand than any of the others for his "stoutness of song," but some prefer the tit-lark, from the very absence of such stoutness. "Fresh-caught" larks are vended in the streets at 6*d.* and 8*d.*, but a seasoned bird is worth 2*s.* 6*d.* One-tenth is the street-sale.

The larks for the supply of fashionable tables are never provided by the London bird-catchers, who catch only "singing larks," for the shop and street-traffic. The edible larks used to be highly esteemed in pies, but they are now generally roasted for consumption. They are principally the produce of Cambridgeshire, with some from Bedfordshire, and are sent direct (killed) to Leadenhall-market, where about 215,000 are sold yearly, being nearly two-thirds of the gross London consumption.

It is only within these twelve or fifteen years that the London dealers have cared to trade to any extent in *Nightingales*, but they are now a part of the stock of every bird-shop of the more flourishing class. Before that they were merely exceptional as cage-birds. As it is, the "domestication," if the word be allowable with reference to the nightingale, is but partial. Like all migratory birds, when the season for migration approaches, the caged nightingale shows symptoms of great uneasiness, dashing himself against the wires of his cage or his aviary, and sometimes dying in a few days. Many of the nightingales, however, let the season pass away without showing any consciousness that it was, with the race of birds to which they belonged, one for a change of place. To induce the nightingale to sing in the daylight, a paper cover is often placed over the cage, which may be gradually and gradually withdrawn until it can be dispensed with. This is to induce the appearance of twilight or night. On the subject of this night-singing, however, I will cite a short passage.

"The Nightingale is usually supposed to withhold his notes till the sun has set, and then to be

the only songster left. This is, however, not quite true, for he sings in the day, often as sweetly and as powerfully as at night; but amidst the general chorus of other singing birds, his efforts are little noticed. Neither is he by any means the only feathered musician of the night. The Wood-lark will, to a very late hour, pour forth its rich notes, flying in circles round the female, when sitting on her nest. The Sky-lark, too, may frequently be heard till near midnight high in the air, soaring as if in the brightness of a summer's morning. Again we have listened with pleasure long after dark to the warblings of a Thrush, and been awakened at two in the morning by its sweet serenade." It appears, however, that this night-singing, as regards England, is on fine summer nights when the darkness is never very dense. In far northern climates larks sing all night.

I am inclined to believe that the mortality among nightingales, before they are reconciled to their new life, is higher than that of any other bird, and much exceeding one-half. The dealers may be unwilling to admit this; but such mortality is, I have been assured on good authority, the case; besides that, the habits of the nightingale unfit him for a cage existence.

The capture of the nightingale is among the most difficult achievements of the profession. None are caught nearer than Epping, and the catchers travel considerable distances before they have a chance of success. These birds are caught at night, and more often by their captor's imitation of the nightingale's note, than with the aid of the call-bird. Perhaps 1000 nightingales are reared yearly in London, of which three-fourths may be, more or less, songsters. The inferior birds are sold at about 2*s.* each, the street-sale not reaching 100, but the birds, "caged and singing," are worth 1*l.* each, when of the best; and 10*s.* 12*s.* and 15*s.* each when approaching the best. The mortality I have estimated.

Redbreasts are a portion of the street-sold birds, but the catch is not large, not exceeding 3000, with a mortality of about a third. Even this number, small as it is, when compared with the numbers of other singing birds sold, is got rid of with difficulty. There is a popular feeling repugnant to the imprisonment, or coercion in any way, of "a robin," and this, no doubt has its influence in moderating the demand. The redbreast is sold, when young, both in the shops and streets for 1*s.*, when caged and singing, sometimes for 1*l.* These birds are considered to sing best by candlelight. The street-sale is a fifth, or sometimes a quarter, all young birds, or with the rarest exceptions.

The *Thrush*, *Throstle*, or (in Scottish poetry) *Mavis*, is of good sale. It is reared by hand, for the London market, in many of the villages and small towns at no great distance, the nests being robbed of the young, wherever they can be found. The nestling food of the infant thrush is grubs, worms, and snails, with an occasional moth or butterfly. On this kind of diet the young thrushes are reared until they are old enough for sale to the shopkeeper, or to any private patron. Thrushes are also netted, but



THE RUBBISH CARTER.

[From a Photograph.]

those reared by hand are much the best, as such a rearing disposes the bird the more to enjoy his cage life, as he has never experienced the delights of the free hedges and thickets. This process the catchers call "rising" from the nest. A throstle thus "rose" soon becomes familiar with his owner—always supposing that he be properly fed and his cage duly cleaned, for all birds detest dirt—and among the working-men of England no bird is a greater favourite than the thrush; indeed few other birds are held in such liking by the artisan class. About a fourth of the thrushes supplied to the metropolitan traders have been thus "rose," and as they must be sufficiently grown before they will be received by the dealers, the mortality among them, when once able to feed themselves, in their wicker-work cages, is but small. Perhaps somewhere about a fourth perish in this hand-rearing, and some men, the aristocrats of the trade, let a number go when they have ascertained that they are hens, as these men exert themselves to bring up thrushes to sing well, and then they command good prices. Often enough, however, the hens are sold cheap in the streets. Among the catch supplied by netting, there is a mortality of perhaps more than a third. The whole take is about 35,000. Of the sale the streets have a tenth proportion. The prices run from 2s. 6d. and 3s. for the "fresh-caught," and 10s., 1l., and as much as 2l. for a seasoned throstle in high song. Indeed I may observe that for any singing bird, which is considered greatly to excel its mates, a high price is obtainable.

Blackbirds appear to be less prized in London than thrushes, for, though with a mellower note, the blackbird is not so free a singer in captivity. They are "rose" and netted in the same manner as the thrush, but the supply is less by one-fifth. The prices, mortality, street-sale, &c., are in the same ratio.

The street-sale of *Canaries* is not large; not so large, I am assured by men in the trade, as it was six or seven years ago, more especially as regarded the higher-priced birds of this open-air traffic. *Canaries* are now never brought from the group of islands, thirteen in number, situate in the North Atlantic and near the African coast, and from which they derive their name. To these islands and to these alone (as far as is known to ornithologists) are they indigenous. The canary is a slow flyer and soon wearied; this is one reason no doubt for its not migrating. This delightful songster was first brought into England in the reign of Elizabeth, at the era when so many foreign luxuries (as they were then considered, and stigmatised accordingly) were introduced; of these were potatoes, tobacco, turkeys, nectaries, and canaries. I have seen no account of what was the cost of a canary-bird when first imported, but there is no doubt that they were very dear, as they were found only in the abodes of the wealthy. This bird-trade seems, moreover, to have been so profitable to the Spaniards, then and now the possessors of the isles, that a government order for the killing or setting at liberty of all hen canaries, caught with the males,

was issued in order that the breed might be confined to its native country; a decree not attended with successful results as regards the intention of the then ruling powers.

The foreign supply to this country is now principally from Holland and Germany, where canaries are reared in great numbers, with that care which the Dutch in especial bestow upon everything on which money-making depends, and whence they are sent or brought over in the spring of every year, when from nine to twelve months old. Thirty years ago, the Tyrolese were the principal breeders and purveyors of canaries for the London market. From about the era of the peace of 1814, on the first abdication of Napoleon, for ten or twelve years they brought over about 2000 birds yearly. They travelled the whole way on foot, carrying the birds in cages on their backs, until they reached whatever port in France or the Netherlands (as Belgium then was) they might be bound for. The price of a canary of an average quality was then from 5s. to 8s. 6d., and a fair proportion were street-sold. At that period, I was told, the principal open-air sale for canaries (and it is only of that I now write) was in Whitechapel and Bethnal-green. All who are familiar with those localities may smile to think that the birds chirping and singing in these especially urban places, were bred for such street-traffic in the valleys of the Rætian Alps! I presume that it was the greater rapidity of communication, and the consequent diminished cost of carriage, between England, Holland, and Germany, that caused the Tyrolese to abandon the trade as one unremunerative—even to men who will live on bread, onions, and water.

I have, perhaps, dwelt somewhat at length on this portion of the subject, but it is the most curious portion of all, for the canary is the only one of all our singing-birds which is *solely* a household thing. Linnets, finches, larks, nightingales, thrushes, and blackbirds, are all free denizens of the open air, as well as prisoners in our rooms, but the canary with us is unknown in a wild state. "Though not very handy," wrote, in 1848, a very observant naturalist, the late Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, "canaries might possibly be naturalized in our country, by putting their eggs in the nests of sparrows, chaffinches, or other similar birds. The experiment has been partially tried in Berkshire, where a person for years kept them in an exposed aviary out of doors, and where they seemed to suffer no inconvenience from the severest weather."

The breeding of canaries in this country for the London supply has greatly increased. They are bred in Leicester and Norwich, weavers being generally fond of birds. In London itself, also, they are bred to a greater extent than used to be the case, barbers being among the most assiduous rearers of the canary. A dealer who trades in both foreign and home-bred birds thought that the supply from the country, and from the Continent, was about the same, 8000 to 9000 each, not including what were sold by the barbers, who are regarded as "fanciers," not to say interlopers;

by the dealers. No species of birds are ever bred by the shop-dealers. The price of a brisk canary is 5s. or 6s.; but they are sold in the streets as low as 1s. each, a small cage worth 6d. being sometimes included. These, however, are hens. As in the life of a canary there is no transition from freedom to enthrallment, for they are in a cage in the egg, and all their lives afterwards, they are subject to a far lower rate of mortality than other street-sold birds. A sixteenth of the number above stated as forming the gross supply are sold in the streets.

The foregoing enumeration includes all the singing-birds of street-traffic and street-folk's supply. The trade I have thus sketched is certainly one highly curious. We find that there is round London a perfect belt of men, employed from the first blush of a summer's dawn, through the heats of noon, in many instances during the night, and in the chills of winter; and all labouring to give to city-pent men of humble means one of the peculiar pleasures of the country—the song of the birds. It must not be supposed that I would intimate that the bird-catcher's life, as regards his field and wood pursuits, is one of hardship. On the contrary, it seems to me to be the very one which, perhaps unsuspected by himself, is best suited to his tastes and inclinations. Nor can we think similar pursuits partake much of hardship when we find independent men follow them for mere sport, to be rid of lassitude.

But the detail of the birds captured for the Londoners by no means ends here. I have yet to describe those which are not songsters, and which are a staple of street-traffic to a greater degree than birds of song. Of these my notice may be brief.

The trade in *Sparrows* is almost exclusively a street-trade and, numerically considered, not an inconsiderable one. They are netted in quantities in every open place near London, and in many places in London. It is common enough for a bird-catcher to obtain leave to catch sparrows in a wood-yard, a brick-field, or places where is an open space certain to be frequented by these bold and familiar birds. The sparrows are sold in the streets generally at 1d. each, sometimes a halfpenny, and sometimes 1½d., and for no purpose of enjoyment (as in the case of the cheap song birds), but merely as playthings for children; in other words, for creatures wilfully or ignorantly to be tortured. Strings are tied to their legs and so they have a certain degree of freedom, but when they offer to fly away they are checked, and kept fluttering in the air as a child will flutter a kite. One man told me that he had sometimes sold as many as 200 sparrows in the back streets about Smithfield on a fine Sunday. These birds are not kept in cages, and so they can only be bought for a plaything. They oft enough escape from their persecutors.

But it is not merely for the sport of children that sparrows are purveyed, but for that of grown men, or—as Charles Lamb, if I remember rightly,

qualifies it, when he draws a Pentonville sports man with a little shrubbery for his preserve—for grown cockneys. The birds for adult recreation are shot in sparrow-matches; the gentleman slaughtering the most being, of course, the hero of a sparrow "*battue*." One dealer told me that he had frequently supplied dozens of sparrows for these matches, at 2s. the dozen, but they were required to be fine bold birds! One dealer thought that during the summer months there were as many sparrows caught close to and within London as there were goldfinches in the less urban districts. These birds are sold direct from the hands of the catcher, so that it is less easy to arrive at statistics than when there is the intervention of dealers who know the extent of the trade carried on. I was told by several, who had no desire to exaggerate, that to estimate this sparrow-sale at 10,000 yearly, sold to children and idlers in the streets, was too low, but at that estimate, the outlay, at 1d. a sparrow, would be 850l. The adult sportsmen may slaughter half that number yearly in addition. The sporting sparrows are derived from the shopkeepers, who, when they receive the order, instruct the catchers to go to work.

Starlings used to be sold in very great quantities in the streets, but the trade is now but the shadow of its former state. The starling, too, is far less numerous than it was, and has lost much of its popularity. It is now seldom seen in flocks of more than 40, and it is rare to see a flock at all, although these birds at one period mustered in congregations of hundreds and even thousands. Ruins, and the roofs of ancient houses and barns—for they love the old and decaying buildings—were once covered with them. The starling was moreover the poor man's and the peasant's parrot. He was taught to speak, and sometimes to swear. But now the starling, save as regards his own note, is mute. He is seldom tamed or domesticated and taught tricks. It is true starlings may be seen carried on sticks in the street as if the tamest of the tame, but they are "braced." Tapes are passed round their bodies, and so managed that the bird cannot escape from the stick, while his fetters are concealed by his feathers, the street-seller of course objecting to allow his birds to be handled.

Starlings are caught chiefly Ilford way, I was told, and about Turnham-green. Some are "rose" from the nest. The price is from 9d. to 2s. each. About 3000 are sold annually, half in the streets. After having been braced, or ill-used, the starling, if kept as a solitary bird, will often mope and die.

Jackdaws and *Maggies* are in less demand than might be expected from their vivacity. Many of the other birds are supplied the year round, but daws and pies for only about two months, from the middle of June to the middle of August. The price is from 6d. to 1s. and about 1000 are thus disposed of, in equal quantities, one-half in the streets. These birds are for the most part reared from the nest, but little pains appear to be taken with them.

The *Redpole* is rather a favourite bird among street-buyers, especially where children are allowed to choose birds from a stock. I am told that they most frequently select a goldfinch or a redpole. These birds are supplied for about two months. About 800 or 1000 is the extent of the take. The mortality and prices are the same as with the goldfinch, but a goldfinch in high song is worth twice as much as the best redpole. About a third of the sale of the redpole is in the streets.

There are also 150 or 200 *Black-caps* sold annually in the open air, at from 3d. to 5d. each.

These are the chief birds, then, that constitute the trade of the streets, with the addition of an occasional yellow-hammer, wren, jay, or even cuckoo. They also, with the addition of pigeons, form the stock of the bird-shops.

I have shown the number of birds caught, the number which survive for sale, and the cost; and, as usual, under the head of "Statistics," will be shown the whole annual expenditure. This, however, is but a portion of the London outlay on birds. There is, in addition, the cost of their cages and of their daily food. The commonest and smallest cage costs 6d., a frequent price being 1s. A thrush's basket-cage cannot be bought, unless rubbish, under 2s. 6d. I have previously shown the amount paid for the green food of birds, and for their turfs, &c., for these are all branches of street-commerce. Of their other food, such as rape and canary-seed, German paste, chopped eggs, biscuit, &c., I need but intimate the extent by showing what birds will consume, as it is not a portion of street-trade.

A goldfinch, it has been proved by experimentalising ornithologists, will consume 90 grains, in weight, of canary-seed in 24 hours. A greenfinch, for whose use 80 grains of wheat were weighed out, ate 79 of them in 24 hours; and, on another occasion ate, in the same space of time, 100 grains of a paste of eggs and flour. Sixteen canaries consumed 100 grains' weight of food, each bird, in 24 hours. The amount of provision thus eaten was about one-sixth of the full weight of the bird's body, or an equivalent, were a man to swallow victuals in the same proportion, of 25 lbs. in 24 hours. I may remark, moreover, that the destruction of caterpillars, insects, worms, &c., by the small birds, is enormous, especially during the infancy of their nestlings. A pair of sparrows fed their brood 36 times an hour for 14 hours of a long spring day, and, it was calculated, administered to them in one week 3400 caterpillars. A pair of chaffinches, also, carried nearly as great a number of caterpillars for the maintenance of their young.

The singing-birds sold in the street are offered either singly in small cages, when the cage is sold with the bird, or they are displayed in a little flock in a long cage, the buyer selecting any he prefers. They always appear lively in the streets, or indeed a sale would be hopeless, for no one would buy a dull or sick bird. The captives are seen to hop and heard to chirp, but

they are not often heard to sing when thus offered to the public, and it requires some little attention to judge what is but an impatient flutter, and what is the fruit of mere hilarity.

The places where the street-sellers more especially offer their birds are—Smithfield, Clerkenwell-green, Lisson-grove, the City and New roads, Shepherdess-walk, Old Street-road, Shoreditch, Spitalfields, Whitechapel, Tower-hill, Ratcliffe-highway, Commercial-road East, Poplar, Billingsgate, Westminster Broadway, Covent-garden, Blackfriars-road, Bermondsey (mostly about Dock-head), and in the neighbourhood of the Borough Market. The street-sellers are also itinerant, carrying the birds in cages, holding them up to tempt the notice of people whom they see at the windows, or calling at the houses. The sale used to be very considerable in the "Cut" and Lambeth-walk. Sometimes the cages with their inmates are fastened to any contiguous rail; sometimes they are placed on a bench or stall; and occasionally in cages on the ground.

To say nothing, in this place, of the rogueries of the bird-trade, I will proceed to show how the street-sold birds are frequently inferior to those in the shops. The catcher, as I have stated, is also the street-seller. He may reach the Dials, or whatever quarter the dealer he supplies may reside in, with perhaps 30 linnets and as many goldfinches. The dealer selects 24 of each, refusing the remaining dozen, on account of their being hens, or hurt, or weakly birds. The man then resorts to the street to effect a sale of that dozen, and thus the streets have the refuse of the shops. On the other hand, however, when the season is at its height, and the take of birds is the largest, as at this time of year, the shops are "stocked." The cages and recesses are full, and the dealer's anxiety is to sell before he purchases more birds. The catchers proceed in their avocation; they must dispose of their stock; the shopkeeper will not buy "at any figure," and so the streets are again resorted to, and in this way fine birds are often sold very cheap. Both these liabilities prevail the year through, but most in the summer, and keep up a sort of poise; but I apprehend that the majority, perhaps the great majority, of the street-sold birds, are of an inferior sort, but then the price is much lower. On occasions when the bird-trade is overdone, the catchers will sell a few squirrels, or gather snails for the shops.

The buyers of singing-birds are eminently the working people, along with the class of tradesmen whose means and disposition are of the same character as those of the artisan. Grooms and coachmen are frequently fond of birds; many are kept in the several mews, and often the larger singing-birds, such as blackbirds and thrushes. The fondness of a whole body of artificers for any particular bird, animal, or flower, is remarkable. No better instance need be cited than that of the Spitalfields weavers. In the days of their prosperity they were the cultivators of choice tulips, afterwards, though not in so full a degree, of dahlias, and their pigeons were the best "fliers" in England. These things were

accomplished with little cost, comparatively, for the weavers were engaged in tasks, grateful and natural to their tastes and habitudes; and what was expense in the garden or aviary of the rich, was an exercise of skill and industry on the part of the silk-weaver. The humanising and even refining influence of such pursuits is very great, and as regards these pure pleasures it is not seldom that the refinement which can appreciate them has proceeded not *to* but *from* the artisans. The operatives have often been in the van of those who have led the public taste from delighting in the cruelty and barbarity of bear and bull-baiting and of cock-fighting—among the worst of all possible schools, and very influential those schools were—to the delight in some of the most beautiful works of nature. It is easy to picture the difference of mood between a man going home from a dog-fight at night, or going home from a visit to his flowers, or from an examination to satisfy himself that his birds were “all right.” The families of the two men felt the difference. Many of the rich appear to remain mere savages in their tastes and sports. Battues, lion and hippopotamus hunting, &c.,—all are mere civilized barbarisms. When shall we learn, as Wordsworth says,

“Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels?”

But the change in Spitalfields is great. Since the prevalence of low wages the weaver's garden has disappeared, and his pigeon-cote, even if its timbers have not rotted away, is no longer stocked with carriers, dragoons, horsemen, jacobins, monks, poulterers, turtles, tumblers, fantails, and the many varieties of what is in itself a variety—the fancy-pigeon. A thrush, or a linnets, may still sing to the clatter of the loom, but that is all. The culture of the tulip, the dahlia, and (sometimes) of the fuchsia, was attended, as I have said, with small cost, still it *was* cost, and the weaver, as wages grew lower, could not afford either the outlay or the loss of time. To cultivate flowers, or rear doves, so as to make them a means of subsistence, requires a man's whole time, and to such things the Spitalfields man did not devote his time, but his leisure.

The readers who have perused this work from its first appearance will have noticed how frequently I have had to comment on the always realized indication of good conduct, and of a superior taste and generally a superior intelligence, when I have found the rooms of working people contain flowers and birds. I could adduce many instances. I have seen and heard birds in the rooms of tailors, shoemakers, coopers, cabinet-makers, hatters, dressmakers, carriers, and street-sellers,—all people of the best class. One of the most striking, indeed, was the room of a street-confectioner. His family attended to the sale of the sweets, and he was greatly occupied at home in their manufacture, and worked away at his peppermint-rock, in the very heart of one of the thickest populated parts of London, surrounded by the song of thrushes, linnets, and goldfinches, all kept, not for profit, but because he “loved” to have them about him. I have

seldom met a man who impressed me more favourably.

The flowers in the room are more attributable to the superintending taste of a wife or daughter, and are found in the apartments of the same class of people.

There is a marked difference between the buyers or keepers of birds and of dogs in the working classes, especially when the dog is of a sporting or “varmint” sort. Such a dog-keeper is often abroad and so his home becomes neglected; he is interested about rat-hunts, knows the odds on or against the dog's chance to dispatch his rats in the time allotted, loses much time and customers, his employers grumbling that the work is so slowly executed, and so custom or work falls off. The bird-lover, on the other hand, is generally a more domestic, and, perhaps consequently, a more prosperous and contented man. It is curious to mark the refining qualities of particular trades. I do not remember seeing a bulldog in the possession of any of the Spitalfields silk-weavers: with them all was flowers and birds. The same I observed with the tailors and other kindred occupations. With slaughterers, however, and drovers, and Billingsgatemens, and coachmen, and cabmen, whose callings naturally tend to blunt the sympathy with suffering, the gentler tastes are comparatively unknown. The dogs are almost all of the “varmint” kind, kept either for rat-killing, fighting, or else for their ugliness. For “pet” or “fancy” dogs they have no feeling, and in singing birds they find little or no delight.

OF THE BIRD-CATCHERS WHO ARE STREET-SELLERS.

THE street-sellers of birds are called by themselves “hawkers,” and sometimes “bird hawkers.”

Among the bird-catchers I did not hear of any very prominent characters at present, three of the best known and most prominent having died within these ten months. I found among all I saw the vagrant characteristics I have mentioned, and often united with a quietness of speech and manner which might surprise those who do not know that any pursuit which entails frequent silence, watchfulness, and solitude, forms such manners. Perhaps the man most talked of by his fellow-labourers, was Old Gilham, who died lately. Gilham was his real name, for among the bird-catchers there is not that prevalence of nicknames which I found among the costermongers and patterers. One reason no doubt is, that these bird-folk do not meet regularly in the markets. It is rarely, however, that they know each other's surnames, Old Gilham being an exception. It is Old Tom, or Young Mick, or Jack, or Dick, among them. I heard of no John or Richard.

For 60 years, almost without intermission, Old Gilham caught birds. I am assured that to state that his “catch” during this long period averaged 100 a week, hens included, is within the mark, for he was a most indefatigable man; even at that computation, however, he would have been the captor, in his lifetime, of three hundred and twelve

thousand birds! A bird-catcher who used sometimes to start in the morning with Old Gilham, and walk with him until their roads diverged, told me that of late years the old man's talk was a good deal of where he had captured his birds in the old times: “Why, Ned,” he would say to me, proceeded his companion, “I've caught goldfinches in lots at Chalk Farm, and all where there's that railway smoke and noise just by the hill (Primrose Hill). I can't think where they'll drive all the birds to by and bye. I dare say the first time the birds saw a railway with its smoke, and noise to frighten them, and all the fire too, they just thought it was the devil was come.” He wasn't a fool, wasn't old Gilham, sir. “Why,” he'd go on for to say, “I've laid many a day at Ball's Pond there, where it's nothing but a lot of houses now, and caught hundreds of birds. And I've caught them where there's all them grand squares Pimlico way, and in Britannia Fields, and at White Condit. What with all these buildings, and them barbers, I don't know what the bird-trade'll come to. It's hard for a poor man to have to go to Finchley for birds that he could have caught at Holloway once, but people never thinks of that. When I were young I could make three times as much as I do now. I've got a pound for a good sound chaffinch as I brought up myself.” Ah, poor old Gilham, sir; I wish you could have seen him, he'd have told you of some queer changes in his time.

A shopkeeper informed me that a bird-catcher had talked to him of even “queerer” changes. This man died eight or ten years ago at an advanced age, but beyond the fact of his offering birds occasionally at my informant's shop, where he was known merely as “the old man,” he could tell me nothing of the ancient bird-catcher, except that he was very fond of a talk, and used to tell how he had caught birds between fifty and sixty years, and had often, when a lad, caught them where many a dock in London now stands. “Where there's many a big ship now in deep water, I've caught flocks of birds. I never caught birds to be sure at them docks,” he would add, “as was dug out of the houses. Why, master, you'll remember their pulling down St. Katherine's Church, and all them rummy streets the t'other side of the Tower, for a dock.” As I find that the first dock constructed on the north side of the Thames, the West India dock, was not commenced until the year 1800, there seems no reason to discredit the bird-catcher's statement. Among other classes of street-sellers I have had to remark the little observation they extended to the changes all around, such as the extension of street-traffic to miles and miles of suburbs, unknown till recently. Two thousand miles of houses have been built in London within the last 20 years. But with the bird-catchers this want of observance is not so marked. Of necessity they must notice the changes which have added to the fatigues and difficulties of their calling, by compelling them, literally, to “go further a-field.”

A young man, rather tall, and evidently active, but very thin, gave me the following account. His

manners were quiet and his voice low. His dress could not so well be called mean as hard worn, with the unmistakable look of much of the attire of his class, that it was not made for the wearer; his surtout, for instance, which was fastened in front by two buttons, reached down to his ankles, and could have inclosed a bigger man. He resided in St. Luke's, in which parish there are more bird-catchers living than in any other. The furniture of his room was very simple. A heavy old sofa, in the well of which was a bed, a table, two chairs, a fender, a small closet containing a few pots and tins, and some twenty empty bird-cages of different sizes hung against the walls. In a sort of wooden loft, which had originally been constructed, he believed, for the breeding of fancy-pigeons, and which was erected on the roof, were about a dozen or two of cages, some old and broken, and in them a few live goldfinches, which hopped about very merrily. They were all this year's birds, and my informant, who had “a little connection of his own,” was rearing them in hopes they would turn out good specs, quite “birds beyond the run of the streets.” The place and the cages, each bird having its own little cage, were very clean, but at the time of my visit the loft was exceedingly hot, as the day was one of the sultriest. Lest this heat should prove too great for the finches, the timbers on all sides were well wetted and re-wetted at intervals, for about an hour at noon, at which time only was the sun full on the loft.

“I shall soon have more birds, sir,” he said, “but you see I only put aside here such as are the very best of the take; all cocks, of course. O, I've been in the trade all my life; I've had a turn at other things, certainly, but this life suits me best, I think, because I have my health best in it. My father—he's been dead a goodish bit—was a bird-catcher as well, and he used to take me out with him as soon as I was strong enough; when I was about ten, I suppose. I don't remember my mother. Father was brought up to brick-making. I believe that most of the bird-catchers that have been trades, and that's not half a quarter perhaps, were brick-makers, or something that way. Well, I don't know the reason. The brick-making was, in my father's young days, carried on more in the country, and the bird-catchers used to fall in with the brick-makers, and so perhaps that led to it. I've heard my father tell of an old soldier that had been discharged with a pension being the luckiest bird-catcher he knewed. The soldier was a catcher before he first listed, and he listed drunk. I once—yes, sir, I dare say that's fifteen year back, for I was quite a lad—walked with my father and captain” (the pensioner's sobriquet) “till they parted for work, and I remember very well I heard him tell how, when on march in Portugal—I think that's what he called it, but it's in foreign parts—he saw flocks of birds; he wished he could be after catching them, for he was well tired of sogering. I was sent to school twice or thrice, and can read a little and write a little; and I should like reading better if I could manage it better. I read a penny number.

or the 'police' in a newspaper, now and then, but very seldom. But on a fine day I hated being at school. I wanted to be at work, to make something at bird-catching. If a boy can make money, why shouldn't he? And if I'd had a net, or cage, and a mule of my own, then, I thought, I could make money." [I may observe that the mule longed for by my informant was a "cross" between two birds, and was wanted for the decoy. Some bird-catchers contend that a mule makes the best call-bird of any; others that the natural note of a linnnet, for instance, was more alluring than the song of a mule between a linnnet and a goldfinch. One birdman told me that the excellence of a mule was, that it had been bred and taught by its master, had never been at large, and was "better to manage;" it was bolder, too, in a cage, and its notes were often loud and ringing, and might be heard to a considerable distance.]

"I couldn't stick to school, sir," my informant continued, "and I don't know why, lest it be that one man's best suited for one business, and another for another. That may be seen every day. I was sent on trial to a shoemaker, and after that to a ropemaker, for father didn't seem to like my growing up and being a bird-catcher, like he was. But I never felt well, and knew I should never be any great hand at them trades, and so when my poor father went off rather sudden, I took to the catching at once and had all his traps. Perhaps, but I can't say to a niceness, that was eleven year back. Do I like the business, do you say, sir? Well, I'm forced to like it, for I've no other to live by." [The reader will have remarked how this man attributed the course he pursued, evidently from natural inclination, to its being the best and most healthful means of subsistence in his power.] "Last Monday—for my dealers like birds on a Monday or Tuesday best, and then they've the week before them—I went to catch in the fields this side of Barnet, and started before two in the morning, when it was neither light nor dark. You must get to your place before daylight to be ready for the first flight, and have time to lay your net properly. When I'd done that, I lay down and smoked. No, smoke don't scare the birds; I think they're rather drawn to notice anything new, if all's quite quiet. Well, the first pull I had about 90 birds, nearly all linnnets. There was, as well as I can remember, three hedge-sparrows among them, and two larks, and one or two other birds. Yes, there's always a terrible flutter and row when you make a catch, and often regular fights in the net. I then sorted my birds, and let the hens go, for I didn't want to be bothered with them. I might let such a thing as 35 hens go out of rather more than an 80 take, for I've always found, in catching young broods, that I've drawn more cocks than hens. How do I know the difference when the birds are so young? As easy as light from dark. You must lift up the wing, quite tender, and you'll find that a cock linnnet has black, or nearly black, feathers on his shoulder, where the hens are a deal lighter. Then the cock

has a broader and whiter stripe on the wing than the hen has. It's quite easy to distinguish, quite. A cock goldfinch is straighter and more larger in general than a hen, and has a broader white on his wing, as the cock linnnet has; he's black round the beak and the eye too, and a hen's greenish thereabouts. There's some gray-pates (young birds) would deceive any one until he opens their wings. Well, I went on, sir, until about one o'clock, or a little after, as well as I could tell from the sun, and then came away with about 100 singing birds. I sold them in the lump to three shopkeepers at 2s. 2d. and 2s. 6d. the dozen. That was a good day, sir; a very lucky day. I got about 17s., the best I ever did but once, when I made 19s. in a day.

"Yes, it's hard work is mine, because there's such a long walking home when you've done catching. O, when you're at work it's not work but almost a pleasure. I've laid for hours though, without a catch. I smoke to pass the time when I'm watching; sometimes I read a bit if I've had anything to take with me to read; then at other times I think. If you don't get a catch for hours, it's only like an angler without a nibble. O, I don't know what I think about; about nothing, perhaps. Yes, I've had a friend or two go out catching with me just for the amusement. They must lie about and wait as I do. We have a little talk, of course: well, perhaps about sporting; no, not horse-racing, I care nothing for that, but it's hardly business taking any one with you. I supply the dealers and hawk as well. Perhaps I make 12s. a week the year through. Some weeks I've made between 3l. and 4l., and in winter, when there's rain every day, perhaps I haven't cleared a penny in a fortnight. That's the worst of it. But I make more than others because I have a connection and raise good birds.

"Sometimes I'm stopped by the farmers when I'm at work, but not often, though there is some of 'em very obstinate. It's no use, for if a catcher's net has to be taken from one part of a farm, after he's had the trouble of laying it, why it must be laid in another part. Some country people likes to have their birds caught."

My informant supplied shopkeepers and hawked his birds in the streets and to the houses. He had a connection, he said, and could generally get through them, but he had sometimes put a bird or two in a fancy house. These are the public-houses resorted to by "the fancy," in some of which may be seen two or three dozen singing-birds for sale on commission, through the agency of the landlord or the waiter. They are the property of hawkers or dealers, and must be good birds, or they will not be admitted.

The number of birds caught, and the proportion sold in the streets, I have already stated. The number of bird-catchers, I may repeat, is about the same as that of street bird-sellers, 200.

OF THE CRIPPLED STREET BIRD-SELLER.

FROM the bird-seller whose portrait will be given in the next number of this work I have received the following account. The statement previously

given was that of a catcher and street-seller, as are the great majority in the trade; the following narrative is that of one who, from his infirmities, is merely a street-seller.

The poor man's deformity may be best understood by describing it in his own words: "I have no ancle." His right leg is emaciated, the bone is smaller than that of his other leg (which is not deformed), and there is no ancle joint. The joints of the wrists and shoulders are also defective, though not utterly wanting, as in the ancle. In walking this poor cripple seems to advance by means of a series of jerks. He uses his deformed leg, but must tread, or rather support his body, on the ball of the misformed foot, while he advances his sound leg; then, with a twist of his body, after he has advanced and stands upon his undeformed leg and foot, he throws forward the crippled part of his frame by the jerk I have spoken of. His arms are usually pressed against his ribs as he walks, and convey to a spectator the notion that he is unable to raise them from that position. This, however, is not the case; he can raise them, not as a sound man does, but with an effort and a contortion of his body to humour the effort. His speech is also defective, his words being brought out, as it were, by jerks; he has to prepare himself, and to throw up his chin, in order to converse, and then he speaks with difficulty. His face is sun-burnt and healthy-looking. His dress was a fustian coat with full skirts, cloth trowsers somewhat patched, and a clean coarse shirt. His right shoe was suited to his deformity, and was strapped with a sort of leather belt round the lower part of the leg.

A considerable number of book-stall keepers, as well as costermongers, swag-barrowmen, ginger-beer and lemonade sellers, orange-women, sweet-stuff vendors, root-sellers, and others, have established their pitches—some of them having stalls with a cover, like a roof—from Whitechapel work-house to the Mile End turnpike-gate; near the gate they are congregated most thickly, and there they are mixed with persons seated on the forms belonging to adjacent innkeepers, which are placed there to allow any one to have his beer and tobacco in the open air. Among these street-sellers and beer-drinkers is seated the crippled bird-seller, generally motionless.

His home is near the Jews' burial-ground, and in one of the many "places" which by a misnomer, occasioned by the change in the character and appearance of what were the outskirts, are still called "Pleasant." On seeking him here, I had some little difficulty in finding the house, and asking a string of men, who were chopping fire-wood in an adjoining court, for the man I wanted, mentioning his name, no one knew anything about him; though when I spoke of his calling, "O," they said, "you want Old Billy." I then found Billy at his accustomed pitch, with a very small stock of birds in two large cages on the ground beside him, and he accompanied me to his residence. The room in which we sat had a pile of fire-wood opposite the door; the iron of the

upper part of the door-latch being wanting was replaced by a piece of wood—and on the pile sat a tame jackdaw, with the inquisitive and askant look peculiar to the bird. Above the pile was a large cage, containing a jay—a bird seldom sold in the streets now—and a thrush, in different compartments. A table, three chairs, and a hamper or two used in the wood-cutting, completed the furniture. Outside the house were cages containing larks, goldfinches, and a very fine starling, of whose promising abilities the bird-seller's sister had so favourable an opinion that she intended to try and teach it to talk, although that was very seldom done now.

The following is the statement I obtained from the poor fellow. The man's sister was present at his desire, as he was afraid I could not understand him, owing to the indistinctness of his speech, but that was easy enough, after a while, with a little patience and attention.

"I was born a cripple, sir," he said, "and I shall die one. I was born at Lewisham, but I don't remember living in any place but London. I remember being at Stroud though, where my father had taken me, and bathed me often in the sea himself, thinking it might do me good. I've heard him say, too, that when I was very young he took me to almost every hospital in London, but it was of no use. My father and mother were as kind to me and as good parents as could be. He's been dead nineteen years, and my mother died before him. Father was very poor, almost as poor as I am. He worked in a brick-field, but work weren't regular. I couldn't walk at all until I was six years old, and I was between nine and ten before I could get up and down stairs by myself. I used to slide down before, as well as I could, and had to be carried up. When I could get about and went among other boys, I was in great distress, I was teased so. Life was a burthen to me, as I've read something about. They used to taunt me by offering to jump me" (invite him to a jumping match), "and to say, 'I'll run you a race on one leg. They were bad to me then, and they are now. I've sometimes sat down and cried, but not often. No, sir, I can't say that I ever wished I was dead. I hardly know why I cried. I suppose because I was miserable. I learned to read at a Sunday school, where I went a long time I like reading. I read the Bible and tracts, no thing else; never a newspaper. It don't come in my way, and if it did I shouldn't look at it, for I can't read over well and it's nothing to me who's king or who's queen. It can never have anything to do with me. It don't take my attention. There'll be no change for me in this world. When I was thirteen my father put me into the bird trade. He knew a good many catchers. I've been bird-selling in the streets for six-and-twenty year and more, for I was 39 the 24th of last January. Father didn't know what better he could put me to, as I hadn't the right use of my hands or feet, and at first I did very well. I liked the birds and do still. I used to think at first that they was like me; they was prisoners, and I was a cripple. At first I sold birds in Poplar, and

Limehouse, and Blackwall, and was a help to my parents, for I cleared 9s. or 10s. every week. But now, oh dear, I don't know where all the money's gone to. I think there's very little left in the country. I've sold larks, linnets, and goldfinches, to captains of ships to take to the West Indies. I've sold them, too, to go to Port Philip. O, and almost all those foreign parts. They bring foreign birds here, and take back London birds. I don't know anything about foreign birds. I know there's men dressed as sailors going about selling them; they're duffers—I mean the men. There's a neighbour of mine, that's very likely never been 20 miles out of London, and when he hawks birds he always dresses like a countryman, and duffs that way.

"When my father died," continued the man, "I was completely upset; everything in the world was upset. I was forced to go into the workhouse, and I was there between four and five months. O, I hated it. I'd rather live on a penny loaf a day than be in it again. I've never been near the parish since, though I've often had nothing to eat many a day. I'd rather be lamer than I am, and be oftener called silly Billy—and that sometimes makes me dreadful wild—than be in the workhouse. It was starvation, but then I know I'm a hearty eater, very hearty. Just now I know I could eat a shilling plate of meat, but for all that I very seldom taste meat. I live on bread and butter and tea, sometimes bread without butter. When I have it I eat a quarter loaf at three meals. It depends upon how I'm off. My health's good. I never feel in any pain now; I did when I first got to walk, in great pain. Beer I often don't taste once in two or three months, and this very hot weather one can't help longing for a drop, when you see people drinking it all sides of you, but they have the use of their limbs." [Here two little girls and a boy rushed into the room, for they had but to open the door from the outside, and, evidently to tease the poor fellow, loudly demanded "a ha'penny bird." When the sister had driven them away, my informant continued.] "I'm still greatly teased, sir, with children; yes, and with men too, both when they're drunk and sober. I think grown persons are the worst. They swear and use bad language to me. I'm sure I don't know why. I know no name they call me by in particular when I'm teased, if it isn't 'Old Hypocrite.' I can't say why they call me 'hypocrite.' I suppose because they know no better. Yes, I think I'm religious, rather. I would be more so, if I had clothes. I get to chapel sometimes." [A resident near the bird-seller's pitch, with whom I had some conversation, told me of "Billy" being sometimes teased in the way described. Some years ago, he believed it was at Limehouse, my informant heard a gentlemanly-looking man, tipsy, d—n the street bird-seller for Mr. *Hobler*, and bid him go to the Mansion House, or to h—l. I asked the cripple about this, but he had no recollection of it; and, as he evidently did not understand the allusion to Mr. *Hobler*, I was not surprised at his forgetfulness.]

"I like to sit out in the sunshine selling my birds," he said. "If it's rainy, and I can't go out, because it would be of no use, I'm moped to death. I stay at home and read a little; or I chop a little fire-wood, but you may be very sure, sir, its little I can do that way. I never associate with the neighbours. I never had any pleasure, such as going to a fair, or like that. I don't remember having ever spent a penny in a place of amusement in my life. Yes, I've often sat all day in the sun, and of course a deal of thoughts goes through my head. I think, shall I be able to afford myself plenty of bread when I get home? And I think of the next world sometimes, and feel quite sure, quite, that I shan't be a cripple there. Yes, that's a comfort, for this world will never be any good to me. I feel that I shall be a poor starving cripple, till I end, perhaps, in the workhouse. Other poor men can get married, but not such as me. But I never was in love in my life, never." [Among the vagrants and beggars, I may observe, there are men more terribly deformed than the bird-seller, who are married, or living in concubinage.] "Yes, sir," he proceeded, "I'm quite reconciled to my lameness, quite; and have been for years. O, no, I never fret about that now; but about starving, perhaps, and the workhouse.

"Before father died, the parish allowed us 1s. 6d. and a quarter loaf a week; but after he was buried, they'd allow me nothing; they'd only admit me into the house. I hadn't a penny allowed to me when I discharged myself and came out. I hardly know how ever I *did* manage to get a start again with the birds. I knew a good many catchers, and they trusted me. Yes, they was all poor men. I did pretty tidy by bits, but only when it was fine weather, until these five years or so, when things got terrible bad. Particularly just the two last years with me. Do you think times are likely to mend, sir, with poor people? If working-men had only money, they'd buy innocent things like birds to amuse them at home; but if they can't get the money, as I've heard them say when they've been pricing my stock, why in course they can't spend it."

"Yes, indeed," said the sister, "trade's very bad. Where my husband and I once earned 18s. at the fire-wood, and then 15s., we can't now earn 12s. the two of us, slave as hard as we will. I always dread the winter a-coming. Though there may be more fire-wood wanted, there's greater expenses, and it's a terrible time for such as us."

"I dream sometimes, sir," the cripple resumed in answer to my question, "but not often. I often have more than once dreamed I was starving and dying of hunger. I remember that, for I woke in a tremble. But most dreams is soon forgot. I've never seemed to myself to be a cripple in my dreams. Well, I can't explain how, but I feel as if my limbs was all free like—so beautiful. I dream most about starving I think, than about anything else. Perhaps that's when I have to go to sleep hungry. I sleep very well, though, take it altogether. If I had only plenty to live upon there would be

nobody happier. I'm happy enough when times is middling with me, only one feels it won't last. I like a joke as well as anybody when times is good; but that's been very seldom lately.

"It's all small birds I sell in the street now, except at a very odd time. That jackdaw there, sir, he's a very fine bird. I've tamed him myself, and he's as tame as a dog. My sister's a very good hand among birds, and helps me. She once taught a linnnet to say 'Joey' as plain as you can speak it yourself, sir. I buy birds of different catchers, but haven't money to buy the better kinds, as I have to sell at 3d., and 4d., and 6d. mostly. If I had a pound to lay out in a few nice cages and good birds, I think I could do middling, this fine weather particler, for I'm a very good judge of birds, and know how to manage them as well as anybody. Then birds is rather dearer to buy than they was when I was first in the trade. The catchers have to go further, and I'm afeared the birds is getting scarcer, and so there's more time taken up. I buy of several catchers. The last whole day that I was at my pitch I sold nine birds, and took about 3s. If I could buy birds ever so cheap, there's always such losses by their dying. I've had three parts of my young linnnets die, do what I might, but not often so many. Then if they die all the food they've had is lost. There goes all for nothing the rape and flax-seed for your linnnets, canary and flax for your goldfinches, chopped eggs for your nightingales, and German paste for your sky-larks. I've made my own German paste when I've wanted a sufficient quantity. It's made of pea-meal, treacle, hog's-lard, and moss-seed. I sell more goldfinches than anything else. I used to sell a good many sparrows for shooting, but I haven't done anything that way these eight or nine years. It's a fash'nable sport still, I hear. I've reared nightingales that sung beautiful, and have sold them at 4s. apiece, which was very cheap. They often die when the time for their departure comes. A shopkeeper as supplied such as I've sold would have charged 1l. apiece for them. One of my favouritest birds is redpoles, but they're only sold in the season. I think it's one of the most knowingest little birds that is; more knowing than the goldfinch, in my opinion.

"My customers are all working people, all of them. I sell to nobody else; I make 4s. or 5s.; I call 5s. a good week at this time of year, when the weather suits. I lodge with a married sister; her husband's a wood-chopper, and I pay 1s. 6d. a week, which is cheap, for I've no sticks of my own. If I earn 4s. there's only 2s. 6d. left to live on the week through. In winter, when I can make next to nothing, and must keep my birds, it is terrible—oh yes, sir, if you believe me, terrible!"

OF THE TRICKS OF THE BIRD-DUFFERS.

The tricks practised by the bird-sellers are frequent and systematic. The other day a man connected with the bird-trade had to visit Holloway, the City, and Bermondsey. In Holloway he saw six men, some of whom he recognised as regular bird-

catchers and street-sellers, offering sham birds; in the City he found twelve; and in Bermondsey six, as well as he could depend upon his memory. These, he thought, did not constitute more than a half of the number now at work as bird-"duffers," not including the sellers of foreign birds. In the summer, indeed, the duffers are most numerous, for birds are cheapest then, and these tricksters, to economise time, I presume, buy of other catchers any cheap hens suited to their purpose. Some of them, I am told, never catch their birds at all, but purchase them.

The greenfinch is the bird on which these men's art is most commonly practised, its light-coloured plumage suiting it to their purposes. I have heard these people styled "bird-swindlers," but by street-traders I heard them called "bird-duffers," yet there appears to be no very distinctive name for them. They are nearly all men, as is the case in the bird trade generally, although the wives may occasionally assist in the street-sale. The means of deception, as regards the greenfinch especially, are from paint. One aim of these artists is to make their finch resemble some curious foreign bird, "not often to be sold so cheap, or to be sold at all in this country." They study the birds in the window of the naturalists' shops for this purpose. Sometimes they declare these painted birds are young Java sparrows (at one time "a fashionable bird"), or St. Helena birds, or French or Italian finches. They sometimes get 5s. for such a "duffing bird;" one man has been known to boast that he once got a sovereign. I am told, however, by a bird-catcher who had himself supplied birds to these men for duffing, that they complained of the trade growing worse and worse.

It is usually a hen which is painted, for the hen is by far the cheapest purchase, and while the poor thing is being offered for sale by the duffers, she has an unlimited supply of hemp-seed, without other food, and hemp-seed beyond a proper quantity, is a very strong stimulus. This makes the hen look brisk and bold, but if newly caught, as is usually the case, she will perhaps be found dead next morning. The duffer will object to his bird being handled on account of its timidity; "but it is timid only with strangers!" When you've had him a week, ma'am," such a bird-seller will say, "you'll find him as lovesome and tame as can be." One jealous lady, when asked 5s. for a "very fine Italian finch, an excellent singer," refused to buy, but offered a deposit of 2s. 6d., if the man would leave his bird and cage, for the trial of the bird's song, for two or three days. The duffer agreed; and was bold enough to call on the third day to hear the result. The bird was dead, and after murmuring a little at the lady's mismanagement, and at the loss he had been subjected to, the man brought away his cage. He boasted of this to a dealer's assistant who mentioned it to me, and expressed his conviction that it was true enough. The paints used for the transformation of native birds into foreign are bought at the colour-shops, and applied with camel-hair brushes in the usual way.

When canaries are "a bad colour," or have

grown a paler yellow from age, they are re-dyed, by the application of a colour sold at the colour-shops, and known as "the Queen's yellow." Black-birds are dyed a deeper black, the "grit" off a frying-pan being used for the purpose. The same thing is done to heighten the gloss and blackness of a jackdaw, I was told, by a man who acknowledged he had duffed a little; "people liked a gay bright colour." In the same way the tints of the goldfinch are heightened by the application of paint. It is common enough, moreover, for a man to paint the beaks and legs of the birds. It is chiefly the smaller birds which are thus made the means of cheating.

Almost all the "duffing birds" are hawked. If a young hen be passed off for a good singing bird, without being painted, as a cock in his second singing year, she is "brisked up" with hemp-seed, is half tipsy in fact, and so passed off deceitfully. As it is very rarely that even the male birds will sing in the streets, this is often a successful ruse, the bird appearing so lively.

A dealer calculated for me, from his own knowledge, that 2000 small birds were "duffed" yearly, at an average of from 2s. 6d. to 3s. each.

As yet I have only spoken of the "duffing" of English birds, but similar tricks are practised with the foreign birds.

In parrot-selling there is a good deal of "duffing." The birds are "painted up," as I have described in the case of the greenfinches, &c. Varnish is also used to render the colours brighter; the legs and beak are frequently varnished. Sometimes a spot of red is introduced, for as one of these duffers observed to a dealer in English birds, "the more outlandish you make them look, the better's the chance to sell." Sometimes there is little injury done by this paint and varnish, which disappear gradually when the parrot is in the cage of a purchaser; but in some instances when the bird picks himself where he has been painted, he dies from the deleterious compound. Of this mortality, however, there is nothing approaching that among the duffed small birds.

Occasionally the duffers carry really fine cockatoos, &c., and if they can obtain admittance into a lady's house, to display the beauty of the bird, they will pretend to be in possession of smuggled silk, &c., made of course for duffing purposes. The bird-duffers are usually dressed as seamen, and sometimes pretend they must sell the bird before the ship sails, for a parting spree, or to get the poor thing a good home. This trade, however, has from all that I can learn, and in the words of an informant, "seen its best days." There are now sometimes six men thus engaged; sometimes none: and when one of these men is "hard up," he finds it difficult to start again in a business for which a capital of about 1l. is necessary, as a cage is wanted generally. The duffers buy the very lowest priced birds, and have been known to get 2l. 10s. for what cost but 8s., but that is a very rare occurrence, and the men are very poor, and perhaps more dissipated than the generality of street-sellers. Parrot duffing, moreover, is seldom carried on regularly by any one, for he will often

duff cigars and other things in preference, or perhaps vend really smuggled and good cigars or tobacco. Perhaps 150 parrots, paroquets, or cockatoos, are sold in this way annually, at from 15s. to 1l. 10s. each, but hardly averaging 1l., as the duffer will sell, or raffle, the bird for a small sum if he cannot dispose of it otherwise.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF FOREIGN BIRDS.

THIS trade is curious, but far from extensive as regards street-sale. There is, moreover, contrary to what might be expected, a good deal of "duffing" about it. The "duffer" in English birds disguises them so that they shall look like foreigners; the duffer in what are unquestionably foreign birds disguises them that they may look more foreign—more Indian than in the Indies.

The word "Duffer," I may mention, appears to be connected with the German *Durffen*, to want, to be needy, and so to mean literally a needy or indigent man, even as the word *Pedlar* has the same origin—being derived from the German *Bettler*, and the Dutch *Bedelaar*—a beggar. The verb *Durffen* means also to dare, to be so bold as to do; hence, to *Durff*, or *Duff*, would signify to resort to any impudent trick.

The supply of parrots, paroquets, cockatoos, Java sparrows, or St. Helena birds, is not in the regular way of consignment from a merchant abroad to one in London. The commanders and mates of merchant vessels bring over large quantities; and often enough the seamen are allowed to bring parrots or cockatoos in the homeward-bound ship from the Indies or the African coast, or from other tropical countries, either to beguile the tedium of the voyage, for presents to their friends, or, as in some cases, for sale on their reaching an English port. More, I am assured, although statistics are hardly possible on such a subject, are brought to London, and perhaps by one-third, than to all the other ports of Great Britain collectively. Even on board the vessels of the royal navy, the importation of parrots used to be allowed as a sort of boon to the seamen. I was told by an old naval officer that once, after a long detention on the west coast of Africa, his ship was ordered home, and, as an acknowledgment of the good behaviour of his men, he permitted them to bring parrots, cockatoos, or any foreign birds, home with them, not limiting the number, but of course under the inspection of the petty officers, that there might be no violation of the cleanliness which always distinguishes a vessel of war. Along the African coast, to the southward of Sierra Leone, the men were not allowed to land, both on account of the unhealthiness of the shores, and of the surf, which rendered landing highly dangerous, a danger, however, which the seamen would not have scrupled to brave, and recklessly enough, for any impulse of the minute. As if by instinct, however, the natives seemed to know what was wanted, for they came off from the shores in their light canoes, which danced like feathers on the surf, and brought boat-loads of birds; these the seamen bought of them, or possessed themselves of in the way of barter.

Before the ship took her final departure, however, she was reported as utterly uninhabitable below, from the incessant din and clamour: "We might as well have a pack of women aboard, sir," was the ungallant remark of one of the petty officers to his commander. Orders were then given that the parrots, &c., should be "thinned," so that there might not be such an unceasing noise. This was accordingly done. How many were set at liberty and made for the shore—for the seamen in this instance did not kill them for their skins, as is not unfrequently the case—the commander did not know. He could but conjecture; and he conjectured that something like a thousand were released; and even after that, and after the mortality which takes place among these birds in the course of a long voyage, a very great number were brought to Plymouth. Of these, again, a great number were sent or conveyed under the care of the sailors to London, when the ship was paid off. The same officer endeavoured on this voyage to bring home some very large pine-apples, which flavoured, and most deliciously, parts of the ship when she had been a long time at sea; but every one of them rotted, and had to be thrown overboard. He fell into the error, Captain—said, of having the finest fruit selected for the experiment; an error which the Bahama merchants had avoided, and consequently they succeeded where he failed. How the sailors fed the parrots, my informant could hardly guess, but they brought a number of very fine birds to England, some of them with well-cultivated powers of speech.

This, as I shall show, is one of the ways by which the London supply of parrots, &c., is obtained; but the permission, as to the importation of these brightly-feathered birds, is, I understand, rarely allowed at present to the seamen in the royal navy. The far greater supply, indeed more than 90 per cent. of the whole of the birds imported, is from the merchant-service. I have already stated, on the very best authority, the motives which induce merchant-seamen to bring over parrots and cockatoos. That to bring them over is an inducement to some to engage in an African voyage is shown by the following statement, which was made to me, in the course of a long inquiry, published in my letters in the *Morning Chronicle*, concerning the condition of the merchant-seamen.

"I would never go to that African coast again, only I make a pound or two in birds. We buy parrots, gray parrots chiefly, of the natives, who come aboard in their canoes. We sometimes pay 6s. or 7s., in Africa, for a fine bird. I have known 200 parrots on board; they make a precious noise; but half the birds die before they get to England. Some captains won't allow parrots."

When the seamen have settled themselves after landing in England, they perhaps find that there is no room in their boarding-houses for their parrots; these birds are not admitted into the Sailors' Home; the seamen's friends are stocked with the birds, and look upon another parrot as but another intruder, an unwelcome pensioner. There remains

but one course—to sell the birds, and they are generally sold to a highly respectable man, Mr. M. Samuel, of Upper East Smithfield; and it is from him, though not always directly, that the shopkeepers and street-sellers derive their stock-in-trade. There is also a further motive for the disposal of parrots, paroquets, and cockatoos to a merchant. The seafaring owner of those really magnificent birds, perhaps, squanders his money, perhaps he gets "skinned" (stripped of his clothes and money from being hounded, or tempted to helpless drunkenness), or he chooses to sell them, and he or his boarding-house keeper takes the birds to Mr. Samuel, and sells them for what he can get; but I heard from three very intelligent seamen whom I met with in the course of my inquiry, and by mere chance, that Mr. Samuel's price was fair and his money sure, considering everything, for there is usually a qualification to every praise. It is certainly surprising, under these circumstances, that such numbers of these birds should thus be disposed of.

Parrots are as gladly, or more gladly, got rid of, in any manner, in different regions in the continents of Asia and America, than with us are even rats from a granary. Dr. Stanley, after speaking of the beauty of a flight of parrots, says:—"The husbandman who sees them hastening through the air, with loud and impatient screams, looks upon them with dismay and detestation, knowing that the produce of his labour and industry is in jeopardy, when visited by such a voracious multitude of pilferers, who, like the locusts of Egypt, desolate whole tracts of country by their unsparing ravages." A contrast with their harmlessness, in a gilded cage in the houses of the wealthy, with us! The destructiveness of these birds, is then, one reason why seamen can obtain them so readily and cheaply, for the natives take pleasure in catching them; while as to plentifulness, the tropical regions teem with bird, as with insect and reptile, life.

Of parrots, paroquets, and cockatoos, there are 3000 imported to London in the way I have described, and in about equal proportions. They are sold, wholesale, from 5s. to 30s. each.

There are now only three men selling these brilliant birds regularly in the streets, and in the fair way of trade; but there are sometimes as many as 18 so engaged. The price given by a hawker for a cockatoo, &c., is 8s. or 10s., and they are retailed at from 15s. to 30s., or more, "if it can be got." The purchasers are the wealthier classes who can afford to indulge their tastes. Of late years, however, I am told, a parrot or a cockatoo seems to be considered indispensable to an inn (not a gin-palace), and the innkeepers have been among the best customers of the street parrot-sellers. In the neighbourhood of the docks, and indeed along the whole river side below London-bridge, it is almost impossible for a street-seller to dispose of a parrot to an innkeeper, or indeed to any one, as they are supplied by the seamen. A parrot which has been taught to talk is worth from 4l. to 10l., according to its proficiency in speech. About 500 of these birds are sold yearly by the

street-hawkers, at an outlay to the public of from 500*l.* to 600*l.*

Java sparrows, from the East Indies, and from the Islands of the Archipelago, are brought to London, but considerable quantities die during the voyage and in this country; for, though hardy enough, not more than one in three survives being "taken off the paddy seed." About 10,000, however, are sold annually, in London, at 1*s.* 6*d.* each, but a very small proportion by street-hawking, as the Java sparrows are chiefly in demand for the aviaries of the rich in town and country. In some years not above 100 may be sold in the streets; in others, as many as 500.

In St. Helena birds, known also as wax-bills and red-backs, there is a trade to the same extent, both as regards number and price; but the street-sale is perhaps 10 per cent. lower.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF BIRDS'-NESTS.

THE young gipsy-looking lad, who gave me the following account of the sale of birds'-nests in the streets, was peculiarly picturesque in his appearance. He wore a dirty-looking smock-frock with large pockets at the side; he had no shirt; and his long black hair hung in curls about him, contrasting strongly with his bare white neck and chest. The broad-brimmed brown Italian-looking hat, broken in and ragged at the top, threw a dark half-mask-like shadow over the upper part of his face. His feet were bare and black with mud: he carried in one hand his basket of nests, dotted with their many-coloured eggs; in the other he held a live snake, that writhed and twisted as its metallic-looking skin glistened in the sun; now over, and now round, the thick knotty bough of a tree that he used for a stick. The portrait of the youth is here given. I have never seen so picturesque a specimen of the English nomade. He said, in answer to my inquiries:—

"I am a seller of birds'-nesties, snakes, slow-worms, adders, 'effets'—lizards is their common name—hedgehogs (for killing black beetles); frogs (for the French—they eat 'em); snails (for birds); that's all I sell in the summer-time. In the winter I get all kinds of wild flowers and roots, primroses, 'butter-cups' and daisies, and snow-drops, and 'backing' off of trees ('backing' it's called, because it's used to put at the back of nosegays, it's got off the yew trees, and is the green yew fern). I gather bulrushes in the summer-time, besides what I told you; some buys bulrushes for stuffing; they're the fairy rushes the small ones, and the big ones is bulrushes. The small ones is used for 'stuffing,' that is, for showing off the birds as is stuffed, and make 'em seem as if they was alive in their cases, and among the rushes; I sell them to the bird-stuffers at 1*d.* a dozen. The big rushes the boys buys to play with and beat one another—on a Sunday evening mostly. The birds'-nesties I get from 1*d.* to 3*d.* a piece for. I never have young birds, I can never sell 'em; you see the young things generally dies of the cramp before you can get rid of them. I sell the birds'-nesties in the streets; the three-penny ones has six eggs, a half-penny a egg.

The linnets has mostly four eggs, they're 4*d.* the nest; they're for putting under canaries, and being hatched by them. The thrushes has from four to five—five is the most; they're 2*d.*; they're merely for cur'osity—glass cases or anything like that. Moor-hens, wot build on the moors, has from eight to nine eggs, and is 1*d.* a-piece; they're for hatching underneath a bantam-fowl, the same as partridges. Chaffinches has five eggs; they're 3*d.*, and is for cur'osity. Hedge-sparrows, five eggs; they're the same price as the other, and is for cur'osity. The Bottletit—the nest and the bough are always put in glass cases; it's a long hanging nest, like a bottle, with a hole about as big as a sixpence, and there's mostly as many as eighteen eggs; they've been known to lay thirty-three. To the house-sparrow there is five eggs; they're 1*d.* The yellow-hammers, with five eggs, is 2*d.* The water-wagtails, with four eggs, 2*d.* Black-birds, with five eggs, 2*d.* The golden-crest wren, with ten eggs—it has a very handsome nest—is 6*d.* Bulfinches, four eggs, 1*s.*; they're for hatching, and the bulfinch is a very dear bird. Crows, four eggs, 4*d.* Magpies, four eggs, 4*d.* Starlings, five eggs, 3*d.* The egg-chats, five eggs, 2*d.* Goldfinches, five eggs, 6*d.*, for hatching. Martins, five eggs, 3*d.* The swallow, four eggs, 6*d.*; it's so dear because the nest is such a cur'osity, they build up again the house. The butcher-birds—hedge-murderers some calls them, for the number of birds they kills—five eggs, 3*d.* The cuckoo—they never has a nest, but lays in the hedge-sparrow's; there's only one egg (it's very rare you see the two, they has been got, but that's seldom) that is 4*d.*, the egg is such a cur'osity. The greenfinches has four or five eggs, and is 3*d.* The sparrer-hawk has four eggs, and they're 6*d.* The reed-sparrow—they builds in the reeds close where the bulrushes grow; they has four eggs, and is 2*d.* The wood-pigeon has two eggs, and they're 4*d.* The horned owl, four eggs; they're 6*d.* The wood-pecker—I never see no more nor two—they're 6*d.* the two; they're a great cur'osity, very seldom found. The kingfishers has four eggs, and is 6*d.* That's all I know of.

"I gets the eggs mostly from Witham and Chelmsford, in Essex; Chelmsford is 20 mile from Whitechapel Church, and Witham, 8 mile further. I know more about them parts than anywhere else, being used to go after moss for Mr. Butler, of the herb-shop in Covent Garden. Sometimes I go to Shirley Common and Shirley Wood, that's three miles from Croydon, and Croydon is ten from Westminster-bridge. When I'm out bird-nesting I take all the cross country roads across fields and into the woods. I begin bird-nesting in May and leave off about August, and then comes the bul-rushing, and they last till Christmas; and after that comes the roots and wild flowers, which serves me up to May again. I go out bird-nesting three times a week. I go away at night, and come up on the morning of the day after. I'm away a day and two nights. I start between one and two in the morning and walk all night—for the coolness—you see the weather's so hot you can't

do it in the daytime. When I get down I go to sleep for a couple of hours. I 'skipper it'—turn in under a hedge or anywhere. I get down about nine in the morning, at Chelmsford, and about one if I go to Witham. After I've had my sleep I start off to get my nests and things. I climb the trees, often I go up a dozen in the day, and many a time there's nothing in the nest when I get up. I only fell once; I got on the end of the bough and slipped off. I pisoned my foot once with the stagnant water going after the bulrushes, —there was horseleeches, and effets, and all kinds of things in the water, and they stung me, I think. I couldn't use my foot hardly for six weeks afterwards, and was obliged to have a stick to walk with. I couldn't get about at all for four days, and should have starved if it hadn't been that a young man kept me. He was a printer by trade, and almost a stranger to me, only he seed me and took pity on me. When I fell off the bough I wasn't much hurt, nothing to speak of. The house-sparrow is the worst nest of all to take; it's no value either when it's got, and is the most difficult of all to get at. You has to get up a sparapet (a parapet) of a house, and either to get permission, or run the risk of going after it without. Partridges' eggs (they has no nest) they gives you six months for, if they see you selling them, because it's game, and I haven't no licence; but while you're hawking, that is showing 'em, they can't touch you. The owl is a very difficult nest to get, they builds so high in the trees. The bottle-tit is a hard nest to find; you may go all the year round, and, perhaps, only get one. The nest I like best to get is the chaffinch, because they're in the hedge, and is no bother. Oh, you hasn't got the skylark down, sir; they builds on the ground, and has five eggs; I sell them for 4*d.* The robin-redbreast has five eggs, too, and is 3*d.* The ringdove has two eggs, and is 6*d.* The tit-lark—that's five blue eggs, and very rare—I get 4*d.* for them. The jay has five eggs, and a flat nest, very wiry, indeed; it's a ground bird; that's 1*s.*—the egg is just like a partridge egg. When I first took a kingfisher's nest, I didn't know the name of it, and I kept wondering what it was. I daresay I asked three dozen people, and none of them could tell me. At last a bird-fancier, the lame man at the Mile-end gate, told me what it was. I likes to get the nesties to sell, but I havn't no fancy for birds. Sometimes I get squirrels' nesties with the young in 'em—about four of 'em there mostly is, and they're the only young things I take—the young birds I leaves; they're no good to me. The four squirrels brings me from 6*s.* to 8*s.* After I takes a bird's nest, the old bird comes dancing over it, chirruping, and crying, and flying all about. When they lose their nest they wander about, and don't know where to go. Oftentimes I wouldn't take them if it wasn't for the want of the victuals, it seems such a pity to disturb 'em after they've made their little bits of places. Bats I never take myself—I can't get over 'em. If I has an order for 'em, I buys 'em of boys.

"I mostly start off into the country on Monday

and come up on Wednesday. The most nesties as ever I took is twenty-two, and I generally get about twelve or thirteen. These, if I've an order, I sell directly, or else I may be two days, and sometimes longer, hawking them in the street. Directly I've sold them I go off again that night, if it's fine; though I often go in the wet, and then I borrow a tarpaulin of a man in the street where I live. If I've a quick sale I get down and back three times in a week, but then I don't go so far as Witham, sometimes only to Rumford; that is 12 miles from Whitechapel Church. I never got an order from a bird-fancier; they gets all the eggs they want of the countrymen who comes up to market.

"It's gentlemen I gets my orders of, and then mostly they tells me to bring 'em one nest of every kind I can get hold of, and that will often last me three months in the summer. There's one gentleman as I sells to is a wholesale dealer in window-glass—and he has a hobby for them. He puts 'em into glass cases, and makes presents of 'em to his friends. He has been one of my best customers. I've sold him a hundred nesties, I'm sure. There's a doctor at Dalston I sell a great number to—he's taking one of every kind of me now. The most of my customers is stray ones in the streets. They're generally boys. I sells a nest now and then to a lady with a child; but the boys of twelve to fifteen years of age is my best friends. They buy 'em only for cur'osity. I sold three partridges' eggs yesterday to a gentleman, and he said he would put them under a bantam he'd got, and hatch 'em.

"The snakes, and adders, and slow-worms I get from where there's moss or a deal of grass. Sunny weather's the best for them, they won't come out when it's cold; then I go to a dung-heap, and turn it over. Sometimes, I find five or six there, but never so large as the one I had to-day, that's a yard and five inches long, and three-quarters of a pound weight. Snakes is 5*s.* a pound. I sell all I can get to Mr. Butler, of Covent-garden. He keeps 'em alive, for they're no good dead. I think it's for the skin they're kept. Some buys 'em to dissect: a gentleman in Theobalds-road does so, and so he does hedgehogs. Some buys 'em for stuffing, and others for cur'osities. Adders is the same price as snakes, 5*s.* a pound after they first comes in, when they're 10*s.* Adders is wanted dead; it's only the fat and skin that's of any value; the fat is used for curing pisoned wounds, and the skin is used for any one as has cut their heads. Farmers buys the fat, and rubs it into the wound when they gets bitten or stung by anything pisonous. I kill the adders with a stick, or, when I has shoes, I jumps on 'em. Some fine days I get four or five snakes at a time; but then they're mostly small, and won't weigh above half a pound. I don't get many adders—they don't weigh many ounces, adders don't—and I mostly has 9*d.* a-piece for each I gets. I sells them to Mr. Butler as well.

"The hedgehogs is 1*s.* each; I gets them mostly in Essex. I've took one hedgehog with three

young ones, and sold the lot for 2s. 6d. People in the streets bought them of me—they're wanted to kill the black-beetles; they're fed on bread and milk, and they'll suck a cow quite dry in their wild state. They eat adders, and can't be p'isoned, at least it says so in a book I've got about 'em at home.

"The effets I gets orders for in the streets. Gentlemen gives me their cards, and tells me to bring them one; they're 2d. apiece. I get them at Hampstead and Highgate, from the ponds. They're wanted for curiosity.

"The snails and frogs I sell to Frenchmen. I don't know what part they eat of the frog, but I know they buy them, and the dandelion root. The frogs is 6d. and 1s. a dozen. They like the yellow-bellied ones, the others they're afraid is toads. They always pick out the yellow-bellied first; I don't know how to feed 'em, or else I might fatten them. Many people swallows young frogs, they're reckoned very good things to clear the inside. The frogs I catch in ponds and ditches up at Hampstead and Highgate, but I only get them when I've a order. I've had a order for as many as six dozen, but that was for the French hotel in Leicester-square; but I have sold three dozen a week to one man, a Frenchman, as keeps a cigar shop in R—r's-court.

"The snails I sell by the pailful—at 2s. 6d. the pail. There is some hundreds in a pail. The wet weather is the best times for catching 'em; the French people eats 'em. They boils 'em first to get 'em out of the shell and get rid of the green froth; then they boils them again, and after that in vinegar. They eats 'em hot, but some of the foreigners likes 'em cold. They say they're better, if possible, than whelks. I used to sell a great many to a lady and gentleman in Soho-square, and to many of the French I sell 1s.'s worth, that's about three or four quarts. Some persons buys snails for birds, and some to strengthen a sickly child's back; they rub the back all over with the snails, and a very good thing they tell me it is. I used to take 2s.'s worth a week to one woman; it's the green froth that does the greatest good. There are two more birds'-nest sellers besides myself, they don't do as many as me the two of 'em. They're very naked, their things is all to ribbins; they only go into the country once in a fortnight. They was never nothing, no trade—they never was in place—from what I've heard—either of them. I reckon I sell about 20 nesties a week take one week with another, and that I do for four months in the year. (This altogether makes 320 nesties.) Yes, I should say, I do sell about 300 birds'-nests every year, and the other two, I'm sure, don't sell half that. Indeed they don't want to sell; they does better by what they gets give to them. I can't say by what they takes, they're Irish, and I never was in conversation with them. I get about 4s. to 5s. for the 20 nesties, that's between 2d. and 3d. apiece. I sell about a couple of snakes every week, and for some of them I get 1s., and for the big ones 2s. 6d.; but them I seldom find. I've only had three hedgehogs this season,

and I've done a little in snails and frogs, perhaps about 1s. The many foreigners in London this season hasn't done me no good. I haven't been to Leicester-square lately, or perhaps I might have got a large order or two for frogs."

LIFE OF A BIRD'S-NEST SELLER.

"I am 22 years of age. My father was a dyer, and I was brought up to the same trade. My father lived at Arundel, in Sussex, and kept a shop there. He had a good business as dyer, scourer, calico glazer, and furniture cleaner. I have heard mother say his business in Arundel brought him in 300l. a year at least. He had eight men in his employ, and none under 30s. a week. I had two brothers and one sister, but one of my brothers is since dead. Mother died five years ago in the Consumption Hospital, at Chelsea, just after it was built. I was very young indeed when father died; I can hardly remember him. He died in Middlesex Hospital; he had abscesses all over him; there were six-and-thirty at the time of his death. I've heard mother say many times that she thinned it was through exerting himself too much at his business that he fell ill. The ruin of father was owing to his house being burnt down; the fire broke out at two in the morning; he wasn't insured: I don't remember the fire; I've only heard mother talk about it. It was the ruin of us all she used to tell me; father had so much work belonging to other people; a deal of moreen curtains, five or six hundred yards. It was of no use his trying to start again: he lost all his glazing machines and tubs, and his drugs and 'punches.' From what I've heard from mother they was worth some hundreds. The Duke of Norfolk, after the fire, gave a good lot of money to the poor people whose things father had to clean, and father himself came up to London. I wasn't two year old when that happened. We all come up with father, and he opened a shop in London and bought all new things. He had got a bit of money left, and mother's uncle lent him 60l. We lived two doors from the stage door of the Queen's Theatre, in Pitt-street, Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square; but father didn't do much in London; he had a new connection to make, and when he died his things was sold for the rent of the house. There was only money enough to bury him. I don't know how long ago that was, but I think it was about three years after our coming to London, for I've heard mother say I was six years old when father died. After father's death mother borrowed some more money of her uncle, who was well to do. He was perfumer to her Majesty: he's dead now, and left the business to his foreman. The business was worth 2000l. His wife, my mother's aunt, is alive still, and though she's a woman of large property, she won't so much as look at me. She keeps her carriage and two footmen; her address is, Mrs. Lewis, No. 10, Porchester-terrace, Bayswater. I have been in her drawing-room two or three times. I used to take letters to her from mother: she was very kind to me then, and give me several half-crowns. She



THE MILKMAID'S GARLAND.'

THE ORIGINAL OF THE SWEEPS' MAY-DAY EXHIBITION.

knows the state I am in now. A young man wrote a letter to her, saying I had no clothes to look after work in, and that I was near starving, but she sent no answer to it. The last time I called at her house she sent me down nothing, and bid the servant tell me not to come any more. Ever since I've wanted it I've never had nothing from her, but before that she used to give me something whenever I took a letter from mother to her. The last half-crown I got at her house was from the cook, who gave it me out of her own money because she'd known my mother.

"I've got a grandmother living in Woburn-place; she's in service there, and been in the family for twenty years. The gentleman died lately and left her half his property. He was a foreigner and had no relations here. My grandmother used to be very good to me, and when I first got out of work she always gave me something when I called, and had me down in her room. She was housekeeper then. She never offered to get me a situation, but only gave me a meal of victuals and a shilling or eighteen-pence whenever I called. I was tidy in my dress then. At last a new footman came, and he told me as I wasn't to call again; he said, the family didn't allow no followers. I've never seen my grandmother since that time but once, and then I was passing with my basket of birds' nests in my hand just as she was coming out of the door. I was dressed about the same then as you seed me yesterday. I was without a shirt to my back. I don't think she saw me, and I was ashamed to let her see me as I was. She was kind enough to me, that is, she wouldn't mind about giving me a shilling or so at a time, but she never would do nothing else for me, and yet she had got plenty of money in the bank, and a gold watch, and all, at her side.

After father died, as I was saying, mother got some money from her uncle and set up on her own account; she took in glazing for the trade. Father had a few shops that he worked for, and they employed mother after his death. She kept on at this for eighteen months and then she got married again. Before this an uncle of mine, my father's brother, who kept some lime-kilns down in Bury St. Edmunds, consented to take my brother and sister and provide for them, and four or five year ago he got them both into the Duke of Norfolk's service, and there they are now. They've never seen me since I was a child but once, and that was a few year ago. I've never sent to them to say how badly I was off. They're younger than I am, and can only just take care of themselves. When mother married again, her husband came to live at the house; he was a dyer. He behaved very well to me. Mother wouldn't send me down to uncle's, she was too fond of me. I was sent to school for about eighteen months, and after that I used to assist in the glazing at home, and so I went on very comfortable for some time. Nine year ago I went to work at a French dyer's, in Rathbone-place. My step-father got me there, and there I stopped six year. I lived in the house after the first eighteen months of my service. Five year ago mother fell ill; she had

been ailing many years, and she got admitted into the Consumption Hospital, at Brompton. She was there just upon three months and was coming out the next day (her term was up), when she died on the over night. After that my step-father altered very much towards me. He didn't want me at home at all. He told me so a fortnight after mother was in her grave. He took to drinking very hearty directly she was gone. He would do anything for me before that. He used to take me with him to every place of amusement what he went to, but when he took to drinking he quite changed; then he got to beat me, and at last he told me I needn't come there any more.

"After that, I still kept working in Rathbone-place, and got a lodging of my own; I used to have 9s. a week where I was, and I paid 2s. a week for my bed, and washing, and mending. I had half a room with a man and his wife; I went on so for about two years, and then I was took bad with the scarlet fever and went to Gray's-inn-lane hospital. After I was cured of the scarlet fever, I had the brain fever, and was near my death; I was altogether eight weeks in the hospital, and when I come out I could get no work where I had been before. The master's nephew had come from Paris, and they had all French hands in the house. He wouldn't employ an English hand at all. He give me a trifle of money, and told me he would pay my lodgings for a week or two while I looked for work. I sought all about and couldn't find any; this was about three year ago. People wouldn't have me because I didn't know nothing about the English mode of business. I couldn't even tell the names of the English drugs, having been brought up in a French house. At last, my master got tired of paying for my lodging, and I used to try and pick up a few pence in the streets by carrying boxes and holding horses, it was all as I could get to do; I tried all I could to find employment, and they was the only jobs I could get. But I couldn't make enough for my lodging this way, and over and over again I've had to sleep out. Then I used to walk the streets most of the night, or lie about in the markets till morning came in the hopes of getting a job. I'm a very little eater, and perhaps that's the luckiest thing for such as me; half a pound of bread and a few potatoes will do me for the day. If I could afford it, I used to get a ha'porth of coffee and a ha'porth of sugar, and make it do twice. Sometimes I used to have victuals give to me, sometimes I went without altogether; and sometimes I couldn't eat. I can't always.

"Six weeks after I had been knocking about in the streets in the manner I've told you, a man I met in Covent-Garden market told me he was going into the country to get some roots (it was in the winter time and cold indeed; I was dressed about the same as I am now, only I had a pair of boots); and he said if I chose to go with him, he'd give me half of whatever he earned. I went to Croydon and got some prim-roses; my share came to 9d., and that was quite a God-send to me, after getting nothing. Sometimes before that I'd been two days without tasting

anything; and when I got some victuals after that, I couldn't touch them. All I felt was giddy; I wasn't to say hungry, only weak and sicklied. I went with this man after the roots two or three times; he took me to oblige me, and show me the way how to get a bit of food for myself; after that, when I got to know all about it, I went to get roots on my own account. I never felt a wish to take nothing when I was very hard up. Sometimes when I got cold and was tired, walking about and weak from not having had nothing to eat, I used to think I'd break a window and take something out to get locked up; but I could never make my mind up to it; they never hurt me, I'd say to myself. I do fancy though, if anybody had refused me a bit of bread, I should have done something again them, but I couldn't, do you see, in cold blood like.

"When the summer came round a gentleman whom I seed in the market asked me if I'd get him half a dozen nesties—he didn't mind what they was, so long as they was small, and of different kinds—and as I'd come across a many in my trips after the flowers, I told him I would do so—and that first put it into my head; and I've been doing that every summer since then. It's poor work, though, at the best. Often and often I have to walk 30 miles out without any victuals to take with me, or money to get any, and 30 miles again back, and bring with me about a dozen nesties; and, perhaps, if I'd no order for them, and was forced to sell them to the boys, I shouldn't get more than a shilling for the lot after all. When the time comes round for it, I go Christmasing and getting holly, but that's more dangerous work than bird-nesting; the farmers don't mind your taking the nesties, as it prevents the young birds from growing up and eating their corn. The greater part of the holly used in London for trimming up the churches and sticking in the puddings, is stolen by such as me, at the risk of getting six months for it. The farmers brings a good lot to market, but we is obligated to steal it. Take one week with another, I'm sure I don't make above 5s. You can tell that to look at me. I don't drink, and I don't gamble; so you can judge how much I get when I've had to pawn my shirt for a meal. All last week I only sold two nesties—they was a partridge's and a yellow-hammer's; for one I got 6d., and the other 3d., and I had been thirteen miles to get them. I got beside that a fourpenny piece for some chickweed which I'd been up to Highgate to gather for a man with a bad leg (it's the best thing there is for a poultice to a wound), and then I earned another 4d. by some mash (marsh) mal-low leaves (that there was to purify the blood of a poor woman): that, with 4d. that a gentleman give to me, was all I got last week; 1s. 9d. I think it is altogether. I had some victuals give to me in the street, or else I daresay I should have had to go without; but, as it was, I gave the money to the man and his wife I live with. You see they had nothing, and as they're good to me when I want, why, I did what I could for them. I've tried to get out of my present life, but there

seems to be an ill luck again me. Sometimes I gets a good turn. A gentleman gives me an order, and then I saves a shilling or eighteen-pence, so as to buy something with that I can sell again in the streets; but a wet day is sure to come, and then I'm cracked up, obligated to eat it all away. Once I got to sell fish. A gentleman give me a crown-piece in the street, and I borrowed a barrow at 2d. a day, and did pretty well for a time. In three weeks I had saved 18s.; then I got an order for a sack of moss from one of the flower-sellers, and I went down to Chelmsford, and stopped for the night in Lower Nelson-street, at the sign of "The Three Queens." I had my money safe in my fob the night before, and a good pair of boots to my feet then; when I woke in the morning my boots was gone, and on feeling in my fob my money was gone too. There was four beds in the rooms, feather and flock; the feather ones was 4d., and the flock 3d. for a single one, and 2½d. each person for a double one. There was six people in the room that night, and one of 'em was gone before I awoke—he was a cadger—and had took my money with him. I complained to the landlord—they call him George—but it was no good; all I could get was some victuals. So I've been obligated to keep to birds'-nesting ever since.

"I've never been in prison but once. I was took up for begging. I was merely leaning again the railings of Tavistock-square with my birds'-nesties in my hand, and the policemen took me off to Clerkenwell, but the magistrates, instead of sending me to prison, gave me 2s. out of the poor's-box. I feel it very much going about without shoes or without shirt, and exposed to all weathers, and often out all night. The doctor at the hospital in Gray's-inn-lane gave me two flannels, and told me that whatever I did I was to keep myself wrapped up; but what's the use of saying that to such as me who is obligated to pawn the shirt off our back for food the first wet day as comes? If you haven't got money to pay for your bed at a lodging-house, you must take the shirt off your back and leave it with them, or else they'll turn you out. I know many such. Sometimes I go to an artist. I had 5s. when I was drawed before the Queen. I wasn't 'xactly drawed before her, but my portrait was shown to her, and I was told that if I'd be there I might receive a trifle. I was drawed as a gipsy fiddler. Mr. Oakley in Regent-street was the gentleman as did it. I was dressed in some things he got for me. I had an Italian's hat, one with a broad brim and a peaked crown, a red plush waistcoat, and a yellow hankercher tied in a good many knots round my neck. I'd a black velvet Newmarket-cut coat, with very large pearl buttons, and a pair of black knee-breeches tied with fine red strings. Then I'd blue stripe stockings and high-ankle boots with very thin soles. I'd a fiddle in one hand and a bow in the other. The gentleman said he drawed me for my head of hair. I've never been a gipsy, but he told me he didn't mind that, for I should make as good a gipsy fiddler as the real thing. The artists

mostly give me 2s. I've only been three times. I only wish I could get away from my present life. Indeed I would do any work if I could get it. I'm sure I could have a good character from my masters in Rathbone-place, for I never done nothing wrong. But if I couldn't get work I might very well, if I'd money enough, get a few flowers to sell. As it is it's more than any one can do to save at bird-nesting, and I'm sure I'm as prudent as e'er a one in the streets. I never took the pledge, but still I never take no beer nor spirits—I never did. Mother told me never to touch 'em, and I haven't tasted a drop. I've often been in a public-house selling my things, and people has offered me something to drink, but I never touch any. I can't tell why I dislike doing so—but something seems to tell me not to taste such stuff. I don't know whether it's what my mother said to me. I know I was very fond of her, but I don't say it's that altogether as makes me do it. I don't feel to want it. I smoke a good bit, and would sooner have a bit of baccy than a meal at any time. I could get a goodish rig-out in the lane for a few shillings. A pair of boots would cost me 2s., and a coat I could get for 2s. 6d. I go to a ragged school three times a week if I can, for I'm but a poor scholar still, and I should like to know how to read; it's always handy you know, sir."

This lad has been supplied with a suit of clothes and sufficient money to start him in some of the better kind of street-trades. It was thought advisable not to put him to any more settled occupation on account of the vagrant habits he has necessarily acquired during his bird-nesting career. Before doing this he was employed as errand-boy for a week, with the object of testing his trustworthiness, and was found both honest and attentive. He appears a prudent lad, but of course it is difficult, as yet, to speak positively as to his character. He has, however, been assured that if he shows a disposition to follow some more reputable calling he shall at least be put in the way of so doing.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SQUIRRELS.

THE street squirrel-sellers are generally the same men as are engaged in the open-air traffic in cage-birds. There are, however, about six men who devote themselves more particularly to squirrel-selling, while as many more sometimes "take a turn at it." The squirrel is usually carried in the vendor's arms, or is held against the front of his coat, so that the animal's long bushy tail is seen to advantage. There is usually a red leather collar round its neck, to which is attached some slender string, but so contrived that the squirrel shall not appear to be a prisoner, nor in general—although perhaps the hawker became possessed of his squirrel only that morning—does the animal show any symptoms of fear.

The chief places in which squirrels are offered for sale, are Regent-street and the Royal Exchange, but they are offered also in all the principal thoroughfares—especially at the West End. The

purchasers are gentlefolk, tradespeople, and a few of the working classes who are fond of animals. The wealthier persons usually buy the squirrels for their children, and, even after the free life of the woods, the animal seems happy enough in the revolving cage, in which it "thinks it climbs."

The prices charged are from 2s. to 5s., "or more if it can be got," from a third to a half being profit. The sellers will oft enough state, if questioned, that they caught the squirrels in Epping Forest, or Caen Wood, or any place sufficiently near London, but such is hardly ever the case, for the squirrels are bought by them of the dealers in live animals. Countrymen will sometimes catch a few squirrels and bring them to London, and nine times out of ten they sell them to the shopkeepers. To sell three squirrels a day in the street is accounted good work.

I am assured by the best-informed parties that for five months of the year there are 20 men selling squirrels in the streets, at from 20 to 50 per cent. profit, and that they average a weekly sale of six each. The average price is from 2s. to 2s. 6d., although not very long ago one man sold a "wonderfully fine squirrel" in the street for three half-crowns, but they are sometimes parted with for 1s. 6d. or less, rather than be kept overnight. Thus 2400 squirrels are vended yearly in the streets, at a cost to the public of 240l.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LEVERETS, WILD RABBITS, ETC.

THERE are a few leverets, or young hares, sold in the streets, and they are vended for the most part in the suburbs, where the houses are somewhat detached, and where there are plenty of gardens. The softness and gentleness of the leveret's look pleases children, more especially girls, I am informed, and it is usually through their importunity that the young hares are bought, in order that they may be fed from the garden, and run tame about an out-house. The leverets thus sold, however, as regards nine out of ten, soon die. They are rarely supplied with their natural food, and all their natural habits are interrupted. They are in constant fear and danger, moreover, from both dogs and cats. One shopkeeper who sold fancy rabbits in a street off the Westminster-road told me that he had once tried to tame and rear leverets in hutches, as he did rabbits, but to no purpose. He had no doubt it might be done, he said, but not in a shop or a small house. Three or four leverets are hawked by the street-people in one basket and are seen lying on hay, the basket having either a wide-worked lid, or a net thrown over it. The hawkers of live poultry sell the most leverets, but they are vended also by the singing-bird sellers. The animals are nearly all bought, for this traffic, at Leadenhall, and are retailed at 1s. to 2s. each, one-third to one-half being profit. Perhaps 300 are sold this way yearly, producing 22l. 10s.

About 400 young wild rabbits are sold in the street in a similar way, but at lower sums, from 3d. to 6d. each, 4d. being the most frequent rate.

The yearly outlay is thus 6l. 18s. They thrive, in confinement, no better than the leverets.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF GOLD AND SILVER FISH.

OF these dealers, residents in London, there are about 70; but during my inquiry (at the beginning of July) there were not 20 in town. One of their body knew of ten who were at work live-fish selling, and there might be as many more, he thought, "working" the remoter suburbs of Blackheath, Croydon, Richmond, Twickenham, Isleworth, or wherever there are villa residences of the wealthy. This is the season when the gold and silver fish-sellers, who are altogether a distinct class from the bird-sellers of the streets, resort to the country, to vend their glass globes, with the glittering fish swimming ceaselessly round and round. The gold fish-hawkers are, for the most part, of the very best class of the street-sellers. One of the principal fish-sellers is in winter a street-vendor of cough drops, horehound candy, coltsfoot-sticks, and other medicinal confectionaries, which he himself manufactures. Another leading gold-fish seller is a costermonger now "on pine-apples." A third, "with a good connection among the innkeepers," is in the autumn and winter a hawker of game and poultry.

There are in London three wholesale dealers in gold and silver fish; two of whom—one in the Kingsland-road and the other close by Billingsgate—supply more especially the street-sellers, and the street-traffic is considerable. Gold fish is one of the things which people buy when brought to their doors, but which they seldom care to "order." The impertunity of children when a man unexpectedly tempts them with a display of such brilliant creatures as gold fish, is another great promotive of the street-trade; and the street-traders are the best customers of the wholesale purveyors, buying somewhere about three-fourths of their whole stock. The dealers keep their fish in tanks suited to the purpose, but goldfish are never bred in London. The English-reared gold fish are "raised" for the most part, as respects the London market, in several places in Essex. In some parts they are bred in warm ponds, the water being heated by the steam from adjacent machinery, and in some places they are found to thrive well. Some are imported from France, Holland, and Belgium; some are brought from the Indies, and are usually sold to the dealers to improve their breed, which every now and then, I was told, "required a foreign mixture, or they didn't keep up their colour." The Indian and foreign fish, however, are also sold in the streets; the dealers, or rather the Essex breeders, who are often in London, have "just the pick of them," usually through the agency of their town customers. The English-reared gold fish are not much short of three-fourths of the whole supply, as the importation of these fishes is troublesome; and unless they are sent under the care of a competent person, or unless the master or steward of a vessel is made

to incur a share in the venture, by being paid so much freight-money for as many gold and silver fishes as are landed in good health, and nothing for the dead or dying, it is very hazardous sending them on shipboard at all, as in case of neglect they may all die during the voyage.

The gold and silver fish are of the carp species, and are natives of China; but they were first introduced into this country from Portugal about 1690. Some are still brought from Portugal. They have been common in England for about 120 years.

These fish are known in the street-trade as "globe" and "pond" fish. The distinction is not one of species, nor even of the "variety" of a species, but merely a distinction of size. The larger fish are "pond;" the smaller, "globe." But the difference on which the street-sellers principally dwell is that the pond fish are far more troublesome to keep by them in a "slack time," as they must be fed and tended most sedulously. Their food is stale bread or biscuit. The "globe" fish are not fed at all by the street-dealer, as the animalcules and the minute insects in the water suffice for their food. Soft, rain, or sometimes Thames water, is used for the filling of the globe containing a street-seller's gold fish, the water being changed twice a day, at a public-house or elsewhere, when the hawker is on a round. Spring-water is usually rejected, as the soft water contains "more feed." One man, however, told me he had recourse to the street-pumps for a renewal of water, twice, or occasionally thrice a day, when the weather was sultry; but spring or well water "wouldn't do at all." He was quite unconscious that he was using it from the pump.

The wholesale price of these fish ranges from 5s. to 18s. per dozen, with a higher charge for "picked fish," when high prices must be paid. The cost of "large silvers," for instance, which are scarcer than "large golds," so I heard them called, is sometimes 5s. apiece, even to a retailer, and rarely less than 3s. 6d. The most frequent price, retail from the hawker—for almost all the fish are hawked, but only there, I presume, for a temporary purpose—is 2s. the pair. The gold fish are now always hawked in glass globes, containing about a dozen occupants, within a diameter of twelve inches. These globes are sold by the hawker, or, if ordered, supplied by him on his next round that way, the price being about 2s. Glass globes, for the display of gold fish, are indeed manufactured at from 6d. to 1l. 10s. each, but 2s. or 2s. 6d. is the usual limit to the price of those vended in the street. The fish are lifted out of the water in the globe to consign to a purchaser, by being caught in a neat net, of fine and different-coloured cordage, always carried by the hawker, and manufactured for the trade at 2s. the dozen. Neat handles for these nets, of stained or plain wood, are 1s. the dozen. The dealers avoid touching the fish with their hands. Both gold fish and glass globes are much cheaper than they were ten years ago; the globes are cheaper, of course, since the alteration in the

tax on glass, and the street-sellers are, numerically, nearly double what they were.

From a well-looking and well-spoken youth of 21 or 22, I had the following account. He was the son, and grandson, of costermongers, but was —perhaps, in consequence of his gold-fish selling lying among a class not usually the costermongers' customers—of more refined manners than the generality of the costers' children.

"I've been in the streets, sir," he said, "helping my father, until I was old enough to sell on my own account, since I was six years old. Yes, I like a street life, I'll tell you the plain truth, for I was put by my father to a paperstainer, and found I couldn't bear to stay in doors. It would have killed me. Gold fish are as good a thing to sell as anything else, perhaps, but I've been a costermonger as well, and have sold both fruit and good fish—salmon and fine soles. Gold fish are not good for eating. I tried one once, just out of curiosity, and it tasted very bitter indeed; I tasted it boiled. I've worked both town and country on gold fish. I've served both Brighton and Hastings. The fish were sent to me by rail, in vessels with air-holes, when I wanted more. I never stopped at lodging-houses, but at respectable public-houses, where I could be well suited in the care of my fish. It's an expense, but there's no help for it." [A costermonger, when I questioned him on the subject, told me that he had sometimes sold gold fish in the country, and though he had often enough slept in common lodging-houses, he never could carry his fish there, for he felt satisfied, although he had never tested the fact, that in nine out of ten such places, the fish, in the summer season, would half of them die during the night from the foul air.] "Gold fish sell better in the country than town," the street-dealer continued; "much better. They're more thought of in the country. My father's sold them all over the world, as the saying is. I've sold both foreign and English fish. I prefer English. They're the hardest; Essex fish. The foreign—I don't just know what part—are bred in milk ponds; kept fresh and sweet, of course; and when they're brought here, and come to be put in cold water, they soon die. In Essex they're bred in cold water. They live about three years; that's their lifetime if they're properly seen to. I don't know what kind of fish gold fish are. I've heard that they first came from China. No, I can't read, and I'm very sorry for it. If I have time next winter I'll get taught. Gentlemen sometimes ask me to sit down, and talk to me about fish, and their history (natural history), and I'm often at a loss, which I mightn't be if I could read. If I have fish left after my day's work, I never let them stay in the globe I've hawked them in, but put them into a large pan, a tub sometimes, three-parts full of water, where they have room. My customers are ladies and gentlemen, but I have sold to shopkeepers, such as buttermen, that often show gold fish and flowers in their shops. The fish don't live long in the very small globes, but they're put in them sometimes just to satisfy children. I've sold as many as two dozen at a time to stock a

pond in a gentleman's garden. It's the best sale a little way out of town, in any direction. I sell six dozen a week, I think, one week with another; they'll run as to price at 1s. apiece. That six dozen includes what I sell both in town and country. Perhaps I sell them nearly three-parts of the year. Some hawk all the year, but it's a poor winter trade. Yes, I make a very fair living; 2s. 6d. or 3s. or so, a day, perhaps, on gold fish, when the weather suits."

A man, to whom I was referred as an experienced gold fish-seller, had just returned, when I saw him, from the sale of a stock of new potatoes, peas, &c., which he "worked" in a donkey cart. He had not this season, he said, started in the gold-fish line, and did very little last year in it, as his costermongering trade kept steady, but his wife thought gold fish-selling was a better trade, and she always accompanied him in his street rounds; so he might take to it again. In his youth he was in the service of an old lady who had several pets, and among them were gold fish, of which she was very proud, always endeavouring to procure the finest, a street-seller being sure of her as a customer if he had fish larger or deeper or brighter-coloured than usual. She kept them both in stone cisterns, or small ponds, in her garden, and in glass globes in the house. Of these fish my informant had the care, and was often commended for his good management of them. After his mistress's death he was very unlucky, he said, in his places. His last master having been implicated, he believed, in some gambling and bill-discounting transactions, left the kingdom suddenly, and my informant was without a character, for the master he served previously to the one who went off so abruptly was dead, and a character two years back was of no use, for people said, "But where have you been living since? Let me know all about that." The man did not know what to do, for his money was soon exhausted: "I had nothing left," he said, "which I could turn into money except a very good great coat, which had belonged to my last master, and which was given to me because he went off without paying me my wages. I thought of 'listing, for I was tired of a footman's life, almost always in the house in such places as I had, but I was too old, I feared, and if I could have got over that I knew I should be rejected because I was getting bald. I was sitting thinking whatever could be done—I wasn't married then—and had nobody to consult with; when I heard the very man as used to serve my old lady crying gold fish in the street. It struck me all of a heap, and I wonder I hadn't thought of it before, when I recollected how well I'd managed the fish, that I'd sell gold fish too, and hawk it as he did, as it didn't seem such a bad trade. So I asked the man all about it, and he told me, and I raised a sovereign on my great coat, and that was my start in the streets. I was nervous, and a little 'shamed at first, but I soon got over that, and in time turned my hand to fruit and other things. Gold fish saved my life, sir; I do believe that, for I might have pined into a consumption if I'd been

without something to do, and something to eat much longer."

If we calculate, in order to allow for the cessation of the trade during the winter, and often in the summer when costermongering is at its best, that but half the above-mentioned number of gold-fish sellers hawk in the streets and that for but half a year, each selling six dozen weekly at 12s. the dozen, we find 65,520 fish sold, at an outlay of 3276*l.* As the country is also "worked" by the London street-sellers, and the supply is derived from London, the number and amount may be doubled to include this traffic, or 131,040 fish sold, and 6552*l.* expended.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF TORTOISES.

THE number of tortoises sold in the streets of London is far greater than might be imagined, for it is a creature of no utility, and one which is inanimate in this country for half its life.

Of live tortoises, there are 20,000 annually imported from the port of Mogadore in Morocco. They are not brought over, as are the parrots, &c., of which I have spoken, for amusement or as private ventures of the seamen, but are regularly consigned from Jewish houses in Mogadore, to Jewish merchants in London. They are a freight of which little care is taken, as they are brought over principally as ballast in the ship's hold, where they remain torpid.

The street-sellers of tortoises are costermongers of the smarter class. Sometimes the vendors of shells and foreign birds "work" also a few tortoises, and occasionally a wholesale dealer (the consignee of the Jewish house in Africa) will send out his own servants to sell barrow-loads of tortoises in the street on his own account. They are regularly ranged on the barrows, and certainly present a curious appearance—half-alive creatures as they are (when the weather is not of the warmest), brought from another continent for sale by thousands in the streets of London, and retention in the gardens and grounds of our civic villas. Of the number imported, one-half, or 10,000, are yearly sold in the streets by the several open-air dealers I have mentioned. The wholesale price is from 4s. to 6s. the dozen; they are retailed from 6*d.* to 1*s.*, a very fine well-grown tortoise being sometimes worth 2*s.* 6*d.* The mass, however, are sold at 6*d.* to 9*d.* each, but many fetch 1*s.* They are bought for children, and to keep in gardens as I have said, and when properly fed on lettuce leaves, spinach, and similar vegetables, or on white bread sopped in water, will live a long time. If the tortoise be neglected in a garden, and have no access to his favourite food, he will eat almost any green thing which comes in his way, and so may commit ravages. During the winter, and the later autumn and earlier spring, the tortoise is torpid, and may be kept in a drawer or any recess, until the approach of summer "thaws" him, as I heard it called.

Calculating the average price of tortoises in street-sale at 8*d.* each, we find upwards of 333*l.* thus expended yearly.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SNAILS, FROGS, WORMS, SNAKES, HEDGEHOGS, ETC.

I CLASS together these several kinds of live creatures, as they are all "gathered" and sold by the same persons—principally by the men who supply bird-food, of whom I have given accounts in my statements concerning groundsel, chickweed, plain-tain, and turf-selling.

The principal *snail-sellers*, however, are the turf-cutters, who are young and active men, while the groundsel-sellers are often old and infirm and incapable of working all night, as the necessities of the snail-trade often require. Of turf-cutters there were, at the time of my inquiry last winter, 42 in London, and of these full one-third are regular purveyors of snails, such being the daintier diet of the caged blackbirds and thrushes. These men obtain their supply of snails in the market-gardens, the proprietors willingly granting leave to any known or duly recommended person who will rid them of these depredators. Seven-eighths of the quantity gathered are sold to the bird-dealers, to whom the price is 2*d.* a quart. The other eighth is sold on a street round at from 3*d.* to 6*d.* the quart. A quart contains at least 80 snails, not heaped up, their shells being measured along with them. One man told me there were "100 snails to a fair quart."

When it is moonlight at this season of the year, the snail gatherers sometimes work all night; at other times from an hour before sunset to the decline of daylight, the work being resumed at the dawn. To gather 12 quarts in a night, or a long evening and morning, is accounted a prosperous harvest. Half that quantity is "pretty tidy." An experienced man said to me:—

"The best snail grounds, sir, you may take my word for it, is in Putney and Barnes. It's the 'greys' we go for, the fellows with the shells on 'em; the black snails or slugs is no good to us. I think snails is the slowest got money of any. I don't suppose they get 's scarcer, but there's good seasons for snails and there's bad. Warm and wet is best. We don't take the little 'uns. They come next year. I may make 1*l.* a year, or a little more, in snails. In winter there's hardly anything done in them, and the snails is on the ground; in summer they're on the walls or leaves. They'll keep six months without injury; they'll keep the winter round indeed in a proper place."

I am informed that the 14 snail gatherers on the average gather six dozen quarts each in a year, which supplies a total of 12,096 quarts, or individually, 1,189,440 snails. The labourers in the gardens, I am informed, may gather somewhat more than an equal quantity,—all being sold to the bird-shops; so that altogether the supply of snails for the caged thrushes and blackbirds of London is about two millions and a half. Computing them at 24,000 quarts, and only at 2*d.* a quart, the outlay is 200*l.* per annum.

The *Frogs* sold by street-people are, at the rate of about 36 dozen a year, disposed of in equal proportion to University and King's Colleges. Only two men collect the frogs, one for each hos-

pital. They are charged 1*d.* each:—"I've sometimes," said one of the frog-purveyors, "come on a place where I could have got six or seven dozen in a day, but that's mostly been when I didn't want them. At other times I've gone days without collaring a single frog. I only want them four times a year, and four or five dozen at a time. The low part of Hampstead's the best ground for them, I think. The doctors like big fellows. They keep them in water 'til they're wanted to dissect." One man thought that there might be 50 more frogs or upwards ordered yearly, through the bird-shops, for experiments under air-pumps, &c. This gives about 500 frogs sold yearly by the street-people. One year, however, I was told, the supply was larger, for a Camberwell gentleman ordered 40 frogs to stock a watery place at the foot of his garden, as he liked to hear and see them.

The *Toad* trade is almost a nonentity. One man, who was confident he had as good a trade in that line as any of his fellows, told me that last year he only supplied one toad; in one year, he

forgot the precise time, he collected ten. He was confident that from 12 to 24 a year was now the extent of the toad trade, perhaps 20. There was no regular price, and the men only "work to order." "It's just what the shopkeeper, mostly a herbalist, likes to give." I was told, from 1*d.* to 6*d.* according to size. "I don't know what they're wanted for, something about the doctors, I believe. But if you want any toads, sir, for anything, I know a place between Hampstead and Willesden, where there's real stunners."

Worms are collected in small quantities by the street-sellers, and very grudgingly, for they are to be supplied gratuitously to the shopkeepers who are the customers of the turf-cutters, and snail and worm collectors. "They expects it as a parquisite, like." One man told me that they only gathered ground worms for the bird-fanciers.

Of the *Snakes* and *Hedgehogs* I have already spoken, when treating of the collection of birds'-nests. I am told that some few *glow-worms* are collected.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MINERAL PRODUCTIONS AND NATURAL CURIOSITIES.

THE class of which I have now to treat, including as it does the street-sellers of coal, coke, turf, salt, and sand, seem to have been called into existence principally by the necessities of the poorer classes. As the earnings of thousands of men, in all the sloop, "slaughter-house," or "scamping" branches of tailoring, shoemaking, cabinet-making, joining, &c. have become lower and lower, they are compelled to purchase the indispensable articles of daily consumption in the smallest quantities, and at irregular times, just as the money is in their possession. This is more especially the case as regards chamber-masters and garret-masters (among the shoemakers) and cabinet-makers, who, as they are small masters, and working on their own account, have not even such a regularity of payment as the journeyman of the sloop-tailor. Among these poor artizans, moreover, the wife must slave with the husband, and it is often an object with them to save the time lost in going out to the chandler's-shop or the coal-shed, to have such things as coal, and coke brought to their very doors, and vended in the smallest quantities. It is the same with the women who work for the sloop-shirt merchants, &c., or make cap-fronts, &c., on their own account, for the supply of the shopkeepers, or the wholesale swag-men, who sell low-priced millinery. The street-sellers of the class I have now to notice are, then, the principal purveyors of the very poor.

The men engaged in the street-sale of coal and coke—the chief articles of this branch of the street-sale—are of the costermonger class, as, indeed, is usually the case where an exercise of bodily strength is requisite. Costermongers, too, are better versed than any other street-folk in the management of barrows, carts, asses, ponies, or horses, so that when these vehicles and these

animals are a necessary part of any open-air business, it will generally be found in the hands of the coster class.

Nor is this branch of the street-traffic confined solely to articles of necessity. Under my present enumeration will be found the street-sale of *shells*, an ornament of the mantel-piece above the fire-grate to which coal is a necessity.

The present division will complete the subject of *Street Sale* in the metropolis.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF COALS.

ACCORDING to the returns of the coal market for the last few years, there has been imported into London, on an average, 3,500,000 tons of sea-borne coal annually. Besides this immense supply, the various railways have lately poured in a continuous stream of the same commodity from the inland districts, which has found a ready sale without sensibly affecting the accustomed vend of the north country coals, long established on the Coal Exchange.

To the very poor the importance of coal can be scarcely estimated. Physiological and medical writers tell us that carbonaceous food is that which produces heat in the body, and is therefore the fuel of the system. Experience tells us that this is true; for who that has had an opportunity of visiting the habitations of the poor—the dwellers in ill-furnished rooms and garrets—has not remarked the more than half-starved sloop needle-woman, the wretched half-naked children of the casually employed labourer, as the dock-man, or those whose earnings are extorted from them by their employers, such as the ballast-man, sitting crouched around the smouldering embers in the place where the fire ought to be? The reason of this is, because the system of the sufferer by long