

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 4*s.* to 6*s.* 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

want of food has been deprived of the necessary internal heat, and so seeks instinctively to supply the deficiency by imbibing it from some outward source. It is on this account chiefly, I believe, that I have found the ill-paid and ill-fed work-people prize warmth almost more than food. Among the poorest Irish, I have invariably found them crowding round the wretched fire when they had nothing to eat.

The census returns of the present year (according to the accounts published in the newspapers) estimate the number of the inhabitants of London at 2,363,141, and the number of inhabited houses as 307,722. Now if we take into consideration that in the immense suburbs of the metropolis, there are branching off from almost every street, labyrinths of courts and alleys, teeming with human beings, and that almost every room has its separate family—for it takes a multitude of poor to make one rich man—we may be able to arrive at the conclusion that by far the greater proportion of coals brought into London are consumed by the poorer classes. It is on this account of the highest importance, that honesty should be the characteristic of those engaged in the vend and distribution of an article so necessary not only to the comfort but to the very existence of the great masses of the population.

The modes in which the coals imported into London are distributed to the various classes of consumers are worthy of observation, as they unmistakably exhibit not only the wealth of the few, but the poverty of the many. The inhabitants of Belgravia, the wealthy shopkeepers, and many others periodically see at their doors the well-loaded waggon of the coal merchant, with two or three swarthy "coal-porters" bending beneath the black heavy sacks, in the act of laying in the 10 or 20 tons for yearly or half-yearly consumption. But this class is supplied from a very different quarter from that of the artizans, labourers, and many others, who, being unable to spare money sufficient to lay in at once a ton or two of coals, must have recourse to other means. To meet their limited resources, there may be found in every part, always in back streets, persons known as coal-shed men, who get the coals from the merchant in 7, 14, or 20 tons at a time, and retail them from  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. upwards. The coal-shed men are a very numerous class, for there is not a low neighbourhood in any part of the city which contains not two or three of them in every street.

There is yet another class of purchasers of coals, however, which I have called the 'very poor,'—the inhabitants of two pairs back—the dwellers in garrets, &c. It seems to have been for the purpose of meeting the wants of this class that the street-sellers of coals have sprung into existence. Those who know nothing of the decent pride which often lingers among the famishing poor, can scarcely be expected to comprehend the great boon that the street-sellers of coals, if they could only be made honest and conscientious dealers, are calculated to confer on these people. "I have seen," says a correspondent, "the starveling

child of misery, in the gloom of the evening, steal timidly into the shop of the coal-shed man, and in a tremulous voice ask, as if begging a great favour, for seven pound of coals. The coal-shed man has set down his pint of beer, taken the pipe from his mouth, blowing after it a cloud of smoke, and in a gruff voice, at which the little wretch has shrunk up (if it were possible) into a less space than famine had already reduced her to, and demanded—'Who told you as how I sarves seven pound o' coal?—Go to Bill C— he may sarve you if he likes—I won't, and that's an end on 't—I wonders what people wants with seven pound o' coal.' The coal-shed man, after delivering himself of this enlightened observation, has placidly resumed his pipe, while the poor child, gliding out into the drizzling sleet, disappeared in the darkness."

The street-sellers vend any quantity at the very door of the purchaser, without rendering it necessary for them to expose their poverty to the prying eyes of the neighbourhood; and, as I have said, were the street dealers only honest, they would be conferring a great boon upon the poorer portion of the people, but unhappily it is scarcely possible for them to be so, and realize a profit for themselves. The police reports of the last year show that many of the coal merchants, standing high in the estimation of the world, have been heavily fined for using false weights; and, did the present inquiry admit of it, there might be mentioned many other infamous practices by which the public are shamefully plundered in this commodity, and which go far to prove that the coal trade, *in toto*, is a gigantic fraud. May I ask how it is possible for the street-sellers, with such examples of barefaced dishonesty before their eyes, even to dream of acting honestly? If not actually certain, yet strongly suspecting, that they themselves are defrauded by the merchant, how can it be otherwise than that they should resort to every possible mode of defrauding their customers, and so add to the already almost unendurable burdens of the poorest of the poor, who by one means or other are made to bear all the burdens of the country?

The usual quantity of coals consumed in the poorest rooms, in which a family resides, is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cwt. per week in summer, and 1 cwt. do. in winter, or about 2 tons per annum.

The street sale of coals was carried on to a considerable extent during the earlier part of the last century, "small coalmen" being among the regular street-traders. The best known of these was Tom Britton, who died through fright occasioned by a practical joke. He was a great fosterer of a taste for music among the people; for, after hawking his coals during the day, he had a musical gathering in his humble abode in the evening, to which many distinguished persons resorted. This is alluded to in the lines, by Hughes, under Tom Britton's portrait, and the allusion, according to the poetic fashion of the time being made by means of a strained classicality:—

"Cyllenius so, as fables tell, and Jove,  
Came willing guests to poor Philemon's grove."

The trade seems to have disappeared gradually, but has recently been revived in another form.

Some few years ago an ingenious and enterprising costermonger, during a "slack" in his own business, conceived the idea of purchasing some of the refuse of the coals at the wharfs, conveying them round the poorer localities of his beat, in his ass or pony-cart, and vending them to "room-keepers" and others, in small quantities and at a reduced rate, so as to undersell the coal-shed men, while making for himself a considerable profit. The example was not lost upon his fraternity, and no long time had elapsed before many others had started in the same line; this eventually took so much custom from the regular coal-shed men, that, as a matter of self-defence, those among them who had a horse and cart, found it necessary to compete with the originators of the system in their own way, and, being possessed of more ample means, they succeeded, in a great measure, in driving the costers out of the field. The success of the coal-shed men was for a time so well followed up, that they began by degrees to edge away from the lanes and alleys, extending their excursions into quarters somewhat more aristocratic, and even there establishing a trade amongst those who had previously taken their ton or half ton of coals from the "brass-plate merchant," as he is called in the trade, being a person who merely procures orders for coals, gets some merchant who buys in the coal market to execute them in his name, and manages to make a living by the profits of these transactions. Some of this latter class consequently found themselves compelled to adopt a mode of doing their business somewhat similar, and for that purpose hired vans from the proprietors of those vehicles, loaded them with sacks of coals, drove round among their customers, prepared to furnish them with sacks or half sacks, as they felt disposed. Finally, many of the van proprietors themselves, finding that business might be done in this way, started in the line, and, being in general men of some means, established it as a regular trade. The van proprietors at the present time do the greater part of the business, but there may occasionally be seen, employed in this traffic, all sorts of conveyances, from the donkey-cart of the costermonger, or dock labourer, the latter of whom endeavours to make up for the miserable pittance he can earn at the rate of fourpence per hour, by the profits of this calling, to the aristocratic van, drawn along by two plump, well-fed horses, the property of a man worth 800*l.* or 900*l.*

The van of the street-seller of coals is easily distinguished from the waggon of the regular merchant. The merchant's waggon is always loaded with sacks standing perpendicularly; it is drawn by four immense horses, and is driven along by a gaunt figure, begrimed with coal-dust, and "sporting" ankle boots, or shoes and gaiters, white, or what ought to be white, stockings, velvet knee-creeches, short tarry smock-frock, and a huge fan-hat slouching half-way down his back. The street-seller's vehicle, on the contrary, has the coals stowed into it without sacks; while, on a tailboard, extending behind, lie weights and scales. It is

most frequently drawn by one horse, but sometimes by two, with bells above their collars jingling as they go, or else the driver at intervals rings a bell like a dustman's, to announce his approach to the neighbourhood.

The street-sellers formerly purchased their coals from any of the merchants along the river-side; generally the refuse, or what remained after the best had been picked out by "skreening" or otherwise; but always taking a third or fourth quality as most suitable for their purpose. But since the erection of machinery for getting coals out of the ships in the Regent's Canal basin, they have resorted to that place, as the coals are at once shot from the box in which they are raised from the hold of the ship, into the cart or van, saving all the trouble of being filled in sacks by coal porters, and carried on their backs from the ship, barge, or heap, preparatory to their being emptied into the van; thus getting them at a cheaper rate, and consequently being enabled to realize a greater profit.

Since the introduction of inland coals, also, by the railways, many of the street-sellers have either wholly, or in part, taken to sell them on account of the lower rate at which they can be purchased; sometimes they vend them unmixed, but more frequently they mix them up with "the small" of north country coals of better quality, and palm off the compound as "genuine Walsend direct from the ship;" this (together with short weights) being, in fact, the principal source of their profit.

It occasionally happens that a merchant purchases in the market a cargo of coals which turns out to be damaged, very small, or of inferior quality. In such cases he usually refuses to take them, and it is difficult to dispose of them in any regular way of trade. Such cargoes, or parts of cargoes, are consequently at times bought up by some of the more wealthy van proprietors engaged in the coal line, who realize on them a great profit.

To commence business as a street-seller of coals requires little capital beyond the possession of a horse and cart. The merchants in all cases let street-sellers have any quantity of coals they may require till they are able to dispose of them; and the street-trade being a ready-money business, they can go on from day to day, or from week to week, according to their pre-arrangements, so that, as far as the commodity in which they deal is concerned, there is no outlay of capital whatever.

There are about 30 two-horse vans continually engaged in this trade, the price of each van being 70*l.* This gives

100 horses at 20 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	£2100
160 carts at 10 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	1600
160 horses at 10 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	1600
20 donkey or pony carts, value 1 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	20
20 donkeys or ponies at 1 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> each . . . . .	30
Making a total of 210 vehicles continually employed, which, with the horses, &c., may be valued at . . . . .	6550
This sum, with the price of 210 sets of weights and scales, at 1 <i>l.</i> 10 <i>s.</i> per set . . . . .	31

Makes a total of . . . . . £6865

This may be fairly set down as the gross amount of capital at present employed in the street-sale of coals.

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain correctly the amount of coals distributed in this way among the poorer classes. But I have found that they generally take two turns per day; that is they go to the wharfs in the morning, get their vans or carts loaded, and proceed on their various rounds. This first turn usually occupies them till dinner-time, after which they get another load, which is sufficient to keep them employed till night. Now if we allow each van to carry two and a half tons, it will make for all 150 tons per day, or 900 tons per week. In the same manner allowing the 160 carts to carry a ton each, it will give 320 tons per day, or 1920 tons per week, and the twenty pony carts half a ton each, 40 tons per day, or 240 tons per week, making a total of 3060 tons per week, or 159,120 tons per annum. This quantity purchased from the merchants at 14s. 6d. per ton amounts to 115,362l. annually, and sold at the rate of 1s. per cwt., or 1l. per ton, leaves 5s. 6d. per ton profit, or a total profit of 43,758l., and this profit divided according to the foregoing account gives the subjoined amounts, viz. :—

To each two-horse van regularly employed throughout the year, a profit of . . .	£429	0
To each one-horse cart, ditto, ditto, . . .	171	12
To each pony cart, ditto, ditto, . . .	121	12

From which must, of course, be made the necessary deductions for the keep of the animals and the repair of vehicles, harness, &c.

The keep of a good horse is 10s. per week; a pony 6s. Three horses can be kept for the price of two, and so on; the more there are, the less cost for each.

The localities where the street-sellers of coals may most frequently be met with, are Blackwall, Poplar, Limehouse, Stepney, St. George's East, Twig Folly, Bethnal Green, Spitalfields, Shoreditch, Kingsland, Haggerstone, and Islington. It is somewhat remarkable that they are almost unknown on the south side of the Thames, and are seldom or never to be encountered in the low streets and lanes in Westminster lying contiguous to the river, nor in the vicinity of Marylebone, nor in any place farther west than Shoreditch; this is on account of the distance from the Regent's Canal basin precluding the possibility of their making more than one turn in the day, which would greatly diminish their profits, even though they might get a higher price for their commodity.

It may be observed that the foregoing statement in figures is rather under the mark than otherwise, as it is founded on the amount of coals purchased at a certain rate, and sold at a certain profit, without taking into account any of the "dodges" which almost all classes of coal dealers, from the highest to the lowest, are known to practise, so that the rate of profit arising from this business may be fairly supposed to amount to much more than the above account can show in figures.

I received the following statement from a person engaged in the street traffic :—

"I kept a coal-shed and greengrocer's shop, and as I had a son grown up, I wanted to get something for him to do; so about six years ago, having a pony and cart, and seeing others selling coals through the street, I thought I'd make him try his hand at it. I went to Mr. B——'s, at Whiting's wharf, and got the cart loaded, and sent my son round our own neighbourhood. I found that he soon disposed of them, and so he went on by degrees. People think we get a great deal of profit, but we don't get near as much as they think. I paid 16s. a ton all the winter for coals and sold them for a shilling a hundred, and when I came to feed the horse I found that he'll nearly eat it all up. A horse's belly is not so easy to fill. I don't think my son earns much more now, in summer, than feeds the horse. It's different in winter; he does not sell more nor half a ton a day now the weather's so warm. In winter he can always sell a ton at the least, and sometimes two, and on the Saturday he might sell three or four. My cart holds a ton; the vans hold from two to three tons. I can't exactly tell how many people are engaged in selling coals in the street, but there are a great many, that's certain. About eight o'clock what a number of carts and vans you'll see about the Regent's Canal! They like to get away before breakfast, because then they may have another turn after dinner. There's a great many go to other places for coals. The people who have vans do much better than those with the carts, because they carry so much that they save time. There are no great secrets in our business; we haven't the same chance of 'doing the thing' as the merchants have. They can mix the coals up as they like for their customers, and sell them for best; all we can do is to buy a low quality; then we may lose our customers if we play any tricks. To be sure, after that we can go to parts where we're not known. I don't use light weights, but I know it's done by a good many, and they mix up small coals by a good deal, and that of course helps their profits. My son generally goes four or five miles before he sells a ton of coals, and in summer weather a great deal farther. It's hard-earned money that's got at it, I can tell you. My cart is worth 12l.; I have a van worth 20l. I wouldn't take 20l. for my horse. My van holds two tons of coals, and the horse draws it easily. I send the van out in the winter when there's a good call, but in the summer I only send it out on the Saturday. I never calculated how much profit I made. I haven't the least idea how much is got by it, but I'm sure there's not near as much as you say. Why, if there was, I ought to have made a fortune by this time." [It is right I should state that I received the foregoing account of the profits of the street trade in coals from one practically and eminently acquainted with it.] "Some in the trade have done very well, but they were well enough off before. I know very well I'll never make a fortune at anything; I'll be satisfied if I keep moving along, so as to keep out of the Union."

As to the habits of the street-sellers of coal-

they are as various as their different circumstances will admit; but they closely resemble each other in one general characteristic—their provident and careful habits. Many of them have risen from struggling costermongers, to be men of substance, with carts, vans, and horses of their own. Some of the more wealthy of the class may be met with now and then in the parlours of respectable public houses, where they smoke their pipes, sip their brandy and water, and are remarkable for the shrewdness of their remarks. They mingle freely with the respectable tradesmen of their own localities, and may be seen, especially on the Sunday afternoons, with their wives and showily-dressed daughters in the gardens of the New Globe, or Green Dragon—the Cremorne and Vauxhall of the east. I visited the house of one of those who I was told had originally been a costermonger. The front portion of the shop was almost filled with coals, he having added to his occupation of street-seller the business of a coal-shed man; this his wife and a little boy managed in his absence; while, true to his early training, the window-ledge and a bench before it were heaped up with cabbages, onions, and other vegetables. In an open space opposite his door, I observed a one-horse cart and two or three trucks with his name painted thereon. At his invitation, I passed through what may be termed the shop, and entered the parlour, a neat room nicely carpeted, with a round table in the centre, chairs ranged primly round the walls, and a long looking-glass reflecting the china shepherds and shepherdesses on the mantel-piece, while, framed and glazed, all around were highly-coloured prints, among which, Dick Turpin, in flash red coat, gallantly clearing the toll-gate in his celebrated ride to York, and Jack Sheppard lowering himself down from the window of the lock-up house, were most conspicuous. In the window lay a few books, and one or two old copies of *Bell's Life*. Among the well-thumbed books, I picked out the *Newgate Calendar*, and the "*Calendar of Orrers*," as he called it, of which he expressed a very high opinion. "Lor bless you," he exclaimed, "them there stories is the vunderfullest in the world! I'd never ha believed it, if I adn't seed it vith my own two hies, but there can't be no mistake ven I read it hout o' the book, can there, now? I jist asks yer that ere plain question."

Of his career he gave me the following account:—"I vos at von time a coster, riglarly brought up to the business, the times vas good then; but lor, ve used to lush at sich a rate! About ten year ago, I ses to meself, I say Bill, I'm blowed if this here game 'ill do any longer. I had a good moke (donkey), and a tidyish box or a cart; so vot does I do, but goes and sees von o' my old pals that gits into the coal-line somehow. He and I goes to the Bell and Seven Mackerels in the Mile End Road, and then he tells me all he knowed, and takes me along vith hisself, and from that time I sticks to the coals."

"I niver cared much about the lush myself, and ven I got away from the old uns, I didn't mind it no how; but Jack my pal vos a awful lushy cove,

he couldn't do no good at nothink, votsomever; he died they say of *lirium trumans*" [not understanding what he meant, I inquired of what it was he died]; "why, of *lirium trumans*, vich I takes to be too much of Trueman and Hanbury's heavy; so I takes varnin by poor Jack, and cuts the lush; but if you thinks as ve don't enjoy ourselves sometimes, I tells you, you don't know nothink about it. I'm gittin on like a riglar house a fire."

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF COKE.

AMONG the occupations that have sprung up of late years is that of the purchase and distribution of the refuse cinders or coke obtained from the different gas-works, which are supplied at a much cheaper rate than coal. Several of the larger gas companies burn as many as 100,000 tons of coals per annum, and some even more, and every ton thus burnt is stated to leave behind two chaldrons of coke, returning to such companies 50 per cent. of their outlay upon the coal. The distribution of coke is of the utmost importance to those whose poverty forces them to use it instead of coal.

It is supposed that the ten gas companies in and about the metropolis produce at least 1,400,000 chaldrons of coke, which are distributed to the poorer classes by vans, one-horse carts, donkey carts, trucks, and itinerant vendors who carry one, and in some cases two sacks lashed together on their backs, from house to house.

The van proprietors are those who, having capital, contract with the companies at a fixed rate per chaldron the year through, and supply the numerous retail shops at the current price, adding 3d. per chaldron for carriage; thus speculating upon the rise or fall of the article, and in most cases carrying on a very lucrative business. This class numbers about 100 persons, and are to be distinguished by the words "coke contractor," painted on a showy ground on the exterior of their handsome well-made vehicles; they add to their ordinary business the occupation of conveying to their destination the coke that the companies sell from time to time. These men have generally a capital, or a reputation for capital, to the extent of 400l. or 500l., and in some cases more, and they usually enter into their contracts with the companies in the summer, when but small quantities of fuel are required, and the gas-works are incommenced for want of space to contain the quantity made. They are consequently able, by their command of means, to make advantageous bargains, and several instances are known of men starting with a wheelbarrow in this calling and who are now the owners of the dwellings in which they reside, and have goods, vans, and carts besides.

Another class, to whom may be applied much that has been said of the van proprietors, are the possessors of one-horse carts, who in many instances keep small shops for the sale of greens, coals, &c. These men are scattered over the whole metropolis, but as they do not exclusively obtain their

living by vending this article, they do not properly belong to this portion of the inquiry.

A very numerous portion of the distributors of coke are the donkey-cart men, who are to be seen in all the poorer localities with a quantity shot in the bottom of their cart, and two or three sacks on the top or fastened underneath—for it is of a light nature—ready to meet the demand, crying "Coke! coke! coke!" morning, noon, and night. This they sell as low as 2*d.* per bushel, coke having, in consequence of the cheapness of coals, been sold at the gas-works by the single sack as low as 7*d.*, and although there is here a seeming contradiction—that of a man selling and living by the loss—such is not in reality the case. It should be remembered that a bushel of good coke will weigh 40 lbs., and that the bushels of these men rarely exceed 25 lbs.; so that it will be seen that by this unprincipled mode of dealing they can seemingly sell for less than they give, and yet realize a good profit. The two last classes are those who own a truck or wheelbarrow or are the fortunate possessors of an athletic frame and broad shoulders, who roam about near the vicinity of the gas-works, soliciting custom, obtaining ready cash if possible, but in most cases leaving one sack on credit, and obtaining a profit of from 2*d.*, 3*d.*, 4*d.*, or more. These men are to be seen going from house to house cleverly regulating their arrival to such times as when the head of the family returns home with his weekly wage, and in possession of ready cash enough to make a bargain with the coke contractor. Another fact in connection with this class, many of whom are women, who employ boys to drag or carry their wares to their customers, is this: when they fail through any cause, they put their walk up for sale, and find no difficulty to obtain purchasers from 2*l.* to as high as 8*l.*, 10*l.*, and 12*l.* The street-sellers of coke number in all not less than 1500 persons, who may be thus divided: van proprietors, 100; single horse carts, 300; donkey-cart men, 500; trucks, wheelbarrows, and "physical force men," 550; and women about 50, who penetrate to all the densely-crowded districts about town distributing this useful article; the major portion of those who are of anything like sober habits, live in comfort; and in spite of the opinion held by many, that the consumption of coke is injurious to health and sight, they carry on a large and increasing business.

At the present time coke may be purchased at the gas factories at 6*s.* per chaldron; but in winter it generally rises to 10*s.*, so that, taking the average, 8*s.*, it will be found, that the gas factories of the metropolis realize no less a sum than 560,000*l.* per annum, by the coke produced in the course of their operations. And 4*s.* per chaldron being considered a fair profit, it will be found, that the total profit arising from its sale by the various vendors is 280,000*l.*

It is impossible to arrive with any degree of certainty at the actual amount of business done by each of the above-named classes, and the profits consequent on that business: by dividing the above amount equally among all the coke sellers,

it will be found to give 18*g.* per annum to each person. But it will be at once seen, that the same rule holds good in the coke trade that has already been explained in connection with coals: those possessing vans reaping the largest amount of profit; the one-horse cart men next; then the donkey carts, trucks, and wheelbarrows; and, least of all, the "backers," as they are sometimes called.

Concerning the amount of capital invested in the street-sale of coals it may be estimated as follows:—

If we allow 70 <i>l.</i> for each of the 100 vans, it will give . . . . .	£7,000
20 <i>l.</i> for each of the horses . . . . .	2,000
300 carts at 10 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	3,000
300 horses at 10 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	3,000
500 donkey-carts at 1 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	500
500 donkeys at 1 <i>l.</i> each . . . . .	500
200 trucks and barrows at 10 <i>s.</i> each . . . . .	100
making a total of . . . . .	£16,000
To this must be added	
4800 sacks for the 100 vans at 3 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> each . . . . .	840 0 0
3600 sacks for the 300 carts . . . . .	630 0 0
3000 " " 500 donkey carts . . . . .	525 0 0
1652 " " 550 trucks and backers . . . . .	288 15 0
300 " " 50 women . . . . .	52 10 0
	£18,336 5 0

Which being added to the value of vans, carts, and horses employed in the street-sale of coals, viz. . . . .

gives a capital of . . . . . £252,015

employed in the street-sale of coal and coke.

The profits of both these trades added together, namely, that on coals . . . . . 43,758 and the profit on coke . . . . . 280,000

shows a total profit of . . . . . £323,758 to be divided among 1710 persons, who compose the class of itinerant coal and coke vendors of the metropolis.

The following statement as to the street-sale of coke was given by a man in good circumstances, who had been engaged in the business for many years:—

"I am a native of the south of Ireland. More nor twenty years ago I came to London. I had friends here working in a gas factory, and after a time they managed to get me into the work too. My business was to keep the coals to the stokers, and when they emptied the retorts to wheel the coke in barrows and empty it on the coke heap. I worked for four or five years, off and on, at this place. I was sometimes put out of work in the summer-time, because they don't want as many hands then. There's not near so much gas burned in summer, and then, of course, it takes less hands

to make it. Well, at last I got to be a stoker; I had better wages than, and a couple of pots of beer in the day. It was dhrreadful hard work, and as hot, aye, as if you were in the inside of an oven. I don't know how I ever stood it. Be me soul, I don't know how anybody stands it; it's the devil's place of all you ever saw in your life, standing there before them retorts with a long heavy rake, pullin out the red-hot coke for the bare life, and then there's the rake red-hot in your hands, and the hiss and the bubblin of the wather, and the smoke and the smell—it's fit to melt a man like a rowl of fresh butther. I wasn't a bit too fond of it, at any rate, for it 'ud kill a horse; so I ses to the wife, 'I can't stand this much longer, Peggy.' Well, behold you, Peggy begins to cry and wring her hands, thinkin we'd starve; but I knew a grate dale better nor that, for I was two or three times dhrinkin with some of them that carry the coke out of the yard in sacks to sell to the poor people, and they had twice as much money to spend as me, that was working like a horse from mornin to night. I had a pound or two by me, for I was always savin, and by this time I knew a grate many people round about; so off I goes, and asks one and another to take a sack of coke from me, and bein knoun in the yard, and standin a dhrop o' dhrink now and thin for the fillers, I alway got good measure, and so I used to make four sacks out of three, and often three out of two. Well, at last I got tired carryin sacks on me back all day, and now I know I was a fool for doin it at all, for it's asier to dhrag a thruck with five or six sacks than to carry one; so I got a second-hand thruck for little or nothin, and thin I was able to do five times as much work in half the time. At last, I took a notion of puttin so much every Sathurday night in the savin bank, and faith, sir, that was the lucky notion for me, although Peggy wouldn't hear of it at all. She swore the bank 'ud be broke, and said she could keep the goold safer in her own stockin; that thin gintlemin in banks were all a set of blickards, and only desaved the poor people into givin them their money to keep it thim-selves. But in spite of Peggy I put the money in, and it was well for me that I did so, for in a short time I could count up 30 or 40 guineas in bank, and whin Peggy saw that the bank wasn't broke she was quite satisfied; so one day I ses to myself, What the devil's the use of me breakin my heart mornin, noon, and night, dhraggin a thruck behind me, whin ever so little a bit of a horse would dhrag ten time as much as I can? so off I set to Smithfield, and bought a stout stump of a horse for 12*l.* 10*s.*, and thin went to a sale and bought an ould cart for little or nothin, and in less nor a month I had every farthin back again in the bank. Well, after this, I made more and more every day, and findin that I paid more for the coke in winther than in summer, I thought as I had money if I could only get a place to put a good lot in summer to sell in winther it would be a good thing; so I begun to look about, and found this house for sale, so I bought it out and out. It was an ould

house to be sure; but it's sthrong enough, and dune up well enough for a poor man—besides there's the yard, and see in that yard there's a hape o' coke for the winther. I'm buyin it up now, an it 'ill turn a nice pinny whin the could weather comes again. To make a long story short, I needn't call the king my cousin. I'm sure any one can do well, if he likes; but I don't mane that they can do well brakin their heart workin; divil a one that sticks to work 'ill ever be a hapenny above a beggar; and I know if I'd stuck to it myself I'd be a grate dale worse off now than the first day, for I'm not so young nor near so sthrong as I was thin, and if I hadn't lift it off in time I'd have nothin at all to look to in a few years more but to ind my days in the workhouse—bad luck to it."

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF TAN-TURF.

TAN-TURF is oak bark made into turf after its virtues have been exhausted in the tan-pits. To make it into turf the manufacturers have a mill which is turned by horse-power, in which they grind the bark to a considerable degree of fineness, after which it is shaped by a mould into thin cakes about six inches square, put out to dry and harden, and when thoroughly hardened it is fit for sale and for all the uses for which it is intended.

There is only one place in London or its neighbourhood where there are tan-pits—in Bermondsey—and there only is the turf made. There are not more than a dozen persons in London engaged in the sale of this commodity in the streets, and they are all of the tribe of the costermongers. The usual capital necessary for starting in the line being a donkey and cart, with 9*s.* or 10*s.* to purchase a few hundreds of the turf.

There is a tradition extant, even at the present day, that during the prevalence of the plague in London the houses where the tan-turf was used in a great measure escaped that awful visitation; and to this moment many people purchase and burn it in their houses on account of the peculiar smell, and under the belief that it is efficacious in repelling infectious diseases from the localities in which it is used.

The other purposes for which it is used are for forming a sort of compost or manure for plants of the heath kind, which delight in a soil of this description, growing naturally among mosses and bogs where the peat fuel is obtained. It is used also by small bakers for heating their ovens, as preferable for their purposes, and more economical than any other description of fuel. Sometimes it is used for burning under coppers; and very often for keeping alight during the night, on account of the slowness of its decomposition by fire, for a single cake will continue burning for a whole night, will be found in the morning completely enveloped in a white ash, which, on being removed, discovers the live embers in the centre.

The rate at which the tan-turf is sold to the dealers, at the tan-pits, is from 6*d.* to 9*d.* per hun-

dred cakes. Those at 9d. per hundred are perfect and unbroken, while those at 6d. have been injured in some way or other. The quality of the article, however, remains the same, and by purchasing some of each sort the vendors are able to make somewhat more profit, which may be, on an average, about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hundred, as they sell it at 1s.

While seeking information on this subject I obtained the address of a person in T— mews, T— square, engaged in the business. Running out of the square is a narrow street, which, about mid-way through, leads on the right-hand side to a narrow alley, at the bottom of which is the mews, consisting of merely an oblong court, surrounded by stables of the very smallest dimensions, not one of them being more than twelve feet square. Three or four men, in the long waistcoats and full breeches peculiar to persons engaged among horses, were lounging about, and, with the exception of the horses, appeared to be the only inhabitants of the place. On inquiring of one of the loungers, I was shown a stable in one corner of the court, the wide door of which stood open. On entering I found it occupied by a donkey-cart, containing a couple of hundred cakes of tan-turf; another old donkey-cart was turned up opposite, the tailboard resting on the ground, the shafts pointing to the ceiling, while a cock and two or three draggle-tailed hens were composing themselves to roost on the front portion of the cart between the shafts. Within the space thus inclosed by the two carts lay a donkey and two dogs, that seemed keeping him company, and were busily engaged in mumbling and crunching some old bones. On the wall hung "Jack's harness." In one corner of the ceiling was an opening giving access to the place above, which was reached by means of a long ladder. On ascending this I found myself in a very small attic, with a sloping ceiling on both sides. In the highest part, the middle of the room, it was not more than six feet high, but at the sides it was not more than three feet. In this confined apartment stood a stump bedstead, taking up the greater portion of the floor. In a corner alongside the fire-place I noticed what appeared to be a small turn-up bedstead. A little rickety deal table, an old smoke-dried Dutch clock, and a poor old woman, withered and worn, were the only other things to be seen in the place. The old woman had been better off, and, as is not uncommon under such circumstances, she endeavoured to make her circumstances appear better than they really were. She made the following statement:—

"My husband was 23 years selling the tan turf. There used to be a great deal more of it sold than there is now; people don't seem to think so much of it now, as they once did, but there are some who still use it. There's an old lady in Kentish-town, who must have it regularly; she burns it on account of the smell, and has burned it for many years: my husband used to serve her. There's an old doctor at Hampstead—or rather he was there, for he died a few days

ago—he always bought a deal of it, but I don't know whether he burned it or not; he used to buy 500 or 600 at a time, he was a very good customer, and we miss him now. The gardeners buy some of it, for their plants, they say it makes good manure, though you wouldn't think so to look at it, it's so hard and dry. My husband is dead three years; we were better off when he was alive; he was a very sober and careful man, and never put anything to waste. My youngest son goes with the cart now; he don't do as well as his father, poor little fellow! he's only fourteen years of age, but he does very well for a boy of his age. He sometimes travels 30 miles of a day, and can't sell a load—sometimes not half a load; and then he comes home of a night so foot-sore that you'd pity him. Sometimes he's not able to stir out, for a day or two, but he must do something for a living; there's nothing to be got by idleness. The cart will hold 1000 or 1200, and if he could sell that every day we'd do very well; it would leave us about 3s. 6d. profit, after keeping the donkey. It costs 9d. a day to keep our donkey; he's young yet, but he promises to be a good strong animal, and I like to keep him well, even if I go short myself, for what could we do without him? I believe there are one or two persons selling tan-turf who use trucks, but they're strong; besides they can't do much with a truck, they can't travel as far with a truck as a donkey can, and they can't take as much out with them. My son goes of a morning to Bermondsey for a load, and is back by breakfast time; from this to Bermondsey is a long way—then he goes out and travels all round Kentish-town and Hampstead, and what with going up one street and down another, by the time he comes home at night, he don't travel less than from 25 to 30 miles a day. I have another son, the eldest. He used to go with his father when he was alive; he was reared to the business, but after he died he thought it was useless for both to go out with the cart, so he left it to the little fellow, and now the eldest works among horses. He don't do much, only gets an odd job now and then among the ostlers, and earns a shilling now and then. They're both good lads, and would do well if they could; they do as well as they can, and I have a right to be thankful for it."

The poor woman, notwithstanding the extraordinary place in which she lived, and the confined dimensions of her single apartment (I ascertained that the two sons slept in the stump bedstead, while she used the turn-up), was nevertheless cleanly in her person and apparel, and superior in many respects to persons of the same class, and I give her statement verbatim, as it corroborates, in almost every particular, the statement of the unfortunate seller of salt, who is afflicted with a drunken disorderly wife, and who is also a man superior to the people with whom he is compelled to associate, but who in evident bitterness of spirit made this assertion: "Bad as I'm off now, if I had only a careful partner, I wouldn't want for anything."



ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING CLIMBING SWEEPS.

[From a Photograph.]

Concerning the dogs that I have spoken of as being with the donkey, there is a curious story. During his rounds the donkey frequently met the bitch, and an extraordinary friendship grew up between the two animals, so that the dog at last forsook its owner, and followed the donkey in all his travels. For some time back she has accompanied him home, together with her puppy, and they all sleep cozily together during the night, Jack taking especial care not to hurt the young one. In the morning, when about to go out for the day's work, it is of no use to expect Jack to go without his friends, as he will not budge an inch, so he is humoured in his whim. The puppy, when tired, is put into the cart, and the mother forages for her living along the way; the poor woman not being able to feed them. The owner of the dogs came to see them on the day previous to my visit.

OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SALT.

UNTIL a few years after the repeal of the duty on the salt, there were no street-sellers of it. It was first taxed in the time of William III., and during the war with Napoleon the impost was 15s. the bushel, or nearly thirty times the cost of the article taxed. The duty was finally repealed in 1823. When the tax was at the highest, salt was smuggled most extensively, and retailed at 4d. and 4½d. the pound. A licence to sell it was also necessary. Street salt-selling is therefore a trade of some twenty years standing. Considering the vast consumption of salt, and the trifling amount of capital necessary to start in the business, it might be expected that the street-sellers would be a numerous class, but they do not number above 150 at the outside. The reason assigned by a well-informed man was, that in every part of London there are such vast numbers of shopkeepers who deal in salt.

About one-half of those employed in street salt-selling have donkeys and carts, and the rest use the two-wheeled barrow of the costermonger, to which class the street salt-sellers, generally, belong. The value of the donkey and cart may be about 2l. 5s. on an average, so that 75 of the number possessing donkeys and carts will have a capital among them equal to the sum of

£168	15	0	
The barrows of the remainder are worth about 10s. each, which will amount to	37	10	0
To sell 3 cwt. of salt in a day is considered good work; and this, if purchased at 2s. per cwt., gives for stock-money the sum total of	45	0	0

Thus the amount of capital which may be reasonably assumed to be embarked in this business is	£251	5	0
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The street-sellers pay at the rate of 2s. per cwt.

for the salt, and retail it at 3 lbs. for 1d., which leaves 1s. 1d. profit on every cwt. One day with another, taking wet and dry, for from the nature of the article it cannot be hawked in wet weather, the street-sellers dispose of about 2½ cwt. per day, or 18 tons 15 cwt. per day for all hands, which, deducting Sundays, makes 5825 tons in the course of the year. The profit of 1s. 1d. per cwt. amounts to a yearly aggregate profit of 6310l. 8s. 4d., or about 42l. per annum for each person in the trade.

The salt dealers, generally, endeavour to increase their profits by the sale of mustard, and sometimes by the sale of rock-salt, which is used for horses; but in these things they do little, the most profit they can realize in a day averaging about 4d.

The salt men who merely use the barrow are much better off than the donkey-cart men; the former are young men, active and strong, well able to drive their truck or barrow about from one place to another, and they can thereby save the original price and subsequent keep of the donkey. The latter are in general old men, broken down and weak, or lads. The daily cost of keeping a donkey is from 6d. to 9d.; if we reckon 7½d. as the average, it will annually amount to 11l. 8s. 1d. the year, which will reduce the profit of 42l. to about 30l., and so leave a balance of 11l. 8s. 1d. in favour of the truck or barrow man.

There are nine or ten places where the street-sellers purchase the salt:—Moore's, at Paddington, who get their salt by the canal, from Staffordshire; Welling's, at Battle-bridge; Baillie, of Thames-street, &c. Great quantities are brought to London by the different railways. The street-sellers have all regular beats, and seldom intrude on each other, though it sometimes happens, especially when any quarrel occurs among them, that they oppose and undersell one another in order to secure the customers.

During my inquiries on this subject, I visited Church-lane, Bloomsbury, to see a street-seller, about seven in the evening. Since the alterations in St. Giles's, Church-lane has become one of the most crowded places in London. The houses, none of which are high, are all old, time-blackened, and dilapidated, with shattered window-frames and broken panes. Stretching across the narrow street, from all the upper windows, might be seen lines crossing and recrossing each other, on which hung yellow-looking shirts, stockings, women's caps, and handkerchiefs looking like soiled and torn paper, and throwing the whole lane into shade. Beneath this ragged canopy, the street literally swarmed with human beings—young and old, men and women, boys and girls, wandering about amidst all kinds of discordant sounds. The footpaths on both sides of the narrow street were occupied here and there by groups of men and boys, some sitting on the flags and others leaning against the wall, while their feet, in most instances bare, dabbled in the black channel alongside the kerb, which being disturbed sent up a sickening stench. Some of these groups were playing cards for money, which lay on the ground near them. Men and women at intervals lay stretched out in

sleep on the pathway; over these the passengers were obliged to jump; in some instances they stood on their backs as they stepped over them, and then the sleeper languidly raised his head, growled out a drowsy oath, and slept again. Three or four women, with bloated countenances, blood-shot eyes, and the veins of their necks swollen and distended till they resembled strong cords, staggered about, violently quarrelling at the top of their drunken voices.

The street salt-seller—whom I had great difficulty in finding in such a place—was a man of about 50, rather sickly in his look. He wore an old cloth cap without a peak, a sort of dun-coloured waistcoat, patched and cobbled, a strong check shirt, not remarkable for its cleanliness, and what seemed to me to be an old pair of buckskin breeches, with fragments hanging loose about them like fringes. To the covering of his feet—I can hardly say shoes—there seemed to be neither soles nor uppers. How they kept on was a mystery.

In answer to my questions, he made the following statement, in language not to be anticipated from his dress, or the place in which he resided: "For many years I lived by the sale of toys, such as little chairs, tables, and a variety of other little things which I made myself and sold in the streets; and I used to make a good deal of money by them; I might have done well, but when a man hasn't got a careful partner, it's of no use what he does, he'll never get on; he may as well give it up at once, for the money'll go out ten times as fast as he can bring it in. I hadn't the good fortune to have a careful woman, but one who, when I wouldn't give her money to waste and destroy, took out my property and made money of it to drink; where a bad example like that is set, it's sure to be followed; the good example is seldom taken, but there's no fear of the bad one. You may want to find out where the evil lies, I tell you it lies in that pint pot, and in that quart pot, and if it wasn't for so many pots and so many pints, there wouldn't be half so much misery as there is. I know that from my own case. I used to sell toys, but since the foreign things were let come over, I couldn't make anything of them, and was obliged to give them up. I was forced to do something for a living, for a half loaf is better than no bread at all, so seeing two or three selling salt, I took to it myself. I buy my salt at Moore's wharf, Paddington; I consider it the purest; I could get salt 3d. or 2d. the cwt., or even cheaper, but I'd rather have the best. A man's not ashamed when he knows his articles are good. Some buy the cheap salt, of course they make more profit. We never sell by measure, always by weight; some of the street weights, a good many of them, are slangs, but I believe they are as honest as many of the shopkeepers after all; every one does the best he can to cheat everybody else. I go two or three evenings in the week, or as often as I want it, to the wharf for a load. I'm going there to-night, three miles out and three miles in. I sell, considering everything, about 2 cwt. a day; I sold 1½ to-day,

but to-morrow (Saturday) I'll sell 3 or 4 cwt., and perhaps more. I pay 2s. the cwt. for it, and make about 1s. a cwt. profit on that. I sold six-pennyworth of mustard to-day; it might bring me in 2d. profit; every little makes something. If I wasn't so weak and broke down, I wouldn't trouble myself with a donkey, it's so expensive; I'd easily manage to drive about all I'd sell, and then I'd save the expense. It costs me 7d. or 8d. a day to keep him, besides other things. I got him a set of shoes yesterday, I said I'd shoe him first and myself afterwards; so you see there's other expenses. There's my son, too, paid off the other day from the *Prince of Wales*, after a four years' voyage, and he came home without a sixpence in his pocket. He might have done something for me, but I couldn't expect anything else from him after the example that was set to him. Even now, bad as I am, I wouldn't want for anything if I had a careful woman; but she's a shocking drunkard, and I can do nothing with her." This poor fellow's mind was so full of his domestic troubles that he recurred to them again and again, and was more inclined to talk about what so nearly concerned himself than on any matter of business.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SAND.

Two kinds of sand only are sold in the streets, scouring or floor sand, and bird sand for birds. In scouring sand the trade is inconsiderable to what it was, saw-dust having greatly superseded it in the gin-palace, the tap-room, and the butcher's shop. Of the supply of sand, a man, who was working at the time on Hampstead-heath, gave the following account:—"I've been employed here for five-and-thirty years, under Sir Thomas Wilson. Times are greatly changed, sir; we used to have from 25 to 30 carts a day hawking sand, and taking six or seven men to fill them every morning; besides large quantities which went to brass-founders, and for cleaning dentists' cutlery, for stone-sawing, lead and silver casting, and such like. This heath, sir, contains about every kind of sand, but Sir Thomas won't allow us to dig it. The greatest number of carts filled now is eight or ten a day, which I fill myself. Sir Thomas has raised the price from 3s. 6d. to 4s. a load, of about 2½ tons. Bless you, sir, some years ago, one might go into St. Luke's, and sell five or six cart-loads of house-sand a week; now, a man may roar himself hoarse, and not sell a load in a fortnight. Saw-dust is used in all the public-houses and gin-palaces. People's sprung up who don't use sand at all; and many of the old people are too poor to buy it. The men who get sand here now are old customers, who carry it all over the town, and round Holloway, Islington, and such parts. Twelve year ago I would have taken here 6l. or 7l. in a morning, to-day I have only taken 9s. Fine weather is greatly against the sale of house-sand; in wet, dirty weather, the sale is greater."

One street sand-seller gave the following account of his calling:—

"I have been in the sand business, man and

boy, for 40 years. I was at it when I was 12 years old, and am now 52. I used to have two carts hawking sand, but it wouldn't pay, so I have just that one you see there. Hawking sand is a poor job now. I send two men with that 'ere cart, and pay one of 'em 3s. 4d. and the other 3s. a day. Now, with beer-money, 2s. a week, to the man at the heath, and turnpike gates, I reckon every load of sand to cost me 5s. Add to that 6s. 4d. for the two men, the wear and tear, and horse's keep (and, to do a horse justice, you cannot in these cheap times keep him at less than 10s. a week, in dear seasons, it will cost 15s.), and you will find each load of sand stands me in a good sum. So suppose we get a guinea a load, you see we have no great pull. Then there's the licence, 8l. a year. Many years ago we resisted this, and got Mr. Humphreys to defend us before the magistrates at Clerkenwell; but we were 'cast,' several hawkers were fined 10l., and I was brought up before old Sir Richard Birnie, at Bow-street, and had to find bail that I would not sell another bushel of sand till I took out a licence. Soon after that Sir Thomas Wilson shut up the heath from us; he said he would not have it cut about any more, for that a poor animal could not pick up a crumb without being in danger of breaking its leg. This was just after we took out our licences, and, as we'd paid dearly for being allowed to sell the sand, some of us, and I was one, we waited upon Sir Thomas, and asked to be allowed to work out our licences, which was granted, and we have gone on ever since. My men work very hard for their money, sir; they are up at 3 o'clock of the morning, and are knocking about the streets, perhaps till 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening."

The yellow house-sand is also found at Kingsland, and at the Kensington Gravel-pits; but at the latter place street-sellers are not supplied. The sand here is very fine, and mostly disposed of to plasterers. There is also some of this kind of sand at Wandsworth. In the street-selling of house-sand, there are now not above 30 men employed, and few of these trade on their own account. Reckoning the horses and carts employed in the trade at the same price as our Camden-town informant sets on his stock, we have 20 horses, at 10l. each, and 20 carts, at 3l. each, with 3 baskets to each, at 2s. apiece, making a total of 236l. of capital employed in the carrying machinery of the street-selling of sand. Allowing 3s. a day for each man, the wages would amount for 30 men to 27l. weekly; and the expenses for horses' keep, at 10s. a head, would give, for 20 horses, 10l. weekly, making a total of 38l. weekly, or an annual expenditure for man and horse of 2496l. Calculating the sale at a load per day, for each horse and cart, at 21s. a load, we have 6573l. annually expended in the purchase of house or floor-sand.

*Bird-sand*, or the fine and dry sand required for the use of cage-birds, is now obtained altogether of a market gardener in Hackney. It is sold at 8d. the barrow-load; as much being shovelled on to a coster's barrow "as it will carry." A good-sized barrow holds 3½ bushels;

a smaller size, 3 bushels, and the buyer is also the shoveller. Three-fourths of the quantity conveyed by the street-sellers from Hackney is sold to the bird-shop keepers at 6d. for 3 pecks. The remainder is disposed of to such customers as purchase it in the street, or is delivered at private houses, which receive a regular supply. The usual charge to the general public is a halfpenny or a penny for sand to fill any vessel brought to contain it. A penny a gallon is perhaps an average price in this retail trade.

A man, "in a good way of business," disposes of a barrow-load once a week; the others once a fortnight. In wet or windy weather great care is necessary, and much trouble incurred in supplying this sand to the street-sellers, and again in their vending it in the streets. The street-vendors are the same men as supply the turf, &c., for cage-birds, of whom I have treated, p. 156, vol. i. They are 40 in number, and although they do not all supply sand, a matter beyond the strength of the old and infirm, a few costermongers convey a barrow-load of sand now and then to the bird-sellers, and this addition ensures the weekly supply of 40 barrow-loads. Calculating these at the wholesale, or bird-dealer's price—2s. 3d. a barrow being an average—we find 234l. yearly expended in this sand. What is vended at 2s. 3d. costs but 8d. at the wholesale price; but the profit is hardly earned considering the labour of wheeling a heavy barrow of sand for miles, and the trouble of keeping over night what is unsold during the day.

#### OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SHELLS.

THE street-trade in shells presents the characteristics I have before had to notice as regards the trade in what are not necessities, or an approach to necessities, in contradistinction of what men must have to eat or wear. Shells, such as the green snail, ear shell, and others of that class, though extensively used for inlaying in a variety of ornamental works, are comparatively of little value; for no matter how useful, if shells are only well known, they are considered of but little importance; while those which are rarely seen, no matter how insignificant in appearance, command extraordinary prices. As an instance I may mention that on the 23rd of June there was purchased by Mr. Sowerby, shell-dealer, at a public sale in King-street, Covent-garden, a small shell not two inches long, broken and damaged, and withal what is called a "dead shell," for the sum of 30 guineas. It was described as the *Conus Glory Mary*, and had it only been perfect would have fetched 100 guineas.

Shells, such as conches, cowries, green snails, and ear shells (the latter being so called from their resemblance to the human ear), are imported in large quantities, as parts of cargoes, and are sold to the large dealers by weight. Conch shells are sold at 8s. per cwt; cowries and clams from 10s. to 12s. per cwt; the green snail, used for inlaying, fetches from 1l. to 1l. 10s. per cwt.; and the ear shell, on account of its superior quality and richer variety of colours, as much as 3l. and 5l. per cwt.

The conches are found only among the West India Islands, and are used principally for garden ornaments and grotto-work. The others come principally from the Indian Ocean and the China seas, and are used as well for chimney ornaments, as for inlaying, for the tops of work-tables and other ornamental furniture.

The shells which are considered of the most value are almost invariably small, and of an endless variety of shape. They are called "cabinet" shells, and are brought from all parts of the world—land as well as sea—lakes, rivers, and oceans furnishing specimens to the collection. The Australian forests are continually ransacked to bring to light new varieties. I have been informed that there is not a river in England but contains valuable shells; that even in the Thames there are shells worth from 10s. to 1*l.* each. I have been shown a shell of the snail kind, found in the woods of New Holland, and purchased by a dealer for 2*l.*, and on which he confidently reckoned to make a considerable profit.

Although "cabinet" shells are collected from all parts, yet by far the greater number come from the Indian Ocean. They are generally collected by the natives, who sell them to captains and mates of vessels trading to those parts, and very often to sailors, all of whom frequently speculate to a considerable extent in these things, and have no difficulty in disposing of them as soon as they arrive in this country, for there is not a shell dealer in London who has not a regular staff of persons stationed at Gravesend to board the homeward-bound ships at the Nore, and sometimes as far off as the Downs, for the purpose of purchasing shells. It usually happens that when three or four of these persons meet on board the same ship, an animated competition takes place, so that the shells on board are generally bought up long before the ship arrives at London. Many persons from this country go out to various parts of the world for the sole purpose of procuring shells, and they may be found from the western coast of Africa to the shores of New South Wales, along the Persian Gulf, in Ceylon, the Malaccas, China, and the Islands of the Pacific, where they employ the natives in dredging the bed of the ocean, and are by this means continually adding to the almost innumerable varieties which are already known.

To show the extraordinary request in which shells are held in almost every place, while I was in the shop of Mr. J. C. Jamrach, naturalist, and agent to the Zoological Society at Amsterdam—one of the largest dealers in London, and to whom I am indebted for much valuable information on this subject—a person, a native of High Germany, was present. He had arrived in London the day before, and had purchased on that day a collection of shells of a low quality for which he paid Mr. Jamrach 36*l.*; to this he added a few birds. Placing his purchase in a box furnished with a leather strap, he slung it over his shoulder, shook hands with Mr. Jamrach, and departed. Mr. Jamrach informed me that the next morning he was to start by steam for Rotterdam.

then continue his journey up the Rhine to a certain point, from whence he was to travel on foot from one place to another, till he could dispose of his commodities; after which he would return to London, as the great mart for a fresh supply. He was only a very poor man, but there are a great many others far better off, continually coming backwards and forwards, who are able to purchase a larger stock of shells and birds, and who, in the course of their peregrinations, wander through the greater part of Germany, extending their excursions sometimes through Austria, the Tyrol, and the north of Italy. A visit to the premises of Mr. Jamrach, Ratcliff-highway, or Mr. Samuel, Upper East Smithfield, would well repay the curious observer. The front portion of Mr. Jamrach's house is taken up with a wonderful variety of strange birds that keep up an everlasting screaming; in another portion of the house are collected confusedly together heaps of nondescript articles, which might appear to the uninitiated worth little or nothing, but on which the possessor places great value. In a yard behind the house, immured in iron cages, are some of the larger species of birds, and some beautiful varieties of foreign animals—while in large presses ranged round the other rooms, and furnished with numerous drawers, are placed his real valuables, the cabinet shells. The establishment of Mr. Samuel is equally curious.

In London, the dealers in shells, keeping shops for the sale of them, amount to no more than ten; they are all doing a large business, and are men of good capital, which may be proved by the following quotation from the day-books of one of the class for the present year, viz. :—

Shells sold in February . . .	£275	0	0
Ditto, ditto, March . . . . .	471	0	0
Ditto, ditto, April . . . . .	1389	0	0
Ditto, ditto, May . . . . .	475	0	0
Total . . . . .	£2610	0	0
Profit on same, February . . . .	£75	12	0
Ditto, ditto, March . . . . .	140	0	0
Ditto, ditto, April . . . . .	323	0	0
Ditto, ditto, May . . . . .	127	0	0
Total . . . . .	£665	12	0

Besides these there are about 20 private dealers who do not keep shops, but who nevertheless do a considerable business in this line among persons at the West End of London. All shell dealers add to that occupation the sale of foreign birds and curiosities.

There is yet another class of persons who seem to be engaged in the sale of shells, but it is only seeming. They are dressed as sailors, and appear at all times to have just come ashore after a long voyage, as a man usually follows them with that sort of canvas bag in use among sailors, in which they stow away their clothes; the men themselves go on before carrying a parrot or some rare bird in one hand, and in the other a large shell. These men are the "duffers" of whom I have spoken

in my account of the sale of foreign birds. They make shells a more frequent medium for the introduction of their real avocation, as a shell is a far less troublesome thing either to hawk or keep by them than a parrot.

I now give a description of these men, as general duffers, and from good authority.

"They are known by the name of 'duffers,' and have an exceedingly cunning mode of transacting their business. They are all united in some secret bond; they have persons also bound to them, who are skilled in making shawls in imitation of those imported from China, and who, according to the terms of their agreement, must not work for any other persons. The duffers, from time to time, furnish these persons with designs for shawls, such as cannot be got in this country, which, when completed, they (the duffers) conceal about their persons, and start forward on their travels. They contrive to gain admission to respectable houses by means of shells and sometimes of birds, which they purchase from the regular dealers, but always those of a low quality; after which they contrive to introduce the shawls, their real business, for which they sometimes have realized prices varying from 5*l.* to 20*l.* In many instances, the cheat is soon discovered, when the duffers immediately decamp, to make place for a fresh batch, who have been long enough out of London to make their faces unknown to their former victims. These remain till they also find danger threaten them, when they again start away, and others immediately take their place. While away from London, they travel through all parts of the country, driving a good trade among the country gentlemen's houses; and sometimes visiting the seaports, such as Liverpool, Portsmouth, and Plymouth."

An instance of the skill with which the duffers sometimes do business, is the following. One of these persons some time ago came into the shop of a shell dealer, having with him a beautiful specimen of a three-coloured cockatoo, for which he asked 10*l.* The shell dealer declined the purchase at that price, saying, that he sold these birds at 4*l.* apiece, but offered to give 3*l.* 10s. for it, which was at once accepted; while pocketing the money, the man remarked that he had paid ten guineas for that bird. The shell dealer, surprised that so good a judge should be induced to give so much more than the value of the bird, was desirous of hearing further, when the duffer made this statement:—"I went the other day to a gentleman's house, he was an old officer, where I saw this bird, and, in order to get introduced, I offered to purchase it. The gentleman said he knew it was a valuable bird, and couldn't think of taking less than ten guineas. I then offered to barter for it, and produced a shawl, for which I asked twenty-five guineas, but offered to take fifteen guineas and the bird. This was at length agreed to, and now, having sold it for 3*l.* 10s., it makes 19*l.* 5s. I got for the shawl, and not a bad day's work either."

Of shells there are about a million of the commoner sorts bought by the London street-sellers at

3s. the gross. They are retailed at 1*d.* apiece, or 12s. the gross, when sold separately; a large proportion, as is the case with many articles of taste or curiosity rather than of usefulness, being sold by the London street-folk on country rounds; some of these rounds stretch half-way to Bristol or to Liverpool.

#### OF THE RIVER BEER-SELLERS, OR PURL-MEN.

THERE is yet another class of itinerant dealers who, if not traders in the streets, are traders in what was once termed the silent highway—the river beer-sellers, or purl-men, as they are more commonly called. These should strictly have been included among the sellers of eatables and drinkables; they have, however, been kept distinct, being a peculiar class, and having little in common with the other out-door sellers.

I will begin my account of the river-sellers by enumerating the numerous classes of labourers, amounting to many thousands, who get their living by plying their respective avocations on the river, and who constitute the customers of these men. There are first the sailors on board the corn, coal, and timber ships; then the "lumpers," or those engaged in discharging the timber ships; the "stevedores," or those engaged in stowing craft; and the "riggers," or those engaged in rigging them; ballast-heavers, ballast-getters, corn-porters, coal-whippers, watermen and lightermen, and coal-porters, who, although engaged in carrying sacks of coal from the barges or ships at the river's side to the shore, where there are public-houses, nevertheless, when hard worked and pressed for time, frequently avail themselves of the presence of the purl-man to quench their thirst, and to stimulate them to further exertion.

It would be a remarkable circumstance if the fact of so many persons continually employed in severe labour, and who, of course, are at times in want of refreshment, had not called into existence a class to supply that which was evidently required; under one form or the other, therefore, river-dealers boast of an antiquity as old as the naval commerce of the country.

The prototype of the river beer-seller of the present day is the bumboat-man. Bumboats (or rather *Baum*-boats, that is to say, the boats of the harbour, from the German *Baum*, a haven or bar) are known in every port where ships are obliged to anchor at a distance from the shore. They are stored with a large assortment of articles, such as are likely to be required by people after a long voyage. Previously to the formation of the various docks on the Thames, they were very numerous on the river, and drove a good trade with the homeward-bound shipping. But since the docks came into requisition, and steam-tugs brought the ships from the mouth of the river to the dock entrance, their business died away, and they gradually disappeared; so that a bumboat on the Thames at the present day would be a sort of curiosity, a relic of times past.

In former times it was *not* in the power of any person who chose to follow the calling of a bumboat man on the Thames. The Trinity Com-



pany had the power of granting licences for this purpose. Whether they were restrained by some special clause in their charter, or not, from giving licences indiscriminately, it is difficult to say. But it is certain that none got a licence but a sailor—one who had “served his country;” and it was quite common in those days to see an old fellow with a pair of wooden legs, perhaps blind of an eye, or wanting an arm, and with a face rugged as a rock, plying about among the shipping, accompanied by a boy whose duty it was to carry the articles to the purchasers on shipboard, and help in the management of the boat. In the first or second year of the reign of her present Majesty, however, when the original bumboatmen had long degenerated into the mere beer-sellers, and any one who wished traded in this line on the river (the Trinity Company having for many years paid no attention to the matter), an inquiry took place, which resulted in a regulation that all the beer-sellers or purl-men should thenceforward be regularly licensed for the river-sale of beer and spirits from the Waterman’s Hall, which regulation is in force to the present time.

It appears to have been the practice at some time or other in this country to infuse wormwood into beer or ale previous to drinking it, either to make it sufficiently bitter, or for some medicinal purpose. This mixture was called *purl*—why I know not, but Bailey, the philologist of the seventeenth century, so designates it. The drink originally sold on the river was *purl*, or this mixture, whence the title, *purl-man*. Now, however, the wormwood is unknown; and what is sold under the name of *purl* is beer warmed nearly to boiling heat, and flavoured with gin, sugar, and ginger. The river-sellers, however, still retain the name of *purl-men*, though there is not one of them with whom I have conversed that has the remotest idea of the meaning of it.

To set up as a *purl-man*, some acquaintance with the river, and a certain degree of skill in the management of a boat, are absolutely necessary; as, from the frequently-crowded state of the pool, and the rapidity with which the steamers pass and repass, twisting and wriggling their way through craft of every description, the unskilful adventurer would run in continual danger of having his boat crushed like a nutshell. The *purl-men*, however, through long practice, are scarcely inferior to the watermen themselves in the management of their boats; and they may be seen at all times easily working their way through every obstruction, now shooting athwart the bows of a Dutch galliot or sailing-*barge*, then dropping astern to allow a steam-boat to pass till they at length reach the less troubled waters between the tiers of shipping.

The first thing required to become a *purl-man* is to procure a licence from the Waterman’s Hall, which costs 3s. 6d. per annum. The next requisite is the possession of a boat. The boats used are all in the form of skiffs, rather short, but of a good breadth, and therefore less liable to capsize through the swell of the steamers, or through any other cause. Thus equipped he then goes to some of the

small breweries, where he gets two “pins,” or small casks of beer, each containing eighteen pots; after this he furnishes himself with a quart or two of gin from some publican, which he carries in a tin vessel with a long neck, like a bottle—an iron or tin vessel to hold the fire, with holes drilled all round to admit the air and keep the fuel burning, and a huge bell, by no means the least important portion of his fit-out. Placing his two pins of beer on a frame in the stern of the boat, the spiles loosened and the brass cocks fitted in, and with his tin gin bottle close to his hand beneath the seat, two or three measures of various sizes, a black tin pot for heating the beer, and his fire pan secured on the bottom of the boat, and sending up a black smoke, he takes his seat early in the morning and pulls away from the shore, resting now and then on his oars, to ring the heavy bell that announces his approach. Those on board the vessels requiring refreshment, when they hear the bell, hail “*Purl ahoy*;” in an instant the oars are resumed, and the *purl-man* is quickly alongside the ship.

The bell of the *purl-man* not unfrequently performs another very important office. During the winter, when dense fogs settle down on the river, even the regular watermen sometimes lose themselves, and flounder about bewildered perhaps for hours. The direction once lost, their shouting is unheeded or unheard. The *purl-man*’s bell, however, reaches the ear through the surrounding gloom, and indicates his position; when near enough to hear the hail of his customers, he makes his way unerringly to the spot by now and then sounding his bell; this is immediately answered by another shout, so that in a short time the glare of his fire may be distinguished as he emerges from the darkness, and glides noiselessly alongside the ship where he is wanted.

The amount of capital necessary to start in the *purl* line may be as follows:—I have said that the boats are all of the skiff kind—generally old ones, which they patch up and repair at but little cost. They purchase these boats at from 3*l.* to 6*l.* each. If we take the average of these two sums, the items will be—

	£	s.	d.
Boat . . . . .	4	10	0
Pewter measures . . . . .	0	5	0
Warming-pot . . . . .	0	1	6
Fire stove . . . . .	0	5	0
Gallon can . . . . .	0	2	6
Two pins of beer . . . . .	0	8	0
Quart of gin . . . . .	0	2	6
Sugar and ginger . . . . .	0	1	0
Licence . . . . .	0	3	6

Total £5 19 0

Thus it requires, at the very least, a capital of 6*l.* to set up as a *purl-man*.

Since the Waterman’s Hall has had the granting of licences, there have been upwards of 140 issued; but out of the possessors of these many are dead, some have left for other business, and others are too old and feeble to follow the occupation

any longer, so that out of the whole number there remain only 35 *purl-men* on the river, and these are thus divided:—23 ply their trade in what is called “the pool,” that is, from Execution Dock to Ratcliff Cross, among the coal-laden ships, and do a tolerable business amongst the sailors and the hard-working and thirsty coal-whippers; 8 *purl-men* follow their calling from Execution Dock to London Bridge, and sell their commodity among the ships loaded with corn, potatoes, &c.; and 4 are known to frequent the various reaches below Limehouse Hole, where the colliers are obliged to lie at times in sections, waiting till they are sold on the Coal Exchange, and some even go down the river as far as the ballast-lighters of the Trinity Company, for the purpose of supplying the ballast-getters. The *purl-men* cannot sell much to the unfortunate ballast-heavers, for they are suffering under all the horrors of an abominable truck system, and are compelled to take from the publicans about Wapping and Shadwell, who are their employers, large quantities of filthy stuff compounded especially for their use, for which they are charged exorbitant prices, being thus and in a variety of other ways mercilessly robbed of their earnings, so that they and their families are left in a state of almost utter destitution. One of the *purl-men*, whose boat is No. 44, has hoops like those used by gipsies for pitching their tents; these he fastens to each side of the boat, over which he draws a tarred canvas covering, water-proof, and beneath this he sleeps the greater part of the year, seldom going ashore except for the purpose of getting a fresh supply of liquors for trade, or food for himself. He generally casts anchor in some unfrequented nook down the river, where he enjoys all the quiet of a Thames hermit, after the labour of the day. To obtain the necessary heat during the winter, he fits a funnel to his fire-stove to carry away the smoke, and thus warmed he sleeps away, in defiance of the severest weather.

It appears from the facts above given that 210*l.* is the gross amount of capital employed in this business. On an average all the year round each *purl-man* sells two “pins” of beer weekly, independent of gin; but little gin is thus sold in the summer, but in the winter a considerable quantity of it is used in making the *purl*. The men purchase the beer at 4s. per pin, and sell it at 4d. per pot, which leaves them a profit of 4s. on the two pins, and, allowing them 6d. per day profit on the gin, it gives 1*l.* 7s. per week profit to each, or a total to all hands of 47*l.* 5s. per week, and a gross total of 2457*l.* profit made on the sale of 98,280 gallons of beer, beside gin sold on the Thames in the course of the year. From this amount must be deducted 318*l.* 10s., which is paid to boys, at the rate of 3s. 6d. per week; it being necessary for each *purl-man* to employ a lad to take care of the boat while he is on board the ships serving his customers, or traversing the tiers. This deduction being made leaves 61*l.* 2s. per annum to each *purl-man* as the profit on his year’s trading.

The present race of *purl-men*, unlike the

weather-beaten tars who in former times alone were licensed, are generally young men, who have been in the habit of following some river employment, and who, either from some accident having befallen them in the course of their work, or from their preferring the easier task of sitting in their boat and rowing leisurely about to continuous labour, have started in the line, and ultimately superseded the old river dealers. This is easily explained. No man labouring on the river would purchase from a stranger when he knew that his own fellow-workman was afloat, and was prepared to serve him with as good an article; besides he might not have money, and a stranger could not be expected to give trust, but his old acquaintance would make little scruple in doing so. In this way the customers of the *purl-men* are secured; and many of these people do so much more than the average amount of business above stated, that it is no unusual thing to see some of them, after four or five years on the river, take a public-house, spring up into the rank of licensed victuallers, and finally become men of substance.

I conversed with one who had been a coal-whipper. He stated that he had met with an accident while at work which prevented him from following coal-whipping any longer. He had fallen from the ship’s side into a barge, and was for a long time in the hospital. When he came out he found he could not work, and had no other prospect before him but the union. “I thought I’d be by this time toes up in Stepney churchyard,” he said, “and grinning at the lid of an old coffin.” In this extremity a neighbour, a waterman, who had long known him, advised him to take to the *purl* business, and gave him not only the advice, but sufficient money to enable him to put it in practice. The man accordingly got a boat, and was soon afloat among his old workmates. In this line he now makes out a living for himself and his family, and reckons himself able to clear, one week with the other, from 1*l.* 5s. to 2*l.* 5s. “I should do much better,” he said, “if people would only pay what they owe; but there are some who never think of paying anything.” He has between 10*l.* and 20*l.* due to him, and never expects to get a farthing of it.

The following is the form of licence issued by the Watermen’s Company:—

INCORPORATED 1827.

BUMBOAT.

I hereby certify that  
 of \_\_\_\_\_, in the parish of \_\_\_\_\_,  
 in the county of Middlesex, is this day registered in a book of the Company of the Master, Wardens, and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen of the river Thames, kept for that purpose, to use, work, or navigate a boat called a skiff, named \_\_\_\_\_, number \_\_\_\_\_, for the purpose of selling, disposing of, or exposing for sale to and amongst the seamen, or other per-

sons employed in and about any of the ships or vessels upon the said river, any liquors, slops, or other articles whatsoever, between London Bridge and Limehouse Hole; but the said boat is not to be used on the said river for any other purpose than the aforesaid.

Waterman's Hall,

JAS. BANYON, Clerk.

Beside the regular purl-men, or, as they may be called, bumboat-men, there are two or three others who, perhaps unable to purchase a boat, and take out the licence, have nevertheless for a number of years contrived to carry on a traffic in spirits among the ships in the Thames. Their practice is to carry a flat tin bottle concealed about their person, with which they go on board the first ship in a tier, where they are well known by those who may be there employed. If the seamen wish for any spirit the river-vendor immediately supplies it, entering the name of the customers served, as none of the vendors ever receive, at the time of sale, any money for what they dispose of; they keep an account till their customers receive their wages, when they always contrive to be present, and in general succeed in getting what is owing to them. What their profits are it is impossible to tell, perhaps they may equal those of the regular purl-man, for they go on board of almost every ship in the course of the day. When their tin bottle is empty they go on shore to replenish it, doing so time after time if necessary.

It is remarkable that although these people are perfectly well known to every purl-man on the river, who have seen them day by day, for many years going on board the various ships, and are

thoroughly cognizant of the purpose of their visits, there has never been any information laid against them, nor have they been in any way interrupted in their business.

There is one of these river spirit-sellers who has pursued the avocation for the greater part of his life; he is a native of the south of Ireland, now very old, and a little shrivelled-up man. He may still be seen every day, going from ship to ship by scrambling over the quarters where they are lashed together in tiers—a feat sometimes attended with danger to the young and strong; yet he works his way with the agility of a man of 20, gets on board the ship he wants, and when there, were he not so well known, he might be thought to be some official sent to take an inventory of the contents of the ship, for he has at all times an ink-bottle hanging from one of his coat buttons, a pen stuck over his ear, spectacles on his nose, a book in his hand, and really has all the appearance of a man determined on doing business of some sort or other. He possesses a sort of ubiquity, for go where you will through any part of the pool you are sure to meet him. He seems to be expected everywhere; no one appears to be surprised at his presence. Captains and mates pass him by unnoticed and unquestioned. As suddenly as he comes does he disappear, to start up in some other place. His visits are so regular, that it would scarcely look like being on board ship if "old D—, the whiskey man," as he is called, did not make his appearance some time during the day, for he seems to be in some strange way identified with the river, and with every ship that frequents it.

OF THE NUMBERS, CAPITAL, AND INCOME OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF SECOND-HAND ARTICLES, LIVE ANIMALS, MINERAL PRODUCTIONS, ETC.

THE hawkers of second-hand articles, live animals, mineral productions, and natural curiosities, form, as we have seen, large important classes of the street-sellers. According to the facts already given, there appear to be at present in the streets, 90 sellers of metal wares, including the sellers of second-hand trays and Italian-irons; 30 sellers of old linen, as wrappers and towelling; 80 vendors of second-hand (burnt) linen and calico; 30 sellers of curtains; 30 sellers of carpeting, &c.; 30 sellers of bed-ticking, &c.; 6 sellers of old crockery and glass; 25 sellers of old musical instruments; 6 vendors of second-hand weapons; 6 sellers of old curiosities; 6 vendors of telescopes and pocket glaases; 30 to 40 sellers of other miscellaneous second-hand articles; 100 sellers of men's second-hand clothes; 30 sellers of old boots and shoes; 15 vendors of old hats; 50 sellers of women's second-hand apparel; 30 vendors of second-hand bonnets, and 10 sellers of old furs; 116 sellers of second-hand articles at Smithfield-market;—making altogether 725 street-sellers of second-hand commodities.

But some of the above trades are of a tem-

porary character only, as in the case of the vendors of old linen towelling or wrappers, carpets, bed-ticking, &c.—the same persons who sell the one often selling the others; the towels and wrappers, moreover, are offered for sale only on the Monday and Saturday nights. Assuming, then, that upwards of 100 or one-sixth of the above number sell two different second-hand articles, or are not continually employed at that department of street-traffic, we find the total number of street-sellers belonging to this class to be about 500.

Concerning the number selling live animals in the streets, there are 50 men vending fancy and sporting dogs; 200 sellers and "duffers" of English birds; 10 sellers of parrots and other foreign birds; 3 sellers of birds'-nests, &c.; 20 vendors of squirrels; 6 sellers of leverets and wild rabbits; 35 vendors of gold and silver fish; 20 vendors of tortoises; and 14 sellers of snails, frogs, worms, &c.; or, allowing for the temporary and mixed character of many of these trades, we may say that there are 200 constantly engaged in this branch of street-commerce.

Then of the street-sellers of mineral productions and natural curiosities, there are 216 vendors of coals; 1500 sellers of coke; 14 sellers of tan-turf; 150 vendors of salt; 70 sellers of sand; 26 sellers of shells; or 1969 in all. From this number the sellers of shells must be deducted, as the shell-trade is not a special branch of street-traffic. We may, therefore, assert that the number of people engaged in this latter class of street-business amounts to about 1900.

Now, adding all these sums together, we have the following table as to the numbers of individuals comprised in the first division of the London street-folk, viz. the street-sellers:—

1. Costermongers (including men, women, and children engaged in the sale of fish, fruit, vegetables, game, poultry, flowers, &c.) . . . . .	30,000
2. Street-sellers of "green stuff," including water-cresses, chickweed and gr'n'sel, turf, &c. . . . .	2,000
3. Street-sellers of eatables and drinkables . . . . .	4,000
4. Street-sellers of stationery, literature, and fine arts . . . . .	1,000
5. Street-sellers of manufactured articles of metal, crockery, glass, textile, chemical, and miscellaneous substances . . . . .	4,000
6. Street-sellers of second-hand articles, including the sellers of old metal articles, old glass, old linen, old clothes, old shoes, &c. . . . .	500
7. Street-sellers of live animals, as dogs, birds, gold and silver fish, squirrels, leverets, tortoises, snails, &c. . . . .	200
8. Street-sellers of mineral productions and natural curiosities, as coals, coke, tan-turf, salt, sand, shells, &c. . . . .	1,900

TOTAL NUMBER OF STREET-SELLERS 43,640

These numbers, it should be remembered, are given rather as an approximation to the truth than as the absolute fact. It would therefore be safer to say, making all due allowance for the temporary and mixed character of many branches of street-commerce, that there are about 40,000 people engaged in selling articles in the streets of London. I am induced to believe that this is very near the real number of street-sellers, from the wholesale returns of the places where the street-sellers purchase their goods, and which I have always made a point of collecting from the best authorities connected with the various branches of street-traffic. The statistics of the fish and green markets, the swag-shops, the old clothes exchange, the bird-dealers, which I have caused to be collected for the first time in this country, all tend to corroborate this estimate.

The next fact to be evolved is the amount of capital invested in the street-sale of Second-hand Articles, of Live Animals, and of Mineral Productions. And, first, as to the money employed in the Second-hand Street-Trade.

The following tables will show the amount of capital invested in this branch of street-business.

<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Metal Wares.</i>	
30 stalls, 5s. each; 20 barrows, 1l. each; stock-money for 50 vendors, at 10s. per head . . . . .	£ s. d. 52 10 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Metal Trays.</i>	
Stock-money for 20 sellers, at 5s. each . . . . .	5 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of other Second-hand Metal Articles, as Italian and Flat Irons.</i>	
Stock-money for 20 vendors, at 5s. each; 20 stalls, at 3s. each . . . . .	8 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Linen, &amp;c.</i>	
Stock-money for 30 vendors, at 5s. per head . . . . .	7 10 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand (burnt) Linen and Calico.</i>	
Stock-money for 80 vendors, at 10s. each . . . . .	40 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Curtains.</i>	
Stock-money for 30 sellers, at 5s. each . . . . .	7 10 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Carpeting, Flannels, Stocking-legs, &amp;c.</i>	
Stock-money for 30 sellers, at 6s. each . . . . .	9 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Bed-ticking, Sacking, Fringe, &amp;c.</i>	
Stock-money for 30 sellers, at 4s. each . . . . .	6 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Glass and Crockery.</i>	
6 barrows, 15s. each; 6 baskets, 1s. 6d. each; stock-money for 6 vendors, at 5s. each . . . . .	6 9 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Miscellaneous Articles.</i>	
Stock-money for 5 vendors, at 15s. each . . . . .	3 15 0
<i>Street-Sellers and Duffers of Second-hand Music.</i>	
Stock-money for 25 sellers, at 1l. each . . . . .	25 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Weapons.</i>	
Stock-money for 6 vendors, at 1l. each . . . . .	6 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Curiosities.</i>	
6 barrows, 15s. each; stock-money for 6 vendors, at 15s. per head . . . . .	9 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of Second-hand Telescopes and Pocket-Glasses.</i>	
Stock-money for 6 vendors, at 4l. each . . . . .	24 0 0
<i>Street-Sellers of other Miscellaneous Articles.</i>	
30 stalls, 5s. each; stock-money for 30 sellers, at 15s. each . . . . .	30 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Men's Second-hand Clothes.*  
100 linen bags, at 2s. each; stock-money for 100 sellers, at 15s. each . . . . . 85 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Boots and Shoes.*  
10 stalls, at 3s. each; 30 baskets, at 2s. 6d. each; stock-money for 30 sellers, at 10s. each . . . . . 20 5 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Hats.*  
30 irons, two to each man, at 2s. each; 60 blocks, at 1s. 6d. per block; stock-money for 15 vendors, at 10s. each . . . . . 15 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Women's Second-hand Apparel.*  
Stock-money for 50 sellers, at 10s. each; 50 baskets, at 2s. 6d. each . . . . . 31 5 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Bonnets.*  
10 umbrellas, at 3s. each; 30 baskets, at 2s. 6d. each; stock-money for 30 sellers, at 5s. each . . . . . 12 15 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Furs.*  
Stock-money for 10 vendors, at 7s. 6d. each . . . . . 3 15 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Articles in Smithfield-market.*

30 sellers of harness sets and collars, at an average capital of 15s. each; 6 sellers of saddles and pads, at 15s. each; 10 sellers of bits, at 3s. each; 6 sellers of wheel-springs and trays, at 15s. each; 6 sellers of boards and trestles for stalls, at 10s. each; 20 sellers of barrows, small carts, and trucks, at 5l. each; 6 sellers of goat carriages, at 3l. each; 6 sellers of shooting galleries and guns for ditto, and drums for costers, at 15s. each; 10 sellers of measures, weights, and scales, at 25s. each; 5 sellers of potato cans and roasted-chestnut apparatus, at 5l. each; 3 sellers of ginger-beer trucks, at 5l. each; 6 sellers of pea-soup cans and pickled-eel kettles, 15s. each; 2 sellers of elder-wine vessels, at 15s. each. Thus we find that the average number of street-sellers frequenting Smithfield-market once a week is 116, and the average capital . . . . . 217 0 0

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CAPITAL BELONGING TO STREET-SELLERS OF SECOND-HAND ARTICLES . . . . . 621 14 0

STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE ANIMALS.

*Street-Sellers of Dogs.*  
Stock-money for 20 sellers (including kennels and keep), at 5l. 15s. each seller . . . . . 115 0 0

*Street-Sellers and Duffers of Birds (English).*  
2400 small cages reckoning 12 to

each seller), at 6d. each; 1200 long cages (allowing 6 cages to each seller), at 2s. each; 1800 large cages (averaging 9 cages to each seller), at 2s. 6d. each. Stock-money for 200 sellers, at 20s. each . . . . . 605 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Parrots, &c.*  
20 cages, at 10s. each; stock-money for 10 sellers, at 30s. each . . . . . 25 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Birds'-Nests.*  
3 hamper baskets, at 6d. each . . . . . 1 6

*Street-Sellers of Squirrels.*  
Stock-money for 20 vendors, at 10s. each . . . . . 10 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Leverets, Wild Rabbits, &c.*  
6 baskets, at 2s. each; stock-money for 6 vendors, at 5s. each . . . . . 2 2 0

*Street-Sellers of Gold and Silver Fish.*  
35 glass globes, at 2s. each; 35 small nets, at 6d. each; stock-money for 35 vendors, at 15s. each . . . . . 30 12 6

*Street-Sellers of Tortoises.*  
Stock-money for 20 vendors, at 10s. each . . . . . 25 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Snails, Frogs, Worms, Snakes, Hedgehogs, &c.*  
14 baskets, at 1s. each . . . . . 14 0

TOTAL AMOUNT OF CAPITAL BELONGING TO STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE ANIMALS . . . . . 798 10 0

STREET-SELLERS OF MINERAL PRODUCTIONS AND NATURAL CURIOSITIES.

*Street-Sellers of Coals.*  
30 two-horse vans, at 70l. each; 100 horses, at 20l. each; 100 carts, at 10l. each; 160 horses, at 10l. each; 20 donkey or pony carts, at 1l. each; 20 donkeys or ponies, at 1l. 10s. each; 210 sets of weights and scales, at 1l. 10s. each; stock-money for 210 vendors, at 2l. each . . . . . 7,485 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Coke.*  
100 vans, at 70l. each; 100 horses, at 20l. each; 300 carts, at 10l. each; 300 horses, at 10l. each; 500 donkey-carts, at 1l. each; 500 donkeys, at 1l. each; 200 trucks and barrows, at 10s. each; 4800 sacks for the 100 vans, at 3s. 6d. each; 3600 sacks for the 300 carts; 3000 sacks for the 500 donkey carts; 1652 sacks for the 550 trucks and barrows; 300 sacks for the 50 women; stock-money for 1500 vendors, at 1l. per head . . . . . 19,936 12 0

*Street-Sellers of Tan-Turf.*  
12 donkeys and carts, at 2l. each;

the streets upon women's second-hand £ s. d. apparel is no less than . . . . . 1,950 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Bonnets.*

There are at present 30 persons (nearly one-half of whom are milliners and the others street-sellers) who sell second-hand straw and other bonnets; some of these are placed in an umbrella turned upside down, while others are spread upon a wrapper on the stones. The average takings of this class of street-sellers are about 12s. each per week, and their clear gains not more than one-half, thus giving a yearly expenditure of . . . . . 936 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Furs.*

During five months of the year there are as many as 8 or 12 persons who sell furs in the street-markets on Saturday nights, Sunday mornings, and Monday nights. The weekly average takings of each are about 12s., nearly three-fourths of which is clear profit. Reckoning that 10 individuals are engaged 20 weeks during the year, and that each of these takes weekly 12s., we find the sum annually expended in the streets on furs amounts to . . . . . 120 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Second-hand Articles in Smithfield-market.*

I am informed, by those who are in a position to know, that there are sold on an average every year in Smithfield-market about 62½ sets of harness, at 14s. per set; 1560 collars, at 2s. each; 686 pads, at 1s. each; 1560 saddles, at 5s. each; 936 bits, at 6d. each; 520 pair of wheels, at 10s. per pair; 624 pair of springs, at 8s. 4d. per pair; 832 pair of trestles, at 2s. 6d. per pair; 520 boards, at 4s. each; 1820 barrows, at 25s. each; 312 trucks, at 50s. each; 208 trays, at 1s. 3d. each; 1040 small carts, at 63s. each; 156 goat-carriages, at 20s. each; 520 shooting-galleries, at 14s. each; 312 guns for shooting-galleries, at 10s. each; 1040 drums for costers, at 3s. each; 2080 measures, at 3d. each; 2080 pair of large scales, at 5s. per pair; 2080 pair of hand-scales, at 5d. per pair; 30 roasted chestnut-apparatus, at 20s. each; 100 ginger-beer trucks, at 30s. each; 20 eel-kettles, at 5s. each; 100 potato-cans, at 17s. each; 10 pea-soup cans, at 5s. each; 40 elderwine vessels, at 8s. each; giving a yearly expenditure of . . . . . 10,242 3 8

TOTAL SUM OF MONEY ANNUALLY TAKEN BY THE STREET-SELLERS OF SECOND-HAND ARTICLES . . . . . 33,461 1 4

STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE ANIMALS.

*Street-Sellers of Dogs (Fancy Pets).*

From the best data it appears that each hawkker sells "four or five occasionally in 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 during each week in winter, when there isn't the same chance." Calculating, then, that seven dogs are sold by each hawkker in a fortnight, at an average price of 50s. each (many fetch 3l., 4l., and 5l.), and supposing that but 20 men are trading in this line the year through, we find that no less a sum is yearly expended in this street-trade than . . . . . 9,100 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Sporting Dogs.*

The amount "turned over" in the trade in sporting dogs yearly, in London, is computed by the best informed at about . . . . . 12,000 0 0

*Street-Sellers and Duffers of Live Birds. (English).*

There are in the metropolis 200 street-sellers of English birds, who may be said to sell among them 7000 linnets, at 3d. each; 3000 bullfinches, at 2s. 6d. each; 400 piping bullfinches, at 63s. each; 7000 goldfinches, at 9d. each; 1500 chaffinches, at 2s. 6d. each; 700 greenfinches, at 3d. each; 6000 larks, at 1s. each; 200 nightingales, at 1s. each; 600 redbreasts, at 1s. each; 3500 thrushes and thrustles, at 2s. 6d. each; 1400 blackbirds, at 2s. 6d. each; 1000 canaries, at 1s. each; 10,000 sparrows, at 1d. each; 1500 starlings, at 1s. 6d. each; 500 magpies and jackdaws, at 9d. each; 300 redpoles, at 9d. each; 150 black-caps, at 4d. each; 2000 "duffed" birds, at 2s. 6d. each. Thus making the sum annually expended in the purchase of birds in the streets, amount to . . . . . 3,624 12 2

*Street-Sellers of Parrots, &c.*

The number of individuals at present hawking parrots and other foreign birds in the streets is 10, who sell among them during the year about 500 birds. Reckoning each bird to sell at 1l., we find the annual outlay upon parrots bought in the streets to be 500l.; adding to this the sale of 110 Java sparrows and St. Helena birds, as Wax-bills and Red-beaks at 1s. 6d. each, we have for the sum yearly expended in the streets on the sale of foreign birds . . . . . 508 5 0

*Street-Sellers of Birds'-Nests.*

There are at present only three persons hawking birds'-nests, &c., in the streets during the season, which lasts from May to August; these street-sellers sell among them 400 nests, at 2½d. each; 144 snakes, at 1s. 6d. each; 4 hedgehogs, at 1s. each; and about 2s.'s worth of snails. This makes the weekly income of each amount to about 8s. 6d. during a period of 12 weeks in the summer, and the sum annually expended on these articles to come to . . . . . 15 6 0

*Street-Sellers of Squirrels.*

For five months of the year there are 20 men selling squirrels in the streets, at from 20 to 50 per cent. profit, and averaging a weekly sale of six each. The average price is from 2s. to 2s. 6d. Thus 2400 squirrels are vended yearly in the streets, at a cost to the public of . . . . . 240 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Leverets, Wild Rabbits, &c.*

During the year there are about six individuals exposing for sale in the streets young hares and wild rabbits. These persons sell among them 300 leverets, at 1s. 6d. each; and 400 young wild-rabbits, at 1d. each, giving a yearly outlay of . . . . . 29 3 4

*Street-Sellers of Gold and Silver Fish.*

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 35 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 . . . . . 3,276 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Tortoises.*

Estimating the number of individuals selling tortoises to be 20, and the number of tortoises sold to be 10,000, at an average price of 8d. each, we find there is expended yearly upon these creatures upwards of . . . . . 333 6 8

*Street-Sellers of Snails, Frogs, &c.*

There are 14 snail gatherers, and they, on an average, gather six dozen quarts each in a year, which supplies a total of 12,096 quarts of snails. The labourers in the gardens, I am informed, gather somewhat more than an equal quantity, the greater part 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 at 2d. a quart, the annual

outlay is 200l. Besides snails, there are collected annually 500 frogs and 18 toads, at 1d. each, giving a yearly expenditure of . . . . . 202 3 2

TOTAL, OR GROSS "TAKINGS," OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF LIVE ANIMALS . . . . . 23,868 16 4

INCOME, OR "TAKINGS," OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MINERAL PRODUCTIONS AND NATURAL CURIOSITIES.

*Street-Sellers of Coals.*

The number of individuals engaged in the street-sale of coals is 210; these distribute 2940 tons of coals weekly, giving an annual trade of 152,880 tons, at 1l. per ton, and consequently a yearly expenditure by the poor of . . . . . 152,880 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Coke.*

The number of individuals engaged in the street-sale of coke is 1500; and the total quantity of coke sold annually in the streets is computed at about 1,400,000 chaldrons. These are purchased at the gas factories at an average price of 8s. per chaldron. Reckoning that this is sold at 4s. per chaldron for profit, we find that the total gains of the whole class amount to 280,000l. per annum, and their gross annual takings to . . . . . 840,000 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Tan-Turf.*

The number of tan-turf sellers in the metropolis is estimated at 14; each of these disposes of, upon an average, 20,000 per week, during the year; selling them at 1s. per hundred, and realizing a profit of 4½d. for each hundred. This makes the annual outlay in the street-sale of the above article amount to . . . . . 7,280 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Salt.*

There are at present 150 individuals hawking salt in the several streets of London; each of these pays at the rate of 2s. per cwt. for the salt, and retails it at 3 lbs. for 1d., which leaves 1s. 1d. profit on every cwt. One day with another, wet and dry, each of the street-sellers disposes of about 2½ cwt., or 18 tons 15 cwt. per day for all hands, and this, deducting Sundays, makes 5868 tons 15 cwt. in the course of the year. The profit of 1s. 1d. per cwt. amounts to a yearly aggregate profit of 6357l. 16s. 3d., or about 42l. per annum for each person in the trade; while the sum annually expended upon this article in the streets amounts to . . . . . 18,095 6 3

*Street-Sellers of Sand.* £ s. d.

Calculating the sale at a load of sand per day, for each horse and cart, at 21s. per load, we find the sum annually expended in house-sand to be 6573l.; adding to this the sum of 234l. spent yearly in bird-sand, the total street-expenditure is . 6,807 0 0

*Street-Sellers of Shells.*

There are about 50 individuals disposing of shells at different periods of the year. These sell among them 1,000,000 at 1d. each, giving an annual expenditure of . . . . . 4,166 13 4

TOTAL, OR GROSS TAKINGS, OF THE STREET-SELLERS OF MINERAL PRODUCTIONS AND NATURAL CURIOSITIES . . . . . £1,029,228 19 7

*River-Sellers of Purl.*

There are at present 35 men following the trade of purl-selling on the river Thames to colliers. The weekly profits of this class amount to 117l. 5s. per week, and yearly to 6097l., while their annual takings is . . . . . 8,190 0 0

Now, adding together the above and the other foregone results, we arrive at the following estimate as to the amount of money annually expended on the several articles purchased in the streets of the metropolis.

"Wet" fish . . . . .	£1,177,200	£
Dry fish . . . . .	127,000	
Shell fish . . . . .	156,600	
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Fish of all kinds . . . . .	£1,460,800	
Vegetables . . . . .	£292,400	
Green fruit . . . . .	332,200	
Dry fruit . . . . .	1,000	
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Fruit and Vegetables . . . . .	625,600	
Game, poultry, rabbits, &c. . . . .	80,000	
Flowers, roots, &c. . . . .	14,800	
Water-cresses . . . . .	13,900	
Chickweed, grunsel, and turf for birds	14,570	
Eatables and drinkables . . . . .	203,100	
Stationery, literature, and fine arts . . . . .	33,400	
Manufactured articles . . . . .	188,200	
Second-hand articles . . . . .	29,900	
Live animals (including dogs, birds, and gold fish) . . . . .	29,300	
Mineral productions (as coals, coke, salt, sand, &c.) . . . . .	1,022,700	

TOTAL SUM EXPENDED UPON THE VARIOUS ARTICLES VENDED BY THE STREET-SELLERS . . . . . £3,716,270

Hence it appears that the street-sellers, of all ages, in the metropolis are about forty thousand in number—their stock-in-trade is worth about sixty thousand pounds—and their gross annual takings or receipts amount to no less than three millions and a half sterling.

OF THE STREET-BUYERS.

THE persons who traverse the streets, or call periodically at certain places to purchase articles which are usually sold at the door or within the house, are—according to the division I laid down in the first number of this work—STREET-BUYERS. The largest, and, in every respect, the most remarkable body of these traders, are the buyers of old clothes, and of them I shall speak separately, devoting at the same time some space to the STREET-JEWS. It will also be necessary to give a brief account of the Jews generally, for they are still a peculiar race, and street and shop-trading among them are in many respects closely blended.

The principal things bought by the itinerant purchasers consist of waste-paper, hare and rabbit skins, old umbrellas and parasols, bottles and glass, broken metal, rags, dripping, grease, bones, tea-leaves, and old clothes.

With the exception of the buyers of waste-paper, among whom are many active, energetic, and intelligent men, the street-buyers are of the lower sort, both as to means and intelligence. The only further exception, perhaps, which I need notice here is, that among some umbrella-buyers, there is considerable smartness, and sometimes, in the repair or renewal of the ribs, &c., a slight degree of skill. The other street-purchasers—such as the

hare-skin and old metal and rag buyers, are often old and infirm people of both sexes, of whom—perhaps by reason of their infirmities—not a few have been in the trade from their childhood, and are as well known by sight in their respective rounds, as was the "long-remembered beggar" in former times.

It is usually the lot of a poor person who has been driven to the streets, or has adopted such a life when an adult, to sell trifling things—such as are light to carry and require a small outlay—in advanced age. Old men and women totter about offering lucifer-matches, boot and stay-laces, penny memorandum books, and such like. But the elder portion of the street-folk I have now to speak of do not sell, but buy. The street-seller commends his wares, their cheapness, and excellence. The same sort of man, when a buyer, depreciates everything offered to him, in order to ensure a cheaper bargain, while many of the things thus obtained find their way into street-sale, and are then as much commended for cheapness and goodness, as if they were the stock-in-trade of an acute slop advertisement-monger, and this is done sometimes by the very man who, when a buyer, condemned them as utterly valueless. But this is common to all trades.