

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	
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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.

OF THE STREET-BUYERS OF RAGS, BROKEN METAL, BOTTLES, GLASS, AND BONES.

I CLASS all these articles under one head, for, on inquiry, I find no individual supporting himself by the trading in any one of them. I shall, therefore, describe the buyers of rags, broken metal, bottles, glass, and bones, as a body of street-traders, but take the articles in which they traffic seriatim, pointing out in what degree they are, or have been, wholly or partially, the staple of several distinct callings.

The traders in these things are not unprosperous men. The poor creatures who may be seen picking up rags in the street are "street-finders," and not buyers. It is the same with the poor old men who may be seen bending under an unsavoury sack of bones. The bones have been found, or have been given for charity, and are not purchased. One feeble old man whom I met with, his eyes fixed on the middle of the carriage-way in the Old St. Pancras-road, and with whom I had some conversation, told me that the best friend he had in the world was a gentleman who lived in a large house near the Regent's-park, and gave him the bones which his dogs had done with! "If I can only see hisself, sir," said the old man, "he's sure to give me any coppers he has in his coat-pocket, and that's a very great thing to a poor man like me. O, yes, I'll buy bones, if I have any ha'pence, rather than go without them; but I pick them up, or have them given to me mostly."

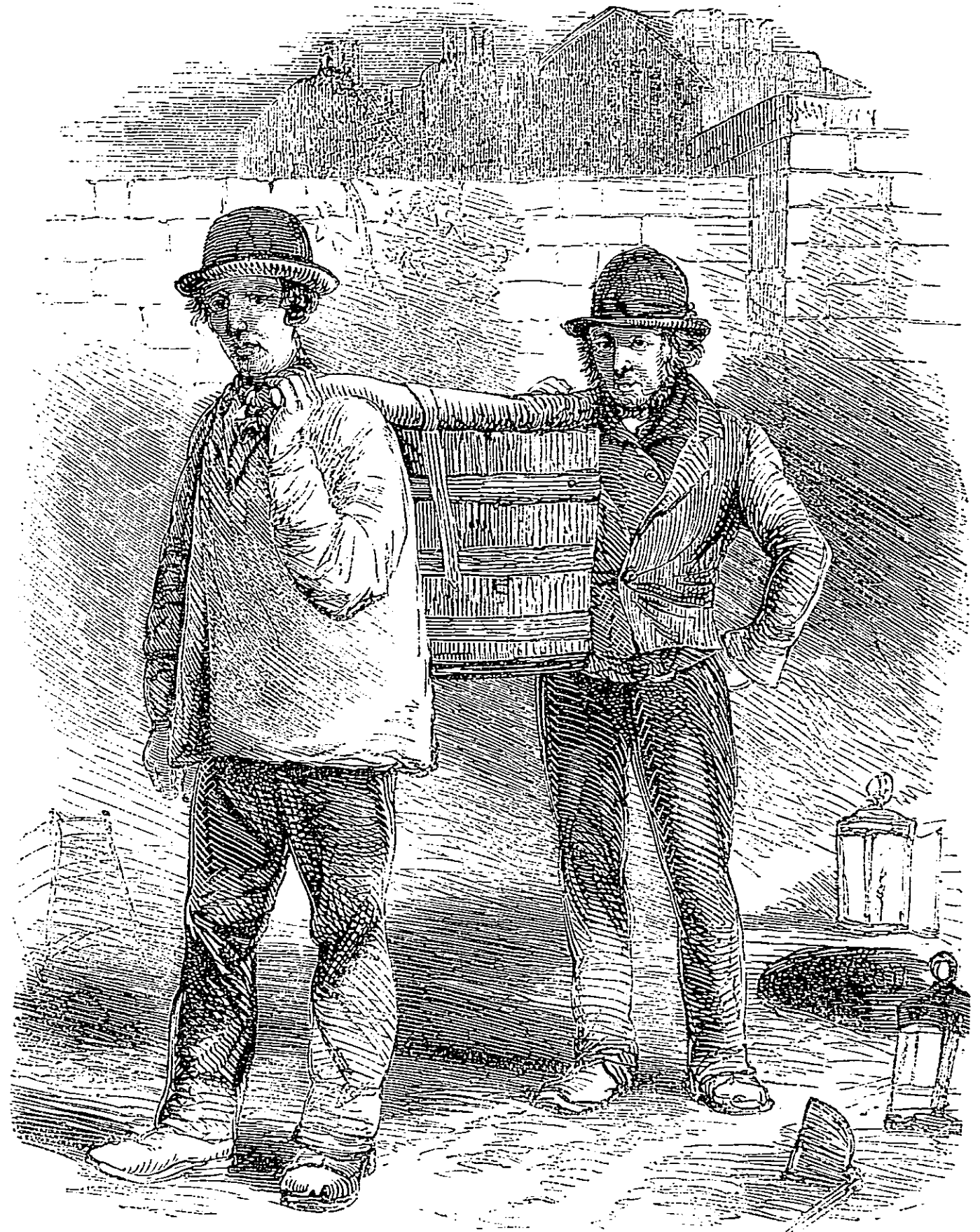
The street-buyers, who are only buyers, have barrows, sometimes even carts with donkeys, and, as they themselves describe it, they "buy everything." These men are little seen in London, for they "work" the more secluded courts, streets, and alleys, when in town; but their most frequented rounds are the poorer parts of the populous suburbs. There are many in Croydon, Woolwich, Greenwich, and Deptford. "It's no use," a man who had been in the trade said to me, "such as us calling at fine houses to know if they've any old keys to sell! No, we trades with the poor." Often, however, they deal with the servants of the wealthy; and their usual mode of business in such cases is to leave a bill at the house a few hours previous to their visit. This document has frequently the royal arms at the head of it, and asserts that the "firm" has been established since the year —, which is seldom less than half a century. The hand-bill usually consists of a short preface as to the increased demand for rags on the part of the paper-makers, and this is followed by a liberal offer to give the very best prices for any old linen, or old metal, bottles, rope, stair-rods, locks, keys, dripping, carpeting, &c., "in fact, no rubbish or lumber, however worthless, will be refused;" and generally concludes with a request that this "bill" may be shown to the mistress of the house and preserved, as it will be called for in a couple of hours.

The papers are delivered by one of the "firm," who marks on the door a sign indicative of the

houses at which the bill has been taken in, and the probable reception there of the gentleman who is to follow him. The road taken is also pointed by marks before explained, see vol. i. pp. 218 and 247. These men are residents in all quarters within 20 miles of London, being most numerous in the places at no great distance from the Thames. They work their way from their suburban residences to London, which, of course, is the mart, or "exchange," for their wares. The reason why the suburbs are preferred is that in those parts the possessors of such things as broken metal, &c., cannot so readily resort to a marine-store dealer's as they can in town. I am informed, however, that the shops of the marine-store men are on the increase in the more densely-peopled suburbs; still the dwellings of the poor are often widely scattered in those parts, and few will go a mile to sell any old thing. They wait in preference, unless very needy, for the visit of the street-buyer.

A good many years ago—perhaps until 30 years back—rags, and especially white and good linen rags, were among the things most zealously inquired for by street-buyers, and then 3d. a pound was a price readily paid. Subsequently the paper-manufacturers brought to great and economical perfection the process of boiling rags in lye and bleaching them with chlorite, so that colour became less a desideratum. A few years after the peace of 1815, moreover, the foreign trade in rags increased rapidly. At the present time, about 1200 tons of woollen rags, and upwards of 10,000 tons of linen rags, are imported yearly. These 10,000 tons give us but a vague notion of the real amount. I may therefore mention that, when reduced to a more definite quantity, they show a total of no less than twenty-two millions four hundred thousand pounds. The woollen rags are imported the most largely from Hamburg and Bremen, the price being from 5l. to 17l. the ton. Linen rags, which average nearly 20l. the ton, are imported from the same places, and from several Italian ports, more especially those in Sicily, Leghorn, and Trieste (the Trieste rags being gathered in Hungary). The value of the rags annually brought to this country is no less than 200,000l. What the native rags may be worth, there are no facts on which to ground an estimate; but supposing each person of the 20,000,000 in Great Britain to produce one pound of rags annually, then the rags of this country may be valued at very nearly the same price as the foreign ones, so that the gross value of the rags of Great Britain imported and produced at home, would, in such a case, amount to 400,000l. From France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, and other continental kingdoms, the exportation of rags is prohibited, nor can so bulky and low-priced a commodity be smuggled to advantage.

Of this large sum of rags, which is independent of what is collected in the United Kingdom, the Americans are purchasers on an extensive scale. The wear of cotton is almost unknown in many parts of Italy, Germany, and Hungary; and al-



LONDON NIGHTMEN.

[From a Photograph.]

though the linen in use is coarse, and, compared to the Irish, Scotch, or English, rudely manufactured, the foreign rags are generally linen, and therefore are preferred at the paper mills. The street-buyers in this country, however, make less distinction than ever, as regards price, between linen and cotton rags.

The linen rag-buying is still prosecuted extensively by itinerant "gatherers" in the country, and in the further neighbourhoods of London, but the collection is not to the extent it was formerly. The price is lower, and, owing to the foreign trade, the demand is less urgent; so common, too, is now the wear of cotton, and so much smaller that of linen, that many people will not sell linen rags, but reserve them for use in case of cuts and wounds, or for giving to their poor neighbours on any such emergency. This was done doubtlessly to as great, or to a greater extent, in the old times, but linen rags were more plentiful then, for cotton shirting was not woven to the perfection seen at present, and many good country housewives spun their own linen sheetings and shirtings.

A street-buyer of the class I have described, upon presenting himself at any house, offers to buy rags, broken metal, or glass, and for rags especially there is often a serious bargaining, and sometimes, I was told by an itinerant street-seller, who had been an ear-witness, a little joking not of the most delicate kind. For coloured rags these men give $\frac{1}{2}d.$ a pound, or $1d.$ for three pounds; for inferior white rags $\frac{1}{2}d.$ a pound, and up to $1\frac{1}{2}d.$; for the best, $2d.$ the pound. It is common, however, and even more common, I am assured, among masters of the old rag and bottle shops, than among street-buyers, to announce $2d.$ or $3d.$, or even as much as $6d.$, for the best rags, but, somehow or other, the rags taken for sale to those buyers never are of the best. To offer $6d.$ a pound for rags is ridiculous, but such an offer may be seen at some rag-shops, the figure G , perhaps, crowning a painting of a large plum-pudding, as a representation of what may be a Christmas result, merely from the thrifty preservation of rags, grease, and dripping. Some of the street-buyers, when working the suburbs or the country, attach a similar "illustration" to their barrows or carts. I saw the winter placard of one of these men, which he was reserving for a country excursion as far as Rochester, "when the plum-pudding time was a-coming." In this pictorial advertisement a man and woman, very florid and full-faced, were on the point of enjoying a huge plum-pudding, the man flourishing a large knife, and looking very hospitable. On a scroll which issued from his mouth were the words: "From our rags! The best prices given by ———, of London." The woman in like manner exclaimed: "From dripping and house fat! The best prices given by ———, of London."

This man told me that at some times, both in town and country, he did not buy a pound of rags in a week. He had heard the old hands in the trade say, that 20 or 30 years back they could "gather" (the word generally used for buying) twice and three times as many rags as at present. My

informant attributed this change to two causes, depending more upon what he had heard from experienced street-buyers than upon his own knowledge. At one time it was common for a mistress to allow her maid-servant to "keep a rag-bag," in which all refuse linen, &c., was collected for sale for the servant's behoof; a privilege now rarely accorded. The other cause was that working-people's wives had less money at their command now than they had formerly, so that instead of gathering a good heap for the man who called on them periodically, they ran to a marine store-shop and sold them by one, two, and three penny-worths at a time. This related to all the things in the street-buyer's trade, as well as to rags.

"I've known this trade ten years or so," said my informant, "I was a costermonger before that, and I work coster-work now in the summer, and buy things in the winter. Before Christmas is the best time for second-hand trade. When I set out on a country round—and I've gone as far as Guildford and Maidstone, and St. Alban's—I lays in as great a stock of glass and crocks as I can raise money for, or as my donkey or pony—I've had both, but I'm working a ass now—can drag without distressing him. I swops my crocks for anythink in the second-hand way, and when I've got through them I buys outright, and so works my way back to London. I bring back what I've bought in the crates and hampers I've had to pack the crocks in. The first year as I started I got hold of a few very tidy rags, coloured things mostly. The Jew I sold 'em to when I got home again gave me more than I expected. O, lord no, not more than I asked! He told me, too, that he'd buy any more I might have, as they was wanted at some town not very far off, where there was a call for them for patching quilts. I haven't heard of a call for any that way since. I get less and less rags every year, I think. Well, I can't say what I got last year; perhaps about two stone. No, none of them was woollen. They're things as people's seldom satisfied with the price for, is rags. I've bought muslin window curtains or frocks as was worn, and good for nothink but rags, but there always seems such a lot, and they weighs so light and comes to so little, that there's sure to be grumbling. I've sometimes bought a lot of old clothes, by the lump, or I've swopped crocks for them, and among them there's frequently been things as the Jew in Petticoat-lane, what I sells them to, has put o' one side as rags. If I'd offered to give rag prices, them as I got 'em of would have been offended, and have thought I wanted to cheat. When you get a lot at one go, and 'specially if it's for crocks, you must make the best of them. This for that, and t'other for t'other. I stay at the beer-shops and little inns in the country. Some of the landlords looks very shy at one, if you're a stranger, acause, if the police detectives is after anythink, they go as hawkers, or barrowmen, or somethink that way." [This statement as to the police is correct; but the man did not know how it came to his knowledge; he had "heard of it," he believed.] "I've very seldom slept in a common lodging-house. I'd

rather sleep on my barrow." [I have before had occasion to remark the aversion of the costermonger class to sleep in low lodging-houses. These men, almost always, and from the necessities of their calling, have rooms of their own in London; so that, I presume, they hate to sleep in public, as the accommodation for repose in many a lodging-house may very well be called. At any rate the costermongers, of all classes of street-sellers, when on their country excursions, resort to the least to the lodging-houses.] "The last round I had in the country, as far as Reading and Pangbourne, I was away about five weeks, I think, and came back a better man by a pound; that was all. I mean I had 30 shillings' worth of things to start with, and when I'd got back, and turned my rags, and old metal, and things into money, I had 50s. To be sure Jenny (the ass) and me lived well all the time, and I bought a pair of half-boots and a pair of stockings at Reading, so it weren't so bad. Yes, sir, there's nothing I likes better than a turn into the country. It does one's health good, if it don't turn out so well for profits as it might."

My informant, the rag-dealer, belonged to the best order of costermongers; one proof of this was in the evident care which he had bestowed on Jenny, his donkey. There were no loose hairs on her hide, and her harness was clean and whole, and I observed after a pause to transact business on his round, that the animal held her head towards her master to be scratched, and was petted with a mouthful of green grass and clover, which the costermonger had in a corner of his vehicle.

Tailor's cuttings, which consist of cloth, satin, lining materials, fustian, waistcoatings, silk, &c., are among the things which the street-buyers are the most anxious to become possessed of on a country round; for, as will be easily understood by those who have read the accounts before given of the Old-Clothes Exchange, and of Petticoat and Rosemary lanes, they are available for many purposes in London.

Dressmaker's cuttings are also a portion of the street-buyer's country traffic, but to no great extent, and hardly ever, I am told, unless the street-buyer, which is not often the case, be accompanied on his round by his wife. In town, tailor's cuttings are usually sold to the piece-brokers, who call or send men round to the shops or work-shops for the purpose of buying them, and it is the same with the dressmaker's cuttings.

Old metal, or broken metal, for I heard one appellation used as frequently as the other, is bought by the same description of traders. This trade, however, is prosecuted in town by the street-buyers more largely than in the country, and so differs from the rag business. The carriage of old iron bolts and bars is exceedingly cumbersome; nor can metal be packed or stowed away like old clothes or rags. This makes the street-buyer indifferent as to the collecting of what I heard one of them call "country iron." By "metal" the street-folk often mean copper (most especially), brass, or pewter, in contradistinction to the cheaper substances of iron or lead. In the country they are

most anxious to buy "metal;" whereas, in town, they as readily purchase "iron." When the street-buyers give merely the worth of any metal by weight to be disposed of, in order to be melted, or re-wrought in some manner, by the manufacturers, the following are the average prices:—Copper, 6d. per lb.; pewter, 5d.; brass, 5d.; iron, 6 lbs. for 1d., and 8 lbs. for 2d. (a smaller quantity than 6 lbs. is seldom bought); and 1d. and 1½d. per lb. for lead. Old zinc is not a metal which "comes in the way" of the street-buyer, nor—as one of them told me with a laugh—old silver. Tin is never bought by weight in the streets.

It must be understood that the prices I have mentioned are those given for old or broken metal, valueless unless for re-working. When an old metal article is still available, or may be easily made available, for the use for which it was designed, the street-purchase is by "the piece," rather than the weight.

The broken pans, scuttles, kettles, &c., concerning one of the uses of which I have quoted Mr. Babbage, in page 6 of the present volume, as to the conversion of these worn-out vessels into the light and japanned edgings, or clasps, called "clamps," or "clips," by the trunk-makers, and used to protect or strengthen the corners of boxes and packing-cases, are purchased sometimes by the street-buyers, but fall more properly under the head of what constitutes a portion of the stock-in-trade of the street-finder. They are not bought by weight, but so much for the pan, perhaps so much along with other things; a halfpenny, a penny, or occasionally two-pence, and often only a farthing, or three pence for a penny. The uses for these things which the street-buyers have more especially in view, are not those mentioned by Mr. Babbage (the trunk clasps), but the conversion of them into the "iron shovels," or strong dust-pans sold in the streets. One street artisan supports himself and his family by the making of dust-pans from such grimy old vessels.

As in the result of my inquiry among the street-sellers of old metal, I am of opinion that the street-buyers also are not generally mixed up with the receipt of stolen goods. That they may be so to some extent is probable enough; in the same proportion, perhaps, as highly respectable tradesmen have been known to buy the goods of fraudulent bankrupts, and others. The street-buyers are low itinerants, seen regularly by the police and easy to be traced, and therefore, for one reason, cautious. In one of my inquiries among the young thieves and pickpockets in the low lodging-houses, I heard frequent accounts of their selling the metal goods they stole, to "fences," and in one particular instance, to the mistress of a lodging-house, who had conveniences for the melting of pewter pots (called "cats and kittens" by the young thieves, according to the size of the vessels), but I never heard them speak of any connection, or indeed any transactions, with street-folk.

Among the things purchased in great quantities by the street-buyers of old metal are keys. The

keys so bought are of every size, are generally very rusty, and present every form of manufacture, from the simplest to the most complex wards. On my inquiring how such a number of keys without locks came to be offered for street-sale, I was informed that there were often duplicate or triplicate keys to one lock, and that in sales of household furniture, for instance, there were often numbers of odd keys found about the premises and sold "in a lump;" that locks were often spoiled and unsaleable, wearing out long before the keys. Twopence a dozen is an usual price for a dozen "mixed keys," to a street-buyer. Bolts are also freely bought by the street-people, as are holdfasts, bed-keys, and screws, "and everything," I was told, "which some one or other among the poor is always a-wanting."

A little old man, who had been many years a street-buyer, gave me an account of his purchases of bottles and glass. This man had been a soldier in his youth; had known, as he said, "many ups and downs;" and occasionally wheels a barrow, somewhat larger and shallower than those used by masons, from which he vends iron and tin wares, such as cheap gridirons, stands for hand-irons, dust-pans, dripping trays, &c. As he sold these wares, he offered to buy, or swap for, any second-hand commodities. "As to the bottle and glass buying, sir," he said, "it's dead and buried in the streets, and in the country too. I've known the day when I've cleared 2l. in a week by buying old things in a country round. How long was that ago, do you say, sir? Why perhaps twenty years; yes, more than twenty. Now, I'd hardly pick up odd glass in the street." [He called imperfect glass wares "odd glass."] "O, I don't know what's brought about such a change, but everything changes. I can't say anything about the duty on glass. No, I never paid any duty on my glass; it ain't likely. I buy glass still, certainly I do, but I think if I depended on it I should be wishing myself in the East Injes again, rather than such a poor consarn of a business—d—n me if I shouldn't. The last glass bargain I made about two months back, down Limehouse-way, and about the Commercial-road, I cleared 7d. by; and then I had to wheel what I bought—it was chiefly bottles—about five mile. It's a trade would starve a cat, the buying of old glass. I never bought glass by weight, but I've heard of some giving a halfpenny and a penny a pound. I always bought by the piece: from a halfpenny to a shilling (but that's long since) for a bottle; and farthings and halfpennies, and higher and sometimes lower, for wine and other glasses as was chipped or cracked, or damaged, for they could be sold in them days. People's got proud now, I fancy that's one thing, and must have everything slap. O, I do middling: I live by one thing or other, and when I die there'll just be enough to bury the old man." [This is the first street-trader I have met with who made such a statement as to having provided for his interment, though I have heard these men occasionally express repugnance at the thoughts of being buried by the parish.] "I have a daughter, that's all my family now; she

does well as a laundress, and is a real good sort; I have my dinner with her every Sunday. She's a widow without any young ones. I often go to church, both with my daughter and by myself, on Sunday evenings. It does one good. I'm fond of the music and singing too. The sermon I can very seldom make anything of, as I can't hear well if any one's a good way off me when he's saying anythink. I buy a little old metal sometimes, but it's coming to be all up with street glass-people; everybody seems to run with their things to the rag-and-bottle-shops."

The same body of traders buy also old sacking, carpeting, and moreen bed-curtains and window-hangings; but the trade in them is sufficiently described in my account of the buying of rags, for it is carried on in the same way, so much per pound (1d. or 1½d. or 2d.), or so much for the lot.

Of Bones I have already spoken. They are bought by any street-collector with a cart, on his round in town, at a halfpenny a pound, or three pounds for a penny; but it is a trade, on account of the awkwardness of carriage, little cared for by the regular street-buyers. Men, connected with some bone-grinding-mill, go round with a horse and cart to the knackers and butchers to collect bones; but this is a portion, not of street, but of the mill-owner's, business. These bones are ground for manure, which is extensively used by the agriculturists, having been first introduced in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire about 30 years ago. The importation of bones is now very great; more than three times as much as it was 20 years back. The value of the foreign bones imported is estimated at upwards of 300,000l. yearly. They are brought from South America (along with hides), from Germany, Holland, and Belgium.

The men who most care to collect bones in the streets of London are old and infirm, and they barter toys for them with poor children; for those children sometimes gather bones in the streets and put them on one side, or get them from dustholes, for the sake of exchanging them for a plaything; or, indeed, for selling them to any shopkeeper, and many of the rag-and-bottle-tradesmen buy bones. The toys most used for this barter are paper "wind-mills." These toy-barterers, when they have a few pence, will buy bones of children or any others, if they cannot become possessed of them otherwise; but the carriage of the bones is a great obstacle to much being done in this business.

In the regular way of street-buying, such as I have described it, there are about 100 men in London and the suburbs. Some buy only during a portion of the year, and none perhaps (except in the way of barter) the year round. They are chiefly of the costermonger class, some of the street-buyers however, have been carmen's servants, or connected with trades in which they had the care of a horse and cart, and so became habituated to a street-life.

There are still many other ways in which the commerce in refuse and the second-hand street-trade is supplied. As the windmill-seller for bones, so will the puppet-show man for old bottles or broken table-spoons, or almost any old trifle, allow children to regale their eyes on the beauties of his exhibition.

The trade expenditure of the street-buyers it is not easy to estimate. Their calling is so mixed with selling and bartering, that very probably not one among them can tell what he expends in *buying*, as a separate branch of his business. If 100 men expend 15s. each weekly, in the purchase of rags, old metal, &c., and if this trade be prosecuted for 30 weeks of the year, we find 2250l. so expended. The profits of the buyers range from 20 to 100 per cent.

OF THE "RAG-AND-BOTTLE," AND THE "MARINE-STORE," SHOPS.

The principal purchasers of any refuse or worn-out articles are the proprietors of the rag-and-bottle-shops. Some of these men make a good deal of money, and not unfrequently unite with the business the letting out of vans for the conveyance of furniture, or for pleasure excursions, to such places as Hampton Court. The stench in these shops is positively sickening. Here in a small apartment may be a pile of rags, a sack-full of bones, the many varieties of grease and "kitchen-stuff," corrupting an atmosphere which, even without such accompaniments, would be too close. The windows are often crowded with bottles, which exclude the light; while the floor and shelves are thick with grease and dirt. The inmates seem unconscious of this foulness,—and one comparatively wealthy man, who showed me his horses, the stable being like a drawing-room compared to his shop, in speaking of the many deaths among his children, could not conjecture to what cause it could be owing. This indifference to dirt and stench is the more remarkable, as many of the shopkeepers have been gentlemen's servants, and were therefore once accustomed to cleanliness and order. The door-posts and windows of the rag-and-bottle-shops are often closely placarded, and the front of the house is sometimes one glaring colour, blue or red; so that the place may be at once recognised, even by the illiterate, as the "red house," or the "blue house." If these men are not exactly street-buyers, they are street-billers, continually distributing hand-bills, but more especially before Christmas. The more aristocratic, however, now send round cards, and to the following purport:—

No. — No. —
 THE — HOUSE IS —'S
 RAG, BOTTLE, AND KITCHEN STUFF
 WAREHOUSE,
 — STREET, — TOWN,
 Where you can obtain Gold and Silver to any amount.
 ESTABLISHED —.

THE HIGHEST PRICE GIVEN

For all the undermentioned articles, viz:—
 Wax and Sperm Pieces
 Kitchen Stuff, &c.
 Wine & Beer Bottles
 Eau de Cologne, Soda
 Water
 Doctors' Bottles, &c.
 White Linen Rags
 Bones, Phials, & Broken
 Flint Glass
 Old Copper, Brass, Pew-
 ter, &c.
 Lead, Iron, Zinc, Steel,
 &c., &c.
 Old Horse Hair, Mat-
 tresses, &c.
 Old Books, Waste Paper,
 &c.
 All kinds of Coloured
 Rags

The utmost value given for all kinds of Wearing
 Apparel.
 Furniture and Lumber of every description bought, and
 full value given at his Miscellaneous Warehouse.
 Articles sent for.

Some content themselves with sending hand-bills to the houses in their neighbourhood, which many of the cheap printers keep in type, so that an alteration in the name and address is all which is necessary for any customer.

I heard that suspicions were entertained that it was to some of these traders that the facilities with which servants could dispose of their pilferings might be attributed, and that a stray silver spoon might enhance the weight and price of kitchen-stuff. It is not pertaining to my present subject to enter into the consideration of such a matter; and I might not have alluded to it, had not I found the regular street-buyers fond of expressing an opinion of the indifferent honesty of this body of traders; but my readers may have remarked how readily the street-people have, on several occasions, justified (as they seem to think) their own delinquencies by quoting what they declared were as great and as frequent delinquencies on the part of shopkeepers: "I know very well," said an intelligent street-seller on one occasion, "that two wrongs can never make a right; but tricks that shopkeepers practise to grow rich upon we must practise, just as they do, to live at all. As long as they give short weight and short measure, the streets can't help doing the same."

The *rag-and-bottle* and the *marine-store* shops are in many instances but different names for the same description of business. The chief distinction appears to be this: the marine-store shopkeepers (proper) do not meddle with what is a very principal object of traffic with the rag-and-bottle man, the purchase of dripping, as well as of every kind of refuse in the way of fat or grease. The marine-store man, too, is more miscellaneous in his wares than his contemporary of the rag-and-bottle-store, as the former will purchase any of the smaller articles of household furniture, old tea-caddies, knife-boxes, fire-irons, books, pictures, draughts and backgammon boards, bird-cages, Dutch clocks, cups and saucers, tools and brushes. The rag-and-bottle tradesman will readily purchase any of these things to be disposed of as old metal or waste-paper, but his brother tradesman buys them to be re-sold and re-used for the purposes for which they were originally manufactured. When furniture, however, is the staple of one of these second-hand storehouses, the proprietor is a furniture-broker, and not a marine-store dealer. If, again, the dealer in these stores confine his business to the purchase of old metals, for instance, he is classed as an old metal dealer, collecting it or buying it of collectors, for sale to iron-founders, coppersmiths, brass-founders, and plumbers. In perhaps the majority of instances there is little or no distinction between the establishments I have spoken of. The *dolly* business is common to both, but most common to the marine-store dealer, and of it I shall speak afterwards. These shops are exceedingly numerous. Perhaps in the poorer and smaller streets they are more numerous even than the chandlers' or the beer-sellers' places. At the corner of a small

street, both in town and the nearer suburbs, will frequently be found the chandler's shop, for the sale of small quantities of cheese, bacon, groceries, &c., to the poor. Lower down may be seen the beer-seller's; and in the same street there is certain to be one rag-and-bottle or marine-store shop, very often two, and not unfrequently another in some adjacent court.

I was referred to the owner of a marine-store shop, as to a respectable man, keeping a store of the best class. Here the counter, or table, or whatever it is to be called, for it was somewhat nondescript, by an ingenious contrivance could be pushed out into the street, so that in bad weather the goods which were at other times exposed in the street could be drawn inside without trouble. The glass frames of the window were removable, and were placed on one side in the shop, for in the summer an open casement seemed to be preferred. This is one of the remaining old trade customs still seen in London; for previously to the great fire in 1666, and the subsequent rebuilding of the city, shops with open casements, and protected from the weather by overhanging eaves, or by a sloping wooden roof, were general.

The house I visited was an old one, and abounded in closets and recesses. The fire-place, which apparently had been large, was removed, and the space was occupied with a mass of old iron of every kind; all this was destined for the furnace of the iron-founder, wrought iron being preferred for several of the requirements of that trade. A chest or range of very old drawers, with defaced or worn-out labels—once a grocer's or a chemist's—was stuffed, in every drawer, with old horse-shoe nails (valuable for steel manufacturers), and horse and donkey shoes; brass knobs; glass stoppers; small bottles (among them a number of the cheap cast "hartshorn bottles"); broken pieces of brass and copper; small tools (such as shoemakers' and harness-makers' awls), punches, gimlets, plane-irons, hammer heads, &c.; odd dominoes, dice, and backgammon-men; lock escutcheons, keys, and the smaller sort of locks, especially padlocks; in fine, any small thing which could be stowed away in such a place.

In one corner of the shop had been thrown, the evening before, a mass of old iron, then just bought. It consisted of a number of screws of different lengths and substance; of broken bars and rails; of the odds and ends of the cogged wheels of machinery, broken up or worn out; of odd-looking spikes, and rings, and links; all heaped together and scarcely distinguishable. These things had all to be assorted; some to be sold for re-use in their then form; the others to be sold that they might be melted and cast into other forms. The floor was intricate with hampers of bottles; heaps of old boots and shoes; old desks and work-boxes; pictures (all modern) with and without frames; waste-paper, the most of it of quarto, and some larger sized, soiled or torn, and strung closely together in weights of from 2 to 7 lbs.; and a fire-proof safe, stuffed with old fringes, tassels, and other upholstery goods, worn and discoloured. The miscellaneous

wares were carried out into the street, and ranged by the door-posts as well as in front of the house. In some small out-houses in the yard were piles of old iron and tin pans, and of the broken or separate parts of harness.

From the proprietor of this establishment I had the following account:—

"I've been in the business more than a dozen years. Before that, I was an auctioneer's, and then a furniture broker's, porter. I wasn't brought up to any regular trade, but just to jobbing about, and a bad trade it is, as all trades is that ain't regular employ for a man. I had some money when my father died—he kept a chandler's shop—and I bought a marine." [An elliptical form of speech among these traders.] "I gave 10l. for the stock, and 5l. for entrance and good-will, and agreed to pay what rents and rates was due. It was a smallish stock then, for the business had been neglected, but I have no reason to be sorry for my bargain, though it might have been better. There's lots taken in about good-wills, but perhaps not so many in my way of business, because we're rather 'fly to a dodge.' It's a confined sort of life, but there's no help for that. Why, as to my way of trade, you'd be surprised, what different sorts of people come to my shop. I don't mean the regular hands; but the chance comers. I've had men dressed like gentlemen—and no doubt they was respectable when they was sober—bring two or three books, or a nice cigar case, or anythink that don't show in their pockets, and say, when as drunk as blazes, 'Give me what you can for this; I want it sold for a particular purpose.' That particular purpose was more drink, I should say; and I've known the same men come back in less than a week, and buy what they'd sold me at a little extra, and be glad if I had it by me still. O, we sees a deal of things in this way of life. Yes, poor people run to such as me. I've known them come with such things as teapots, and old hair mattresses, and flock beds, and *then* I'm sure they're hard up—reduced for a meal. I don't like buying big things like mattresses, though I do purchase 'em sometimes. Some of these sellers are as keen as Jews at a bargain; others seem only anxious to get rid of the things and have hold of some bit of money anyhow. Yes, sir, I've known their hands tremble to receive the money, and mostly the women's. They haven't been used to it, I know, when that's the case. Perhaps they comes to sell to me what the pawns won't take in, and what they wouldn't like to be seen selling to any of the men that goes about buying things in the street.

"Why, I've bought everythink; at sales by auction there's often 'lots' made up of different things, and they goes for very little. I buy of people, too, that come to me, and of the regular hands that supply such shops as mine. I sell retail, and I sell to hawkers. I sell to anybody, for gentlemen 'll come into my shop to buy anythink that's took their fancy in passing. Yes, I've bought old oil paintings. I've heard of some being bought by people in my way as have turned out stunners, and was sold for a

hundred pounds or more, and cost, perhaps, half-a-crown or only a shilling. I never experienced such a thing myself. There's a good deal of gammon about it. Well, it's hardly possible to say anything about a scale of prices. I give 2*d.* for an old tin or metal teapot, or an old saucepan, and sometimes, two days after I've bought such a thing, I've sold it for 3*d.* to the man or woman I've bought it of. I'll sell cheaper to them than to anybody else, because they come to me in two ways—both as sellers and buyers. For pictures I've given from 3*d.* to 1*s.* I fancy they're among the last things some sorts of poor people, which is a bit fanciful, parts with. I've bought them of hawkers, but often I refuse them, as they've given more than I could get. Pictures requires a judge. Some brought to me was published by newspapers and their sort of people. Waste-paper I buy as it comes. I can't read very much, and don't understand about books. I take the backs off and weighs them, and gives 1*d.*, and 1½*d.*, and 2*d.* a pound, and there's an end. I sell them at about ¼*d.* a pound profit, or sometimes less, to men as we call 'waste' men. It's a poor part of our business, but the books and paper takes up little room, and then it's clean and can be stowed anywhere, and is a sure sale. Well, the people as sells 'waste' to me is not such as can read, I think; I don't know what they is; perhaps they're such as obtains possession of the books and what-not after the death of old folks, and gets them out of the way as quick as they can. I know nothink about what they are. Last week, a man in black—he didn't seem rich—came into my shop and looked at some old books, and said 'Have you any black lead?' He didn't speak plain, and I could hardly catch him. I said, 'No, sir, I don't sell black lead, but you'll get it at No. 27,' but he answered, 'Not black lead, but black letter,' speaking very pointed. I said, 'No,' and I haven't a notion what he meant.

"Metal (copper) that I give 5*d.* or 5½*d.* for, I can sell to the merchants from 6½*d.* to 8*d.* the pound. It's no great trade, for they'll often throw things out of the lot and say they're not metal. Sometimes, it would hardly be a farthing in a shilling, if it war'n't for the draught in the scales. When we buys metal, we don't notice the quarters of the pounds; all under a quarter goes for nothink. When we buys iron, all under half pounds counts nothink. So when we buys by the pound, and sells by the hundredweight, there's a little help from this, which we calls the draught.

"Glass bottles of all qualities I buys at three for a halfpenny, and sometimes four, up to 2*d.* a piece for 'good stouts' (bottled-porter vessels), but very seldom indeed 2*d.*, unless it's something very prime and big like the old quarts (quart bottles). I seldom meddles with decanters. It's very few decanters as is offered to me, either little or big, and I'm shy of them when they are. There's such a change in glass. Them as buys in the streets brings me next to nothing now to buy; they both brought and bought a lot ten year back and later. I never was in the street-trade in second-hand, but it's not what it was. I sell in

the streets, when I put things outside, and know all about the trade.

"It ain't a fortnight back since a smart female servant, in slap-up black, sold me a basket-full of doctor's bottles. I knew her master, and he hadn't been buried a week before she come to me, and she said, 'missus is glad to get rid of them, for they makes her cry.' They often say their missuses sends things, and that they're not on no account to take less than so much. That's true at times, and at times it ain't. I gives from 1½*d.* to 3*d.* a dozen for good new bottles. I'm sure I can't say what I give for other odds and ends; just as they're good, bad, or indifferent. It's a queer trade. Well, I pay my way, but I don't know what I clear a week—about 2*l.* I dare say, but then there's rent, rates, and taxes to pay, and other expenses."

The *Dolly* system is peculiar to the rag-and-bottle man, as well as to the marine-store dealer. The name is derived from the black wooden doll, in white apparel, which generally hangs dangling over the door of the marine-store shops, or of the "rag-and-bottles," but more frequently the last-mentioned. This type of the business is sometimes swung above their doors by those who are not dolly-shop keepers. The dolly-shops are essentially pawn-shops, and pawn-shops for the very poorest. There are many articles which the regular pawnbrokers decline to accept as pledges. Among these things are blankets, rugs, clocks, flock-beds, common pictures, "translated" boots, mended trowsers, kettles, saucepans, trays, &c. Such things are usually styled "lumber." A poor person driven to the necessity of raising a few pence, and unwilling to part finally with his trifle advanced, deposits one or other of the articles I have mentioned, or something similar. For an advance of 2*d.* or 3*d.*, a halfpenny a week is charged, but the charge is the same if the pledge be redeemed next day. If the interest be paid at the week's end, another 1*d.* is occasionally advanced, and no extra charge exacted for interest. If the interest be not paid at the week or fortnight's end, the article is forfeited, and is sold at a large profit by the dolly-shop man. For 4*d.* or 6*d.* advanced, the weekly interest is 1*d.*; for 9*d.* it is 1½*d.*; for 1*s.* it is 2*d.*, and 2*d.* on each 1*s.* up to 5*s.*, beyond which sum the "dolly" will rarely go; in fact, he will rarely advance as much. Two poor Irish flower girls, whom I saw in the course of my inquiry into that part of street-traffic, had in the winter very often to pledge the rug under which they slept at a dolly-shop in the morning for 6*d.*, in order to provide themselves with stock-money to buy forced violets, and had to redeem it on their return in the evening, when they could, for 7*d.* Thus 6*d.* a week was sometimes paid for a daily advance of that sum. Some of these "illicit" pawnbrokers even give tickets.

This incidental mention of what is really an immense trade, as regards the number of pledges, is all that is necessary under the present head of inquiry, but I purpose entering into this branch of the subject fully and minutely when I come to treat of the class of "distributors."

The *iniquities* to which the poor are subject are positively monstrous. A halfpenny a day interest on a loan of 2*d.* is at the rate of 7280 *per cent. per annum!*

OF THE BUYERS OF KITCHEN-STUFF, GREASE, AND DRIPPING.

THIS body of traders cannot be classed as street-buyers, so that only a brief account is here necessary. The buyers are not now chance people, itinerant on any round, as at one period they were to a great extent, but they are the proprietors of the rag and bottle and marine-store shops, or those they employ.

In this business there has been a considerable change. Until of late years women, often wearing suspiciously large cloaks and carrying baskets, ventured into perhaps every area in London, and asked for the cook at every house where they thought a cook might be kept, and this often at early morning. If the well-cloaked woman was known, business could be transacted without delay: if she were a stranger, she recommended herself by offering very liberal terms for "kitchen-stuff." The cook's, or kitchen-maid's, or servant-of-all-work's "perquisites," were then generally disposed of to these collectors, some of whom were charwomen in the houses they resorted to for the purchase of the kitchen-stuff. They were often satisfied to purchase the dripping, &c., by the lump, estimating the weight and the value by the eye. In this traffic was frequently mixed up a good deal of pilfering, directly or indirectly. Silver spoons were thus disposed of. Candles, purposely broken and crushed, were often part of the grease; in the dripping, butter occasionally added to the weight; in the "stock" (the remains of meat boiled down for the making of soup) were sometimes portions of excellent meat fresh from the joints which had been carved at table; and among the broken bread, might be frequently seen small loaves, unbroken.

There is no doubt that this mode of traffic by itinerant charwomen, &c., is still carried on, but to a much smaller extent than formerly. The cook's perquisites are in many cases sold under the inspection of the mistress, according to agreement; or taken to the shop by the cook or some fellow-servant; or else sent for by the shopkeeper. This is done to check the confidential, direct, and immediate trade-intercourse between merely two individuals, the buyer and seller, by making the transaction more open and regular. I did not hear of any persons who merely purchase the kitchen-stuff, as street-buyers, and sell it at once to the tallow-melter or the soap-boiler; it appears all to find its way to the shops I have described, even when bought by charwomen; while the shopkeepers send for it or receive it in the way I have stated, so that there is but little of street traffic in the matter.

One of these shopkeepers told me that in this trading, as far as his own opinion went, there was as much trickery as ever, and that many gentlefolk quietly made up their minds to submit to it, while others, he said, "kept the house in hot

water" by resisting it. I found, however, the general opinion to be, that when servants could only dispose of these things to known people, the responsibility of the buyer as well as the seller was increased, and acted as a preventive check.

The price for kitchen-stuff is 1*d.* and 1½*d.* the pound; for dripping—used by the poor as a substitute for butter—3½*d.* to 5*d.*

OF THE STREET-BUYERS OF HARE AND RABBIT SKINS.

THESE buyers are for the most part poor, old, or infirm people, and I am informed that the majority have been in some street business, and often as buyers, all their lives. Besides having derived this information from well-informed persons, I may point out that this is but a reasonable view of the case. If a mechanic, a labourer, or a gentleman's servant, resorts to the streets for his bread, or because he is of a vagrant "turn," he does not become a *buyer*, but a *seller*. Street-selling is the easier process. It is easy for a man to ascertain that oysters, for example, are sold wholesale at Billingsgate, and if he buy a bushel (as in the present summer) for 5*s.*, it is not difficult to find out how many he can afford for "a penny a lot." But the street-buyer must not only know what to *give*, for hare-skins for instance, but what he can depend upon *getting* from the hat-manufacturers, or hat-furriers, and upon having a regular market. Thus a double street-trade knowledge is necessary, and a novice will not care to meddle with any form of open-air traffic but the simplest. Neither is street-buying (old clothes excepted) generally cared for by adults who have health and strength.

In the course of a former inquiry I received an account of hareskin-buying from a woman, upwards of fifty, who had been in the trade, she told me, from childhood, "as was her mother before her." The husband, who was lame, and older than his wife, had been all *his* life a field-catcher of birds, and a street-seller of hearth-stones. They had been married 31 years, and resided in a garret of a house, in a street off Drury-lane—a small room, with a close smell about it. The room was not unfurnished—it was, in fact, crowded. There were bird-cages, with and without birds, over what *was* once a bed; for the bed, just prior to my visit, had been sold to pay the rent, and a month's rent was again in arrear; and there were bird-cages on the wall by the door, and bird-cages over the mantelshelf. There was furniture, too, and crockery; and a vile oil painting of "still life;" but an eye used to the furniture in the rooms of the poor could at once perceive that there was not *one* article which could be sold to a broker or marine-store dealer, or pledged at a pawn-shop. I was told the man and woman both drank hard. The woman said:—

"I've sold hareskins all my life, sir, and was born in London; but when hareskins isn't in, I sells flowers. I goes about now (in November) for my skins every day, wet or dry, and all day long—that is, till it's dark. To-day I've not laid out a penny, but then it's been such a day

for rain. I reckon that if I gets hold of eighteen hare and rabbit skins in a day, that is my greatest day's work. I gives 2*d.* for good hares, what's not riddled much, and sells them all for 2½*d.* I sells what I pick up, by the twelve or the twenty. If I can afford to keep them by me till that number's gathered, to a Jew. I don't know what is done with them. I can't tell you just what use they're for—something about hats." [The Jew was no doubt a hat-furrier, or supplying a hat-furrier.] "Jews gives us better prices than Christians, and buys readier; so I find. Last week I sold all I bought for 3*s.* 6*d.* I take some weeks as much as 8*s.* for what I pick up, and if I could get that every week I should think myself a lady. The profit left me a clear half-crown. There's no difference in any particular year—only that things gets worse. The game laws, as far as I knows, hasn't made no difference in my trade. Indeed, I can't say I knows anything about game laws at all, or hears anything consarnin' 'em. I goes along the squares and streets. I buys most at gentlemen's houses. We never calls at hotels. The servants, and the women that chars, and washes, and jobs, manages it there. Hareskins is in—leastways I c'lects them—from September to the end of March, when hares, they says, goes mad. I can't say what I makes one week with another—perhaps 2*s.* 6*d.* may be cleared every week."

These buyers go regular rounds, carrying the skins in their hands, and crying, "Any hare-skins, cook? Hareskins." It is for the most part a winter trade; but some collect the skins all the year round, as the hares are now vended the year through; but by far the most are gathered in the winter. Grouse may not be killed excepting from the 12th, and black-game from the 20th of August to the 10th of December; partridges from the 1st of September to the 1st of February; while the pheasant suffers a shorter season of slaughter, from the 1st of October to the 1st of February; but there is no time restriction as to the killing of hares or of rabbits, though custom causes a cessation for a few months.

A lame man, apparently between 50 and 60, with a knowing look, gave me the following account. When I saw him he was carrying a few tins, chiefly small dripping-pans, under his arm, which he offered for sale as he went his round collecting hare and rabbit-skins, of which he carried but one. He had been in the streets all his life, as his mother—he never knew any father—was a rag-gatherer, and at the same time a street-seller of the old brimstone matches and papers of pins. My informant assisted his mother to make and then to sell the matches. On her last illness she was received into St. Giles's workhouse, her son supporting himself out of it; she had been dead many years. He could not read, and had never been in a church or chapel in his life. "He had been married," he said, "for about a dozen years, and had a very good wife, who was also a street-trader until her death; but 'we didn't go to church or anywhere to be married,' he told me, in reply to

my question, "for we really couldn't afford to pay the parson, and so we took one another's words. If it's so good to go to church for being married, it oughtn't to cost a poor man nothing; he shouldn't be charged for being good. I doesn't do any business in town, but has my regular rounds. This is my Kentish and Camd-n-town day. I buys most from the servants at the bettermost houses, and I'd rather buy of them than the missuses, for some missuses sells their own skins, and they often want a deal for 'em. Why, just arter last Christmas, a young lady in that there house (pointing to it), after ordering me round to the back-door, came to me with two hareskins. They certainly was fine skins—werry fine. I said I'd give 4½*d.* 'Come now, my good man,' says she, "and the man mimicked her voice, "'let me have no nonsense. I can't be deceived any longer, either by you or my servants; so give me 8*d.*, and go about your business.' Well, I went about my business; and a woman called to buy them, and offered 4*d.* for the two, and the lady was so wild, the servant told me arter; howsomever she only got 4*d.* at last. She's a regular screw, but a fine-dressed one. I don't know that there's been any change in my business since hares was sold in the shops. If there's more skins to sell, there's more poor people to buy. I never tasted hares' flesh in my life, though I've gathered so many of their skins. I've smelt it when they've been roasting them where I've called, but don't think I could eat any. I live on bread and butter and tea, or milk sometimes in hot weather, and get a bite of fried fish or anything when I'm out, and a drop of beer and a smoke when I get home, if I can afford it. I don't smoke in my own place, I uses a beer-shop. I pay 1*s.* 6*d.* a week for a small room; I want little but a bed in it, and have my own. I owe three weeks' rent now; but I do best both with tins and hareskins in the cold weather. Monday's my best day. O, as to rabbit-skins, I do werry little in them. Them as sells them gets the skins. Still there 's a few to be picked up; such as them as has been sent as presents from the country. Good rabbit-skins is about the same price as hares, or perhaps a halfpenny lower, take them all through. I generally clears 6*d.* a dozen on my hare and rabbit-skins, and sometimes 8*d.* Yes, I should say that for about eight months I gathers four dozen every week, often five dozen. I suppose I make 5*s.* or 6*s.* a week all the year, with one thing or other, and a lame man can't do wonders. I never begged in my life, but I've twice had help from the parish, and that only when I was very had (ill). O, I suppose I shall end in the great house."

There are, as closely as I can ascertain, at least 50 persons buying skins in the street; and calculating that each collects 50 skins weekly for 32 weeks of the year, we find 80,000 to be the total. This is a reasonable computation, for there are upwards of 102,000 hares consigned yearly to Newgate and Leadenhall markets; while the rabbits sold yearly in London amount to about

1,000,000; but, as I have shown, very few of their skins are disposed of to street-buyers.

OF THE STREET-BUYERS OF WASTE (PAPER).

BEYOND all others the street-purchase of waste paper is the most curious of any in the hands of the class I now treat of. Some may have formed the notion that waste paper is merely that which is soiled or torn, or old numbers of newspapers, or other periodical publications; but this is merely a portion of the trade, as the subsequent account will show.

The men engaged in this business have not unfrequently an apartment, or a large closet, or recess, for the reception of their purchases of paper. They collect their paper street by street, calling upon every publisher, coffee-shop keeper, printer, or publican (but rarely on a publican), who may be a seller of "waste." I heard the refuse paper called nothing but "waste" after the general elliptical fashion. Attorneys' offices are often visited by these buyers, as are the offices of public men, such as tax or rate collectors, generally.

One man told me that until about ten years ago, and while he was a youth, he was employed by a relation in the trade to carry out waste paper sold to, or ordered by cheesemongers, &c., but that he never "collected," or bought paper himself. At last he thought he would start on his own account, and the first person he called upon, he said, was a rich landlady, not far from Hungerford-market, whom he saw sometimes at her bar, and who was always very civil. He took an opportunity to ask her if she "happened to have any waste in the house, or would have any in a week or so?" Seeing the landlady look surprised and not very well pleased at what certainly appeared an impertinent inquiry, he hastened to explain that he meant old newspapers, or anything that way, which he would be glad to buy at so much a pound. The landlady however took in but one daily and one weekly paper (both sent into the country when a day or so old), and having had no dealings with men of my informant's avocation, could not understand his object in putting such questions.

Every kind of paper is purchased by the "waste-men." One of these dealers said to me: "I've often in my time 'cleared out' a lawyer's office. I've bought old briefs, and other law papers, and 'forms' that weren't the regular forms then, and any d—d thing they had in my line. You'll excuse me, sir, but I couldn't help thinking what a lot of misery was caused, perhaps, by the cwt. of waste I've bought at such places. If my father hadn't got mixed up with law he wouldn't have been ruined, and his children wouldn't have had such a hard fight of it; so I hate law. All that happened when I was a child, and I never understood the rights or the wrongs of it, and don't like to think of people that's so foolish. I gave 1½*d.* a pound for all I bought at the lawyers, and done pretty well with it, but very likely that's the only good turn such paper ever did any one—unless it were the lawyers themselves."

The waste-dealers do not confine their purchases

to the tradesmen I have mentioned. They buy of any one, and sometimes act as middlemen or brokers. For instance, many small stationers and newsvendors, sometimes tobacconists in no extensive way of trade, sometimes chandlers, announce by a bill in their windows, "Waste Paper Bought and Sold in any Quantity," while more frequently perhaps the trade is carried on, as an understood part of these small shopmen's business, without any announcement. Thus the shop-buyers have much miscellaneous waste brought to them, and perhaps for only some particular kind have they a demand by their retail customers. The regular itinerant waste dealer then calls and "clears out everything" the "everything" being not an unmeaning word. One man, who "did largely in waste," at my request endeavoured to enumerate all the kinds of paper he had purchased as waste, and the packages of paper he showed me, ready for delivery to his customers on the following day, confirmed all he said as he opened them and showed me of what they were composed. He had dealt, he said—and he took great pains and great interest in the inquiry, as one very curious, and was a respectable and intelligent man—in "books on every subject" [I give his own words] "on which a book can be written." After a little consideration he added: "Well, perhaps every subject is a wide range; but if there are any exceptions, it's on subjects not known to a busy man like me, who is occupied from morning till night every week day. The only worldly labour I do on a Sunday is to take my family's dinner to the bake-house, bring it home after chapel, and read *Lloyd's Weekly*. I've had Bibles—the backs are taken off in the waste trade, or it wouldn't be fair weight—Testaments, Prayer-books, Companions to the Altar, and Sermons and religious works. Yes, I've had the Roman Catholic books, as is used in their public worship—at least so I suppose, for I never was in a Roman Catholic chapel. Well, it's hard to say about proportions, but in my opinion, as far as it's good for anything, I've not had *them* in anything like the proportion that I've had Prayer-books, and Watts' and Wesley's hymns. More shame; but you see, sir, perhaps a godly old man dies, and those that follow him care nothing for hymn-books, and so they come to such as me, for they're so cheap now they're not to be sold second-hand at all, I fancy. I've dealt in tragedies and comedies, old and new, cut and uncut—they're best uncut, for you can make them into sheets then—and farces, and books of the opera. I've had scientific and medical works of every possible kind, and histories, and travels, and lives, and memoirs. I needn't go through them—everything, from a needle to an anchor, as the saying is. Poetry, ay, many a hundred weight; Latin and Greek (sometimes), and French, and other foreign languages. Well now, sir, as you mention it, I think I never *did* have a Hebrew work; I think not, and I know the Hebrew letters when I see them. Black letter, not once in a couple of years; no, nor in three or four years, when I think of it. I have met with it, but I always take anything I've got that way to Mr. —, the

bookseller, who uses a poor man well. Don't you think, sir, I'm complaining of poverty; though I have been very poor, when I was recovering from cholera at the first break-out of it, and I'm anything but rich now. Pamphlets I've had by the ton, in my time; I think we should both be tired if I could go through all they were about. Very many were religious, more's the pity. I've heard of a page round a quarter of cheese, though, touching a man's heart."

In corroboration of my informant's statement, I may mention that in the course of my inquiry into the condition of the fancy cabinet-makers of the metropolis, one elderly and very intelligent man, a first-rate artisan in skill, told me he had been so reduced in the world by the underselling of slop-masters (called "butchers" or "slaughterers," by the workmen in the trade), that though in his youth he could take in the *News* and *Examiner* papers (each he believed 9d. at that time, but was not certain), he could afford, and enjoyed, no reading when I saw him last autumn, beyond the book-leaves in which he received his quarter of cheese, his small piece of bacon or fresh meat, or his savelys; and his wife schemed to go to the shops who "wrapped up their things from books," in order that he might have something to read after his day's work.

My informant went on with his specification: "Missionary papers of all kinds. Parliamentary papers, but not so often new ones, very largely. Railway prospectuses, with plans to some of them, nice engravings; and the same with other joint-stock companies. Children's copy-books, and cyphering-books. Old account-books of every kind. A good many years ago, I had some that must have belonged to a West End perfumer, there was such French items for Lady this, or the Honourable Captain that. I remember there was an Hon. Capt. G., and almost at every second page was '100 tooth-picks, 3s. 6d.' I think it was 3s. 6d.; in arranging this sort of waste one now and then gives a glance to it. Dictionaries of every sort, I've had, but not so commonly. Music books, lots of them. Manuscripts, but only if they're rather old; well, 20 or 30 years or so: I call that old. Letters on every possible subject, but not, in my experience, any very modern ones. An old man dies, you see, and his papers are sold off, letters and all; that's the way; get rid of all the old rubbish, as soon as the old boy's pointing his toes to the sky. What's old letters worth, when the writers are dead and buried? why, perhaps 1½d. a pound, and it's a rattling big letter that will weigh half-an-ounce. O, it's a queer trade, but there's many worse."

The letters which I saw in another waste-dealer's possession were 45 in number, a small collection, I was told; for the most part they were very dull and common-place. Among them, however, was the following, in an elegant, and I presume a female hand, but not in the modern fashionable style of handwriting. The letter is evidently old, the address is of West-end gentility, but I leave out name and other particularities:—

"Mrs. — [it is not easy to judge whether the flourished letters are 'Mrs.' or 'Miss,' but certainly more like 'Mrs.')] Mrs. — (Zoological Artist) presents her compliments to Mr. —, and being commissioned to communicate with a gentleman of the name, recently arrived at Charing-cross, and presumed by description to be himself, in a matter of delicacy and confidence, indispensably verbal; begs to say, that if interested in the eclaireissement and necessary to the same, she may be found in attendance, any afternoon of the current week, from 3 to 6 o'clock, and no other hours.

"— street, — square.
"Monday Morn. for the aftn., at home."

Among the books destined to a butcher, I found three perfect numbers of a sixpenny periodical, published a few years back. Three, or rather two and a half, numbers of a shilling periodical, with "coloured engravings of the fashions." Two (imperfect) volumes of French Plays, an excellent edition; among the plays were *Athalie*, *Iphigénie*, *Phèdre*, *Les Frères Ennemis*, *Alexandre*, *Andromaque*, *Les Plai-deurs*, and *Esther*. A music sheet, headed "A lonely thing I would not be." A few pages of what seems to have been a book of tales: "Album d'un Sourd-Muet" (36 pages in the pamphlet form, quite new). All these constituted about twopennyworth to the butcher. Notwithstanding the variety of sources from which the supply is derived, I heard from several quarters that "waste never was so scarce" as at present; it was hardly to be had at all.

The purchasers of the waste-paper from the collectors are cheesemongers, buttermen, butchers, fishmongers, poulterers, pork and sausage-sellers, sweet-stuff-sellers, tobacconists, chandlers—and indeed all who sell provisions or such luxuries as I have mentioned in retail. Some of the wholesale provision houses buy very largely and sell the waste again to their customers, who pay more for it by such a medium of purchase, but they have it thus on credit. Any retail trader in provisions at all "in a large way," will readily buy six or seven cwt. at a time. The price given by them varies from 1¼d. to 3½d. the pound, but it is very rarely either so low or so high. The average price may be taken at 18s. the cwt., which is not quite 2d. a pound, and at this rate I learn from the best-informed parties there are twelve tons sold weekly, or 1624 tons yearly (1,397,760 lbs.), at the cost of 11,232l. One man in the trade was confident the value of the waste paper sold could not be less than 12,000l. in a year.

There are about 60 men in this trade, nearly 50 of whom live entirely, as it was described to me, "by their waste," and bring up their families upon it. The others unite some other avocation with it. The earnings of the regular collectors vary from 15s. weekly to 35s. accordingly as they meet with a supply on favourable terms, or, as they call it, "a good pull in a lot of waste." They usually reside in a private room with a recess, or a second room, in which they sort, pack, and keep their paper.

One of these traders told me that he was satisfied that stolen paper seldom found its way, directly, into the collectors' hands, "particularly publisher's paper," he added. "Why, not long since there was a lot of sheets stolen from Alder-

man Kelly's warehouse, and the thief didn't take them to a waste dealer; he knew better. He took them, sir, to a tradesman in a large respectable way over the water—a man that uses great lots of waste—and sold them at just what was handed to him: I suppose no questions asked. The thief was tried and convicted, but nothing was done to the buyer."

It must not be supposed that the waste-paper used by the London tradesmen costs no more than 12,000l. in a year. A large quantity is bought direct by butchers and others from poor persons going to them with a small quantity of their own accumulating, or with such things as copy-books.

OF THE STREET-BUYERS OF UMBRELLAS AND PARASOLS.

The street-traders in old umbrellas and parasols are numerous, but the buying is but one part, and the least skilled part, of the business. Men, some tolerably well-dressed, some swarthy-looking; like gipsies, and some with a vagabond aspect, may be seen in all quarters of the town and suburbs, carrying a few ragged-looking umbrellas, or the sticks or ribs of umbrellas, under their arms, and crying "Umbrellas to mend," or "Any old umbrellas to sell?" The traffickers in umbrellas are also the crockmen, who are always glad to obtain them in barter, and who merely dispose of them at the Old Clothes Exchange, or in Petticoat-lane.

The umbrella-menders are known by an appellation of an appropriateness not uncommon in street language. They are *mushroom-fakers*. The form of the expanded umbrella resembles that of a mushroom, and it has the further characteristic of being rapidly or suddenly raised, the

mushroom itself springing up and attaining its full size in a very brief space of time. The term, however, like all street or popular terms or phrases, has become very generally condensed among those who carry on the trade—they are now *mush-fakers*, a word which, to any one who has not heard the term in full, is as meaningless as any in the vocabulary of slang.

The mushroom-fakers will repair any umbrella on the owner's premises, and their work is often done adroitly, I am informed, and as often bunglingly, or, in the trade term, "botched." So far there is no traffic in the business, the mushroom-faker simply performing a piece of handicraft, and being paid for the job. But there is another class of street-folk who buy the old umbrellas in Petticoat-lane, or of the street buyer or collector, and "sometimes," as one of these men said to me, "we are our own buyers on a round." They mend the umbrellas—some of their wives, I am assured, being adepts as well as themselves—and offer them for sale on the approaches to the bridges, and at the corners of streets.

The street umbrella trade is really curious. Not so very many years back the use of an umbrella by a man was regarded as partaking of effeminacy, but now they are sold in thousands in the streets, and in the second-hand shops of Monmouth-street and such places. One of these street-traders told me that he had lately sold, but not to an extent which might encourage him to proceed, old silk umbrellas in the street for gentlemen to protect themselves from the rays of the sun.

The purchase of umbrellas is in a great degree mixed up with that of old clothes, of which I have soon to treat; but from what I have stated it is evident that the umbrella trade is most connected with street-artisanship, and under that head I shall describe it.

OF THE STREET-JEWS.

ALTHOUGH my present inquiry relates to London life in London streets, it is necessary that I should briefly treat of the Jews generally, as an integral, but distinct and peculiar part of street-life.

That this ancient people were engaged in what may be called street-traffic in the earlier ages of our history, as well as in the importation of spices, furs, fine leather, armour, drugs, and general merchandise, there can be no doubt; nevertheless concerning this part of the subject there are but the most meagre accounts.

Jews were settled in England as early as 730, and during the sway of the Saxon kings. They increased in number after the era of the Conquest; but it was not until the rapacity to which they were exposed in the reign of Stephen had in a great measure exhausted itself, and until the measures of Henry II. had given encouragement to commerce, and some degree of security to property in cities or congregated communities, that the Jews in England became numerous and wealthy. They then became active and enter-

prising attendants at fairs, where the greater portion of the internal trade of the kingdom was carried on, and especially the traffic in the more valuable commodities, such as plate, jewels, armour, cloths, wines, spices, horses, cattle, &c. The agents of the great prelates and barons, and even of the ruling princes, purchased what they required at these fairs. St. Giles's fair, held at St. Giles's hill, not far from Winchester, continued sixteen days. The fair was, as it were, a temporary city. There were streets of tents in every direction, in which the traders offered and displayed their wares. During the continuance of the fair, business was strictly prohibited in Winchester, Southampton, and in every place within seven miles of St. Giles's hill. Among the tent-owners at such fairs were the Jews.

At this period the Jews may be considered as one of the bodies of "merchant-strangers," as they were called, settled in England for purposes of commerce. Among the other bodies of these